

SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, opens the Season of Creation each year. Since adding this day to the Catholic liturgical calendar in 2015, Pope Francis has regularly issued an official message promoting the Season of Creation theme.

Pope Francis's **Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation** is, as it is each year, a contemplation on the this year's global ecumenical theme "To Hope and Act with Creation," a theme drawn from St. Paul's letter to the Romans 8:19-25.

This theme, he writes, is grounded on our faith, faith that comes from the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. The Spirit prompts us to live in authentic human ways, the ways revealed by Jesus, the creative and proactive ways of love that overcome all obstacles, even death. Christians are, then, to live lives of faith, active in charity and abounding in hope. We bear witness to that hope by caring for suffering humanity, nature itself, and our living environment, Earth.

Our hope is based on the realization that everything is ordered finally to the glory of God. That ultimate truth does not deny the current reality that humanity and all Creation are bound by the slavery resulting from sinful abuse of Creation. All Creation groans in the process of "new birth," of conversion from the arrogance of seeking power to exercise dominion over others and over nature. The path of this conversion is a new spirit of solidarity among all peoples and with Creation based on universal love and a mission of caring for Creation. That path is difficult and painful, like the groaning and pain of labor, but its success is assured in Christ.

Pope Francis concludes his message with these words:

In this way, our lives can become a song of love for God, for humanity, with and for Creation, and find their fullness in holiness.

An ecumenical prayer service will be available online on September 1st for a shared celebration of this crucial and sacred common mission. Once plans are complete, more information and directions for joining it will be available at SeasonofCreation.org.

For those who would prefer to celebrate a local ecumenical prayer service to launch the Season of Creation, a draft text is offered as Addendum 1 in the **Season of Creation Celebration Guide**, pp. 31-40.

For those who will use the celebration of Sunday Mass to launch the Season of Creation this year, suggestions to help focus and enrich their liturgy follow here.