

# Recommendations for Sunday Liturgies during The Season of Creation 2023



**Join Christians around the world as we pray and take action to care more  
deeply for Our Common Home.**

**These resources are provided by the Laudato Si' Working Group of the Irish  
Bishops' Conference.**

**You can find further material on the international website  
[www.seasonofcreation.org](http://www.seasonofcreation.org) and on the Irish Bishops' Care for Our Common  
Home webpage**



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### **This year's theme: Let Justice and Peace Flow**

The Prophet Amos cries out: "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5: 24) and so we are called to join the river of justice and peace, to take up climate and ecological justice, and to speak out with and for communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity.

Our prayers, sermons and liturgies must call for justice not only for humans but for all creation. Justice, allied with peace, calls us to repent of our ecological sins and to change our attitudes and actions. Righteousness demands that we live in peace, not conflict with our human neighbours, and building right relationships with all of creation. 'Peace' (shalom) involves not only the absence of conflict but positive, life-giving relationships with God, ourselves, our human neighbours, and all creation.

We are invited to join the river of justice and peace on behalf of all Creation and to converge our individual identities, of name, family or faith community, in this greater movement for justice, just like tributaries come together to form a mighty river. As the people of God, we must work together on behalf of all Creation, as part of that mighty river of peace and justice.

### **This year's symbol:**

The Prophet Isaiah proclaims: "Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert." (Isaiah 43: 19). Biodiversity is being lost at a rate not seen since the last mass extinction. The hope of keeping the average temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius is fading. The world which humans have known, enjoyed, and celebrated is changing rapidly beyond repair. The futures of young people are threatened by the cascading impacts of the loss of biodiversity and a changing climate. Industrialization, colonisation and the extraction and consumption of resources have created great wealth, unequally distributed. Powerful Global North nations have grown wealthy at the expense of Global South nations and Indigenous and subsistence communities. Today's climate and ecological emergency hurts the most vulnerable, many living in the least wealthy nations, who have contributed the fewest emissions. Indigenous peoples make up five percent of the world's population and protect nearly 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity.

We are presently more aware than ever of the link between fossil fuels, and violence and war. We can, however, dream and work for a world where each country produces the energy they need from God-given gifts of the sun and wind, rather than going to war for fossil fuels. The urgency grows and we must make visible peace with Earth and on Earth, at the same time that justice calls us to repentance and a change of attitude and actions. As we join the river of justice and peace with others then hope is created instead of despair. Streams can rise in the desert. An economy of peace can be built instead of an economy based on conflict.

## Some ideas for before your Season of Creation Liturgy 2023

- Parishes may choose **one particular Sunday** in the Season of Creation (1<sup>st</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October) to celebrate the season using these resources.
- Invite volunteers, children or adults, to dress in nature costumes – bees, insects, fish, and to welcome the congregation before mass.
- Technology can enhance the celebration in terms of visual resources. You might consider using our video of Pope Francis' message for this year which is available on the Irish Bishop's Conference Website under Care for Our Common Home – Season of Creation Resources.
- Consider how this year's symbol of the Mighty River might be incorporated into your liturgy. You might have a central space incorporating the theme of water; this could be simply done linking the baptismal font with blue cloths reaching towards that space if appropriate. We have a beautiful outdoor *Ritual by a River* resource also online.
- You can download the Season of Creation Logo and display it around the church: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eniPzon4pCcyhSbnuDSdf7PfpqUH4>
- As well as liturgy, our individual actions during the Season of Creation are important. Celebrating creation, taking part in clean-ups, planting trees, and reducing our carbon footprint are some of the immediate actions we can take. Maybe mark this Season outdoors after mass with a tree planting service?
- We ask that the Season is referred to in some way in each Sunday liturgy, for example in the prayers of the faithful, throughout this time.

