



SEASON OF CREATION 2021

A HOME FOR ALL?

RENEWING THE **OIKOS** OF GOD

A CATHOLIC LITURGICAL GUIDE

THE PLACE TO BEGIN . . .

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The new story of Creation, the Universe Story, makes very clear that at almost all times and seasons, in practically every day and every prayer,

Our God is too small.

In reality, the larger context of every moment of our lives is an expanding universe of unimaginable size, power, and beauty.

In reality, the larger context of every moment of our lives is the Mystery we call God, the Creator, Who birthed this universe in a great fiery flaring forth and Who has cherished and shaped it through billions of years, up to this very evolutionary moment, this very evolutionary place.

*Awareness of this context of our
lives demands that we pause in
the deep quiet of awe.*

It is important that this is the sense of Creator God to Whom we turn, Who opens our eyes, our ears, our hearts, and to Whom we respond in awe, worship, and action during this Season of Creation.

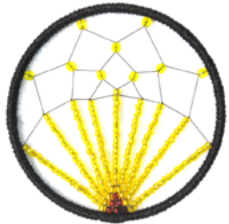
Columban Fr. Vincent Busch, serving in the Philippines for more than 45 years among the Subanens people, created the following Mandala and poem, trying to capture in a small way, in accessible images, symbols, and words from the new Universe Story, the overwhelming greatness of God and the Universe. We are grateful to Fr. Busch for permission to build upon his creative work.

These images will be reflected in the Introductory Comments and prayer suggestions for each of the Sundays of this year's Season of Creation in the materials that follow.

May they be a blessing upon our efforts to respond to the great Mystery we call God, Who cherishes us and the Universe of which we are a small part, welcoming us, in words attributed to the Creator Spirit, ...

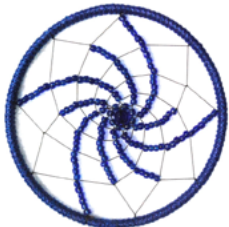
*"...to the celebration of creation's
transformation From my fire that grew to
be a wondrous blue-green symphony."*

THE CREATION MANDALA



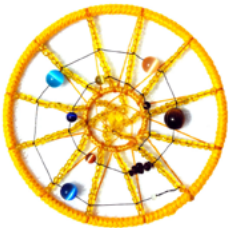
The Birth of the Universe

In the beginning the Spirit said: "From my fire and its warmth
Let all creation come flaring forth.
Let matter and energy converse
To weave the tale of the universe,
And through the course of time and space
I'll cherish all in my embrace."



The Birth of the Galaxies

Then the Spirit said: Let the fire begin to dance
In cooling clouds of elements
Where the tug of gravity
Draws atoms into galaxies,
And hugs the stars till they ignite
To fill the darkness with their light."



The Birth of the Solar System

Then the Spirit said: "Let stars blaze till
they consume
The nuclear fire in their wombs,
And bursting forth as they collapse
Sow the elements in their grasp,
And from their dust let new stars grow
With moons and planets in their tow."

The Birth of Earth

Then the Spirit said: "Along with planets
near and far
Let Earth take shape around its star.
While its crust solidifies,
Let molten rock throb inside,
Lifting the mountains, spreading the seas,
Molding and folding its geography."



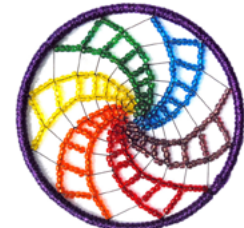
The Birth of Life

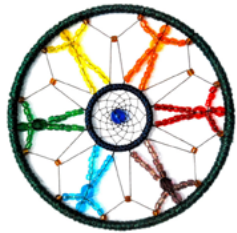
Then the Spirit said: "Let heat and lightning
stir the sea
To animate its chemistry,
And from that swirling pool of genes
Let Earth give birth to living beings,
Sprouting forth all kinds of things
With roots and legs, fins and wings."



The Birth of the Earth Community

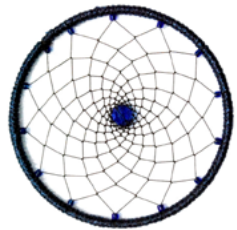
Then the Spirit said: "From desert sand to
mountain snow
Let habitats emerge and grow,
Where plants and beasts participate
In nature's rugged give and take
And every creature plays a role
In keeping Earth alive and whole."





The Birth of Humans

Then the Spirit said: "Let the fire of nature's chorus,
Its raging storms and mighty forests,
Its pounding seas and soaring peaks,
Its blazing skies and teeming reefs,
Burn human hearts with its splendor
And forge their souls in awe and wonder."



The Birth of the Ecological Age

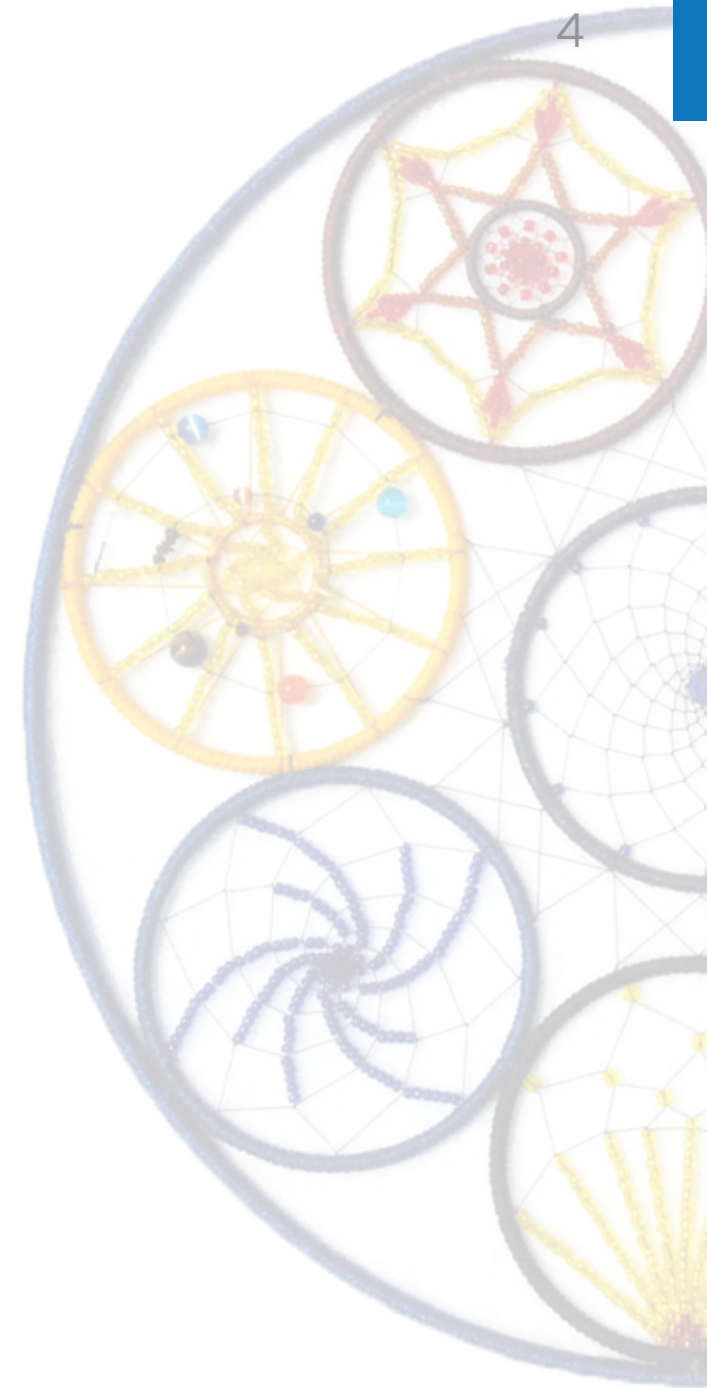
Then the Spirit said: "Let life entwine the land
and sea
In the web of its community.
Let its power move human hearts
To mend the world they've torn apart,
And sing with every leaf and stone
This is our Earth. This is our home."



The Birth of Your Story

Then the Spirit said: "The habitats that grace
the Earth
Were there to hold you at your birth
And welcome you to the celebration
Of creation's transformation
From my fire that grew to be
A wondrous blue-green symphony."

The Creation Mandala poem and artwork by:
Fr. Vincent Busch, SSC, subanencrafts.com



INTRODUCTION

This vision of the psalmist has helped to inspire and shape the theme of this year's Season of Creation. In the [2021 Celebration Guide for the Season of Creation](#), the ecumenical steering committee highlights the two faith statements at the heart of the psalm and at the heart of this year's Season of Creation. They write,

"The first is that every creature belongs to the Earth community. The second is that the entire community belongs to the Creator. A Greek word for this Earth community is *oikos*.... Our common home, the Earth belongs to God, and each beloved creature belongs to this common *oikos*."

In their discussion of the 2021 Season of Creation theme, they continue:

By rooting our theme in the concept of *oikos*, we point to the integral web of relationships that sustain the wellbeing of the Earth. The word ecology (*oikologia*) describes the relationships between animals, plants, non-sentient organisms and minerals that each play a vital role in maintaining the balance of this beloved community. Each creature is important and contributes to the health and

**"The Earth
is the Lord's
and all that
is in it."**

Ps. 24:1

resilience of the biodiverse ecosystem in which it lives. Humans belong in the right relationship within this Earth community. We are made from the same stuff of the Earth, and are cared for by our co-creatures and the land.

In reflecting on this same theme in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis taught that everything is connected in the web of creation. Every creature has value in its own right and is loved by God. Animals, plants, non-sentient creatures - everything on Earth is important in itself and is not to be looked at and considered only in its value to human beings. In the creation myths in Genesis, God is understood as having given to humans a special vocation to tend and care for Earth and all creatures within it, the household [*oikos*] of God, not to dominate and exploit them. [*Laudato Si'*, #66]

This calling is especially urgent in these our times. As Pope Francis did in *Laudato Si'*, the ecumenical steering committee highlights the destructive force of the "greed, exploitation, disrespect, disconnection and systematic degradation" of the richness of creation by the processes of development embraced by so many

in the human community over the last several hundred years.

For centuries, humans (*anthropoi*) have ordered our lives and economies according to the logic of markets rather than the limits of the Earth. This false logic exploits the *oikos* of God, and makes creation a means to economic or political ends. The current exploitation of land, plants, animals and minerals for profit results in the loss of habitats that are homes for millions of species, including humans whose homes are at risk due to climate conflict, loss and damage. Reason tells us that in this anthropocene age, ecological and social disintegration and exclusion cause the current climate crisis and accelerate ecological instability. Wisdom equips us to find the answers, and pathways to build green economies of life and just political systems that would sustain life for the planet and people.

These recent centuries have seen the rise of the sixth great mass extinction in Earth's 4.54-billion-year history, the result of the impact of human development activities on the species and their habitats. To take just one example, wildfires have exploded in number and destructiveness. They have spread to parts of the planet rarely if ever experiencing them

“The deadly heat wave that blazed through a vast stretch of North America this summer, which left hundreds of people dead and killed off as many as 1 billion sea creatures, is yet another sign of what’s to come.” *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2021

in the past. In 2020 the worst fires have been in California, Washington and Oregon in the U.S., the Brazilian Amazon rainforest, Siberia and the Arctic (over 20,000 fires on 35 million acres of permafrost), Indonesia, and Australia. The 2019-2020 wildfire season in Australia destroyed 46 million acres, killing an estimated 3 billion animals. And the 2021 heat wave in the North American west killed as many as a billion shellfish and other sea creatures.

This year’s Season of Creation theme challenges us precisely here: Earth is the home of all these creatures too. The death and destruction of so many innocents of so many species living among us from humanly-produced climate change makes them, in a very real way, martyrs to the pursuit of a mistaken and destructive vision of human development. What must we do to restore the household (*oikos*) of God to its full purpose as nurturing and protective home for all?

The Season of Creation this year comes at a critical time as the global community struggles to answer this question. From October 11th to 24th, the Committee of Parties to the United Nations Biodiversity Convention will meet in Kunming, China for what is known as **COP 15 of the UN Biodiversity Convention**. It will review and evaluate the work on biodiversity of the last decade and is expected to finalize the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, capacity building, and resource mobilization.

In his [World Environment Day Message](#) for 2021, Pope Francis calls attention to this UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. He underlines the need for a sense of urgency and for strong ten-year commitments to restore the global ecosystems that nurture biodiversity and constitute the household of God’s creation on Earth. The prayer, discussions, advocacy, and actions of this year’s Season of Creation, with its focus on all God’s vastly diverse creatures that make their home on Earth, will hopefully support and strengthen the commitments of nations at this crucial UN meeting.

In addition to this sixth great mass extinction, the extremely serious loss of biodiversity currently underway, it has become apparent that the human community is now using up more of Earth’s resources in a few months than the planet can replenish in a full year. In 1970, the first attempts were made to measure human production and consumption against Earth’s regenerative capacities. The efforts resulted in the birth of **Earth Overshoot Day**, an annual calculation of the point at which as much of Earth’s resources will have been used in that particular year as it can replenish in a full year.

In 1970, Earth Overshoot Day was determined to be December 29th. Since then, it has been occurring earlier and earlier. This year, 2021, Earth Overshoot Day was July 29th. In just under 7 months, the human community has consumed what it will take Earth a full 12 months to replenish: resources such as water, food, forest products, clean air. In the 5 months from July 29th through the end of this calendar year, the human community is consuming from the reserves built up by Earth over millennia.

This obviously cannot go on forever. Those reserves are limited. It is a death spiral.

It is clear that we must continually reaffirm the Season of Creation theme from 2020: Earth desperately needs a Jubilee year of rest and replenishment as well as dramatic changes by the human family to bring about more sustainable and just ways of living in “our common home.”

Climate change is the final dimension of the complex and integrated socio-cultural-ecological crisis assaulting the planet and all creatures for whom it is home. Earth is warming in dynamic and dangerous ways, largely from the heat-trapping processes of human fossil fuel use in the

***“Because of us,
thousands of species will
no longer give glory to God
by their very existence, nor
convey their message to us.
We have no such right.”***

(Laudato Si', #33)

industrial era. Storms and wildfires are already more violent, droughts and floods more frequent and damaging, sea levels rising and islands disappearing, and human suffering and tragedy more severe, especially among people who are poor and marginalized. They are increasingly forced to migrate in search of food, security, and other basic essentials. Tens of millions of people are now climate migrants or refugees, adding to the social pressures and unrest in so many parts of the world.

Looking forward to the United Nations global climate summit known as COP 26 in November this year, UN Secretary General António Guterres called for strong, courageous action from the leaders of the G-7 nations during their June 2021 Summit. He called the November summit “our last opportunity to defuse the climate emergency.”

Twenty twenty-one is a make-it-or-break-it year. I think we are still on time, but when you are on the verge of the abyss, you need to make sure that the next step is in the right direction.

Pope Francis gave a similarly urgent warning in his [2021 World Environment Day Message](#).

The Season of Creation is an important global effort of the ecumenical faith community to “make sure that the next step is in the right direction.”

