SEASON OF CREATION 2020

JUBILEE TIME FOR THE EARTH

A CATHOLIC LITURGICAL GUIDE

LISTEN

LAUDATO SI' INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS TERTIARY EDUCATION NETWORK

"Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes ... The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action here and now." – *Laudato si'*, #161

"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." – From the *Earth Charter,* Quoted in *Laudato si'*, #207

2020 *Season of Creation* Catholic Liturgy Guide

September 1, 2020

Dear Reader,

Peace be with you! We are pleased that you have received this 2020 *Season of Creation* Liturgy Guide with a view to experiencing the liturgical gifts in this resource.

Liturgical seasons invite us to reflect, pray, and practice different aspects of our faith and the *Season of Creation* is a time for intentional reflection, prayer, and practice on care for our common home. While the *Season of Creation* is marked on the calendar from September 1 – October 4, we are called through each person's ecological conversion to carry the prayer, reflections, and practice of this season into our everyday lives all throughout the year.

2020 is an historic moment in the world and in the Church. The global health pandemic, COVID-19, presents the world with an extraordinary illumination of injustice, disease, isolation and systemic breakdown. In contrast, 2020 also marks the 5th anniversary of *Laudato si'* and the *Laudato si'* Special Anniversary Year which concludes in May 2021 (*Laudato si'* Week) and will give way to a *Laudato si'* decade of integral healing ahead.

This 2020 *Season of Creation* liturgical guide is shaped by paradoxical realities. The world is experiencing deep pain and longs for radical healing. *Laudato si'* offers us the opportunity to listen and reflect, to learn together through the process of dialogue and to walk humbly on new pathways of transformation as agents of God's love.

These resources are brought to you by LISTEN - a global network of universities dedicated to bringing *Laudato si'* to life. This *Season of Creation* Liturgy Guide is offered to you as part of LISTEN's ongoing collaboration with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development during this *Laudato si'* Special Anniversary Year.

A special word of thanks to James E. Hug, S.J., Sacramental Minister of the Adrian Dominicans and LISTEN special contributor, for writing this Liturgy Guide which brings depth to this emerging *Season of Creation* for the Catholic Church. We thank Ms. Denise Mathias, Music Minister of the Adrian Dominicans for providing hymn recommendations.

May your *Season of Creation* 2020 be abundantly blessed and may your ecological spiritual journey be illuminated more fully by the grace of God's loving presence.

In peace,

Jacqui Remond and Amy Woolam Echeverria
LISTEN Co-Chairs

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YEAR 2020-2021 LAUDATO SI'

GLOBAL CATHOLIC CLIMATE MOVEMENT

Season of Creation 2020 Prayer

Creator of Life,

At Your word, the Earth brought forth plants yielding seed and trees of every kind bearing fruit. The rivers, mountains, minerals, seas and forests sustained life. The eyes of all looked to You to satisfy the needs of every living thing. And throughout time the Earth has sustained life. Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons, renewal and growth, you open your hand to give creatures our food in the proper time.

In your Wisdom, you granted a Sabbath; a blessed time to rest in gratitude for all that you have given; a time to liberate ourselves from vicious consumption; a time to allow the land and all creatures to rest from the burden of production. But these days our living pushes the planet beyond its limits. Our demands for growth, and our never-ending cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world. The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail, the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify. We have not allowed the land to observe her Sabbath, and the Earth is struggling to be renewed.

During this Season of Creation, we ask you to grant us courage to observe a Sabbath for our planet. Strengthen us with the faith to trust in your providence. Inspire us with the creativity to share what we have been given. Teach us to be satisfied with enough. And as we proclaim a Jubilee for the Earth, send Your Holy Spirit to renew the face of creation.

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

Jesus Christ.
Amen.

From the ecumenical 2020 Season of Creation Celebration Guide:
https://seasonofcreation.org/celebration-guide

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Introduction

The Season of Creation is a relatively recent addition to Catholic liturgical celebrations. In 2015, Pope Francis added the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation to the Catholic liturgical calendar to be celebrated on September 1st each year. In 2019, the Vatican asked Catholic communities and pastors everywhere to join ecumenical communities around the world in celebrating the Season of Creation from September 1st to October 4th.

The Season of Creation is a liturgical season dedicated to prayer, reflection, and celebration of God as Creator. It also celebrates and reflects prayerfully on the gifts of creation and the mission given us by God to care for creation and respond to its needs and crises today.

These crises are severe and urgent. In its Season of Creation 2020 Celebration Guide, the Season of Creation Ecumenical Advisory committee writes:

> We are in the midst of a climate emergency. Several studies have indicated that the world is nowhere near meeting pledged emission reduction rate targets. The latest IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] report highlights that "only with rapid and far-reaching" transitions in the world economy, on a scale and at a rate without historical precedent, can the 1.5C limit be achieved. It is therefore a time to reconcile ourselves with creation through concrete repentance and urgent action. The Season of Creation is a time to acknowledge that tipping points are being reached, threatening the lives of the most vulnerable and putting the lives of future generations in jeopardy. As people of faith we are being called to stand up against climate injustice in prophetic ways.

This year, 2020, marks the 5th anniversary of Pope Francis's important encyclical, *Laudato si'* and the Church is using this occasion to join the ecumenical ecological efforts to save the planet with great energy and commitment. May 16-24 was celebrated around the world as *Laudato si'* Week which, in turn, launched the *Laudato si'* Special Anniversary Year with an ambitious global organizing and action agenda that will conclude with a conference in May 2021 setting into motion a *Laudato si'* Multi-Year Action Program for the global Catholic community for the following decade.

In its introduction to the booklet on the special anniversary year, the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development expresses its hope that

> the anniversary year and the ensuing decade will indeed be a time of grace, a true Kairos experience and "Jubilee" time for the Earth, and for humanity, and for all God's creatures. The anniversary year … will proceed with several initiatives, realized in partnership and with a clear emphasis on "ecological conversion" in "action". We invite everyone to join us. The urgency of the situation calls for immediate, holistic and unified responses at all levels - local, regional, national and international. We need, above all, "a peoples' movement" from below, an alliance of all people of good will. [pp. 2-3]

Celebration of the 2020 liturgical Season of Creation is a key centerpiece of this anniversary year. With this impressive call to prayer, integral ecological conversion, and extensive action planning, the Catholic Community is making a major contribution to the global ecumenical effort to address the ecological crises facing Earth at this time and to restore reverent respect and care for the sacredness of creation.

The theme of the 2020 Season of Creation, chosen by its international steering committee, is Jubilee for the Earth. The ecumenical steering committee explains the theme this way:

> Climate change is a result of the intersection of greed, inequality and destruction of God's Earth. The theme of Jubilee has been chosen for this year's Season of Creation as it reflects those three interlocking themes. Jubilee is a time to renounce overconsumption and economic systems based on constant economic growth at the cost of the Earth and those who are poor. Jubilee is a time when those who have consumed the most must make restitution to those who have suffered the most. Jubilee is a time of rest for the land from constant exploitation, to restore ecosystems and people.

Since the Catholic community is new to the global ecumenical Season of Creation celebrations, it does not yet have seasonal liturgical texts proper to it. The materials in this packet have been prepared under the auspices of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the *Laudato si'* Institutes Network (LISTEN) to help Catholic communities read and pray with the scriptures for the Sundays in Ordinary Time during this period through the lens of the Season of Creation. This year, 2020, this period includes the 23rd through 27th Sundays in Ordinary Time for Cycle A.

The Bigger Picture: Assumptions Behind These Materials

Drawing on *Laudato si'* and the rich background of Catholic Social Tradition, these resources assume that the human family is not facing various separate and distinct crises – social, political, economic, cultural, ecological. There is only one complex and integrated socio-cultural ecological crisis requiring prayer, an integral ecological conversion, and action in all the interrelated dimensions of human life for the healing of the vast Web of Life. Everything is connected.

Ecological Dimension. The ecological dimension of this complex crisis has two important facets: climate change, or what some are calling *"climate collapse"*, and *ecological degradation* through overproduction and consumption.

