

# St. Joseph Freinademetz Church

## Parish Bulletin and Newsletter

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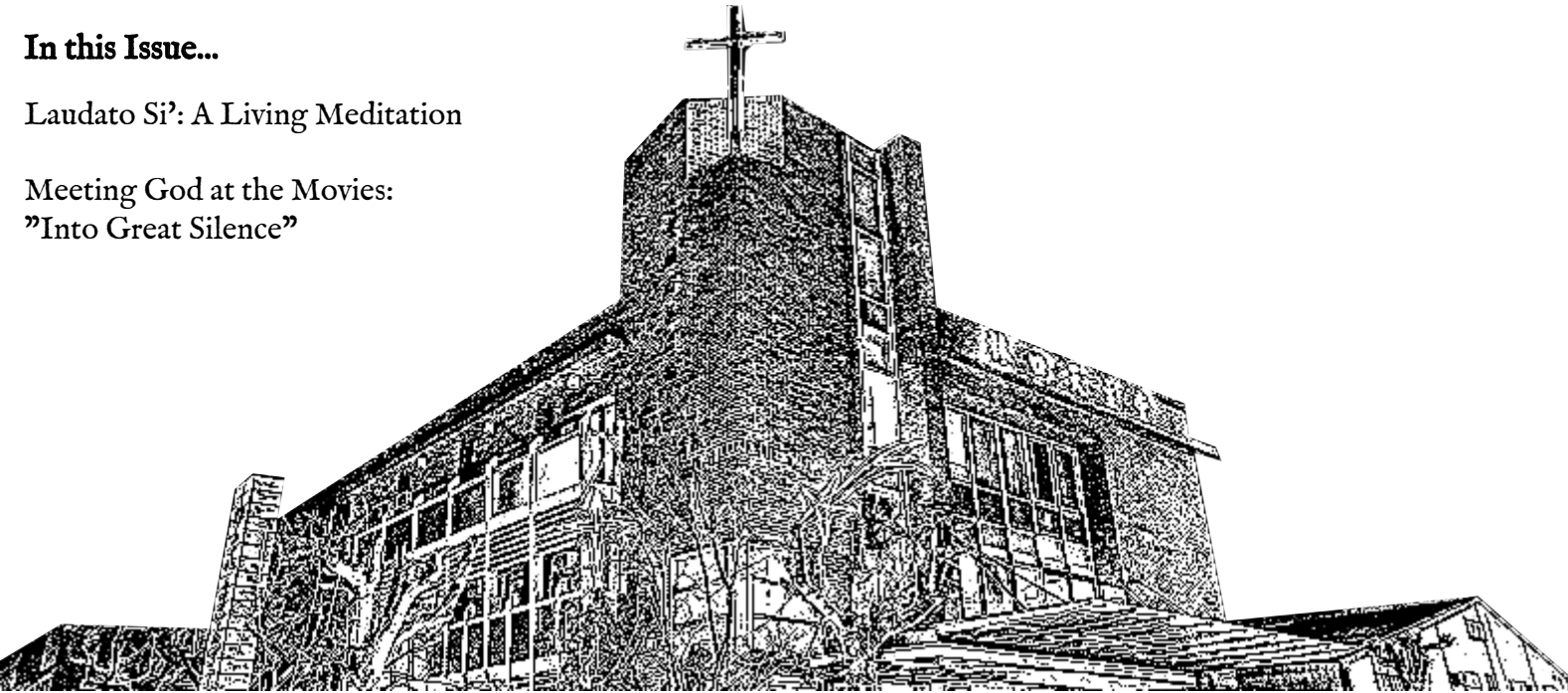
Year A

Volume 1-3

### In this Issue...

Laudato Si': A Living Meditation

Meeting God at the Movies:  
"Into Great Silence"



### Pope Leo XIV Prayer Intention

**For children with incurable diseases**

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.



### Parish Announcements

#### Palm Collection for Ash Wednesday



All parishioners are invited to **bring their palms from last year's Palm Sunday** to Church for the preparation of ashes **before February 18**.

On Sundays, a **collection box** will be **left outside the church entrance** after mass where you can leave your palms.



### Important Feast Days

#### February 2, Monday

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord  
7:30 PM (Chinese)

*(All are invited to bring candles for blessing)*

#### February 17, Tuesday

Chinese New Year Mass  
9:00 AM (Chinese)

#### February 18, Wednesday

Ash Wednesday  
7:30 PM (Chinese)

#### February 22, Sunday

First Sunday of Lent  
11:00 AM (English)

### English Community Potluck



On **February 8 (Sunday)** after mass, we'll be having a potluck! It's a communal meal where everyone can bring a dish.

It will be held **in the Church basement**. Even if you are unable to bring a dish, all are welcome to stop by and hang out!

# Laudato Si'

## A Living Meditation



***"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."***

***- St. Francis of Assisi.***

In 2015, Pope Francis released his radical encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, the first ever written by a Pope on the subject of the environment.

The title *Laudato Si'* translates to "Praise Be to You" and is taken from the famous "Canticle of the Sun" by St. Francis of Assisi. The spirit of *Laudato Si'* can be summed up in one phrase: **"Everything is connected."**

As we begin our Lenten journey this month, we could reflect on how the three practices of Lent - prayer, fasting and almsgiving - not only redirects focus to our spiritual lives and draws us closer to God, they also transform how we relate to the earth and to each other.

***"Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God."***

***- Laudato Si' 119***



### Reflection on Clean Air

God formed the first man, Adam, out of the dust of the ground and breathed life into him. Air is essential to life. The average person at rest takes 15 breaths a minute, 900 breaths an hour, and breathes in over 3,000 gallons of air each day.

