**Vigil for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation**

(adapted for young people)

***Preparation:*** *Ask people to bring either a seed or a picture of a seed or flower with them. Or make photos of seeds or flowers available.*

**Opening hymn:** *O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder* (Laudate 721); *God of Wonders*, Maranatha Music, 2016; *Mungu ni mwema (Know that God is good),* John Bell.

**INTRODUCTION AND OPENING PRAYER**

**Leader:** *(Sign of the cross)* The coronavirus pandemic reminded us how connected we all are. It highlighted that we are not separate from one another or from the rest of creation. And it helped many people to appreciate in a new way the beauty of creation. We gather today to thank God for the gift of creation, and to ask God’s help to care for our world.

This year [2020], we also celebrate five years of Pope Francis’ letter to the world, *Laudato Si’* and so we pray with Pope Francis:

Loving God, Creator of heaven, earth and all they contain,

**All: Open our minds and touch our hearts, so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.**

**Leader:** Be present to those in need, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

Help us to work together creatively to confront the global pandemic.

Help us embrace the changes we need to make for the sake of the common good.

**All: Now more than ever, may we see that we are all connected.**

**Leader:** Help us to listen and respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

May their current sufferings give birth to a more caring and sustainable world.

We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.

**All: Amen.**

**CALL TO REPENTANCE**

**Leader:** All of the earth is good. Yet, our fragile world is being robbed by greed. In many countries, water is no longer safe to drink. The rainforests are slashed down and their inhabitants driven out, for the sake of money and power.

**Reader one:** José Batista, a human rights lawyer from Brazil supported by CAFOD, says: “In the Amazon region we reside in the midst of a big conflict. On one side are those who fight to protect the forest and its peoples, on the other, those who want to destroy the forest.”

**Reader two:**In his letter *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis wrote: “Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it...”[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Leader:** We recognise our part in harming the earth and our neighbours, and we ask for the Lord’s forgiveness. In silence, let us reflect on how to change our lives and care for creation.

**Silent reflection   
  
Hymn:** *Father we have sinned*, Keith Getty and Stuart Townend (© 2003 Thankyou Music); *O, the love of my Lord* (Laudate 967).

**READINGS**  
 **First reading:** *Laudato Si’, paragraph 228*Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be *freely given*\*; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us. That is why it is possible to love our enemies. This [also] inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them.

*\*Gratuitous*

**Responsorial psalm:** *Psalm 103:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35. R. Cf. v.30*

**R. Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.**

Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are,   
clothed in majesty and glory,  
wrapped in light as in a robe! **R**.

You founded the earth on its base,   
to stand firm from age to age.   
You wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak:  
the waters stood higher than the mountains. **R.**

You make springs gush forth in the valleys:   
they flow in between the hills.  
On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;  
from the branches they sing their song. **R**.

From your dwelling you water the hills;  
earth drinks its fill of your gift.   
You make the grass grow for the cattle  
and the plants to serve people’s needs. **R.**

How many are your works, O Lord!   
In wisdom you have made them all.   
The earth is full of your riches.   
Bless the Lord, my soul! **R.**

**Gospel reading:** *Matthew 13: 31-33*

Jesus put another parable before them, “The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air can come and shelter in its branches.”

**Leader:** The Gospel of the Lord. **All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Pause for quiet reflection*

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

**Leader:** A mustard seed; small enough to hold in the palm of your hand. Yet, Jesus tells us that this precious little seed is like the kingdom of Heaven. We ask the Lord our God to open our eyes to the wonders of creation, and we offer our hearts in hope that all things may flourish.

**Reader:** We pray for the Church: that the Holy Spirit may breathe compassion and courage into our hearts. May we walk alongside all vulnerable people and respond in love to their needs. Lord, in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world, our common home: that through God’s grace we may recognise that we are all part of a fragile balance. May we hear the earth’s cry, and be moved to protect it for future generations. Lord, in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** We pray for world leaders, that the Lord may move them to act with respect and urgency for the sake of the earth and the most vulnerable. Lord, in your mercy,   
**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** We pray for everyone struggling in the face of increasing droughts, floods and storms, and for those working to tackle the climate emergency. May God grant us all hope and strength for the future. Lord, in your mercy...

**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** We pray for our parishes and local communities as we begin to rebuild following coronavirus. Through the grace of God may we choose lifestyles that do no harm to our vulnerable brothers and sisters or to the earth. Lord, in your mercy…

**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** We ask these prayers through our Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all creation,   
**All: Amen.**

**Hymn:** *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God* (Laudate 820); *The Summons*, Iona community.

**LITANY OF CREATION**

**Leader:** Loving Creator, we give you thanks and praise, as we pray:

**Reader:** Heavenly Father, source of light and life,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** Son of God, Jesus, risen in fullness,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** Holy Spirit, infinite bond of love,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** Holy Trinity, creator of resplendent beauty,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** God of our own hearts, you draw all creatures to yourself,

**All: Give us the grace to care for your gift.**

**Reader:** Living Lord Jesus, you open our eyes to the dignity of all,

**All: Give us the grace to care for your gift.**

**Reader:** Holy Spirit, you inspire us to do what is good,

**All: Give us the grace to care for your gift.**

**Leader:** God’s love unites us as one family, and so together we say:

**All: Our Father...**

**ACT OF COMMITMENT**

**Leader:** We think of all who dwell in the rainforests of our earth. We think of the infinite varieties of bird, the trees, the fish, and the waters. By opening our hearts to God’s grace, we are able to cherish the goodness around us.

Now, as a sign of commitment, take some time to contemplate the beauty of creation. If you have brought a seed or a photo with you, please take hold of it now. If not, please look at one of the images of nature placed near to you. Contemplate the wonder of what God has made and consider what you could commit to do in order to care for creation over the next year. For example, walking as often as possible instead of using the car, planting a tree, picking up litter when you go out for a walk, donating or campaigning with CAFOD.

In this way we may take a step towards creating a heavenly place to call home.

*Quiet music plays*

**CLOSING PRAYER AND FINAL BLESSING**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my ears to listen to the cry of the earth,   
the voices of my sisters and brothers,   
those who face the harsh reality of climate change.   
**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my eyes to see the beauty of creation,   
in flowers, creatures, forests, and cities alike.   
**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my voice to speak out for justice  
and ensure people living in poverty are heard.    
**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my hands to care for the earth,   
to toil, to reap, to celebrate.   
**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my feet to take the path less trod,   
to walk the extra mile,   
to take your message out to the world.   
**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

*(Prayer by Father Michael Fitzsimmons/CAFOD)*

**Leader:** Through the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, may we go forth with joy to care for creation.  
**All: Amen.**

**Closing hymn:** *Here I am, Lord* (Laudate 865); *Be thou my vision* (Laudate 970)

*As part of your renewed commitment to care for creation, we invite you to reflect on our responsibility to care for the world that God has made. In his encyclical Laudato Si', Pope Francis calls on us all to make simple daily gestures to care for the world’s poorest people, for future generations and for the earth, our common home. This is an opportunity to live wisely, think deeply and love generously.*

*We also invite you to continue your journey to caring for our common home, by speaking out and calling on politicians to do their bit. Visit our website for CAFOD’s latest campaign. In 2020, we are calling on politicians to put plans in place to rebuild a fairer, more just society after the coronavirus crisis, so that the world’s most vulnerable people can live in dignity and to restore our common home for future generations. Find out more and sign the petition at* ***cafod.org.uk/uniteagainstcoronavirus***

1. Laudato Si’ #53 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)