Climate Change/Collapse. Fossil fuel use and industrial production over the last century and a half by what are now often referred to as the "developed nations" has, through the emission of heat-trapping greenhouse gases, produced a warming of the planet that is changing the climate everywhere in dynamic and dangerous ways. Increasingly, scientists and religious leaders are referring to the situation as a human-produced *climate crisis* that is destroying vast numbers of species and threatening the whole Web of Life on the planet. Storms and wildfires are already more violent, droughts and floods more frequent and damaging, sea levels rising and islands disappearing, and human suffering and tragedy more severe, especially among people who are poor and marginalized.

Ecological Degradation. At the same time, it has become apparent, as ecological awareness has grown, that the human community is now using up more of Earth's resources in a few months than the planet can replenish in a full year. In 1970, the first attempts were made to measure human production and consumption against Earth's regenerative capacities. The efforts resulted in the birth of Earth Overshoot Day, a calculation of the point at which as much of Earth's resources will have been used in a particular year as it can replenish in a full year. In 1970, Earth Overshoot Day was determined to be December 29th. Since then, it has been occurring earlier and earlier. This year, 2020, Earth Overshoot Day was August 22nd. In just under 8 months, the human community has consumed what it will take Earth a year to replenish: resources such as water, food, forest products, clean air. For the next 4 months, we

"We are faced not by two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both environmental and social. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature." – L.S. #139

will be consuming from the reserves built up by Earth over millennia. This is obviously cannot go on forever. Those reserves are limited. It is a death spiral. Earth clearly and desperately needs a Jubilee year of rest and replenishment as well as some dramatic changes by the human family to bring about more sustainable and just ways of living on "our common home."

Socio-political-economic-cultural Dimensions. Socially, inequality of resources is stark and dangerous around the world. A small number of extremely wealthy people control as much wealth as half the human community of more than 7.5 billion people. Nearly one billion people lack adequate food and are chronically hungry, even malnourished, and that number is again growing. The rise of nationalism around the planet, wars, fierce international competition for limited natural resources, wars, violence, racism, hate crimes and a variety of other forms of cruel oppression create deep wounds and hostilities. The poor suffer most from climate change/collapse and are increasingly forced to migrate in search of food, security, and other basic essentials. Tens of millions of people are now climate migrants or refugees, adding to the social pressures and unrest in so many parts of the world.

And as if all this were not enough, the coronavirus pandemic is casting a harsh light on the cruel, life-destroying impacts of environmental racism, poverty, discrimination, and hate.

Some Basic Inferences to Guide Our Responses. These dimensions of the current complex crisis support some basic conclusions which will be reflected in the liturgical materials and upon which our responses must be based.

First, the human community must move to clean, renewable energy as soon as possible to slow down and reverse the catastrophic climate change that threatens the survival of the intricately interconnected and interdependent Web of Life of which humanity is one strand.

Second, even with renewable energy, the human community cannot grow its way out of the severe poverty and great maldistribution of resources in which so many live globally. Those who hold up economic growth as the only way to overcome poverty and hunger are failing (or refusing) to face the reality of Earth's resource limitations and the current death spiral of overproduction laid bare by the data behind Earth Overshoot Day. As Pope Francis pointed out, the technocratic paradigm dominating the global economy "is based on the lie that there is an infinite supply of the earth's goods, and leads to the planet being squeezed dry beyond every limit." [*Laudato Sí*, #106]

Third, this requires critique and rejection of the current dominant economic model with its assumptions about "development", "progress", economic growth, and "the good life." These assumptions guide and govern the current destructive patterns of living responsible for so much suffering and devastation. The human community needs instead to give priority to dignified human life for all, especially the most vulnerable, and care for the environment. The quality of relationships, commitment to the common good, and global solidarity characterize authentic human development, the true "good life," in Catholic Social Tradition, not the accumulation of industrial and political power, material goods and wealth.

Fourth, these changes demand what Pope Francis has called "integral ecological conversion." Such conversion will require cross-cultural encounter and dialogue that feed a spirituality of global solidarity, freedom from consumerism, growing consciousness of the interconnectedness of all creation, gratitude, and contentment with what is really necessary. This is a true Jubilee agenda of the type that Jesus claimed as his mission to proclaim.

In short, the human family must reduce its global consumption and waste, return to patterns of living compatible with Earth's resources and regenerative capacities, rethink what constitutes the good human life and how to reach it, and redistribute or redirect available wealth and resources to meet the basic needs of the whole human family, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and the full Web of Life.

Diversity of the Communities of Faith

Resources prepared for a global Church must be adaptable to many different social, cultural and economic contexts. No single text can be expected to speak to such vast diversity without

careful and prayerful local interpretation and adaptation.

For example, communities engaging the Season of Creation this year will include indigenous peoples and those marginalized, poor, and struggling to survive. There will be comfortable and rising middle class communities eager to achieve and enjoy more affluent lifestyles of "developed nations." There will be middle and working classes in industrial nations living in contexts where cultural dynamics and institutional factors guide and promote economic systems built on consumerism, growth, and constant upward mobility defined by material goods, what Pope Francis has called "throwaway societies." There will be extremely wealthy and powerful economic and political elites. There will be communities of people deeply conscious of their connections with nature, their place in the Web of Life. And there will be communities of people whose consciousness is bounded by urban life, unconscious of their place in the vast interconnected and interdependent web of all life. The list could go on.

In the case of these notes for liturgical celebrations, for example, communities in wealthier nations or wealthier segments of poor nations will be challenged to face their participation in the lifestyles and assumptions about development, progress and economic growth that are contributing to the current crisis. Their ecological conversion will involve serious reevaluation of how they live day to day, what they see as "development" and "progress," and what their attitudes toward poor and indigenous peoples are and need to become. Embracing global solidarity, renouncing consumerism, simplifying lifestyles, and working for sustainable justice for all people are elements of their challenging prophetic call from God.

On the other hand, communities living in poverty need to find ways to increase their consumption to meet basic human needs. But they may need to pray over the fact that the lifestyles and wealth of the industrial nations are illusory as a goal, as alluring as they might seem. The way to a better life cannot be through economic growth and technological progress as modeled by the so-called developed nations of the industrial world. It must be through greater justice, sustainability, and solidarity. Their ecological conversion may entail letting go of unrealistic material dreams for their future and that of their families and communities. It may involve efforts to grow in appreciation of and gratitude for the values that they, indigenous peoples and poor communities, have nurtured and relied upon – virtues of solidarity and mutual support, respect and care for nature, living in harmony with creation sustainably. Pope Francis assumes that it will involve their recognizing and affirming their traditional wisdom, cultural values and ways of living – recognizing them as true and essential elements of authentic human development, ready to share them and promote them in dialogue.

All communities will find in the liturgies of this Season of Creation prophetic challenges and an invitation from God to shape a different future for our Web of Life, our common home. Different communities, different cultures may hear different challenges, different invitations, their particular part of the great work of the Holy Spirit birthing the new creation in these times. Local liturgical/pastoral teams will need to be conscious of the characteristics and social location of their own specific communities as they work to discern God's Word to them. Only then will they be able to use and adapt the materials included here appropriately.

The Materials

The five Sundays of the 2020 Season of Creation have a certain thematic flow that integrates them as a season.

The first Sunday's scriptures challenge Christians to take up the prophetic responsibility in love to invite each other gently and prayerfully to conversion and care for creation in these times of ecological crisis.

The scriptures of the second Sunday recall that while the seriousness of the ecological crisis demands urgent and passionate prophetic action, it must remain non-judgmental and forgiving. They invite reflection on how much we have been forgiven and still need forgiveness so that we may be patient and forgiving of others.

The third Sunday's scriptures remind us that God's ways are not our ways and they invite us to contemplate some of God's Jubilee ways of living on Earth, giving birth to the New Creation.

The fourth Sunday texts put the focus squarely on personal responsibility for embracing the integral ecological conversion essential to healing Earth, caring for the Web of Life.

The fifth Sunday continues to invite us to prayer, petitions, and thanksgiving while issuing strong warnings to the leaders of faith communities and nations that they have been entrusted with care for Earth, are failing at it, and will be held responsible. It will be taken away from them and given to those who will produce its fruit.

So in simple, summary form, the message of the Season of Creation for 2020 is this:

- You must pass on the prophetic word given to you about care of Earth.
- Do it with a forgiving heart, as you have been forgiven.
- Pay attention to God's ways of living, Jubilee ways, in all dimensions of life.
- Each person is ultimately responsible for his or her own ecological conversion.
- If the human community and its leaders fail in this mission to care for Earth, it will be taken away from them. Pray for God's peace.

