

Season of Creation 2024

TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION



**The firstfruits of hope
(Rom 8:19-25)**

Resources for Scottish Parishes

Please feel free to adapt for your own use.

Introduction

This resource is offered to assist parishes to celebrate the *Season of Creation 2024*.

For those not familiar with the Season of Creation we give a very brief background and information on the Theme and Logo for 2024.

[Background to the Season of Creation](#)

[Theme and Logo for 2024](#)

This year the first Sunday of the Season of Creation is also the *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, and we offer an Introduction which could be used at the beginning of Mass or incorporated into the homily.

We also offer some Prayers of the Faithful which are rooted in Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

[Introduction to the Season of Creation](#)

[Sunday 1st September - Prayer of the Faithful](#)

For each of the subsequent Sundays we also offer some Prayers of the Faithful.

[Sunday 8th September - Prayer of the Faithful](#)

[Sunday 15th September - Prayer of the Faithful](#)

[Sunday 22nd September - Prayer of the Faithful](#)

[Sunday 29th September - Prayer of the Faithful](#)

To truly embrace the theme of the Season of Creation '*To Hope and Act with Creation*' we are invited to take action in support of the *Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty*, and we will send out more information on this in the coming weeks.

Finally, we would like to remind you of two events that have already been circulated and we invite you to encourage parishes to promote and support.

[Season of Creation Conference](#)

[To hope and act with creation - rooted in Laudato Si' and Laudate Deum with Fr Josh Kureethadam](#)

From the Bishops' Conference of Scotland's Care of Creation Office

Background to the Season of Creation

Pope Francis' universally acclaimed encyclical [*Laudato Si': On the Care of Our Common Home*](#) was released Pentecost 2015 and on 6th August 2015 he established 1st September as the [*World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*](#), acknowledging that such a day was well established in the Orthodox Church.

Sharing the concern of my beloved brother, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, for the future of creation (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 7-9), ... I wish to inform you that I have decided to institute in the Catholic Church the "*World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*" which, beginning this year, is to be celebrated on 1 September, as has been the custom in the Orthodox Church for some time.

Then in his message for the [*World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, 1st September 2016*](#) Pope Francis began by praising the work that was being carried out by Churches, Christian Communities and other religions and noted the positive impact of the then '*Time for Creation*'.

It is most encouraging that concern for the future of our planet is shared by the Churches and Christian communities, together with other religions. In response to a growing concern for the integrity of creation, the Third European Ecumenical Assembly proposed celebrating a "*Time for Creation*" during the five weeks between 1 September (the Orthodox commemoration of God's creation) and 4 October (the commemoration of Francis of Assisi in the Catholic Church and some other Western traditions).

In September 2019, in his message for the [*World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*](#) Pope Francis officially invited and strongly encouraged the Catholic community to participate in the Season of Creation.

The **Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development** reports that during recent years, thousands of Catholics on six continents have organized local activities to celebrate the Season of Creation and many parishes throughout Scotland have participated in it.

The Season of Creation is coordinated by an ecumenical steering committee and a wide range of resources can be found at [Season of Creation](#). Our friends at Eco-Congregation Scotland have again produced excellent resources for study, action and prayer and they are promoted on the Season of Creation website: [Season of Creation Resources 2024 - Eco-Congregation Scotland](#).

Theme and Logo for 2024

Each year there is a particular theme and for 2024 it is *To Hope and Act With Creation*, and the symbol is *The firstfruits of hope*, inspired by Romans 8:19-25.



The biblical image pictures the Earth as a Mother, groaning as in childbirth (Rom 8:22). Saint Francis of Assisi understood this when he referred to the Earth as our sister and our mother in his Cantic of Creatures. The times we live in show that we are not relating to the Earth as a gift from our Creator, but rather as a resource to be used. "Creation is groaning" because of our selfishness and our unsustainable actions that harm her. Along with our Sister, Mother Earth, creatures of all kinds, including humans, cry out because of our destructive actions causing climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, and human suffering as well as Creation's suffering.

Introduction to the Season of Creation

Today we begin the **Season of Creation**, which runs from September 1 to October 4 and is a time for Christians to unite in praying and acting together to care for our common home. The theme for 2024 it is *To Hope and Act with Creation*.

Today is also the **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation**, which Pope Francis established in August 2015, and we warmly invite you to read and reflect on his Message for 2024¹.

In 2015 Pope Francis issued his encyclical [*Laudato Si': Care for Our Common Home*](#), that invited the Churches, religions and all people of good will, to recognise the reality of climate change and take radical action to care for our fragile planetary home before it became too late. He warned of the dangers of minimising or denying the scientific evidence and thereby failing to take the bold decisions required.

The dangers of not taking the bold actions required was also something that the Bishops of Scotland identified in their Pentecost 2021 [*Pastoral Letter on the Sixth Anniversary of Laudato Si'*](#). Whilst acknowledging the efforts that had been made, they stated:

. . . . but much more is required if we are to undo the harm caused by generations of neglect and abuse. Scientists tell us that time is limited. All of us must, therefore, work with a sense of urgency to discern what needs to be done and to make the changes required.

Then last year, on 4th October, the Feast of St Francis, Pope Francis issued [*Laudate Deum: Apostolic Exhortation on the Climate Crisis*](#) and in it he shares his deep concerns about the lack of progress since the publication of *Laudato Si'*.

Eight years have passed since I published *Laudato Si'*, when I wanted to share with all of you, my brothers and sisters of our suffering planet, my heartfelt concerns about the care of our common home. Yet, with the passage of time, I have realized that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point.

~ *Laudate Deum* 2.

Today we begin by seeking to reflect on what is happening to our common home and to discern ways in which we, individually and as a community, and as a nation, can **Hope and Act with Creation**.

¹ If you wish to print the message it is included in this [document](#) and this is the link to the [Message on Vatican website](#)

Sunday 1st September

Prayer of the Faithful

R: For the Church:
that our acts of worship may give us a deeper understanding of Mother Earth as our common home;
a home in which all life can flourish as God intended.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.

R: For the gift of listening:
that, empowered by the Spirit, we may listen with our hearts to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor.
May our hearts be dedicated to justice and peace as 'fratricidal wars kill children, destroy cities, pollute the environment and leave mother earth violated and devastated'².
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.

R: For the gift of conversion:
that empowered by the Spirit we may be guided to a true conversion, that manifests itself in 'a change in lifestyle in order to resist the degradation of our environment and to an engagement in a dialogue that witnesses to the real possibility of change'³.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.

² Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Creation 2024 - 4

³ Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Creation 2024 - cf5

Sunday 8th September

Prayer of the Faithful

R: For the Church:

that we may listen and respond with boldness and imagination
to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor
by becoming, in word and deed, Prophets of Hope⁴.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.

R: For open and courageous hearts and minds:

that we may allow the Spirit to empower us to challenge 'the great economic
powers, whose concern is with the greatest profit possible at minimal cost and in
the shortest amount of time'⁵.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.

R: For the courage to act in solidarity with Mother Earth and the Poor:

- that we may pray with and for Mother Earth and the Poor,
- that we may speak out with and for Mother Earth and the Poor,
- that we may act with and for Mother Earth and the Poor.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.

⁴ Spes Non Confundit

⁵ Laudate Deum 13

- R:** For the Church:
that we may witness to Hope for Creation, through: -
'divesting from fossil fuel investments,
achieving carbon neutrality in all our agencies,
encouraging our parishes to join the Eco-Congregation initiative and to examine
what practical measures can be undertaken at a local level'⁶.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.
- R:** For the gift of conversion:
that the Spirit will lead us to a true 'ecological conversion'
so that through our lifestyle we will be agents of sustainable radical change
and be witnesses of prophetic hope.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.
- R:** For the courage to be agents of hope:
acknowledging that 'we need to abandon the use of fossil fuels and that progress
is not being made fast enough'⁷
we pray that all Church institutions and individual Catholics will support the
Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.

⁶ Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of Scotland on the Sixth Anniversary of Laudato Si'
Pentecost 2021

⁷ Laudate Deum 55

Sunday 22nd September

Prayer of the Faithful

- R:** For the Church:
may we always seek to reach out and serve the poor and marginalised,
by working with them to build a more just, compassionate and sustainable world
for all.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.
- R:** For the gift of authentic service:
in our broken and divided world may we always strive to put the needs of the
most vulnerable above our own.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.
- R:** For a commitment to the children of the future:
may we strive not only to avert climate catastrophe
but to develop new economic models that are based on equality and justice for
everyone in our Common Home⁸.
(*pause a few seconds for silent prayer*).
Lord, hear us.

⁸ Laudate Deum 31

- R:** For the Church:
may we strive to work with all women and men of good will
to be the voice of Mother Earth and all those who are already suffering the
devastating effects of climate change.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.
- R:** For all followers of Jesus:
may we firmly reject the 'throwaway culture'⁹
and 'seek to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence'¹⁰
thereby creating a new culture that seeks to live in harmony with creation.
(pause a few seconds for silent prayer).
Lord, hear us.
- R:** For a commitment to the children of today and of the future:
may we strive to avert full climate catastrophe
by challenging the 'political sectors for their unfulfilled responsibilities'¹¹
and powerful businesses for their lack of action.
(*pause a few seconds for silent prayer*).
Lord, hear us.

⁹ Laudato Si' 16, 22,43

¹⁰ Laudate Deum 71

¹¹ Laudate Deum 71

Season of Creation Conference



The Bishops Conference of Scotland Care of Creation Office presents...

SEASON OF CREATION CONFERENCE 2024

SAT
7TH SEPT
'24

Ben Wilson, Director of Public Engagement at SCIAF and member of the Holy See delegation at COP28.

Guest speaker: Ben Wilson, Director of Public Engagement at SCIAF and member of the Holy See delegation at COP28.

Workshop hosts: Justice & Peace Scotland and SCIAF.

Location info and bookings: <https://tinyurl.com/46wmt9ah>

JOIN US FOR A DAY OF DISCUSSION, IDEAS AND INSPIRATION ON HOW WE CAN GROW CARE OF CREATION ACTIVITY IN OUR FAITH COMMUNITIES.

TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION
The Care of Creation Office
2024

THE BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF SCOTLAND

We are hosting this Conference to enable parishioners from across the country to come together and explore how we may *hope and act for creation* in our own dioceses and parishes and how we can act on the message of Pope Francis to care for our common home.

The conference programme will include inputs from both J&P Scotland and SCIAF as well as a Keynote Address from Ben Wilson, Director of Public Engagement at SCIAF and member of the Holy See delegation at COP28, along with opportunities for networking and planning on how we can foster care for creation and Laudato Si activity in our communities.

Key details:

Date: Saturday 7th September 2024

Time: 10am – 3pm

Location: St. Margaret's, Raploch, Stirling

Tickets (booking is essential but free):

www.tinyurl.com/46wmt9ah

To hope and act with creation - rooted in Laudato Si' and Laudate Deum with Fr Josh Kureethadam

TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION
SEASON OF CREATION 2024

To hope and act with Creation
- rooted in Laudato Si and Laudate Deum
with Fr Joshstrom Kureethadam
Thursday 19th September Online 7.00-8.30pm [UK Time]

Photo by [onehundredseventyfive](#) on [Unsplash](#)

We have organised this session to enable us, individually and as parish communities, to discern how the insights of *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum* can lead us to hope and act with creation.

Our companion for the session is **Fr Josh Kureethadam** who was the Coordinator of the Sector of “Ecology” at the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development from 2017-2023, where he continues to serve as a consultant.

Fr Josh will share not only a sense of awe and wonder before the grandeur and majesty of the universe, but also a deep sense of concern for the increasingly precarious state of our common planetary home. For those not familiar with *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum* this will be a wonderful opportunity to learn about them.

Key details:

Time: 7:00 - 8:30pm and you can register at:

Date: Thursday 19th September

Time: 7:00 - 8:30pm

Location: Online

Registration:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0scO2hrzwtE9E8gDiyJLbQZJ1rbdLXja36>

Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

“Hope and Act with Creation” is the theme of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, to be held on 1 September 2024. The theme is drawn from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Romans (8:19- 25), where the Apostle explains what it means for us to live according to the Spirit and focuses on the sure hope of salvation that is born of faith, namely, newness of life in Christ.

1. Let us begin with a question, one perhaps without an immediately obvious answer. If we are truly believers, how did we come to have faith? It is not simply because we believe in something transcendent, beyond the power of reason, the unattainable mystery of a distant and remote God, invisible and unnameable. Rather, as Saint Paul tells us, it is because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. We are believers because the very love of God “has been poured into our hearts” (Rom 5:5) and the Spirit is now truly “the pledge of our inheritance” (Eph 1:14), constantly prompting us to strive for eternal goods, according to the fullness of Jesus’ authentic humanity. The Spirit enables believers to be creative and pro-active in charity. He sends us forth on a great journey of spiritual freedom, yet one that does not eliminate the tension between the Spirit’s way of thinking and that of the world, whose fruits are opposed to each other (cf. Gal 5:16-17). We know that the first fruit of the Spirit, which sums up all the others, is love. Led by the Holy Spirit, believers are children of God and can turn to him with the words “Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15), just as Jesus did. Moreover, they can do so with the freedom of those who no longer fall back into the fear of death, for Jesus has risen from the dead. This is our great hope: God’s love has triumphed and continues to triumph over everything. Indeed, even in the face of physical death, future glory is already assured for those who live the new life of the Spirit. Nor does this hope disappoint, as was affirmed in the recent Bull of Indiction of the forthcoming Jubilee. [1]
2. The life of a Christian, then, is one of faith, active in charity and abounding in hope, as we await the Lord’s return in glory. We are not troubled by the “delay” of the Parousia, Christ’s second coming; for us the important question is whether, “when the Son of man comes, he will find faith on earth” (Lk 18:8). Faith is a gift, the fruit of the Spirit’s presence in us, but it is also a task to be undertaken freely, in obedience to Jesus’ commandment of love. Such is the blessed hope to which we must bear witness. Yet where, when, and how are we to bear that witness? Surely *by caring for the flesh of suffering humanity*. As people who dare to dream, *we must dream with our eyes wide*

