The River Does Not Divide Us:

Pentecost Novena on the Care of Creation

We invite all Catholics in England and Wales to respond in prayer and action to the urgent climate change issues that we all face. The *God Who Speaks* team offers this Novena of readings and prayers drawn from the Bible and recent Papal teaching.

Between Ascension and Pentecost, the Scriptures tell us: *"All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers…"* (Acts 1:14) while they awaited to be *"clothed with power from on high."* (Luke 24:49).

We are invited to pray these nine days reflecting on the account of creation in the book of Genesis. This Novena can be used on its own or to complement the prayers and reflections of the global prayer movement - 'Thy Kingdom Come' with the Care of Creation theme.

Day 1 – Friday after Ascension (14th May)

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (*Laudato Si’*, 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our ancestors,
and to be praised and highly exalted for ever;
Blessed are you in the shrine of your glory
and to be extolled and highly glorified for ever.
Blessed be you, who sits upon cherubim and looks upon the deeps,
and to be praised and highly exalted for ever;
Blessed are you upon the throne of your kingdom,
and to be extolled and highly exalted for ever.
Blessed be you in the firmament of heaven
and to be sung and glorified forever.
(*Prayer of Azariah and his Companions, Daniel 3:52-56*)

A reading from the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* on 'Care for our Common Home.' Pope Francis, 24th May 2015.

… Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. "Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (*Wisdom 13:5*); indeed, "his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world" (*Romans 1:20*). For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty. Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise. N.12.

Prayer*

"Common Prayer for Earth and for Humanity"

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.
Amen.

Day 2 – Saturday after the Ascension (15th May)

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (*Laudato Si’* 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And here was evening and there was morning, the first day.
(Genesis 1:3-5)

Bless the Lord, all works of the Lord,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, you heavens,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, all waters above the heaven
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
(*Prayer of Azariah and his Companions, Daniel 3:57-60*)

A reading from the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* on 'the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Church's life and mission.' Pope Benedict XVI, 22nd February 2007.

… to develop a profound Eucharistic spirituality that is also capable of significantly affecting the fabric of society, the Christian people, in giving thanks to God through the Eucharist, should be conscious that they do so in the name of all creation, aspiring to the sanctification of the world and working intensely to that end. The Eucharist itself powerfully illuminates human history and the whole cosmos. In this sacramental perspective we learn, day by day, that every ecclesial event is a kind of sign by which God makes himself known and challenges us. The Eucharistic form of life can thus help foster a real change in the way we approach history and the world. The liturgy itself teaches us this, when, during the presentation of the gifts, the priest raises to God a prayer of blessing and petition over the bread and wine, "fruit of the earth," "fruit of the vine" and "work of human hands." With these words, the rite not only includes in our offering to God all human efforts and activity, but also leads us to see the world as God's creation, which brings forth everything we need for our sustenance. The world is not something indifferent, raw material to be utilized simply as we see fit. Rather, it is part of God's good plan, in which all of us are called to be sons and daughters in the one Son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. *Ephesians 1:4-12*). The justified concern about threats to the environment present in so many parts of the world is reinforced by Christian hope, which commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation. The relationship between the Eucharist and the cosmos helps us to see the unity of God's plan and to grasp the profound relationship between creation and the "new creation" inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ, the new Adam. Even now we take part in that new creation by virtue of our Baptism (cf. *Colossians 2:12ff.*). Our Christian life, nourished by the Eucharist, gives us a glimpse of that new world – new heavens and a new earth – where the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven, from God, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (*Revelation 21:2*). N.92.

Prayer*

"Common Prayer for Earth and for Humanity"

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.
Amen.

Day 3 – 7th Sunday of Easter (16th May)

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (*Laudato Si’*, 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
And God said, “let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. (Genesis 1:6-8)

Bless the Lord, all powers,
sing praise to him and highly exalt
him forever.

Bless the Lord, sun and moon,
sing praise to him and highly exalt
him forever.

Bless the Lord, stars of heaven,
sing praise to him and highly exalt
him forever.

Bless the Lord, rain and dew,
sing praise to him and highly exalt
him forever.

