

PRAY AND TAKE ACTION FOR OUR COMMON HOME



TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

The firstfruits of hope
(Rom 8:19-25)

1st September – 4th October 2024

**"... water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise"
(Archbishop Oscar Romero).**

A Resource of Reflection

These reflections are offered to the local Church – parishes, schools, sodalities, prayer groups, families and individuals as an aide to deeper reflection, sharing, and action during the Season of Creation.

*Compiled by: **Departments of Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue, Christian Formation, Laity, Family & Youth, Commission for Justice & Peace, MARFAM and Laudato Si Movement (SA).***

Opening Prayer (Laudato Si Prayer)

Triune God, Creator of all,

We praise you for your goodness, visible in all the diversity that you have created, making us a cosmic family living in a common home.

Through the Earth you created, we experience love and nourishment, home and protection.

We confess that we do not relate to the Earth as a Mothering gift from you, our Creator.

Our selfishness, greed, neglect, and abuse have caused the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, human suffering as well as the suffering of all our fellow creatures.

We confess that we have failed to listen to the groans of the Earth, the groans of all creatures, and the groans of the Spirit of hope and justice that lives within us.

May your Creator Spirit help us in our weakness, so that we may know the redeeming power of Christ and the hope found in him.

May the groans of the Spirit birth in us a willingness to serve you faithfully, so that we may hear and heal Creation, to hope and act together with her, so that the firstfruits of hope may blossom.

Loving and Creator God, we pray that you will make us sensitive to these groans and enable us to have the same compassion as that of Jesus, the redeeming Lord.

Grant us a fresh vision of our relationship with Earth, and with one another, as creatures that are made in your image.

In the name of the one who came to proclaim the good news to all Creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen.



Closing Prayer (A Prayer for our Earth)

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

(Concluding prayer of Laudato Si' by Pope Francis)

Introduction

The call to hope is very central to our Catholic spirituality. Christian hope is not superficial, it is concrete. Christian hope is rooted in God's character, promises and actions. This year's theme: **Hope and Act with Creation** has its bearing on the symbol of "*first fruits of hope*" which is inspired by St Paul; "*for the creation is subjected to frustration, not by its choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope*" (Rom 8:20).

This biblical image depicts "Mother Earth" as a mother groaning as if giving birth. St Francis of Assisi understood it this way when he referred to the Earth as our sister and our mother in his Canticum for Creatures. The times we live in demonstration, we no longer relate to the Earth as a gift from our Creator, but as a resource to be used and abused.

"*Creation groans*" (Rom 8:22) because of our selfish ambition, turning a deaf ear to the cry and resistance to change lifestyle. Together with our Sister; Mother Earth, creatures of all kinds, including humans, cry out because of our destructive ignorance and actions that cause climate crisis, biodiversity loss and human suffering, as well as Creation's suffering.

However, in this Season of Creation, as Christian and in everyone, in the spirit of *ubuntu* we are called to hope, like seeds that is imbedded in every heart, awaiting in expectation for a better world. To hope does not mean to be superficial but concrete, to "*groan*" to "*cry out*" and collective action towards new possibilities for creation. To hope calls for action in the care for the suffering. To hope is faith in what we do not see but long for, knowing tomorrow will be better because Christ is risen. To hope is non-monetary but can change the world.

Only if we work together with Creation can the "*firstfruits*" of hope begin to spring like seeds for new life. as in childbirth, we go through a period of intense pain. This pain is already experienced in many parts of the world, but new life emerges if we are willing to embrace a new attitude towards creation.

The Season of Creation is an annual Christian collective call for action, through prayer and reflection respond to the "*cry of the earth*". This year, in a beautiful way, World Day Prayer for Care for Creation is on Sunday, where families, parishes, community and ecumenical movements or groups can fulfil the dream of St Francis, the patron of ecology beloved by many Christian denomination and people in general.

St Francis dreamt of a cosmic collective family, invoked by Pope Francis to the care for creation. *I am because we are (ubuntu philosophy)* the same goes for Creation. We are nature, nature is us, we are God's hands and hope for global and cosmic justice.

Resources:

[Laudato Si' \(24 May 2015\)/Francis \(vatican.va\)](#), [Laudato Deum \(4 October\)/Francis \(Vatican.va\)](#) and [Amoris Laetitia \(16 March 2026\)/Francis \(Vatican.va\)](#).

www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resources/laudato-si;

www.laudatosi.org/laudato-si/laudato-si-movement

[Summary of Planning Guide \(laudatosiactionplatform.org\)](http://Summary of Planning Guide (laudatosiactionplatform.org))

<https://laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book/>

<https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>

www.marfam.org.za **THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY**



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CREATION Sunday, 1st September 2024

Topic: Abide by the Commandments, be the first fruits of hope for creation.

