

PARISH RESOURCE: LENT 2025



Trocaire
TOGETHER FOR A JUST WORLD

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ABOUT TRÓCAIRE



Trócaire is an international NGO, established by the Catholic Church in Ireland in 1973.

We work with local partners in the world's most at-risk communities and with people in Ireland to tackle the underlying causes of poverty and injustice and respond to the crises they create. Together we bring about positive and lasting change for a just world. Trócaire is rooted in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching which inspires us to live out the Gospel message of inclusion, love, justice and dignity for all. This social teaching of the Church is informed by Scripture, the wisdom of Church leaders, and the lived experience of grassroots movements. In the words of Trócaire's founding document, in which the bishops of Ireland gave the organisation a strong and clear mandate, 'We know that we cannot claim to love God if we do not love our fellow men and women.'

Trócaire has worked through local partner organisations since its foundation. Partnership is at the heart of how Trócaire works. We work with

local faith- and non-faith-based organisations who share our values and who are working on any or all of our core programme areas: defending human rights; climate and environmental justice; women and girl's protection, voice and influence; saving lives and protecting human dignity; mobilising the public to achieve global justice. These organisations understand the needs of their communities and are best placed to work with communities to deliver sustainable long-term change.

Trócaire, as the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland, is delighted to celebrate two key moments in Church life this year. The Jubilee Year of Hope 2025 and the 10th Anniversary of *Laudato Sí'*. When looking at each week of Lent later in this resource you will see that we have created moments where you can link these two important events into parish life this Lent.

YEAR OF JUBILEE AND 10 YEARS OF LAUDATO SÍ'

A 'Jubilee' or 'Holy Year' is marked every twenty-five years by the global Church and is a time of dedicated prayer to renew our relationship with God, with one another and with all of creation.

The theme for Jubilee Year 2025 is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. This theme encourages each of us to be messengers of hope in our very troubled world.



In Pope Francis' letter announcing the Jubilee he notes:

"Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire...we [must] refuse to turn a blind eye to the tragedy of rampant poverty that prevents millions of men, women, young people and children from living in a manner worthy of our human dignity ... May the voices of the poor be heard throughout this time of preparation for the Jubilee, which is meant to restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone."

Coinciding with the Jubilee of Hope, this year we also celebrate the 10th anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. This encyclical has given rise to a growing *Laudato Si'* movement across the global church. Care for creation has become a greater part of parish life, a way of bringing faith into action in many communities across Ireland. Here in Trócaire, we are members of the *Laudato Si'* Movement and work in partnership with them on our *Laudato Si'* Project. In conjunction with the *Laudato Si'* Working Group of the Irish Bishops



Ilma and Gloria at the prayer space in their home.
Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

Conference, we aim to bring the teachings and wisdom of *Laudato Si'* into homes and parishes across Ireland. These partnerships help us to work together for our common home so that faith communities can take action in order to address the climate and biodiversity crises our world currently faces. Through these initiatives we hope to inspire people in "living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork" (*Laudato Si'*, 217).

This is a special year, a time to look back to celebrate all that has been achieved and inspired by the Year of Jubilee, and the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, letting ourselves be renewed in our endeavours to protect our common home, to "hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (*Laudato Si'*, 49).

LENT 2025 FOCUS COUNTRY: GUATEMALA

Trócaire began working in Guatemala during the 1980s when the violence of the internal armed conflict was at its most extreme. The work focused on international solidarity and supporting the thousands of Guatemalans scattered across refugee camps in Mexico and Honduras who were fleeing the violence. Trócaire established its office in Guatemala in 2001. Through support for local organisations committed to working with the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded sectors of Guatemalan society. The Guatemalan office currently works in three programme areas: Human Rights and Access to Justice, Women's Rights, and Disaster Risk Reduction.

Guatemala, despite being one of the countries least responsible for climate change, has been severely affected by the impacts of climate change. This is an injustice.

Guatemala is a multi-hazard country: in addition to threats linked to tectonic phenomena such as earthquakes and volcanoes, the country is threatened by increasingly extreme weather due to global warming, such as droughts, hurricanes, floods and landslides. They affect large sectors of the population, for example hurricanes Eta and Iota, affected more than a million people in 2020. The country also faces man-made threats such as internal displacements and migration, often linked to conflict and violence.

In Guatemala, Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives focus on protecting communities. Communities' capacities are strengthened against extreme climate events and other natural phenomena through risk mapping and establishing preparedness and response measures. An example of this is 'Flood Early Warning Systems'.

These mainly consist of the installation of sensors in rivers and radio systems in communities so they can communicate with each other and with local and national authorities to monitor the level of risk. This helps to make timely decisions to save people's lives to ensure they can evacuate their homes in areas that are likely to flood.

The Lent campaign centres around the story of a family, and a small community, from La Paz in Guatemala. Ilma and Julio have four children and depend on farming for their livelihood. Like many families and communities we work with, they are experiencing increasingly erratic weather patterns due to climate change. This is having life-changing consequences on their livelihoods, wellbeing and future.