## Suggestions for Music:

- St Francis' Canticle (could be used as a Psalm)
- Come to the Water (John B Foley SJ) Listen: <https://youtu.be/EcxRvfTC2D8>
- This is holy ground (Christopher Beatty). Sung by John Michael Talbot: <https://youtu.be/1YCXLbQ6CIA>
- Look at the World (John Rutter) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxr8QBPq1z0>
- Our God Reigns
- Deirdre Ní Chinneide: Oscail Mo Chroi (meditative chant) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW7niPuhxpY>
- All Creatures Great and Small
- Ag Críost an Síol
- Psalm 38: All the Ends of the Earth
- For the Beauty of the Earth (John Rutter) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlBkpAm3fhw>
- How Great is Our God (Chris Tomlin)
- Laudate Omnes Gentes (Taizé)
- How Great Thou Art
- Taizé Chants: e.g. Laudate Omnes Gentes
- God Has Given us the Earth (Grow in Love hymn) <https://vimeo.com/280567593>



### **Sacred Space & Entrance Procession suggestions:**

- During opening hymn, children in nature costumes could wave colourful cloths and bring them to the Altar, with a globe, banners or other symbols.
- The theme of “Let Justice & Peace Flow” should be emphasised in the sacred space, alongside the Mighty River theme or a banner for the Season of Creation.
- Use Earth’s elements: fire, water, earth, wind. Be creative.
- Statue of St. Francis (patron of ecology) or a picture of Irish saints such as St. Brigid, St. Kevin; use the Celtic Cross making links with our Celtic Spirituality.
- Tree saplings could be available for planting after the mass / pot plants. (see separate Tree Planting resource on [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org) or [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie) Season of Creation page).



A Mighty River  
Amos 5: 24

**Let Justice  
and Peace Flow**  
Season of Creation 2023

## MASS FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION 2023



### **Introduction** (Priest, Leader of Care for Creation Group or Reader)

I am happy to welcome you to this celebration of the Eucharist during this Season of Creation. The Season of Creation is a time marked throughout the Christian world from 1<sup>st</sup> September (the World Day of Prayer for Creation) to 4<sup>th</sup> October (Feast of St. Francis of Assisi) and celebrates the joy of creation as well as encourages awareness-raising initiatives to help us to heal and protect Our Common Home. The theme this year is **Let Justice and Peace Flow**. The Prophet Amos cries out: “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Amos 5: 24) and so we are called to join the river of justice and peace, to take up climate and ecological justice, and to speak out with and for communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity.

Creation never ceases to proclaim to us. We celebrate in the awareness that our world is suffering deeply from numerous environmental crises as well as conflict in many regions. These global crises are interconnected and affect millions of people but are experienced most deeply by the poor and vulnerable. The earth is crying out to us, but are we listening now to the Book of Creation? May this Season inspire us and strengthen us in our efforts to protect our common home.

### **Penitential Rite**

O Gracious God, Creator Spirit, Source of life, you have given order, light and life to the world around us, and you have expressed delight in your creation. You commanded us to till and care for the garden of life. And yet, we have trampled on the beauty of your creation and neglected to keep your Word. As we begin Mass today, we seek God’s mercy and forgiveness for the times that we have offended against the integrity of God’s creation.

And so, O God of Creation:

1. You have created land and trees, animals and all living creatures on the earth. We are destroying the forests through poisons and logging, the voices of the birds, insects and forest dwellers are silenced, Lord have mercy
2. You created the wonders of the ocean, the fish, shells, reefs, whales, waves, corals. Through the warming of the oceans and as they drown in plastic, their voices are being stilled, Christ have mercy
3. You created Mother Earth, our common home, who sustains us. Human activities are causing the destruction of her delicate ecosystems as we contaminate the atmosphere with harmful emissions, Lord have mercy

May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our ecological sins, and inspire us to care for our common home, Amen.

### **Introduction to the Gloria**

As we say/sing the Gloria, let us remind ourselves that we are praising and celebrating God as the author of our universe.

