



## EXAMEN

In Pope Francis' message "[Show Mercy to our Common Home](#)" (Sept 1, 2016) he reminds us that one of the first steps toward integrating love and care for creation as part of our Christian faith is by conducting an examination of conscience. We offer this #Mercy2Earth examen based on the Pope's message to help you through this process. This examen, is patterned after the examination of conscience developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola. We invite you to use it during Lent, as a way to deepen in your vocation as "protector of God's handiwork" or before going to the sacrament of confession.

This #Mercy2Earth Examen has 6 steps:

1. **Rest** in the presence of God.
2. **Give thanks** for God's creation and creatures
3. **Reflect** on the ways you have heard "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."
4. **Ask forgiveness** for the ways you've fallen short in caring for God's creation and creatures.
5. **Make amends** by committing to concrete ways to show mercy to creation and your neighbors.
6. **Close in prayer**

### 1. Rest in the presence of God.

*"Turning to this bountiful and merciful Father who awaits the return of each of his children, we can acknowledge our sins against creation, the poor and future generations."<sup>1</sup>*

Before you begin, take a moment to remember that you are in the presence of our loving Creator. It might help to close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and offer a prayer for the grace to listen deeply to God's word within you.

### 2. Give thanks for God's creation and creatures.

*"The first step... involves "gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift."*

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes are from Pope Francis' message "Show Mercy to our Common Home" written on the occasion of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (1 September 2016)

- Offer thanks for the many ways God has blessed you through creation. This might include what you ate for breakfast, the water you drink... or it might be a favorite tree, the sounds of birds chirping or a place in nature that is special to you.
- Give thanks for the the people, past and present, who have contributed to the fabric of your life. You might think about the people who helped raise you, your teachers, the people who pick your food, make your clothes, and the countless others. Pope Francis invites us into *“loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion.”* Our lives are interconnected, and interdependent on so many other people!

### **3. Reflect on the ways you have listened to “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”**

*“Inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage,” we are called to acknowledge “our contribution, smaller or greater, to the disfigurement and destruction of creation.”*

Take time to reflect on the following questions Pope Francis asks in his message:

- Am I aware of the “cry of the earth and the cry of the poor?” Am I conscious of how the natural world, the plants, and animals are suffering? Do I take time to learn about the social and economic realities faced by so many around the globe?
- In what ways have I made a conscious effort to care for creation and its creatures? In what ways have I fallen short?
- Are there ways and times that I consume more than is necessary?
- How can I help to *“make amends for past and present religious intolerance”* as well as *for injustice towards people of other religions, “women, indigenous peoples, immigrants, the poor and the unborn?”*

### **4. Ask forgiveness for the ways you’ve fallen short in caring for God’s creation and creatures.**

*“After a serious examination of conscience and moved by sincere repentance, we can confess our sins against the Creator, against creation, and against our brothers and sisters.”*

Bring to God the ways that you have fallen short in caring for our common home and ask for forgiveness. If you are so moved, you might want to bring some of your reflections to the sacrament of reconciliation “as the place where the truth makes us free.”

## 5. Make Amends

*"Examining our consciences, repentance and confession to our Father who is rich in mercy lead to a firm purpose of amendment. This in turn must translate into concrete ways of thinking and acting that are more respectful of creation."*

Pray to God for the grace to know how you are invited to better care for creation, the poor, and future generations. In his message, Pope Francis offers the following guidance,

*As a corporal work of mercy, care for our common home requires "simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness" and "makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world... A single question can keep our eyes fixed on the goal: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?"*

What changes can you make in your personal life or in your community to better care for our common home and its inhabitants, present and future? You may consider reviewing the suggestions in our #Mercy2Earth guide as a way of joining Catholics globally in giving mercy to our common home during #Mercy2Earth weekend. (See more at [mercy2earth.org](http://mercy2earth.org))

## 6. Closing Prayer

Conclude your examen by giving thanks for the merciful love that you received during this time and then praying the final prayer in the Pope's message:

**O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned  
and forgotten of this earth,  
who are so precious in your eyes...  
God of love, show us our place in this world  
as channels of your love  
for all the creatures of this earth,  
God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness  
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.  
Praise be to you!  
Amen.**