



(Unsplash/Mike Erskine)



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## Fourth week of Advent—Community

Day 24: Tuesday, Dec. 22

### REFLECT

As part of Simple Advent, Abundant Life, we invited young people to share how they strive to live simply on the earth as a sign of hope that restoration is possible.

Today's reflection comes from Connor O'Leary Herreras, a senior at Bishop O'Dowd High School in Oakland, California.

Right now, my life is chaotic, but when I tend to the one-by-four-foot garden bed in my backyard, I am removed from the stress of college applications, my senior year and the civil unrest our country faces. Essays, assignments and politics all dissipate as I hover my watering can above the rows of carrots and lettuce, allowing its water to saturate the soil. Since April of this year, I have harvested zucchini, peas, tomatoes and more.

There is something incredibly mellow about watching a plant's growth. A plant makes slow, relaxed movements as it stretches toward the sky. I am almost jealous: How is the natural world so effortless in its peace? How is it that simple? Then I remember — it's not. Nature's tranquility belies a profound complexity. The natural world is constantly under pressure, constantly dealing with stress. All life relies on an interconnected network of biogeochemical cycles. A plant reaches leisurely towards the sun, but it must struggle up through the soil first. Though it may not appear to be, chaos is natural.

Like most people these days, I deal with stress daily. However, gardening has taught me that by accepting the complexity in my life, I can learn to live a bit more simply.

What images of nature have revealed lessons to you in your life? What lessons about simplicity does nature share?

## ACT

If you are able, spend 10 minutes outside today observing the tranquility and complexity of nature. If you cannot go outside, watch a video or imagine a natural scene.

View the [Advent Simplicity Calendar](#) for more Advent simplicity inspiration.

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