## **Homily Notes for each Sunday of the Season of Creation 2023**

**These notes can be adapted as appropriate for your setting**

### **Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A – Season of Creation 1**

**September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023 - Matthew 16:21-27**

**By Bishop Martin Hayes**

Jesus came among us and is with us to nurture life. The fulfilment of that purpose meant his suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus faced the reality of opposition filled with the hope of new life. Jesus, in stating that he was destined to go Jerusalem was indicating the beginning of the final stage of his earthly ministry - his upcoming suffering, death, and resurrection.

Peter tried to stop him, but Jesus makes it clear that it is not God's way and reminds us that we too must take up our cross and follow him. We are called to live in harmony with the rhythm of the life of Jesus. We are, of course, assured that Jesus is with us always, yes, until the end of time (Mt 28:20).

As we begin our Season of Creation, we give thanks believing that creation in all its beauty and diversity communicates the mystery of God's presence.

Pope Francis in his message for the Season of Creation, in accord with the theme, 'Let Justice and Peace Flow', calls us to live in harmony with creation. He says that just as the heartbeat of babies in the womb are in harmony with that of their mothers so we can sense the maternal heartbeat of the earth. In calling us to renew our relationship with the earth, Pope Francis states that it involves our relationships with God, with each other, with creation and with ourselves. We are interconnected with all of life (LS 66).

In entering the rhythm of the life of Jesus, the Son of God, we enter the rhythm of God's gift of creation, the Common Home of our interrelationships. The climate crisis, as highlighted by the sciences, and impacting upon the poor, opposes that rhythm of life. As Christians, we are called to enter the flow of justice for humanity and for creation. Indeed, St. Paul (2nd Rd.) calls us not to model our behaviour on this world, but 'let your behaviour change'. Jesus, filled with a fire burning in his heart, like Jeremiah (1st Rd.), stayed with the flow of his calling to go to Jerusalem. His urge to keep going despite opposition was irrepressible. We too are called to tune into this urge of Jesus to renounce everything for the sake of the cause of justice and peace. Pope Francis in his Season of Creation Message urges us to enter the flow of justice for the earth by changing our lifestyles and advocating for the public policies that care for our Common Home.

May we, in trusting in the rhythm of life of Jesus, be renewed in our caring for our Common Home.

**Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A – Season of Creation 2**  
**September 10<sup>th</sup> - Matthew 18:15-20**

**By Jane Mellett**

Matthew chapter 18 is concerned with how the early Christian community might live together in harmony. It reminds us that the church should be a place where the least are considered the greatest and the last first; where we look out for the most vulnerable, where we are accountable to one another and forgive each other. In today's text, Jesus sets out a vision for his followers concerning disputes within the community. The process he lays out is a respectful one and it is also realistic, because some people will not respond to this advice. The teaching reminds us that as church, we belong to one another, sisters and brothers, one body (1 Cor 12).

As we celebrate this beautiful Season of Creation, this is an appropriate text, for it invites us to reflect on how we are called to live in harmony. The realities of the ecological crises our world faces today highlights the great *disharmony* which exists between humanity and God's creation. We are not living in right relationship with the natural world nor with our sisters and brothers who are suffering the most from the climate and biodiversity crises. We are not living in right relationship with young people who are now growing up for "*we may well be leaving to coming generations, debris, desolation and filth*" (*Laudato Si'*, 161). Pope Francis calls the destruction of nature an "ecological sin". This is not easy to hear, for it makes demands on us. The good news is that there is a cure. *Laudato Si'* calls us to a profound interior conversion where our relationship with nature is concerned. Today's Gospel reminds us that there are moments when we must speak the truth in love for the greater good. The Season of Creation presents us with such a moment where we can create awareness across our communities so that together we can discern how to care more deeply for God's creation. For this is our common home, the home we all share. We are not alone, Christ is with us on this journey: "*For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them*".

