

Prayer Service for Feast of Creation September 1st and/or for use in Creation Time - Sept 1st to Oct 4th

Introduction

“LAUDATO SI’ mi’ Signore” – “Praise be to you, My Lord” is the name of the recent letter of Pope Francis that invites us to consider our shared responsibility for the world in which we live and our connectedness with all living beings and all the gifts of creation. The letter begins in this way: ‘In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you our Lord, through our sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who (produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs” (LS1)

(Member of the congregation is invited to light a candle on the altar)

Opening Hymn - All creatures of our God and King

All sing: All creatures of our God and King,

Lift up your voice with us and sing

Alleluia!, Alleluia!,

Thou burning sun with Golden beam,

Thou silver moon with softer gleam,

O praise him, O praise him,

Alleluia!, Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,

Ye clouds that sail in heaven,

O Praise him, Alleluia!

Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,

Ye lights of evening, find a voice;

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,

Make music for thy Lord to hear,

Alleluia!, Alleluia!

Thou fire so masterful and bright,

That givest us both warmth and light,

Dear mother earth; who day by day

Unfoldest blessings on our way, O praise him, Alleluia!

The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,

Let them his glory also show;

Let all things their creator bless,

And worship him in humbleness;

O Praise him, Alleluia!

Praise, praise the Father, Praise the Son,

And Praise the Spirit, Three in one;

Procession to the altar with locally grown plants, flowers, vegetables and fruit.

(A commentary or instrumental music may be used)

Words of welcome and opening prayer

Priest/leader: *(Makes sign of the cross)*

We gather today in thanksgiving for the gift of creation, and we ask for God’s help to care for our world.

Let us pray: God of all creation,
Your spirit dances throughout the earth.
You give drink to the trees,
shade for the birds,
bread for the hungry,
you bring life and make all things holy.
Flood us with your grace,

so we may sow seeds of love, justice and beauty,
and reflect your kingdom here on earth.
We ask this through Christ your Son, Jesus Christ
Amen.

Reflection

This Sister Mother Earth now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail". We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of earth. Our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters (L.S. 2)

Litany of Repentance:

Human beings have sinned against creation. Let us ask for forgiveness.

Human beings have helped to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation.

All sing or say: Kyrie eleison / Lord have mercy

Human beings have degraded the integrity of the earth by causing change in its climate.

All sing or say: Christe eleison/Christ have mercy

Human beings have stripped the earth of its natural forests and destroyed its wetlands.

All sing or say: Kyrie eleison/Lord have mercy

Human beings have contaminated the earth's waters, its land, its air and its life.

All sing: Christe eleison/Christ have mercy

(Member of the congregation is invited to light a candle on the altar)

Solo Reading

"It's 3:23 in the morning
and I'm awake
because my great great grandchildren
won't let me sleep.
my great great grandchildren
ask me in dreams
what did you do while the Planet was plundered?
what did you do when the Earth was unravelling?
surely you did something
when the seasons started failing?
as the mammals, reptiles, birds were all dying?
did you fill the streets with protest
when democracy was stolen?
what did you do
once
you
knew?..."
Excerpt from "Hieroglyphic Stairway" by Drew Dillinger

(Pause for silent reflection)

First Reading: Book of Wisdom: 11:24-26-12:1

For you love all things that exist and detest none of the things that you have made,
for you would not have made anything if you had hated it.
How would anything have endured if you had not willed it?
Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved?
You spare all things, for they are yours,
O Lord, you who love the living.
For your immortal Spirit is in all things.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Responsorial psalm:

**Response: Send forth your spirit, O Lord,
and renew the face of the earth.**

Bless the Lord, my soul!

Lord God, how great you are,
clothed in majesty and glory,
wrapped in light as in a robe! **R.**

You founded the earth on its base,
to stand firm from age to age.
You wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak:
the waters stood higher than the mountains. **R.**

You make springs gush forth in the valleys:
they flow in between the hills.
On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;
from the branches they sing their song. **R.**

From your dwelling you water the hills;
earth drinks its fill of your gift.
You make the grass grow for the cattle
and the plants to serve people's needs. **R.**

How many are your works, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.
Bless the Lord, my soul! **R.**

Gospel reading: *Matthew 13: 1-3, 31-33*

That same day, Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the shore, and he told them many things in parables.

