



## SEASON OF CREATION

SEPT. 1 – OCT. 4

### SONG

#### Call to Worship

**Leader:** We gather in the image of the Creator

**All:** **who is a community of love.**

**Leader:** We gather in the name of the Redeemer

**All:** **who reconciles all of creation.**

**Leader:** We gather in the presence of the Life Giver

**All:** **who inspires new life and renews it.**

#### Opening prayer (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*)

**Leader:** All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of 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. Oh 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 living 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.

#### Introduction

We gather here today to pray to God, who is Father, Son and Spirit, as God's children residing on a planet that is endangered by our failure to care for it well. Human life is at risk because of our exploitation of resources, our wars over the earth's goods, and a reluctance to assume responsibility for those who are poor and oppressed. We come together not only to ask for forgiveness of our brothers and sisters, but to ask God for a new heart, one that recognizes our responsibility for our sister, Mother Earth, and all her children, present and future.

#### With the psalmist we pray:

O LORD, our Lord,

how awesome is your name through all the earth!  
You have set your majesty above the heavens!

Out of the mouths of babes and infants  
you have drawn a defense against your foes,  
to silence enemy and avenger.

When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and stars that you set in place—  
What are humans that you are mindful of them,  
mere mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them little less than a god,  
crowned them with glory and honor.  
You have given them rule over the works of your hands,  
put all things at their feet:

All sheep and oxen,  
even the beasts of the field,  
The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,  
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord,  
how awesome is your name through all the earth!

**Let us pray:** O God, we have tried to master creation, but we have not treated it with the respect that is due. Give us eyes to see what is good, to discern what can be changed, and to envision a world where the earth's goods are shared equitably by all.

**Reflection:** Desmond Tutu, Retired Archbishop of Cape Town, Anglican Church of South Africa

Genesis in the Bible declares that human beings have been created in the image of God and are bidden to have dominion over the rest of creation. Made in the *imago dei*, they are thus God's representatives, and so must hold this dominion not ruthlessly, aggressively exploitatively, but as

God would hold dominion, caringly, lovingly and compassionately.

There is a very intimate connection between us humans and the rest of creation. It is mystical and real. So, when Adam and Eve muck up their lives through disobeying God, it has devastating consequences for the rest of creation – the ground which up to then had produced crops for the benefit of humans, now spews forth weeds. This is an imaginative way of saying that Creation has been damaged because human beings have been damaged. It is now red in tooth and claw.

**Reflection:** Archbishop Anders Wejryd of Uppsala, Church of Sweden

Access to water is a human right. Water is the basis of all life. The unique role water plays in

human life is reflected in the key role water has been given in texts and rituals in most religions all over the world. In our Christian interpretation, water signifies life cleansing and sanctity, but also compassion and generosity.

In our times water is a scarce resource for more than a thousand-million people. The nations of the world have agreed to cut hunger in half between 2000 and 2015. If this goal is to be achieved, we must make lasting improvements in the water situation in the world around us. We all share a responsibility to find the solutions.

(Pause for reflection)

**Reflection:** Saint Paul (Romans, 8)

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

**Declaration** by the Working Group Commissioned by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican, 2011

We call on all people and nations to recognize the serious and potentially irreversible impacts of global warming caused by the anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, and by changes in forests, wetlands, grasslands, and other land uses. We appeal to all nations to develop and implement, without delay, effective and fair policies to reduce the causes and impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems, including mountain glaciers and their watersheds, aware that we all live in the same home. By acting now, in the spirit of common but differentiated responsibility, we accept our duty to one another and to the stewardship of a planet blessed with the gift of life.

We are committed to ensuring that all inhabitants of this planet receive their daily bread, fresh air to breathe and clean water to drink as we are aware that, if we want justice and peace, we must protect the habitat that sustains it.

**Pause for Reflection**

**With Francis of Assisi, we pray:**

**SIDE 1:** Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing. To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no man is worthy to mention your name.

**SIDE 2:** Praised be You, my lord, with all your creatures, especially Brother Sun, who is the day

and through whom You give us light.

**SIDE 1:** And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

**SIDE 2:** Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

**SIDE 1:** Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through which you give sustenance to your creatures.

**SIDE 2:** Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

**SIDE 1:** Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

**SIDE 2:** Praised be you, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

**SIDE 1:** Praised be you, my Lord, through those who give pardon for your love and bear infirmity and tribulation.

**SIDE 2:** Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

**SIDE 1:** Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living man can escape.

**SIDE 2:** Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.

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

**Closing Prayer (ALL):**

Come, Holy Spirit, breathe down upon our troubled world. Shake the tired foundations of our crumbling institutions. Break the rules that keep you out of all our sacred spaces, and from the dust and rubble, gather up the seedlings of a new creation.

Come, Holy Spirit, enflame once more the dying embers of our weariness. Shake us of our complacency. Whisper our names once more and scatter your gifts of grace with wild abandon. Break open the prisons of our inner being and let your raging justice be our sign of liberty.

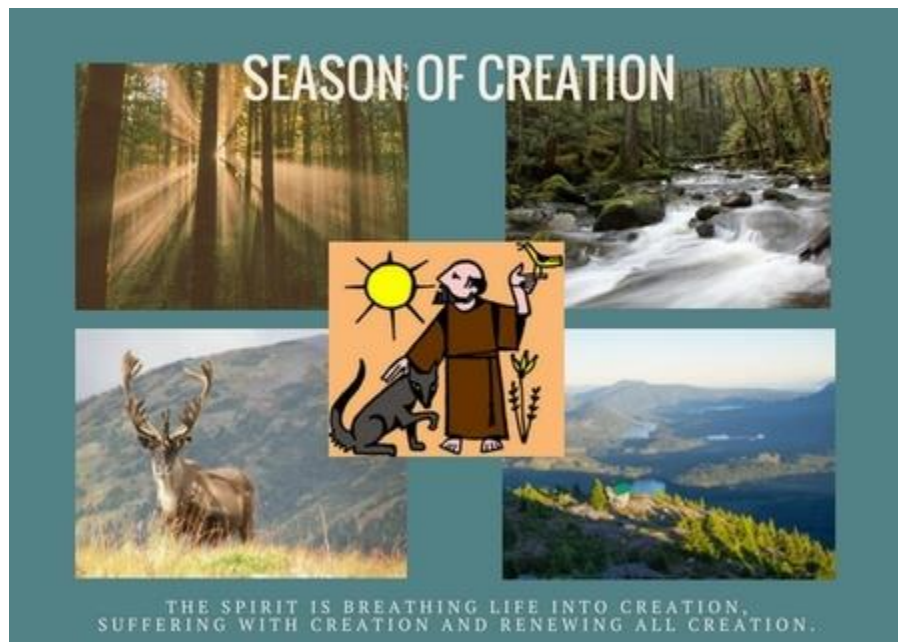
Come, Holy Spirit, and lead us to places we would rather not go; expand the horizons of our limited

imaginations. Awaken in our souls' dangerous dreams for a new tomorrow and rekindle in our hearts the fire of prophetic enthusiasm.

Come, Holy Spirit, whose justice outwits international conspiracy; whose light outshines spiritual bigotry, whose peace can overcome the destructive potential of warfare, whose promise invigorates our every effort to create a new heaven and a new earth, now and forever.

Empowered by the Spirit, we continue the mission entrusted to us.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come! AMEN.



Sources:

(<https://francis35.org/english/ecumenical-celebration/>)  
(<https://catholicclimatemovement.global/liturgical-prayer-and-spiritual-resources/>)  
(<http://seasonofcreation.org/guide/>)