Ilma and Julio and their four children live with 24 families in this small Maya Q'eqchi' community. 'La Paz' means 'peace' and the community speak Q'eqchi- one of the many indigenous languages spoken in rural Guatemala.



Guatemalan flag





Ilma and Julio with their family tending to their crops.
Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

LENT 2025 FAMILY STORY

Ilma and Julio have a strong family unit. Both parents want their children to continue their education. Ilma and Julio make a living through farming. In the community, everyone has their own plot of land. They grow cardamom and corn and depend on selling cardamom for their livelihood. They also have chickens and turkeys and will pick herbs and berries when they are available. The family used to plant crops twice a year but now only plant once a year because of the extreme weather conditions.

A recent drought has devastated their cardamom crop, and for the first time, Julio has had to find a job selling mangoes in nearby market to support his family. Flooding has also affected their home and livelihood.

Bad flooding in 2020 due to hurricanes Eta and Iota destroyed their crops. The family were cut off from the rest of the community and had to take refuge on higher ground to save their lives. Five families

lost their harvest, including Ilma and Julio. The community shared their food and supported the families who were affected.

Miriam who is Ilma and Julio's daughter (12) recalls the hurricanes, she said: "We didn't have any classes because the teacher was not able to come to the community and we didn't have any food. But we were able to get food from neighbours. We waited a month for the water to go down." After these hurricanes they took part in Trócaire's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Early Warning System (EWS) training and moved to higher, safer ground. Since then, they have been safe from flooding but not from the extreme weather that hurricanes and storms can bring.

Ilma told us, when talking about climate change: "We have noticed the weather changing in the last few years. It is now hotter and we have more droughts. Then it starts to rain, and it won't stop raining. A more intense rain, more frequently."

She also said: "It affects our crops. When there's drought our crops die. And then when it starts raining it also kills all our crops. So, we don't know what to do anymore." When Ilma was asked if she worried about the weather she said: "Yes, we worry very much. Because when we plant our crops, it's very dry. We depend on the cardamom and maize to send our kids to study as well. Unfortunately, our crops are not growing and my husband has to go and work in another area, in another community, to provide for our family. So that's kind of hard for us. I do worry about that"

Their children's education is one of Ilma and Julio's biggest worries. They attend a primary school in the community and their eldest child, 12-year-old Miriam, is due to go to secondary school which is an hour away by bus. It costs just under €5 a week for the bus but as climate change is now affecting Ilma and Julio's livelihood they can not afford the fare for Miriam. Julio told us: "My daughter is finishing (primary) school and I am hoping to be able to provide what she needs in order to continue her education."

Ilma added: "I'm afraid that my children will suffer and won't be able to go to school because of the weather."

When Miriam was asked if she would like to go to secondary school she said: "I would like to study

because in the community there's no place to study for high school." Her favourite subjects are Maths and Spanish.

Since moving to higher ground and building a new home, they have been better protected from flooding but the extreme weather has implications for the families' safety and the erratic weather conditions are a constant threat. There was one particularly bad storm this year (May 2024). Ilma told us: "The children were screaming because the steel sheets on the roof flew off. We stayed in the house because of the risk to my children if I took them outside. There was a lot of wind, a lot of trees falling."

Miriam (12) said about the same storm in May 2024: "We were inside the house. We didn't go out but we were afraid." The homes in the community are made of wood with corrugated metal sheet roofing so the house offers little protection to severe weather.

When Julio was asked what he wishes for his family he told us: "My first wish, and challenge, is for my children to pursue secondary education. My second wish is to construct a stronger house using cement blocks. But unfortunately, because of the situation with the land and the farm I won't be able to do it because of the droughts. With the salary I earn, it's not going to be possible."



Children from Ilma and Julio's Community.
Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Newsletter Insert

This year, Trócaire's Lenten campaign focuses on Guatemala, a country which is one of the least responsible for causing the climate crisis, yet is bearing the brunt of the consequences. We tell this story through, Ilma, Julio and their family. Find out more at trocaire.org



Jubilee Year 2025

In Pope Francis' letter announcing the Jubilee Year of Hope, he notes: "Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire...we [must] refuse to turn a blind eye to the tragedy of rampant poverty that prevents millions of men, women, young people and children from living in a manner worthy of our human dignity ... May the voices of the poor be



heard throughout this time of preparation for the Jubilee, which is meant to restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone."

The concept of Jubilee calls for restoration and renewal: a renewal of our relationship with God and with one another, and a period of restoration for the earth: "[This] calls for acts of clemency and liberation that enable new beginnings (Is 61:1-2; cf. Lk 4:18-19)". Pope Francis, Papal Bull *Spes non Confundit*.

