

What is the Season of Creation?

“Let Justice and Peace Flow” is the theme of this year’s ecumenical Season of Creation, inspired by the words of the prophet Amos: “Let justice flow on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” (5:24). When we “seek first the kingdom of God” (Mt 6:33), maintaining a right relationship with God, humanity and nature, then justice and peace can flow like a never-failing stream of pure water, nourishing humanity and all creatures.

How can we contribute to the mighty river of justice and peace in this Season of Creation? First, let us join the mighty river by transforming our *hearts*. Second, let us add to the flow of this mighty river by transforming our *lifestyles*. Lastly, for the mighty river to continue flowing, we must transform the *public policies* that govern our societies and shape the lives of young people today and tomorrow. In this Season of Creation, as followers of Christ on our shared synodal journey, let us live, work and pray that our common home will teem with life once again. May the Holy Spirit once more hover over the waters and guide our efforts to “renew the face of the earth” (cf. Ps 104:30).

[excerpted: [Message from His Holiness Pope Francis](#) for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, Sep 1, 2023]

What is the Season of Creation at St. Pat’s?

Each September, the Roman Catholic Church joins with other Christian denominations across the globe to mark the Season of Creation (September 1 through October 4, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi). Here at St. Patrick Church-Bridge Ave., we also mark the season with creation-focused prayers and songs at liturgy and weekly reflections on the Sunday readings. The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together. During the Season of Creation, we join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home. Learn more at <https://seasonofcreation.org/about/>

What prayer can I use with my family & friends during the Season of Creation?

Creator of all,

From your communion of love life sprung forth like a mighty River and the whole cosmos came into being.

On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden. You placed into right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable. We broke with the flowing communion of love and sinned against you by not safeguarding the conditions for life.

We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats, we grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished, and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls us through the book of Scripture and the book of creation. Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow in all creation.

Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace, and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures around us, and all creation.

Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the living waters of God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

SUNDAY READINGS

Reflections & Prayers on Care for God's Creation

(prepared by the St. Patrick Creation Care Team)

Sunday, September 10, 2023

Reading 1

Ez 33:7-9

Thus says the Lord: You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

R. (8) If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts.

Reading 2

Rom 13:8

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Gospel

Mt 18:15-20

Jesus said to his disciples: if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Reflection

Pope Francis's message for Care for Creation underlines the 2023 theme "Let Justice and Peace Flow." This theme focuses attention on the significant role of injustice and violence in the current climate crisis. We are urged to contribute to this River of Justice and Peace by resolving to transform our hearts, our lifestyles, and the public policies ruling our societies for the healing of the Earth. In today's letter from St. Paul to the Romans, Paul says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no evil to the neighbor, hence love is the fulfillment of the law." Who is our neighbor, but all of God's Creation? (Resource: Dominican Spirituality Center for Mission, A Catholic Liturgical Guide)

Prayers of the Faithful

That we may renew our vocation as stewards of God's creation by hearing the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, acknowledging God's love so that Justice and peace will flow like a mighty River, we pray to the Lord...

Action

Read and try 10 ways you can make a difference:

catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/10-ways-you-can-make-difference

Take an "Awe Walk": walking and meditating on the meaning and beauty of God's Creation, be it big or small. Reflect on St. Francis of Assisi and his Canticle of Creation, giving thanks to the glory of God!

Sunday, September 17, 2023

Reading 1

Sir 27:30—28:7

Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight. The vengeful will suffer the LORD's vengeance, for he remembers their sins in detail. Forgive your neighbor's injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

R. (8) The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.

Reading 2

Rom 14:7-9

Brothers and sisters: None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For this is why Christ died and came to life...

Gospel

Mt 18:21-35

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.

Reflection

Today's readings require us to act mercifully and justly toward all whom we are harming through our thoughtless destruction of the Earth's stable climate. We've been responsible for a great majority of the damaging gases and yet others in many poorer places around the earth suffer sooner and more severely. We can expect God's mercy for our weather disasters only when we act to alleviate our victims' ever greater ongoing disasters. Reconciliation with our neighbors and our natural world can follow our humble acknowledgement of responsibility, request for forgiveness, and serious actions to recompense them and prevent further harm. We can know that God's mercy for our beloved creation will honor our repentance and renew its blessings for us.

Prayers of the Faithful

Forgiving God, Having called and empowered us to live and die in Christ, we ask you to strengthen our resolve and effective action to repair and renew the lives and environment disrupted by our merciless demands, that we may live in your holy creation sustainably with all our brothers and sisters.

