

# Land Blessing

We present here a liturgy or prayer service for the parish that can be adapted for use in the classroom or for any group or family who wishes to pray together. Where possible this blessing could be used outdoors in a park, by a holy well or on church grounds.

## Greeting and Introduction

**Priest/Deacon – from now on referred to as the Presider:** In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**

**Presider:** Peace be with you.

**All: And with your spirit.**

**Presider:** Today we gather together in prayer, song, and solidarity with the people of Honduras. We listen to their story of how climate change affects their home, family, and community. We ask God to bless them and the land that he has given us. That we care for it, work with it and praise him who gave us this earth as our common home.

**Reader 1:** *The Canticle of Creation* by Saint Francis of Assisi

O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God,  
to you belong praise, glory,  
honor and all blessing.  
Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation  
and especially for our Brother Sun,  
who brings us the day and the light;  
he is strong and shines magnificently.  
O Lord, we think of you when we look at him.  
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon,  
and for the stars  
which you have set shining and lovely  
in the heavens.  
Be praised, my Lord,  
for our Brothers Wind and Air  
and every kind of weather  
by which you, Lord,  
uphold life in all your creatures.  
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,

who is very useful to us,  
and humble and precious and pure.  
Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire,  
through whom you give us light in the darkness:  
he is bright and lively and strong.  
Be praised, my Lord,  
for Sister Earth, our Mother,  
who nourishes us and sustains us,  
bringing forth  
fruits and vegetables of many kinds  
and flowers of many colors.  
Be praised, my Lord,  
for those who forgive for love of you;  
and for those  
who bear sickness and weakness  
in peace and patience  
– you will grant them a crown.  
Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister Death,  
whom we must all face.  
I praise and bless you, Lord,  
and I give thanks to you,  
and I will serve you in all humility.

*(Moment of silence)*

**Presider:** Gospel Matthew 5:13–16

*Salt and Light*

*'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.*

*'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.*

*In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'*

**Presider:** We listen to the story of Miriam and her daughter Maria.

**Reader 2:** Miriam and her six-year-old daughter Maria live in Cuyamel. Their village is built around a life of fishing and farming. The small village where the family lives is often victim to flooding. Years ago the village of Cuyamel was one hundred meters away from the sea. As a result of a massive earthquake in 2009, the seabed has sunken by 60 cm, and this, combined with rising sea levels caused by climate change, means the village is now prone to devastating flooding.

When the floods come, mother and daughter grab hold of each other and run. The alert is sounded that the flood is coming and they have little time to get ready. Maria says that she shouts 'let's go, let's go' to her mother because she is so afraid of the water.

They must run fast as the water brings with it timber and other debris. If you are hit with one of these you could get badly hurt.

On returning home, the family spends days cleaning their home, which is now damp and mouldy.

Miriam says: 'It's really sad when I come back and see how my house looks. I want to run away and never return. The sea brings sand and is full of garbage.'

Salt from the sea water stays on the land and means food cannot be grown. In the Gospel of Matthew we are told that you are the salt of the earth, while in the scriptures salt is used to refer to purification, as a preservative, and for taste. However, in Cuyamel, salt has become damaging, destructive and is stopping the

growth of crops. How can we restore the salt of the earth to its rightful place?

*(Moment of silence)*

**Ritual (Blessing of Salt):**

**Presider:** We bless this salt here before us, Salt purifies, gives taste and preserves our food. We need salt to live.

However, too much salt can sting, cause a distaste, damage our land and bodies.

We bless this salt then we scatter it over our lands and boundaries in the hope that the Lord will bless our land and families.

**All: Amen.**

**Presider:** As we scatter this blessed salt, we are mindful of how precious Mother Earth is. The gift that we have been given and the responsibility we have to protect our common home.

**While scattering our salt we say:**

*Lord Jesus,*

*With faith in you, we scatter this salt*

*And seek your blessing.*

*Protect our family, home, and land from all harm*

*And keep us safe in mind and body*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

*(Prayer by Kildare and Leighlin Dioceses)*

**Presider:** Let us go forth to be lights of the world caring for our of creation. Let us Bless the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**