*"The climate crisis is a deeply spiritual crisis...Our faith offers us a wonderful vision to rekindle these relationships, to renew a childlike sense of awe, wonder and beauty and thus set out in living the first commandment God gave to us, to be guardians and protectors of this beautiful world, not its polluters and destroyers."* - Archbishop Dermot Farrell, [\*Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor, \(Pastoral Letter\)\*](#).



**Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A – Season of Creation 2**  
**September 17<sup>th</sup> - Matthew 18:21-35**

**By Nóirin Lynch**

In this week's readings, we hear about kindness and greed as Jesus tells the parable of the servant whose debt is forgiven. We sometimes think that this gospel is about how many times we are asked to forgive others. Yet on reflection, we can see the challenge is actually much deeper than numbers. We are being challenged to realise how blessed we are and invited to use our privilege and power to support, not oppress, all around us. Let us be, like the Lord, "kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion".

In Matthew's account of the Gospel, we hear Jesus' parable about a king forgiving a debt – that is, the King uses his power to set someone free from what was oppressing them. Then we hear how the now-free-from-debt servant fails to offer the same freedom to another. This enrages the King, who condemns the man. His condemnation is not about the money though. Instead, the King expects that the privilege granted to his servant would have transformed his heart, and he is shocked that it hasn't. The servant had had the experience but missed the meaning – the opportunity to grow and live in kindness. Instead, he chose to remain greedy.

Those of us who rarely know hunger, who have never lost our homes to floods or fires, who live in a democratic state are privileged. It might not always feel that way, in fact we might worry a lot about what is owed to us, but we actually have a blessed life. When we remain consumed by what others 'owe us' or whether others deserve what they have, we lose sight of God's generous grace.

This week's gospel, and this season of creation, is an opportunity to notice where our heart is – trapped in fear and greed, or open and grateful. The first reading today asks: "Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from the Lord?" We ask our leaders, our churches, our neighbours and ourselves – Could anyone know the love of God and not recognise and respect God present in every living thing?"

"In effect, there is a clear link between the protection of nature and the building of a just and equitable social order. There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature, without a renewal of humanity itself." – Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*.

"As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life" – Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 207.

**Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A - Season of Creation 4**  
**September 24<sup>th</sup> - Matthew 20:1-16**

**By Sally Simpson**

Today's Gospel reading is challenging. We hear in this reading from Matthew about the owner of the vineyard who employs people at different times of the day to tend the vineyard. Some work a full day, others only a few hours, and yet they are all paid the same amount. We might agree with the first reading, God's ways are not our ways. The parable challenges our understanding of how we live, work and care for each other.

Many interpretations of this parable see the owner of the vineyard as God and God's people as the workers. During this Season of Creation we are called to care for the land, to "till it and to keep it" (Gen 2:15). In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis invites us to move away from the idea that we have complete dominion over the earth. He says, "we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures" (LS, 67). He invites us into a relationship of mutual responsibility with the earth where we take what is necessary for our sustenance but that we also care and protect the land for future generations.

We can also look at this reading from the perspective of what it is to be a just employer and of current employment practices. The landowner in the parable makes a point of going out to engage all those looking for work. In our world today, so many people have to work more than one job just to make ends meet? We often hear of situations where workers are working long hours, for little reward while profits go back to making the businesses richer. There is serious inequality where corporations focus solely on making profits and those who shape our economy keep GDP as the measuring tool.

This is often at the expense of the earth and the poor. We are so often told that the richest 10% of the world hold 85% of the world's wealth, while the bottom 90% hold the remaining 15% of the world's total wealth. A recent survey showed that the world's ten richest people doubled their wealth over the past two years, while 99% of others' income dropped.

Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si* talks about "big picture thinking". Like the owner of the vineyard, we are called to work for the common good, to have a preferential option for the poor, to raise their voices and the voice of the earth, the vineyard. The owner of the vineyard pays everyone the same, regardless of their work. This may sound ludicrous, but parables often leave us puzzled. We might ask the question: what would our society look like if everyone was raised up and empowered? The more we can provide meaningful work with a just wage for all, the more everyone will feel included and can be given the opportunity to flourish. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis urges those in power to work for the "universal destination" of the world's goods and that everyone has the right to their access. (LS, 93). He says, "the rich and the poor have equal dignity, for 'the Lord is the maker of them all' (Prov 22:22; cf. LS, 93).

May we expand our vision and see as Jesus sees. May we see the needs of our brothers and sisters and respond. The parable of the vineyard owner challenges us to grow and to work for the common good, to love God and neighbour so that the quality of life for all may improve.

## Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A– Season of Creation 5

1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 – Matthew 21:28-32

By Finbarr Keaveney

In the Gospel today, the work in the vineyard may be compared to the urgent work of caring for our common home, this sacred planet, and all of its forms which live in delicate ecosystems where everything is connected. Like the first son in Jesus' parable, we must change our minds, turn around our lives if we are to go to work in the vineyard today, and help create the reign of God.

“Let Justice and Peace Flow” is the theme chosen for Season of Creation 2023, the ecumenical celebration held each year from September 1st to October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Inspired by the words of the prophet Amos: “Let justice flow on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” (5:24), we are called to join the river of justice and peace, to take up climate and ecological justice, and to speak out for communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity.

In his message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, Pope Francis asks: How can we contribute to the mighty river of justice and peace in this Season of Creation? What can we, particularly as Christian communities, do to heal our common home so that it can once again teem with life? We must do this by resolving to transform our *hearts*, our *lifestyles*, and the *public policies* ruling our societies. Pope Francis invites us to join the mighty river by firstly transforming our *hearts*. This is essential for any other transformation to occur; it is that “ecological conversion” which Saint John Paul II encouraged us to embrace: the renewal of our relationship with creation so that we no longer see it as an object to be exploited but cherish it instead as a sacred gift from our Creator. Furthermore, we should realize that an integral approach to respect for the environment involves four relationships: with God, with our brothers and sisters of today and tomorrow, with all of nature, and with ourselves. As to the first of these relationships, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the urgent need to recognize that creation and redemption are inseparably linked: “The Redeemer is the Creator and if we do not proclaim God in his full grandeur – as Creator and as Redeemer – we also diminish the value of the redemption”. Creation refers both to God's mysterious, magnificent *act* of creating this majestic, beautiful planet and universe out of nothing and to the continuing result of that act, which we experience as an inexhaustible *gift*. During the liturgy and personal prayer in “the great cathedral of creation”, let us recall the great Artist who creates such beauty, and reflect on the mystery of that loving decision to create the cosmos. (Pope Francis, Season of Creation, 2023).

Second, Pope Francis invites us to add to the flow of this mighty river by transforming our *lifestyles*. Starting from grateful wonder at the Creator and his creation, let us repent of our “ecological sins” ... These sins harm the world of nature and our fellow men and women. With the help of God's grace, let us adopt lifestyles marked by less waste and unnecessary consumption, especially where the processes of production are toxic and unsustainable. Let us be as mindful as we can about our habits and economic decisions so that all can thrive – our fellow men and women wherever they may be, and future generations as well. Let us cooperate in God's ongoing creation through positive choices: using resources with moderation and joyful sobriety, disposing and recycling waste, and making greater use of

available products and services that are environmentally and socially responsible. (Pope Francis, Season of Creation, 2023).

Lastly, for the mighty river to continue flowing, Pope Francis notes that we must transform the *public policies* that govern our societies and shape the lives of young people today and tomorrow. Economic policies that promote scandalous wealth for a privileged few and degrading conditions for many others, spell the end of peace and justice. It is clear that the richer nations have contracted an “ecological debt” that must be paid. We read in *Laudato Si’*: “A true ‘ecological debt’ exists, particularly between the global north and south, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time” (*Laudato Si’*, 51). The world leaders who will gather for the COP28 summit in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December next must listen to science and institute a rapid and equitable transition to end the era of fossil fuel. According to the commitments undertaken in the Paris Agreement to restrain global warming, it is absurd to permit the continued exploration and expansion of fossil fuel infrastructures. Let us raise our voices to halt this injustice towards the poor and towards our children, who will bear the worst effects of climate change. I appeal to all people of good will to act in conformity with these perspectives on society and nature.

