

Second Sunday OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

September 8, 2024 | 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 35:4-7a

Ps. 146:6-10

James 2:1-5

Mark 7:31-37

Integral Ecological Sign of the Cross

We begin our celebration of the 2nd Sunday of the Season of Creation...

In the name of our Creator God from Whom this universe with its countless solar systems flared forth in fiery birth,

And of the Word of God Who took on our flesh, working to give healing and hope to Earth,

And of the Holy Spirit of God Who is calling us all to a wiser, more just and sustainable spiritual vision and life. **Amen**

May the grace and peace of our Creator God Who cherishes us be with you!

Introductory Comments

Today is the Second Sunday of the 2024 Season of Creation. This season is a time of prayer and action celebrating God as Creator of the vast cosmic universe, God's revelation in Creation, and our calling to care for Creation. It invites us to protect its rich diversity and to address the urgent, destructive crises threatening its health and future - including our own.

This year's theme calls the Christian community to address the discouragement growing as the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and pollution worsen, the global human response is falling short, and the urgency is growing. On this 2nd Sunday of the Season of Creation, the scriptures urge us not to lose hope in the face of the urgent and complex climate crisis facing us. They remind us to trust

in God Who is faithful and is even now working to save us. They challenge us to confront the false values of wealth and consumption that are so common and so destructive and to pray for Christ to open our eyes, our ears, our hearts.

Penitential Rite Suggestion

As we begin our celebration of this 2nd Sunday in the Season of Creation, let's enter into the quiet of our spirits ... conscious of Earth, our home and the home of every other living and inanimate creature we know ... just a dot in the vast expanse of the Milky Way ... Suffering from overconsumption, devastation and warming temperatures ... home to millions of people rising up to restore and save our common home....

Loving God, we often lose hope in the face of the widespread devastation of climate change, the threats of far worse to come, the urgency of the needs, and the slowness of our response.

Creator Spirit of God, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You warned us how hard it is for the rich to enter the Kin-dom of God and yet we hold up wealth as a sign of success and "development" and pursue it in ways that are destroying our common home.

Word of God, have mercy.

Holy Spirit of God, You call us to be the voice of the voiceless of Creation suffering among us, working with them for their healing and rescue.

Wisdom of God, have mercy.

May God, Who gave fiery birth to all time and space and to the vast Web of Life in which we live, have mercy on us, free us from our sins, and guide us into the fullness of divine Life.

Amen.

Gloria: In conscious awe, we join our voices with all Creation to praise and glorify God.

Opening Prayer

Loving Creator God, You have been faithful through billions of years, patiently preparing Earth to be the nurturing home for all that dwell on it and in it. As we come to recognize the urgent threats to its well-being from values and actions of our human community, we ask You to deepen our hope in Your faithful love, Your power to save us, and Your action in us, among us, and through us.

Send the healing power of Christ to open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. Unite the human family and teach us to recognize and embrace Your Wisdom, Wisdom that suffers, guides, heals and renews our Common Home.

We make our prayer in the name of Christ, Your Word, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, the

Wisdom at work renewing all things in Creation, now and forever. **Amen.**

Points for Reflection on the Scriptures

In last week's reflections, we summed up the context the Earth community is facing simply and directly. It remains our context today. Can the scriptures help us to walk the fine line that will help us as people of faith to face and embrace the urgency of the situation threatening Earth and all its creatures with hope and ready commitment to the transformations so desperately required?

In the first reading, Isaiah urges his people to "Be strong, fear not" because God is faithful and is engaged in their history to save them. He sees the work of God in the eyes that are opened, the ears that hear again, in the lame and the mute being healed and Earth being restored to fruitfulness and life.

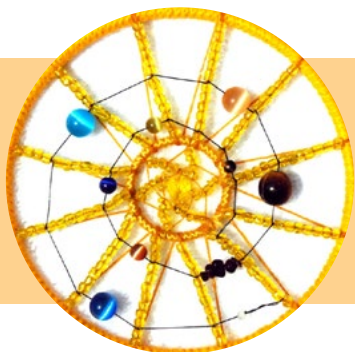
This is another essential dimension of **Ecological Spirituality**, one of the seven crucial **Laudato SÍ Action Platform goals**: growth in the ability to discern and identify the positive qualities

and actions of a healthy, integral ecological spirituality.

