

World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation – 1st September

On the 6th August 2015, Pope Francis called for the establishment of a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. This call was to the Catholic church, and while not being Catholic, this seems a fitting and good opportunity for our Avenues Family to join in both celebrating and praying for the world in which we live and our part to play in being custodians of our environment. In the words of Pope Francis...

“As Christians we wish to contribute to resolving the ecological crisis which humanity is presently experiencing. In doing so, we must first rediscover in our own rich spiritual patrimony the deepest motivations for our concern for the care of creation. We need always to keep in mind that, for believers in Jesus Christ, the Word of God who became man for our sake, “the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us”. The ecological crisis thus summons us to a profound spiritual conversion: Christians are called to “an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them”. For “living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience”.

The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation will offer individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live.

**With others or on your own, take a few minutes to pray sometime during the day on 1st September....
Some prayer ideas...**

1. Leaf prayer – Reaffirmation of being a steward of creation

From Pope Francis Encyclical of May 2015... 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 (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.



Go outside and pick a leaf from a tree or a fallen leaf on the ground.

Hold the leaf carefully in your palm. Look at the leaf.

What can you see? Look at the shape, the patterns, the detail, the imperfections...

What does this leaf tell you about God’s handiwork in creation?

Consider the life cycle of a leaf.

Consider the oxygen a leaf provides so people can breathe

Consider the way people have cut down trees to make room for buildings and roads in the name of progress.

*Creator God,
We live in a green land.
We live in a land where there are leaves.
We can touch them.
We can pick them.
We can breathe easily because they are here.*

*But we confess that we take leaves for granted.
 We take for granted the trees that are in our gardens, our parks and our forests
 We take for granted many things in creation
 We assume it is our right to enjoy these things
 But we forget that we are part of this creation pattern.
 We forget that we have a responsibility to care for your creation
 Not just for the trees, but for every living thing within our touch and our sight,
 And for those things that we have not seen but are also your creation
 Today we want to affirm that we are carers, custodians, stewards of creation.
 Amen*

2. Flower prayer – Thank you God for the wonderful handiwork you’ve entrusted to our care



How cool is this?
 We live in a world with flowers
 We can smell them
 We can appreciate their beauty
 We can pick them
 We can enjoy them
 What other things in creation do you love and appreciate?
 Draw (or write) your ideas of different things you love about creation.
 End your picture prayer by saying a one sentence thank you to God for the wonderful handiwork entrusted to our care.

From Pope Francis Encyclical of May 2015... 1. “LAUDATO SI’, mi’ Signore” – “Praise be to you, my Lord”. In the words of this 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. “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”.

3. Honey prayer - Please God help us protect your creation

From Pope Francis Encyclical of May 2015... Nothing in this world is indifferent to us 3. More than fifty years ago, with the world teetering on the brink of nuclear crisis, Pope Saint John XXIII wrote an Encyclical which not only rejected war but offered a proposal for peace. He addressed his message Pacem in Terris to the entire “Catholic world” and indeed “to all men and women of good will”. Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet. In my Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, I wrote to all the members of the Church with the aim of encouraging ongoing missionary renewal. In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.



Who knew that honey would be a powerhouse of protection?

Honey it seems is a natural cure for all kinds of ailments

It can act as a protectant to stop us getting sick

Take a spoonful of honey and eat it.

As it melts in your mouth say a silent prayer to God asking for help to protect creation

Pray that the peoples of the world would one by one make a change to their individual lives to protect creation, individually, in their communities and countries and in our whole world.

4. Ice cube prayer – Forgive us God for the sins we have committed against creation

From Pope Francis Encyclical of May 2015... the need for each of us to repent of the ways we have harmed the planet, for "inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage", we are called to acknowledge "our contribution, smaller or greater, to the disfigurement and destruction of creation".[14] He has repeatedly stated this firmly and persuasively, challenging us to acknowledge our sins against creation: "For human beings... to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins".[15] For "to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God"

Hold an ice-cube in your hand and pray this prayer....

*Creator God
We need to talk.
Climate change
It's big.
It's real.
It's happening.*

*People like us have had a part to play in this significant phase
of the earth's life.*

We didn't know.

Not personally.

We have lived in a time of huge progress.

We are great-great-grandchildren of the industrial age.

It is what we know.

It's all we know.

*For our own sins and for the sins of our forefathers forgive us
Help us to be people with eyes open as to what we can do to look after
creation*

Help us to do our little bit, in our little corner

Before it is too late.

Amen



Two Prayers from Pope Francis' Encyclical to every living person on the planet

A prayer for our earth

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.

☉ 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 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.

A Christian prayer in union with creation

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.

○ 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.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's on 24 May, the Solemnity of Pentecost, in the year 2015, the third of my Pontificate.

Pope Francis' letter re: World Day of Prayer for Creation

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150806_lettera-giornata-cura-creato.html

Pope Francis' Encyclical – to every living person on this planet

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

