



A Week-Day Prayer Service for the Season of Creation “Cultivating Hope”

Introduction The prayer service can be used on September 1st - World Day of Prayer for Creation - in an ecumenical setting, or as a general resource for use between 1st September and 4th October, feast of St. Francis of Assisi. It is prepared for a formal church setting or for use out-of-doors. You may wish to shorten it or why not do your own with readings and prayers of your choice.

Leader: Welcome to the Season of Creation, that time set aside by Pope Francis for all of us to reflect on our place within the story of creation and to accept our individual and collective responsibility to care for creation. Our commitment to the care of our common home is not something optional or a kind of add-on to our faith; instead as Pope Francis continually reminds us, the care of creation is central to our Christian faith. One of the striking features of the Covid 19 pandemic crisis is the way people turned to nature. Many spent more time in their gardens, getting in touch with the life, beauty and complexity of nature. Some found themselves within the spiritual shelter of nature communing with the Creator of it all.

Opening Hymn For the Beauty of the Earth (© John Rutter)

For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth, over and around us lies,
Over and around us lies

Lord of all, to Thee we raise this our joyful hymn of praise

For the beauty of each hour, of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower;
Sun and moon and stars of light, sun and moon and stars of light

Lord of all, to thee we raise this our joyful hymn of praise

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above;
For all gentle thoughts and mild, for all gentle thoughts and mild

Lord of all, to Thee we raise this our joyful hymn of praise

For each perfect gift of thine, unto us so freely given,
Graces human and divine, flow'rs of earth and buds of heav'n
Flow'rs of earth and buds of heav'n

Lord of all, to Thee we raise this our joyful hymn of praise

Procession to the altar with *Irish grown fruit, vegetables, flowers/foliage and a sheaf of corn if available. Suitable background music or a commentary may be used (alternatively they may be placed at the altar in advance)*

Opening Prayer:

O Creator God,

open our eyes and our hearts to the wonders of your presence among us.

May we see the signs of your beauty within and about us and ever be in awe of the simple gifts of life.

Help us to reach beyond ourselves and to give thanks for all of your creation that share this universe with us; people of every nation, animals of every species, all forms of vegetation, the planets, stars, and all the elements.

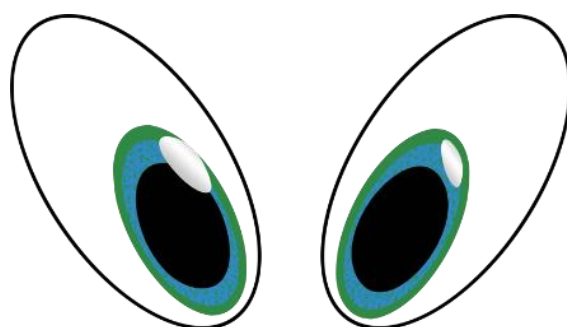
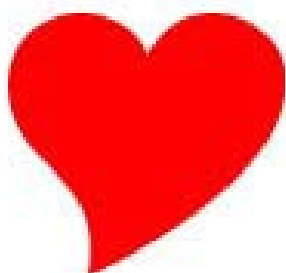
We pray this in union with the incarnate Word of God in whose image all was created. Amen.

Litany of Repentance

(say or sing responses)

- **Leader:** We confess that the way we live today is changing the climate of our earth, polluting oceans, rivers and lakes with plastics and destroying the purity of the air we breathe.
Lord have mercy or Kyrie eleison
- We confess, O God, that while we eat good food daily, many of your children go to bed hungry. Forgive us for our lack of awareness, our lack of compassion.
Christ have mercy or Christe eleison
- We confess the loss of biodiversity irreplaceable and irretrievable, and no longer giving glory to God by its very existence, nor available for the functioning of the earth, human wellbeing, and future generations.
Lord have mercy or Kyrie eleison
- We confess to the times when we failed to appreciate the environmental costs of our food and drink and our lack of support for local food producers.
Christ have mercy or Christe eleison
- We confess our inadequate ways of dealing with the world's water. Free us from our misuse and waste of this precious gift.
Lord have mercy or Kyrie eleison

Meditative Chant: *Oscail Mo Chroí/Open my Heart* (Deirdre Ni Chinnéide)
Open My Eyes (Jesse Manibusan)



A reading from the Book of Job (12: 7-10)

'But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
Or the birds of the air, and they will tell you.
Or speak to the earth and it will teach you.
Or let the fish of the sea inform you.
Which of all these does not know
That the hand of the Lord has done this?
In God's hand is the life of every creature
And the breath of all humankind

Responsorial Psalm

Taizé Chant:

Laudate omnes gentes

Laudate Dominum

Praise the Lord, all you nations

Gospel (Mark 16:15)

And he said to them, Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation.
The Gospel of the Lord.
(short pause)

Meditation with Meister Eckhart

Apprehend God in all things

for God is in all things

Every single creature is full of God

and is a book about God

Every creature is a word of God.