HYMN (Related to the Care of creation)

Begin with an opening hymn, the opening prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures.

OPENING PRAYER: (Laudato Si Prayer)

SUNDAY READINGS: Duet 4: 1-2, 6-8; Jas 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27; Mk 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23.

St James invites us to consider doing what God has instructed, “*Be doers of the word*”. The word he is referring to is the word of truth; Jesus Christ, who through his grace has made us a kind of ‘first fruits’ of his creatures. This calls for conversion to how we treat each other and creation. Our Christian journey is a pilgrimage of hope for something better in life. This hope for better things lies in the keeping of God’s commandments, not in choosing what we prefer or think it best suit us. Jesus challenges the attitude of the Pharisee, who know observe the letter of the law but ignored the spirit of the law. “*It is from within, out of the man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder foolishness.*” Moses admonishes the house of Israel to keep the commandments, be wise and not foolish.

REFLECTION FROM LAUDATO SI (LS)

LS 4. In 1971, eight years after *Pacem in Terris*, St Pope Paul VI referred to the ecological concern as “*a tragic consequence*” of unchecked human activity: “*Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation*” an “*ecological catastrophe under the effective explosion of industrial civilization*” and stressed “*the urgent need for a radical change in the conduct of humanity.*”

LS 5. Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in “*lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies*” “*and take into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in an ordered system*”.

LS 213. “*The family is the place in which life – the gift of God – can be properly welcomed. It is the heart of the culture of life. We first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures.*”

AL 277 “*The family is the principal agent of an integral ecology. It contains the two fundamental principles of human civilization on earth, the principle of communion and of fruitfulness.*”

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR JUSTICE FOR CREATION: ADVOCACY

- ✚ Join other Christian denominations, religious and community groups’ campaign on awareness, advocacy for environment.
- ✚ Rosary for Creation and other prayers AS COMMUNITY, FAMILY, AND GROUP (link below)
- ✚ How about organizing and set up for open-air Mass in Creation (i.e. Sunrise Mass)?
- ✚ How can I (we) be of good influence in small ways to change lifestyles?
- ✚ What can I (we) do this week in line with the above reflection?
- ✚ Promote Becoming Eco-Friendly Families in action, visit: <https://laudatosimovement.org/pray>

SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS:

Allow time for those who wish to make a petition in prayer on behalf of the group.

Our Father.... Hail Mary...Glory be....

CLOSING PRAYER: (A Prayer for our earth).



Second Week of the Season of Creation
Sunday, 8th September 2024

Topic: Like Seeds of Hope!

HYMN (Related to the Care of creation)

Begin with an opening hymn, the opening prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures.

OPENING PRAYER: (Laudato Si Prayer)

SUNDAY READINGS: Isa 35: 4-7, Jas 2:1-5, Mk 7: 31-37.

A time of awakening. It is either now or never. Looking around in the world, there is this silent groaning over lost values toward other human beings and creation. The rise in crime and killing, poverty and unemployment, is somewhat a cry of something that is hidden in the very core of every human person. All the reading calls for a change of attitude... the blind and poor used as indicator of hope in life, for in their situation that rely and trust on others, yet beyond the visible their faith goes much deeper. It is their trust in God that keeps them content. Amazing Jesus came to make the deaf hear, the mute speak and to open the eyes of the blind. Isaiah draws our attention to the hope that lies in store, if we are willing to change, in completing the words of the Gospel... "for waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert." That is hope for all of us and creation.

REFLECTION FROM LAUDATO SI (LS) AND LAUDATE DEUM (LD)

LS 25...*there is widespread indifference to ...suffering, which is even now taking place throughout the world. 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, women children, and creations.*

LS 20 ...*Some forms of pollution are part of people's daily experience. Exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a broad spectrum of health hazards, especially for the poor, and causes millions of premature deaths.*

LD 58.... *Once and for all, let us put an end to the irresponsible derision that would present this issue as something purely ecological, "green", romantic, frequently subject to ridicule by economic interests. Let us finally admit that it is a human and social problem on any number of levels. For this reason, it calls for involvement on the part of all.*

AL 157. *Should man aspire to be pure spirit and to reject the flesh as pertaining to his animal nature alone, then spirit and body would both lose their dignity. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift.*

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR JUSTICE FOR CREATION: ADVOCACY

- ✚ Approach any group of concerned citizens and work on services that transform our neighborhood.
- ✚ What can I (we) do this week to be that light and that righteous person?
- ✚ Have you considered to measure your activities against the [Laudato Si Action Platform](#) **and the various sectors**

SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS:

Allow time for those who wish to make a petition in prayer on behalf of the group.