Ten Years of *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home

In 2015, Pope Francis published *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, the first papal encyclical on care for creation. It became a best seller in Ireland and in many countries and has contributed to the growth of a grassroots movement across faith communities in Ireland who are passionate about addressing the environmental crises our world faces. *Laudato Si'* provides a blueprint for faith in action which encourages "every person living on this planet" (*Laudato Si'*, 3) to listen to the signs of the times, to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor; to listen to the science and to listen to the call of our faith at this time. Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si'*, "I urgently



appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (*Laudato Si'*, 14). It is time now to reflect on all that has happened and on all the work yet to be done. In Trócaire, this document has inspired and nourished us in our work over the past 10 years.

Each week we will bring you more ideas to reflect on *Laudato Si'*. One way of marking the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'* would be to include a quote from the encyclical each week in your parish newsletter. Quotes are available at the end of this resource; we have 52, one for every week of the year!

Prayers of the Faithful

1) Let us pray for the people of the La Paz community. Lord, this Lent, may we, empowered by your Spirit, stand in solidarity with them.



2) In this Jubilee year of hope, let us bring hope and action to climate justice. May our God, who can move mountains, move all our hearts and minds this Lent to take action for climate justice.

HOMILY NOTES FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

“Worship the Lord your God” (Luke 4:1-13)

The Gospel today tells us that before he commenced his mission, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert. In the Bible, the desert is often a place of encounter and/or of spiritual struggle. And of course, the desert is where the people of Israel journeyed for forty years after their escape from slavery in Egypt. During that time, they often struggled with the temptation to turn away from God, to test God or to demonstrate their lack of trust in the one who had saved them.

Jesus’ forty days in the desert is a reminder of the forty years of wandering by the people of Israel. But unlike them, Jesus did not succumb to the various temptations that were put before him. Enticed to use his power from God for his own comfort and needs, to win public acclaim, to be tempted by the ‘glory’ offered by this world, Jesus refuses. Jesus knew what his mission was – he did not come to fulfil his own desires and needs, but to do the will of God and to make God known to human beings. Jesus was clear that he

came to offer “life to the full” (Jn 10:10), to bring the Kingdom of God to fruition in the world – a kingdom of justice and peace, compassion and love, forgiveness and mercy.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to participate in bringing this Kingdom to life in the world. On this first Sunday of Lent, we can take time to review where we stand regarding the choices we make every day. Are we building up or tearing down? Do we pursue only our own comforts and needs regardless of how they may affect others?

Every Lenten season, Trócaire draws our attention to places and people in the world who are suffering because of the greed, selfishness, or thoughtlessness of others. This year we meet Julio and Ilma and their four children who live in central Guatemala, and we learn how erratic weather patterns arising from climate change are devastating their crops and lifestyle. Find out more at trocaire.org

Homily Notes by Mary Kirk.

Community of Ilma and Julio on the bridge that funds from Trócaire helped to rebuild.
Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire



SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Newsletter Insert

Ilma and Julio have four children and you can see their photo on our Trócaire box this year. They depend on farming for their livelihood. Like many families and communities Trócaire work with, they are experiencing increasingly erratic weather patterns due to climate change. This is having life-changing consequences on their livelihoods, wellbeing and future. Find out more at trocaire.org



Jubilee Year 2025

During this time of Lent, let us focus on the Jubilee year, a year of hope.

In Rome, the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica was opened on Christmas Eve. Throughout this year, pilgrims will walk through this door for hope, healing and renewal. Could



we also do this in our homes and parishes? Do you have a door or archway that you could decorate in your home or parish to be a door of hope, even for these weeks of Lent? For the season of Lent, this space, this threshold can be a symbol of change and restoration in our parish communities and in our families. As the weeks go on, we will add some ideas to this door.

Ten Years of *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home

Reflecting on the 10th Anniversary of *Laudato Si'*: *Professor John Sweeney, Climate Scientist and member of the Laudato Si' Working Group of the Irish Bishops' Conference reflects on what Laudato Si' has meant to him:*

As we struggle with the everyday pressures of normal life, we don't explicitly connect our actions with consequences for those that come after us, or for those in distant lands who bear the burdens of our obsession for material advancement. Pope Francis, however, made this connection beautifully in *Laudato Si'*. The intertwined relationship between the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor suddenly was clear. For Irish people it represented a call for conversion, a recognition that stewardship



of the earth, not its short-term exploitation, is necessary to avoid our world, as Pope Francis said, "beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth."

As the tenth anniversary of the encyclical approaches, progress in following the guidance it provides has been slow. But *Laudato Si'* offers a beacon for the future, reminding us that economics is not the be-all-and-end-all of our endeavours in life. Rather it signposts us to a new paradigm based on ethical and moral considerations. No longer are we to consider the air, waters, and fellow living creatures, as an infinite resource to be mercilessly exploited. *Laudato Si'* tells us we cannot be passive actors in this drama. Rather it is incumbent on us to be active advocates with those in authority to ensure that those that come after us do not inherit an irreparably damaged planet.

Prayers of the Faithful

1) We pray for Ilma, Julio and their family who have shared their story on our Trócaire box this year. To speak out for justice takes great bravery, may we make sure our ears are always open. Lord, help us to listen to others so that we may stand in solidarity with them.