The materials for each of the liturgies of the Sundays of the 2020 Season of Creation that follow will include these elements:

- **Short Introductory Comments** setting the context and focusing on the messages of the scriptures as they relate to the Season of Creation's theme of Jubilee and focus on integral ecological conversion as essential to Jubilee. These introductions could be published in a parish bulletin, read as they are or adapted for brief introductory comments at the beginning of a liturgy.
- **Suggestions for the penitential rite**. It should be noted that although the Roman Missal gives various optional formulations for the penitential rite, it also allows for "other invocations." The suggestions included in these materials help to focus the community's repentance on the issues addressed by the scriptural messages of the day.
- **Orations**. Alternative orations (the opening prayer, the prayer over the gifts, and the prayer after communion) are offered that reflect the themes of the Season of Creation and the scriptures for the given Sunday.
- **Points for reflection on the scriptures**. These points are not offered as an outline or text for a homily. Local contexts, cultures, and issues are too diverse to permit that kind of presentation. They are points for reflection drawn from the Sunday scriptures read against the background of the Season of Creation. They are meant to inspire or suggest issues for homilists to consider in their preparations or for anyone's personal reflection and prayer. The questions included can help homilists reflect on their own experience. In addition, they may in many cases be fruitfully posed to their congregations for their own prayerful consideration.
- **A few related petitions** suitable or adaptable for the General Intercessions.
- **Musical suggestions** related to the themes for each particular Sunday are offered for consideration by music planners and musicians.

Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings**, based upon prayers of Pope Francis for possible use at the end of Mass.

Musical Suggestions

After each Sunday entry are suggestions for hymns and psalm settings that can be used during the new Season of Creation. Music planners may wish to have a "theme song" and some of the hymns suggested for entrance or dismissal would work beautifully for a theme throughout the season. There are also many musical and liturgical resources online; hymnary.org is just one example. Many hymnals that have been recently published have exciting possibilities and new hymns. It is always useful to consider the community carefully, choosing songs to which they can relate, culturally, and socially, and teach new songs in a way that enhances learning. This list is definitely not exhaustive—there are still many possibilities! Creativity can be a large part of musical planning for the Season of Creation.

For hymns, text authors only are listed—in some cases the author is also the composer. Some hymns have more than one tune possibility, as well. At the end of all of the Sunday suggestions is a complete list of all songs used, with some additional possibilities.

First Sunday of the Season of Creation

September 6, 2020 | 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Ezekiel 33:7-9

Ps. 95:1-2, 6-9

Romans 13:8-10

Matthew 18:15-20

Introductory Comments

The Season of Creation is a new Liturgical Season for the Catholic community globally as it joins the 30-year ecumenical/orthodox history of celebration under the leadership of Pope Francis and through the promotion of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. It extends from September 1st, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, to October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

The Season focuses on God as Creator of the vast cosmic universe, God's revelation in Creation, and our calling to care for God's creation, protect its rich diversity and address the urgent, destructive crises threatening its health and future.

This year's theme is Jubilee for the Earth. Climate change, currently one of Earth's most pressing crises, is a result of the intersection of greed, inequality and destruction of God's Earth. Jubilee is a time to renounce overconsumption and economic systems based on constant economic growth at the cost of the Earth and those who are poor. Jubilee is a time when those who have consumed the most must care for those who have suffered the most. Jubilee is a time of rest for the land from constant exploitation, to restore ecosystems and people.

On this 1st Sunday of the Season of Creation, the scriptures call us to accept our prophetic responsibility in love to invite each other to conversion and care for creation in these times of ecological crisis.

Penitential Rite Suggestion

(It should be noted that although the Roman Missal gives various optional formulations for the penitential rite, it also allows for "other invocations." These are intended to help shape the community's repentance in accord with the scriptural message of the day.)

Conscious of God's loving presence and great gifts to us in creation, let us enter into the quiet of our spirits, praying for prophetic courage, wisdom, and deeper love for God, for all people, and for creation which gives us life and sustains us. *[silent pause]*

Creator God, You have entrusted the human family with the richly diverse gifts of creation, asking us to receive them with gratitude and care for them wisely and well.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You have entrusted us with a mission to warn those whose actions abuse and are destructive of Earth, its life, and its peoples, to invite them and ourselves to more loving, protective and life-giving ways.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You are at work in us and among us making us more conscious of the sacredness of all creation, raising up global movements in these times to care for Earth and each other.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, the Creator of all time and space and the vast Web of Life in which we live, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

Gloria

Opening Prayer

Our Loving God, in You justice and mercy meet. With unparalleled love and forgiveness, You have drawn us into the circle of your life. You send us to invite our sisters and brothers to turn from their sins into Your ways, ways of love and care for You, for each other, and for all creation. Open our eyes to the wonders Your creation sets before us that we may serve you free from fear and address You with grateful love. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. **Amen**.

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

In the first reading, Ezekiel describes God's warning to himself and to us: we are responsible for each other. If we hear and fail to relay God's Word, God's call to conversion to those for whom it is intended, we will be held responsible and complicit in their sin and in the suffering and punishment it brings.

One of Pope Francis's central beliefs at the heart of Laudato si' is that everything and everyone is connected, interdependent. We are responsible for each other. God speaks to us and calls us to conversion in many ways. In the context of the Season of Creation, we need to listen to that Word of God in "the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor." (L.S. 49)

The cry of the Earth, heard in increasingly powerful storms and fires, melting ice and rising sea levels, droughts and floods, pollution of air and water, loss of rich biodiversity and ecological degradation.

The cry of the poor, heard and seen in widespread hunger and malnutrition, in homelessness and ill health, exploitation and vast migration and refugee flows, violence and ecological destruction of the most marginal regions where the poor are so often forced to struggle for survival.

> How do we, how can we educate and warn ourselves and each other about the ecological crises facing us and threatening life as we know it on the planet?
>
> How do we, how can we understand and warn each other about our part, our responsibility for the destructive forces at work?
>
> What is the conversion in ways of thinking, acting, and living together on Earth that God is calling us to? What are the changes in lifestyle and relationships with each other and with creation?
>
> What individuals, groups, communities, parishes, institutions, movements will help me/us to grow in this mission?
>
> To what individuals, groups, communities, parishes, institutions, movements am I called to speak out, educate, warn of God's prophetic Word in the cry of the poor and the cry of Earth?

St. Paul's letter to the Romans puts this prophetic education and invitation to care for creation in their deepest context: they are expressions of the great commandments that sum everything up: Love God. Love your neighbor.

All is interdependent, all is interconnected. We cannot say we love God if we do not love our neighbor. We cannot say we love our neighbor if we do not care for the air, the water, the land, the ecological systems, the intricate Web of Life upon which our neighbors and we depend for life itself.

Nor can we say we love God if we do not care for God's gift of creation in all its wonders and richness.

> How can we, how do we express this prophetic love in our families? In our parishes and dioceses? In our religious communities? In our schools and universities? In our hospitals and health care centers? In our businesses and farms?

In the gospel, Jesus lays out a way to convey the urgent prophetic warnings in this time of ecological crisis, an approach that shows respect for those who need to hear these truths and invites conversion gently but persistently.

At the same time, the approach is realistic: there will be those who will not listen. The prophetic word around these issues is far too important and urgent to get bogged down in endless arguments with those who, in the words of the

psalm, have hardened their hearts. Move on to where the work of conversion and the growth of the New Creation can find fertile ground and produce a hundredfold.

Christ calls us together too in prayer, promising to be with us, promising us that our prayer will be heard. Let our prayer deepen our awe and reverence before God revealed powerfully in creation.

General Intercessions Petitions

That we may grow in consciousness of the great gift of creation and all of its elements, we pray....

That we may deepen our gratitude for nature's rich Web of Life within which we live and may grow in openness to wiser and more just ways of caring for it and sharing it, we pray....

That we may take up our prophetic responsibility in this time of crisis to speak God's Truth to each other and to call each other into conversion and to ways of living within creation wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently we pray....

Prayer over the Gifts

God of peace and love, may our offering of ourselves, our energies, and our prayers in these gifts bring You true worship and make us one with You in bringing to birth Your New Creation. Grant this through Christ the Lord. **Amen**.