Our Father.... Hail Mary...Glory be.....

CLOSING PRAYER: (A Prayer for our Earth).



**Third Week of the Season of Creation
Sunday, 15th September 2024**

Hope paves way for new possibilities!

HYMN (Related to the Care of creation)

Begin with an opening hymn, the opening prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures.

OPENING PRAYER: (Laudato Si Prayer)

SUNDAY READINGS: Isa 50: 5-9, Jas 2:14-18, Mk 8: 27-35.

It is quite striking that Jesus takes his disciples to the region of Caesarea Philippi to ask them the question about his identity. It is a moment of declaring their faith in their Master. St James brings in the debate on faith and works. Isaiah, in facing of opposition, he suggests a certain disposure required from a disciple. Pope Francis rigorously calls for ecological conversion. We need to face ourselves in terms of faith in God as Creator and check whether we are missing and messing up with creation. We can only stand with Jesus if we are in good relationship with the whole creation. Any disposure opposite is declaration oneself guilt, submitting to Satan as it were, and not worth a Christian. A good disciple has sharpened an ear and is not rebellious (Isa 50:5).

REFLECTION FROM LAUDATO SI (LS) AND LAUDATE DEUM (LD)

LD 61 *“I cannot fail in this regard to remind the Catholic faithful of the motivations born of their faith. I encourage my brothers and sisters of other religions to do the same, since we know that authentic faith not only gives strength to the human heart, but also transforms life, transfigures our goals, and sheds light on our relationship to others and with creation as a whole.”*

LD 63 *“Let us stop thinking, then, of human beings as autonomous, omnipotent and limitless, and begin to think of ourselves differently, in a humbler but more fruitful way.”*

LS 14 *“As the bishops of Southern Africa have stated: “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation”.*

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR JUSTICE FOR CREATION: ADVOCACY

- ✚ Collect plastic bottle, bottle tops (seed that can never germinate) and drop at the recycling spot.
- ✚ Prepare a spot in your FAMILY OR PARISH yard to start a vegetable garden.
- ✚ Promote the practice of recycling and regenerative agriculture.
- ✚ What can I (we) do this week in line with the above sharing?
- ✚ Have you considered to measure your activities against the [Laudato Si Action Platform](#)

SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS:

Allow time for those who wish to make a petition in prayer on behalf of the group.

Our Father.... Hail Mary...Glory be....

CLOSING PRAYER: (A Prayer for our Earth).



Fourth Week of the Season of Creation
Sunday, 22nd September 2024

Topic: Indifference breeds destruction!

HYMN (Related to the Care of creation)

Begin with an opening hymn, the opening prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures.

OPENING PRAYER: (Laudato Si Prayer)

SUNDAY READINGS: Wis 2: 12, 17-20, Jas 3: 16-4:3, Mk 9: 30-37.

Jesus warns his disciples about the fateful demise that lies ahead in the mission of preaching the “*Kingdom of My Father*”. But sounded a strange phenomenon to the Jews when he referred to Himself as the Son of the God, thus also posing treat to the Romans. Absurd, his closest friends pay no attention to the posed risk, yet are carried on with personal benefits in the newfound movement. Quite parallel, Wisdom writer introduces the plot of the evil ones who seek to destroy the righteous one. This allegorically refers to Christ’s passion and death. Who is brought to the spot in this? St James suggests, it is those who know what is right, but refuse to act accordingly, those who harbor their selfishness, jealousy and vile practices, which eventual leads to wars.

REFLECTION FROM LAUDATO SI (LS) AND LAUDATE DEUM (LD)

LS 14 “*Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation, or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity.*”

LS 18 “*...change is something desirable, yet it becomes a source of anxiety when it causes harm to the world and to the quality of life of much humanity.*”

LD 71 “*Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture.... Let us realize, then, that even though this does not immediately produce a notable effect from the quantitative standpoint, we are helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society.*”

LS 6. *Pope Benedict observed that the world cannot be analysed by isolating only one of its aspects. The book of nature is one and indivisible, and includes the environment, life, sexuality, the family, social relations and so forth. The deterioration of nature is closely connected to the culture which shapes human coexistence.*

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR JUSTICE FOR CREATION: ADVOCACY

- ✚ Whose responsibility is to change the status quo?
- ✚ Start at home, in the family to change lifestyle and habits of indifference to resources.
- ✚ Adopt new approaches, do not waste water.
- ✚ Propose actions that promote the care for creation, advocacy for clean neighborhood (set a date for community cleaning)
- ✚ Organize a community clean up
- ✚ What can I (we) do this week in line with the above sharing?

SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS:

Allow time for those who wish to make a petition in prayer on behalf of the group.

Our Father.... Hail Mary...Glory be....