2) Lord, source of all wisdom, guide us during this Year of celebrating the Jubilee. Open our hearts and enlighten our minds so that we may understand and fully experience the gifts of mercy and forgiveness, renewal and restoration.

HOMILY NOTES FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

“This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him” (Luke 9:28-36)

In the Bible, when someone went up a mountain, there was often an encounter with God. In the Gospel today, Jesus brings his core group of disciples, Peter, James, and John, with him when he ascends the mountain to pray. While Jesus was praying, these apostles witnessed a unique and incredibly special moment, a moment of transformation. They were privileged to see Jesus as Son of God, in all his majesty and glory. Peter, overwhelmed by the experience, wanted to stay there; he wanted the experience to last. But Jesus knew that his mission lay elsewhere at the bottom of the mountain, he knew he had to continue his journey to Jerusalem and the cross that awaited him there. Without that there could be no resurrection. The three apostles were given a brief vision of who Jesus really was, as a preview of the future, and to sustain them in the challenging times ahead.

Times of connection with God through prayer, contemplation, and the Eucharist are meant to sustain us as we go about our lives in their ordinariness, their messiness, their challenges, and their disappointments. We cannot stay on the

mountaintop no matter how spiritual or deep our encounters with God. The challenge of being a follower of Christ must be lived out at the bottom of the mountain, being Christ to everyone we meet, supporting and sustaining others, helping to bring justice and fairness to our unjust and unfair world.

The family in our Trócaire campaign this year, Julio and Ilma and their four children, live in Guatemala, a country that is one of the least responsible for climate change but is one of those severely affected by it. The country is threatened by increasingly extreme weather, droughts, hurricanes, floods and landslides, due to the effects of climate change. Please do what you can this Lent to support Trócaire who are working in Guatemala to alleviate the effects of these inequalities and injustice. As we stand in solidarity with them, we also pray that our national and global leaders take the necessary actions for climate justice and listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Find out more at trocaire.org

Homily Notes by Mary Kirk.

Community leaders in Ilma and Julio village.

Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Newsletter Insert

Llma, the mother of the family on our Trócaire box this year, says: 'We have noticed the weather changing in the last few years. It is now hotter and we have more droughts. Then it starts to rain, and it won't stop raining. A more intense rain, more frequently.' Find out more about Llma and the Climate Crises at trocaire.org



Jubilee Year 2025

Pilgrimage is very much part of the year of Jubilee. We, in Ireland, have a great history of pilgrimage to places like Glendalough, Ballintubber Abbey and Lough Derg to name a few. These places have been



sources of hope and joy for many people for hundreds of years. Do you know if there is a pilgrim place in your parish? This could be a holy well, a Mass rock or shrine. Could you visit there this week and pray for hope, restoration and renewal in the world and in your community?

Ten Years of *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home

Sylvia Thompson from the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group (JPIC) in Kerry Diocese tells us about what *Laudato Si'* has meant to her:

The rumor was true after all, it was June 2015 and *Laudato Si'* had been published.

It was such a breath of fresh air! Statements from Pope Francis that I always knew were true but now here they were as part of the Church's Social Teaching: 'the earth, our sister, is crying out to us'; our dual call to care for the poor and the earth; the earth is a 'common home' ... for all living creatures, all ecosystems all that was created and seen by God as 'very good'; working



to protect our common home is an integral part of our Christian vocation.

The influence of Saint Francis was everywhere ... his Canticle of the Creatures, even that of setting aside an area in our gardens so that whatever grew there could give glory to God and that all these plants are good in themselves and not just for us.

I presumed that this letter would set the Catholic church on fire but alas no. Maybe some haven't read it or their copy is gathering dust so, on this 10th anniversary, read or re-read it, let your heart be awakened and then go out and find God everywhere in the face of a poor person, a leaf, a bird singing and give thanks, for it is 'very good'. *Laudato Si'*. (Praise Be!)

Prayers of the Faithful

1) Loving God, we pray that individuals, communities and policymakers can work together to build a just world where all people have access to their basic needs, such as food, water and education.



2) Loving God, we pray for those parts of the world where war, conflict and climate change make access to safe, clean water difficult. Give us the courage and strength to stand up against injustice wherever we see it.

HOMILY NOTES FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

“The Parable of the Fig Tree” (Luke 13:1-9)

The Gospel today provides an example of the cruel and brutish behaviour of the Roman Governor Pilate. For whatever reason he ordered a massacre of some Galileans who were offering sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem. We can imagine the shock and consternation of the followers of Jesus as they accompanied him along the road to that same Jerusalem. Jesus knew that it was often assumed that terrible things like this, or tragic accidents like the tower at Siloam that collapsed killing eighteen people, only happened to people who had ‘sinned’ or ‘deserved’ it in some way. Jesus immediately put this idea to rest; he is clear that those who are caught up in accidents and tragedies are not to blame, neither are these events punishments from God.