Brief History

The Season of Creation had its beginnings in 1989 with the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s recognition of the Day of Prayer for Creation. In a few short years, it grew into a widely embraced ecumenical celebration of the Creator and the good gifts of creation. As a season of prayer and action stretching from September 1st, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, to October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, it has become a powerful way to raise awareness of the gifts of creation and the mission given us by God to care for creation and respond to its needs and crises today.

The Catholic community is relatively new to this ecumenical celebration. In 2015, Pope Francis added the World Day of Prayer for the Care of

Creation to the Catholic liturgical calendar. In 2019 and again this year, the Vatican invited Catholic communities, bishops and pastors everywhere to join ecumenical communities in celebrating the Season of Creation.

In 2020, the 5th anniversary of Pope Francis’s important encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, the Catholic community committed itself to joining the ecumenical ecological efforts to save the planet with extraordinary energy, creativity, and commitment. May 16-24 was celebrated around the Catholic world as *Laudato Si’ Week* which, in turn, launched the *Laudato Si’ Special Anniversary Year* with an ambitious global organizing and action agenda that concluded with a conference in May 2021. That conference, during *Laudato Si’ Week* 2021, set into motion the *Laudato Si’ Action Platform*. The Platform lays out goals and invites the variety of different sectors of the global Catholic community to undertake a seven-year journey of ongoing integral ecological conversion and transformational action.

Season of Creation Important Dates

1989	1991	2007	2015	2015	2016	2019	2020	2021
Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios establishes 1st Day of Prayer for Creation September 1st	Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew increases importance of the celebration	5-week Season of Creation established by the World Council of Churches	Pope Francis issues <i>Laudato Si’</i>	Pope Francis designates September 1st as a World Day of Prayer for Creation for Catholics	Pope Francis urges Catholics to join the interreligious celebration of the Season of Creation	Vatican invites all pastors and Catholic communities to join ecumenical celebrations	<i>Laudato Si’ Week</i> (May 16-24) and <i>Laudato Si’ Special Anniversary Year</i> (2020-21) launched	<i>Laudato Si’ Action Platform</i> launched

Celebration of the 2021 liturgical Season of Creation is a privileged opportunity to engage the *Laudato Si' Action Platform* in serving and forwarding the global ecumenical effort to address the ecological crises facing Earth at this time and to restore reverent respect and care for the sacredness of creation.

Since the Catholic community is new to the global ecumenical Season of Creation celebrations, it does not yet have seasonal liturgical texts proper to it. The materials in this booklet have been prepared under the auspices of LISTEN: *Laudato Si'* International Scholars Tertiary Education Network and in partnership with the Ecology Sector of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development to help Catholic communities read and pray with the scriptures for the Sundays in Ordinary Time during this period through the lens of the Season of Creation. In 2021 this period includes the 23rd through 27th Sundays in Ordinary Time for Cycle B.

Diversity of the Communities of Faith

Resources such as these, prepared for a global Church, must be adaptable to many different social, cultural and economic contexts. No single text can be expected to speak to such vast diversity without careful and prayerful local interpretation and adaptation.

The communities joining in the prayer, celebration, and activities of the Season of Creation this year will range from indigenous peoples to those marginalized, poor, and

struggling to survive; from working and middle class communities to the wealthiest elites around the planet. They will include youth, young adults, middle-aged and elders, powerful and vulnerable weak oppressed. They will include those extremely conscious of the current interrelated web of crises, those suffering from them and those who are in compassionate solidarity with them. They will also include those unconscious of it all and those self-absorbed who don't care.

The call to integral ecological conversion will be different for each of these communities and individuals. Local liturgical/pastoral teams will need to be conscious of the characteristics and social location of their own specific communities as they work to discern God's Word to them. Only then will they be able to use and adapt the materials included here effectively.

But this much is clear from the nature of the complex crisis confronting the global human community and all for whom Earth is home. The way to a better life cannot be through economic growth and technological progress as modeled by the so-called "developed" nations of the industrial world. It cannot rely on the current economic systems built on consumerism, growth, and constant upward mobility defined by material goods. It must be through greater

justice, sustainability, solidarity, and attentive care to the needs of all Earth's creatures and Earth itself.

"... the human family must reduce its global consumption and waste, return to patterns of living compatible with Earth's limited resources and regenerative capacities ..."

Integral ecological conversion will require cross-cultural encounter and dialogue that feed a spirituality of global solidarity, freedom from consumerism, growing consciousness of the interconnectedness of all creation, gratitude, and contentment with what is really necessary. The quality of relationships, commitment to the common good, global solidarity and care for all Earth's inhabitants characterize authentic human development, the true "good life," in Catholic Social Tradition

In short, the human family as a whole must reduce its global consumption and waste, return to patterns of living compatible with Earth's limited resources and regenerative capacities, rethink what constitutes the good human life and how to reach it, and redistribute or redirect available wealth and resources to meet the basic needs of the whole human family, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and the full Web of Life.

The Materials

The five Sundays of the 2020 Season of Creation [23rd through 27th Sundays in Ordinary Time in the Catholic lectionary] have a certain thematic flow that helps us to integrate them as a season. They speak powerfully to the contexts we have just reviewed.

The first Sunday's scriptures encourage us not to lose hope in the face of this complex crisis. God is faithful and is working to open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf. God has chosen the poor who suffer most, and we need to listen especially to them. Spread the good news of those who do come to see and hear, whose ecological conversion is appearing around and among us.

The scriptures of the second Sunday warn that when God opens our ears and we hear, we must expect to suffer. When we act on the call that we hear to care for Earth, we will face resistance and conflict, as Isaiah did, as Jesus did, and as Jesus called his disciples to. The history of ecological martyrs witnesses to this truth. Some of their pictures and links to their stories will appear in this and the following Sundays. But God is our help.

The scriptures of the third Sunday again raise up the opposition of the wicked and focus on the suffering to be expected by those God is calling. The passage from the letter of James identifies the roots of this conflict and violence in jealousies, passions, desires. The apostles' competition over who is the greatest among them is an illustrative case in point. Christ calls us to a wisdom that recognizes greatness and finds peace through service and childlikeness.

The scriptures of the fourth Sunday urge all to be prophets, speaking out. They encourage openness to all who are not explicitly against us, though they warn us against the rich whose wealth and luxury are effectively stolen from

the poor of the world. They include prayer for cleansing from our unknown faults and insistence that we take those faults and the dangers and evils we are engaging with utmost seriousness.

The scriptures of the fifth Sunday remind us that creation drives toward communion, toward unity. And they warn us that we will eat the fruit of our handiwork. They can stand as a summary reminder that rather than putting our energies into competitive consumption and exploitation of creation for material wealth, the human community needs instead to give priority to dignified human life for all, especially the most vulnerable, the unity of the human family, and care for the environment. The quality of relationships, commitment to the common good, and global solidarity characterize authentic development, the true "good life," in Catholic Social Tradition

The materials for each of the liturgies of the Sundays of the 2021 Season of Creation that follow will include these elements:

- **An Example of Integral Ecological Sign of the Cross.** These will reflect the new creation story, the Universe Story, and will draw on imagery from The Creation Mandala. They are not currently approved for official Catholic liturgical use, but hopefully they will help those who choose to use them to set the context of their prayer to experience more consciously the awesome reality of what they/we are doing when we turn to the real Creator God.

- **Short Introductory Comments.** These will set the context briefly, focusing on the messages of the scriptures as they relate to the Season of Creation's theme of restoring Earth as the household of God for all Earth creatures. These introductions could be published in a parish bulletin, read as they are or adapted for brief introductory comments at the beginning of a liturgy.
- **Suggestions for the penitential rite.** It should be noted that although the Roman Missal gives various optional formulations for the penitential rite, it also allows for "other invocations" to be used in public Catholic liturgies. The suggestions included in these materials help to focus the community's repentance on the issues addressed by the scriptural messages of the day in the context of the Season of Creation.
- **Orations.** Alternative orations (the opening prayer, the prayer over the gifts, and the prayer after communion) are offered that reflect the themes of the Season of Creation and the scriptures for the given Sunday. While they are not currently allowed to replace the orations given in the Catholic Roman Missal, they may be useful for private prayer or for use in other ecclesial Christian communities that have greater freedom. They could also be useful for those in the Catholic community entrusted in the future with the task of preparing proper liturgical texts for the Season of Creation.

- **Points for reflection on the scriptures.** These points are not offered as an outline or text for a homily. Local contexts, cultures, and issues are too diverse to permit that kind of presentation. They are points for reflection drawn from the Sunday scriptures read against the background of the Season of Creation. They are meant to inspire or suggest issues for homilists to consider in their preparations or for anyone's personal reflection and prayer. The questions included can help homilists reflect on their own experience. In addition, they may, in many cases, be fruitfully posed to their congregations for their own prayerful consideration.
- **Faith Reflections.** The creed at Mass can take the form of questions of faith, as for example during the Easter Vigil. The questions offered here cannot properly be used in an official Catholic liturgy, but they can serve as helpful invitations to faith raised by the scriptures and prayers of the particular Sunday of the Season of Creation. They are offered as helps to personal prayer and faith development and could be useful in homilies.
- **General Intercessions Petitions.** A few related petitions suitable or adaptable for the General Intercessions.
- **Music Suggestions.** Musical suggestions related to the themes for each particular Sunday are offered for consideration by music planners and musicians.

Following the materials for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, two **Solemn Blessings**, based upon prayers of Pope Francis, and one **Simple Blessing** are offered for contemplative reflection.

An Appendix offers links and further information on the eco-martyrs, human and other-than-human, appearing elsewhere through this booklet. This is far from a complete listing. It is estimated that more than a hundred activists working to protect Earth's ecologies have been martyred every year of this century. The numbers, tragically, are increasing, and the extinction of other living species continues at alarming rates.

Note: *Among the official Catholic Eucharistic Prayers, Eucharistic Prayer IV is generally considered the most appropriate in creation-focused liturgies. However, early in the prayer it has these words in the English translation:*

"You formed man in your own image
And entrusted the whole world to his care,
So that in serving you alone,
He might have dominion over all creatures."

In addition to the problematic use of exclusive male language, the claim of human "dominion over all creatures" tends to suggest what Pope Francis identifies as a distorted interpretation of our relationship with Earth. He writes:

Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the

notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures. The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to "till and keep" the garden of the world (cf. Gn 2:15). [*Laudato Si'*, ## 66-67]

He closes the following paragraph with the strong statement:

Clearly, the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures. [*Laudato Si'*, # 68]

This authoritative teaching suggests that the prayer should be changed to reflect the Church's true intent with language such as:

"You formed us in your own image
And entrusted the whole world to our care,
So that in serving you alone,
We might care for all creatures."

MUSICAL SUGGESTIONS INTRODUCTION

The Psalmist wrote, “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” (Psalm 24, NIV) In 1858 William How wrote “...May we your bounties thus, as stewards true receive...” (We Give Thee But Thine Own) reminding us that stewardship reaches beyond a tithe, to encompassing care for all creation. Despite this 19th century reminder, in the 20th and 21st centuries greed and avarice have still run rampant over God’s creation. So now, as climate crisis looms, hymnwriters are even more specific—Shirley Erena Murray reminds us, “Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently...” (Touch the Earth Lightly).

As your community of faith prays for renewal, guidance, and a call to action, included in this publication are some hymn and psalm suggestions to help in planning worship services. Music planners may wish to have a “theme song” and some of the hymns suggested for entrance or dismissal would work beautifully for a theme throughout the season. There are also many musical and liturgical resources online;

hymnary.org is just one example. **It is always useful to consider the community carefully, choosing songs to which they can relate, culturally, and socially, and to teach new songs in a way that enhances learning.** This list is definitely not exhaustive—there are still many possibilities! Creativity can be a large part of musical planning for the Season of Creation.

For hymns, text authors only are listed—in some cases the author is also the composer. Depending on the meter, some hymns may have more than one tune possibility. For psalms, the composer of the musical setting is listed. At the end of all of the suggestions is a complete list of all songs used, with some additional possibilities. The suggestions for October 4, the Memorial of St. Francis, could also be used on any previous Sundays.

As we pray, plan, and act, may God’s wisdom guide and sustain us all!

Denise Mathias

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

September 5, 2021 | 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 35:4-7a

Ps. 146:6-10

James 2:1-5

Mark 7:31-37

Integral Ecological Sign of the Cross

We begin our celebration of the 1st Sunday of the Season of Creation...

In the name of our Creator God from Whom this universe flared forth in fiery birth,

And of the Word of God Who took on our flesh, working to give healing and hope to all creation,

And of the Wisdom of God Who presided over the forming of atoms and galaxies and the birth of stars through billions of years. **Amen.**

May the grace and peace of our Creator God Who cherishes us be with you!

Introductory Comments

Today is the First Sunday of the 2021 Season of Creation. This season is a time of prayer and action stretching from September 1st, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, to October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. The Season celebrates God as Creator of the vast cosmic universe, God's revelation in creation, and our calling to care for creation, to protect its rich diversity and to address the urgent, destructive crises threatening its health and future - including our own.

"Can the global human community face honestly the urgency of the situation ..."

This year's theme is *A Home for All? Renewing the Oikos of God*. *Oikos* is a Greek word for home. It is the root word for terms like ecology, economy, and ecumenical. It is used here, in the words of the ecumenical steering committee for the Season of Creation, to "point to the integral web of relationships that sustain the wellbeing of the Earth."

This theme invites the global Christian community to recall that every creature of God upon Earth is loved by God for itself. It reminds us that the current exploitation of Earth is making it "a means to economic or political ends" and is destroying its ability to be the nurturing home for millions of species that God has created it to be. It invites us to ask what we must do to restore the planet to being the life-giving home God intends it to be for all that dwell here.

On this 1st Sunday of the Season of Creation, the scriptures urge us not to lose hope in the face of the urgent and complex climate crisis facing us. They remind us to trust in God Who is faithful and is even now working to save us. They challenge us to confront the false values of wealth and consumption that are so common and so destructive and to pray for Christ to open our eyes, our ears, our hearts.

Penitential Rite Suggestion

(It should be noted that although the Roman Missal gives various optional formulations for the penitential rite, it also allows for "other invocations." These are intended to help shape the community's repentance in accord with the scriptural message of the day.)

As we begin our celebration of this 1st Sunday in the Season of Creation, let's enter into the quiet of our spirits ... conscious of Earth, our home and the home of every other living and inanimate creature we know ... just a dot in the vast expanse of [the Milky Way](#) ... Suffering from overconsumption, devastation and the crisis of dangerously-rising temperatures globally ... home to millions of people rising up to restore and save our common home....

Loving God, we often lose hope in the face of the widespread devastation of climate change, the threats of far worse to come, the urgency of the needs, and the slowness of our response.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You warned us how hard it is for the rich to enter the Kin-dom of God and yet we hold up wealth as a sign of success and "development" and pursue it in ways that are destroying our common home.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You call us to be the voice of the voiceless of creation suffering among us.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, Who gave fiery birth to all time and space and to the vast Web of Life in which we live, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

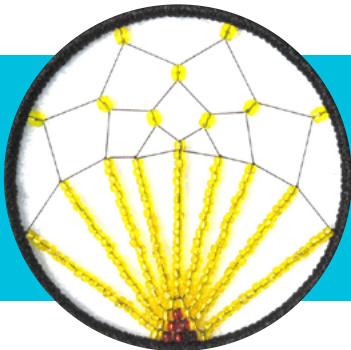
Gloria: In conscious awe, we join our voices with all Creation to praise and glorify God.