Prayer after Communion

Our loving God, at the table of Your word and sacrament, You nourish Your faithful and give us life. Grant that through these gifts of Your Son, we may advance in holiness, in love of our neighbor, and in reverence and care for Your creation. May we look forward with joy to sharing his life forever. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

Final Blessing

Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings** on p. 30, based upon prayers of Pope Francis for possible use at the end of Mass.

All is interdependent, all is interconnected. We cannot say we love God if we do not love our neighbor. We cannot say we love our neighbor if we do not care for the air, the water, the land, the ecological systems, the intricate Web of Life upon which our neighbors and we depend for life itself.

First Sunday – Musical Selections

September 6, 2020 | 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E – Entrance | O – Offertory | C – Communion | D – Dismissal

E,D Stewards of Earth
Omer Westendorf, © 1984 World Library Publications (WLP)

E,D Touch the Earth Lightly
Shirley Erena Murray, ©1992 Hope Publishing Company.

E,D God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
Catherine Cameron, ©1967 Hope Pub. Co.

O,C Where Charity and Love Prevail
Paul Benoit, ©1960 WLP

O,C Love One Another
Feargal King ©2000, WLP

O,C Many and Great Dakota hymn, para. Philip Frazier

C Life-giving Bread, Saving Cup
James Chepponis ©1087 GIA

D Here I Am, Lord
Daniel L. Schutte ©1981, Oregon Catholic Press (OCP)

D Christ Has No Body Now But Yours
St. Theresa of Ávila, adapt. Warner ©2003 WLP

Psalm Settings

If Today You Hear: Psalm 95
Lorenzo Florián ©2006, WLP

If Today You Hear the Voice of God: Psalm 95
Ed Bolduc ©1998, WLP

If Today You Hear God's Voice: Psalm 95
Jeffery Honoré ©1996, WLP

Listen! Listen! Open Your Hearts!
©2005 The Collegeville Composers Group, Liturgical Press

Psalm 95: If Today You Hear His Voice
Michael Guimont, ©1995 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 95: If Today You Hear His Voice
Roy James Stewart ©1993 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 95: If Today You Hear God's Voice
©2000 Bernadette Farrell, published by OCP

Second Sunday of the Season of Creation

September 13, 2020 | 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Sirach 27:30-28:9

Ps. 103:1-4, 9-12

Romans 14:7-9

Matthew 18:21-35

Introductory Comments

On the 1st Sunday of the Season of Creation, the scriptures called us to accept our prophetic responsibility in love to invite each other to conversion and care for creation in these times of ecological crisis.

The readings today remind us not to let our prophetic call to others turn into anger or vengeance against them. If we do not forgive each other, we cannot expect God to forgive us.

We are invited to reflect with gratitude on all the failings, sins, and abuse of creation that God has forgiven us and is now calling us to confront, heal and transform.

The call to be prophetic, yet patient, non-judgmental and forgiving with each other if we hope God to forgive us extends to all the dimensions of the "integral ecological conversion" which Pope Francis identifies as the prophetic word of God to our world at this time: the interconnected environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

Penitential Rite Suggestion

Conscious of God's mercy, patience, kindness and compassion in our lives, let us enter into the quiet of our spirits ... asking for forgiveness ... and for a forgiving spirit with each other. *[silent pause]*

Creator God, You have entrusted the human family with the richly diverse gifts of creation, asking us to receive them with gratitude, share them generously, and care for them wisely and well. Too often we abuse Your gifts and Your trust.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You came to show us God's loving forgiveness and You have taught us to forgive each other as we long to be forgiven.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You are at work in us and among us making us more conscious of the sacredness of all creation, raising up global movements in these times to care for Earth and for each other.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, the Creator of all time and space and the vast Web of Life in which we live, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

Gloria

Opening Prayer

Our loving God most high, human ignorance and sin have brought great destruction upon Earth, Your awe-inspiring and gracious gift with its vast web of life.

You are slow to anger and rich in compassion. Keep alive in us the memory of Your mercy, that our angers may be calmed and our resentments dispelled. May we discover the forgiveness promised to those who forgive and become a people rich in mercy. May Your Holy Spirit continue to

draw us together into one human family working together with urgency and hope to heal and renew our common home.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

Reading from the Book of Sirach. The mission of relaying God's call to "integral ecological conversion" in these times can lead to frustration and anger when people refuse to listen, deny the truth and evidence, resist acting, and even actively oppose the work of caring for and healing Earth and all its Web of Life.

When crises are as urgent and destructive as the ecological/climate crises today, it is hard to be patient and gentle with those causing them who do not see the truth and the need or are not willing to change. When we watch families starve, the Amazon burn, floods ravage, arctic regions melt, and crucial waters evaporate in rising heat, anger about the thoughtlessness and destruction seems just and called for. When people we love suffer from the changing climate, the desire to strike out against those responsible rises quickly. The human costs: to those alive now and to future generations can be devastating. Earth is even now going through the Sixth Great Extinction with costs to all life that are massive.

Still, Sirach warns that clinging to anger and vengeance will bring God's anger and vengeance upon us. We must forgive others' injustice if we hope to have God forgive our own.

Legitimate righteous anger, on the other hand, can provide energy and courage to speak out and work for change, but this kind of anger seeks conversion and reconciliation, not vengeance or destruction. It does not become bitter.

Psalm 103 celebrates God's forgiveness, mercy, patience, and compassion for us. As we pray this psalm in the context of the Season of Creation, the Spirit is working with us to deepen our felt gratitude for God's mercy and forgiveness for the abuse of the gifts of creation. The Spirit longs to heal us and redeem our lives from the destruction threatening us all.

> How have we experienced God's patience and forgiveness for the ways we receive, live in, and treat God's gifts of Earth, of creation? As a community? As individuals?

This passage from Paul's letter to the Romans, in its fuller context, serves to encourage Christians not to judge one another. Each one lives or dies for Christ and "each of us shall give an account to God." [Romans: 14:12]

Matthew's gospel answers two questions: How often must we forgive someone who seeks forgiveness? And what will happen if we don't forgive each other?

Jesus could not be clearer: We must forgive not 7 times but 77 times – a metaphor in his time and culture for a number without limit. Every time they ask forgiveness sincerely, we must give it from our hearts. If we do not forgive each other when we have been forgiven so much by God, we will lose God's forgiveness.

To recognize how precious God's forgiveness for the misuse of the gifts of creation is, we need to be conscious of how precious and sacred those gifts are.

> How has God patiently increased our awareness of the preciousness of the gifts of creation?
>
> What do we most appreciate, enjoy and rely on in nature? How can we come to recognize it more as a gift from God?
>
> How can we contemplate God present in those gifts? How can we grow in discerning God's Self-gift in and through them?

As we have grown in consciousness of God's gifts in creation and of our destructive use and abuse of them, we have experienced God's patience, mercy, and call to conversion in our lives – what Pope Francis has called an integral ecological conversion.

> How have we been forgiven in our individual journeys thus far? In our community life? For what are we in still need of forgiveness now?
>
> How can we expand our consciousness of the ways we continue to live unconscious of or unconcerned about waste, pollution, a

"throw away culture," overuse of resources, inequality and poverty?

Acknowledging our sins, failures, slowness to change and asking forgiveness, we need to contemplate and give profound thanks to God for this patience, gentleness in forgiving us, teaching us, drawing us to work for the New Creation.

How can we express and live out our gratitude for God's patient forgiveness to us personally? As a community?

How can we work at deepening and nurturing that gratitude of spirit? What type of liturgies, prayers, actions together can nurture this spiritual growth?

How can that gratitude call forth in us patience and forgiveness for those "behind us" in this journey? For those resisting or denying the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth?

General Intercessions Petitions

That we may grow in consciousness of the great gift of creation and all of its elements, we pray....

That we may deepen our gratitude for nature's rich Web of Life within which we live and may grow in openness to wiser and more just ways of caring for it and sharing it, we pray....

That we may take up our prophetic responsibility in this time of crisis to speak God's Truth to each other and to call each other into ways of living within creation wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently we pray....

For forgiveness for our own part in the sins against creation and for patience in forgiving others, we pray....

