

Care for Our Common Home Advent Retreat

December 8, 2020

*Please have a pen
and a sheet of
paper handy.*



Prepared by Care for our Common Home Ministry of
St. John Neumann Catholic Community
Reston, Virginia

Care for Our Common Home Advent Retreat

Thank you for taking the time to follow along this self paced Advent Retreat.

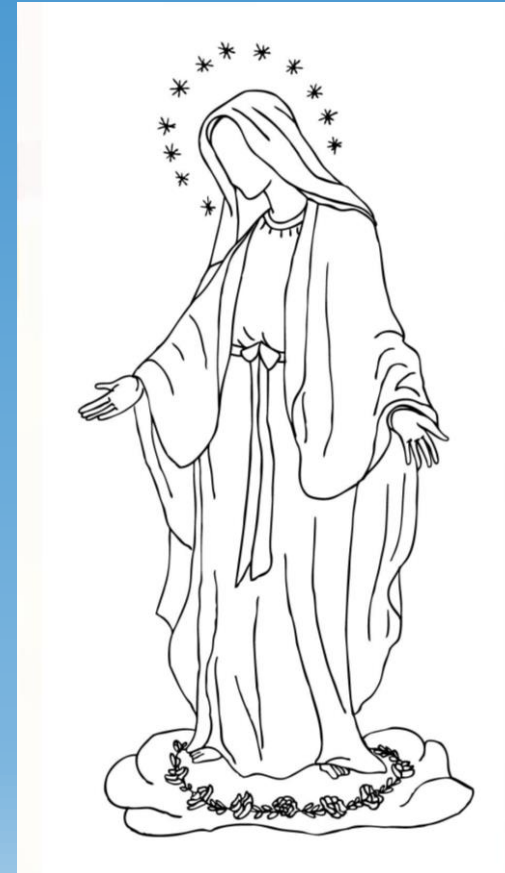
We offer it as an opportunity to step back from your daily routine and allow the Lord to renew your body, mind, soul and spirit.



Since we presented this retreat virtually on December 8, we opened the retreat with a prayer to Mary on her Feast Day.

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary

Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of our death.
Amen.



An Advent Meditation with James Finley

We begin the retreat by watching and listening to this 6 minute video

(right click on the link to open in a new tab)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POAu-09Hg2o>



An Advent Meditation with James Finley

Take a moment to recall these two points from the video:

There was no room at the inn and yet God came anyway.

*It would be so much easier if we were asked
to live a simple life in a simple world,
but, we're asked
to live a simple life in a complicated world.*

An Advent Meditation Cultivating Simplicity



Speak to the Lord about this and ask for guidance and direction in your encounters with God and others.

Consider both photos. What are the brambles, weeds, or voices clamoring for attention in your life that block your path to a simple, more authentic life?



A Tool for Living Simply

Next, we present a tool that might help identify some ways to “live more simply in a complex world.” Read the next slide and then there will be a short reflective activity.