We breathe without thinking about it, but occasionally, why don't we take time to breathe more mindfully? Next time before you pray, try to slowly fill your diaphragm, then lungs. Let the oxygen fill your body, then slowly exhale every bit of carbon dioxide. Be grateful for the oceans and rainforests that absorb carbon dioxide emissions and release clean oxygen into the atmosphere. Be grateful for the breath of God within you.

Be mindful of how our lifestyle choices contribute to air pollution and climate change problems worldwide. Consider buying more locally produced food and goods, which minimizes energy use for transportation. We can plan to drive less each week and fly less each year. Instead of abstaining from meat only on designated days in Lent, we could make this a weekly practice year-round. A plant-based diet produces less pollutants and greenhouse gases compared to a diet that includes meat.

***"All praise be yours, my Lord,  
through Brothers Wind and Air . . . . ."***

***- St. Francis of Assisi***



### Reflection on Healthy Soil

Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, writes: "We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the Earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters." In fact, the name "Adam" means "earth" or "soil" in Hebrew.

Food, flowers, seeds, herbs, and trees all come from the earth's soil. Soil provides a habitat for many living things (including us) and contains microorganisms like bacteria, algae and fungi needed for the health of the ecosystem.

It takes more than a century for less than an inch of soil to be formed, and that's only when the required conditions are present. Without healthy soil (along with water and sunlight), we would not have the fruits of the earth needed to make the bread and wine for the Eucharist.

Be aware when shopping that every dollar we spend in some way affects the Earth and all the people, animals and plants that live in it. Buy only what is needed. Invest, spend and donate your money in a way that demonstrates your concern for the poor and for those who are most vulnerable to the damage from climate change and environmental degradation.

*"Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs..."*

*- St. Francis of Assisi*

### Reflection on Clean Water

Water is a vital substance found in every living cell of nearly every creature. The Earth's surface is about 70% water. 60% of the weight of the human body also comes from water.

Water is a vital part of animal and human habitation; it forms and shapes the landscape; it cools and warms us; it is used in the manufacture of many products, such as semiconductors, paper, coffee and clothes.

Water is used in the rituals of the Mass and in the sacraments such as Baptism. The Bible contains over 500 references to water.

Think of a Biblical story or reference to water and reflect on how it can influence your life right now.

Appreciate and use "Sister Water" with greater awareness, reverence, and wonder. Wait until you have a full load of laundry before running your washing machine. Save the water used to wash, boil or steam vegetables for other purposes like rinsing out recyclable items or watering plants. Try taking a shower in the same amount of time as the length of your favorite song. Taiwan's Water Resources Agency recommends that time spent in the shower should be no more than five minutes.

*"We praise you, Lord, for Sister Water, so useful, humble, precious and pure."*

*- St. Francis of Assisi*

Making a difference starts with a change in our attitudes and perceptions. This Lent, may we consciously incorporate more time enjoying and contemplating God's creation – what has been created, what is alive, and what is freely given.

Praise be to God for His creation that surrounds us and sustains us.

# Corner for You

If you'd like to  
contribute an article,  
email us at  
english@lkcc.tw!

## Meeting God at the Movies: "Into Great Silence"



Lent is coming soon, and most Catholics (myself included) may feel reluctant to practice the fasting and self-denial that is expected during this period. We may imagine it to be a torturous time devoid of joy and consolation. In high school, I and my Catholic schoolmates were given a checklist for every day of Lent, with items such as "No soda", "No computer games", "Daily Mass attendance" and so on. I don't think any of us had that many ticks on our lists by the end of the forty days.

A few years ago, I watched a remarkable film that made me reconsider these preconceived notions about the misery and suffering of an ascetic life. It had a simple title: "Into Great Silence".

"Into Great Silence" is a two and a half hour long documentary from German director Philip Gröning, documenting the lives of Carthusian monks living in the Grande Chartreuse monastery, nestled high up in the breathtakingly beautiful Chartreuse Mountains. And it is almost completely silent.

No narration. No long, in-depth interviews. No guided tour of the monastery. It's just long, uninterrupted shots of men in robes going about their day. Cooking, cleaning, reading, praying. There's one memorable scene where a young novice is sawing wood, sliding his arm back and forth rhythmically until finally, after what feels like an eternity, a small block of wood falls to the ground. He stops for a moment, wipes the sweat off his brow, glances at the seemingly endless amount of wood he has left to saw, and continues the work. There's another scene where a monk is sitting down for a meal in his room, and it's so quiet that you can hear the soft crunch as he slowly and deliberately takes in his meal.

I was entranced. I recall spending most of that day in a state of worried distraction, but when I sat down to watch the film, my soul sank into an indescribable peace, like a weary body laying down to rest... But then the film kept going. And going. And by the time the film ended, I was relieved because I was struggling to stay awake.

The film cannot be accused of romanticizing or idealizing the lives of these monks. It plunges us, the viewer, deep into the silence that permeates the lives of these monks. Initially, it feels like a respite from the noise of this world, and we wonder why all of us can't live like this. But the silence continues. And sooner or later, our minds start to wander. Uncomfortable thoughts may surface. The silence becomes less of a balm and more of a weight on our souls. We are reminded why we avoid silence in the first place.

But if we stay in the silence just a little bit longer, and let those thoughts sit, sooner or later they go away. And we return to that blissful peace. The thoughts may return, but they always go, like the passing of all the things of this world.

One of the reasons why many people in the modern age may feel so dissatisfied and bored in life is because we don't allow ourselves moments of quiet. Without these moments, even beautiful things become trivial noise. To truly live close to God, we must embrace silence as a restorative force, a force that restores our capacity for wonder and awe in the face of beauty. Of God.