As noted in the Introduction, the orations offered in these materials are not currently allowed to replace the orations given in the Catholic Roman Missal. They may be used for private prayer or by ecclesial Christian communities freer to make adjustments in the language of their liturgies.

Opening Prayer

Loving Creator God, You have been faithful through billions of years, patiently preparing Earth to be the nurturing home for all that dwell on it and in it. As we come to recognize the urgent threats to its well-being from the values and actions of our human community, we ask You to deepen our trust in Your faithful love, Your power to save us, and Your work in us, among us, and through us. Send the healing power of Christ to open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. Unite the human family and teach us to recognize and embrace Your Wisdom, Wisdom that suffers, guides, heals and renews our common home.

We make our prayer in the name of Christ, Your Word, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Wisdom at work renewing all things in creation, now and forever. **Amen.**



"It is hard to imagine the suffering that the loss of 7 billion people and countless other living beings to fires, floods, droughts, other forms of violent weather, starvation, and more would impose...."

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

The 2021 Season of Creation begins at a critical and very delicate time for the human community as we face the climate crisis threatening Earth and its future. UN Secretary General António Guterres and Pope Francis have both added their voices to the overwhelming global consensus of scientists in warning that there is only about a decade left for the nations of the world to take the steps needed to reduce carbon emissions and keep the average temperature of the planet from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. If those steps are not taken with a sense of urgency and global solidarity, irreversible turning points will bring great devastation with lasting destructive impacts. [In some of the worst-case scenarios](#), Earth's ability to sustain the human population could be reduced from its current capacity [presently approaching 8 billion people] to about 1 billion. It is hard to imagine the suffering that the loss of 7 billion people and countless other living beings to fires, floods, droughts, other forms of violent weather, starvation, and more would impose.

It is widely acknowledged that the nations of the world are failing seriously to take adequate steps to meet the true urgency of the planetary crisis. This Season of Creation must help to build the sense of urgency and commitment to serious change that are essential for the future wellbeing of our common home. And yet, too great an emphasis on the severe threats of devastation can lead to discouragement, depression, and inaction.

Can the scriptures help us to walk the fine line that will help us as people of faith to face and embrace the urgency of the situation threatening Earth and all creatures for whom it is home with hope and ready commitment to the transformations so desperately required?

In the first reading, Isaiah urges his people to "Be strong, fear not" because God is faithful and is engaged in their history to save them. He sees the work of God in the eyes that are opened, the ears that hear again, in the lame and the mute being healed and Earth being restored to fruitfulness and life.

The faithful presence and work of God are the surest foundation against discouragement and losing hope in the face of the current crises. As St. Paul wrote so powerfully, "If God is for us, who can be against?" Do we share Isaiah's prophetic faith here and now?

Do I, do we as a community share in the discouragement and paralysis? Are we able to see the needs, hear the call, and act for healing and renewal of Earth?

Where do we see eyes being opened to the climate realities and dangers? Where do we see people who were deaf to the issues or refused to listen begin to hear and understand? Where are those who had been mute beginning to speak up with concern and care for creation? Where do we see people whose response to the planetary crises had been halting in the past taking more bold steps? At the personal level? At the political

level? Through international collaboration and networking?

Where are we seeing Earth being healed and renewed through prophetic human efforts? Where do we recognize God at work in these efforts to address the climate crisis threatening Earth?

In the [Laudato Si' Action Platform](#), launched at the Vatican during [Laudato Si' Week 2021](#), the Catholic community identifies seven practical goals. One of them is foundational for all the rest and is important for our reflection and prayer here: Ecological Spirituality. The questions above and those below help us probe and deepen our Ecological Spirituality.

Ecological Spirituality. This goal aims to recover a religious vision of creation and urges more contact with nature in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy, gratitude. Actions could include creation-centered liturgical celebrations, ecological retreats and formation programs, praying in nature.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Do actions like these resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? Are there other people, communities, networks with whom I/we can join in this type of action?

How can we help each other grow in trust in the faithfulness of God? How has God been faithful to us in our lives? Can we trust that God is with us in these times, working to save us and our planet?

Do we see God at work in the unprecedented mobilization of the Catholic community through the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, the global networks that are emerging, and the ecumenical and interfaith collaboration that is growing?

How are we being invited, as individuals, as communities, to share in this saving work? What is God inviting us to do?

The Psalm acknowledges God's faithfulness in actions like these and invites us to praise.

Can we pray it with heartfelt conviction and draw strength from its vision?

In the second reading, James focuses upon the widespread human temptation to honor wealth as a sign of success and value. That temptation feeds the greed, exploitation, and systematic degradation of the richness of creation. The dominant model and processes of development embraced by so many over the last several hundred years are based on a vision of unlimited economic growth fed by production, consumption, and competition for wealth. These have driven and continue to drive

the destructive exploitation of Earth and the rapidly increasing diminishment of Earth's ability to renew itself and remain a nurturing home for all its inhabitants. These economic patterns and processes must be transformed.

Such transformation flows from a strong ecological spirituality and is made more specific in another of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform goals, Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles:

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles.

This goal promotes a sense of sufficiency rather than unnecessary accumulation or consumerism. Actions could include recycling, reducing waste, more sustainable diets, promotion of public transportation and avoiding single-use items.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Do actions like these resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? Are there other people, communities, networks with whom I/we can join in this type of action?

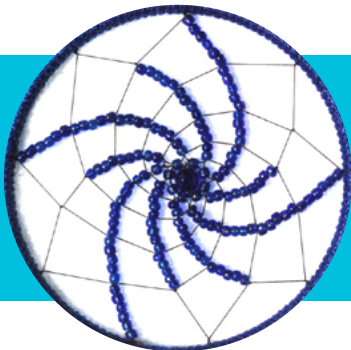
How can I/we transform our lifestyles and values to embrace a more authentic

and sustainable way of living on Earth in solidarity with all God's creation?

James also reminds us that God chooses the poor of the world to be rich in faith. This important reminder echoes throughout Christian history, most recently raised up in Pope Francis's call in *Laudato Si'* to listen to the Cry of the Poor and the Cry of Earth. The poor are most often the first to suffer and, in their suffering, to reveal the injustices and unsustainable ways of living of our societies. This is a focus of a third Platform goal.

Response to the Cry of the Poor. This goal calls us to promote ecojustice and to defend human life and all forms of life on Earth. Actions toward this goal could include promoting solidarity, attention and support to vulnerable groups: indigenous communities, refugees, migrants, racial minorities, children. They could include analysis and improvement of social systems and institutions.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Do actions like these resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? Are there other people,



“Over sixty-five years ago, Teilhard proposed that ‘our religion is becoming enfeebled.’ The reason being that we are too cut off from awe and wonder and a ‘passionate admiration of the universe.’” Matthew Fox

communities, networks with whom I/we can join in this type of action?

Pope Francis has often spoken of the wisdom and faith of indigenous peoples and the poor as rich resources for learning to live sustainably on Earth and contribute to its healing restoration. How can I/we engage that wisdom and grow in that faith?

Do I/we have relationships with people in poverty? With indigenous peoples? What wisdom do they have to share with us about caring for creation sustainably, reverently? How do their warnings and demonstrations in resistance to development projects speak to us and invite our solidarity?

Looking to indigenous communities and other oppressed peoples, do we see the environmental racism from which they so often suffer? Do we see the growing ecological crises behind the increasing flows of climate refugees? Does their suffering stir our compassion? Do we hear Christ's command to welcome the stranger?

In the gospel, Jesus struggles, groaning, to give healing to a deaf person with a speech impediment. Without a doubt, the work over the next decade of restoring the household of God, our common home, will be difficult and challenging.

Are we ready to pray for the healing power of Christ to be at work in us and through us so

that we may hear and speak clearly the Word of God given us to share in this critical time?

Can we offer ourselves to join Christ in the difficult work of opening eyes and ears, freeing tongues, and supporting bold efforts to embrace the integral ecological conversion required in these times?

Faith Reflections

Are you among those who believe in God, Who births all created things, renews all things, and cherishes all things with love?

Are you among those who believe in God, Who through billions of years has evolved this Earth as a nurturing home for all creatures, all members of the Earth family?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, God become flesh and blood, a human part of Earth, Who lived and breathed and spoke among us, suffered and died on a cross, a faithful witness to God's desire of loving care for all human beings and for all creation?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, the risen Christ, Who is at the heart of the New Creation, reconciling all things to God, renewing all creation, and filling the universe?

Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit Who renews life in creation, groans in

empathy with a suffering creation, and waits, working with us, for the rebirth of creation?

Are you among those who believe that with Christ and in the Holy Spirit we will rise to celebrate a New Creation?

This is our faith. Through it we see God's revelation emerging in new ways among us. Through it we embrace the promise of God's saving love and our mission to restore the household of creation. **Amen.**

General Intercessions

For ever-deepening trust in the faithful presence and loving work of God in us, among us, and through us to respond to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, we pray...

For the success of the work of ecumenical and interfaith communities to promote global unity and restore Earth as a nurturing home to all its creatures, we pray...

That we may take up our prophetic responsibilities in this time of urgent crisis to speak God's Truth to each other and to call each other into ways of living on Earth wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently, we pray...

That we may hear and respond in faith and in hope to the Cry of the Poor among us and around the planet, we pray...

"For ever-deepening trust in the faithful presence and loving work of God in us, among us, and through us to respond to the Cry of the Earth..."

Prayer over the Gifts

Creator God, You inspire awe in our hearts. Through Your love this Universe flared forth from You in fiery birth billions of years ago. Through all that time, You have patiently prepared and given us these gifts and so much more to share. We offer them in gratitude as simple signs of Your faithful care for all our needs.

Through them we offer our lives, our talents, and our commitment to care for all in need on planet Earth and to work for the renewal of our Common Home itself. Receive them and transform our gifts and our energies into Your true Bread of Life for our world. We ask this in the name of Christ, Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Gracious, Loving God, we have celebrated this Eucharist in thanksgiving for Your sacred creation in which we share and where we find our common home.

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to heal our wounds, to open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts, and to renew all of Earth's communities. We make our prayer in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

*Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings**, based upon prayers of Pope Francis, and one **Simple Blessing**. Once again, these are not yet officially sanctioned for Catholic liturgical use.*



ECO-MARTYR

Gloria Capitan
(1959-2016) Philippines

EXTINCT SPECIES

Schomburgk's Deer
(declared extinct 2015) Asia



FIRST SUNDAY – MUSICAL SELECTIONS

September 5, 2021 | 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E - Entrance | O - Offertory | C - Communion | D - Dismissal
OCP - Oregon Catholic Press | WLP–World Library Publications

- E, D A Place at the Table
Shirley Erena Murray, ©1998 Hope Publishing Co.
- E, O,D Abundant Life Ruth Duck, ©1992 GIA
- E, D Flow, River, Flow
©1986 Bob Hurd, Published by Oregon Catholic Press
- E, D Say to the Frightened Heart
©2012 Bob Hurd, published by OCP.
- E Glory and Praise to Our God
©1972, 1974, 2008 Daniel L. Schutte, pub. OCP
- E Morning Has Broken ©1957 Eleanor Farjeon, Harold Ober Assoc.
- E I Sing the Mighty Power of God Isaac Watts
- E, O Praise to You, O Christ, Our Savior
©1986 Bernadette Farrell, published by OCP
- O, C Healer of Our Every Ill, by Marty Haugen
©1987 GIA Publications, Inc.
- O,C Open My Eyes ©1988, 1998, 1999
Jesse Manibusen, published by Spirit and Song (OCP)
- C Now In This Banquet
Marty Haugen, ©1986 GIA Publications, Inc.
- D Touch the Earth Lightly
Shirley Erena Murray, ©1992 Hope Publishing Company.

Psalm Settings

- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
Owen Alstott, ©1977, 1990 OCP
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
Bob Hurd, ©2011 OCP
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
Richard Proulx, ©1975, GIA Publications, Inc.
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
©2016 Sarah Hart, published by OCP
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
Paul Tate, ©2013, 2014 GIA Publications, Inc.
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
James Gerrish, ©1971 WLP

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

September 12, 2021 | 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 50:5-9a

Ps. 116:1-9

James 2:14-18

Mark 8:27-35

Introductory Comments

We begin our celebration of the 2nd Sunday of the Season of Creation...

In the name of our Creator God Who from the death of stars births new stars and planets and spreads the seeds of life through the Universe,

And of the Word of God spoken into a hostile world,
accepting suffering to give hope to all creation,

And of the Wisdom of God, at work among us calling
forth the New Creation. Amen

May the grace and peace of our loving Creator God be
with you!

Introductory Comments

As we began the Season of Creation last Sunday, we heard the encouragement of Isaiah to "Be strong and fear not," relying on God's faithful presence. We were invited to recognize God in the opening of eyes and ears to the crises Earth is suffering. We were encouraged to discern and accept God's invitation to share in the work of saving Earth and all the communities whose home it is.

Today again we hear the call to listen to God's Word coming in the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor. We are urged to put our faith into action and to expect resistance and suffering, our share in the cross of Christ.

As we begin today, let's enter into the quiet of our spirits, ... conscious of Earth, our home and the home of every other living and inanimate creature we know ... just a

dot in the vast expanse of the Milky Way ... the Milky Way itself but a small dot in the vast expanse of the Universe... conscious of the destruction and suffering on Earth from overconsumption, exploitation, and the crisis of dangerously-rising temperatures globally ... yet home to millions of people rising up to restore, heal, and save our common home....

Creator God, we often lose hope in the face of widespread destruction from fires, floods, droughts, violent storms and other devastation from our changing climate, from the urgency of the needs, and the slowness of our response.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You call forth compassion and insist that we must be ready to suffer and sacrifice, taking up our crosses in Your spirit of love and healing forgiveness.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You call us to be the voice of the voiceless suffering among us on Earth, our common home.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, the Creator of all time and space, Who through the death of a star brought forth the vast Web of Life in which we live, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

Gloria: In conscious awe, we join our voices with all the stars and planets, all the inanimate and living inhabitants of our galaxy and of all creation, to praise and glorify God.

Opening Prayer

Loving Creator God, You have been faithful through billions of years, patiently preparing Earth to be the nurturing home for all that dwell on it and in it. As we come to recognize the urgent threats to its well-being from the values and actions of our human community, we ask You to deepen our trust in Your faithful love, Your power to save us, and Your work in us, among us, and through us. Send the healing power of Christ. Give us strength of faith and courage to speak Your prophetic Word of truth and transformation, ready to face resistance, rejection, and suffering with love, creativity, and perseverance.

We make our prayer in the name of Christ Jesus, Your Word, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Wisdom at work renewing all things in creation, now and forever.