open, impelled by a desire for love, fraternity, friendship and justice for all. *Christian salvation enters into the depths of the world's suffering*, which embraces not only humanity but also the entire universe, nature itself, and the *oikos*, the home and living environment of humanity. Salvation embraces creation as an “earthly paradise,” mother earth, which is meant to be *a place of joy and a promise of happiness for all*. Our Christian optimism is founded on a living hope: it realizes that everything is ordered to the glory of God, to final consummation in his peace and to bodily resurrection in righteousness, as we pass “from glory to glory.” Nonetheless, in the passage of time we are not exempt from pain and suffering: *the whole creation groans* (cf. Rom 8:19-22), we Christians groan (cf. vv. 23-25) and the Spirit himself groans (cf. vv. 26-27). *This groaning expresses apprehension and suffering, together with longing and desire*. It gives voice to our *trust in God* and our *reliance* on his loving yet demanding presence in our midst, as we look forward to the fulfilment of his plan, which is joy, love and peace in the Holy Spirit.

3. The whole of creation is caught up in this process of new birth and, in groaning, looks forward to its liberation. This entails an unseen and imperceptible process of growth, like that of “a mustard seed that becomes a great tree” or “leaven in the dough” (cf. Mt 13:31-33). The beginnings are tiny, but the expected results can prove to be infinite in their beauty. Similar to the anticipation of a birth - the revelation of the children of God - *hope* can be seen as *the possibility of remaining steadfast amid adversity*, of not losing heart in times of tribulation or in the face of human evil. Christian hope does not disappoint, nor does it deceive. The groaning of creation, of Christians and of the Spirit is the anticipation and expectation of a salvation already at work; all the same, we continue to find ourselves enduring what Saint Paul describes as “tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword” (Rom 8:35). Hope, then, is an alternative reading of history and human affairs. It is not illusory, but realistic, with the realism of a faith that sees what is unseen. This hope is *patient expectation, like that of Abraham*. I think of that great visionary believer, Joachim of Fiore, the Calabrian abbot who, in the words of Dante Alighieri, “was endowed with a spirit of prophecy”. [2] At a time of violent conflicts between the Papacy and the Empire, the Crusades, the outbreak of heresies and growing worldliness in the Church, Joachim was able to propose the ideal of a new spirit of coexistence among people, based on universal fraternity and Christian peace, the fruit of a life lived in the spirit of the Gospel. I spoke of this spirit of social friendship and universal fraternity in [Fratelli Tutti](#), but this harmony among men and women should also be extended to creation, in a “situated anthropocentrism” ([Laudate](#)

Deum, 67) and in a sense of responsibility for *a humane and integral ecology*, the path to salvation for our common home and for us who inhabit it.

4. Why is there so much evil in the world? Why so much injustice, so many fratricidal wars that kill children, destroy cities, pollute the environment and leave mother earth violated and devastated? Implicitly evoking the sin of Adam, Saint Paul states: “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now” (Rom 8:22). The moral struggles of Christians are linked to the “groaning” of creation, ever since the latter “was subjected to futility” (v. 20). The entire universe and every creature therein groans and yearns “impatiently” for its present condition to be overcome and its original state to be restored. Our liberation thus includes that of all other creatures who, in solidarity with the human condition, were placed under the yoke of slavery. Creation itself, like humanity, was enslaved, albeit through no fault of its own, and finds itself unable to fulfil the lasting meaning and purpose for which it was designed. It is subject to dissolution and death, aggravated by the human abuse of nature. At the same time, the salvation of humanity in Christ is a sure hope also for creation, for, “the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom 8:21). Consequently, *thanks to Christ’s redemption, it is possible to contemplate in hope the bond of solidarity between human beings and all other creatures.*
5. In our hopeful and persevering expectation of the glorious return of Jesus, the Holy Spirit keeps us, the community of believers, vigilant; he continually guides us and calls us to conversion, to a change in lifestyle in order to resist the degradation of our environment and to engagement in that social critique which is above all a witness to the real possibility of change. This conversion entails leaving behind the arrogance of those who want to exercise dominion over others and nature itself, reducing the latter to an object to be manipulated, and instead embracing the humility of those who care for others and for all of creation. “When human beings claim to take God’s place, they become their own worst enemies” (*Laudate Deum*, 73), for Adam’s sin has tainted our fundamental relationships, namely with God, with ourselves, with one another and with the universe. All these relationships need to be integrally restored, saved and “put right”. None of them can be overlooked, for if even one is lacking, everything else fails.
6. To hope and act with creation, then, means above all to join forces and to walk together with all men and women of good will. In this way, we can help to rethink, “among other things, the question of human power, its meaning and its limits. Our power has

