

A CELEBRATION OF

Laudato Si

ROLE MODELS

Role Models

WHO INSPIRES YOU?

Laudato Sí is not just about protecting the environment, nor is it just about social action. It is about both because they are so closely connected.

We must protect the environment in order to help others as often climate change creates the hardest problems in the poorest places. Also, our environment teaches us so much about ourselves and about God. Just like a painting can tell us things about the painter, our world can teach us things about our Creator, God.

All these role models show us how...

St Francis

OF ASSISI



Feast Day: October 4th

Patronage: Animals, Ecology, Archaeologists, Italy, Merchants, Messengers, Metal Workers

Life Story: St Francis of Assisi was born in late 1181 or early 1182 in an Italian town named Assisi. His father was a wealthy silk merchant and Francis lived a prosperous life, wearing the best clothes, eating the best food and going to the best social events.

"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".
Laudato Si (67)

One day, a beggar came to his silk stall and Francis took pity on him, giving him everything that he had in his pockets. His friends teased him and his father was furious. After some time, he began to realise the importance of living simply and spending time with those in poverty. Whilst in prayer, he heard God speak to him saying 'Francis, Francis, go and repair My house which, as you can see, is falling into ruins'. He at first understood this command to be that he had to rebuild the church that he was praying in at the time as it was old and falling down. Eventually he seemed to realise that God meant the entire Church community. St Francis decided to dedicate himself to growing the Church, living a life of poverty and helping others.

St Francis was also known for having a love for animals and is thought to have even spoken sermons to the birds. Through living simply, he was able to appreciate the beauty of nature and had the time to see God with fresh eyes through His creation.

St Kateri

TEKAKWITHA



Feast Day: July 14th

Patronage: Ecology, The Environment, Native American and first Nations People

Life Story: St Kateri was born in 1656 in what is now Fonda, New York. Her father was a Kanienkehaka chief and her mother was an Algonquin Catholic. When she was 4, smallpox attacked her village and her parents died. However, she survived. Nevertheless, she would have to live the rest of her life with a weaker body and bad eyesight as a result of catching smallpox.

"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)

She would often wander through the woods and felt God's presence there in the natural world. When she was 18 she grew in faith further when a Jesuit priest, Fr de Lamberville came to her family's settlement and established a chapel. His teachings about Jesus must have really resonated with her and reminded her of her mother's Catholic faith because she decided to get baptised. Some members of her family were not pleased with her choice and so she decided to move away to a Catholic mission near Montreal. There, she taught young children and tended to those who were ill. Many of the people there loved being in her company and said that when they prayed with her they felt close to God.

St Kateri brought to her Catholic faith her love and knowledge of creation. She understood how all God's creation, including humanity, was interconnected and that all living things rely on each other. She appreciated the natural world in all its beauty.



St Melangell

HERMITESS OF WALES



Feast Day: May 27th

Patronage: Hares, Rabbits, Small Creatures, the Natural Environment

Life Story: According to legend, St Melangell was an Irish princess born in the late 6th century. Her father, the King, arranged for her to be married, but she refused and fled to Tanant Valley in Northern Wales. Here, she lived a peaceful, solitary life of prayer, eating the nuts and berries in the forest, with only small creatures as company.

One day, Brochfael, Prince of Powys was out hunting a hare in the forest. He came across Melangell who protected the hare under her cloak from the prince's hunting dogs. He was so impressed by her strength and courage - standing up to him and rescuing the hare - that he granted her a large piece of land. He did also request that instead of continuing to live a life of solitude, that she used some of the land to found a monastery for others seeking a peaceful life with God. She agreed, but only on the condition that the monastery also became a place of refuge from hunters for the woodland creatures as well.

To this day people visit the place where she lived for spiritual reflection and to be surrounded by the woodland. Her legacy still lives on: the conservation society, Cymdeithas Melangell, is dedicated to animal welfare, and hares will always have an association with St Melangell, especially since in Welsh for 'hare' is 'wyn bach Melangell'!

"Because all creatures are connected,
each must be cherished with love and
respect, for all of us as living creatures
are dependent on one another".
Laudato Si' (42)



B1 Pier Giorgio

FRASSATI

Feast Day: July 4th

Patronage: Students, Young Catholics, Mountaineers

Life Story: Pier Giorgio was born in the Italian town of Turin in 1901. His father worked for a newspaper company and his mother was an artist. Since a young age, he always wanted to help others. Once a woman and child came begging at his front door. The child had no shoes, so Pier Giorgio took off his own and gave them to the child. He also loved playing jokes on people and making them laugh.

He was average at school but his friends saw intelligence in him. He failed his exams and was sent to a private Jesuit school where he began to become passionate about social action, destroying social inequality and unifying people. He said 'charity is not enough; we need social reform'. He spent much of his time riding his bicycle around town, helping those in need. He died very young but at his funeral people lined the streets to celebrate his life and love in appreciation for all he'd done for them.

Pier Giorgio also loved climbing mountains. The mountains were his favourite place. They helped him appreciate the beauty of God's creation and the beauty of friendship as climbing was a wonderful opportunity to bond with others. The joy he gained from climbing mountains taught him about how we should treat others and our world. When we appreciate nature and all its stunning landscapes, it is easier to appreciate each other.

"Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose... The entire material universe speaks of God's love... Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God". Laudato Si' (84)

St Pope John Paul

THE SECOND



Feast Day: October 22nd

Patronage: Young Catholics, Families, World Youth Day

Life Story: St Pope John Paul II was the name that he took when he became Pope. Before this his name was Karol Józef Wojtyła. He was born in Poland in 1920. His mother died when he was young and so throughout his life he had a strong devotion to Mary, seeing her as a spiritual Mother.

"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)

He eventually decided that becoming a priest was his calling in life.

His training happened during World War II where Poland was occupied by Germany. Because his training for the priesthood happened at a very dangerous time of division between people, one of his main focuses as Pope was to bring people together. He strengthened relationships between Catholics, Jews and Muslims, and he was passionate about spending time with young people so that they could learn the mistakes of the past and make a better future. This is one of the reasons that he began World Youth Day.

This enabled young people from around the world to come together and share their joy, love and faith with each other.

This need to make the future a better place and protect the future for young people also involved him reflecting upon the environment and how to protect it. He said: 'the earth will not continue to offer its harvest, except with faithful stewardship. We cannot say we love the land then take steps to destroy it for use by future generations'.

St Thérèse

OF LISIEUX



Feast Day: October 1st

Patronage: The Gardens of Vatican City, Gardeners, Florists, Missionaries

Life Story: St Thérèse was born in 1873 in a place called Alençon in France.

When she was young, Thérèse often suffered from illness and worried a lot. As she grew up, her illnesses started to improve and her worries were much easier to cope with as she found peace in prayer. Eventually after a lot of effort, she was accepted into a Carmelite convent where she trained to be and eventually did become a Carmelite nun.

During her time at the convent she realised that living in community can often be quite difficult. People can be impatient with each other and small problems can often feel very frustrating. St Thérèse found peace in her frustrations through realising that even though she was just one person, every little kind act that she did would make a big difference to herself, and her community. She called these small acts of kindness the 'Little Way'.

Whilst living in the convent she had a lot of time to contemplate and she wrote many of her thoughts down. She was overwhelmed by the beauty of nature and began to realise that through nature, God speaks to us. She said that Jesus 'set before me the book of nature'. Looking at the flowers taught her that they are all unique but special in their own way. She realised that this was the same for us too. She called herself the 'little flower of God'.

"St Thérèse 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".

Laudato Si (230)

