

SEASON OF CREATION 2024 – ‘To Hope and Act with Creation’

In 2015 Pope Francis instituted in the Catholic Church the “World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation” which starts the ecumenical Season of Creation. This takes place each year from 1 September to the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4 October. This year is very special as the 1st of September falls on a Sunday and so we would like to invite you to celebrate a Mass for Creation and, if possible, to consider running an event to enable parishioners to consider how we can be better stewards of God’s gifts to us.

In the papal message entitled “Hope and Act with Creation,” Pope Francis reminds us that “Hoping and acting with creation means first of all joining forces and walking together with all men and women of good will.” In this moment of struggle for our common home, we are united. We join together with our sisters and brothers throughout the world in common purpose. We are also called to action. Pope Francis tells us that the Holy Spirit “keeps the believing community alert and continually instructs them, calls them to conversion in lifestyles, to resist human degradation of the environment. “Believing in a better future means taking action to bring it to life. We respond to Pope Francis’ message with hope, prayer, and action.

Firstly, we would like to invite parishes to consider offering a Mass for Creation to begin the Season of Creation, this too will be the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. The Mass will use the readings from the Ordo which are for the 22nd Sunday in ordinary time, and this will be an opportunity to celebrate Sunday’s dual symbolism as both “the day of Creation” – “the first day of the week” when God began the creative act, and “the day of the Resurrection”. On the reverse of this letter I have included some homily suggestions that are based on the readings for 1st September. Also included are some intercessory prayers. In some parishes, you may wish to send out a special invitation to your partner school as our children are at the forefront of care for creation as well as among the generation most likely to be affected.

Secondly, we would like to encourage parishes to plan to take action during the Season of Creation. This could be to invite parishioners to join a picnic after the service, either in your own grounds if you have them or process to a nearby gardens to enjoy each others company in God’s beautiful surroundings. You may wish to hold a plant or seed swap or maybe invite people to help improve the landscape around the church in some way, either planting or tidying. You may like to organise a creation walk and litter pick the streets around your churches, praying for the area as you go.



Canon John Deeny
Chair of Caritas Diocese of Plymouth



Simon Giarchi
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First Reading: Deuteronomy

1. **Faithfulness to God's Commandments:** Living in good relationship with God's creation is an important element of obeying God's laws.
2. **Gratitude for God's presence:** Reflect on the nearness of God and the blessings of His creation, calling us to stewardship.

Second Reading: James

1. **God as the Source of All Good:** Acknowledge God as the creator of every good and perfect gift, including the natural world.
2. **Call to Action:** The importance of being **doers** of the word, not merely hearers, which includes caring for creation **in action**.
3. **Pure Religion:** Pure and faultless religion as caring for the vulnerable and keeping oneself unpolluted by the world, which can extend to environmental stewardship.

Gospel: Mark

1. **Invites self-examination:** Jesus teaches that what defiles comes from within, urging us to examine our inner attitudes to our relationship with God, with others, with the world around us.
2. **Hypocrisy vs. True Devotion:** Avoiding hypocrisy. We only have one heart that loves God, our neighbour, the natural world.



Pope's prayer intention

September 2024

For the Cry of the Earth

We pray that each one of us will hear and take to heart the cry of the Earth and of the victims of natural disasters and climactic change, and that all will undertake to personally care for the world in which we live.

Pope Francis



Monthly Prayer

Good Father, the cry of the earth strikes in the Heart of your Son Jesus, and cries out to us "I want mercy and not sacrifices".

Our Common Home implores us a bold and radical change in our way of life. We need courage, and a holy indignation to commit ourselves to a cultural change that welcomes the cry of the earth and the poor.

We need the fire of your Holy Spirit to burn in our hearts, to contemplate and give thanks, to welcome and to care, so that we may all feel as one in you.

May our gestures of love and care for everyone and everything, rise up to You as a universal prayer of adoration, Of thanksgiving and forgiveness.

May our daily living reflect a temperate, and modest lifestyle that moderates how excessively greedy we tend to be with the world and each other.

May we embrace this cry for help transforming it with our decisions into a loving and consoling melody.

Amen.

Attitudes in your daily life

CARE FOR THE COMMON HOME

"Promote global solidarity in light of the fact that biodiversity is a global common good demanding a shared commitment. Give priority to people in situations of vulnerability, including those most affected by the loss of biodiversity, such as indigenous peoples, the elderly and the young." (Pope Francis)

What concrete actions do you want to carry out to take care of your environment, which is also that of your brothers and sisters and the whole of creation?

LISTENING TO THE PAIN

"Let us weep with the anguished plea of creation. Let us hear that plea and respond to it with deeds, so that we and future generations can continue to rejoice in the creation's sweet song of life and hope." (Pope Francis)

See in the pain of the environment and of your brothers and sisters the opportunity to do something for them. What is within your reach?

CARING FOR LIFE (AIR, WATER, AND LIVING BEINGS)

"Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience." (Pope Francis)

Do you express your faith and your relationship with God by caring for and protecting the nature and people he gave you?

PERSONAL COMMITMENT

"As people of faith, we feel ourselves even more responsible for acting each day in accordance with the summons to conversion. Nor is that summons simply individual." (Pope Francis)

Write a resolution that expresses your desire to care for the environment and for the people God has given you.

MOBILIZING WITH OTHERS

"The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion... This means "converting" models of consumption and production, as well as lifestyles, in a way more respectful of creation and the integral human development of all peoples, present and future." (Pope Francis)

How can you improve your consumption habits to minimize waste and reduce harm to the environment and others?



Intercessory Prayers: “To hope and act with Creation”

God of the land, the sea, the sky:

Creator of all that is seen and unseen.

Open our hearts to the rhythm of Creation in the swells of the ocean, the movements of air and wind, the breath of all living things.

Open our eyes to the fragile beauty of the biodiversity of which we are a part. Open our ears to the sounds of life around us.

Open our minds to the awareness of our deep relationship with all your Creation. Creator God:

May we hope and act with Creation.

God of Light, Life and Love:

Help us to seek and find your presence in all Creation.

Help us to understand the roots of the ecological crisis and give us the wisdom to live resiliently in harmony with your Creation.

Keep us firm in the faith that the gift of life in all its fullness is for all Creation.

Help us to maintain hope that your reign of love is manifested in our common love for you, for ourselves, and for our neighbour - both human and non-human.

Creator God:

May we hope and act with Creation.

God of truth and justice:

Fill us with your spirit of compassion so we may live and act with and in solidarity with Creation.

Guide us in paths of righteousness that help us to tread softly on the land and sail gently on the sea.

Give us wisdom and courage to recognise our role in the evil of systemic exploitation and extraction and to speak truth to power.

Give us strength of heart and arm to be agents of the ecological conversion the world so desperately needs.

Creator God:

May we hope and act with Creation.

Amen.

(Rev. James Bagwan, Pacific Conference of Churches)