Rather than focusing on who was deserving or undeserving of what had happened to them Jesus instead called on the people to repent, to change the focus inward to an examination of their own hearts. Was there fruit growing in their hearts or were their hearts withered like the fig tree? It was not too late, Jesus assured them, to embrace a change of heart. With the right approach, the right care, they too could bear fruit. All they needed to do was turn away from their old ways that were taking them away from God and turn back towards a God who was always merciful.

This Sunday in Lent we are called to look into our own hearts and be honest about the fruit we are growing there. Jesus tells us elsewhere in the Gospel, “A good person brings out what is good from the store of goodness of the heart.” (Luke 6:45). When we look into our hearts what do we see? A heart full of goodness, compassion, and love, towards myself and others or a heart withering through bitterness, jealousies, worries, fears and cares? If the latter, now is the time to turn back to God and open our hearts to his love



Children shelter from the rain in Ilma and Julio's village.

Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

and grace. In that way we can bear fruit again and be a blessing to others and to the world.

The world needs our help and our informed choices to reduce and alleviate the effects of climate change. Our Trócaire family this year, Julio and Ilma and their four children, have suffered repeatedly at the hands of erratic weather due to global warming. Already dependent on their crops to feed their families and earn an income, they now live on a knife edge not knowing when the unpredictable weather will destroy their only means of support. When that happens, they are pushed further into poverty, meaning that Julio has no choice but to leave his family to find other work or they rely on other members of the community to feed and look after them. Please support the Trócaire campaign this year and Find out more at trocaire.org

Homily Notes by Mary Kirk.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT: MOTHER'S DAY

Newsletter Insert

Happy Mother's Day from Trócaire. We wish all mothers throughout the world well on this day. Women, and in particular mothers, often bare the huge burdens of the impacts of the climate crisis. We ask you to stand in solidarity with these women by becoming campaigners with Trócaire see more trocaire.org



Jubilee Year 2025

Last week we asked you to go on pilgrimage to a place near you. Pilgrimage is an important part of the Jubilee Year. This week, as mothers are in focus, let us go on pilgrimage to our mothers. Some may be in our hearts or perhaps we can visit them. Our Lady guides us in a motherly way back to Jesus. Through this week, we ask for Our Lady's guidance in every part of our life.



Ten Years of *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home

Finbarr Keaveney, *Laudato Si'* Animator, from Newcastle, Co. Down, tells us about what *Laudato Si'* has meant to him:



'*Laudato Si'* plants the seeds for our ecological conversion: care for our common home, an integral ecology: "nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live ... We are a part of nature." (LS.139)

'*Laudato Si'* introduces Eco spirituality. "The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a poor person's face" (LS.233).

'*Laudato Si'* gives us hope that our actions matter. "The conscious decisions we make each day, have the ability to break the chain of

destruction as we work towards a sustainable future." (LS.231).

'*Laudato Si'* embraces science and looks to the future. "Our environment must be preserved for future generations." (LS.159) Our first grandchild will come into the world at the time of the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'*.

'*Laudato Si'* tells a love story. "The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God" (LS.84).

'*Laudato Si'* invites us on a journey. "Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. (LS.92)

Prayers of the Faithful

1) We pray for mothers and all who are in a mothering role. We remember especially mothers living in situations of war, conflict and climate change. May God give them the strength they need to support and guide their families through difficult times.



2) We pray for women and mothers who are survivors of gender-based violence, and who live each day in danger because of their gender. May we work together to create a world in which girls and women can live and flourish safely.

HOMILY NOTES FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

“You are with me always, and all I have is yours.” (Luke 15:1-3, 11-32)

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is one we are very familiar with and so sometimes we may think we know it extremely well and even switch off when we hear it read. But like all Scripture, we can never completely exhaust all its meaning for us, therefore it is worth reflecting on it again with an open mind and heart.

We may have little problem identifying with the younger son in the parable, acknowledging that at times we may have drifted away from God, behaved badly, and then returned to a loving Father God who welcomes us with tender mercy and compassion. This Lent we could perhaps change the focus and reflect on how we may actually be more like the older son. It might be difficult to admit this as we may feel we never step too far out of line, and we try to do what is right. But perhaps like the older brother, we may be resentful when someone who has done all the wrong things (as we see it) is welcomed back and indeed celebrated – whether that be in church, family or social situations. It goes against our sense of fairness, of getting what we have earned, what we feel we are entitled to.

Isn't it wonderful that God does not apply our standards of fairness and entitlement when dispensing his grace and forgiveness? The reality is that all of us need God's grace, including the eldest son in the parable, because he was unable to open his heart to his younger brother, or to appreciate all the gifts he had already been given. His heart was withering from jealousy, envy, and bitterness. Can we admit that we sometimes do or feel something similar? We fail to recognise the many wonderful gifts we have already been given by God, as we measure and compare and decide who is deserving and who is not. In these last few weeks of Lent, let us open our eyes to the bounty that God has already bestowed on us, let us offer thanks and praise in gratitude, and let us look for ways to share out of that bounty with those who are genuinely in need.



