

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH



A SERVICE IN PREPARATION FOR COP26

GLASGOW 2021

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH

OPENING HYMN

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Chorus

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Chorus

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Chorus

WELCOME BY LEADER

OPENING PRAYER BY 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. 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 (*Laudato Si* 246)

INTRODUCTION (*See Appendix*)

COP26 and St Francis of Assisi

'UBI CARITAS' *(Taize melody)*

Give us, Lord, we pray, respect for the earth,
renew within us Lord, a sense of its worth. *(Sung)*

FIRST REFLECTION *(Laudato Si 51)*

The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world, especially Africa, where a rise in temperature, together with drought, has proved devastating for farming. There is also the damage caused by the export of solid waste and toxic liquids to developing countries, and by the pollution produced by companies which operate in less developed countries in ways they could never do at home, in the countries in which they raise their capital.

LIVED EXAMPLE 1 *(See Appendix)*

'LAUDATE OMNES GENTES' *(Taize melody)*

All nations join together
Give thanks for land and sea. *(Sung)*

CANTICLE OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

All: 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".

Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs".



SECOND REFLECTION (*Laudato Si 1-2*)

In the words of his beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.

LIVED EXAMPLE 2 (*See Appendix*)

BROTHER SUN SISTER MOON (*See Appendix*)

THIRD REFLECTION (*Laudato Si 44*)

Nowadays, for example, we are conscious of the disproportionate and unruly growth of many cities, which have become unhealthy to live in, not only because of pollution caused by toxic emissions but also as a result of urban chaos, poor transportation, and visual pollution and noise. Many cities are huge, inefficient structures, excessively wasteful of energy and water. Neighbourhoods, even those recently built, are congested, chaotic and lacking in sufficient green space. We were not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature.

LIVED EXAMPLE 3 (*See Appendix*)

'STAY HERE AND KEEP WATCH' (*Taize melody*)

Praise God, the earth is a gift
To treasure and care for
To love and to cherish

(*Sung*)

FOURTH REFLECTION (*Laudato Si* 117)

Once the human being declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion, the very foundations of our life begin to crumble, for “instead of carrying out his role as a co-operator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature”.

LIVED EXAMPLE 4 (*See Appendix*)

‘O ADORAMUS TE DOMINE’ (*Taize melody*)

Forgive us Lord for we have sinned
For profit and greed, we scar the earth

(Sung)



A CALL FOR CHANGE (*Laudato Si* 59)

Superficially, apart from a few obvious signs of pollution and deterioration, things do not look that serious, and the planet could continue as it is for some time. Such evasiveness serves as a licence to carrying on with our present lifestyles and models of production and consumption. This is the way human beings contrive to feed their self-destructive vices: trying not to see them, trying not to acknowledge them, delaying the important decisions and pretending that nothing will happen.

A CALL FOR COMMITMENT

The Season of creation is officially ending, but care for our Earth must be ongoing. Pope Francis encourages us “to reflect on our lifestyles, and how our daily decisions about food, consumption, transportation, use of water, energy and many other materials goods, can often be thoughtless and harmful”

PENITENTIAL RITE

Leader:

Lord, when we have taken for granted the beauty of the earth and viewed it as a ‘commodity’ for personal comfort resulting in exploitation and devastation of vulnerable communities.

All: We are sorry – forgive us we pray

Leader:

Lord, for the many times we have failed to appreciate the need to protect and sustain the earth’s resources for future generations and for the benefit of all her people.

All: We are sorry – forgive us we pray

Leader:

Lord, for failing to challenge decisions of government or multinational companies when they put profit and selfish interest before the needs of indigenous people.

All: We are sorry – forgive us we pray

ACT OF COMMITMENT BY ALL

We commit ourselves:

To love and cherish the beautiful gift of the earth, our common home.

To have respect for one another, for earth and its creatures.

To do our part to stop further decline in the health of our planet by the way we live our lives.

To be grateful for the beauty and goodness of creation around us.

To be thankful for Mother earth who nourishes us every day.

That together as one family may we always sing your praises.

CLOSING PRAYER (*Laudato Si* 246)

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

CLOSING HYMN

Oh Lord, all the world belongs to You
And You are always making all things new.
What is wrong, You forgive,
And the new life You give
Is what's turning the world upside down.

The world's only loving to its friends,
But You have brought us love that never ends,
Loving enemies too;
And this loving with You
Is what's turning the world upside down.

The world lives divided and apart,
You draw all together, and we start
In our friendship to see
That in harmony we
Can be turning the world upside down.

The world wants the wealth to live in state,
But You show a us new way to be great:
Like a servant You came,
And if we do the same,
We'll be turning the world upside down.

Oh Lord all the world belongs to You
And You are always making all things new.
Send Your Spirit on all in Your Church whom You call
To be turning the world upside down.