Pope Francis ends the message with a short prayer: 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).[7]

*Message of his holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 1st September 2023.*

*Short silence after the homily*

## **Introduction to the Creed**

As we stand to recite the Creed, notice that we are speaking to God who is the ‘Creator of heaven and earth’.

## Options for Prayers of the Faithful

1. O Creator God, in this month of creation time, teach us to see your footprints in the beauty of creation. Help us to listen to the voice of creation, inspire us to respect the rights of all people, and all living species to share in your gifts today and to be always mindful of those who come after us. Lord hear us,
2. God of all life, we give thanks for the gift of the earth, our common home. At this time, many people, the oceans, and the eco-systems of the earth are struggling to survive. Help us to change our ways, to join this river of justice and guide us to live a life which is not centred exclusively on ourselves but on the needs of others and the worship of you as our ultimate concern.  
Lord hear us,
3. At this time in human history, we are mindful that the survival of our planet and the well-being of humanity is threatened. Let us pray that UN Agreements to reduce global warming and to care for the poor will be honoured by governments throughout the world. Give courage to world leaders as they meet in the coming months to make crucial decisions for our common home. Lord hear us,
4. Let us pray for each other at this time that we may live the vision and values of Pope Francis' encyclical *On Care for our Common Home*. In particular we pray for greater attention to social justice, climate justice, and intergenerational justice. Lord hear us,
5. Lord, we pray that we may gain a deeper appreciation of the beauty and diversity of all that you have created. As we journey through our Synodal process, help us to also listen to the voice of creation, to acknowledge how deeply interconnected we are with each other and with the natural world. Lord hear us,
6. Lord, in the spirit of the call of your Son, Jesus, to follow Him by renouncing ourselves, may we resolve to curb all selfish individual actions that conflict with our interrelationship with each other and with the natural world. Lord hear us
7. Lord, on this Sunday – day of rest and recreation - we give thanks for the faith we celebrate in your Son, the Risen Jesus Christ, who has inspired us to gather in thanksgiving and praise.
8. Lord, may we have the courage to give expression to our faith with practical actions for the betterment of each other and of your creation to ensure the rejuvenation of our common home. Lord hear us

## Offertory Procession

- A loaf of bread and bowl of grapes could be brought to the altar.
- Indicate that we have bread and wine to offer only because of the work of our endangered pollinators; bread and wine are gifts from the Earth, gifts from God.
- If symbols were not brought up at the beginning of the liturgy; soil, seeds, plants or a tree for planting could also be offered.

**Suggested Music:** Ag Críost an Síol

## Our Father

As we pray this prayer over the coming weeks, let us ask forgiveness for our sins against Creation and the poor. Let us be reminded of our deep interconnectedness with all that exists and that at the centre of the Lord's prayer we say: **thy will be done on earth** as it is in heaven.

## Before Communion

The celebrant could read aloud the prayer usually said quietly by the priest: 'Lord Jesus Christ, may our receiving of you ... be for us protection in mind and body, and a healing remedy'.

**Post-communion Reflection** *Please see Appendix for further examples.*

**From Laudato Si', 236:** 'The Eucharist is an act of cosmic love: yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. The Eucharist joins heaven and earth: it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration. In the bread of the Eucharist creation is projected towards divinisation, towards unification with the Creator himself.'

## The Canticle of Creatures (St. Francis)

Most High, all-powerful Lord,

Yours are the praises, the glory,

and the honour and all blessing.

Praised be you, my Lord, with all Your creatures,

especially Sir Brother Sun, who is the day,

and through whom You give us light.

And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;

and bears a likeness of You, Most High one.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,  
in heaven You formed them, clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,  
and through the air, cloudy and serene,  
and every kind of weather through which you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister water,  
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother fire,  
through whom You light the night, and he is beautiful and playful  
and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,  
who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit  
with coloured flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love,  
and bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed those who endure in peace,  
for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks  
and serve Him with great humility.

### **Final Blessing**

- Indicate theme of next Sunday's Mass
- We are encouraging parishes to plant a tree during the Season of Creation, invite people to join outside if possible. You can use our Tree Planting resource found on the [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie) or [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org) Season of Creation resource page.
- The Final Blessing to include all aspects of creation, including what is around the Altar and outside the Church.

**Presider:** The Mass is ended. Go in Peace to listen to the voice of creation and care more deeply for our common home.

## **As Congregation Exits**

- Small gift of seeds, bulbs, prayer card, booklet, photo, given out by children in costumes
- Planting of a native Irish Tree on church grounds to mark the Season of Creation 2023. Involve local groups and local media.
- Inviting people to *take off their shoes and stand on holy ground* (Ex 3:1-15)

## **APPENDIX - POST COMMUNION REFLECTIONS**

### **1. Prayer for the Season of Creation 2023**

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 us 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 to 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 into 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.



## 2. A Prayer for the Earth (from Laudato Si, 246)

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.  
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.  
O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.  
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.  
Touch the hearts  
of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly united  
with every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.  
We thank you for being with us each day.  
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace.

### **3. A Christian prayer in union with creation (from Laudato Si, 246).**

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.  
They came forth from your all-powerful hand;  
they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.  
Praise be to you!  
Son of God, Jesus,  
through you all things were made.  
You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother,  
you became part of this earth,  
and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.  
Today you are alive in every creature  
in your risen glory.  
Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light  
you guide this world towards the Father's love  
and accompany creation as it groans in travail.  
You also dwell in our hearts  
and you inspire us to do what is good.  
Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,  
teach us to contemplate you  
in the beauty of the universe,  
for all things speak of you.  
Awaken our praise and thankfulness  
for every being that you have made.  
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined  
to everything that is.  
God of love, show us our place in this world  
as channels of your love  
for all the creatures of this earth,  
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.  
Enlighten those who possess power and money  
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,  
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,  
and care for this world in which we live.  
The poor and the earth are crying out.  
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,  
help us to protect all life,  
to prepare for a better future,  
for the coming of your Kingdom  
of justice, peace, love and beauty.  
Praise be to you!  
Amen.

#### 4. St Patrick's Breastplate

I arise today, through the strength of heaven,  
The light of the sun, radiance of the moon, splendour of fire,  
The speed of lightning, the swiftness of wind,  
The depth of the sea, the stability of the earth, the firmness of rock.  
I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me,  
God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me,  
God's shield to protect me, God's host to save me  
From everyone who shall wish me ill, afar and near.  
Against every cruel and merciless power, that may oppose my body and soul,  
Christ with me, Christ before me,  
Christ behind me, Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.  
I arise today  
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,  
Through belief in the Threeness, Through confession of the Oneness  
of the Creator of creation.



## **5. WALK DON'T RUN By Rob Bell**

Walk, don't run.

That's it. Walk, don't run.

Slow down, breathe deeply,

and open your eyes because there's a whole world right here within this one.

The bush doesn't suddenly catch on fire,

it's been burning the whole time.

Moses is simply moving slowly enough to see it.

And when he does, he takes off his sandals.

Not because the ground has suddenly become holy,

but because he's just now becoming aware that the ground has been holy the whole time.

Efficiency is not God's highest goal for your life,

neither is busyness,

or how many things you can get done in one day,

or speed, or even success.

But walking, which leads to seeing,

now that's something.

