

July 15th, 2024



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What is the Season of Creation?

Pope Francis calls for a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

The Season of Creation is an ecumenical month-long moment of prayerful reflection and celebration which began several years ago and calls us to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together. During this Season we join together as sisters and brothers of a universal family in prayer and action to renew our appreciation, our commitment, and our care and activities to protect and bring new life to Mother Earth, our Common Home, as we thank our loving God for the beautiful gift of all creation.

The theme for this Season of Creation is “To Hope and Act with Creation” and it is also the theme designated by Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer of Creation which takes place on September 1st, the

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first day of the annual Season of Creation, which will end on October 4th, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. Francis is the Patron Saint of ecology and is beloved by many Christian and other denominations. Pope Francis in the statement *Laudato Si* calls Mother Earth, our Common Home, that we will pass on to the next generations. Pope Francis' World Day of Prayer focuses on thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father for the beautiful gift of all of creation, and asking God's continuing blessings on this wonderful gift.

The *Laudato Si* Movement points out that in accord with this year's theme of Hope, the symbol is the first fruits of hope inspired by (Rom 8;19-25) which is to produce new life. The biblical image pictures the Earth as a mother groaning as in childbirth (Rom 8;22). Saint Francis understood this when he referred often to the Earth as our sister and our mother in his *Canticle of Creatures*. In so many ways the present moment we live sadly shows that we are not fully relating to the Earth as a gift from our Creator but most often as a

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resource to be used selfishly and not to protect, to enrich, and renew this wonderful gift. “Creation is groaning” (Rom 8;22) because of our selfishness and our unsustainable actions that harm her.

The Laudato Si Movement tells us that the Season of Creation is an annual remembrance of Christians and many other denominations to pray, listen, and respond together to the Cry of Creation. In this Season the ecumenical family around the world unites to listen and to show more care of our Common Home. Mother Earth, with creatures of all kinds including humans, cry out because of our destructive actions causing Climate Crisis, loss of biodiversity, and human suffering in so many ways. But the Season of Creation calls us, guided by the Holy Spirit, to change our negative manner of acting and teaches us that hope is present in the waiting and working together for the expectation of a better future. (Rom 8;20-21). To hope in a biblical sense does not mean standing still and

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quiet, but rather together in prayer, groaning, crying, and actively striving and working for new life amid the failures and struggles. Creation and all of us are called to worship our Creator, working together for a future of active hope expressed in our care and action. When we as a world-wide family work together with Creation, the first fruits will be born.

What can we do to show our respect for all of Creation, and work together to renew the face of Mother Earth. Catholic Climate Covenant proposes a practical, pastoral, and spiritual way for each one individually, as a family, or as a community or parish to participate in the Season of Creation. Individuals and communities are invited to participate through prayer, sustainability projects, and advocacy.

- Prayer. Host an ecumenical prayer gathering that unites all Christians for the Care of our Common Home. One option is to host an interactive Feast of Saint Francis program.

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- Sustainability: lead a clean-up or carbon reduction project that helps all of Creation thrive, such as improving energy efficiency.
- Advocacy; raise our voices in civic, church, political, and social forums for climate justice by participating in or leading an ongoing campaign that supports our Common Home.

Catholic Climate Covenant also mentions that some diocese and parishes are celebrating the Season of Creation with a special mass – a “Mass for Creation” sometimes called a “Green Mass”. The Mass for Creation is chosen to bring to light the important theme of Catholic Social Teaching around issues of stewardship, through the lens of integral ecology; care for creatures, care for the earth and its climate, care for water, and care for each other.

Our Catholic faith, led by the example of the teaching, and action of Pope Francis, stresses

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that the church following the teaching of Jesus exhorts believers to work for the common good. This calls for respect for the dignity of life in all its forms on our Common Home, especially for human life from its sacred beginning until its natural end as determined by God. This care for our Common Home should commit us to the construction of more just, supportive, fraternal, and peaceful societies. Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato Si* “Everyone’s talents and involvements are needed to address the damage of human abuse of God’s creation. All people can ecumenically cooperate as instruments of God for the care of Creation according to his or her culture, religious background, political system, experience, involvements, and talents.”

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In conclusion, I share a couple of lines from the Pledge of Commitment to protect and heal God’s creation: “We have come to renew our covenant with God and with one another with Christ Jesus our Lord. We have come to help protect God’s creation. We have come as followers of Jesus to commit ourselves anew to one another and to heal injustice and poverty. We will remember always that God speaks to us through the beauty of his creation, and we will try our best to answer God’s call to reverence all that He has created.”