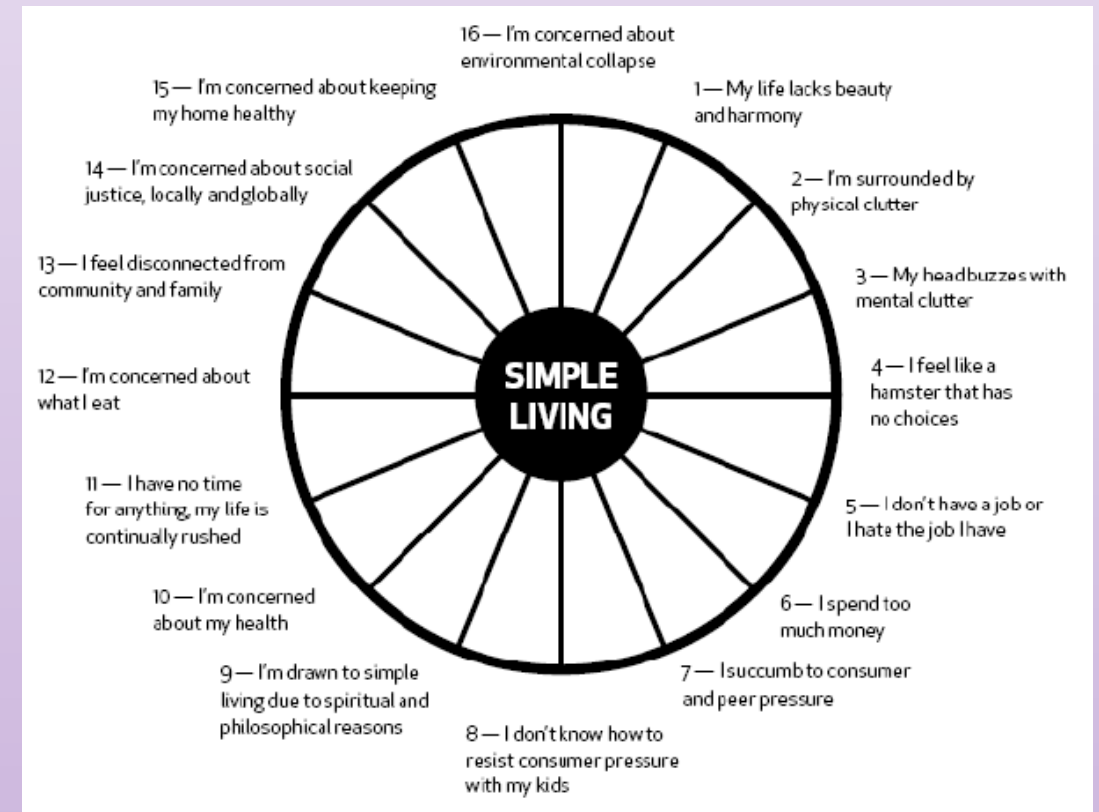


The Simple Living Wheel

“Different people are attracted to simple living for different reasons. Inspired by Duane Elgin's "The Garden of Simplicity" and based on our own experience, we've identified 16 of these reasons, which we call the Spokes of the Simple Living Wheel.

As you explore whatever spoke of the wheel first attracted you to simple living, you'll find that other spokes are interconnected with yours. In the process of simplifying one aspect of your life, it's likely that you might end up simplifying other aspects too, as well as living more sustainably on Earth.

All the paths converge at the wheel's center.”



Take your piece of paper and fold it into 4 squares.
Label them as shown.
Then proceed with directions on next slide.

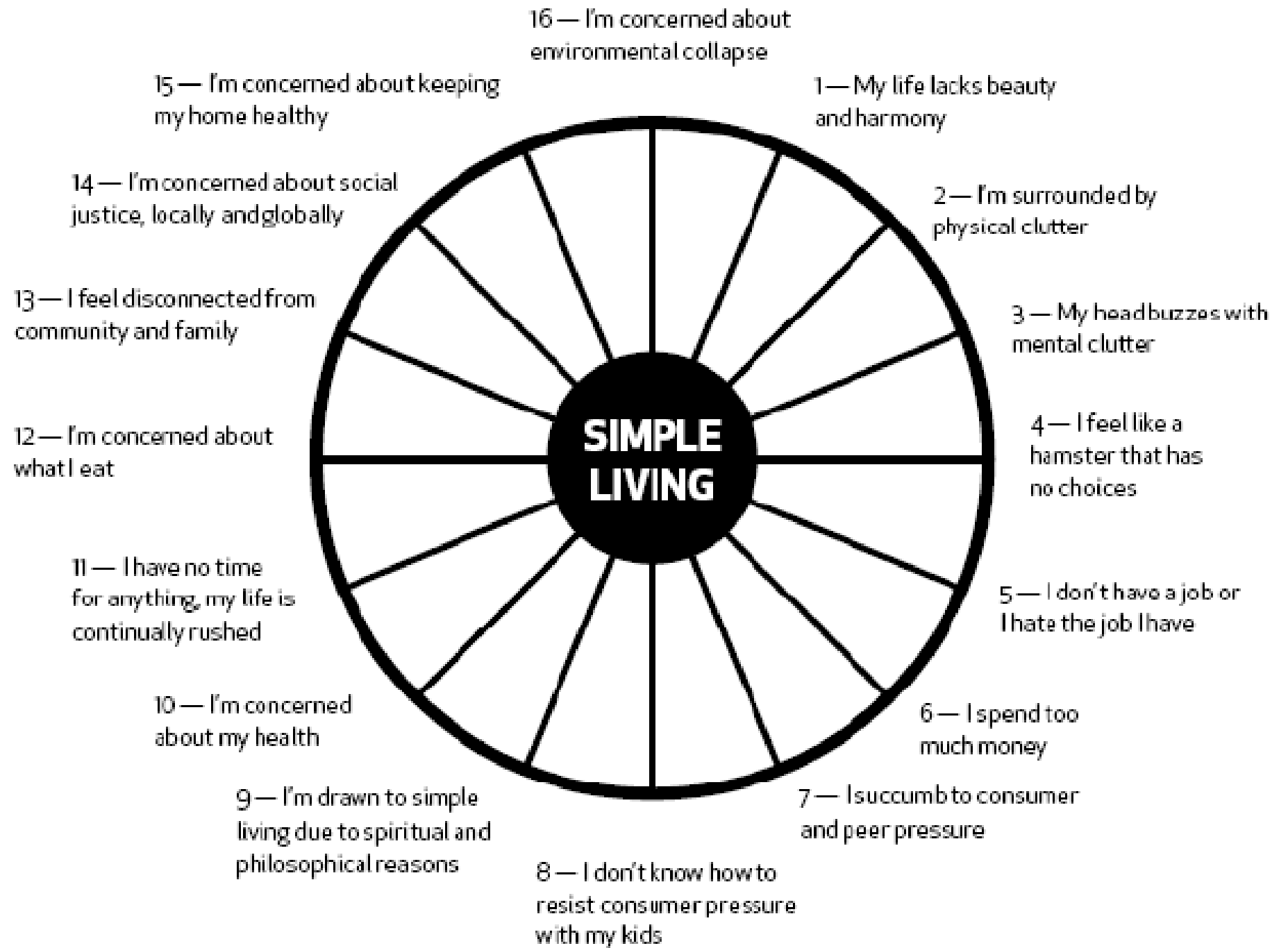
<p>1) Spokes that resonate with me (I have already simplified my life in this area.)</p>	<p>2) Spokes that do not describe me at all.</p>
<p>3) The remaining spokes (I am aware of this issue, but I haven't made any, or little, changes.)</p>	<p>4) Issues I choose to make progress in. (Specific action I will start with.)</p>