Julio with his failed crops.

Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

On this Mother's Day as we celebrate and give thanks for all mothers, we think especially of Ilma and her family in Guatemala, who are on the Trócaire box this year. Ilma loves her children dearly and wants her children to have a good life, a better life than she has had. The lack of stability in their lives due to climate change worries her desperately, including her fear for their very lives during hurricanes and floods. As we celebrate Mother's Day, may we also raise our voices for all mothers and families who are on the front lines of the climate crises. May we be a "voice for those who are voiceless" (St Oscar Romero) and urge our political leaders to take the urgent action that is necessary to bring about a more sustainable world for all. We think of Ilma today as she struggles to give her children the best life she can.

“The world sings of an infinite love, how can we fail to care for it?”

(Laudate Deum, 65)

Homily Notes by Mary Kirk.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Newsletter Insert

Next month we will celebrate the 10th Anniversary of *Laudato Si'*. Have you read *Laudato Si'*? Would you like to learn more about it? Find out more at trocaire.org/our-work/working-in-ireland/parishes/laudato-si *Laudato Si'* Week runs from May 19th – 26th 2025. How could your parish celebrate it? We will have ideas and events keep an eye on our website trocaire.org



Jubilee Year 2025

For this week in our Jubilee year, we invite you to look at the Jubilee Calander of Major Events 2025 (iubilaeum2025.va/en/pellegrinaggio/calendario-giubileo.html)



Moving forward into the Jubilee year could you pick one event to link in with in your parish? An example of this could be to celebrate the Jubilee of Justice on the 20th September linking this to Season of Creation.

Ten Years of *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home

Sally Simpson, *Laudato Si'* Animator from Kinsale Co. Cork, tells us about what *Laudato Si'* has meant to her:

You can't read *Laudato Si'* without being prepared to be challenged! My story of how *Laudato Si'* has changed my life is the story of a challenge to see nature as God's Creation, that I am part of it and have a responsibility to care for it and through that to care for the poor of the world. We can see Creation as God's song of Love to which we respond. I have been challenged to see God in the beauty of creation but also to take action to protect it.

In looking at connectedness, *Laudato Si'* took me on a journey to see that how I live affects not



just those around me but my neighbours in other parts of the world. *Laudato Si'* has brought me to a greater understanding of my responsibility to care for God's creation, our common home, and the consequences of not doing so. To care for Creation as our common home is to care for the poor and vulnerable who are most at risk in the climate crisis; this is part of our call to love our neighbour. *Laudato Si'* has instilled in me that to care for Creation is not an option, as a Christian it is our responsibility. It is a way of life which raises our consciousness, inspires us to change, to make our voices heard and above all to raise our spirits to say *Laudato Si' mi Signore*. (Praised be to You, my Lord!)

Prayers of the Faithful

1) Let us pray for all people who are looking for a new direction. Lord, may your Spirit guide us to always seek justice and create change in the world.



2) We pray for peace. God, light the path to peace in our world. Let us never see any other path but your road to peace and love for each other and all of creation.

HOMILY NOTES FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

“Look, I am about to do something new, now it is springing up; can you not see it?” (Is. 43:18)

This Sunday's Gospel is from the Gospel of John. As Jesus teaches in the temple, the Scribes and Pharisees interrupt him and bring a woman before him who has been caught in adultery. They question Jesus as to whether she should be stoned in accordance with the punishment outlined in the Law. John tells us their motive for placing her in this position of public humiliation was to put Jesus to a public test and find grounds to accuse him: would the legal experts will able to trap Jesus on a question about sin?

But Jesus did not play their game and remained silent no matter how many questions they fired at him. Finally, he looked up at them and spoke; “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7). In fairness to the Pharisees and the Scribes they were honest enough to admit to themselves their own sinfulness, and quietly drifted away. Jesus, left alone with the woman told her; “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again” (John 8:11). Perhaps we might feel those final words were a warning, but if we reflect back on all the words and deeds of Jesus throughout his life, we will understand them instead as an invitation to transformation and new life.

The First Reading today speaks about God's unlimited compassion for his people. No matter how many times the Israelites abandoned their God, God never abandoned them, and he always came to call them back to him as his chosen people. God did not hold grudges or hold the past against them. “Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old” (Is. 43:18). We do not need to hold onto past failings. Jesus calls people to new life, calling them to put their trust in his message and to follow him as the way of truth and life.

In the Gospel today both the woman, and the Pharisees and scribes have sinned. The Pharisees and scribes were arrogant and judgmental and lacked the compassion God had demonstrated in the past, and that Jesus was showing now in the present. What would we have done if we were there? What do we do when the private lives or secrets of public figures or politicians are splashed all over the media? Do we rush to judgment and throw stones, or do we quietly reflect on our own weaknesses and how much we would not like to be publicly judged or humiliated? Rather than judging might we extend instead a hand of love and compassion?

