

Fifth Sunday OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

September 22, 2024 | 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Numbers 11:25-29

Ps. 19:8-14

James 5:1-6

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Integral Ecological Sign of the Cross

We begin our celebration of the 5th Sunday of the Season of Creation...

In the name of our Creator God Who drew forth from Creation the human family, inviting awe and wonder,

And of the Word of God, calling us in Jesus to freedom from sin and healing in his name, ,

And of the Holy Spirit, who weaves the web of life's community. **Amen.**

May the grace and peace of our God be with you!

Introductory Comments

Today's readings continue to warn us that our sinfulness is destroying our communities, the human family, and Earth, the supportive and nurturing home of us all. They challenge us to be active and prophetic in working for the New Creation in these times. The Responsorial Psalm guides us in prayer to ask for greater awareness of our "unknown faults" and of their grave seriousness, to ask for freedom from their destructive power no matter the cost.

Penitential Rite Suggestion

So, as we begin, let's enter into the quiet of our spirits ... conscious of God's gift of Earth, its rich diversity of life, ... conscious of its destruction and suffering from overconsumption, exploitation, and warming temperatures ... yet home to millions of people rising up to restore, heal, and save our common home....

Loving Creator God, You have evolved extraordinary consciousness in the human family and revealed to us Creation's overwhelming power, beauty, and splendor, yet we too often respond with greed and abuse rather than awe, gratitude, and care

Loving Creator God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, the human community is polluting Earth's air, land, and waters, driving countless species extinct, turning our greed into global warming, devaluing human life, and tearing the Web of Life of which we all are a part.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You are at work in us and among us now in these times, reweaving the web of life, restoring Earth, our common home.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, our Creator, Who is raising up prophets and inviting humanity into one loving community in a New Creation, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of Life. **Amen.**

Gloria: The awesome beauty of the created Universe today reveals to us a God of unimaginable Beauty, Creativity, Vibrancy of Life and of Love. As we contemplate our true reality, let's join our voices with all Creation to sing our praise to God.

Opening Prayer

Gracious, Holy God of all that was, is, and ever shall be, we bless You. In Your goodness and infinite generosity, You pour Yourself out into Creation, from the first flaring forth of matter and energy to this very day.

Through the slow unfolding over billions of years, You have brought forth a richly diverse, powerful, and nurturing home for all that You have created.

Open our eyes in awe at the wonder of the Universe.

Turn our hearts to gratitude for Your ongoing work of Creation.

Awaken our hope and stir us to prophetic action for the dream of a renewed Creation where Your justice and love will govern all and all will live in Your peace.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Christ, and of Your life-giving Spirit, in Whom we live and move and have our being now and forever. **Amen.**

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

In the reading from the Book of Numbers, God bestowed some of the Spirit that was on Moses on 70 elders who immediately began to prophesy. Two other elders who were not present at this gathering also received the Spirit and began to prophesy. Joshua was upset and wanted to stop them, but Moses was clear:

“Would that all the people of God were

prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow the Spirit on them all!”

The scriptural understanding of prophets is not of people who predict the future. Biblical prophets are inspired to speak God’s Word to the people of their time. Given the urgency and seriousness of the planetary crisis and the threats to Earth confronting us, Moses’ response needs to be ours today. May God bestow the Spirit on everyone, raising people up around the planet as prophets. There is clearly urgent need for a global chorus of such prophets to speak out now as the destruction and dangers to Earth are escalating so rapidly.

The Laudato Sí Action Platform encourages that kind of universal prophetic response throughout the Catholic community. During the 2021 **Laudato Sí Special Anniversary Year**, a program was launched with public commitments from the various institutions that constitute the Catholic Community globally. Leaders from each of those types of institutions committed to beginning “a 7-year journey to total sustainability in the spirit of Laudato Sí.” And they invite all like institutions to join them. Today’s prayer for all of God’s people to be prophets provides a perfect context for asking ourselves how these **Laudato Sí Action Platform Partners** in our communities can respond more fully to this commitment.



Laudato Sí Families.

How might each of our families join more fully in achieving the Laudato Sí Action Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our families join other families, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for families as families? Have some of our families given us helpful examples that can give others hope and encourage their participation?

Laudato Sí Parishes and Dioceses.

How might each of our parishes and dioceses join more fully in achieving the Laudato Sí Action Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our parish and

diocese join other parishes and dioceses, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for parishes and dioceses as parishes and dioceses? Have some of our parishes given us helpful examples that can give others hope and encourage their participation?

Laudato Sí Educational Institutions.

How might each of our schools, universities, and other educational institutions join more fully in achieving the Laudato Sí Action Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our educational institutions join other educational institutions, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for educational institutions as educational institutions? Have some of our educational institutions given us helpful examples in recent years that can give others hope and encourage their participation?

Laudato Sí Hospitals and Health Care Institutions.

How might each of our hospitals and health care institutions join more fully in achieving the Laudato Sí Action Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our hospitals and health care institutions join other health institutions, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for hospitals and health care institutions as hospitals and health care institutions? Have some of our health care institutions given us helpful examples that can give others hope and encourage their participation?