APPENDIX

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION

St Francis of Assisi is with justification called the Patron Saint of the Environment. This thirteenth century Italian Saint espoused the main tenets of the many modern eco-friendly groups pursuing zero carbon emission targets and an even broader agenda covering loving and preserving our “Common Home” for future generations. Francis embraced poverty as a means of appreciating the beauty of the ordinary and refuting the pre-eminence of profit over people and exploitation of resources over simplicity of lifestyle. It is most appropriate then for us to celebrate a “preparation COP26” service close to his feast day.

As the postponed cop26 conference takes place in Glasgow many eco-centric groups wish to promote Pope Francis’ encyclical ‘*Laudato Si*’ as a meaningful proposal for restoring balance to the earth with concern for all its inhabitants. This ground-breaking document has put the Catholic Church at the forefront of campaigning for a more just and responsible use of our common home for the benefit of all rather than the few.

in our service today we turn to our Creator aware of the damage and destruction caused to the earth and to many of our sisters and brothers by the incessant greed of some of the wealthiest individuals and nations on the earth, and in the hope that those in positions of influence will rethink their priorities and face up to our common responsibilities for each other and for our common home.

it has been most encouraging to witness the enthusiasm and commitment of young people in pressuring governments and multinational companies to think of the environment and the effect of greenhouse gas emissions in warming the global climate and endangering the lives and livelihoods of some of the poorest and most vulnerable people on our planet. The probability of more severe droughts, storms and extensive flooding and the threat to food and water supplies if we do not put the reigns on exploitation of the world’s natural resources increases day by day. COP26 offers almost 200 nations the chance to examine and set carbon emission targets, cancel debt of the poorest nations, and restore a much needed balance to the global economy based on need not greed.



BROTHER SUN SISTER MOON LOVELY DAY/BROTHER SUN

Birds are singing sweet and low
From the trees that gently grow
By the silver river's flow
On this lovely day

To the meadow there go I
To wonder as the butterfly
How the flowers please my eye
On this lovely day

I wish it could be always
Life is easy on such a day
I wish this peace on everyone
On this lovely day

I wish it could be always
Life is easy on such a day
I wish this peace on everyone
On this lovely day

Brother Sun and Sister Moon
I seldom see you seldom hear your tune
Preoccupied with selfish misery

Brother Wind and Sister Air
Open my eyes to visions pure and fair
That I may see the glory around me.

I am God's creature, of Him I am part
I feel His love awakening my heart.

Brother Sun and Sister Moon
I now do see you, I can hear your tune
So much in love with all that I survey.

LIVED EXAMPLE (1) CLIMATE CHANGE MALAWI

The Climate Challenge Programme Malawi (CCPM) is a Scottish Government initiative administered by SCIAF helping rural communities in Malawi find innovative solutions to problems caused by climate change. This is the story of Tereza Matias, one of the farmers who is taking part in the project.

“When you say climate change I see it in the changes here,” she said. “I see the dry wells and the droughts that stop our crops growing.” Tereza lives in the Chikwawa district, in southern Malawi. In the distance behind the grass roofed homes of the village are the mountains that mark the border with Mozambique. There, she and her husband are raising their four children – but it’s getting harder. “I travel across the border to Mozambique and do piece work in others’ farms and use the money to buy food I can bring back home,” she explains.

When she’s away, her small battered mobile phone, held together by an elastic band, is a lifeline back to her family – but it’s not easy to keep it charged as she has little or no access to energy. “We are farmers, but it’s not easy. Last year our land produced three bags of Maize. The year before just eight.” In a good year she’d hope for 20 bags. Her explanation is simple, “The droughts are getting worse”. Even in the winter the heat in Malawi is punishing, while in summer it is often over 40 degrees. “The rivers run dry, and the only way to get water is to dig shallow wells in the dry riverbeds,” she said. “But it’s not good water, people get sick.”

There have been several cases of cholera in the region reported this year from drinking dirty water. With the land dry and barren, she has to travel to support her family. Despite these challenges, Tereza refuses to give up and maintains hope that her family’s situation can get better. “I have hope for the future - if we can find solutions to these problems. Source:

<https://www.ccpm.scot/participants/12-tereza-matias>



LIVED EXAMPLE (2) EVERYDAY ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE

- As the weather cools, put on a jumper before you turn up the heating.
- Support recycling efforts in your home, workplace and community.
- Be conscious of the water you use.
- Don't buy anything non – essential.
- Give thanks for all of creation!
- Get connected with [The Global Catholic Climate Movement : The Global Catholic Climate Movement](#)
- Take steps to reduce your environmental impact: Rainforest-alliance.org/everyday-actions
- Subscribe to Sowing Hope for the Planet free newsletter:
Sowinghopefortheplanet.org

**THE TIME IS
NOW**

The logo consists of the words 'THE TIME IS' in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. Below this, the word 'NOW' is written in a larger, bold, red, sans-serif font. The letter 'O' in 'NOW' is replaced by a stylized globe showing the Americas in green and blue.

