

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

(proposal for a celebration)



“Replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing, an asceticism which “entails learning to give, and not simply to give up.” (LS 9)

Prepare a space for prayer or pray outdoors with the nature:

You may prepare the room with plants, flowers and fruits etc., each participant in the prayer will bring along an object of creation e.g. rock, flower, a blade of grass, plant, mud, leaf etc.)

Theme: I CARE FOR CREATION

INTRODUCTION

Leader: Pope Francis has established September 1, as an annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, inspired by the example of the Orthodox Churches who have observed this day for a number of years. He reminds us that: “Christians are called to “an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.” Thus, “living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”(Laudato Si, 217). As followers of Christ from around the globe, we share a common role as caretakers of God’s creation. We see that our wellbeing is interwoven with the wellbeing of Creation. We rejoice in this opportunity to care for our common home and the sisters and brothers who share it.

Let us consider the integral relationship between rest for the earth and ecological, economic, social and political ways of living. This particular year, the need for just and sustainable systems has been revealed by the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The global reach of this pandemic has revealed our shared human nature and the inter-connectivity of our economies, political structures, health care systems, food production chains, energy and transportation systems in devastating ways. The epidemic also demonstrated that the entire web is rooted in the earth and limited by the earth's capacity to sustain our economic and ecological demands. The unjust effects of climate change are a consequence of our inability to find a sustainable balance of this web.

HYMN:

OR (Canticle of the Sun by David Haas) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE_Ei6JR11o

**The heavens are telling the glory of God,
And all creation is shouting for joy!
Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field,
And sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!**

1. Praise for the sun, the bringer of day,
he carries the light of the Lord in his rays;
the moon and the stars who light up the way
unto your throne!
2. Praise for the wind that blows through the trees,
the seas' mighty storms, the gentlest breeze;
they blow where they will, they blow where they please
to please the Lord!
3. Praise for the rain that waters our fields,
and blesses our crops so all the earth yields;
from death unto life her mystery revealed
springs forth in joy!
4. Praise for the fire who gives us his light,
the warmth of the sun to brighten our night;
he dances with joy, his spirit so bright,
he sings of you!

(Optional: Psalm 65 - Thanksgiving for Earth's Bounty or Psalm 104 - God the Creator and Provider)

Leader:

The scriptures begin with God's affirmation that all of creation is "very good," and as the stewards of God's creation, we are called to protect and nurture its goodness. (Genesis 1:30, Genesis 1:28, Jeremiah 29:5-7) Our vocation to protect and nurture life relates to the sustainability of ecological, economic, social and political systems. A just balance between these aspects of life must be maintained for the health of the earth and all creatures.

The reality of the world and the Church with its lights and shadows, cries out every day through new faces, new needs and new urgencies and moves us to new scenarios of mission. The great challenge is to respond with our life and our actions whatever can be done to restore human

dignity, denouncing any abuse that threatens life, with obvious actions of justice and peace, defending life and caring for our common home. We are sent with words and deeds to bring a message of hope. (55th General chapter).

How do we as individuals, society, Church and humanity as a whole:

- Recognize God's ownership of the whole earth and our possession of it?
- Release what we have received, back to God, both spiritually and practically?
- Recognize our total dependency on God and his creation?
- Receive God's provision, in patience and trust?

How can we glorify God for the hope we have in Christ, who restores and redeems the earth?

What changes will we see for those who are poor and the land we enslave?

Silence and Reflection

Response: Change my heart O lord, make it ever new (2), May I be like you

1. Forgive us for not taking care of the dignity and the rights of so many brothers and sisters who live in conditions of extreme poverty R//.
2. Forgive us for not taking care of your creative work. R//
3. Forgive us for being indifferent to the pain of the world. R//
4. Forgive the leaders of the nations, who do not seek the welfare either of the earth, or of the whole of humanity R//.

(You may add 2 or 3 spontaneous petitions for forgiveness)

Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon by St. Francis of Assisi OR

CANTICLE OF ALL CREATURES – St. Francis of Assisi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZCGLHDeUnQ>

(While praying the canticle, the symbols can be placed in the center of the place of prayer)

Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord, All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor and all blessings.