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature –

even a caterpillar - I would never have to prepare a sermon

So full of God is every creature.



Prayer of the Faithful

Use some or all of these prayers as needed in your situation or compose your own.

1. We pray for Pope Francis and all leaders in Church and State as they strive to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor at home and in the global south.

Leader. O God, hear us we pray **All: Give us your love for the whole creation**

2. Your plundered earth with its varieties of endangered species is crying out for healing.

Help us to be instruments of that healing in our own local area. **Response**

3. 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.

Response

4. We pray for environmentalists, recyclers, farmers, gardeners and those who fish. May they be supported in their sustainable efforts to preserve the earth for future generations.

Response

5. We pray for visionaries, artists, musicians and writers that through their work we may see creation afresh. **Response**

6. We thank God for all the people in our parishes and schools throughout the country who are developing pollinator-friendly biodiversity gardens, wild flower meadows, and the planting of trees. May their efforts be abundantly blessed. **Response**

7. The earth you have created O God, has evolved to produce enough food for all humanity. Yet many of your children are hungry or even starving. Help us to appreciate simple, locally-produced food once more, so that people in other countries are not denied land to grow food and flowers for us. **Response**

8. May people, creatures and all that lives and grows have the water they need to flourish. Help us to solve the problems of safe drinking water, drought, flooding, sanitation and disease. **Response**

9. We thank God for being with us each day. Guide scientists in their efforts to find a lasting cure vaccine for the coronavirus. **Response**

10. Give eternal rest to the women and men around the world who have been murdered for their work in caring for our common home. **Response.**

Leader: Let us pray, most provident God, you graciously give us all good gifts. Teach us to care for our earth; to till the soil responsibly, to keep our air pure, to free our waters from pollution, to harvest the warmth of the sun, to respect the rights of all species. May we willingly share the gifts of your goodness with all. We ask this God of the universe, through Christ, your Son. Amen



Reflection: Beginners (© Denise Levertov)

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

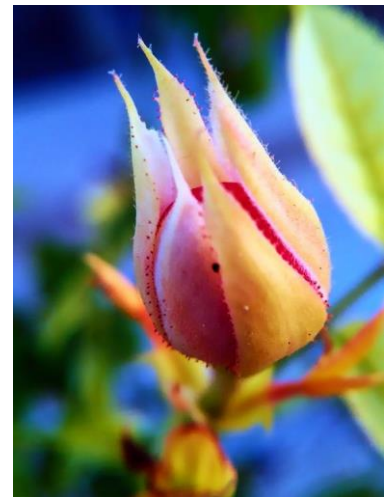
How it might be
To live as siblings with beast and flower
not as oppressors.

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.



Ritual – Cultivating Hope

Note: When bulb planting – use **peat free compost only** if possible.

- Plant some of the following *pollinator-friendly bulbs*: crocuses, snowdrops, grape hyacinths, aliums.
- (Information note: Trees and bushes suitable for planting in autumn, elder, rowan, pussy willow, blackthorn and whitethorn).

During the planting of the bulbs the following statements are read by solo voices with microphone. After each statement pause and light a candle on the altar.

- “Hope would have us recognise there is always a way out (LS. 61)
Pause and light a candle.
- “All it takes is one good person to restore hope” (LS. 71)
Pause and light a candle.
- “A hopeful person says it’s possible to make a difference” (© Dr. Rowan Williams as Master of the Magdalene College, Cambridge 2013)
Pause and light a candle.
- “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has” (© Margaret Meade).
Pause and light a candle.
- "My heart is moved by all that I cannot save,
So much has been destroyed.
I have to cast my lot with those
Who, age after age, perversely
With no extraordinary power
Reconstitute the world." (© Adrienne Rich)
Pause and light a candle.
- “The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God” (LS. 83)
Pause and light a candle.
- We come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast” (LS. 244)
Pause and light a candle.
- “Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope” (LS. 244)



Pause and light a candle.

Our Father....

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.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: 'How great thou art (© Boburg/Hine)

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 thou 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:



Refrain: *Then sings*

As the congregation leaves the church each person receives one of the pollinator–friendly bulbs named above for planting at home. This giving can be accompanied by the following:

Ag Críost an Síol (Seán Ó Riada)

Laudate Dominum (Taizé) (Praise the Lord all ye nations)