The faithful presence and work of God Who raised Jesus from the dead are the surest foundation against discouragement and losing hope in the face of the current crises. As St. Paul wrote so powerfully, "If God is for us, who can be against?"

Do we share Isaiah's prophetic faith here and now? Are we able to see the needs, hear the call, and act for healing and renewal of Earth?

Where do we see eyes being opened to the climate realities and dangers? Where do we see people who were deaf to the issues or refused to listen begin to hear and understand the powerful "statements" of Nature's destructive forces? Where are those who had been mute beginning to speak up with concern and care for Creation? Where do we see people whose response to the planetary crises had been halting in the past taking more bold steps? At the personal level? At the political level? Through international collaboration and networking?



"Over sixty-five years ago, Teilhard proposed that 'our religion is becoming enfeebled.' The reason being that we are too cut off from awe and wonder and a 'passionate admiration of the Universe.'" Matthew Fox

Do we see God at work in the unprecedented mobilization of the Catholic community through the *Laudato Sí* Action Platform, the global networks that are emerging, and the ecumenical and interfaith collaboration that is growing?

Where are we seeing Earth being healed and renewed through prophetic human efforts? Where do we recognize God at work in these efforts to address the climate crisis threatening Earth?

The Psalm acknowledges God's faithfulness in actions like these and invites us to praise God.

Can we pray it with heartfelt conviction and draw strength from its vision?

In the second reading, James focuses upon the widespread human temptation to honor wealth as a sign of success and value. That temptation feeds the greed, exploitation, and systematic degradation of the richness of Creation. The dominant model and processes of development embraced by so many over the last several hundred years are based on a vision of unlimited economic growth fed by production,

consumption, and competition for wealth on a limited planet. These have driven and continue to drive the destructive exploitation of Earth and the rapidly increasing diminishment of Earth's ability to renew itself and remain a nurturing home for all its inhabitants. These economic patterns and processes must be transformed.

Such transformation flows from a strong **Ecological Spirituality** and is made more specific in another of the *Laudato Sí* Action Platform goals, **Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles**:

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles.

This goal promotes a sense of sufficiency rather than unnecessary accumulation or consumerism. Actions could include recycling, reducing waste, more sustainable diets, promotion of public transportation and avoiding single-use items.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Do actions like these resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? Are there other people, communities, networks with whom I/we can join in this type of action?

How can I/we transform our lifestyles and values to embrace a more authentic and sustainable way of living on Earth in solidarity with all God's Creation?

James also reminds us that God chooses the poor of the world to be rich in faith. This important reminder echoes throughout Christian history, most recently raised up in Pope Francis's call in *Laudato Sí* to listen to the Cry of the Poor and the Cry of Earth. The poor are most often the first to suffer and, in their suffering, to reveal the injustices and unsustainable ways of living of our societies. This is a focus of a fourth Platform goal.

Response to the Cry of the Poor.

This goal calls us to promote ecojustice and to defend human life and all forms of life on Earth. Actions toward this goal could include promoting solidarity, attention and support to vulnerable groups: indigenous communities, refugees, migrants, racial minorities, children. They could include analysis and improvement of social systems and institutions.

Does this type of action speak to my/our lives at this time? Do actions like these



"For ever-deepening trust in the faithful presence and loving work of God in us, among us, and through us to respond to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, we pray..."

resonate with my/our sense of calling at this time? Are there other people, communities, networks with whom I/we can join in this type of action?

Pope Francis has often spoken of the wisdom and faith of indigenous peoples and the poor as rich resources for learning to live sustainably on Earth and contribute to its healing restoration. How can I/we engage that wisdom and grow in that faith?

Do I/we have relationships with people in poverty? With indigenous peoples? What wisdom do they have to share with us about caring for Creation sustainably, reverently? How do their warnings and demonstrations in resistance to development projects speak to us and invite our solidarity?

Looking to indigenous communities and other oppressed peoples, do we see the environmental racism from which they so often suffer? Do we see the growing ecological crises behind the increasing flows of climate refugees? Does their suffering stir our compassion? Do we hear Christ's command to welcome the "stranger," who approaches in the form of a climate refugee?

In the gospel, Jesus struggles, groaning, to give healing to a deaf person with a speech impediment. Without a doubt, the work over

the next decade of restoring the household of God, our Common Home, will be difficult and challenging.

Are we ready to pray for the healing power of Christ to be at work in us and through us so that we may hear and speak clearly the Word of God given us to share in this critical time?