Amen.

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

The human community around the world has been growing in recent decades in its consciousness of the increasingly destructive

threats from Earth's changing climate.

The inadequacy of national responses and commitments, however, is now widely recognized. More dramatic and far-reaching commitments to transformative change are urgent to avoid catastrophic environmental tipping points in as little as ten years into the future.

The issues have been highly politicized in nations around the planet and populations are deeply divided. Disinformation and denial are everywhere, protecting individual and group interests, resisting the global transformations essential to the survival and common good of the planet and all creatures who make their home on it and in it.

The first reading from Isaiah today picks up one of the key themes from last week: God's presence and work among us are recognized in the opening of eyes and ears, the loosening of tongues to proclaim God's prophetic Word.

Today's reading is taken from the **3rd Servant Song**. In the verse just before today's passage

begins, the Servant of God declares, "God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them." And she/he continues, "Morning after morning God opens my ear that I may hear...."

In the second reading, James insists that faith that is not put into action is worthless. Faith without works is dead.

In other words, in the context of our current planetary crises, we whose ears have been opened to God's Word in the Cry of the Poor and the Cry of Earth must use our "well-trained tongues" to speak out the prophetic Word we have received. How might we take up the opportunities God provides us each to forward the healing and saving of Earth and all its communities?

Do I, do we as communities have a sense of the prophetic Word given to us? How could I/we put that prophetic Word into action in our world today?



Will we adopt, as an international community, the necessary measures to stop the devastation of the environment or will we continue denying the evidence?" Pope Francis

In the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, Catholic communities and people of good will around the world have identified seven practical goals and have begun to articulate actions and transformations that the prophetic Cry of the Poor and the Cry of Earth are calling forth from us, actions for healing our relationships with God, the human family, the community of creation, and Earth itself.

From Faith into Action. These goals offer guidance for discerning our effective faith response. Three of the goals were raised for reflection and commitment to action in the First Sunday's points on the scriptures: **Ecological Spirituality, Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles, and Response to the Cry of the Poor.**

Would it be valuable to revisit one or more of those goals, exploring further commitments to action and implementation?

A fourth of the seven goals follows naturally and can help individuals and communities discover important insights and lines of action that can increase the quality and wisdom of their spiritualities, lifestyles, and action responses to those in poverty: **Ecological Education.**

Ecological Education. This goal seeks curricular and institutional reform to foster ecological awareness and transformative action. Actions could include ensuring access to education for all, promoting human rights, fostering *Laudato Si'* themes, and encouraging ecological leadership and restoration activities.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Do actions like these resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? Are there other people, communities, networks with whom I/we can join in this type of action?

How might I/we further educate ourselves on the issues and dimensions of the crises we face? What areas or issues stir our curiosity and invite deeper understanding, wiser action?

How might I/we learn about and explore the possibilities for more sustainable lifestyles and alternate approaches to development than the dominant one?

Where can we find education for ourselves and our communities to deepen and expand an ecological spirituality? Who

are the best teachers? How can I/we begin?

Take up your cross and follow me.

The second major theme running through today's readings is equally challenging and more disturbing. Those who are chosen to proclaim God's prophetic Word must expect rejection and suffering, perhaps even death.

The passage from the 3rd Servant Song in the first reading from Isaiah, immediately after describing God's action to open her/his ears to the prophetic message, goes on to describe the beatings, resistance, and abuse that the Servant endures.

In the gospel, Jesus begins teaching his disciples that he too must suffer, be rejected and killed. He rejects Peter's insistence that God would not let that happen to the Messiah. Jesus knew that he was preaching God's prophetic Truth to a divided and hostile social-religious context. His Word threatened the control and social status of those in positions of religious and political power. They would not be able to let him succeed in the Way or the Truth he was



"Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share."

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #13

proclaiming or the Life of the Kin-dom that he was revealing and calling into being.

Like the Servant of God in Isaiah, Jesus affirms strong faith that God will be present with help and vindication. Jesus insists that he will rise again. The witness of his love and forgiveness through excruciating suffering and a shameful death, and then of his rising to new, transformed Life would speak more powerfully of God's good news of loving forgiveness.

People around the planet who are raising their prophetic voices for Care of Earth and Care of the Poor in these times are enduring the resistance, persecution, suffering, and death we hear about here. They make up a community of the human martyrs of this age, joining the plants, animals and other species suffering extinction from the effects of humanly generated climate change.

These human martyrs have numbered between 100 and 200 each year in the last two decades and represent all major areas of the planet. A few of their pictures appear in these pages as powerful witnesses calling us all to the seriousness of our mission and to courage and hope. More on each of them and links to additional information can be found in the Appendix on eco-martyrs and extinct species at the end of this booklet.

The Psalm featured in today's liturgy offers the perfect prayerful expression of the faith of both the Servant and of Jesus. It expresses gratitude for God's mercy in saving the Servant in the past

and reaffirms the belief that she/he will walk again with God in the land of the living.

What do these scriptures say to communities being urgently called to speak out and work to save Earth as a nurturing home for all its creatures in such a deeply divided and conflictive time in human history?

Are there responses that I/we fear, that make me/us hesitate or hold back from the urgent prophetic mission before us? What are they?

What groups in my/our context will resist the call to what Pope Francis calls an integral ecological conversion? What groups/individuals will reject and push back against actions I/we are feeling called to take as expressions of our faith?

Even when there is little chance of physical harm, do I/we fear the hardships that may be involved in speaking out publicly and embracing the transformations in my/our ways of living that an integral ecological conversion will call us to?

Does our faith in God's presence and faithful protection reflect the faith of the Servant in Isaiah and of Jesus? Can we pray in the spirit of the psalm in gratitude for God's mercy and faithful presence to us in our lives, drawing strength and trust from our experiences?

Am I/Are we ready to speak out and stand with vulnerable communities under attack for their work and witness for eco-justice? Indigenous communities? Communities of

the poor and communities of color resisting environmental racism?

Am I/Are we conscious of those who have been killed or have suffered great violence for their work responding to the Cry of Earth and the Cry of the Poor? Who are these prophets in our region of the planet? How do their courage and witness affect me/us? How can they inspire and encourage us to express our faith in God's mission to us to heal Earth in urgent action?

Can we call upon their presence in the communion of saints to support and guide us?

Faith Reflections

Are you among those who believe in God, Who births all created things, renews all things, and cherishes all things with love?

Are you among those who believe in God, Who through billions of years has evolved Earth as a nurturing home for all creatures, all members of the Earth family?

Are you among those who believe in God, Who opens the ears and frees the tongues of those called to be Servants of the New Creation among us in these times?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, God become flesh and blood, a human part of Earth, Who lived and breathed and spoke among us, Who accepted rejection, suffering and death on a cross, a faithful witness to God's call to loving care for all human beings and healing restoration for all creation?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, the risen Christ, Who is at the heart of the New Creation reconciling all things to God, renewing all creation, and filling the Universe?

Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit, Who renews life in creation, groans in empathy with a suffering creation, and waits, working with us, for the rebirth of creation?

Are you among those who believe that with Christ and in the Holy Spirit we will rise to celebrate the New Creation?

This is our faith. Through it we see God's revelation emerging in new ways among us. Through it we embrace the promise of God's saving love and our mission to restore the household of creation. **Amen.**

General Intercessions

For ever-deepening trust in the faithful presence and loving work of God in us, among us, and through us to respond effectively to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, we pray...

For the success of the work of ecumenical and interfaith communities to promote global unity

and restore Earth as a nurturing home to all its creatures, we pray...

For the urgent, generous, and effective response of the global community in the upcoming United Nations conferences on biodiversity and climate change, COP 15 and COP 26, we pray...

That we may take up our prophetic responsibilities in this time of urgent crisis to speak God's Truth to each other and to call each other into ways of living on Earth wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently, we pray...

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving Creator God, from the explosive death of a star You planted the seeds of life on Earth. Through vast periods of time, You have prepared and given us these gifts and so much more to share. We offer them in gratitude as simple signs of Your faithful care for all our needs.

Through them we offer our lives, our talents, and our commitment to care for all in need on planet Earth and to work for the restoration of our common home itself. Receive them and transform our gifts and our energies into Your

true Bread of Life for our world. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Gracious, Loving God, we have celebrated this Eucharist in thanksgiving for Your sacred creation in which we share and where we find our common home.

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to heal our wounds, to open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. Strengthen and protect us in the prophetic mission to heal and renew all of Earth's communities that You have entrusted to us. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus and in the power of Your Holy Spirit where we live and move and have our being, now and forever. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

*Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings**, based upon prayers of Pope Francis, and one **Simple Blessing**. Once again, these are not yet officially sanctioned for Catholic liturgical use.*



ECO-MARTYR

Wayne Lotter
(1965 - 2017) South Africa

EXTINCT SPECIES

St. Helena Olive
(declared extinct 2004) Africa



SECOND SUNDAY – MUSICAL SELECTIONS

September 12, 2021 | 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E - Entrance | O - Offertory | C - Communion | D - Dismissal

OCP - Oregon Catholic Press | WLP–World Library Publications

- E For the Beauty of the Earth
Folliet S. Pierpoint
- E Journey of Faith
Delores Dufner, © 2012 Sisters of St. Benedict, pub. by WLP
- E,D God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
Catherine Cameron, ©1967 Hope Publishing Co
- O,D Here I Am, Lord Daniel L. Schutte, ©1981 OCP
- O,D Take Up Your Cross Charles W. Everest
- O When We Are Living /Pues Si Vivimos
Roberto Escamilla, ©1989 United Meth. Pub. House
- O,C Christ Has No Body Now But Yours
Teresa of Ávila/Stephen C. Warner, ©2003 WLP
- C Gift of Finest Wheat
Omer Westendorf, ©1977 Archdiocese of Phila., Internat. Liturgy Pub.
- C One Bread, One Body
© 1978 John B. Foley, SJ. Published by OCP.
- D O God, Our Help in Ages Past Isaac Watts
- D Stewards of Earth
Omer Westendorf, ©1984 World Library Publications

Psalm Settings

Psalm 116: I will walk before the Lord

Owen Alstott, ©1977, 1990, OCP.

Psalm 116: I will walk before the Lord

Kathleen Harmon, ©2013, 2014 by GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 116: I will walk before the Lord

©2016 Casey McKinley, published by OCP

Psalm 116: I will walk before the Lord

©2002 Randall DeBruyn, published by OCP.

Psalm 116: I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living

Howard Hughes, ©1994 WLP

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

September 19, 2021 | 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Wis. 2:12, 17-20

Ps. 54:3-8

James 3:16-4:3

Mark 9:30-37

Integral Ecological Sign of the Cross

We begin our celebration of the 3rd Sunday of the Season of Creation...

In the name of our Creator God Who gave birth to all Earth's living things, providing them a home in Earth's nurturing, supportive lands and seas,

And of the Word of God speaking into the world visions of true human greatness in service,

And of the Wisdom of God guiding every creature in keeping Earth alive and whole. **Amen.**

May the grace and peace of our loving Creator God be with you!

Introductory Comments

In today's readings, we are given a sense of the destructive power of passions, divisions, jealousies, greed, and competition, both for people and, in this Season of Creation, for Earth itself and all Earth inhabitants. This destructive dynamic contrasts sharply with what the Letter of James calls "the Wisdom from above," a wisdom that embraces the importance of turning our competitive energies to true service of the least among us and the creation of which we are a part.

So, as we begin, let's enter into the quiet of our spirits ... conscious of God's gift of Earth, the nurturing home of such rich diversity of life, ... conscious of its destruction and suffering from overconsumption, exploitation, and the crisis of dangerously-rising temperatures globally ... yet

home to millions of people rising up to restore, heal, and save our common home....

Creator God, we have become alienated from each other and from Earth and viewed this planet as disposable, a source of endless resources.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, the human family has polluted Earth's air, land, and waters, made countless species extinct, turned our greed into a major ecological crisis, devalued human life and loved what was called "progress" more than the planet and each other.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You are at work in us and among us now in these times, teaching us of Your presence in Earth, calling us to take part in Your New Creation

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, the Creator Who birthed life from the seas and drew it forth to increase and evolve and fill Earth, its sacred home, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

Gloria: The Word of God that flared forth nearly 14 billion years ago, unfolding into the vast beauty and expanse that we know as the created Universe today, reveals to us a God of unimaginable Beauty, Creativity, Vibrancy of Life and Love. Take a moment to contemplate our reality and ask for conscious awe. ... And then let's join our voices with all Creation to sing our praise to God.

Opening Prayer

Loving Creator God, You have been faithful through billions of years, patiently preparing Earth to be the nurturing home for all that dwell on it and in it.

As we come to recognize the urgent threats to Earth's well-being from the values and actions of our human community, we ask You to deepen our longing for the true wisdom "full of mercy and good fruits" that will bring the change and healing that Earth and we so urgently need.

Protect us from all who would resist our efforts to care for Earth. Stir in us Christ's passion for the greatness of service, service of all people, of all creatures, and of our common home. And give us strength of faith and courage to speak Your prophetic Word of Truth and service, ready to face resistance, rejection, and suffering with love, creativity, and perseverance.

We make our prayer in the name of Christ Jesus, Your Word, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Wisdom at work renewing all things in creation, now and forever. **Amen.**

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

In the first reading from the book of Wisdom, the wicked are preparing to torture and kill the just one whom they experience as a living condemnation of their ways. They tell themselves, "If the just one be the son of God, God will defend him." This is the assumption that Peter made in last Sunday's gospel, the assumption which Jesus rejected, telling Peter that he was thinking not as God does but as humans do. [Mark 8:27-35]

Hearing this in the Season of Creation raises a disturbing question. If God does not intervene to save God's beloved sons or daughters from suffering and death, could it true that God will not protect Earth either, no matter how precious it is, from the destructive effects of humanity's actions? God is certainly not protecting people from the suffering and death of martyrs who are working to care for and protect Earth. The eco-martyrs highlighted in this guide's appendix show that. But what of Earth herself?

The warnings of scientists about the devastation that would come from the dangerous tipping

points in the near future because of climate change press that question upon us. From what we are already seeing in more devastating storms, heat waves, droughts, fires, floods, the looming threat of dramatic sea level rise, the increasing frequency of extinctions of species globally, and the continuing dangerous rise of average annual global temperatures, there is no denying that the risks and threats are real. And it is hard to imagine the extent of their widespread destructive power.

Could Earth be facing what Jesus was trying to teach his apostles in today's gospel: "I will be handed over to people who will kill me..."? From the evidence of the five great extinctions etched in our planetary history and the mysterious remnants of vast lost civilizations of the past, Earth has and could again endure vast and terrible death. That history also bears witness that it can rise again, but that "resurrection" would, without doubt, as it has in past recoveries from major extinctions, take thousands and tens of thousands if not millions of years.

The passage from the letter of James in today's liturgy warns of the destructiveness of



"Faith without works is dead."

selfish competitive patterns of action. Those are the behaviors that Pope Francis identified in *Laudato Si'* as driving the destructive dynamics now threatening the life of the planet, including the human community. The global economy is structured on competition that drives consumption and requires constant economic growth on a planet with limited resources. Recall that less than two months ago on July 29th we noted Earth Overshoot Day, highlighting the fact that the human community had consumed in just 7 months the renewable resources that it will take the planet a full year to replenish. And Earth Overshoot Day is coming earlier every year.

