

September 25, 2015

Caring for Our Common Home

A Prayer as Pope Francis Addresses the United Nations General Assembly

As Pope Francis addresses the United Nations General Assembly, you are invited to join Catholics throughout the world in prayer that his message to care for Earth and care for the poor will be received with openness and determination to act.

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: We come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us. God, who calls us to generous commitment, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way.

All: Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.

— Pope Francis, *Laudato si': On care for our common home*, para. 244-245

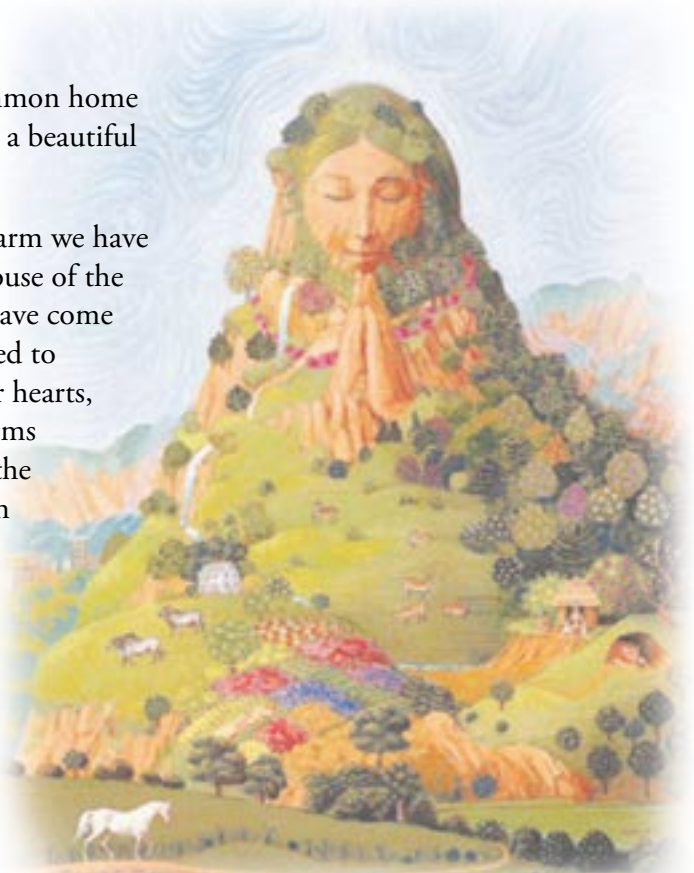
Opening Song: *Choose appropriate music, if desired.*

Reader 1: 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.

Reader 2: 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. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

— *Laudato si'*, para. 1-2

Brief pause for reflection



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Litany of Sorrow

Leader: We have forgotten who we are,
We have alienated ourselves from the unfolding of the cosmos,
We have become estranged from the movements of the earth,
We have turned our backs on the cycles of life.

Response: **We have forgotten who we are.**

Leader: We have sought only our own security,
We have exploited simply for our own ends,
We have distorted our knowledge,
We have abused our power.

Response: **We have forgotten who we are.**

Leader: Now the land is barren,
The waters are poisoned,
And the air is polluted.

Response: **We have forgotten who we are.**

Leader: Now the forests are dying,
The creatures are disappearing,
And humans are suffering.

Response: **We have forgotten who we are.**

Leader: We ask forgiveness,
We ask for the gift of remembrance,
We ask for the strength to change.

Response: **May we remember who we are.**

— adapted from “A Litany of Sorrow,” *Interfaith Declarations and Worship Observance, The North American Conference on Religion and Ecology, Earth Day, 1990*



Reader 1: The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together.... In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: “the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest.”

— *Laudato si'*, para. 48

Reader 2: We have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*.

— *Laudato si'*, para. 49

Reader 1: We cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships.

— *Laudato si'*, para. 119

Reflection

Suggested questions:

- *How have we experienced the mutual deterioration of the natural environment and of society in our culture?*
- *How have the most vulnerable been impacted by this mutual deterioration?*
- *What challenges does this mutual deterioration present to us? To our nation? To global society?*

Sharing, if desired



Reader 1: Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.

— *Laudato si'*, para. 25

Reader 2:

Politics and business have been slow to react in a way commensurate with the urgency of the challenges facing our world. ... nonetheless there is reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave responsibilities.

— *Laudato si'*, para. 165

Reader 1: Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start.

— *Laudato si'*, para. 205

Ongoing Reflection

- *What “new start” does Pope Francis’ message call you to make?*
- *What “new start” are we called to make communally?*



Intercessory Prayer

Leader: God of the universe, fill us with peace,

Response: **that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.**

Leader: Help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,

Response: **so precious in your eyes.**

Leader: Bring healing to our lives,

Response: **that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.**

Leader: Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain

Response: **at the expense of the poor and Earth, our home.**

Leader: Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,

Response: **to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature.**

Leader: Awaken the ears of delegates to the United Nations General Assembly,

Response: **that they may embrace and respond to Pope Francis’ message.**

— *adapted from “A prayer for our earth,” Laudato si', para. 246*

Additional intentions, if desired.

Closing Prayer

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.

— excerpted from “A Christian prayer in union with creation,” *Laudato si'*, para. 246

Rite of Peace: *Please offer a sign of peace to those around you and to Mother Earth, our home.*



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