



CULTIVATING HOPE IN ADVENT



Re-Wild your part of the World



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IRISH CATHOLIC
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
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Advent is a time of waiting. Nature shows us what it means to wait. The days are shorter, creatures hibernate, growth slows, the soil rests, our attention is drawn inwards. This Winter is like no other we have experienced as our world continues to battle Covid-19. It is a time for reflection, a time to awaken to what is happening to our planet. What if during this time we prepared the ground for planting at home, in school or parish? Because we know Spring is coming. Nature is preparing for the future season of Spring and new possibilities. Can we build back better? Can we Rewild our World during this time?

'Everything in the world is connected... As the pandemic made sure to remind us, we are interdependent on each other as well as our Mother Earth.'
(Pope Francis, TED Talk 2020)

At Home, in our Parishes and Local Communities

Pray: During Reconciliation Services this Advent encourage your parish to use the **Ecological Examen** which helps us to reflect on our relationship with God's creation: www.ecologicalexamen.org

Reflect: Would your parish like to run a **Laudato Si' book club** in the New Year and see where it takes you? Contact Jane.mellett@trocaire.org

Include short *Laudato Si'* quotes weekly in your parish bulletin during Advent and beyond!

Act: Prepare the ground to make 2021 the year you Re-Wild the parish!

- Have you gathered any fallen leaves? There is still time to make **leaf mould!** Or you can leave them around the base of a tree or bush as a type of blanket to protect against the winter frost. <http://www.ipcc.ie/advice/composting-diy/composted-leaves-leaf-mould/>
- Invite local community groups, such as the Men's Shed, TY students, local eco-groups, to help your parish Re-WILD this ADVENT.
- **There's still time to plant** some pollinator friendly bulbs such as Crocus, Grape hyacinth and Allium. The pollinators will thank you next spring-summer.
- It is good to buy seeds that suit our local creatures so **try to source Irish ones.** For example: www.fruithillfarm.com or www.wildflowers.ie
- Seeds make lovely **gifts** too for birthdays, special occasions and **Christmas.**



Reconnect! Wintertime and Advent are special times for being in nature. Now the leaves have fallen, we can see the shapes of the trees and their branches more clearly. It is a time to **look and listen**, some birds will be singing, you might see a squirrel or hear a little field mouse rustling around in the leaves. If you lift a log gently you will see lots of little creatures underneath, so put it back very carefully, *this is their home*. Many creatures are beginning to hibernate now, so it is a good time to learn about them and get ready to spot them when they re-emerge in the Spring.



PREPARE to Re-Wild Your World

In your parish grounds look around and see where you can begin

'St Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty.' (Laudato Si', 40)

The Faith Community Pollinator Plan includes guidelines for various aspects of Rewilding including why we need to take these actions as we *'recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature.'* (Laudato Si' 246).
<https://pollinators.ie/communities/faith-communities/>



PREPARE to Re-Wild Your World

This beautiful book 'Gardening for Biodiversity' gives the overall framework for your garden and has beautiful illustrations too. <https://laois.ie/gardening-for-biodiversity/>



And this super colouring book, suitable for all ages. <https://laois.ie/garden-biodiversity-colouring-book/>



Want some advice on how to begin? Sylvia Thompson St John's Parish Care of Creation Group, Tralee is happy to help any parish group make a start. You can contact Sylvia on: sylviajms11@gmail.com

Advent Wreath Prayers

Cultivate Hope by lighting the Advent candles in awareness of the interconnectedness of all things.

First Sunday of Advent: As the earth turns away from the sun and enters the season of darkness, a darkness which is necessary for the bulbs and seeds to ready themselves for the burst of growth in Spring, so do we enter the time of waiting that is Advent. We pray that we may use this time as wisely as the earth does, preparing our hearts and spirits for the celebration of the wonder that is the incarnation, God becoming flesh and living among us. We light this candle for Hope.

Second Sunday of Advent: Silent but attentive God, as we light this second candle, we pray for the protection of what remains of the wilder parts of our world. Remind us, Lord, that we need wild places for the restoration of our deeper selves. Only in such places can we be drawn into harmony with Nature in its wonder, its playfulness, its surprise, its beauty and its lavishness. Lure us, Lord, into the wilderness and speak to our hearts (Hosea 2:14) so we can remember that we are all called to live with Nature as brothers and sisters and to share her gifts generously with one another. Pour out Advent Peace on us as we gather here around this Wreath. Let us be brave and active, our best gift to the world in this troubled Advent time. Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent: O God, source of light and darkness, let the lighting of this third candle be a sign of our willingness to speak for the light; to be, like John the Baptist, a witness to the light. It is to John we turn for inspiration today as one who found in the wilderness the grace of seeing clearly. May we find in our time a voice to protect our wild places for 'in wilderness is the preservation of the world' (Henry David Thoreau). We pray that the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with the **light of joy** and thanksgiving so that we may live as children of the light blessing one another and the sacred earth by what we say and do. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, the Light of the world. Amen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Spirit of God, Calling together the creatures of the earth, the vulnerable with the powerful. By your becoming one with creation renew the earth. Come to our divided world, come to our fragmented lives; Come to heal and save. In you our life is one again and all things come together: each connected to the other, ourselves and all things living: heaven and earth, time and space, the whole created universe in you. Through Christ, Amen.



Staying Awake - Fr Sean McDonagh

Staying awake helps us to understand that the greatest threat to humanity and all of creation is the current destruction of biodiversity globally. It is having enormous negative impacts both on the planet and on human wellbeing. Right now, we are experiencing the 6th largest extinction of life since life began 3.8 billion years ago. This is largely caused by human activity. Faith communities have great potential to change our way of relating to the earth and all its creatures. St Columban (545–615 AD), tells us that if we want to know God, we must study Creation.

In his Canticle of the Creatures St Francis blesses and thanks God for all creation as *'every creature is the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world.'* Pope Francis goes even further and says that *'all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God.'*

(*Laudato Si'*, 83). As religious people, our faith should encourage us to get to know the natural world more thoroughly, understand what is threatening biodiversity more fully and do all we can to create a friendly world for every creature.



Rewilding is an excellent way to heal ecosystems which have been destroyed by human activity. Rewilding our lawns will bring back insects such as bees, hoverflies, beetles which, in turn, will bring back more birds, all of which contributes to increasing biodiversity. Rewilding larger areas such as parks, roadsides provide even more space for nature, and allows natural processes such as soil restoration and carbon capture to take place. Planting a native wild-flower meadow with native trees is another wonderful way to bring nature home. Advent is a time when we can plan how to achieve these objectives during the growing season the following year and put the necessary resources in place.



**'Let us continue, then, to advance
along the paths of hope'
*Fratelli Tutti, 55***

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