frenetically increased in a few decades. We have made impressive and awesome technological advances, yet we have not realized that at the same time we have turned into highly dangerous beings, capable of threatening the lives of many beings and our own survival” (Laudate Deum, 28). Unchecked power creates monsters and then turns against us. Today, then, there is an urgent need to set ethical limits on the development of artificial intelligence, since its capacity for calculation and simulation could be used for domination over humanity and nature, instead of being harnessed for the service of peace and integral development (cf. Message for the World Day of Peace 2024).

7. “The Holy Spirit accompanies us at every moment of our lives”. This was clearly understood by the boys and girls assembled in Saint Peter’s Square for the first World Day of Children, which was held on Trinity Sunday. God is not an abstract notion of infinity, but the loving Father, the Son who is the friend and redeemer of every person, and the Holy Spirit who guides our steps on the path of charity. Obedience to the Spirit of love *radically changes the way we think*: from “predators”, we become “tillers” of the garden. The earth is entrusted to our care, yet continues to belong to God (cf. Lev 25:23). This is the “theological anthropocentrism” that marks the Judeo- Christian tradition. To claim the right to possess and dominate nature, manipulating it at will, thus represents a form of idolatry, a Promethean version of man who, intoxicated by his technocratic power, arrogantly places the earth in a “dis-graced” condition, deprived of God’s grace. Indeed, if the grace of God is Jesus, who died and rose again, then the words of Benedict XVI certainly ring true: “It is not science that redeems man: man is redeemed by love” ([Spe Salvi](#), 26), the love of God in Christ, from which nothing and no one can ever separate us (cf. Rom 8:38-39). Creation, then, is not static or closed in on itself, but is continuously drawn towards its future. Today, thanks to the discoveries of contemporary physics, the link between matter and spirit presents itself in an ever more intriguing way to our understanding.
8. The protection of creation, then, is not only an ethical issue, but one that is eminently *theological*, for it is the point where the mystery of man and the mystery of God intersect. *This intersection can be called “creative”*, since it originates in the act of love by which God created human beings in Christ. That creative act of God enables and grounds the freedom and morality of all human activity. We are free precisely because we were created *in the image of God who is Jesus Christ*, and, as a result, are “representatives” of creation in Christ himself. A transcendent (theological-ethical) motivation commits Christians to promoting justice and peace in the world, not least through the universal destination of goods. It is a matter of *the revelation of the children*

*of God that creation awaits, groaning as in the pangs of childbirth. At stake is not only our earthly life in history, but also, and above all, our future in eternity, the *eschaton* of our blessedness, the paradise of our peace, in *Christ, the Lord of the cosmos, crucified and risen out of love.**

9. To hope and act with creation, then, means to live an incarnational faith, one that can enter into the suffering and hope-filled “flesh” of others, by sharing in the expectation of the bodily resurrection to which believers are predestined in Christ the Lord. In Jesus, the eternal Son who took on human flesh, *we are truly children of the Father*. Through faith and baptism, our life in the Spirit begins (cf. Rom 8:2), a holy life, lived as children of the Father, like Jesus (cf. Rom 8:14-17), since by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in us (cf. Gal 2:20). 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. [3]

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 27 June 2024

FRANCIS

[1] . Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025 *Spes Non Confundit* (9 May 2024).

[2] *The Divine Comedy, Paradiso, Canto XII, 141.*

[3] The Rosminian priest Clemente Rebora expressed this poetically: “As creation ascends in Christ to the Father, all in a mysterious way become the travail of birth. How much dying is required if life is to be born! Yet from one Mother alone, who is divine, we come happily into the light. We are born to a life that love brings forth in tears. Its yearning, here below, is poetry; but holiness alone can finish the song” (Curriculum vitae, “Poesia e santità”: Poesie, prose e traduzioni, Milan 2015, p. 297).

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