Can we offer ourselves to join Christ in the difficult work of opening eyes and ears, freeing tongues, and supporting bold efforts to embrace the integral ecological conversion required in these times?

Faith Reflections

Are you among those who believe in God, who through billions of years has evolved Earth as a nurturing home for all creatures, all members of the Earth family?

Are you among those who believe in God who is bringing forth all Creation, cherishing every creature, inviting us to care for each other wisely and with love?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, who can open eyes and ears and loosen tongues to speak a prophetic call to simple living and loving response to the Cry of the Poor?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, who through his dying and rising bears faithful witness to God's loving and healing care for all people and for all Creation?

Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit who groans in empathy with suffering Creation and is working with us to renew the face of Earth?

Are you among those who believe that with Christ and in the Holy Spirit we will rise with people of all faiths and people of good will to celebrate a 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 to respond to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, 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 creatures, we pray...

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

That we may hear and respond in faith and in hope to the Cry of the Poor among us and around the planet, we pray...

Prayer over the Gifts

Creator God, You inspire awe in our hearts. Through Your love this Universe flared forth from You in fiery birth billions of years ago. Through all that time, You have patiently prepared and provided us these gifts and so much more to share. We offer them in gratitude as signs of Your faithful care for all our needs.

Through them we offer our lives, our talents, and our commitment to care for all in need on planet Earth and to work for the renewal of our Common Home itself. Receive them 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.**

How are we being invited, as individuals, as communities, to share in this saving work? What is God inviting us to do?

Prayer after Communion

Gracious, Loving God, we have shared this Eucharist in thanksgiving for Your sacred Creation in which we share and where we find our Common Home.

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into our hearts, our minds, and our bodies. Heal our wounds, open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts, and renew all Earth's communities. We make our prayer in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

The Creating Spirit of God is above all and in all and through all.

May that Loving Spirit fill us with knowledge of God's faithful presence and healing work.

Amen.

Christ Jesus opens eyes and ears and tongues for the healing of Earth.

May Christ open our eyes and ears, minds and hearts to love and care for each other and for Creation. **Amen.**

The Holy Spirit is at work around Earth to raise up communities working together to renew the face of the Earth.

May the Spirit nourish hope and unity in our hearts. **Amen.**

And may almighty God bless us, God who is our Creator, Jesus the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit in Whom we live and move and have our being now and forever. **Amen.**



ECO-MARTYR

Wayne Lotter

(1965 - 2017) South Africa

EXTINCT SPECIES

St. Helena Olive

(declared extinct 2004) Africa



Second Sunday **MUSICAL SELECTIONS**

September 8, 2024 | 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns

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

- E, D A Place at the Table
Shirley Erena Murray, ©1998 Hope Publishing Co.
- E, O, D Abundant Life
Ruth Duck, ©1992 GIA
- E, D Flow, River, Flow
©1986 Bob Hurd, Published by Oregon Catholic Press
- E, D Say to the Frightened Heart
©2012 Bob Hurd, published by OCP.
- E Glory and Praise to Our God
©1972, 1974, 2008, Daniel L. Schutte, pub. OCP
- E Morning Has Broken
©1957 Eleanor Farjeon, Harold Ober Assoc.
- E I Sing the Mighty Power of God
Isaac Watts
- E, O Praise to You, O Christ, Our Savior
©1986 Bernadette Farrell, published by OCP
- O, C Healer of Our Every Ill, by Marty Haugen
©1987 GIA Publications, Inc.
- O, C Open My Eyes ©1988, 1998, 1999
Jesse Manibusen, published by Spirit and Song (OCP)

- C Now in This Banquet
Marty Haugen, ©1986 GIA Publications, Inc.
- D Touch the Earth Lightly
Shirley Erena Murray, ©1992 Hope Publishing Company.
- D Light Dawns on a Weary World
Mary Louise Bringle, ©2002, GIA Publications

Psalm Settings

- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
Owen Alstott, ©1977, 1990 OCP
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
Bob Hurd, ©2011 OCP
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
Richard Proulx, ©1975, GIA Publications, Inc.
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
©2016 Sarah Hart, published by OCP
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
Paul Tate, ©2013, 2014 GIA Publications, Inc.
- Psalm 146: Praise the Lord, My Soul
James Gerrish, ©1971 WLP