

Global Catholic Climate Movement

Prayer Practices



Season of Creation



2020

“Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope.” GCCM

Suaimhneas, Emo - www.suaimhneas.ie

Anglo—Irish Region



Photo by Andrea Caramello on Unsplash

“When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them.” The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. (LS)

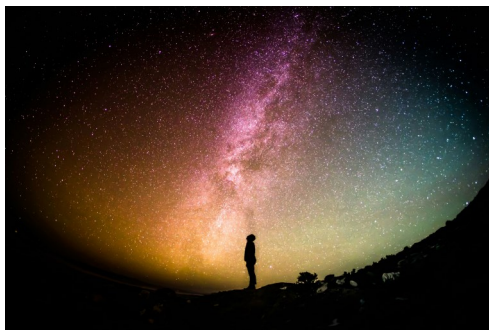


Photo by Greg Rakozy on Unsplash



Tired Wheelbarrow finds new purpose at Suaimhneas

Introduction/ Preface

During the time of the Covid restrictions we took part in some of the online initiatives organised by the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM). It is a global network of over 400 member organizations and a community of thousands of Catholics responding to Pope Francis's urgent *"call to respond to the ecological crisis,"* in *Laudato Si.* Sr. Lucy in her letter dated 14/7/2020 issued an invitation to all SCJM's *"to think about what more we can do in order to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and to sustain and renew our Earth"*

In preparation for the season of creation we took part in a GCCM programme entitled 'Laudato Si Animators Training Programme.' This programme was based on three interrelated dimensions outlined by Pope Francis when speaking about our relationship with our common home i.e. Spiritual... Life style... and Mobilization & Advocacy.

The programme invited all participants to find creative ways of caring for our common home during this time of COVID19.

We enjoyed being part of this excellent online programme with a global group. We find it a tremendous resource and support.

We would like to share with you two methods of Prayer with Creation which we were introduced to during the programme.

- [Lectio Divina with Creation](#)
- [Laudato Si Chaplet](#)

We find these prayer practices very helpful when praying with creation. We hope you find them helpful also.

The Laudato Si Animators Training Programme

Introduction

The Training Programme offered opportunities to explore the three dimensions of Laudato Si,

The Spiritual Dimension

Invited each one of us:

To see that *"the ecological crisis is a summons to profound interior conversion"* (LS 217), and a deep change of heart to heal our wounded relationship with God's Creation. *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.* (217)

Action:

The Prayer Practices can bring us into deepening our experience of God through all that exists - Create liturgies and prayer services which engage in creation centred spirituality, celebrating the gift of creation.

The Lifestyles Dimension :

To encourage our local communities to join with us in striving to express in our life style the teaching of Laudato Si—Sharing together this challenging but exciting journey of ecological conversion.

Action

Adapt the principles, of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Re-purpose

Become more aware of the small ways in which we individually and collectively can make a change. Dialogue with people we meet in our daily lives about the plight of our common home. These actions provide an opportunity for mutual transformation and a change in attitude and behaviour.

"Amidst the worsening climate crisis and the coronavirus pandemic, our sisters and brothers around the world are clamouring for hope and restoration" GCCM



Photo by Hannah Valentine on Unsplash

Now is the time for Christians to come together, take action,
and show the world
what love for creation looks like.

"As part of the universe, ... all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect." (LS 89)

Some Prayerful videos and songs

- 1) Video: Brother Moon Sister Sun
Release date: March 1972

This video is a lovely dramatization of events in the life of St. Francis of Assisi from before his conversion ... through his audience with the pope, including his friendship with St. Clare.

On DVD

Or see on <https://www.youtube.com>

- (2) Prayer of St. Francis

This video has magnificent images of "Creation" composed by André Ripa. Featuring the Canticle of creation written by St Francis of Assisi, narration by Peter Strauss. (4 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com>

- (3) Hymn to St. Francis on youtube

- a. <https://www.youtube.com>
- b. <https://www.youtube.com>

Mobilisation & Advocacy Dimension:

To raise our voices for climate justice and the protection of our common home and be moved by Pope Francis's appeal:

"Our common home is being pillaged, laid waste and harmed with impunity. ... I ask you, in the name of God, to defend Mother Earth."

Action:

Prepare questions to pose to our politicians regarding their plans for caring for our planet.

Promote and Engage with community projects that promote sustainability and respect for all life.

"We are created to read the book of creation so that we may know the Author of Life." –Ilia Delio, OSF



Photo by Jorge Bermudez on Unsplash

In order to help us live these three dimensions we were invited to pray daily, and to recognise that prayer and action are part of the same process. One depends on the other. Prayer motivates action and action inspires prayer. Interior conversion leads to exterior conversion and exterior conversion results in a richer interior conversion. It is a life long process of conversion and transformation.

