

PRAYER SERVICE FOR *Earth Day*



“Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.”

- Pope Francis
May 21, 2014

LEADER: Come, let us praise God for the gift of Creation.

READER 1: Psalm 148: 4-13

Let them all praise the Lord's name; for the Lord commanded and they were created,
Assigned them duties forever, gave them tasks that will never change.
Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deep waters;
You lightning and hail, snow and clouds, storm winds that fulfill his command;
You mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;
You animals wild and tame, you creatures that crawl and fly;
You kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all who govern on earth;
Young men and women too, old and young alike.
Let them all praise the Lord's name, for His name is exalted, majestic above earth and heaven.

LEADER: We thank God for Creation and for our place within this gift. The teachings of our Church call us to be good stewards of the earth. They call on us to take climate change seriously and to be active in responding to it.



READER 2: A reading from the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*

Care for the environment represents a challenge for all of humanity. It is a matter of a common and universal duty, that of respecting a common good, destined for all, by preventing anyone from using “with impunity the different categories of beings, whether living or inanimate — animals, plants, the natural elements — simply as one wishes, according to one’s own economic needs.” It is a responsibility that must mature on the basis of the global dimension of the present ecological crisis and the consequent necessity to meet it on a worldwide level, since all beings are interdependent in the universal order established by the Creator. “One must take into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in an ordered system, which is precisely the ‘cosmos.’ ” (#466)

READER 3: A reading from a delegation of U.S. Catholic Bishops

Humankind on the Planet Earth is ordained to live in equity, justice and dignity, peace and harmony in the midst of the order of Creation. Humankind is ordered to treat respectfully Creation, which has value in itself. We recognize the atmosphere, rainforests, oceans and agricultural land as common good that require our care...We recognize that in line with truly democratic principles, the poor and the poorer nations, who are many and are more affected by climate change impacts, are also agents in the development of nations and human life on earth. They also give us a voice and a sense of hope in our times as we face crises such as climate change. (*20th Conference of the Parties, United Nations Climate Change Conference, December 2014*)



READER 4: A reading from Pope Francis

The human family has received from the Creator a common gift: nature. The Christian view of Creation includes a positive judgement about the legitimacy of interventions on nature if these are meant to be beneficial and are performed responsibly, that is to say, by acknowledging the “grammar” inscribed in nature and by wisely using resources for the benefit of all, with respect for the beauty, finality and usefulness of every living being and its place in the ecosystem. Nature, in a word, is at our disposition and we are called to exercise a responsible stewardship over it. Yet so often we are driven by greed and by the arrogance of dominion, possession, manipulation and exploitation; we do not preserve nature; nor do we respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations. (*World Day of Peace, January 1, 2014*)



PRAYER SERVICE



LEADER: Let us pray. For the many times we displayed a lack of concern for the environment,

ALL: Lord, forgive us and have mercy on us

LEADER: For our misuse of the environment because of greed and gain,

ALL: Lord, forgive us and have mercy on us

LEADER: For the lack of vision that prevented our leadership from working together for the common environmental good,

ALL: Lord, forgive us and have mercy on us

LEADER: May the Lord forgive us and guide us to become responsible stewards of Creation, aware of what is happening to the earth, and ready to act and advocate for the good of the entire planet. May our praises to God for the gift of Creation energize us to see, reflect, and act.

ALL: Creator God, we praise you for the grandeur of the universe.

We praise you for the gift of this Earth.

We praise you for the land, and we praise you for the seas.

We praise you for the great miracle of teeming life on our prolific planet.

We praise you for the cycle of growth and for the beauty of the spring.

We praise you for the green growth of the summer and for the holy harvest of the fall.

We praise you for the different creatures on the land and in the sea, each unique in its own way, each fitting into the complex ecosystems you have gifted us with, each dependent on each other and the whole.

We praise you, our Creator.

Grace us with a sense of our responsibilities to preserve and protect your precious gift, this Garden, this Earth.

LEADER: We praise you again and again, Creator God, and thus we offer you our hearts and hands for the preservation of your Creation. Amen.