Those economic systems, structures and patterns of living are also the drivers of growing inequality around the planet that promises increasing social crises and conflict. When the average worker for a major corporation makes about \$28,000 a year while its CEO makes \$28,000 every nine seconds, social crisis seems inevitable. While that may be an extreme example, the competitive structures of the global economy are aggravating what Pope Francis has described as one complex and interrelated global crisis.

Finally, in the Gospel, Jesus catches the Twelve arguing among themselves, competing to be recognized as the greatest in the group. Most all of us have to acknowledge a competitive streak in ourselves. It may show itself in different situations and ways. Some people's competitive

juices flow when the issue is recognition. Some instinctively compete for power and control. The economy is driven when people compete for wealth. Others compete to be most helpful....

What is worth noting in this gospel passage is that Jesus does not tell the Twelve to stop competing. The drive to compete can provide powerful energy to drive action. Jesus tells them that his disciples need to channel their competitive energies into service, service of the least.

The spiritual work coming out of this Sunday's reflection certainly should include continuing and deepening attention to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform's goal of **Ecological Spirituality** that we looked at the 1st Sunday.

What competitive challenges do we find ourselves rising to most naturally and spontaneously? Through study and prayerful reflection, how can we best direct our competitive energies, both individually and as communities, to serve creation and the human community in this time of growing crisis and need?

Will our plans and efforts deepen our personal and community ecological spirituality? Can they help to free us from the competitive dynamics driving climate change and social conflict? How can we nurture growth in mutual service, simplicity of life, and the true wisdom "full of mercy and good fruits" that will bring the change and healing Earth and we so urgently need?

This reflection also highlights the importance of two other **Platform** goals.

Response to the Cry of the Earth.

The severity of the various dimensions and impacts of the changing climate express Earth's great cry for help. This goal invites action to protect Earth for the wellbeing of all who make it home. Actions toward this goal could include adopting renewable energies, working for carbon neutrality, protecting biodiversity, sustainability, and more - all the ways human creativity can identify or create to address the planetary crisis of devastating climate change.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Do actions like these resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? Are there other people, communities, networks with whom I/we can join in this type of action? How might we move into further action toward this goal now?

Ecological Economics. This goal sees the economy as being in service of the whole human community which in turn needs to be in service of the biosphere. Actions could include sustainable production and consumption, ethical investments and divestment from fossil fuels, and prioritizing the care economy and the dignity of workers. It promotes transition to economic systems which respect Earth's limits and are not based on competitive consumption, greed and the assumption of unlimited growth.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Does it counter the destructive human passions driving climate change that the Apostle James and Pope Francis warn against? Do actions like these resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? What are we being called to?

How can we identify and grow in understanding more sustainable economic systems? What are some of their fundamental values and principles? More and more local communities are choosing these systems to transform the ways they are living. What changes would they require of us/our communities in how we live and what we aspire to? Where can we find individuals, communities and networks living them now in practical ways? Are there ways that I/we can join in this type of action? How might we move into further action toward this goal now?

Faith Reflections

Are you among those who believe in God Who births all created things, renews all things, and cherishes all things with love?

Are you among those who believe in God, Who nearly 4.5 billion years ago began to form Earth, Who patiently evolved Earth as a nurturing home for all creatures, all members of the Earth family?

Are you among those who believe in God, Who opens the ears and frees the tongues of those called to protect and care for Earth as servants of the New Creation among us in these times?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, God become flesh and blood, a human part of Earth, Who lived and breathed and spoke among us, Who accepted rejection, suffering and death on a cross, a faithful witness to God's call to loving care for all human beings and healing restoration for all creation?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, the risen Christ, Who is inviting us to the greatness of service, evolving the New Creation?

Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit, offering the peaceable, gentle Wisdom of God among us?

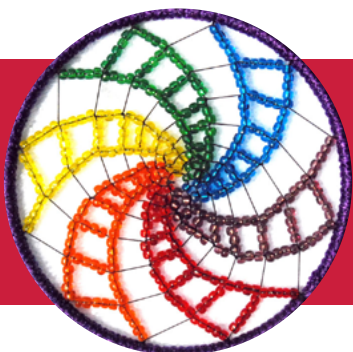
Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit, Who is working now among us to deepen in all peoples a spirit of solidarity dedicated to service of all for the renewal of Earth as a nurturing home for all?

This is our faith. Through it we see God's revelation emerging in new ways among us. Through it we embrace the promise of God's saving love and our mission to restore the household of creation. **Amen.**

General Intercessions Petitions

For ever-deepening trust in the faithful presence and loving work of God in us, among us, and through us, for ever-greater attentiveness to the Wisdom from above guiding us to respond effectively to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, we pray...

For the creativity, global solidarity, and courage to address the global ecological and social crises resulting from destructive climate change effectively, we pray...



**Could Earth be facing what Jesus was trying to teach his apostles:
"I will be handed over to people who will kill me...?"**

For those who are today suffering most from the effects of the changing climate and for generous response to their needs from the rest of the human community, we pray...

For the success of the work of ecumenical and interfaith communities to promote global unity and restore Earth as a nurturing home to all its creatures, we pray...

For the urgent, generous, and effective response of the global community in the upcoming United Nations conferences on biodiversity and climate change, COP 15 and COP 26, we pray...

That we may take up our prophetic responsibilities in this time of urgent crisis to speak God's Truth with courage, calling each other into ways of living on Earth wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently, we pray...

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving Creator God, from the explosive death of a star You planted the seeds of life on Earth. Through billions of years, You have prepared and given us a rich diversity of Earth's gifts to share. From among them all and representing them all, we offer this bread and wine, grateful for Your faithful care for all our needs.

Through them too we offer our lives, our talents, and our commitment to care for all in need on planet Earth and to work for the restoration of our common home itself. Receive them and transform our gifts and our energies into Your true Bread of Life for our world. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Gracious, Loving God, we have celebrated this Eucharist in thanksgiving for Your sacred creation in which we share and where we find our common home.

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to heal our wounds, to open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. Strengthen and protect us in the prophetic mission to heal and renew all of Earth's communities that You have entrusted to our care. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus and in the power of Your Holy Spirit where we live and move and have our being now and forever. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

*Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings**, based upon prayers of Pope Francis, and one **Simple Blessing**. Once again, these are not yet officially sanctioned for Catholic liturgical use.*



ECO-MARTYR

Berta Cáceres
(1971-2016) Honduras

EXTINCT SPECIES

Golden Toad of Costa Rica
(declared extinct 2020) South America



THIRD SUNDAY – MUSICAL SELECTIONS

September 19, 2021 | 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E - Entrance | O - Offertory | C - Communion | D - Dismissal
OCP - Oregon Catholic Press | WLP-World Library Publications

- E, D God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
Catherine Cameron, ©1967 Hope Pub. Co.
- E,D Touch the Earth Lightly
Shirley Erena Murray, ©1992 Hope Publishing Company.
- E,O,D For the Healing of the Nations
Fred Kaan, ©1968 Hope Publishing Co
- O For the Fruits of This (All) Creation
Fred Pratt Green, ©1970 Hope Publishing Co
- O Everything That Has Voice
Shirley Erena Murray, ©2003 Hope Publishing Co.
- O The Thirsty Cry for Water, Lord
Herman Stuempfle, ©1997 GIA Publications, Inc.
- C Pan de Vida
Bob Hurd and Pia Moriarty ©1988 by Bob Hurd, pub. by OCP
- C Be Not Afraid
©1975, 1978 Robert J. Dufford, published by OCP
- D This Is My Song
Lloyd Stone & Georgia Harkness, ©1964 Lorenz Publishing Co.
- D How Can I Keep From Singing
Robert Lowry

Psalm Settings

- Psalm 54: The Lord Upholds My Life
Owen Alstott, ©1970, 1990, OCP
- Psalm 54: The Lord Upholds My Life
J. Michael Joncas, ©1989, WLP
- Psalm 54: The Lord Upholds My Life
Michel Guimont, ©1994, 1998, GIA Publications, Inc.
- Psalm 54: The Lord Upholds My Life
Stephen Pishner, ©2013, 2014 GIA Publications, Inc.
- Psalm 54: You Alone Are My Help
Collegeville Composers Group, ©2005 Liturgical Press

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

September 26, 2021 | 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Numbers 11:25-29

Ps. 19:8-14

James 5:1-6

Mark 9:38-43, 45,
47-48

Integral Ecological Sign of the Cross

We begin our celebration of the 4th Sunday of the Season of Creation...

In the name of our Creator God Who drew forth from creation the human family, evolving a new consciousness of creation's splendor, inviting awe and wonder,

And of the Word of God, calling us in Jesus to freedom from sin and healing in his name,

And of the Holy Spirit, who weaves the web of life's community, moving human hearts to bring forth a New Creation. **Amen**

May the grace and peace of our God be with you!

Introductory Comments

Today's readings continue to warn us that our sinfulness is destroying our communities, the human family, and Earth, the supportive and nurturing home of us all. They challenge us to be active and prophetic in working for the New Creation in these times. And they guide us in prayer to ask for greater awareness of our "unknown faults" and of their grave seriousness, to ask for freedom from their destructive power no matter the cost.

So, as we begin, let's enter into the quiet of our spirits ... conscious of God's gift of Earth, its rich diversity of life, ... conscious of its destruction and suffering from overconsumption, exploitation, and the crisis of dangerously-rising temperatures globally ... yet home to millions of people rising up to restore, heal, and save our common home....

Creator God, You have evolved extraordinary consciousness in the human family and revealed to us creation's overwhelming power, beauty, and splendor, yet we too often respond with greed and abuse rather than awe and gratitude.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, the human community has polluted Earth's air, land, and waters, made countless species extinct, turned our greed into a major ecological crisis, devalued human life and torn the Web of Life of which we all are a part.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You are at work in us and among us now in these times, reweaving the web of life's community, restoring Earth, our common home.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, the Creator, Who is raising up prophets and inviting humanity into one loving community in a New Creation, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life. **Amen.**

Gloria: The Word of God that flared forth nearly 14 billion years ago, unfolding into the vast beauty and expanse that we know as the created Universe today, reveals to us a God of unimaginable Beauty, Creativity, Vibrancy of Life and Love. Take a moment to contemplate our true reality ... and ask for conscious awe. ... And then let's join our voices with all creation to sing our praise to God.

Opening Prayer

Gracious, Holy God of all that was, is, and ever shall be, we bless You. In Your goodness and infinite generosity, You poured Yourself out into creation, from the first flaring forth of matter and energy to this very day.

Through the slow unfolding over billions of years, You have brought forth a richly diverse, powerful, and nurturing home for all that You have created.

Open our eyes in awe at the wonder of the Universe.

Turn our hearts to gratitude for Your ongoing work of creation.

And awaken our hope for the dream of a renewed creation where Your justice and love will govern all and all will live in Your peace.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Christ, and of Your life-giving Spirit, in Whom we live and move and have our being now and forever.
Amen.

"These times demand human solidarity and collaboration totally unprecedented in human history to this time."

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

In the reading from the Book of Numbers, God bestowed some of the Spirit that was on Moses on 70 elders who immediately began to prophesy. Two other elders who were not present at this gathering also received the Spirit and began to prophesy. Joshua was upset and wanted to stop them, but Moses was clear:

"Would that all the people of God were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow the Spirit on them all!"

The scriptural understanding of prophets is not of people who predict the future. Biblical prophets are inspired to speak God's Word to the people of their time. Given the urgency and seriousness of the planetary crisis and the threats to Earth confronting us, Moses' response needs to be ours today. May God bestow the Spirit on everyone, raising people up around the planet as prophets. There is clearly urgent need for a global chorus of such prophets to speak out now as the destruction and dangers to Earth are escalating so rapidly.

The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform encourages that kind of universal prophetic response throughout the Catholic community. During the *Laudato Si'* Special Anniversary Year, a program was launched with public commitments from the various institutions that constitute the Catholic Community globally. Leaders from each of those types of institutions committed to beginning "a 7-year journey to

total sustainability in the spirit of *Laudato Si'!*" And they invite all like institutions to join them. Today's prayer for all of God's people to be prophets provides a perfect context for asking ourselves how these *Laudato Si'* Action Platform Partners in our communities can respond more fully to this commitment.



***Laudato Si'* Families.** How might each of our families join more fully in achieving the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our families join other families, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for families as families?

***Laudato Si'* Parishes and Dioceses.** How might each of our parishes and dioceses join more fully in achieving the *Laudato Si'* Action

Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our parish and diocese join other parishes and dioceses, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for parishes and dioceses as parishes and dioceses?

Laudato Si' Educational Institutions. How might each of our schools, universities, and other educational institutions join more fully in achieving the *Laudato Si' Action Platform goals* we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our educational institutions join other educational institutions, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for educational institutions as educational institutions?

Laudato Si' Hospitals and Health Care Institutions. How might each of our hospitals and health care institutions join more fully in achieving the *Laudato Si' Action Platform goals* we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our hospitals and health care

institutions join other health institutions, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for hospitals and health care institutions as hospitals and health care institutions?

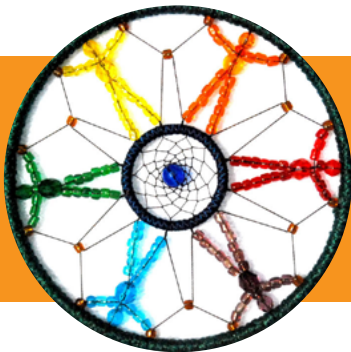
Laudato Si' Economic Entities. How might each of our economic entities join more fully in achieving the *Laudato Si' Action Platform goals* we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might they join other economic entities, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for economic entities as economic entities?

Laudato Si' Organizations and Groups. How might each of our organizations and groups join more fully in achieving the *Laudato Si' Action Platform goals* we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might they join other organizations and groups, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for organizations and groups as organizations and groups?

Laudato Si' Religious Orders. How might each of our religious orders join more fully in achieving the *Laudato Si' Action Platform goals* we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our religious orders join other religious orders, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for religious orders as religious orders?

The reading from the Letter of James is a devastating, direct condemnation of the rich. It reflects the judgment widespread through the early centuries of Christianity that those who have more than they need are in effect stealing from those who don't have the basics they need. In this age of unprecedented *inequality* between the 1% with unimaginable wealth and the vast majority of the human family, James' words are a sharply appropriate prophetic warning.

Today it is clear that this warning applies not just to wealthy individuals or groups but also to the wealthy industrialized nations. Their development through fossil-fuel-driven production has over the last century and a half polluted and warmed Earth dangerously.



The rich diversity of communities and institutions of the Catholic Community are invited to commit themselves to "a 7-year journey to total sustainability in the spirit of *Laudato Si'*."

The widespread culture and systems of competitive consumption and accumulation have consolidated global wealth, creating what Pope Francis has called “throw-away societies.” The majority of nations, often exploited and controlled by the economic and political power of the wealthy nations, remain poor and are struggling to deal with the impacts of the changing climate.