CLOSING PRAYER: (A Prayer for our Earth).



**Fifth Week of the Season of Creation
Sunday, 29th September 2024**

Topic: True wealth is in building new strategies and policies for life!

HYMN (Related to the Care of Creation)

Begin with an opening hymn, the opening prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures.

OPENING PRAYER: (Laudato Si Prayer)

SUNDAY READINGS: Num 11: 25-29, Jas 5: 1-6, Mk 9: 38-45, 47-48.

A quite moving reflection on how Jesus responds to John, forbidding the one considered not on their list; “*For he that is not against us, is for us*” (Mk 9:40). Soon after, Jesus brings forth a warning on causing the “*little ones to sin*” and the judgment deserving such an act. He also proposes that the most desired change will be the attitude the person has to life. In a similar fashion, Moses rebukes his Joshua for the gift of prophesy given to Eldad and Medad. In response, Moses says; “*Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them*” (Num 11:29). St James chastises those seeking after riches while not considerate to labourers who strain hard mowing the fields.

I recall walking into Woolworths and seeing how pricey the products, thinking about the poor who toil the day working on the fields but cannot afford any of the harvest produced by their sweat and brow!

REFLECTION FROM LAUDATO SI (LS) AND LAUDATE DEUM (LD)

LS 52 “*...the most one can expect is superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern for the environment, whereas any genuine attempt by groups within society to introduce change is viewed as a nuisance based on romantic illusions or an obstacle to be circumvented.*”

LD 60 “*May those taking part in the Conference be strategists capable of considering the common good and the future of their children, more than the short-term interests of certain countries or businesses. In this way, may they demonstrate the nobility of politics and not its shame. To the powerful, I can only repeat this question: ‘What would induce anyone, at this stage, to hold on to power, only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so?’*”

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR JUSTICE FOR CREATION: ADVOCACY

- ✚ Consider adopting an attitude of appreciation and gratitude.
- ✚ Think about “the cry of the poor” and the cry of the earth” caused by your behavior and attitude.
- ✚ Promote the actions of helping initiative and policies that care for the poor.
- ✚ What can I (we) do this week in line with the above sharing?

SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS:

Allow time for those who wish to make a petition in prayer on behalf of the group.

Our Father.... Hail Mary...Glory be

CLOSING PRAYER: (A Prayer for our Earth).



FEAST OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
Final Day of the Season of Creation
Friday, 4th October 2024

Hope call us to acclaim: “Praise God in all his creatures!”

HYMN (Related to the Care of creation)

Begin with an opening hymn, the opening prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures.

OPENING PRAYER: (Laudato Si Prayer)

MEMORIAL READINGS: Gal 6: 14-18, Mt 11: 25-30.

In the face of a seem un-effective message of Laudato Si and Laudate Deum, the message of Pope Francis, like the words of St Paul calls for a serious reflection on the state of our planet. After the example of the friar of Assisi, our Christian obligation is to see the redemptive marks of Christ’ crucifixion not as a scorn, but as a reconciliation of all creation is the “*firstfruit*” and “*hope for creation*”. This is where the concept of “new creation” applies to everyone and everything. Therefore, we must walk by the new rule of reconciliation, “*acting and walking in hope with creation*” – living gracefully with all creation. Jesus invites us to shoulder his yoke, which is indicative of the stigmata for the sake of the reconciliation preached by St Francis. He left us an example to imitate; “a life of total connection and peace with all God’s creation. This is the state to which we are all called.

REFLECTION FROM LAUDATO SI (LS) AND LAUDATE DEUM (LD)

LD 69 “*I ask everyone to accompany this pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home and to help make it more beautiful, because that commitment has to do with our personal dignity and highest values.*”

LS 243 “*Even now, we are journeying towards the sabbath of eternity, the new Jerusalem, towards our common home in heaven. Jesus says; “I make all things new” (Rev 21:5).*

LS 245 “*In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitely to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!”*

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR JUSTICE FOR CREATION: ADVOCACY

- ✚ Reflect on what aspect of St Francis Canticle touches and inspires you the most.
- ✚ Consider adopting an attitude of praise for God’s creation.
- ✚ Think about “the cry of the poor” and the cry of the earth” caused by your behavior and attitude.
- ✚ Blessing of animals <https://laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book/>
- ✚ What can I (we) do this week in line with the above sharing?

SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS:

Allow time for those who wish to make a petition in prayer on behalf of the group.

Our Father.... Hail Mary...Glory be

CLOSING PRAYER:

God of Love, creator of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

You are a family, a community of love, the model and inspiration for the human family. To us you have given dominion over your creation with the task of caring for all species, plant, animal and human.

We praise and thank you and pledge our care.

Amen.