Bless the Lord, all winds,
sing praise to him and highly exalt
him forever.

(*Prayer of Azariah and his Companions, Daniel 3:61-65*)

A reading from the Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* 'on integral human development in charity and truth.'
Pope Benedict XVI, 29th June 2009.

The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. The deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: *when "human ecology" is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits*. Just as human virtues are interrelated, such that the weakening of one places others at risk, so the ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature.

In order to protect nature, it is not enough to intervene with economic incentives or deterrents; not even an apposite education is sufficient. These are important steps, but *the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society*. If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society. N.51.

Prayer*

"Common Prayer for Earth and for Humanity"

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.
Amen.

Day 4 – Monday 17th May

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (*Laudato Si’*, 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place and let dry land appear.” And the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw it was good. And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind on earth.” And so it was. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.
(Genesis 1:9-13)

Bless the Lord, fire and heat,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, winter cold and summer heat,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, dews and snows,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, nights and days,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, light and darkness,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, ice and cold,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, frosts and snows,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, lightnings and clouds,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

(*Prayer of Azariah and his Companions, Daniel 3:66-73*)

A reading from the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia,* 'to the beloved Amazon region.'
Pope Francis, 2nd February 2020.

The Amazon is also the spinal column that creates harmony and unity: "the river does not divide us. It unites us and helps us live together amid different cultures and languages". While it is true that in these lands there are many "Amazon regions", the principal axis is the great river, the offspring of many rivers: "From the high mountain range where the snows are eternal, the water descends and traces a shimmering line along the ancient skin of the rock: the Amazon is born. It is born every second. It descends slowly, a sinuous ray of light, and then swells in the lowland. Rushing upon green spaces, it invents its own path and expands. Underground waters well up to embrace the water that falls from the Andes. From the belly of the pure white clouds, swept by the wind, water falls from heaven. It collects and advances, multiplied in infinite pathways, bathing the immense plain… This is the Great Amazonia, covering the humid tropic with its astonishingly thick forest, vast reaches untouched by man, pulsing with life threading through its deep waters… From the time that men have lived there, there has arisen from the depths of its waters, and running through the heart of its forest, a terrible fear: that its life is slowly but surely coming to an end". N.45.

Prayer*

"Common Prayer for Earth
and for Humanity"

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth,
and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.
Amen.

Day 5 – Tuesday 18th May

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (*Laudato Si’*, 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon thee.” And it was so. And God made the two great lights - the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night- and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. (Genesis 1:14-19)

Let the earth bless the Lord,
let it sing praise to him
and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, mountains and hills,
sing praise to him
and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, all things that grow
on the earth,
sing praise to him
and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, seas and rivers,
sing praise to him
and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, you springs,
sing praise to him
and highly exalt him forever.

(*Prayer of Azariah and his Companions, Daniel 3:74-78*)

A reading from the Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* on 'integral human development in charity and truth.'
Pope Benedict XVI, 29th June 2009.

Today the subject of development is also closely related to the duties arising from *our relationship to the natural environment*. The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it, we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. When nature, including the human being, is viewed as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism, our sense of responsibility wanes. In nature, the believer recognizes the wonderful result of God's creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise, while respecting the intrinsic balance of creation. If this vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it. Neither attitude is consonant with the Christian vision of nature as the fruit of God's creation.

Nature expresses a design of love and truth. It is prior to us, and it has been given to us by God as the setting for our life. Nature speaks to us of the Creator (cf. *Romans 1:20*) and his love for humanity. It is destined to be "recapitulated" in Christ at the end of time (cf. *Ephesians 1:9-10; Colossians 1:19-20*). Thus it too is a "vocation". Nature is at our disposal not as "a heap of scattered refuse", but as a gift of the Creator who has given it an inbuilt order, enabling man to draw from it the principles needed in order "to till it and keep it" (*Genesis 2:15*). But it should also be stressed that it is contrary to authentic development to view nature as something more important than the human person. This position leads to attitudes of neo-paganism or a new pantheism — human salvation cannot come from nature alone, understood in a purely naturalistic sense. This having been said, it is also necessary to reject the opposite position, which aims at total technical dominion over nature, because the natural environment is more than raw material to be manipulated at our pleasure; it is a wondrous work of the Creator containing a "grammar" which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation. N.48.