Wealthy nations and wealthy communities and individuals have an urgent responsibility to address the crises their ways of living have created for the world community. These times demand human solidarity and collaboration totally unprecedented in human history to this time.

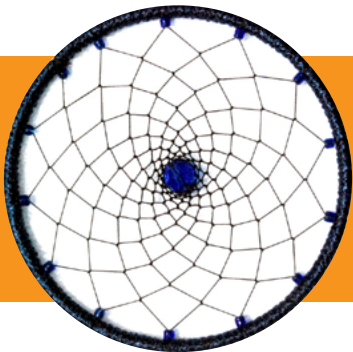
In the gospel passage, John plays the same role Joshua played with Moses. He tells Jesus that he and the others tried to stop someone who didn’t follow Jesus from driving out demons in his name. Like Moses, Jesus rejects exclusive ownership to the good works. He urges his disciples to respect those doing these works, “For whoever is not against us is for us.”

This message is important to remember as members of the Catholic community collaborate with and form networks with people of other faiths or no faith who do not share all the Church’s beliefs or moral positions. In recent years, many Catholic social service agencies around the world have come under withering attack from members of their own church in some nations for collaborating on work for justice and for protection and restoration of Earth with those who do not share the Church’s official position on controversial ethical issues, especially abortion. In working to restore Earth and save all its inhabitants from devastating suffering and destruction, our position needs to be, in the words Jesus used, that whoever is not against us is for us. And our prayer needs to be, “Would that everyone were a prophet!”

In the latter section of the gospel, Jesus gives grave warning about how seriously we need to take our sins and what terrible punishment will lie ahead for teaching the young our sinful ways. In the context of the Season of Creation, those sins include the destructive patterns of living identified by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’*,

as well as throughout these materials for this year’s Season of Creation and from so many other contemporary prophets. Jesus’s warning demands we look at how we are raising our children and how they are learning to relate to Earth.

Jesus’s repeated reference to the horror of the fiery abyss, the unquenchable fire of Gehenna draws upon the imagery of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology. And his injunction to cut out of our lives what causes us to sin is vivid and effective use of Jewish hyperbole. But the imagery of Gehenna is eerily contemporary when we see video of the massive wildfires destroying everything and everyone in their paths in Australia, the western United States, Siberia and the Arctic, Indonesia, and the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil, to name just a few. Until the human family can embrace what Pope Francis calls an integral ecological conversion, until we can cut out of our lives the sinful, destructive patterns of living on Earth that are driving climate change, we will continue more and more to face the fiery abyss, the unquenchable flames that are the contemporary incarnation of Gehenna.



“Are we willing to change the lifestyles that plunge so many into poverty, promoting and encouraging us to lead a more austere and humane life that enables an equitable distribution of resources?”

Pope Francis

The prayer of today's Responsorial Psalm

speaks to this world: a prayer for the wisdom and guidance of God, a prayer to cleanse us even from our unknown faults.

"Faith without works is dead."

We have already begun to look at the actions we might take in reviewing how the diverse communities and institutions within the Church can further realize the commitment to full sustainability through achievement of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform goals.

But the prayer that all God's people may be moved by the Spirit to prophesy, to bring God's Word of care for creation to our world, finds an inviting answer in action suggested in the goal of **Community Engagement**.

Community Engagement and Participatory Action. This goal seeks community engagement and action to develop cultures and policies that protect our common home and all who live in and on it. Actions could include advocacy, people's campaigns, engaging decision makers and encouraging rootedness in local communities.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Do actions like these resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? Are there other people, communities, networks with whom I/we can join in this type of action?

Faith Reflections

Are you among those who believe in God, Who nearly 4.5 billion years ago began to form Earth, Who patiently evolved Earth as a nurturing home for all creatures, all members of the Earth family?

Are you among those who believe in God, Who opens the ears and frees the tongues of those called to be prophets guiding us to integral conversion to nurture the New Creation among us in these times?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, God become flesh of our flesh, a human part of the Earth community, Who lived and breathed and spoke prophetic truth among us, sending us to be prophets of his Word for the healing of the Earth community?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, Who was rejected, tortured, and put to death on a cross, a faithful witness to God's call to loving care for all human beings and healing restoration for all creation?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, the risen Christ, Who is at the heart of the New Creation, guiding us in our conversion and reconciling all things to God, renewing creation?

Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit Who is working now among us to deepen

"Will we adopt ... the necessary measures to stop the devastation of the environment or will we continue denying the evidence?"

in all peoples a spirit of solidarity dedicated to service of all for the renewal of Earth as a nurturing home for all?

Are you among those who believe that with Christ and in the Holy Spirit we will rise to celebrate the New Creation?

This is our faith. Through it we see God's revelation emerging in new ways among us. Through it we embrace the promise of God's saving love and our mission to restore the household of creation. **Amen.**

General Intercessions Petitions

For ever-deepening trust in the faithful presence and loving work of God in us, among us, and through us; for ever-greater attentiveness to the Wisdom from above guiding us to respond effectively to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, we pray...

For the rich diversity of groups, organizations, and institutions within our community, that they may grow in creativity, global solidarity, and prophetic courage to address the global ecological and social crises resulting from destructive climate change effectively, we pray ...

For those who are today suffering most from the effects of the changing climate, that the human family may listen attentively to their prophetic word and respond generously to their needs, we pray ...

For the success of the work of ecumenical and interfaith communities to promote global unity and restore Earth as a nurturing home to all its inhabitants, we pray...

For the urgent, generous, and effective response of the global community in the upcoming United Nations conferences on biodiversity and climate change, COP 15 and COP 26, we pray...

That we may take up our prophetic responsibilities in this time of urgent crisis to speak God's Truth with courage, calling each other into ways of living on Earth wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently, we pray...

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving Creator God, from the explosive death of a star You planted the seeds of life on Earth. Through billions of years, You have prepared and given us a rich diversity of Earth's gifts to share. From among them and in the name of them all, we offer this bread and wine, grateful for Your faithful care.

Through them too we offer our lives, our talents, and our commitment to care for all in need on Earth and to work for the restoration of this planet as the common home for all who dwell on and in it. Receive our offering and transform our gifts and our energies into Your true Bread of Life for our world. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Gracious, Loving God, we have celebrated this Eucharist in thanksgiving for Your sacred creation and for Earth which we share with all creatures for whom it is home.

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to heal our wounds, to open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. Strengthen and protect us in the prophetic work of integral conversion and of healing and renewing all of Earth's communities that You have entrusted to our care. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus and in the power of Your Holy Spirit where we live and move and have our being now and forever. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

*Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings**, based upon prayers of Pope Francis, and one **Simple Blessing**. Once again, these are not yet officially sanctioned for Catholic liturgical use.*



ECO-MARTYR

Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN
(1931-2005) United States

EXTINCT SPECIES

Po'ouli
(declared extinct 2019) Hawaii, USA



FOURTH SUNDAY – MUSICAL SELECTIONS

September 26, 2021 | 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E - Entrance | O - Offertory | C - Communion | D - Dismissal

OCP - Oregon Catholic Press | WLP-World Library Publications

- E,D Praise to You, O Christ, Our Savior
©1986 Bernadette Farrell, published by OCP
- E All Are Welcome
Marty Haugen, ©1994 GIA Publications, Inc.
- E,D The Church of Christ
Fred Pratt Green, ©1971 Hope Publishing Co.
- O, C At the Table of the World
Brian Wren, ©1989 Hope Publishing Co.
- E, O Come Holy Spirit, Wind and Fire
Alan J. Hommerding, ©1993 WLP
- O O Beauty, Ever Ancient
©2004 Robert F. O'Connor, published by OCP
- O, D Stewards of Earth
Omer Westendorf, ©1984 World Library Publications
- O, C Here I Am, Lord
Daniel L. Schutte, ©1981 OCP
- C Life-giving Bread, Saving Cup
James Chepponis, ©1987 GIA
- D Lord, You Give the Great Commission
Jeffery Rowthorn, ©1978 Hope Publishing Co.

Psalm Settings

Psalm 19: The precepts of the Lord
Stephen Pishner, ©2013, 2014 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 19: The precepts of the Lord
Steven R. Janco, ©2010, WLP

Psalm 19: The precepts of the Lord
Michel Guimont, ©1994, 1998 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 19: The precepts of the Lord
©2019 Thomas Muglia, published by OCP

Psalm 19: The precepts of the Lord, (ref. II)
Tony E. Alonso, ©2003, 2012 GIA Publ., Inc.

Psalm 19: The precepts of the Lord
Owen Alstott, ©1977, 1990 OCP

FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

October 3, 2020 | 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 2:18-24

Ps. 128:1-6

Hebrews 2:9-11

Mark 10:2-16

Integral Ecological Sign of the Cross

We begin our celebration of the 5th Sunday of the Season of Creation...

In the name of our Creator God Who prepared the habitats that received and nourished us, support and guide us,

And of the Word of God Who calls us to union with each other and with all creation,

And of the Wisdom of God, calling forth a great symphony of beauty in the New Creation. **Amen.**

May the grace and peace, the fire and beauty of our loving Creator God be with you!

Introductory Comments

As we enter the final days of this year's Season of Creation, our readings invite us to reflect on creation and the sacredness of the bonds that unite us all. The reading from the second creation myth in Genesis focuses upon God's sensitive attention to Adam's loneliness and the special gift of human attraction and bonding that unites human persons for companionship, new life, and attentive care for Earth. In the Gospel, Jesus reminds us that what God has thus joined together, no human being must separate.

This warning takes on new, more profound and challenging meaning as we become aware through contemporary science that every creature is actually "joined together" with every other in complex and evolving webs of

interdependence. God has, we are coming to realize, joined together everything with which we share Earth and the Universe beyond in one great web of interdependent life.

As we begin, let's enter into the quiet of our spirits ... asking to be more conscious of the webs of interconnected life within which we live ... upon which we depend ... which invite our care ... asking for gratitude and awe ... asking to be part of birthing the New Creation in our times....

Creator God, in birthing the Universe, this Earth, and all its inhabitants, You have joined us together in richly interdependent and supportive ways. Too often we fail to see or respect what You have joined together, exploiting Earth to satisfy our personal desires and greed.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, in calling us to respect God's work to unite all peoples and creation itself in justice and loving peace, You challenge us to approach life with childlike simplicity and awe. Word of God, have mercy.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You are at work in us and among us in these times, reweaving the healing webs of life's communities, restoring Earth, and bringing forth a New Creation.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

Our mysterious God, from the first flaring forth of creation, has been working to bring forth ever greater communion and

richer life. May our gracious Creator have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of the New Creation. **Amen.**

Gloria: In conscious amazement at all the ways everything is connected, all things are interdependent, let's join our voices with all the stars and planets, all the inanimate and living inhabitants of our galaxy and of all Creation, to praise and glorify God.

Opening Prayer

Gracious, Holy God, in Your goodness and infinite generosity You have brought forth Earth, a richly diverse, powerful, and nurturing home for all that You have created, all that live within it and upon it.

Open our eyes in awe at the wonder of Earth. Help us to see that we are made of the same Earth materials as every other Earth creature. Help us to realize that, in mysterious ways, every creature that we encounter is at some level "flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone."

Help us to recognize our kinship with each and all Your creatures with whom we share Earth and with Earth itself. As we recognize our kinship and dependence upon each other, help us to care for each other wisely, sustainably, and with love.

Yours is the Way of justice and peace. You hold out before us the vision and hope of a New Creation. And You are inviting us to tend its growth. Bless the work entrusted to our hands that we may offer You a New Creation of justice and wholeness, a rich harvest of peace.

We ask this through Christ Jesus, Your Son and our brother, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

In the reading from the book of Genesis we see God's sensitive care for the needs of the first human, Adam, formed from the clay of the Earth. Using the same ground from which Adam was formed, God shapes and brings forth tame and wild animals and birds. Though made from the same materials, none of them "proved to be the suitable partner" capable of companionship, of sparking creativity and nurturing new life, of helping to care for creation. When Adam encounters that partner that God then brings forth for him, he recognizes that they are created for each other, to unite as one in a new and fuller union.

This suggests two reflections, one more general concerning the bonds that unite all creatures in the great community of Earth, the other more specifically focused on the human communion and creative human partnership that is the focus of this biblical text.

The Family of Earth. In the context of the Season of Creation, contemporary scientific knowledge, and Pope Francis' writings, it is important to give greater attention to those

other living creatures that this passage from Genesis refers to as "tame and wild animals and birds." While none of them proves to be "the suitable partner," they are much more integral to human life and flourishing than is portrayed in Genesis.

As the ecumenical steering committee of the Season of Creation noted in the passage quoted in the Introduction to these materials, to fully grasp human reality and the fuller life to which we are being invited, we need to look to

... the integral web of relationships that sustain the wellbeing of the Earth. The word ecology (*oikologia*) describes the relationships between animals, plants, non-sentient organisms, and minerals that each play a vital role in maintaining the balance of this beloved community. Each creature

is important and contributes to

the health and resilience of the biodiverse ecosystem in which it lives. Humans belong in the right relationship within this Earth community. We are made from the same stuff of the Earth and are cared for by our co-creatures and the land.

"Everything is connected."

Pope Francis, Laudato Si'

In other words, we have discovered that “the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all wild animals” are much more important in themselves and to Adam’s and humanity’s wellbeing than this creation myth attends to. We have come to realize that God has sensitive care for each creature in our lives not unlike that shown to the human. God has evolved and nurtures the habitats that enable each living creature to survive and thrive, to grow and form new and creative unions. And these habitats are interdependent, interwoven as a common home to support and unite all Earth’s inhabitants, including humans.

In the often-repeated words of Pope Francis, “Everything is connected!” Einstein is quoted as writing that “Separation is an illusion.” The reality is: humans are part of a vast interdependent web of life. The more we become conscious of those connections, the more we can be drawn to appreciation, even awe and gratitude for the richly complex, interdependent reality we are part of.

What we appreciate and respect, we can love. What we love we will take care of. When we recognize that trees turn toxic carbon dioxide into the air we breathe to survive, for example, we can realize how much we and most other living beings on Earth are in their debt. When we learn that the rainforests of the Amazon, central Africa, and Indonesia produce much of Earth’s atmosphere and circulate the air we breathe and the weather we depend on around the planet, it’s easy to see why they are called the essential “lungs” of Earth and why they must be protected. They are not just collections of resources without any intrinsic connection with us, available to use to increase our wealth or power. They are essential members of the sacred Web of Life, active partners making possible the life of Earth in which we share.

As we rely on their essential contributions to our lives, they rely on our protection and care for theirs.

When we are not conscious of our connections and interdependence, when we think of

ourselves as separate and apart from the trees and plants, the waters and animals, the microbes and birds, it becomes much easier to disregard how we treat them, to abuse and exploit them in ways destructive of the common good of the Earth community. Pope Francis and the ecumenical steering committee for the Season of Creation both trace the destructive patterns of consumerism, waste, and the devastation of the habitats of so many of Earth’s inhabitants to this lack of awareness and/or disrespect for the connections and interdependence of all who dwell on this planet.