Prayer over the Gifts

Our loving God, be attentive to our prayers and receive with favor these gifts of our energies and service. May what each of us has offered to the glory of your name advance the healing and salvation of us all and of the Earth our home. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

Prayer after Communion

Our Loving God, may the eucharist You have given us nourish us and guide our thoughts and actions. May Your Holy Spirit direct us in Your ways in bringing to birth Your new creation. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. **Amen**.

Final Blessing

Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings** on p. 30, based upon prayers of Pope Francis for possible use at the end of Mass.

Legitimate righteous anger ... can provide energy and courage to speak out and work for change, but this kind of anger seeks conversion and reconciliation, not vengeance or destruction. It does not become bitter.

Second Sunday – Musical Selections

September 13, 2020 | 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E – Entrance | O – Offertory | C – Communion | D – Dismissal

E,O,D For the Healing of the Nations
Fred Kaan ©1968 Hope Publishing Co.

E,O,D This Is My Song
Lloyd Stone, Georgia Harkness ©1964 Lorenz Publishing Co.

E,O,D Abundant Life
Ruth Duck ©1992 GIA

E,O,D Creating God, Your Fingers Trace
Jeffery Rowthorn ©1979 Hymn Society of America

E,O,D Prayer of Saint Francis
St. Francis of Assisi, adapt. Sebastian Temple, ©1967 OCP

O,D Forgive Our Sins, as We Forgive
Rosamund E. Herklots ©1969 Oxford University Press

O When We Are Living /Pues Si Vivimos
Roberto Escamilla ©1989 United Methodist Pub. House

C Gift of Finest Wheat
Omer Westendorf ©1977 Archdiocese of Philadelphia, ILP

C Bread to Share
Marty Haugen, ©1995 GIA

C Pan de Vida
© 1988 Bob Hurd and Pia Moriarty, published by OCP

Psalm Settings

Psalm 103: The Lord Is Kind and Merciful
Marty Haugen, ©1983 GIA

Psalm 103: The Lord Is Kind and Merciful
Michel Guimont, ©1998 GIA

Psalm 103: The Lord Is Kind and Merciful
Charles Thatcher, ©2001 WLP

Psalm 103: The Lord is kind and merciful
Paul Tate, ©2013 GIA

Psalm 103: The Lord Is Kind and Merciful
©1995, 2007 Howard Hughes pub. By OCP

Psalm 103: The Lord Is Kind and Merciful
©1997 Ricky Manalo, Pub. By OCP

Merciful and Tender: Psalm 103
©2005 Collegeville Composers Grp., pub. by Liturgical Press

Third Sunday of the Season of Creation

September 20, 2020 | 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 55:6-9

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

Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a

Matthew 20:1-16a

Introductory Comments

Today we will hear from Isaiah God's message: "As high as the heavens are above the Earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts."

In this Season of Creation, we are being called to recognize the global climate emergency in which we are living. The planet is warming dangerously because of our use of fossil fuels and our systems of production and consumption. The ways our economies function and the values they serve are depleting and wasting Earth's resources, creating great inequalities, suffering and injustice, and exceeding Earth's regenerative capacity. Earth is crying out, the poor are crying out, the existence and wellbeing of future generations is threatened.

Climate experts continue to warn of devastating, severe and destructive changes to all dimensions of life within a decade unless the global community makes dramatic changes urgently.

In this Season of Creation, we are being called to take up our prophetic responsibility in love to spread the word and to transform the ways we are living upon Earth. We must acknowledge our failures to care for creation and embrace God's ways.

Penitential Rite Suggestion

Conscious of God's mercy, patience, compassion, and call, let us enter into the quiet of our spirits... asking for forgiveness, protection from the crises of this time, and the grace to see and understand God's ways for us in these times, in this context... *[silent pause]*

Creator God, our ways of living on Earth as a human family woven into the vast, complex web of life have not been Your ways and now are threatening all life as we know it with suffering and destruction.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, Your teaching is calling us to imagine a more just way of working and living, one that provides justice to all and generosity to those most in need.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You are at work in us, among us, and through us, teaching us Your ways and preparing a time of sacred Jubilee in response to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, the Creator of time, space and the vast Web of Life in which we live, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

Gloria

Opening Prayer

Our loving God most high, Your ways are not our ways, for Your kindness and love are lavished equally upon all and guide all creation. Teach us to welcome Your mercy toward others even as we hope to receive Your mercy ourselves. Teach us to love and care for all creation, Your gift to us all, wisely and well. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. God is near to all who call upon God.

We are invited to enter into contemplative reverence in the midst of creation before the greatness of God, the source of Earth and all the universe. Love of God's creation in all its beauty, intricacy, and lavish goodness can spark love in our hearts and guide us in caring for creation as it needs to be cared for.

In what ways can we grow in consciousness of God's gifts and presence in creation?

How can we grow in an ecological spirituality, discover and deepen our sense of wonder, praise, joy and gratitude before God in creation?

How might we develop and promote creation-centered liturgical celebrations? Retreats? Education programs?

Do we call upon God for forgiveness? For wisdom in living more sustainably, more justly, and more generously upon Earth? In what ways do we and our communities contribute to the current ecological crises? To overcoming them and bringing healing and new life to the communities of Creation?

Isaiah's urgent call to seek God while God is near and can be found resonates deeply with the warnings of climate experts for these times: that "only with rapid and far-reaching transitions in the world economy on a scale and at a rate without historical precedent" can humanity avoid the tipping points that will bring great devastation to life around Earth.

Do we understand and feel the sense of urgency? Do we see and experience the dangers? What study and other ways of growing in understanding do we need to undertake?

How do we contribute to the dangers and the suffering, the cry of the Earth?

How can we and our communities reconcile ourselves with God, with each other, and with creation through concrete repentance, conversion and urgent action?

In our lifestyles? Through social outreach, social media? By studying the needs of our localities, regions, ecosystems? Through joining peoples' campaigns and social movements locally and globally? Through political advocacy locally, nationally, globally?

In our families? In businesses and organizations? In our schools, educational institutions and faith communities? In our financial activities and organizations? In our health care systems?

The parable of the Landowner and the Workers. God's ways are not our ways. The parable in the gospel in which the owner of the vineyard gives a full day's wage to all, regardless of how long they worked often stirs complaints about fairness.

But those who worked the longest, the whole day, received what they had agreed was a just wage.

The wages of day laborers are often all that their family has to survive on for a given day; and so the generosity of the vineyard owner served to meet the people's basic daily needs.

This parable shows us a compensation system based on the agreed-upon value of certain work and care to meet the basic needs of all workers. It is not based upon comparative, competitive, unlimited accumulation.

God's ways challenge us. A central belief of the Catholic Social Tradition confesses that the Earth is God's and everything in it. Creation is a gift of God to all people and living creatures, a gift to provide for the needs of all for survival, growth, and flourishing.

The right to private property is not absolute. To accumulate and cling to more and more than one needs while others live in desperate poverty

is a serious sin against creation and the Creator. It is the situation of human life on Earth today: a grave pattern of injustice that undermines peace and survival planet-wide.

Climate change today is a result of the coming together of economic and social systems driven by greed and accumulation, governed to protect inequality, and built upon domination and destruction of Earth.

The biblical vision of Jubilee was chosen as the theme for this year's celebration of the Season of Creation because, in the words of the international ecumenical steering committee, "Jubilee is a time to renounce overconsumption and economic systems based on constant economic growth at the cost of the Earth and those who are poor."

"Jubilee is a time of rest for the land from constant exploitation, to restore ecosystems and people."

"The theme of Jubilee affirms the need for equality, justice and sustainability, and a transition of sustainable economies."

How can we and our communities embrace God's ways of Jubilee here, now? How can we do more to heal our relationships with God, with people, with Earth in ways that respond with love and care to the cry of the poor and the cry of Earth?

In our lifestyles? Through social outreach, social media? By studying the needs of our localities, regions, ecosystems? Through joining peoples' campaigns and social movements locally and globally? Through political advocacy locally, nationally, globally?

In our families? In businesses and organizations? In our schools, educational institutions and faith communities? In our financial activities and organizations? In our health care systems?

General Intercessions Petitions

That we may grow in consciousness, awe, and praise of the mystery of God in creation and of the great gift of creation and all of its elements, we pray....

That we may deepen our gratitude for nature's rich Web of Life within which we live and may grow in openness to wiser and more just ways of caring for it and sharing it, we pray....