Prayer

God of compassion, have mercy on us.
Heal our relationship with all creation.
Forgive us our mistreatment and neglect
of the creatures who share the earth with us.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent
for what we have done to harm them,
and for what we have not done to help them.
Fill us with your Spirit, that we may care for one another and for all creatures,
according to your will and in the fulness of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Sunday, September 24, 2023

Reading 1

Is 55:6-9

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked his thoughts; let him turn to the LORD for mercy; As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18

R. (18a) The Lord is near to all who call upon him
The Lord is just in all his ways and holy in all His works.

Reading 2

Phil 1:20c-24, 27a

Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Gospel

Mt 20:1-16a

Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Reflection

No matter what stage of life we are at right now, we are called by God to work for all to share the bounty of this earth, not just those who have the money and resources to profit by exploiting earth's resources. We are called by Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, to take measures now to work at saving our only planet and not wait around for someone to ask us "Why do you stand there idle?", when our planet is in crisis.

Prayers of the Faithful

Bless the farm workers and immigrants who labor in our fields to feed the people of this country, that they may receive a just wage and safe, healthy living conditions, we pray to the Lord of all.

Prayer

For a just, habitable and sustainable common home, we pray:
Merciful God and Creator of all,
We praise You for the gift of the earth, home to so many forms of life
The common home of peoples, cultures, and species
We have made it an unjust place
where some consume and pollute more than others, and
the poorest face the greatest impacts of climate change.
Therefore, we ask You to help us achieve climate and ecological justice
So that no one takes for themselves what belongs to all,
that we may share the world's goods equitably, and live simply
so that we may bear witness that the earth is the sister and mother of all.
Help us to respect its rhythms of regeneration, so that it may sustain all
living beings both in the present and for future generations.
Amen.

(Originally written in Spanish by Daniel Castellanos Velasco, religious brother of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit congregation, LSM Spiritual consultant. Mexico.)

Sunday, October 1, 2023

Reading 1

Ez 18:25-28

But if he turns from the wickedness he has committed, and does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned away from all the sins that he has committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R. (6a) Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.

Reading 2

Phil 2:1-11

Brothers and sisters:

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vain glory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for their own interests, but also for those of others.

Gospel

Mt 21:28-32

Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him."

Reflection

Our season of creation ends on St Francis Day, October 4. The theme this year, "Let justice and peace flow like a river," came from international ecumenical religious leaders. It is from Isaiah 43:19: "Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth, will you not be aware of it. I will put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert." How we need God to put rivers in the desert, and how God needs us to stop damaging creation. Our prayers and actions for our common home and its future need to continue after St Francis Day. You are welcome at Creation Care. Meetings are on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 in the Club Building

Prayers of the Faithful

That we may see children and generations of the future as more important than ourselves and do what is right and just for the earth, our common home, we pray.

Prayer

Creator of all,

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In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Blessing of Earth (Our Common Home) during the Season of Creation
(Prayer of the four directions)

Prayer facing North:

Great God of wonder
Our eyes are turned toward You
In the direction where You speak to us
From the north.

You are the power over the harshness of our lives.
The stormy winds, the great winds, the great snows.

Give us the strength and courage to walk
Facing the strong winds in life
And to walk firmly with You
So our steps may not falter.
Amen

Prayer facing South:

O gentle One,
You send us the soft winds and rains
From the direction we are now facing

Soften our troubles and cool them
With your refreshing breeze.

May goodness be always in our hearts, mildness in our speech.
May our lives open and bloom at Your bidding.

As we face You in the direction of the south,
We are reminded of the things that make us happy
Friends, family, community and You,
O great power and source of all life.

We ask You to keep us close to You,
Cleanse us with your refreshing rains.
And help us to walk with You always.
Amen.

Prayer facing East:

O divine Creator ,
Maker of all that is,
Who always has been,
Behold us here standing facing You,
The source of our life.

May the rising sun remind us of You,
Who gives us great wisdom and strength:
Listen to us, as we call upon You.

Be merciful to us, O morning star, there at the place where the sun comes up,
Help us, your people,
As we walk your sacred path and live in a manner pleasing to you.
Give us the light needed
To follow Your path.
Amen.

Prayer facing West:

Creator of the setting Sun,
We send our voices up to You.

We gaze upon Your splendor and beauty,
We thank You for the day spent,
We pray, Great Spirit, that our journey through life
May know the harmony and rhythm of the setting Sun.
Amen.

The sweet song of creation invites us to practice an "ecological spirituality" (Laudato Si', 216), attentive to God's presence in the natural world. It is a summons to base our spirituality on the "loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion" (ibid., 220). For the followers of Christ in particular, this luminous experience reinforces our awareness that "all things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being" (Jn 1:3). In this Season of Creation, we pray once more in the great cathedral of creation, and revel in the "grandiose cosmic choir" made up of countless creatures, all singing the praises of God. Let us join Saint Francis of Assisi in singing: "Praise be to you, my Lord, for all your creatures" (cf. Canticle of Brother Sun). Let us join the psalmist in singing, "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!" (Ps 150:6). (Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation)