



A Week-Day Prayer Service for the Season of Creation 2020

“Cultivating Hope”

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

We thank the Lord for our own beautiful environment, the coastline, hills, valleys and escarpment of the Illawarra, our farmlands, communities and the rich diversity of species which live within it.

We also acknowledge the Traditional owners of the country, the Wadi Wadi people, and recognize their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.

Sing: For the Beauty of the Earth (John Rutter)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Opening Prayer:

O Creator God, open our eyes and our hearts to the wonders of your presence among us. May we see the signs of your beauty within and about us and ever be in awe of the simple gifts of life. Help us to reach beyond ourselves and to give thanks for all of your creation that share this universe with us; people of every nation, animals of every species, all forms of vegetation, the planets, stars, and all the elements. We pray this in union with the incarnate Word of God in whose image all was created. Amen

Confession

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

Words of Assurance

When God created the world, God saw that it was "very good".
God loved the world, the cosmos, so much that God sent Jesus,
not to condemn it, but to save the world, the cosmos, through him.
So hear again Christ's words of grace to us:

"You are forgiven."

And so we give thanks to God and commit ourselves once more to seeking to live out this love in our lives.

Readings

A reading from the Book of Job:

'But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
Or the birds of the air, and they will tell you.
Or speak to the earth and it will teach you
Or let the fish of the sea inform you.
Which of all these does not know
That the hand of the Lord has done this?
In God's hand is the life of every creature
And the breath of all humankind
(Job 12; 7-10)

Listen: Creator and Poet

Father and Mother, creator and poet,
speaking your wisdom in forest and glade:
telling your glory in ocean and river,
pouring your pleasure on all you have made.

Christ of the cosmos, you sang into being,
galaxies spinning through measureless space;
coming among us, and sharing our weakness;
singing your songs of redemption and grace.

Spirit, you danced at the dawn of creation,
rising, rejoicing on jubilant wings.
Yours is the rhythm of cycle and season,
yours is the heartbeat of all living things.

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Gospel: Mark 16:15

And he said to them, Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

(short pause)

Meditation with Meister Eckhart

Apprehend God in all things

for God is in all things

Every single creature is full of God

and is a book about God

Every creature is a word of God.

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature –

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

So full of God is every creature.

Prayer of the faithful

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

1. We pray for all leaders in Church and State as they strive to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor at home and in the global south.
2. Your plundered earth with its varieties of endangered species is crying out for healing. Help us to be instruments of that healing in our own local area.
3. The sun, the wind and the waves are your gifts for the flourishing of the whole community of life on earth. Help us to use them creatively to produce sustainable energy for all.
4. We pray for environmentalists, recyclers, farmers, gardeners and fishermen. May they be supported in their sustainable efforts to preserve the earth for future generations.
5. We pray for visionaries, artists, musicians and writers that through their work we may see creation afresh.
6. The earth you have created O God, has evolved to produce enough food for all humanity. Yet many of your children are hungry or even starving. Help us to appreciate simple, locally- produced food once more, so that people in other countries are not denied land to grow food and flowers for us.
7. Nourishing God, may people, creatures and all that lives and grows have the water they need to live their lives fully. Help us to solve the problems of safe drinking water, drought, flooding, sanitation and disease that none may be in want.

8. We thank God for being with us each day. Guide scientists in their efforts to find a vaccine for the coronavirus.
9. Give eternal rest to the women and men around the world who have been murdered for their work in caring for our common home.

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

Our Father....

Our Father who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory
World without end, Amen

FINAL BLESSING:

Bless us, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
as we go forth with joy and hope to care for God's creation,
- walking gently on the earth,
- in right relationship,
- nurtured by your love,
- taking only what we need,
- giving back to the earth in gratitude,
- honouring all with reverence,
- reconciling and healing,
- mindful of those who will come after, and of the poor today
- recognising our proper place as part of, not apart from, your creation.
Ignite your spark within us, that we may know ourselves as truly human and irrevocably part of the web of Life.

Amen

Adapted from a service prepared by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference
<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2020/07/15/season-of-creation-2020/>