Clear cutting rainforests in the Amazon, central Africa, and Indonesia to profit from the lumber or by using the land to graze animals, for example, amounts to choking the life-breath from the human community now and into the future. Lack of understanding and respect for the interdependent webs supporting life on Earth endanger its/our survival. They are steps in a death spiral, a species suicide. Climate change and all its devastating manifestations witness to this truth and stand in judgment on human lack of awareness, biases, and sin.



Humans belong in the right relationship within this Earth community. We are made from the same stuff of the Earth and are cared for by our co-creatures and the land.

Season of Creation 2021 Celebration Guide

This vast and intricate interdependence in the interwoven webs of being and life that make up Earth are the evolutionary gift of the Creative Mystery we call God. In this context, the words of Jesus in today's Gospel reading find a new, expanded, and appropriate focus: "What God has joined together, no human being must separate." We must come to know, respect, and care for the intricate and life-nourishing relationships that weave together all realities that make up the full and healthy Earth community of being.

A [traditional Iroquois prayer](#) of gratitude gives greetings and thanks to people, to Mother Earth, to the waters that are life, the fish that cleanse and purify water and provide us food, to the plants providing food and medicines, for the animals that provide food and teach us many things, the trees for their shelter and shade, fruit and beauty, the birds that remind us to enjoy and appreciate life, the winds that refresh us, and everything else we may have forgotten. One version of the prayer closes in a way that will nourish and enrich any **Ecological Spirituality**:

To All of Creation: I Give Thanks.

May I forever remember the
interconnectedness and equality of all creation
And my place in the Great Cycle of Life.
With gentleness and unity in body,
mind, and spirit
becoming one in harmony and balance
with the universe.
I give thanks.

Ecological Education. How can our work and future educational plans help to make us more conscious of the critical interdependence and rich connections uniting us with the rest of Earth's creatures?

Ecological Spirituality. How can our efforts to celebrate the gifts of creation and the loving Creator deepen our Ecological Spirituality as individuals? As a community?

Human Families and the Human Family.

A second line of reflection focuses on the traditional and more restricted application of the Genesis and Markan texts to individual human relationships, in particular to marriage. These relationships are elements within the vast webs of interdependent relationships of the Earth community we have been reflecting on.

In the context of *Laudato Si'* and the Season of Creation, it is important to recognize that Pope Francis does not consider human relationships, families, or communities somehow separate from the ecology of the planet. Everything is connected. Human relationships, families, and communities are an integral and deeply integrated part of Earth's vast interdependent ecology. They are shaped and supported by all its interwoven webs and those webs are shaped and impacted by the human communities.

The quality of human lives, families, and communities, then, is an extremely important element of the whole ecology. As is clear in these times, their impact on the Web of Life is far-reaching and deeply significant. Unhealthy families and communities quickly become seedbeds for consumerism, conflict, and other ways of living that are toxic to the common good of the integral Earth community. Care and nurture for healthy human relationships, families, and communities in all their forms are important commitments in the overall goal of total sustainability in a healthy, just, and peaceful Earth ecology.

There are many difficult and contentious issues around families and communities in these times: issues like official Catholic teaching on divorce, the nature of marriage, the various forms of marriage, types of families, gender roles, gender identities, and more. These issues are being worked through in cultures and faith communities around the planet. Although they clearly relate to the creativity and intentions of the Creator, it is naïve and too often arrogant to claim that we know God's mind and will in all these matters. Discernment in the light of the incarnation of Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit are essential. At the very least, it would be a mistake to focus on them in the context of this Season of Creation.

As we have seen from one Sunday to the next, we are being invited to take up a prophetic mission for the healing (salvation) of the whole Earth community and its restoration as nurturing home to all that dwell on and in it. The questions and discussions appropriate here include attention to questions like these based on the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform goals:



Do our efforts to embrace Ecological Education and foster deeper Ecological Spirituality help families to understand the interdependent ecologies of Earth in these times? Do they help families grow in contemplative awe and gratitude before the revelation of God in creation all around us?

Do our efforts and work for sustainability enable families to hear the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor? Are our families

and communities exploring and undertaking sustainable lifestyles? Alternative visions of the successful human life more in harmony with nature and Christ's gospel vision of the Kin-dom?

Do our efforts help families become active in the larger civic communities, engaging in ways that promote policies and institutions for responding to the Cry of Earth and the Cry of the Poor? To help families live more sustainably and justly in peace?

Are we promoting and nurturing an Ecological Spirituality of global solidarity so that the human community of Earth will become able to move effectively and urgently together for the healing and restoration of Earth as a nurturing ecology, a nurturing home for all its creatures?

Closing Note

As we come to the end of this Season of Creation, it should be clear that we human members of the full Earth community are standing at a critical, urgent, dangerous crisis point. Advancing and ever more destructive climate change is revealing Earth to be sliding quickly into devastating ecological collapse. Effective response to this situation cannot be a five-week focus on the issues annually that then turns to other issues and devotions. Pope Francis, the Vatican, and their collaborators are right in treating it as an "all hands on deck" effort over seven to ten years committed to achieving full sustainability and a planet restored to health as a nurturing home for all its inhabitants.

A new vision of interconnected and interdependent "family relations" is emerging before our contemplative presence. It is inviting us to a new level of consciousness. And it demands a new level of global solidarity for Care of the Earth and all for whom it is home if humans are to have a place in its future evolution.

The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform Goals chart a clear and promising path forward. The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform Partners connect us to committed partners for the journey.

May the Renewing Spirit of God bring to fulfillment the integral ecological conversion beginning among us.

May God's Spirit of Wisdom provide us all the wisdom and courage we need

to restore the household (*oikos*) of God on Earth, making it once again a true Home for All.

May the prophetic Spirit of God bring about true global solidarity in the human community

so that together in that Spirit

we may give birth to a great symphony of beauty in the New Creation. **Amen.**

LSAP Partners

*Families
Parishes & Dioceses
Educational Institutions
Hospitals/Healthcare Institutions
Economic Entities
Organizations & Groups
Religious Orders*

Faith Reflections

Are you among those who believe in God, Who nearly 4.5 billion years ago began to form Earth, Who patiently evolved Earth as a nurturing home for all creatures, all members of the Earth family?

Are you among those who believe in God, the Creative One giving birth to the whole family of creation, a vast and intricate web of mutual support and interdependence that invites our awe, our gratitude, and our care for its wellbeing?

Are you among those who believe in God, the Creative Source of all human families and all loving relationships, Who calls us to reverence the mystery of love among us in all its forms?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, God become flesh of our flesh, a human part of the Earth community, Who lived and breathed and spoke prophetic truth among us, sending us to be prophets of His Word for the healing of the Earth community?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, Who taught us to respect and protect all that God has joined together in so many different ways and to approach life with childlike simplicity, wonder, and joy?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, Who was judged, tortured, put to death, and then raised in the Spirit, an undying witness of hope to the power of love and life over death?

Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit Who is working now among us to deepen in all peoples a spirit of solidarity dedicated to service of all for the renewal of Earth as a nurturing home for all?

Are you among those who believe that with Christ and in the Holy Spirit we will rise to celebrate the New Creation?

This is our faith. Through it we see God's revelation emerging in new ways among us. Through it we embrace the promise of God's saving love and our mission to restore the household of creation. **Amen.**

General Intercessions Petitions

For ever-deepening trust in the faithful presence and loving work of God in us, among us, and through us; for ever-greater attentiveness to the Wisdom from above guiding us to respond effectively to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, we pray...

For the rich diversity of groups, organizations and institutions within our community, that they may grow in creativity, global solidarity, and prophetic courage to address the global ecological and social crises resulting from destructive climate change effectively, we pray ...

For those who are today suffering most from the effects of the changing climate, that the human family may listen attentively to their prophetic word and respond generously to their needs, we pray ...

For the success of the work of ecumenical and interfaith communities to promote global unity and restore Earth as a nurturing home to all its creatures, we pray...

For the urgent, generous, and effective response of the global community in the upcoming United Nations conferences on biodiversity and climate change, COP 15 and COP 26, we pray...

That we may take up our prophetic responsibilities in this time of urgent crisis to speak God's Truth with courage, calling each other into ways of living on Earth wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently, we pray....

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving Creator God, from the first flaring forth by which You gave birth to creation through billions of years, You have prepared a nurturing home for us and a special place in this vast Universe. From among Your many gifts and in the name of them all, we offer this bread and wine, grateful for Your faithful care.

"...we are being invited to take up a prophetic mission for the healing (salvation) of the whole Earth"

Through them too we offer our lives, our talents, and our commitment to care for all in need on Earth and to work for the restoration of this planet as the common home for all who dwell on it and in it. Receive our offering and transform our gifts and our energies into Your true Bread of Life for our world. We ask this in the name of Christ, Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Gracious, Loving God, we have celebrated this Eucharist in thanksgiving for Your sacred creation and for Earth which we share with all creatures for whom it is home.

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to heal our wounds, to open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. Strengthen and protect us in the prophetic work of integral conversion and of healing and renewing all of Earth's communities that You have entrusted to our care. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus and in the power of Your Holy Spirit where we live and move and have our being now and forever. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

*Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings**, based upon prayers of Pope Francis, and one **Simple Blessing**. Once again, these are not yet officially sanctioned for Catholic liturgical use.*



ECO-MARTYR

Glen Turner
(1963-2014) Australia

EXTINCT SPECIES

Thick-billed Ground-dove
(declared extinct 2016) Oceania



FIFTH SUNDAY – MUSICAL SELECTIONS

October 3, 2020 | 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E - Entrance | O - Offertory | C - Communion | D - Dismissal
OCP - Oregon Catholic Press | WLP—World Library Publications

- E For the Beauty of the Earth, by Folliet S. Pierpoint
- E Joyful, Joyful We Adore You, by Henry van Dyke
- E, D God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
Catherine Cameron, ©1967 Hope Pub. Co.
- E,O,D When Love Is Found, by Brian Wren,
©1983, Hope Publishing Co.
- E,D Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, by Charles Wesley
- O, C Love One Another, Feargal King, ©2000 WLP
- O, C Set Your Heart on the Higher Gifts,
by Stephen C. Warner, ©1992, 1994 WLP
- C One Bread, One Body
© 1978 John B. Foley, SJ, pub. by OCP
- C Pan de Vida
Bob Hurd and Pia Moriarty, ©1988 by Bob Hurd, pub. by OCP
- D Prayer of Saint Francis
St. Francis of Assisi, adapt. Sebastian Temple, ©1967 OCP
- D For the Fruits of This (All) Creation
Fred Pratt Green, ©1970 Hope Publishing Co.

Psalm Settings

Psalm 128: May the Lord bless us
Owen Alstott, ©1977, 1990, OCP

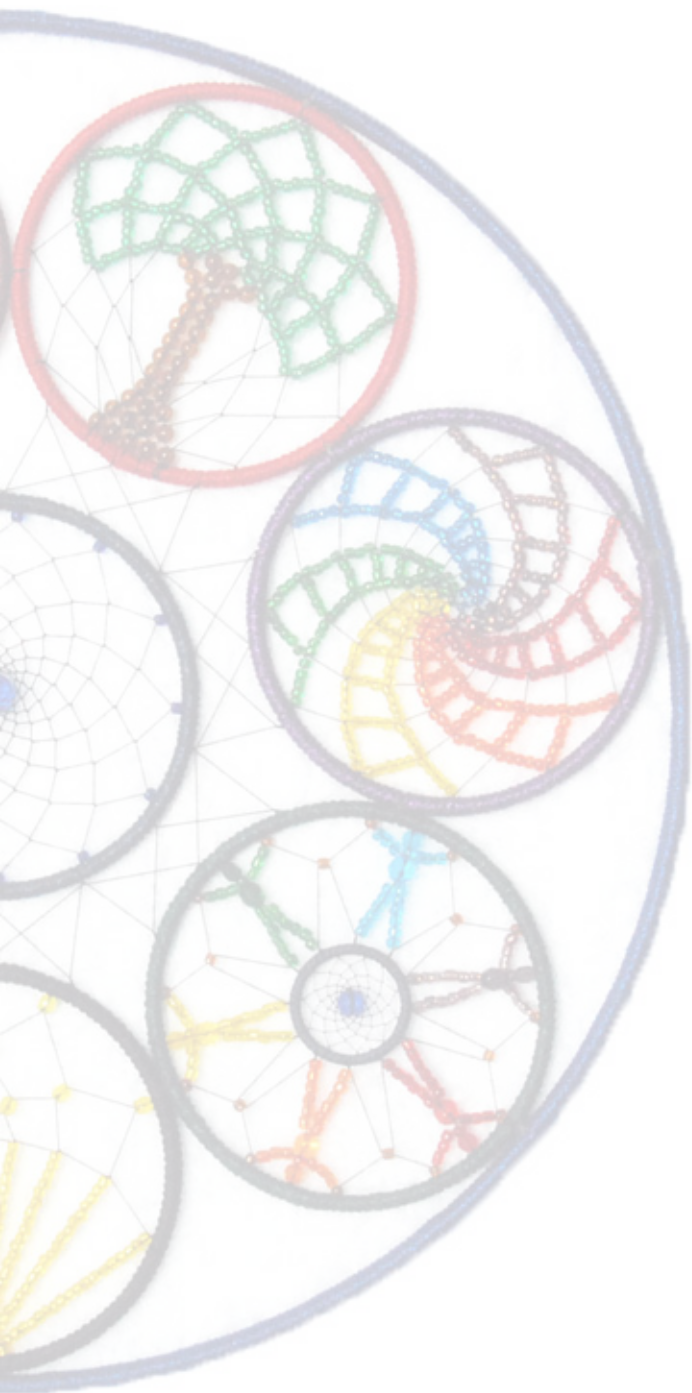
Psalm 128: O Blessed Are Those
©1981 Paul Inwood, published by OCP.

Psalm 128: Blest Are Those (refrain II)
Marty Haugen, ©1987, 1993 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 128: Blest Are Those (refrain II)
Tony Alonso, ©2012, 2014 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 128: How Happy Are You
©2005 Collegeville Composers Grp., pub. Liturgical Press.

Psalm 128: May the Lord bless and protect us
Michel Guimont, ©1994, 1998 GIA Pub., Inc.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SOLEMN BLESSINGS

For Prayerful Reflection and Public Blessing

Solemn Blessing I

We believe that all creatures come forth from the all-powerful hand of the Creator, evolving through time and space, filled with God's presence and tender love.

May God awaken our praise and thankfulness for every creature and bless us with the grace of feeling profoundly joined to everything that is. **Amen.**

Through Christ all things were made. Formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, Christ Jesus became part of this Earth, gazing upon this world with human eyes.

May Christ bless us with eyes to see him alive in every creature in his risen glory. **Amen.**

The Holy Spirit guides this world toward the Creator's love and accompanies creation as it groans in travail.