Lectio Divina with Creation



“All things must come to the soul from its roots, from where it is planted”-Saint Teresa of Avila

Footnote

The Chaplet can also be prayed in any way that is helpful for each person.

You could pray it with just a few expressions or elements of nature for a few minutes, or spend a longer time praying with the whole of creation.

If the setting is helpful, you can choose any aspect of creation for your prayer e.g.

sound - birds, water stream

touch - breeze/wind, sunlight in the face or touching grass

smell - flowers, herbs lavender, rosemary

sight - trees, clouds, lake, moss, butterfly, mountain, sand/earth/rocks

“The world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise” (LS 12)



Photo by Hugo Magalhaes

Prayer for the earth 2

By Pope Francis

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...

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.



Prayers 1 and 2 prayer are included in Pope Francis's
2015 encyclical Laudato si'

Lectio Divina

We are all familiar with the ancient practice of slow contemplative praying with the Scriptures, called Lectio Divina. In this traditional practice, one first reads the text (lectio), meditates on a word or phrase (meditation), and prays (oratio) with a question or insight that might arise. Finally, through the grace of God, one might be led into contemplation or simply resting in God's presence.

We are invited to use this form of prayer to listen deeply for God's voice in scripture, and then to allow what we hear to shape our way of being in the world.

"Lectio Divina means 'holy or sacred reading.'

It is an ancient Christian prayer-form that is being rediscovered and reclaimed in our time.

This form of prayer was encouraged in preparation for the General Chapter 2017 and affirmed at the Chapter.

Lectio Divina with Creation

Throughout the Animators Training Programme we were invited to use Lectio Divina **with Creation**. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis shares that "*Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. (LS 12)*

Through reading the Book of Nature we experience the sacred in the midst of God's creation

We were invited to spend a minimum of 10 minutes daily praying Lectio Divina **with Creation** and were given the following guidelines.

Lectio Divina with Creation Practice

For this practice it is preferable to spend time outdoors, whether on a walk or sitting in the garden. If that is not possible it can be practiced inside, sitting by a window looking at trees or flower or anything in nature. It can also be helpful meditating with a plant within the room, or using an experience from memory or following a guided meditation, a selection of which can be found on youtube.



The steps in Lectio Divina with Creation are:

(1) Read/Lectio

To use this process of lectio Divina in creation, take time to “read” creation by just walking and looking around, slowly taking in what is around you with all of your senses. Notice the different colours, shapes, smells, textures.

(2) Meditate/Meditation.

Notice if something attracts your attention and allow yourself to linger there. It might be a flower, a tree, or cloud formations in the sky. Allow yourself to be present to what is there. Use your senses to take in the wonder of this expression or element of creation.

Reflect on *how you experience God's presence within or through this element of creation?*

(3) Pray/ Oratio

Enter into dialogue with God on this expression of creation, as a reflection of God's presence. You might ask God a question such as “*What are you saying to me through this tree?*” Or you might just give God thanks for the beauty of this creation. Then allow yourself to listen. Allow yourself *to be open to what God might be saying to you through creation*. Don't worry if you do not hear anything. Just be open to what might arise, without needing to force anything.

4th Decade

Bring your attention to Mother Earth by touching the earth with your hands and/or bare feet.

Praised be you, my God, through Mother Earth.
(e.g. sand earth, rock)

(Repeat 10 times)

Refrain: All praise to you, O God of all creation x 2
or Laudate omnes gentes, Laudate Dominum x 2

The planet has the perfect amount of each of element to allow life to flourish. Take time for silence (ideally a minimum of 1 minute with each element), to experience God's love through the elements.

5th Decade

You may then wish to include a 5th Decade by bringing your attention to what ever you wish to focus on in your environment e.g. Plant, Tree, or Bird

Praise to you my God, through brother

(Repeat 10 times)

Refrain: All praise to you, O God of al creation x2
or listen to Taizé chant Laudate omnes gentes, Laudate Dominum x 2

Reflection: You are invited now to reflect on your experience of using this prayer.

Closing prayer:

Choose from any of the following options

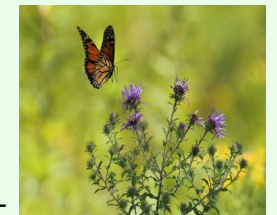
Prayer for our Earth 2 see page 16 or

Pray the Our Father

alternatively youtube video prayer for the earth

<https://www.youtube.com>

Or a closing hymn of your preference.



(3) Praying with the Chaplet:

First Decade :

Take a few deep breaths to become aware of the blessing of Brother Air in the breath that you breathe, or in the breeze/wind.