Prayer*

"Common Prayer for Earth and for Humanity"

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.
Amen.

Day 6 – Wednesday 19th May

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (*Laudato Si’*, 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” So God created the great sea creatures and every living creatures that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the sea, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. (Genesis 1:20-23)

Bless the Lord, you whales and all creatures that move in the waters,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, all birds of the air,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, all beasts and cattle
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
(*Prayer of Azariah and his Companions, Daniel 3:79-81*)

A reading from the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* on 'the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world.'
Pope Francis, 24th November 2013.

There are other weak and defenceless beings who are frequently at the mercy of economic interests or indiscriminate exploitation. I am speaking of creation as a whole. We human beings are not only the beneficiaries but also the stewards of other creatures. Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement. Let us not leave in our wake a swath of destruction and death which will affect our own lives and those of future generations.[177] Here I would make my own the touching and prophetic lament voiced some years ago by the bishops of the Philippines: "An incredible variety of insects lived in the forest and were busy with all kinds of tasks… Birds flew through the air, their bright plumes and varying calls adding colour and song to the green of the forests… God intended this land for us, his special creatures, but not so that we might destroy it and turn it into a wasteland… After a single night's rain, look at the chocolate brown rivers in your locality and remember that they are carrying the life blood of the land into the sea… How can fish swim in sewers like the Pasig and so many more rivers which we have polluted? Who has turned the wonder world of the seas into underwater cemeteries bereft of colour and life?" N.215.

Small yet strong in the love of God, like Saint Francis of Assisi, all of us, as Christians, are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live, and all its peoples. N.216

Prayer*

"Common Prayer for Earth and for Humanity"

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.
Amen.

Day 7 – Thursday 20th May

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. "The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward." (*Laudato Si'*, 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

"O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth" (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to the kinds - livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw it was good. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and all the earth and over every creeping things that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:23-31)

Bless the Lord, you sons of men,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, O Israel,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, you priests,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, you servants,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, spirits and souls of the righteous,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
Bless the Lord, you who are holy and humble in heart,
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
(*Prayer of Azariah and his Companions, Daniel 3:82-87*)

A reading from the World Peace Day Message '*Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of creation*.'
Pope John Paul II, 1st January 1990.

In the Book of Genesis, where we find God's first self-revelation to humanity (*Genesis 1-3*), there is a recurring refrain: *"And God saw that it was good"*. After creating the heavens, the sea, the earth and all it contains, God created man and woman. At this point the refrain changes markedly: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, *it was very good"* (*Genesis 1:31*). God entrusted the whole of creation to the man and woman, and only then - as we read - could he rest "from all his work" (*Genesis 2:3*). Adam and Eve's call to share in the unfolding of God's plan of creation brought into play those abilities and gifts which distinguish the human being from all other creatures. At the same time, their call established a fixed relationship between mankind and the rest of creation. Made in the image and likeness of God, Adam and Eve were to have exercised their dominion over the earth (*Genesis 1:28*) with wisdom and love. Instead, they destroyed the existing harmony *by deliberately going against the Creator's plan*, that is, by choosing to sin. This resulted not only in man's alienation from himself, in death and fratricide, but also in the earth's "rebellion" against him (cf. *Genesis 3:17-19; 4:12*).

Prayer*

"Common Prayer for Earth and for Humanity"

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.
Amen.

Day 8 – Friday 21st May

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forwar.d (*Lauadto Si’*, 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:1-3)

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy is forever.
Bless him, all who worship the Lord, the God of gods,
sing praise to him and give thanks to him for his mercy is forever.
(*Prayer of Azariah and his Companions, Daniel 3:89-90*)

A reading from the World Peace Day message '*The human person, the heart of peace with all of creation.*'
Pope Benedict XVII, 1st January 2007.