To you alone, Most High, do they belong, and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your Name.

Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day through whom You give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor, Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, In the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, And fair and stormy, all weather's moods, by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water, So useful, humble, precious and pure.

Praised be You my Lord through Brother Fire, through whom You light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You my Lord through our Sister, Mother Earth who sustains and governs us, producing varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Praise be You my Lord through those who grant pardon for love of You and bear sickness and trial. Blessed are those who endure in peace, By You Most High, they will be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death, from whom no-one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin!

Blessed are they she finds doing Your Will. No second death can do them harm. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Mt 6: 25-34

Leader: We continue to praise, bless and ask for the gift of conversion through this video.

See video: Love song to the earth by Michelle Sherliza, OP :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAju0353w9I>

1.EARTH: The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. "The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories will do us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighborhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves" (**Laudato Si, 84**).

Leader: In silence, press your feet into the ground. Become aware of the earth beneath your feet. Marvel and be grateful for the nourishment you receive from "our mother, sister Earth." (**Silent Prayer**)

2.AIR: "The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters....The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth"(**Laudato Si 2,21**).

Leader: Become conscious of your breathing. Be grateful for the gift of air and resolve to use your voice to advocate for the purity of Earth's atmosphere. (**Silent Prayer**)

3.FIRE: Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades... "Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded" (**Laudato Si 25**)

Leader: Open and close your hands, aware that our ability to do so is fueled by the sun's energy that is captured by the plant life that we eat. Rejoice in the energy of the sun and resolve to use your energy to face climate change, one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. **(Silent Prayer)**

4.WATER: Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity, **(Laudato Si 30)**.

Leader: Breathe again deeply, taking in molecules of water that have also passed through the bodies of all breathing creatures. Be grateful for the gift of water and resolve to use it with reverence and justice. **(Silent Prayer)**

FAITH SHARING; If the group wishes, there can be a period of faith sharing on the question: How has the emphasis of Pope Francis on the care of creation made you more aware that ecological concerns are “not optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience”?

CONCLUDING PRAYER: A Christian prayer in union with creation By Pope Francis

Father, we praise you with all your creatures. They came forth from your all-powerful hand; they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love. Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus, through you all things were made. You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, you became part of this earth, and you gazed upon this world with human eyes. Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory. Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light you guide this world towards the Father's love and accompany creation as it groans in travail. You also dwell in our hearts and you inspire us to do what is good. Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen.

(Pope Francis published this prayer in his Laudato Si' encyclical, and is meant for us Christians to ask for inspiration to take up the commitment to creation set before us by the Gospel of Jesus)

LAUDATO SI ROSARY (Optional)

Note: It is recommended to pray the Chaplet outdoors and with a Rosary in your hand. Silent spots immersed in nature are ideal, but it could be prayed in an urban setting with natural elements at sight. It can be prayed in a group (e.g. in a Laudato Si Circle) or alone, and it can be combined with other prayer forms.

1. **Introductory song of praise:** Some options: 1) Laudate Omnes Gentes, 2) Laudate Dominum, 3) Hallelujah (any version), or 4) any creation-themed hymn.

(Optional) Cantic of the Creatures: pray the Cantic (online version and print version)

2. **Contemplation of Creation:** spend a minimum of 5 minutes in silence, inviting participants to listen to God's message in Creation (invite participants to notice the different creatures and natural elements that can be perceived by the different senses).
3. Laudato Si Chaplet - The Praise verses: pray the verses from the Cantic that praise God through the 4 elements, 10 times each (following the Rosary beads).

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| • Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Air. x10 | Laudato Si | Chorus |
| • Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water. x10 | Laudato Si | - |
| • Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire. x10 | Laudato Si | - |
| • Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth. x10 | Laudato Si | - |

Closing prayer: Could be an Our Father or the "Prayer for our Earth" from Laudato Si and/or one of the songs suggested above for the introduction.

