



**SEASON OF
CREATION**



PRAYER GUIDE

SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY

PRAYER GUIDE

This spiritual tool offers useful materials to local Season of Creation organizing committees wishing to inspire their faith community members to join together in prayer for the well-being of the Creation God entrusts in our care.

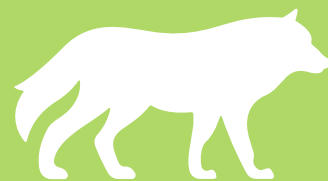


HIS COMPASSION IS OVER ALL HE HAS MADE

"The Lord is good to all and, his compassion is over all that he has made." (Ps 145:9)



SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS



**FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS OF
ASSISI**



SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS



"Today, let us bless the planet Earth. We give thanks for the beauty that is everywhere on Earth and for the diversity of people, plants, and animals that make our home a wonder-filled place to live."

SEPTEMBER 1ST WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION

Prayer for the Season of Creation 2021

Bless the Earth

God is infinite good, and God's spirit of love and life permeates everyone and everything on this marvelous planet that we call home. Today, let us bless the planet Earth. We give thanks for the beauty that is everywhere on Earth and for the diversity of people, plants, and animals that make our home a wonder-filled place to live.

Earth provides all we need for healthy, prosperous living
We increase this abundance by affirming harmony, peace and goodwill for all Earth's inhabitants.

Let us promote a healthy world!

Conditions can't help but improve as the loving spirit of God moves through each of us to bless Earth and all it contains.

(Adapted from the Daily Word Message)

Brief History

On 1 September 1989, His Holiness Dimitrios I, Patriarch of Constantinople, decreed the first day of September as a day of special reverence and prayer for the Safeguarding of Creation. The Orthodox Church continues to celebrate this important day, the start of the liturgical year, with the reading of Chapter 1 of Genesis.

Since 2008, The World Council of Churches has encouraged all Christian denominations to observe and celebrate this day. In 2015, Pope Francis announced that the Catholic Church would also mark September 1st as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. It provides an occasion for Christians from various churches around the world to gather together in prayer for the well-being of the earth, our common home.

Quote

'This is the season for letting our prayer be inspired anew by closeness to nature ... to reflect on our lifestyles ... for undertaking prophetic actions ... directing the planet towards life, not death.'" Pope Francis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbK518OcjJg&list=PLdu7tsNYIRxn-prAR60t3HeKwGCP3h1yK&index=2>

Action

Recognize and assume our Christian responsibility to care for and respect the rightful place occupied by each element of Creation in our common home.

His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople calls upon all faithful to "realize that the protection of the natural environment is the spiritual responsibility of each and every one of us."

<https://www.goarch.org/en/-/why-christians-care-for-the-environment-w-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew->

A beautiful prayer service for Sept. 1st is available in French and in English from the Franciscans at

<https://missionsfranciscains.blogspot.com/>



**RECOGNIZE AND ASSUME OUR CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY TO CARE FOR
AND RESPECT THE RIGHTFUL PLACE OCCUPIED BY EACH ELEMENT OF
CREATION IN OUR COMMON HOME.**



SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS



*These scriptures
remind us that
God makes a
home for each of
his creatures*

SEPTEMBER 5TH

Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

(Mark 7: 34-35)

PRAYER

Open our ears, O Lord, to hear the cry of all parts of your Creation and free our tongues to speak plainly of the change of heart that makes care for all the inhabitants of our common home a focus of our daily decisions and actions. Lord, hear our prayer

QUOTE

"When we fail to see the world as God's creation, we will end up abusing it. Selfishness and greed take over, and we end up not caring about the environment or the problems we are creating for future generations." Billy Graham, Evangelist

PETITION

Strengthen us O Lord as we take up and pursue our daily eco-conversion! Lord, hear our prayer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSctOJ49FRQ>

SEPTEMBER 12 TH

If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day and you say to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what good is that? So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead."