In his Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "Not only has God given the earth to man, who must use it with respect for the original good purpose for which it was given to him, but man too is God's gift to man. He must therefore respect the natural and moral structure with which he has been endowed (6)." By responding to this charge, entrusted to them by the Creator, men and women can join in bringing about a world of peace. Alongside the ecology of nature, there exists what can be called a "human" ecology, which in turn demands a "social" ecology. All this means that humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology. Experience shows that *disregard for the environment always harms human co-existence*, and vice versa. It becomes more and more evident that there is an inseparable link between peace with creation and peace among men. Both of these presuppose peace with God. The poem-prayer of Saint Francis, known as "the Canticle of Brother Sun", is a wonderful and ever timely example of this multi-faceted ecology of peace. N.8.

Prayer*

"Common Prayer for Earth and for Humanity"

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times,
especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.
Amen.

Day 9 – Saturday 22nd May

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
Despite our sins and the daunting challenges before us, we never lose heart. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us… for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (*Laudato Si’*, 13; 245).

In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Scripture Reading and Prayer.
I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you my know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:15-23)

I will sing to my God a new song:
O Lord, you are great and glorious,
wonderful in strength, invincible.
Let all your creatures serve you
for you spoke, and they were made.
You sent forth your Spirit, and it formed them
there is none that can resist your voice.
For the mountains shall be shaken to
their foundations with the waters;
at your presence the rocks shall melt like wax,
but to those who fear you
you will continue to show mercy.
(*Judith's Hymn of Praise, Judith 16:13-15*)

A reading from the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* on 'Care for our Common Home.'
Pope Francis, 24th May 2015.

Yet God, who wishes to work with us and who counts on our cooperation, can also bring good out of the evil we have done. "The Holy Spirit can be said to possess an infinite creativity, proper to the divine mind, which knows how to loosen the knots of human affairs, including the most complex and inscrutable". Creating a world in need of development, God in some way sought to limit himself in such a way that many of the things we think of as evils, dangers or sources of suffering, are in reality part of the pains of childbirth which he uses to draw us into the act of cooperation with the Creator. God is intimately present to each being, without impinging on the autonomy of his creature, and this gives rise to the rightful autonomy of earthly affairs. His divine presence, which ensures the subsistence and growth of each being, "continues the work of creation". The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge: "Nature is nothing other than a certain kind of art, namely God's art, impressed upon things, whereby those things are moved to a determinate end. It is as if a shipbuilder were able to give timbers the wherewithal to move themselves to take the form of a ship" N.80.

Prayer *

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

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

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness
for every being that you have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Sunday 23rd May – Pentecost

Introduction and opening prayer.**

Show Mercy to our Common Home
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In a particular way, let us pray …

“O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes…
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246),

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Psalm Prayer

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all,
the earth teems with creatures innumerable,
living things both small and great.

These all look to you
to give them their food in due season.
When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
When you hide your face, they are dismayed
when you take away their breath they die
and return to the dust.
When you send forth your Spirit, they are created
and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever,
may the Lord rejoice in his works.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live,
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
May my meditation be pleasing to him
for I rejoice in the Lord.
(*Psalm 104:24-25, 27-28, 30-31, 33-34*)

A reading from the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* on 'Care for our Common Home.'
Pope Francis, 24th May 2015.

When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them. This sentiment finds magnificent expression in the hymn of Saint Francis of Assisi:

Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
who is the day and through whom you give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;
and bears a likeness of you, Most High.
Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.
Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather
through whom you give sustenance to your creatures.
Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.
Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong". N.87.

Prayer

Lord and God,
through the Blessed Virgin Mary
you have shown us the example of a disciple
who is faithful to the words of life;
open our hearts to receive your saving word,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit
it may speak to us in our daily lives,
recreate us in the image of your Son
and may bring forth a rich harvest of holiness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing
May the God of hope fill you with every joy in believing.
May the peace of Christ abound in your hearts.
May the Holy Spirit enrich you with his gifts, now and for ever.
Amen.

**Prayer for the fifth anniversary of Laudato Si'. Regina Caeli. 24th May 2020.*

***From the message of Pope Francis for the celebration of the World Day of Creation 1st September 2016 - Show Mercy to our Common Home.*

****A Christian prayer in union with creation from Laudato Si'. 24th May 2015.*

All Scripture is from the ESV-CE.