

Some Catholic Social Teaching and Prayer to Consider for LSAP Goal #7

1. **Laudato Si'**, **excerpts** paragraphs 220 (Gratitude), 228 - 232 (On Civic and Political Love) and 243 – 245 (Moving Forward with God's Help)
2. **Scripture excerpts** 1 Thessalonians 5:13 - 25
3. **PRAYER: We Thank You, Lord** (Order of Poor Clares of the Monastery of San Damiano)
4. **PRAYER: A Prayer for our Earth** (Pope Francis)

1. Laudato Si': paragraphs 220, 228 – 232, 243 - 245 (Pope Francis).

Chapter 6 – On Gratitude

220. This conversion (*ecological conversion*) calls for a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness. First, it entails gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works: "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing... and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Mt 6:3-4). It also entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion. As believers, we do not look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father has linked us to all beings. By developing our individual, God-given capacities, an ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world's problems and in offering ourselves to God "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable" (Rom 12:1). We do not understand our superiority as a reason for personal glory or irresponsible dominion, but rather as a different capacity which, in its turn, entails a serious responsibility stemming from our faith.

On Civic and Political Love

228. Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be gratuitous; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us. That is why it is possible to love our enemies. This same gratuitousness inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them. In this sense, we can speak of a "universal fraternity".

229. We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment.

230. 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 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.

231. 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. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also “macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones”. [156] That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a “civilization of love”. [157] Social love is the key to authentic development: “In order to make society more human, more worthy of the human person, love in social life – political, economic and cultural – must be given renewed value, becoming the constant and highest norm for all activity”. [158] In this framework, along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a “culture of care” which permeates all of society. When we feel that God is calling us to intervene with others in these social dynamics, we should realize that this too is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity and, as such, matures and sanctifies us.

232. Not everyone is called to engage directly in political life. Society is also enriched by a countless array of organizations which work to promote the common good and to defend the environment, whether natural or urban. Some, for example, show concern for a public place (a building, a fountain, an abandoned monument, a landscape, a square), and strive to protect, restore, improve or beautify it as something belonging to everyone. Around these community actions, relationships develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges. Thus, a community can break out of the indifference induced by consumerism. These actions cultivate a shared identity, with a story which can be remembered and handed on. In this way, the world, and the quality of life of the poorest, are cared for, with a sense of solidarity which is at the same time aware that we live in a common home which God has entrusted to us. These community actions, when they express self-giving love, can also become intense spiritual experiences.

“Beyond the Sun”

243. At the end, we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God (cf. 1 Cor 13:12), and be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe, which with us will share in unending plenitude. Even now we are journeying towards the sabbath of eternity, the new Jerusalem, towards our common home in heaven. Jesus says: “I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all.

244. In the meantime, we come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast. In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God, for “if the world has a beginning and if it has been created, we must enquire who gave it this beginning, and who was its Creator”. [172] Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.

245. God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!

2. Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:13 – 25 (NABRE)

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are laboring among you and who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you, and to show esteem for them with special love on account of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all.

See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good [both] for each other and for all.

Rejoice always.

Pray without ceasing.

In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

Do not quench the Spirit.

Do not despise prophetic utterances.

Test everything; retain what is good.

Refrain from every kind of evil.

May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

Brothers (and sisters), pray for us, too.

3. PRAYER: We Thank You, Lord

We thank You, Lord,
for the perfection with which You
created our mother earth.
For filling her with beauty, goodness and generosity.
For looking at her with love,
because by contemplating her You reaffirmed that
everything created was very good.

We thank You, Lord,
for the trees, plants and flowers that speak to us through Your silence,
for the song of the birds that in their diversity sing a beautiful melody to their Creator,
for the air that gently caresses us.

We thank You
for all the Universe that in constant movement
renews, recreates and transforms itself,
elevating our being to You and
making us contemplate Your greatness,
praising You for all that You have created,
as Saint Francis and Saint Clare did one day.

We thank You Lord
for so many men and women
who throughout history have
loved, guarded and cared for our common home,
raising their voices as brave prophets,
denouncing the injustice,
misappropriation and exploitation of our sacred natural resources,
accepting persecution
and even martyrdom.

We ask for their intercession,
along with Mary, our Mother,
for all the people throughout the world who
respect our sister mother earth,
who contemplate her and feel as one with her,
who work for good and who go throughout the world as
messengers of peace and consciousness,
praising You for having created her.
Amen.

(Order of Poor Clares of the Monastery of San Damiano, published in the Laudato Si' Movement Prayer Book, found at <https://mail.laudatosimovement.org/landing/prayerbook>)

4. 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.
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.

From Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home, by Pope Francis, paragraph 246.

St. Francis of Assisi, pray for us.
St Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.