(James 2: 15-17)

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
the earth is yours and you have commanded the winds and the sea;
help us to leave behind our consumer demand for plastics and move towards behaviours that are environmentally healthy;
help us to follow your lead in caring for the world you love. Amen

Rt Revd David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham, Church of England

QUOTE

"There are numerous things we can do in our everyday lives that help protect God's creation, such as conserving energy and reducing waste. These actions enhance our witness as others see us put our faith into action. We worship God the Creator more fully as we see His glory in his creation and as we participate in His work of sustaining and restoring proper relationships within creation." (Geneva College, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America)

"If we take caring for our global neighbours seriously, we need to consider the impact of our lifestyles on them. ... Our decision to drive a big car, or to turn up the heating rather than put on a sweater will have a direct impact on someone already living on the edge. ... Of course Christians will want to do all they can to tell others the Good News of Christ. But woe betide us if in telling that Good News we don't also model it by caring for the world God has entrusted to us." (Bob (Robert) White, Professor of Geophysics in the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge)

PETITION

May we be encouraged and inspired to take action to respond to the needs of the earth, our common home, by the example of our brothers and sisters.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLL4PW4LZT8>



SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS



These scriptures remind us that that God calls us to respect to protect the place each of our fellow creatures occupies in our Common Home, the planet Earth



SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS



*These scriptures
remind us that
God calls us to be
to be prophets
whose words and
actions ignite an
eco-conversion
in our fellow
Christians*

SEPTEMBER 19 TH

*"He sat down, called the twelve and ... put a little child among them. Taking it in his arms, he said to them,
"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name
welcomes me " (Mark 9: 35-37)*

PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus. Thank you so much for all the precious children in this world. We know they mean so much to you. We pray you would help us do all we can to protect and give them the start in life they deserve. Amen. Philippa Hanna

QUOTE

"It was that magic of childhood that shaped the passion that drives me to spend my life fighting to save and protect the last wild places on the planet." Jane Goodall

PETITION

May our children help us embrace all creatures as family members who each have a place in our common home. "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."(Matt. 18:3)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI50nAPurZs>

ACTION

To become more aware of the impact our words and actions have on our children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZSt1pgjQdk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmfnnAZXV-o>



SEPTEMBER 26 TH

"Would that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!"

(Numbers 11:29)

PRAYER

Your creative love, O God, brought forth the earth. Help us to see that our indifference changes the world; our passivity begins to choke us. Call us to renewal, to stewardship. Call us to solidarity with the earth and all its creatures. Give us new spiritual energy to become active in loving the world through our daily life; give us new voices to speak out for environmental solidarity. (From a prayer by Jane Deren, Education for Justice)

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS



God calls us to follow the example of children who do not place barriers between themselves and other creatures but, like St. Francis, welcome all with open arms, like brothers and sisters

QUOTE

'The prophets of the Bible brought change when it was urgently needed, and helped people to face the reality from which they were running. The prophetic narratives offer us stories of whole communities who responded to the call to repent. People began to act in radically different ways, and the world was changed. (Song of the Prophets: A Global Theology of Climate Change, Christian Aid) <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-08/song-of-prophets-global-theology-climate-change-november-2014.pdf>

PETITION

May the Spirit of God come upon us to enlighten and to strengthen us. May we have the courage to denounce the desecration of our earth. May we speak out in defence of all our fellow creatures and the place each and every one occupies in our common home. <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/video-resources/sustainability-videos/schaefer-climate-change>

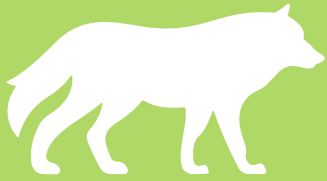
ACTION

Make it a habit to listen to, to hear, the voices of non-human nature: I argue for the theological plausibility of reading contemporary environmental concern as a response to the prophetic voices of nonhuman nature, and in that sense as a movement of the Holy Spirit. ... The main paradigmatic pneumatological narratives considered in this article are those related to prophecy, ... rereading these narratives in the contemporary environmental crisis leads to an account of how the 'voices' of nonhuman nature are heard as prophetic speech that summons response. (R. Muers, 'The Holy Spirit, the voices of nature and environmental prophecy')

FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI, OCTOBER 4



FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



***"All creatures have
the same source as
we have. ...***

***God wishes that we
should succour
them whenever
they require it."***

- St-Francis

=

Father, we praise you with all your creatures. They came forth from your all-powerful hand; they are yours, filled with your presence and tender love.

Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you.

Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made.

Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this Earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Amen (Irish Franciscan Province)

St. Francis' life began in wealth. Born to a cloth merchant in Assisi in 1181, Francis lived in luxury until war called him away from home, in 1204. It was immediately following the war that Francis received a vision; he soon lost his desire for a worldly life and returned to Assisi as a peasant. Francis' father disowned him for his choice to follow Christ, and the saint-to-be began both begging and preaching on the streets. St. Francis challenged everyone to protect nature. Legends about him paint a portrait of a man whose donkey wept upon his death; who blessed a wolf and commanded him to stop harming townspeople and their flocks; and who told his companions that he would "preach to" his "sisters the birds." During his sermon, not one bird flew away. It is said that he once removed worms from a busy road and placed them to the side so they would not be crushed under human traffic.