This is the invitation that Jesus puts before us today. We are all in need of healing and forgiveness but the door to our Creator God, through Jesus, is always open. No matter how many times I lose my way, no matter who condemns me, God calls me to start over again, to be healed and forgiven and to offer the same to others to change my ways of seeing life and other people. As Isaiah tells us today, God is always ready to do something new within us and our lives: “Look I am about to do something new, now it is springing up; can you not see it?” (Is 43:19). This is Good News indeed!

As we draw near to Easter Sunday, we invite you to remember the Trócaire family this year, Julio, and LIma and their children, as they struggle to make a living in Guatemala, a country severely impacted by climate change. We ask for your support and prayers for them. Their problems are not of their own making but are the result of decisions made by others which are adversely affecting climate change. Please give what you can to help alleviate the challenges they face. Find out more at trocaire.org

Homily Notes by Mary Kirk.

WEEKLY PARISH NEWSLETTER INSERTS

The Jubilee Prayer – Pope Francis

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by
the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of
your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless
cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both
humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new
earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your
glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us,
Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of
heaven.

May that same grace spread the joy and peace of
our Redeemer throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and
praise for ever. Amen.

Laudato Si': Care for our Common Home

Quotes for parish newsletters in 2025 to celebrate
the tenth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*

- 1) "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs... This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her." (*Laudato Si'*, 1-2)
- 2) "Faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet... I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all" (*Laudato Si'*, 3, 14)



La Paz Community in a religious Mayan ceremony.
Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

- 3) "The divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet." (*Laudato Si'*, 9)
- 4) "Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace." (*Laudato Si'*, 10).
- 5) "Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. "Through



Ilma with her community.

Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

- the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (Wis 13:5); indeed, "his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world" (Rom 1:20)." (*Laudato Si'*, 12).
- 6) "[St] Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wildflowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty. Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise." (*Laudato Si'*, 12)
 - 7) "The external deserts in the world are growing because the internal deserts have become so vast. ...For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to a profound interior conversion" (*Laudato Si'*, 17).
 - 8) "Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity." (*Laudato Si'*, 30)
 - 9) "It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential
- "resources" to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right." (*Laudato Si'*, 33).
 - 10) "Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So, we cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture." (*Laudato Si'*, 43).
 - 11) "The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation." (*Laudato Si'*, 48).
 - 12) "We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." (*Laudato Si'*, 49).

- 13) "Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality. If we are truly concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it." (*Laudato Si'*, 63).
- 14) "In the first creation account in the Book of Genesis, God's plan includes creating humanity. After the creation of man and woman, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen 1:31). The Bible teaches that every man and woman is created out of love and made in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26). This shows us the immense dignity of each person, "who is not just something, but someone." (*Laudato Si'*, 65)
- 15) "How wonderful is the certainty that each human life is not adrift in the midst of hopeless chaos, in a world ruled by pure chance or endlessly recurring cycles! The Creator can say to each one of us: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jer 1:5). We were conceived in the heart of God, and for this reason "each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary." (*Laudato Si'*, 65).
- 16) "The creation accounts in the book of Genesis contain, in their own symbolic and narrative language, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality. They suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself." (*Laudato Si'*, 66)
- 17) "The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations. This in turn distorted our mandate to "have dominion" over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28), to "till it and keep it" (Gen 2:15). As a result, the originally harmonious relationship between human beings and nature became



Dublin climate strikes.

Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

- conflictual (cf. Gen 3:17-19). It is significant that the harmony which Saint Francis of Assisi experienced with all creatures was seen as a healing of that rupture." (*Laudato Si'*, 66)
- 18) "Nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures. The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to "till and keep" the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15). "Tilling" refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while "keeping" means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature." (*Laudato Si'*, 67)
- 19) Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. "The earth is the Lord's" (Ps 24:1); to him belongs "the earth with all that is within it" (Dt 10:14). (*Laudato Si'*, 67)
- 20) "Together with our obligation to use the earth's goods responsibly, we are called to recognize that other living beings have a value of their own in God's eyes: "by their



Trócaire representatives listening to community leaders.

Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

mere existence they bless him and give him glory”[41] and indeed, “the Lord rejoices in all his works” (Ps 104:31). By virtue of our unique dignity and our gift of intelligence, we are called to respect creation and its inherent laws, for “the Lord by wisdom founded the earth” (Prov 3:19).” (*Laudato Si'*, 69)