He put another parable before them, 'The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air can come and shelter in its branches.'

Priest/Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

(Member of the congregation is invited to light a candle on the altar)

(Pause for silent reflection)

Read extract from *Laudato Si* or show a Powerpoint or DVD on the beauty of creation

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray: Creator God, the parables through which Jesus taught are full of care for creation, whether it be the shepherd seeking the lost sheep, the farmer allowing the 'weeds' and the wheat to grow together until harvest time or the mustard seed growing into a plant that will shelter the birds of the air. May we follow him in having that same care for creation today.
Lord hear us.

Creator God, you showed us how to live on this earth when you were present among us in the person of Jesus. May we live out the values he embodied, especially in his appreciation of the ordinary wonders of life: the lilies of the field, the sparrows that fall, the way the wind blows.
Lord hear us.

Creator God, inspire our Church to develop partnerships of action with others to address the pressing issues of our planet especially climate change.
Lord hear us.

Creator God, the sun, the wind and the waves are your gifts for the flourishing of the whole community of life on earth. Help us to use them creatively to produce sustainable energy for all.
Lord hear us.

Creator God, we pray for visionaries, artists and writers, that through their work we may see Creation afresh.
Lord hear us.

Creator God, we pray for the United Nations, for all international, national and local leaders and for managers of companies that they may be guided by your Spirit to make wise decisions about sources of sustainable energy for all.
Lord hear us.

Creator God, you have generously blessed us with an abundance of gifts in this, your world. Help us to share in that generosity by ensuring that your gifts will be available for the poor and for future generations.
Lord hear us.

Concluding Prayer

God of the universe,
we thank you for Your many good gifts-
For the beauty of Creation and its rich and varied fruits,
For clean water and fresh air for food and shelter, animals and plants.
Forgive us for the times we have taken the earth's resources for granted.
Transform our hearts and minds so that we would learn to care and share,
To touch the earth with gentleness and with love, respecting all living things.
We pray for all those who suffer as a result of our waste, greed and indifference.
Help us to respect the rights of all people and all species.
And help us to willingly share your gifts today and always. Amen

(Member of the congregation is invited to light a candle on the altar)

(Pause for silent reflection)

(Some alternative prayers of intercession on separate sheets)

Ritual: Bulbs or seeds are handed out to all present for planting at home and/or a planting ritual at the Church.

Solo Reading
(Denise Levertov, "Beginners")

"But we have only begun to love the earth.

We have only begun
to imagine the fullness of life.
How could we tire of hope?
-so much is in bud.

How can desire fail?
-we have only begun
to imagine justice and mercy,
only begun to envision
how it might be
to live as siblings with beast and flower,
not as oppressors.
Surely our river,
cannot already be hastening
into the sea of non being.
Surely it cannot
drag, in the silt,
all that is innocent?
Not yet, not yet -
there is too much broken
that must be mended,
too much hurt we have done to each other
that cannot yet be forgiven.
We have only begun to know
the power that is in us if we would join
our solitudes in the communion of struggle.
So much is unfolding that must complete its gesture
so much is in bud.

(Member of the congregation is invited to light a candle on the altar)

Final Blessing:

Bless us, + in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As we go forth with joy and hope to care for God's creation,

- walking gently on the earth,
- in right relationship,
- nurtured by your Love,
- taking only what we need,
- giving back to the earth in gratitude,
- honouring all with reverence,
- reconciling and healing,
- mindful of those who will come after,
and of the poor today
- recognising our proper place as part of,
not apart from, your creation.

Ignite your Spark within us,
That we may know ourselves as truly human and irrevocably part of the Web of Life (LS)

Final Hymn: O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy pow'r throughout the universe display'd.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great though art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home - what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in the humble adoration
and there proclaim, my God, how great thou art!

Russian Hymn based on the Psalm 8, Romans 5 and 1 Thessalonians 4