St. Francis spent up to half of each year praying in different places amongst nature and the wilderness, living in hermitages, caves, under lean-to's, and on mountainsides, interspersing this with preaching to animals and plants as well as to people. While ministering to the poor and sick, Francis contracted conjunctivitis and malaria. Later, approaching death, he went back to Assisi where he died on Oct. 3, 1226, at the age of 44. People reported a flock of larks swooping near and singing at the moment of his death.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-msmuDZfRs> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYH2WS3CU6A>

“All creatures have the same source as we have. Like us, they derive the life of thought, love, and will from the Creator. Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them; but to stop there is a complete misapprehension of the intentions of Providence. We have a higher mission. God wishes that we should succour them whenever they require it.”

St Francis

Although Francis left behind relatively few written documents, his Canticle of the Creatures (also known as The Canticle of Brother Sun), composed one year before he died and while he was laying ill in a small dark hut near San Damiano, sings that the entire creation is charged with the goodness of God so that, even in eternal life, creation will offer praise and glory to the Most High.



The Canticle of the Creatures

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of you; through those who endure sickness and trial. Happy those who endure in peace, for by you, Most High, they will be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those she finds doing your most holy will. The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility.

The Feast of St. Francis and the Blessing of the Animals

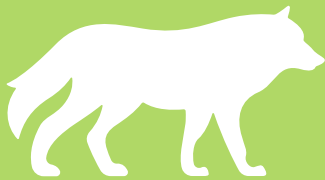
Every year on or around October 4, Christians throughout the world celebrate the Feast of St. Francis with prayers for creation and a blessing of the animals.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5LvfhYu0LE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xh6vM1O8-PM>



PRAYER SERVICE OUTLINE



See the creatures around us -- plants, birds, fish, air, water, stars, animals - as family members coming from the same source as ourselves.

May we respect their place in God's creation and take action, as Francis did, to protect them.

PRAYER SERVICE OUTLINES FOR THE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

<https://seasonofcreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/liturgy-usa-blessing-of-animals-sunday-2.pdf> <http://mastersdust.com/2013/10/03/liturgy-blessing-of-the-animals-service/>

If you are unable to gather, you may want to arrange a virtual parade of your animal friends: <https://cathedral.org/worship/online-blessing-of-the-animals/> Invite your community members to take a moment at home to pray for our animal brothers and sisters:

'Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends, the animals, your creatures. We pray especially for all that are suffering in any way: for the overworked and underfed, the hunted, lost, or hungry; for all in captivity or ill-treated, and for those that must be put to death. For those who deal with them, we ask a gentle heart of compassion, gentle hands,

and kindly words. Make us all true friends to animals and worthy followers of our merciful Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen' (US Conference of Catholic Bishops) Suggestions: Donate cat food, dog food, gently-used blankets to a local animal shelter. Mention the shelter regularly in your church bulletin, perhaps with a photo of an animal ready to be adopted.

See the creatures around us -- plants, birds, fish, air, water, stars, animals -- as family members coming from the same source as ourselves. May we respect their place in God's creation and take action, as Francis did, to protect them.

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible." Francis of Assisi

Réseau des Églises vertes Spirituality Activity

Blessing of Animals

Praying with all God's creatures on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and the environment (October 4th)

Objective
This spiritual activity brings the community together around the Word to express our thanksgiving for God's creation of the animals, our "brothers and sisters". We gather with a heart sensitive to sustaining the delicate balance of nature and ready to follow in the footsteps of Kateri Tekawitha and St. Francis of Assisi who testified to God's respect and love for birds and animals in their own lives. We will praise the Lord as our minister blesses the animals.

Duration
30 minutes

Materials

- Chairs & table;
- small pledge papers;
- poster or bulletin board;
- pencils & pens;
- pictures of animals;
- animal blessing prayer;
- prayers and/or testimonials from children, youth, adults;
- song videos;
- laptop & speakers if there is no one to play a guitar.

Lieux suggérés
Outdoors at the entry of the church or on a hill, beside a body of water or in a nearby green space to encourage the participation of neighbours.

Preparation
(Two weeks in advance)

Do some publicity:
"You are warmly invited to accompany your pets for a blessing of the animals on date, time, location! Cats, dogs, birds, turtles and snakes, we hope to see you all there!"

