

PRAYER SERVICE FOR 1ST SEPTEMBER

INTRODUCTION

The Season of Creation has a special significance for the Catholic Church since Pope Francis established September 1st as an annual "World Day of Prayer" for the care of Creation.

The Season of Creation is celebrated throughout the Christian world from September 1st to October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

The Prayer Service here is for a formal church setting. For other purposes you may wish to shorten it or even do your own with readings and/or hymns of your choice.

Leader:

"Laudato Si' mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord" is the name of the recent letter of Pope Francis that invites us to consider our shared responsibility for the world in which we live and our connectedness with all living beings and all the gifts of creation. The letter begins in this way: 'In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs" (Laudato Si 1.)

(A member of the congregation lights a candle on the altar).

Procession with Plants, Flowers and Fruits of the Harvest grown or produced in Ireland. (Or these may be placed at the altar in advance).

If not using a hymn a short commentary could be spoken.

SONG: ('All Creatures of Our God and King' or another hymn with a creation theme.)

All Sing: All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!

Refrain: O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in Heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou rising moon, in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening, find a voice!
Refrain

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear,
O praise Him! Alleluia,
Thou fire so masterful and bright,
That givest us both warmth and light.
Refrain

Dear mother earth, who day by day
Unfoldest blessings on our way,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
Let them His glory also show.
Refrain

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!
Refrain

(A member of the congregation lights a candle on the altar).

Let us pray: O Creator God, open our hearts and our eyes 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 shares this universe with us: peoples 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.

LITANY OF REPENTANCE

Leader: O God, your fertile earth is slowly being stripped of its riches,
All: Lord have mercy.

Leader: O God, your living waters are slowly being choked with chemicals and plastic,
All: Christ have mercy.

Leader: O God, your clear air is slowly being filled with pollutants,
All: Lord have mercy.

Leader: O God, your creatures are slowly dying and your people are suffering,
All: Christ have mercy.

Leader: God our Maker, so move us by the wonder of creation, that we repent and care more deeply.
All: Lord have mercy.

Leader: So move us to grieve the damage to the climate and the loss of life,
All: That we learn to cherish and protect your world.

(Short pause for reflection as a member of the congregation lights a candle on the altar).

FIRST READING:

Book of Wisdom 11:24-26-12:1

For you love all things that exist and
detest none of the things that you have made,
For you would not have made anything if you had hated it.
How would anything have endured if you had not willed it?
Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved?
You spare all things, for they are yours,
O Lord, you who love the living.
For your immortal Spirit is in all things.

OR

Job 12:7-10

But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being.

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH (L.S. 246)

All say: All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Reader 1 Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

All say: O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of the earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Reader 2 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.

All say: Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Reader 3 Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united
with every creature,
as we journey towards your infinite light.

All say: We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
For justice, love and peace.

(Short silence as a member of the congregation lights a candle on the altar)

REFLECTION Reading

The earth is at the same time mother,
She is mother of all that is natural, mother of all that is human.
She is the mother of all, for contained in her are the seeds of all.
The earth of humankind contains all moistness, all verdancy,
all germinating power.
It is in so many ways fruitful.
All creation comes from it. Yet it forms not only the basic raw
material for humankind, but also the substance of the
incarnation of God's Son.

Hildegard of Bingen (Mystic and Doctor of the Church)

(Short pause for quiet reflection)

PRAYERS OF PETITION:

All: O Lord hear us we pray. O Lord give us your love.

Reader 1: We pray for all international, national and local leaders and for managers of companies that they may be guided to make wise decisions that promote the healing and protection of the earth and the good of all people, especially the poor, and other species.

All: O Lord hear us we pray. O Lord give us your love.

Reader 2: That the church may develop partnerships of action with others to address the pressing issues of our planet especially climate change, biodiversity and clean water and sanitation for all.

All: O Lord hear us we pray. O Lord give us your love.

Reader 3: Creator God, the sun, the wind and the waves are your gifts for the flourishing of the whole community of life. Help us to use them creatively to produce sustainable energy for all.

All: O Lord hear us we pray. O Lord give us your love.

Reader 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.

All: O Lord hear us we pray. O Lord give us your love.

Reader 5: Our plundered earth with its rich variety of species is crying out for healing. Help us to be instruments of that healing in our own local area here.

All: O Lord hear us we pray. O Lord give us your love.

Reader 6: We pray for visionaries, artists, architects and writers, that through their work we may see creation afresh.

All: O Lord hear us we pray. O Lord give us your love.

Reader 7: Give eternal rest to people throughout the world who have been murdered for their efforts to protect God's creation.

All: O Lord hear us we pray. O Lord give us your love.

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 and to protect biodiversity. 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

Leader: Our Father, who art in heaven....

All: you are also at home in the air, soil, forests and oceans,

Leader: Hallowed be Your name....

All: by the care we take of your creation

Leader: Your kingdom come...

All: Your will to till and care.

Leader: Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven....

All: All that you see is good,

Leader: Give us today our daily bread....

All: That all may have sufficient to live life in fullness

Leader: Forgive us our trespasses....
All: our greed, our exploitations, our lack of concern for other species and for future generations,
 Leader: As we forgive those who trespass against us....
All: by reconciliation with justice and peace
 Leader: Lead us not into temptation....
All: the temptation to equate dominion with exploitation,
 Leader: And deliver us from evil....
All: the evil of destroying your gift of creation (ECI)

(A member of the congregation lights a candle on the altar).

