

Laudate Deum Examen:

This Laudate Deum Examen is a tool for prayer, reflection, and action for individuals and communities to deepen our response to the call to care for creation and the most vulnerable. This examen follows the five steps of the Ignatian Examen, guided by key quotes from Pope Francis in his timely exhortation.

1. Give thanks for God's wondrous creation

“Praise God for all his creatures.’ This was the message that Saint Francis of Assisi proclaimed by his life, his canticles and all his actions. In this way, he accepted the invitation of the biblical Psalms and reflected the sensitivity of Jesus before the creatures of his Father: ‘Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these’ (Mt 6:28-29). ‘Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight’ (Lk 12:6). How can we not admire this tenderness of Jesus for all the beings that accompany us along the way!” (LD 1)

Let us give thanks for God's wondrous creation, within which, “God has united us to all his creatures” (LD 66). We know that Jesus looks upon all of creation, including ourselves and our neighbors, with tenderness. Where do I feel God's presence in creation? (LD 64)

Take a few moments to root ourselves in God's love and express thanks for the blessings of this day (LD 65).

2. Ask God for light

“I cannot fail in this regard to remind the Catholic faithful of the motivations born of their faith... Authentic faith not only gives strength to the human heart, but also transforms life, transfigures our goals and sheds light on our relationship to others and with creation as a whole.” (LD 61)

We reflect upon the presence of God throughout our day, as well as where we have turned away from harmonious relationship with God, the most vulnerable of our neighbors, and all of creation. Let us ask God to illuminate our days and actions with “lucidity and honesty” (LD 28).

3. Review the day

“For ‘we are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it,’ and thus ‘we [do] not look at the world from without but from within’” (LD 25).

From first waking in the morning until now, God, help me review my day from my place within creation. Pay attention to what moments rise to the top of your memory as you reflect upon these questions.

- *How did my actions reflect a sacred, affectionate, and humble respect to our “universal family” of all of God’s creation? How did they not? (LD 67)*
- *Did my actions build up or break down a “healthy and harmonious relationship” with creation and all God’s creatures? (LD 27)*
- *How did I interact with “institutions [such as banks, schools, companies; who] preserve the rights of the more powerful without caring for [the rights] of all”? (LD 43)*

4. Learn from our shortcomings

Pope Francis asks: “To the powerful, I can only repeat this question: ‘What would induce anyone, at this stage, to hold on to power, only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so?’” (LD 60).

- *While we may not think that we have power, each of us does impact the world through the ways we live and move throughout our days. When have I chosen power (e.g., money, consumerism, individualism, ease, self-importance, love of my own opinions, rather than transformative listening) over the ecological choices and action needed?*
- *What actions am I taking today—or failing to take—that might lead me to be remembered as one who did something?*
- *Knowing that Jesus looks upon me with tenderness in my pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world, I now reflect upon the times I have acted in ways that impaired my relationship with God, others, or creation (LD 1).*

5. Look toward the day to come

Pope Francis asks us to reflect upon some big questions: “In conscience, and with an eye to the children who will pay for the harm done by their actions, the question of meaning inevitably arises: ‘What is the meaning of my life? What is the meaning of my time on this earth? And what is the ultimate meaning of all my work and effort?’” (LD 33).

These big questions are answered through the choices we make day by day. Pope Francis says, “This is the path. Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day” (LD 34).

- *How is God asking me to realize love, justice, and solidarity with all creation tomorrow?*
- *What policies can I support which will help our culture do the same?*
- *How will I do so, with “the courage needed to produce substantial changes”? (LD 56) Who might be involved with me on this pilgrimage?*

We praise God and ask for help to make these changes tomorrow, for we know that we do not do this work alone, and we can only do so through the grace of God (LD 73). Amen!