That we may take up our prophetic responsibility in this time of crisis to speak God's Truth to each other and to call each other into ways of living within creation wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently we pray....

For a deep sense of urgency in responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, we pray....

That the nations of the world will find ways together to rebuild from the Covid-19 pandemic and economic declines in accord with God's ways, God's vision of economic, social and ecological justice, we pray...

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving and gracious God, all that we have are gifts from You. Receive these gifts of bread and wine, our energies, our hopes, and our commitments to return our love to You through our care for and sharing of creation with grateful and generous hearts. Grant this in the name of Jesus the Lord. **Amen**.

Prayer after Communion

Our loving God, You have nourished us with this sacrament. Support us with Your unfailing help that we may embrace Your ways caring wisely and generously for the human family and the family of creation. Grant this through Christ, the Lord. **Amen**.

Final Blessing

Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings** on p. 30, based upon prayers of Pope Francis for possible use at the end of Mass.

Third Sunday – Musical Selections

September 20, 2020 | 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E – Entrance | O – Offertory | C – Communion | D – Dismissal

E,D Glory and Praise to Our God
©1972, 1974, 2008 Daniel L. Schutte, pub. by OCP

E,D God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
Catherine Cameron ©1967 Hope Publ. Co.

E,D Praise to the Lord
Joachim Neander, trans. Catherine Winkworth

E,O,D For the Fruits of This (All) Creation
Fred Pratt Green ©1970 Hope Publishing Co.

O Seek the Lord
Roc O'Connor, ©1976 Robert F. O'Connor, SJ, and New Dawn Music

O,C When We Are Living /Pues Si Vivimos
Roberto Escamilla ©United Methodist Publ. Hs.

O,D Touch the Earth Lightly
Shirley Erena Murray, ©1992 Hope Publishing Company

C Take and Eat
James Quinn and Michael Joncas, ©1989 GIA

C Taste and See
James E. Moore, Jr., ©1983, GIA

C Pan de Vida
Bob Hurd and Pia Moriarty, ©1988 by Bob Hurd, pub. by OCP

Psalm Settings

Psalm 145: The Lord Is Near
©2004 Tom Booth, pub. by OCP

Psalm 145: The Lord is Near
Stephen R. Janco, ©2001 , WLP

Psalm 145: The Lord is Near
Michel Guimont, ©1998, GIA

Psalm 145: The Lord is Near
Kathleen Harmon ©2013, GIA

Lord, You Are Close
©2007 The Collegeville Composers Group, pub. Liturgical Press

Fourth Sunday of the Season of Creation

September 27, 2020 | 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Ezekiel 18:25-28

Ps. 25:4-9

Philippians 2:1-11

Matthew 21:28-32

Introductory Comments

In this Season of Creation, we have prayed over our calling to recognize the global climate emergency in which we are living and spread the word about the call to conversion and change that it presents.

The ways the human family is living on the planet, the ways our economies function and the values they serve are depleting and wasting Earth's resources, creating great inequalities, suffering and injustice, and exceeding Earth's regenerative capacity.

Earth is crying out. The poor are crying out. The existence and wellbeing of future generations is threatened. This all constitutes a strong and urgent call to conversion in all dimensions of life.

In today's readings, we hear clearly from Ezekiel that this conversion is the personal responsibility of each of us. God will judge us in the end upon the choices we each make of how we will live with each other in the community of creation. It is never too late to choose God's ways. God is always compassionate and forgiving, ready to teach us the way.

St. Paul reminds us that Christ Jesus is that teaching, is God's demonstration of the Way to live: serving everyone compassionately and generously, not competing for attention, appreciation, wealth or glory, humble and self-sacrificing, even to the point of death on a cross. For this God exalted him, glorifying him above every other.

And in the gospel, Jesus warns that words, that simply saying the right things, is not enough. Our actions must show our conversion, a conversion that in these critical times in the history of our planet must be integral, a conversion to action in the ecological, social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions of our lives.

Penitential Rite Suggestion

Conscious of God's mercy, patience, compassion, and call, let us enter into the quiet of our spirits... asking for forgiveness, protection from the crises of this time, the grace to see and understand God's ways for us in these times, in this context, and the courage and commitment to choose and live in those ways... *[silent pause]*

> Creator God, our ways of living on Earth as a human family woven into the vast, complex web of life have not been Your ways and now are threatening all life as we know it with suffering and destruction.
>
> **Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.**
>
> Christ Jesus, Your teaching warns us that words are not enough. Our actions must reveal our inner conversion and commitment to live with the same attitude that guided You, to live the Way that You revealed and lived out among us as one of us in humility and obedience.
>
> **Word of God, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit of God, You are at work in us, among us, and through us, teaching us Your ways and preparing a time of sacred Jubilee in response to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, the Creator of time, space and the vast Web of Life in which we live, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

Gloria

Opening Prayer

Our Loving God, You alone judge rightly and search the depths of the human heart. You alone offer the grace and courage to transform our lives and renew the Earth. Make us quick to do Your will, slow to judge our neighbor, and eager to care for Your creation with wisdom, compassion, and love. Grant that we may walk with those who follow the way of repentance and ecological faithfulness in caring for the family of creation and Earth, our common home. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

Reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. Our decisions for evil or for good matter for God.

The message Ezekiel is affirming is that the major decisions affecting the direction of our lives – even late in life – are matters of life and death for us. Our decisions matter. God pays attention to personal responsibility.

It is never too late in life to respond to God's call to conversion. How can we become more attentive to that call in how we relate to creation, becoming more conscious of our consumer patterns, our care for the poor and marginalized among us and for future generations?

Psalm 25 recalls God's compassion and mercy, asking God to forget the sins and frailties of our past and show us the way we are to live. Conversion requires growing in knowledge of our sinfulness and failings, prayer for forgiveness, and willing trust in God's compassion and forgiveness.

The passage from the Letter to the Ephesians describes God's response to the prayer to know the Way: urging unity of mind and heart, doing nothing out of selfishness, having the same attitude of humility and obedience that Jesus lived even to the point of death on the cross.

The example of Christ Jesus is challenging, as is his teaching on what is truly important in life. The beatitudes and the parable of the last judgment put down-to-Earth examples before us.

How do the example and teaching of Jesus call us to what Pope Francis calls an integral ecological conversion? As we contemplate the extent of the humility and sacrifice that Jesus embraced, do we grow in gratitude and courage?

In Matthew's parable of the two sons, Jesus calls attention to the all too familiar reality that we may learn the right things to say, but that what matters is what we actually do, our actions. He challenges the chief priests and the elders to change and act in the way of righteousness and justice that John preached.

In this Season of Creation, what are our actions showing about how are we responding to God's call to integral ecological conversion?

The environmental dimensions of an integral ecological conversion:

What are we doing to reduce the pollution of air, water and land that have resulted from our ways of living in creation?

How can we grow in a spirituality that will help us better to acknowledge, reverence, care for, and share the gifts of creation within which we live? Upon which we and all others rely for life itself?

The economic dimensions of an integral ecological conversion:

What changes are we undertaking in the economic dimensions of our lives? How are we resisting the idolatry of wealth and possessions so common around the world?

What are we doing to help ourselves and others better understand the systems of economy and development, of production and distribution and consumption which have abused and overused the resources of the planet, are threatening its resilience and are destroying its regenerative capacities?

Do we need to reevaluate our habits of accumulation? How can we act to address the terrible inequalities in our society? In the global human community where billions of people live in devastating poverty? What can we do to change the unjust ways our economies distribute the resources given by God for all, to meet the basic needs of all life?

How can we grow in a spirituality that nurtures simplicity in lifestyles, structures of justice for all in our economies, and sustainable relations with the natural world?

The social dimensions of an integral ecological conversion:

How can we work together to overcome poverty and marginalization? Racism, discrimination in our communities, our societies?

How can we work to overcome violence and divisions that lead to conflict and destruction of creation?

How can we develop a more socially conscious spirituality, one that is attentive to the injustice in our institutions and culture, one that works to resolve conflict nonviolently, one that works to raise up the New Creation?

General Intercessions Petitions

That we may grow in consciousness of the great gift of creation and all of its elements, we pray....

That we may deepen our gratitude for nature's rich Web of Life within which we live and may grow in openness to wiser and more just ways of caring for it and sharing it, we pray....