RITUAL AND/OR COMMITMENT

(Soft music can be played in background for either suggestion below)

Leader: We are now invited to make a personal silent commitment to care for “our common home”. Here are some ideas or choose your own

Plastic

- **Refuse** single use plastics e.g. cling film, straws, plastic cutlery.
- **Switch** to a re-usable water bottle/travel cup.
- **Avoid** plastic wrapping when possible.
- **Use** cloth bags for shopping and **bring/use** your own containers when possible.
- **Check for** and then avoid micro beads in products.
- **Reduce-Repair-Re-use-Recycle-Upcycle.**
- **Check** the new recycling list. www.recyclinglistireland.ie
- **Organize** a recycling workshop in your parish/community (www.voiceireland.org)
- **Show a film** or documentary on the topic of plastic in your parish community.
- **Participate** in a beach, stream, river, park, street, area, road cleanup.
- **Take** the Laudato Si Pledge. www.catholicclimatemovement.globalpetition.

AND/OR

Distribute bulbs for planting at home and have a planting of some in/or at the Church during or after this service.

(A member of the congregation lights a candle on the altar).

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

RECESSIONAL

(‘How great thou art’ or a hymn with a similar theme)

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy pow’r throughout the universe display’d.

*Then sings my soul, my saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

Refrain: *Then sings*

(Russian Hymn based on Psalm 8, Romans 5 and 1 Thessalonians 4)

SOME ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FOR 1ST SEPTEMBER

All Things Bright and Beautiful.

Lyrics:

All things bright and Beautiful,
All things great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountains,
The river running by,

The sunset and the morning,
That brightens up the sky.

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

Reading: (Excerpt from “Hieroglyphic Stairway” by Drew Dillinger)

It's 3:23 in the morning
and I'm awake
because my great great grandchildren
won't let me sleep.
My great great grandchildren
ask me in dreams
What did you do while the planet was plundered?
What did you do when the Earth was unravelling?
Surely you did something
when the seasons started failing?
As the mammals, reptiles, birds were all dying?
Did you fill the street with protest
when democracy was stolen?
What did you do once you knew?..."

A Reflection by Theo Dorgan

When great ships come back,
And come they will,
When they stand in the sky
All over the world,
Candescent suns by day.
Radiant cathedrals in the night
How shall we answer the question:

What have you done
With what was given you
What have you done with
the blue, beautiful world?

A Gathering Prayer

Leader: We join with the earth and with each other.

Leader: To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air

All: We join with the earth and with each other.

Leader: To renew the forests
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures

All: We join with the earth and with each other.

Leader: To celebrate the seas
To rejoice into the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars

All: We join with the earth and with each other.

Leader: To recreate the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children

All: We join with the earth and with each other.

Leader: We join together as many and diverse expressions
of one loving mystery: for the healing of the
earth and the renewal of all life. (U.N. ENVIRONMENTAL SABBATH PROGRAM)

A poem by Marcienne Reinstra - To Weavers Everywhere

God is weeping,
the beautiful creation tapestry
She wove with such joy
Is mutilated, torn to shreds
reduced to rags
Its beauty fragmented by force.

God is weeping,
but look!
She is gathering up the shreds
To weaving something new.

God sits weaving,

Patiently, persistently
With a smile that radiates like a rainbow
On her tear streaked face.

And she invites us
Not only to keep offering her
The shreds and rags of our suffering
And our work
But even more-
To take our place beside her
At the loom
And weave with her
The tapestry of the new creation.

Beginners - A poem by Denise Levertov

But we have only begun to love the earth
We have only begun
To imagine the fullness of life.
How could we tire of hope?
-so much is in bud.

How can desire fail?
-we have only begun
to imagine justice and mercy,
only begun to envision
how it might be
to live as siblings with beast and flower
not as oppressors.
Surely our river,
cannot already be hastening
Into the sea of non being.
Surely it cannot
drag, in the silt,
all that is innocent?
Not yet, not yet-
there is too much broken
that must be mended,
too much hurt we have done to each other
that cannot yet be forgiven.
We have only begun to know
the power that is in us if we would join
our solitudes in the communion of struggle.
So much is unfolding that must complete its gesture
So much is in bud.

THE CRY FROM A WOUNDED PLANET

Sons and daughters of the Earth,
You who know good and evil:
Life is in danger! Show that you care!

DISCOVER THE WHOLENESS
The Earth is a tapestry woven without seams.
No-one has the right to tear it apart.

SENSE THE HOLINESS
A holy fragrance hovers over all that exists.
Life must be valued, protected and loved.

REJOICE IN THE BEAUTY
Creation has a wealth of its own.
Nothing is mere raw material.
The gifts of the Earth must be handled
With devotion and gratitude.

REMEMBER THE CONTEXT
Your life is woven into the pattern
of all life on Earth.
All that you have is given to you in trust.
You must pass it all
onto those who come after you.

STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE
Mother Earth has enough
to meet the needs of all,
But not to satisfy their greed.
The gap between poor and rich
Is contempt for human dignity.

LIVE IN RECONCILIATION
Sons and daughters of the Earth,
You who have the power to tear up the tapestry:
You are called to a life of reconciliation!