



Leader: Pope Francis has established September 1 as an annual **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation**, inspired by the example of the Orthodox Churches who have observed this day for a number of years. Pope Francis wishes to remind us that: “Christians are called to “an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.” Thus, “living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”(Laudato Si’, 217). We begin our prayer singing St. Francis’s Canticle of the Creatures which so inspires the ecological vision of Pope Francis:

Canticle of the Sun, David Haas

Refrain: The heavens are telling the glory of God,
And all creation is shouting for joy!
Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field,
And sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!

Verse One

Praise for the sun, the bringer of day, he carries the light of the Lord in his rays; the moon and the stars who light up the way unto your throne! Refrain

Verse Two

Praise for the wind that blows through the trees, the seas' mighty storms, the gentlest breeze; they blow where they will, they blow where they please to please the Lord! Refrain

Verse Three

Praise for the rain that waters our fields, and blesses our crops so all the Earth yields; from death unto life her mystery revealed springs forth in joy! Refrain

Verse Four

Praise for the fire who gives us his light, the warmth of the sun to brighten our night; he dances with joy, his spirit so bright, he sings of you! Refrain

EARTH

Reader: The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighborhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves, (Laudato Si', 84).

Leader: In silence, press your feet into the ground. Become aware of the earth beneath your feet. Marvel and be grateful for the nourishment you receive from "our mother, sister Earth."

Silent Prayer

AIR

Reader: The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters....The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth, (Laudato Si, 2, 21).

Leader: Become conscious of your breathing. Be grateful for the gift of air and resolve to use your voice to advocate for the purity of Earth's atmosphere.

Silent Prayer

FIRE

Reader: Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades...Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded, (Laudato Si' 25)

Leader: Open and close your hands, aware that our ability to do so is fueled by the sun's energy that is captured by the plant life that we eat. Rejoice in the energy of the sun and resolve to use your energy to face climate change, one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.

Silent Prayer

WATER

Reader: Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity, (Laudato Si' 30).

Leader: Breathe again deeply, taking in molecules of water that have also passed through the bodies of all breathing creatures. Be grateful for the gift of water and resolve to use it with reverence and justice.

Silent Prayer

FAITH SHARING

If the group wishes, there can be a period of faith sharing on the question: How has the emphasis of Pope Francis on the care of creation made you more aware that ecological concerns are "not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience"?

Leader: We conclude our prayer with Pope Francis's Prayer for the Earth.

All: 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. Amen.

This Prayer Service is based on Laudato Si', the encyclical by Pope Francis. It was created by Sr. Diane Roche, rscj who works at the Stuart Center in Washington D.C.