That we may take up our prophetic responsibility in this time of crisis to speak God's Truth to each other and to call each other into ways of living within creation wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently we pray....

That our conversion and actions may help to bring about the urgent and far-reaching transformations all around Earth to restore the health of the planet and prevent the dramatic climate changes and grave devastation to life that threaten the future, we pray....

Prayer over the Gifts

Our loving God, look with favor upon these gifts. They express our offering of ourselves, our energies, our hopes to respond to Your urgent call for us to heal and renew the Earth, turning from our sinful ways to share in the birthing of the New Creation. In this eucharist, open to us the Source from which all blessings flow. We make our prayer through Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Gracious and loving God, through our sharing in this holy mystery restore us in mind and heart, that we may live with energy and joy the rich and integral conversion to which You are drawing us and rejoice in Your Spirit at the birthing of the New Creation. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus and in the power of Your Holy Spirit where we live and move and have our being now and forever. Amen.

Final Blessing

Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings** on p. 30, based upon prayers of Pope Francis for possible use at the end of Mass.

Fourth Sunday – Musical Selections

September 27, 2020 | 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E – Entrance | O – Offertory | C – Communion | D – Dismissal

E	God, Our God of Distant Ages Omer Westendorf ©1984, WLP
E,D	The Stars Declare His Glory Timothy Dudley-Smith ©1981, Hope Publishing Co.
E,D	Sing Out, Earth and Skies Marty Haugen ©1985
E,O,D	For the Beauty of the Earth Folliet S. Pierpoint
O,D	For the Healing of the Nations Fred Kaan ©1968 Hope Publishing Co.
O,C	Where Charity and Love Prevail Paul Benoit ©1960 WLP
O,C	Ubi Caritas ©1979, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA, agent
C	Make of Our Hands a Throne Steven C. Warner, ©2001 WLP
C	I Believe This Is Jesus Alan J. Hommerding, ©2004 WLP

Psalm Settings

Psalm 25: Remember Your Mercies, O Lord
Paul Tate, © 2013 GIA

Psalm 25: Remember Your Mercies, O Lord
Michel Guimont, © 1998 GIA

Psalm 25: Remember Your Mercies, O Lord
Steven R. Janco, © 2001 WLP

Remember, Lord
©2007 The Collegeville Composers Group, pub. Liturgical Press

Fifth Sunday of the Season of Creation

October 4, 2020 | 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 5:1-7

Ps. 80:9, 12-16, 19-20

Philippians 4:6-9

Matthew 21:33-43

Introductory Comments

As we come to the close of this year's Season of Creation, we can recall its messages simply through the last weeks:

God has given us a mission to pass on truthfully the prophetic word given us about care of Earth.

We need to communicate that prophetic word without anger or vengeance, but with a forgiving heart, as we have been forgiven.

It involves a call to all of us to pay attention to God's ways for us to live, Jubilee ways, in all dimensions of life.

Each person is ultimately responsible for his or her own ecological conversion, a conversion which leads to transformed ways of acting in creation.

Our scriptures today warn us that if the human community and its political leaders fail in this mission to care for Earth through the transformation of our cultures and political structures and policies, Earth will be taken away from our care. St. Paul urges us to accept this call and challenge with utmost seriousness but without anxiety, praying with gratitude, and opening our hearts to receive the gift of God's peace.

Penitential Rite Suggestion

Conscious of our journey in faith through this Season of Creation and of the great challenges still before us as the human family in the midst of the community of creation, let us enter into the quiet of our spirits . . . praying that the peace of God may indeed fill our hearts and guide us in our mission on Ear *[silent pause]*

Our Creator God, we have become alienated from Earth and viewed this planet as disposable, a source of endless resources, a mere stopping place on our journey to heaven.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

We have polluted Earth's air and land and waters with toxins. We have killed millions of species. We have turned our greed into global warming, causing storms to become more severe, and artic regions and ice fields to melt. We have devalued human life and have loved "progress" more than the planet.

Word of God, have mercy.

You are at work in us and among us now in these times filling us with new knowledge of God's presence in Earth, calling us to take part in Your New Creation.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May the all-powerful and forgiving God, Creator of all that is, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

Gloria

Opening Prayer

Yours, Our Loving God, is the vineyard and its harvest, Yours the kin-dom of justice and peace. You call Your people to tend its growth. Bless the work entrusted to our hands, that we may offer You an abundance of just, sustainable, and flourishing works, a rich harvest of peace. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen**.

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. "The vineyard of the Lord is the House of Israel."

In Isaiah's parable, the vineyard, although carefully prepared and cultivated by God, produces wild grapes. God promises to destroy the vineyard. The House of Israel must expect destruction and ruin because God came to this "cherished plant" looking for judgment and justice and found only bloodshed and the outcry of those suffering from injustice.

In *Laudato Sí*, Pope Francis refers extensively to the role of individuals and cultures in the destruction of Earth. He calls us to critique the "myths" on which our cultures grow and guide the lifestyles and actions of people around the world: myths of individualism, the possibility of unlimited progress and economic growth, competition, consumerism, and the unregulated market system *[L.S. #210]*. He notes that they support the kind of short-term thinking that has led to the current destructive patterns of overconsumption, inequality, pollution, climate change and social unrest.

> Do these myths operate in our culture, our society? In our community? Do they affect my thinking and actions? My hopes and dreams? My lifestyle choices? Our lifestyle as a community?
>
> How can we learn to discern them and the ways they affect our unexamined cultural assumptions?
>
> How can we turn away from their destructive influence and grow in solidarity, responsibility, and compassionate care for creation, including all in the human family? How might this lead us to make changes in even small daily actions to provide better care for creation [L.S. #211]?
>
> How can we help inform and teach others? How can we together grow in simplicity of life? In grateful contemplation of God's gifts in creation? In concern for the needs of the poor? In protecting the environment?
>
> How can we use social media and participate in social movements and organizations promoting this kind of change in our culture and societal patterns of action?

In Matthew's version of the parable of the vineyard, the focus is not on the cultural beliefs and social patterns of the people as it is in the passage from Isaiah. Jesus addresses his vineyard parable to the chief priests and elders of the people, the decisionmakers, the leaders, the politicians.

Pope Francis is clear in *Laudato Sí* that political action and change are also critically important to the urgent and desperately needed integral ecological conversion we are being called to. Political institutions and politicians set larger community policies, laws, and structures to establish order and protect the common good. Vatican Council II defined the common good as "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment." *[Gaudium et Spes #26]*

> Are our political leaders working to address the ecological needs of Earth? Do they reflect the vision of integral ecological conversion to which we are called? At the local level? At the regional or state level? At the global level?

Pope Francis writes: "The gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity...." *[L.S. #201]*

> How can we fulfill our prophetic responsibility in love to demand that our political leaders and institutions acknowledge the urgency and respond effectively to the current ecological crisis, guiding our communities into more sustainable ways of living for the healing and care of Earth? At the local level? At regional, state, and global levels?
>
> How can we as individuals and as faith communities call upon political leaders to think of, respect, and set in place political processes for protecting the long-term common good?

How can we demand a global vision and active global collaboration in order to protect all peoples, especially the poor who are suffering most severely from climate change and other ecological crises? How can we stand up against and resist destructive nationalism that is so viciously damaging to the interdependent community of creation?

How can we direct political leaders and institutions away from the consumption-driven, competitive and thoroughly unsustainable system of economy dominating the world at this time toward sustainable, healing and much more just models of development?

How can we encourage political leaders to provide financial and technological help to poor nations, make more just and enforceable international agreements, govern the global commons justly and sustainably, and devise, in the words of Pope Francis, "stronger and more efficiently organized international institutions" that treat all nations justly *[L.S. ##172-175]*?

How can we educate ourselves, our communities and our political leaders about more just and sustainable models of development?

Are there political movements or organizations that can strengthen and multiply our efforts to protect and care for our common home effectively?

Paul's letter to the Philippians directs us in the ways of peace as we carry out our mission to care for creation, including the human community.

Have no anxiety, but with gratitude for the gift of creation, ask God's guidance, strength and protection. Then the God of peace will be with us.