That's the invitation for every one of us today,

and every day, in every conversation, interaction, event,

and moment: to walk, not run.

And in doing so,

to see a whole world right here within this one.

## **6. The Hazel Nut by Julian of Norwich**

'God showed me a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand. I looked upon it and wondered, "What might this be?" And I was answered, "It is all Creation."

I marvelled how it could last, for I thought it might suddenly fall to nothing, it was so small.

And I was answered, "It lasts and ever shall last, for God loves it.'

In this little hazelnut, I saw three truths: the first is that God made it; the second is that God loves it; and the third is that God keeps it safe.'

## **7. The Eucharist and Creation – Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 236**

'The Eucharist is an act of cosmic love: yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. The Eucharist joins heaven and earth: it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration. In the bread of the Eucharist creation is projected towards divinisation, towards unification with the Creator himself.'

## **8. The Dance of Creation: Brian Grogan SJ, *Creation Walk* 90-91**

We may imagine heaven, not as an endless choir practice on a wet Sunday afternoon, but as the unrestricted and all-inclusive joy of dancing in a transfigured universe. Even an initial awareness of the infinite imagination and power of God who plays in creation shows that ours is already a dancing universe.

We are part of the unfathomable weave of the universe, immersed in its deep mystery. Its dance has already begun: it has always been in process. Each of us has a role in it. Jesus and his Father are working (John 4:34) for the good of all creation and we can tune in to their signals and do likewise. Thomas Merton says that every moment and every event in every person's life, plants seeds of spiritual vitality in their hearts. This is the divine at work on Earth: this is grace, and grace is everywhere. All is sacred, and so are we. We must not desecrate our Common Home. We belong to the great Creation Story, to a whole that is infinitely greater than ourselves. We are called even now to share with all of creation 'in the freedom of the children of God' (Romans 8:21). So, let's put on our dancing shoes and learn the steps of the cosmic dance!

## **9. A prayer for the Earth (Martyn Goss, Diocese of Exeter)**

God our Creator, maker and shaper of all that is, seen and unseen;  
You are present in the breadth and depth of the whole of creation,  
and in the processes that make life possible.

Yet, we are distracted by the gods of the marketplace.

Our lives have become fractured and fragmented.

In our brokenness we disturb  
the Earth's capacity to hold us,

Call us back from the brink.

Help us to choose love and not fear,

to change ourselves and not the planet,

to act justly for the sake of the vulnerable,

and to make a difference today for the life tomorrow.

We make this our prayer in your name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Amen.

## 10. Our Common Home seen from Space: Astronaut Russell Schweickart 1969

'The astronaut looks back and sees the Earth not as something big but small. And now the contrast between Earth--that bright blue-and-white Christmas tree ornament--and that black sky, that infinite universe, really comes through. Earth becomes so small and so fragile, and such a precious little spot in the universe, and you realize that on that small spot, that little blue-and-white thing, is everything that means anything to you; all of history, music, poetry, art, games, war and death, birth and love, tears and joy, all of it is on that little spot out there, that you can cover with your thumb.

'You're going 25,000 mph, ripping through a vacuum, and there's not a sound. There's a silence, the depth of which you've never experienced before, and you think about what you're experiencing and why. Have you been separated out by God to have some special experience that other people cannot have? No. 'It's not for yourself. You have to bring it back, somehow--a rather special responsibility. It tells you something about your relationship with this life. When you come back, there's a difference--so precious-- in the relationship between you and that planet and all its forms of life, because you've had that kind of experience.'

## 11. When I am Among the Trees – a poem by Mary Oliver

When I am Among the Trees,  
especially the Willows and the Honey Locust,  
equally the Beech, the Oaks and the Pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say that they Save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have Goodness and Discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk Slowly, and Bow often.

Around me the Trees stir in their leaves  
and call out, "Stay awhile."  
The Light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,  
"and you too have come into the world to do this, to Go Easy, to be filled  
with light, and to shine."