Laudato Sí Economic Entities.

How might each of our economic entities join more fully in achieving the Laudato Sí Action Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might they join other economic entities, networking to advance the goals in ways that

are particularly appropriate and possible for economic entities as economic entities? Have some of our businesses given us helpful examples that can give others hope and encourage their participation?

Laudato Sí Organizations and Groups.

How might each of our organizations and groups join more fully in achieving the Laudato Sí Action Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might they join other organizations and groups, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for organizations and groups as organizations and groups? Have some of our organizations given us helpful examples that can give others hope and encourage their participation?

Laudato Sí Religious Orders.

How might each of our religious orders join more fully in achieving the Laudato Sí Action



“Would that all the people of God were prophets!”

~Moses

Platform goals we have been reflecting on and praying over during this season? How might our religious orders join other religious orders, networking to advance the goals in ways that are particularly appropriate and possible for religious orders as religious orders? How have some of our religious communities given us helpful examples that can give others hope and encourage their participation?

The reading from the Letter of James is a devastating, direct condemnation of the rich. It reflects the judgment widespread through the early centuries of Christianity that those who have more than they need are in effect stealing from those who don't have the basics they need. In this age of unprecedented **inequality** between the 1% with unimaginable wealth and the vast majority of the human family, James' words are a sharply appropriate prophetic warning.

Today it is clear that this warning applies not just to wealthy individuals or groups but also to the wealthy industrialized nations. Their development through fossil-fuel-driven production has over the last century and a half polluted and warmed Earth dangerously. The widespread culture and systems of competitive consumption and accumulation have consolidated global wealth, creating what Pope Francis has called "throw-away societies." The majority of nations, often exploited and controlled by the economic and political power of the wealthy nations, remain poor and are

struggling to deal with the impacts of the changing climate.

Wealthy nations and wealthy communities and individuals have an urgent responsibility to address the crises their ways of living have created for the world community. These times demand human solidarity and collaboration totally unprecedented in human history to this time.

In the gospel passage, John plays the same role Joshua played with Moses. He tells Jesus that he and the others tried to stop someone who didn't follow Jesus from driving out demons in his name. Like Moses, Jesus rejects exclusive ownership to the good works. He urges his disciples to respect those doing these works, "For whoever is not against us is for us."

This message is important to remember as members of the Catholic community collaborate with and form networks with people of other faiths or no faith who do not share all the Church's beliefs or moral positions. In recent years, many Catholic social service agencies around the world have come under withering attack from members of their own church for collaborating on work for justice and for protection and restoration of Earth with those who do not share the Church's official positions on controversial ethical issues, especially abortion. In working to restore Earth and save all its inhabitants from devastating suffering and destruction, our position needs to be, in the

words Jesus used, that whoever is not against us is for us. And our prayer needs to be, "Would that everyone were a prophet!"

In the latter section of the gospel, Jesus gives grave warning about how seriously we need to take our sins and what terrible punishment will lie ahead for teaching the young our sinful ways. In the context of the Season of Creation, those sins include the destructive patterns of living identified by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, patterns of ecological degradation, greed, overconsumption, lack of solidarity across economic classes, and many others referred to throughout these materials and identified by so many other contemporary ecological prophets. Jesus's warning demands we look at how we are raising our children and how they are learning to relate to Earth.

Jesus's repeated reference to the horror of the fiery abyss, the unquenchable fire of Gehenna, draws upon the imagery of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology. And his injunction to cut out of our lives what causes us to sin is vivid and effective use of Jewish hyperbole. But the imagery of Gehenna is eerily contemporary when we see video of the massive wildfires destroying everything and everyone in their paths in Australia, the western United States, Siberia and the Arctic, Indonesia, and the Amazon Rainforest, to name just a few. Until the human family can embrace what Pope Francis calls an integral ecological conversion, until we can cut out of our lives the sinful, destructive patterns

of living on Earth that are driving climate change, we will continue more and more to face the fiery abyss, the unquenchable flames that are the contemporary incarnation of Gehenna.

The prayer of today's Responsorial Psalm speaks to this world: a prayer for the wisdom and guidance of God, a prayer to cleanse us even from our unknown faults.

Faith Reflections

Are you among those who believe in God, Who nearly 4.5 billion years ago began to form Earth and Who patiently evolved Earth as a nurturing home for all creatures, all members of the Earth family?

Are you among those who believe in God, Who opens the ears and frees the tongues of those called to be prophets guiding us to integral conversion to nurture the New Creation among us in these times?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, God become flesh of our flesh, a human part of the Earth community, Who lived and breathed and spoke prophetic truth among us, sending us to be prophets of His Word for the healing of the Earth community?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, Who was rejected, tortured, and put to death on a cross, a faithful witness to God's call to loving care for all human beings and healing restoration for all Creation?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, the risen Christ, Who is at the heart of the New Creation, guiding us in our conversion and reconciling all things to God, renewing Creation?

Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit Who is working now among us to deepen in all peoples a spirit of solidarity dedicated to service for the renewal of Earth as a nurturing home for all?

Are you among those who believe that with Christ and in the Holy Spirit we will rise to celebrate the New Creation?

This is our faith. Through it we see God's revelation emerging in new ways among us. Through it we embrace the promise of God's saving love and our mission to restore the household of Creation. **Amen.**

General Intercessions

For ever-deepening trust in the faithful presence and loving work of God in us, among us, and through us; for ever-greater attentiveness to the Wisdom guiding us to respond effectively to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, we pray...

For the rich diversity of groups, organizations, and institutions within our community, that they may grow in creativity, global solidarity, and prophetic courage to address the warming of the planet and the resulting destructive climate change effectively, we pray ...

For those who are today suffering most from the effects of the changing climate, that the human family may listen attentively to their prophetic word and respond generously to their needs, we pray ...

For the success of the work of ecumenical and interfaith communities to promote global unity and restore Earth as a nurturing home to all its inhabitants, we pray...

For the urgent, generous, and effective response of the global community in the ongoing United Nations conferences on biodiversity and climate change, we pray...

That we may take up our prophetic responsibilities in this time of urgent crisis to speak God's Truth with courage, calling each other into ways of living on Earth wisely, sustainably, justly, and reverently, we pray...

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving Creator God, from the explosive death of a star You planted the seeds of life on Earth. Through billions of years, You have prepared and given us a rich diversity of Earth's gifts to share. From among them and representing them all, we offer this bread and wine, grateful for Your faithful care.

Through them too we offer our lives, our talents, and our commitment to care for all in need on Earth and to work for the restoration of this planet as the Common Home for all who dwell on it and in it. Receive our offering and

transform our gifts and our energies into Your true Bread of Life for our world. We ask this in the name of Christ, Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Gracious, Loving God, we have shared this Eucharist in thanksgiving for Your sacred Creation and for Earth which we share with all creatures for whom it is home.

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to heal our wounds, to open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. Strengthen and protect us in the prophetic work of integral conversion and of healing and renewing all of Earth's communities that You have entrusted to our care. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus and in the power of Your Holy Spirit where we live and move and have our being now and forever. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

Based upon "A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation" by Pope Francis from Laudato Sí.

We believe that all creatures come forth from the all-powerful hand of the Creator, evolving through time and space, filled with God's presence and tender love.

May God awaken our praise and thankfulness for every creature and bless us with the grace of feeling profoundly joined to everything that is. **Amen.**

Through Christ all things were made. Formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, Christ Jesus became part of this Earth, gazing upon this world with human eyes.

May Christ bless us with eyes to see him alive in every creature in his risen glory. **Amen.**

The Holy Spirit guides this world toward the Creator's love and accompanies Creation as it groans in travail.

May this Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts and inspire us to do what is good, to care wisely and with love for Earth, our Common Home. **Amen.**

And may our Triune God, wondrous community of infinite love, bless us all with justice, peace, love and beauty,

God who is Creator, Word and Holy Spirit now and forever. **Amen.**



ECO-MARTYR

Glen Turner
(1963-2014) Australia



EXTINCT SPECIES

Thick-billed Ground-dove
(declared extinct 2016) Oceania

Fifth Sunday **MUSICAL SELECTIONS**

September 29, 2024 | 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

E - Entrance | O - Offertory | C - Communion | D - Dismissal
OCP - Oregon Catholic Press | WLP - World Library Publications

- E,D Praise to You, O Christ, Our Savior
©1986 Bernadette Farrell, published by OCP
- E All Are Welcome
Marty Haugen, ©1994 GIA Publications, Inc.
- E,D The Church of Christ
Fred Pratt Green, ©1971 Hope Publishing Co.
- O, C At the Table of the World
Brian Wren, ©1989 Hope Publishing Co.
- E, O Come Holy Spirit, Wind and Fire
Alan J. Hommerding, ©1993 WLP
- O O Beauty, Ever Ancient
©2004 Robert F. O'Connor, published by OCP
- O, D Stewards of Earth
Omer Westendorf, ©1984 World Library Publications
- O, C Here I Am, Lord
Daniel L. Schutte, ©1981 OCP
- C Life-giving Bread, Saving Cup
James Chepponis, ©1987 GIA
- D Lord, You Give the Great Commission
Jeffery Rowthorn, ©1978 Hope Publishing Co.

Psalm Settings

Psalm 19: The Precepts of the Lord
Stephen Pishner, ©2013, 2014 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 19: The Precepts of the Lord
Steven R. Janco, ©2010, WLP

Psalm 19: The Precepts of the Lord
Michel Guimont, ©1994, 1998 GIA Publications, Inc.

Psalm 19: The Precepts of the Lord
©2019 Thomas Muglia, published by OCP

Psalm 19: The Precepts of the Lord, (ref. II)
Tony E. Alonso, ©2003, 2012 GIA Publ., Inc.

Psalm 19: The Precepts of the Lord
Owen Alstott, ©1977, 1990 OCP