General Intercessions Petitions

That in this time of ecological and climate crises, the human family may learn to respect all creatures and care for them as signs of God's wondrous love, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That we may use our resources and creativity to undo the damage we have done to God's creation and to sustain God's gifts in creation, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That political campaigns will educate the people of all nations to the seriousness of the issues facing the world community and call forth a strong commitment to care for our common home, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the successful implementation of stronger international commitments to reduce global warming and care for the oceans and all the global commons, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That we may work to end the suffering of those in poverty and reach out in solidarity to those who suffer most from ecological abuse and destruction, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That we as companions of Christ may preach and act with courage, attentive to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in implementing significant commitments to care for Earth, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Prayer over the Gifts

Our loving God, accept these gifts which Jesus has asked us to offer in His memory, gifts of bread and wine, gifts of ourselves, our energies and our commitment to serve You with gratitude and love in caring for the community of creation. May our faithful service bring us to the fullness of Your redemption. We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Almighty and ever-loving God, let this eucharist that we share fill us with Your life. May the love of Christ which we celebrate here touch our lives, fill us with Your peace, guide us in our care for Your creation, and lead us to You. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

Following the entries for the five Sundays of the Season of Creation, you will find two **Solemn Blessings** on p. 30, based upon prayers of Pope Francis for possible use at the end of Mass.

Fifth Sunday – Musical Selections

October 4, 2020 | 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E – Entrance | O – Offertory | C – Communion | D – Dismissal

E	All Creatures of Our God and King Francis of Assisi, tr. By William H. Draper
E	Canticle of the Sun Marty Haugen ©1980 GIA
E	Journey of Faith Delores Dufner © 2012, Sisters of St. Benedict, pub. By WLP
E,O,D	All Things Bright and Beautiful Cecil F. Alexander
O,D	For the Fruits of This (All) Creation Fred Pratt Green ©1970 Hope Publishing Co.
O,D	For the Beauty of the Earth Folliet S. Pierpoint
O,C	Christ Has No Body Now But Yours Teresa of Ávila/Stephen C. Warner ©2003 WLP
C	One Bread, One Body © 1978, John B. Foley, SJ pub. by OCP
C	Gift of Finest Wheat Omer Westendorf ©1977 Archdiocese of Phila., Interntl. Lit. Pub.
C	Take and Eat James Quinn and Michael Joncas ©1989 GIA
D	Stewards of Earth Omer Westendorf, © 1984 WLP
D	Touch the Earth Lightly Text: Shirley Erena Murray, ©1992 Hope Publishing Co.

Psalm Settings

Psalm 80: The Vineyard of the Lord
Steven C Warner, ©1995, WLP

Psalm 80: The Vineyard of the Lord
Michel Guimont, © 1994, GIA

Psalm 80: The Vineyard of the Lord
© Kevin Keil, pub. by OCP

The People of God Are the Vineyard
©2007 Collegeville Composers Group, pub. Lit. Press

Solemn Blessings

For possible use as Final Blessing at Mass

Solemn Blessing I

We believe that all creatures come forth from the all-powerful hand of the Creator, evolving through time and space, filled with God's presence and tender love.

May God awaken our praise and thankfulness for every creature and bless us with the grace of feeling profoundly joined to everything that is. **Amen**.

Through Christ all things were made. Formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, Christ Jesus became part of this Earth, gazing upon this world with human eyes.

May Christ bless us with eyes to see him alive in every creature in his risen glory. **Amen**.

The Holy Spirit guides this world toward the Creator's love and accompanies creation as it groans in travail.

May this Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts and inspire us to do what is good, to care wisely and with love for Earth, our common home. **Amen**.

And may our Triune God, wondrous community of infinite love, bless us all with justice, peace, love and beauty, Creator, Word and Holy Spirit. **Amen**.

Based upon "A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation" by Pope Francis from *Laudato Sí*.

Solemn Blessing II

Our Creator God is the ultimate source of everything, the loving and self-communicating foundation of all that exists.

May God bless us with deep gratitude for our relationships with all creatures in the vast web of life. **Amen**.

Christ, the Word through whom all things were created, took flesh through Mary, becoming part of the vast web of life on Earth.

May Christ help us to be good news to the poor, to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this Earth. **Amen**.

The Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways.

May this Holy Spirit 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. **Amen**.

And may God bless us with a spirit of global solidarity flowing from the Mystery of the Trinity, Creator, Word and Holy Spirit. **Amen**.

Based upon *Laudato Sí*, ## 238-240, and "A Prayer for Our Earth" by Pope Francis.

Music Reference List

Abundant Life
Ruth Duck, ©1992 GIA

All Creatures of Our God and King
Francis of Assisi, tr. By William H. Draper

All Good Gifts
Matthias Claudius (We plow the fields and scatter)

All Things Bright and Beautiful
Cecil F. Alexander

Bread to Share
Marty Haugen, ©1995 GIA

Canticle of the Sun
Marty Haugen, ©1980 GIA

Christ Has No Body Now But Yours
St. Teresa of Ávila/Stephen C. Warner, ©2003 WLP

Creating God, Your Fingers Trace
Jeffery Rowthorn, ©1979 Hymn Society of America

Journey of Faith
Delores Dufner, © 2012 Sisters of St. Benedict, pub. By WLP

For the Beauty of the Earth
Folliet S. Pierpoint

For the Fruits of This (All) Creation
Fred Pratt Green, ©1970 Hope Publishing Co.

For the Healing of the Nations
Fred Kaan, ©1968 Hope Publishing Co.

Forgive Our Sins, as We Forgive
Rosamund E. Herklots, ©1969 Oxford University Press

Gift of Finest Wheat
Omer Westendorf, ©1977 Archdiocese of Phila., International Liturgy Pub.

Glory and Praise to Our God
©1972, 1974, 2008 Daniel L. Schutte, pub. by OCP

God, Our God of Distant Ages
Omer Westendorf ©1984, WLP

God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens Text: Catherine Cameron,
©1967 Hope Pub. Co.

Here I Am, Lord
Daniel L. Schutte, ©1981 OCP

I Believe This Is Jesus
Alan J. Hommerding, ©2004 WLP

I Sing the Mighty Power of God
Isaac Watts

Life-giving Bread, Saving Cup
James Chepponis, ©1987 GIA

Love One Another
Feargal King, ©2000 OCP

Make of Our Hands a Throne
Steven C. Warner, ©2001 WLP

Many and Great
Dakota hymn, para. Philip Frazier

Morning Has Broken
©1931 Eleanor Farjeon

One Bread, One Body
© 1978 John B. Foley, SJ, pub. by OCP

Now Join We to Praise the Creator
Fred Kaan, ©1968 Hope Publishing Company

Pan de Vida
Bob Hurd and Pia Moriarty, ©1988 by Bob Hurd, pub. by OCP

Praise to the Lord
Joachim Neander, trans. Catherine Winkworth

E,O,D Prayer of Saint Francis
St. Francis of Assisi, adapt. Sebastian Temple, ©1967 OCP

Seek the Lord
Roc O'Connor, ©1976 Robert F. O'Connor, SJ, and New Dawn Music

Sing Out, Earth and Skies
Marty Haugen, ©1985 GIA

Sing, O Sing
©1987, 1989, 1992 Daniel L. Schutte, published by OCP

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Omer Westendorf, © 1984 World Library Publications

Take and Eat
James Quinn and Michael Joncas, ©1989 GIA

Taste and See
James E. Moore, Jr., ©1983 GIA

The Stars Declare His Glory
Timothy Dudley-Smith, ©1981 Hope Publishing Co.

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Lloyd Stone, Georgia Harkness, ©1964 Lorenz Publishing Co.

Touch the Earth Lightly
Shirley Erena Murray, ©1992 Hope Publishing Company.

Ubi Caritas
©1979 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA, agent

We Sing the Mighty Power of God
Isaac Watts

When We Are Living /Pues Si Vivimos
Roberto Escamilla, ©1989 United Meth. Pub.

House Where Charity and Love Prevail
Paul Benoit, ©1960 WLP

Who Can Measure Heaven and Earth Christopher Idle, ©1982 Hope Publishing Co.

Your Word Went Forth
Herman Stuempfle, ©1993 GIA Publications, Inc.

LISTEN

LAUDATO SI'

GLOBAL CATHOLIC CLIMATE MOVEMENT

SEASON OF CREATION 2020

JUBILEE TIME FOR THE EARTH

A CATHOLIC LITURGICAL GUIDE

PRODUCED BY

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