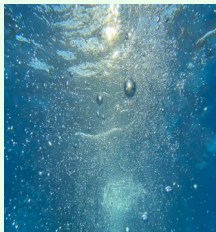
Praised be you, my God , through Brother Air

Repeat this prayer slowly like a mantra 10 times or as many time as you choose.

Refrain : All praise to you, O God of all creation x 2
or listen to Taizé chant on youtube
Laudate omnes gentes, Laudate Dominum x 2

Second Decade

Bring your attention to any presence of Sister Water e.g. in the water that is refreshing to drink, in clouds, river, lake or ocean or waterfall.



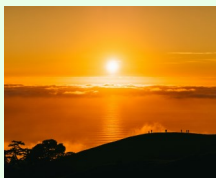
Praised be you, my God, through Sister Water.
(Repeat slowly 10 times)

Refrain : All praise to you, O God of all creation x 2
Or - Laudate omnes gentes, Laudate Dominum x 2

3rd Decade

Bring your attention to the presence of Brother fire through the light and/or the warmth of the Sun's rays.

Praised be you, my God through Brother Fire
(Repeat 10 times)



Refrain : All praise to you, O God of all creation
Or - Laudate omnes gentes, Laudate Dominum x 2

(4) Contemplate/ Contemplation

After some time, let go of any words or thoughts and just allow yourself to rest in God's presence right here and now. You might close your eyes and simply relax.

When you are ready to close your time of prayer, find a way to give thanks: by silently offering a prayer to God, by making a slight gesture of gratitude like a bow, or wishing your friend in creation well-being and health. Then close by saying the Prayer for our Earth 1 by Pope Francis from Laudato Si. or experience the music version of the prayer on youtube <https://www.youtube.com>

Prayer for the Earth 1

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.

O 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.

Finally

Listen to a hymn for creation e.g.

- Touch the Earth with gentleness by Kathy Sherman/ or
- All is Holy Now by Peter Mayer / or
- The Song of Creation
- or any one of your choice.

You are then invited to reflect on the following:

What do you notice as you do this prayer practice?

What insights emerge about

- *God as Creator,*
- *Creation,*
- *Yourself?*

The Practice

Steps of the Chaplet

(1) Contemplation of Creation:

Spend a minimum of 5 minutes in silence. Listen to God's message in Creation using your different senses.

(2) Opening Prayer

Prayer of St Francis or any other prayer of choice

Prayer of St. Francis

... Praised be You, my Lord,
through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven You formed them
clear and precious and beautiful.
Praised be You, my Lord,
through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather
through which you give sustenance to your creatures.
Praised be You, my Lord,
through Sister water,
who is very useful and humble
and precious and chaste.
Praised be You, my Lord,
through Brother fire,
through whom You light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful
and robust and strong...
... Praised be You, my Lord,
through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit
with coloured flowers and herbs

Praised be to You.

For the Prayer of St. Francis -Brother Sun, Sister Moon, with lyrics see;
<https://www.youtube.com>

Introduction

The Laudato Si Chaplet is a simple prayer technique to pray with creation, inspired by the Canticle of the Creatures of St Francis of Assisi, the canticle that inspired the title of the Laudato Si' Encyclical. Praying with the very same words of St Francis, the Chaplet helps us develop an ‘ecological spirituality’ (LS 216) and deepen our “ecological conversion” (LS 5) by:

- Developing spiritual attitudes of praise and gratitude towards God the Creator, and of universal fraternity with all of Creation,
- Enhancing our capacity to contemplate the beauty of Creation with awe and wonder,
- Deepening interior peace and our relationship with God the Creator.

Pope Francis reminds us that ultimately, this “ecological spirituality ...can motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world” (LS 216).

Praying Laudato Si Chaplet

It is recommended to pray the Chaplet outdoors using a Rosary beads. This prayer like Lectio Divina is a slow meditative prayer..

Find a silent area in nature if available, but it could be prayed in any setting with natural elements in sight e.g. in one’s bedroom where a tree or flowers could be seen through a window, or even where a memory in creation can be evoked, as Pope Francis suggests.

Use the rosary beads to pray the verses from the Canticle of the Creatures that praise God through the 4 elements, repeated slowly 10 times like a mantra.

The 4 elements, Air, Water, Fire and Earth were chosen by St Francis because in his time they were used to represent all of Creation, the whole cosmos, in line with the tradition of Ancient Greece and other ancient cultures. He also felt so connected to the human and non—human world that he called every creature brother and sister. To him *each and every creature was a ‘brother’ or ‘sister’ united to him by bonds of affection.*” (LS 11)

Laudato Si Chaplet



Photo by Grant Whitty on Unsplash

“ When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them. LS 87