LIVED EXAMPLE (3) THE CANARY IN A COALMINE

The life of Ella Roberta: a funny, busy, clever, curious, sporty and musical child

Ella was born in Lewisham Hospital and was a healthy, young girl until just before her 7th birthday she began to develop, what was later confirmed at her inquest, rare and life-threatening asthma.

Ella Kissi-Debrah died aged nine in February 2013 having suffered numerous seizures and being taken to hospital almost 30 times in the previous three years.

An inquest ruling from 2014, which found that she died of acute respiratory failure, was quashed by the high court following new evidence about the dangerous levels of air pollution close to her home.

Ella lived 25 metres from the South Circular in Lewisham, south-east London, one of the capital's busiest roads. She may become the first person in the UK for whom air pollution is listed as the cause of death.

With an estimated 40 million people living in areas with illegal levels of air pollution in the UK, it is no wonder that "the rate of asthma deaths in the UK has increased by more than 20% in five years". (Asthma UK)



LIVED EXAMPLE (4) NUCLEAR WARFARE

The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was only the start of our nuclear nightmare. This has been followed by over 2000 atmospheric explosions where human beings were used as guinea pigs in tests.

One Sunday after church in 1946, a Navy commodore met the people of Bikini Atoll, a group of islands within the Marshall Islands, and told them they were like the Israelites, a chosen people, and that perfecting the atomic bomb would deliver mankind from future wars. Within one month the islanders had boarded US ships for relocation.

Within five months the first tests were conducted. Bikini remains permanently polluted and uninhabitable. Sixty-six nuclear devices were exploded by the United States in the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958 — the equivalent of 1.6 Hiroshima bombs every day for twelve years. They blew 2 million tons of lagoon a mile into the sky in 1946.

One of these was the largest explosion ever made by the U.S., code named Castle Bravo, which was 1000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. Its flash was seen from Okinawa, 2,600 miles away. Its radioactive fallout was later detected in cattle in Tennessee. The US Atomic Energy Commission described the Marshall Islands as "by far the most contaminated place in the world."

This touches me personally. I can never forget in 1986 hearing a woman called Along Lijon from the Marshall Islands speak at a meeting in St Stephen's, in Bath Street in Glasgow. As a little girl, she wondered at 'snow' falling from the sky after the explosion on Bikini Island. She gave a searing description of the birth abnormalities seen on the island, Marshallese women she said: "gave birth not to children, but to things we could only describe as octopuses, turtles, and jellyfish, and other things in our experience. We do not have Marshallese words for these kinds of babies, because they were never born before the radiation came. One woman on Likiep gave birth to a child with two heads... The most common birth defects on Rongelap and nearby islands have been "jellyfish" babies. These babies are born with no bones in their bodies and transparent skin. We can see their brains and hearts beating." Along told us how she personally had suffered six miscarriages. Her sister had carried thirteen dead babies. She described a nightmare world where one in eight live births were grossly deformed. Some mothers literally go mad. Later, she gave testimony before the UN when she said: "Of my family, these are the survivors: Father. Mother. Brothers Tomi, Freddi. Sister Api. These are the dead: Sisters Lijon, Sari, Mata. Brothers Wili, Kunio, Paul, Apolo. This is our history: blindness. thyroid tumours. miscarriages. jellyfish babies. Mental retardation. Sterility. Lung cancer, kidney cancer. liver cancer, sarcoma. lymphoma, leukaemia....I do not weep for my lost babies. Two stillbirths. Three jellyfish - glassy, pulsing discoid that made the nurses sick. I no longer weep for the dead. The dead do not care. We are the people of the Marshall Islands. We are your experiment."

In the Bikini Islands atomic tests, dolphins escorted the ships into the lagoon. Being highly intelligent creatures, they stayed behind, curiosity stirred by the underwater activity. The nuclear explosion blew a column of boiling water 6000 feet into the air, before dissolving into a mushroom cloud of radioactive gas and spray. The dolphins were instantly vapourised.

A paradigm to contemplate. It is not suicidal folly that impels society to co-operate with the death machine. It is loyalty, sociability, and intelligence hideously misplaced. Exploited by a system indifferent to their humanity, the people frolic and play as they follow the ship of extinction. And our extinction is one with global extinction. Lijon came here seeking justice and recognition of the crimes committed against herself and many, many others:

The aborigines of Australia who suffered radiation sickness and death through uranium mining and the nuclear tests at Maralinga and Montebello; the test victims of the USSR in Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan and Novaya Zemlya in the arctic; the test victims of the USA - the Shoshone peoples of Nevada, whose land is permanently contaminated. The British servicemen used as human guinea pigs in tests at Christmas Island, and all the many unnamed and unnumbered victims of our nuclear madness. It's sobering to think that Wick in northern Scotland was originally chosen as a test site, but the scientists claimed that the climate was too wet, so they chose Australia instead.

These people have suffered a terrible injustice, and the crimes committed against them cry to heaven for justice. Nuclear weapons destroy God's creation and their removal is part of an environmentally sustainable world.



Let there be
peace
on
earth
& LET IT BEGIN
with me

Thank you
MAY GOD BLESS you

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