*On your paper:
Write the numbers of the
spokes that fit into Boxes
1 and 2.*

*Write the number of the
remaining spokes in Box 3.*

*Take your time to reflect
on the numbers in Box 3.
Consider which ones are
areas that you would like
to work on to enhance a
life of simplicity.*

*In Box 4, write down
specific actions that you
are willing to commit to in
order to get started on
that spoke of the wheel.*



Simplicity and the Pandemic

On the next slide are some thoughts from Pope Francis. He describes the awakening that we are called to as we consider the frantic, selfish attitude of many before the pandemic arrived. The time is ripe to move to a new normal.

Reflective questions will be offered after you read the paragraph.



ENCYCLICAL LETTER - FRATELLI TUTTI - OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS ON FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP

33. The world was relentlessly moving towards an economy that, thanks to technological progress, sought to reduce “human costs”; there were those who would have had us believe that freedom of the market was sufficient to keep everything secure. Yet the brutal and unforeseen blow of this uncontrolled pandemic forced us to recover our concern for human beings, for everyone, rather than for the benefit of a few. Today we can recognize that “we fed ourselves on dreams of splendor and grandeur, and ended up consuming distraction, insularity and solitude. We gorged ourselves on networking, and lost the taste of fraternity. We looked for quick and safe results, only to find ourselves overwhelmed by impatience and anxiety. Prisoners of a virtual reality, we lost the taste and flavor of the truly real”. The pain, uncertainty and fear, and the realization of our own limitations, brought on by the pandemic have only made it all the more urgent that we rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organization of our societies and, above all, the meaning of our existence.

Fratelli Tutti Reflective Questions

An excerpt is repeated here:

The pain, uncertainty and fear, and the realization of our own limitations, brought on by the pandemic have only made it all the more urgent that we rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organization of our societies and, above all, the meaning of our existence.



What changes in lifestyle have you been forced to make due to the pandemic?

Have any of them led you to a simpler and more authentic lifestyle?

Which lifestyle changes would you like to make permanent?

Guided Prayer

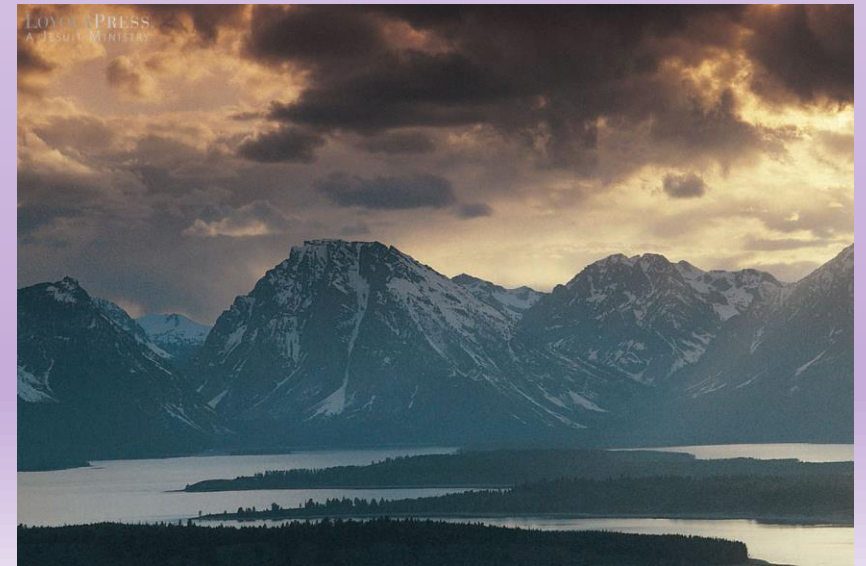
We close the retreat with a 2 minute guided prayer from Loyola Press.

When you open the link, notice the forward arrow to press in order to advance the page when you are ready. Also notice the Sound icon that can be turned on or off if you wish to hear the background music.



*Please return here for the final slide of our retreat.
(right click on the link below to open the prayer in a new tab)*

<https://www.loyolapress.com/retreats/making-room-start-retreat/>



As you leave this retreat,
Thank you for taking the time to step away
from your routine to make room for Christ
in your heart and in your life.
May these reflections linger with you
throughout Advent as you consider ways to
live more simply.
When we reduce the brambles, clutter and
noise, we can see the path of an authentic
life that allows us to do “the one thing
necessary” – encounter our generous Lord
and share his love with others.
Peace to you!





Amen



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