

Lord, we come before you in darkness and look for your dawn.

We listen for Your still, small voice  
in the midst of the storm.

Help us hear Your words and speak them to others.

Help us change the ways we live,  
that we may shine a light  
that leads the world to You.

As You brought new life to the world,  
bring new life to us today,  
that we may share it abundantly with others.

United in hope,  
bound by our love for each other and the home we share,  
we pray this in your name, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Laudato SiLent.org)

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter as we fast, pray and give alms. Laudato Si Lent asks that we move away from “ecological sin and move towards ecological conversion”.

To help us on this journey, Pope Francis invites all of us to watch the documentary **“The Letter”**. This film gives us a rare glimpse into the lives and work of “4 voices” .

Spanning from the Amazon, India, Senegal and Hawaii, we have the opportunity to watch their journey to Rome...They meet with Pope Francis and share their experiences on the poor, indigenous, youth and wildlife. “The Letter” can be found on the following link:

<https://www.theletterfilm.org/watch>

Our commitment to ecological conversion during this Lenten season can be further enhanced. St. Aloysius and Notre Dame, churches that are part of Archdiocese of Newark Environmental Justice Ministry, compiled ways in which we can care for our common home each week of Lent. You may be surprised how many ways you can help.

### **The Week of February 26**

*“He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.”*

*-Matthew 4:2*

This week's gospel certainly brings food to mind. Lent is a good time to think about food and how what we eat and what we don't eat affects the environment. About 40% of food produced, processed, and transported in the U.S. is wasted and ends up in our landfills. Wasted food is a drain on our natural resources, our wallets, and our communities. Half of the U.S. land, 80% of fresh water, and 10% of the energy budget is spent bringing food to our tables\*. When we waste 40% of food, we waste 40% of these natural resources. Worst yet, after wasted food ends up in landfills, it contributes to methane emissions that are 30 times worse than CO<sub>2</sub>. We have an opportunity three times a day to reduce and eliminate this massive carbon footprint. To help reduce food waste, try some of these tips:

- Check your pantry and freezer before shopping to prevent overbuying
- Create a meal plan
- Save and eat leftovers
- Compost unusable scraps

Together we can use our God given resources wisely to help heal the planet.

\*National Resource Defense Council

### **The Week of March 5**

*The LORD said to Abram: Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you."*

*-Gen 12:1-4a*

Today many people look for new lands to live on because their current homeland can no longer sustain them due to environmental problems of excessive heat, droughts, or floods. To resolve these worldwide problems, significant efforts are needed from local and international governments as well as environmental organizations. A major item that helps stem a variety of environmental problems are trees. Forests help with the development of clouds for rain. Trees subsequently also absorb the rains which help prevent floods. Individually we can take the following steps to protect and sustain needed trees:

- Donate to an organization that plants trees such as American Forests.
- Encourage your local government to replace trees that have been cut down.

- Plant a tree in your yard if possible.
- Use paper products sparingly to help preserve trees; such as using both sides of paper when printing or use recycled paper.

### **The Week of March 12**

*A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, Give me a drink.”*

*-John 4:7*

In this week’s gospel, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well where he asks her for a drink. This encounter provides the opportunity for Jesus to reveal himself to the Samaritan woman and ultimately ends with her asking for the ‘living water’ Jesus offers. We will use this encounter as an opportunity to remind you of ways to help keep our drinking water clean:

- Don’t dump hazardous waste on the ground. It can contaminate the soil, which could also -
- contaminate groundwater or nearby surface water. (Household cleaners, medicines, paints, motor oil...)
- Don’t overuse pesticides or fertilizers. Many fertilizers and pesticides contain hazardous chemicals. These can travel through the soil and contaminate groundwater.
- Join a beach, stream, or wetland cleanup

Lent is a good time to learn ways to protect our water so that people and wildlife can enjoy safe drinking water.

### **The Week of March 19**

*As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, Go wash in the Pool of Siloam”—which means Sent--, So he went and washed, and came back able to see.”*

*-Jn 9:1, 6-9*

God created a beautiful world; however, when pollution clouds over the sun it is difficult to “see” and appreciate it. It also keeps toxic fumes in the atmosphere

making it hard to breath and affects the earth's temperatures. In order to improve the air for ourselves and future generations, we can take the following steps:

- Stop using products in aerosol cans; use pump bottles instead
- Install solar panels
- Consider driving electric cars
- Drive less—use alternate means of transportation
- Carpool
- Do not idle your cars waiting in long lines
- Use Energy Star appliances

### **The Week of March 26**

*The disciples said to him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” 13 Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*

*John 11:12-14*

Listening to the story of Lazarus reminds us of our own mortality. If you are someone who tries to live an environmentally sustainable life, perhaps a green funeral would be an option for you to consider when planning for your funeral. A green funeral, sometimes referred to as a natural burial, ensures that you leave the earth as it is and return to the earth as naturally as possible. There is no embalming, no manufactured caskets, or concrete vaults. You can be interred in a shroud, blanket, or biodegradable casket such as seagrass or wood. Not every cemetery supports a natural burial, but some do. The Catholic church supports a green funeral. If this appeals to you, there are resources on the internet to help you plan accordingly.

### **The Week of April 2**

*The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back.”*

*-Is 50:4-5*

On the news we see many incidents of destruction to our environment by oil spills, fires, deforestation by mining, which impacts the quality of life for all living creatures. Let us use our voices to speak up on behalf of the environment by:

- Contacting state or local government to block construction of harmful fossil-fuel pipelines, urging your legislators to clean up the toxic sites in our state
- Volunteering with organizations working to protect the environment.