May this Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts and inspire us to do what is good, to care wisely and with love for Earth, our common home. **Amen.**

And may our Triune God, wondrous community of infinite love, bless us all with justice, peace, love and beauty, Creator, Word and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Based upon "A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation" by Pope Francis from *Laudato Si'*.

Solemn Blessing II

Our Creator God is the ultimate source of everything, the loving and self-communicating foundation of all that exists.

May God bless us with deep gratitude for our relationships with all creatures in the vast web of life. **Amen.**

Christ, the Word through whom all things were created, took flesh through Mary, becoming part of the vast web of life on Earth.

May Christ help us to be good news to the poor, to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this Earth. **Amen.**

The Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways.

May this Holy Spirit 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. **Amen.**

And may God bless us with a spirit of global solidarity flowing from the Mystery of the Trinity, Creator, Word and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Based upon *Laudato Si'*, §§ 238-240, and "A Prayer for Our Earth" by Pope Francis.

Simple Blessing

May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all, fill us with consciousness of God's presence in Earth and the vibrant life of Christ within us.

May almighty God bless us, Creator, Word, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

APPENDIX 2

MONDAY – FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS

October 4, 2021

Hymns

E - Entrance | O - Offertory | C - Communion | D - Dismissal
OCP - Oregon Catholic Press | WLP-World Library Publications

- E All Creatures of Our God and King
Francis of Assisi, tr. By William H. Draper
- E Canticle of the Sun Marty Haugen, ©1980 GIA
- E All Things Bright and Beautiful Cecil F. Alexander
- E,D Stewards of Earth
Omer Westendorf, ©1984 World Library Publications
- E,O,D Creating God, Your Fingers Trace
Jeffery Rowthorn, ©1979 Hymn Society of America
- O, D Prayer of Saint Francis
St. Francis of Assisi, adapt. Sebastian Temple, ©1967 OCP
- O Everything That Has Voice
Shirley Erena Murray, ©2003 Hope Publishing Co.
- O The Thirsty Cry for Water, Lord
Herman Stuempfle, ©1997 GIA Publications, Inc.
- C Take and Eat
James Quinn and Michael Joncas, ©1989 GIA
- C I Believe This Is Jesus Alan J. Hommerding, ©2004 WLP
- D God Is Still Speaking
Marty Haugen, ©2009 GIA Publications, Inc.
- D God of the Fertile Fields
Georgia Harkness, ©1955, Renewal 1953 Hymn Society.
- D The Church of Christ
Fred Pratt Green, ©1971 Hope Publishing Co.

Psalm Settings

Psalm 16: You Are My Inheritance, O Lord
Owen Alstott, ©1977, 1990 OCP

Psalm 16: You Will Show Me the Path of Life (Antiphon III)
Marty Haugen, adapt. Kodner, ©1988, 1994, GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 16: You Are My Inheritance
©2005, 2010 Barbara Bridge, published by OCP.

Psalm 16: You Are My Inheritance
Tony Alonso, ©2013 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 16: You Are My Inheritance, O Lord
Michel Guimont, ©1994, 1998 GIA Pub., Inc.

APPENDIX 3

MUSIC REFERENCE LIST

A Place at the Table

Shirley Erena Murray, ©1998 Hope Publishing Co.

Abundant Life

Ruth Duck, ©1992 GIA Publications, Inc.

All Are Welcome

Marty Haugen, ©1994 GIA Publications, Inc.

All Creatures of Our God and King

Francis of Assisi, tr. By William H. Draper

All Good Gifts

Matthias Claudius (We plow the fields and scatter)

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Cecil F. Alexander

At the Table of the World

Brian Wren, ©1989 Hope Publishing Co.

Bread to Share

Marty Haugen, ©1995 GIA

Be Not Afraid

©1975, 1978 Robert J. Dufford, published by OCP

Canticle of the Sun

Marty Haugen, ©1980 GIA

Christ Has No Body Now But Yours

St. Teresa of Ávila/Stephen C. Warner, ©2003 WLP

Creating God, Your Fingers Trace

Jeffery Rowthorn, ©1979 Hymn Society of America

Everything That Has Voice

Shirley Erena Murray, ©2003 Hope Publishing Co.

Flow, River, Flow

© 1986 Bob Hurd. Published by Oregon Catholic Press

For the Beauty of the Earth

Folliet S. Pierpoint

For the Fruits of This (All) Creation

Fred Pratt Green, ©1970 Hope Publishing Co.

For the Healing of the Nations

Fred Kaan, ©1968 Hope Publishing Co.

Forgive Our Sins, as We Forgive

Rosamund E. Herklots, ©1969 Oxford University Press

Gift of Finest Wheat

Omer Westendorf, ©1977 Archdiocese of Phila., International Liturgy Pub.

Glory and Praise to Our God

©1972, 1974, 2008 Daniel L. Schutte, pub. by OCP

God Is Still Speaking

Marty Haugen, ©2009 GIA Publications, Inc.

God of the Fertile Fields

Georgia Harkness, ©1955, Renewal 1953 Hymn Society.

God, Our God of Distant Ages
Omer Westendorf ©1984, WLP

God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
Catherine Cameron, ©1967 Hope Pub. Co.

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending
Robert Edwards, ©1961, Renewal 1989 Hymn Society.

God, You Spin the Whirling Planets
©1980 Jane Parker Huber (admin. Westminster John Knox Press)

Healer of Our Every Ill
Marty Haugen, ©1987 GIA Publications, Inc.

Here I Am, Lord
Daniel L. Schutte, ©1981 OCP

How Can I Keep From Singing
Robert Lowry

I Believe This Is Jesus
Alan J. Hommerding, ©2004 WLP

I Sing the Mighty Power of God
Isaac Watts

Journey of Faith
Delores Dufner, © 2012 Sisters of St. Benedict, published by WLP

Joyful, Joyful We Adore You
Henry van Dyke

Laudato Si! Be Praised
©2015 Ricky Manalo, CSP, published by OCP.

Life-giving Bread, Saving Cup
James Chepponis, ©1987 GIA

Lord, You Give the Great Commission
Jeffery Rowthorn, ©1978 Hope Publishing Co.

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
Charles Wesley

Love One Another
Feargal King, ©2000 WLP

Make of Our Hands a Throne
Steven C. Warner, ©2001 WLP

Many and Great
Dakota hymn, para. Philip Frazier

Morning Has Broken
©1931 Eleanor Farjeon

O Beauty, Ever Ancient
© 2004 Robert F. O'Connor, published by OCP

One Bread, One Body
© 1978 John B. Foley, SJ, pub. by OCP

O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Isaac Watts

Now Join We to Praise the Creator
Fred Kaan, ©1968 Hope Publishing Company

Now In This Banquet
Marty Haugen, ©1986 GIA Publications, Inc.

Pan de Vida
Bob Hurd and Pia Moriarty, ©1988 by Bob Hurd, pub. by OCP

Praise to the Lord
Joachim Neander, trans. Catherine Winkworth

Praise to You, O Christ, Our Savior
©1986 Bernadette Farrell, published by OCP

Prayer of Saint Francis
St. Francis of Assisi, adapt. Sebastian Temple, ©1967 OCP

Say to the Frightened Heart
©2012 Bob Hurd, published by OCP.

Seek the Lord
Roc O'Connor ©1976 Robert F. O'Connor, SJ, and New Dawn Music

Sing Out, Earth and Skies
Marty Haugen, ©1985 GIA

Sing, O Sing
©1987, 1989, 1992 Daniel L. Schutte, published by OCP

Stewards of Earth
Omer Westendorf, © 1984 World Library Publications

Take and Eat
James Quinn and Michael Joncas, ©1989 GIA

Taste and See
James E. Moore, Jr., ©1983 GIA

Tend the Ground
©2016 Curtis Stephan, published by OCP.

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We Give You But Your Own
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We Sing the Mighty Power of God
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House Where Charity and Love Prevail
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APPENDIX 4

REMEMBERING ECO-MARTYRS & EXTINCT SPECIES

Introduction

Martyrdom, beginning with Jesus, has a long tradition in the Church. This most radical act of sacrifice in defense of one's beliefs gives testimony to radical selfless love. In our contemporary world, we recognize the growing number of eco-prophets who, because of their complete dedication to defending life, become eco-martyrs. The lives taken in the name of profit, extraction, consumption, and accumulation of wealth cannot be simply defined as casualties of growth and development.

In addition, if we think of human eco-martyrs and how they are defined by their defense and protection of lives, habitats, and relationships, we can also include other-than-human species and creation as eco-martyrs. Scientific research increasingly illuminates evidence nonhuman species also, in their own ways, try to defend and protect their lives, habitats, and relationships. Just like human eco-martyrs, so too animals, plants, and entire ecosystems have been tortured and killed to extinction for human consumption, greed and monetary gain.

This appendix includes both human and nonhuman eco-martyrs from around the globe. This is only a small representation of a much larger story. During this Season of Creation, consider learning about your local community

and the lives that have been taken because they were considered a barrier to the current global economic and technocratic paradigm which ensures that profits not prophets will be the voice that is heard.

To learn more about the extinct species listed and many others visit the [International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened and Species](#). Each species listed in the IUCN database includes a downloadable pdf with extensive scientific data including reasons for extinction. The species highlighted here are extinct due to human activity. Precisely because they are not well known throughout the world, we have chosen to lift up their existence to give praise and glory to God for creating them as well as lament our human responsibility for not protecting them.

While there is no known central database that collects the names and stories of the world's eco-martyrs, to learn more about any of the individuals included here, a simple google search will lead to additional information.

Asia

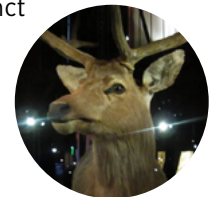
Gloria Capitan (1959-2016) was very active in the fight against coal and led in a series of mass actions and petitions calling for a permanent closure of a coal stockpile in their village. She was shot and killed July 1, 2016, in the Philippines.



Stan Swamy, SJ (1937-2021) was a vocal 84-year-old Jesuit activist for indigenous rights in India, protecting their lands and forests from mining companies and other predatory interests. Fr. Stan died in prison in July of 2021.



Schomburgk's Deer, declared extinct in 2015. Commercial production of rice for export began in the late nineteenth century in Thailand's central plains, leading to the loss of nearly all the grassland and swamp areas that this deer depended on, and greatly fragmented what remained. Intensive hunting pressure at the turn of the 19th-20th century restricted the species further and it disappeared in the 1930s.



Credit: iucnredlist.org/species/4288/79818502

Africa

Ken Saro Wiwa (1941-1995)

was a Nigerian environmental activist. He was a member of the Ogoni people, an ethnic minority whose homeland was targeted for oil drilling and suffered extreme ecological damage from decades of indiscriminate oil waste dumping. He led a nonviolent campaign against the damage done to the land and waters by multinational oil companies, especially Shell. At the height of the campaign, he was tried by a special military tribunal on trumped up charges and hanged in 1995.



Wayne Lotter, (1965-2017),

was a South African leading elephant conservationist and head of an anti-poaching NGO who was shot dead in Tanzania on 16 August 2017.



St. Helena Olive, declared extinct in 2004. The majority of the population was probably lost to deforestation following the establishment of a permanent colony on St Helena by the East India Company in 1658. Trees were cleared for pasture land and also to provide fuel and timber, for which the hard, yellow wood was probably reasonably prized.



Credit: [iucnredlist.org/species/37598/67372241](https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/37598/67372241)

Latin America

Berta Cáceres, (1971-2016)

a Honduran environmental activist and indigenous leader, was co-founder and coordinator of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). She was involved in numerous land and water struggles alongside indigenous Lenca communities across western Honduras. Her efforts to stop construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Gualcarque river, in the community of Río Blanco, led to her murder in her home on March 2, 2016.



Macarena Valdés, (1983-2016)

was a young Mapuche environmental activist, opponent of the hydroelectric project of the transnational company RP Global (Austrian company) and the Chilean Saesa. She was found hanged in her home on August 22, 2016. Initially her death was catalogued as "suicide" by police and the Forensic Medical Service, a thesis that all her acquaintances discarded from the beginning. After multiple investigations, on January 16, 2018 the forensic doctors declared: "the thesis of suicide of environmental activist Macarena Valdés is discarded".



Golden Toad of Costa Rica, declared extinct in 2020. Its restricted range, climate change, chytridiomycosis and airborne pollution probably contributed to this species' extinction.



Credit: [iucnredlist.org/species/3172/54357699](https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/3172/54357699)

*"You have the bullet
... I have the word.
The bullet dies when
detonated, the word
lives when spread."*
Berta Cáceres

North America

Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN (1931-2005)

born in the U.S., a Notre Dame de Namur sister, moved to Brazil as a missionary in 1966 and eventually became a Brazilian citizen. She settled in Anapu, a city in the state of Pará, in the Amazon Basin of Brazil. She dedicated herself to defending the Amazon rain forest and the indigenous poor who lived there from loggers and landowners who wanted their land. This led to death threats against her. She was shot to death while walking through the forest to a community meeting on February 12, 2005.



Native Americans of the United States and Canada

have been systematically and forcibly removed from their ancestral lands, tortured, and murdered to the point of extinction by the U.S. and Canadian governments and institutions like the Catholic Church for centuries with complete impunity. To this day Indigenous Peoples throughout the Americas and the world continue to defend and die protecting their lands, cultures, and spirituality.



Poo-uli declared extinct in 2019. Habitat destruction and modification and the rapid spread of disease-carrying mosquitoes in the lowlands are thought to be responsible for past declines.



Credit: iucnredlist.org/species/22720863/153774712

Oceania

Glen Turner (1963-2014)

was an environmental officer who was shot and killed over a land dispute in New South Wales, Australia, in 2014. His murderer was facing prosecution by the Office of Environment and Heritage over illegal land clearing of critical koala habitat. In May 2016, his murderer was convicted and jailed for a maximum of 35 years.



Thick-billed Ground-dove

declared extinct in 2016.

The species is likely to have declined through a combination of predation by the widespread introduction of cats and rats on Makira and habitat destruction. Most lowland forest has been logged or is in logging concessions, and the larger pigeons are targeted by local hunters.



Credit: iucnredlist.org/species/22691056/93301654



A HOME FOR ALL? RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD

SEASON OF CREATION 2021 | A CATHOLIC LITURGICAL GUIDE

Special Thanks to Creative Team

AUTHOR

James E. Hug, S.J.
Adrian Dominican Sisters

CONTRIBUTOR

Amy Woolam Echeverria
Columban Missionaries

SPANISH TRANSLATOR

Lic. Ariana Díaz Acuña
Laudato Si' Movement

MUSIC GUIDE

Denise Mathias
Adrian Dominican Sisters

COVER ART

Vincent Busch, SSC
Subanen Crafts

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Beth Ponticello
CEDC / Stuart Center

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Ecology Desk of Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral
Human Development: *Laudato Si'* Action Platform

LISTEN: Laudato Si' International Scholars of Tertiary
Education Network

For information about the Season of Creation and this Liturgical Guide contact:

LISTEN Coordinating Team | listennetwork7@gmail.com

Ariana Díaz Acuña
Amy Woolam Echeverria
Jacqui Remond
Uta Sievers



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