- 21) “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made” (Ps 33:6). Creation is of the order of love. God’s love is the fundamental moving force in all created things: “For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it” (Wis 11:24) ... the love which moves the sun and the stars.” (*Laudato Si'*, 72)
- 22) “The Psalms frequently exhort us to praise God the Creator, “who spread out the earth on the waters, for his steadfast love endures for ever” (Ps 136:6). They also invite other creatures to join us in this praise: “Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created” (Ps 148:3-5). We do not only exist by God’s mighty power; we also live with him and beside him. This is why we adore him.” (*Laudato Si'*, 72)
- 23) “In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word “creation” has a broader meaning than “nature”; for it has to do with God’s loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion.” (*Laudato Si'*, 76)
- 24) “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made” (Ps 33:6). This tells us that the world came about as the result of a decision, not from chaos or chance, and this exalts it all the more. The creating word expresses a free choice. The universe did not emerge as the result of arbitrary omnipotence, a show of force or a desire for self-assertion. Creation is of the order of love. God’s love is the fundamental moving force in all created things: “For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it” (Wis 11:24).” (*Laudato Si'*, 77)
- 25) “The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator.” (*Laudato Si'*, 83)

- 26) "The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is as it were, a caress of God. (*Laudato Si'*, 84).
- 27) "God has written a precious book, whose letters are the multitude of created things. From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine. Alongside revelation in sacred scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night" (*Laudato Si'*, 85).
- 28) "When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them. This sentiment finds magnificent expression in the hymn of Saint Francis of Assisi:
- 29) Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
who is the day and through whom you give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
and bears a likeness of you, Most High.
Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.
Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather
through whom you give sustenance to your creatures.
Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.
Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong"" (*Laudato Si'*, 87)
- 30) "The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout creation by his universal Lordship ... the risen One is mysteriously holding [all creatures] to himself and directing them towards fullness



Community brigades for disaster response in action with community leaders.

Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

- as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence." (*Laudato Si'*, 100).
- 31) "A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings...Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society." (*Laudato Si'*, 91)
- 32) "Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth." (*Laudato Si'*, 92)
- 33) "When we speak of the "environment"; what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it." (*Laudato Si'*, 139)
- 34) "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" (*Laudato Si'*, 160).
- 35) "The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face.

Standing awestruck before a mountain, we cannot separate this experience from God" (*Laudato Si'*, 233-4).

- 36) "It cannot be emphasised enough how everything is interconnected...When we speak of the environment, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves ... We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. Recognising why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behaviour patterns and the ways it grasps reality." (*Laudato Si'*, 138-9)
- 37) "We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn." (*Laudato Si'*, 160).
- 38) "Lack of housing is a grave problem in many parts of the world, both in rural areas and in large cities, since state budgets usually cover only a small portion of the demand. Not only the poor, but many other members of society as well, find it difficult to own a home. Having a home has much to do with a sense of personal dignity and the growth of families. This is a major issue for human ecology." (*Laudato Si'*, 152)
- 39) "Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal." (*Laudato Si'*, 202)
- 40) "Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning...No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone



Julio and Debora playing by there home.
Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours. No-one has the right to take it from us." (*Laudato Si'*, 205)

- 41) "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast". For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion." (*Laudato Si'*, 217)
- 42) "What [Christians] need is an ecological conversion, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience." (*Laudato Si'*, 217)
- 43) "We read in the Gospel that Jesus says of the birds of the air that "not one of them is forgotten before God" (*Lk 12:6*). How then can we possibly mistreat them or cause them harm? I ask all Christians to recognize and to live fully this dimension of their conversion. May the power and the light of the grace we have received also be evident in our relationship to other creatures and to the world around us. In this way, we will help nurture that sublime fraternity with all creation which Saint Francis of Assisi so radiantly embodied." (*Laudato Si'*, 221).
- 44) "The Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love: Yes cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. The

Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation." (*Laudato Si'*, 236)

- 45) "A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." *Laudato Si'*, 49.
- 46) "Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever [St. Francis] would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise. He communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them "to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason." (*Laudato Si'*, 11)
- 47) "Fall in love with the Earth, this gift of pure abundance that God has freely given us. This disposition cannot be written off as "naive romanticism," Pope Francis writes, "for it affects the choices which determine our behaviour." If we lose our wonder and awe, our attitude toward the Earth will be that of "masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on [our] immediate needs." (*Laudato Si'*, 11).
- 48) "Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that "less is more." (*Laudato Si'*, 222).
- 49) "We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness ... One expression of this attitude is when we stop and give thanks to God before and after meals. I ask all believers to return to this beautiful and meaningful custom. That moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life; it strengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation; it acknowledges those who by their labours provide us with these goods; and it reaffirms our solidarity with those in greatest need." (*Laudato Si'*, 226-7).
- 50) "Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practise the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows



Community Member's in La Paz.

Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end, a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms. Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world." (*Laudato Si'*, 230-1)

- 51) A prayer for our earth: All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. (*Laudato Si'*, 246).
- 52) Creator God, Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen. (*Laudato Si'*, 246)

Laudate Deum

"The world sings of an infinite love, how can we fail to care for it?" (*Laudate Deum*, 65).



Dolores (67) is from the remote La Paz community in Guatemala.

Photo credit: Mark Stedman, Trócaire

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Cover photo: Ilma and Julio with their children, Miriam, Julio, Debora and Gloria, Guatemala.

Resource by: Anna Keegan, Jane Mellett and Homiles by Mary Kirk.

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