

PRAYER FOCUS FOR MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2015

Our Common Home

The Prayer Focus for this month is a call to contemplate more deeply, with respect and care for our common home.



REFLECTION ONE

Pope Francis in his new encyclical 'Laudato Si', writes to every person living on our planet, reminding 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' (#12) because 'there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face. Everything is, as it were, a caress of God.' (#84)

Yet in many places 'the earth our home is beginning to look like an immense pile of filth' (#21) Pope Francis warns: 'Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years.' (#53)

He challenges us with this question. 'What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?' (#160) Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. (#159) He continues to challenge us. 'Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances?' (#225)

Let us take time then to smell the rose, to marvel at the intricate patterns of plants, to listen to the song of the bird, to behold the beauty of a sunset or a rainbow, to care for all creation and to be filled with a deep sense of God's presence and love for us.



With Pope Francis let us pray:

*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.
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*

REFLECTION TWO

Care and respect for our common home, especially in solidarity with the poor

Pope Francis in his encyclical 'Laudato Si' reminds us that 'a sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.' (#91)

He challenges us:

'Let us not only keep the poor of the future in mind, but also today's poor, whose life on this earth is brief and who cannot keep on waiting.' (#162) 'It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society' (#91)

Pope Francis challenges us to responsible simplicity of life and solidarity with each other, overcoming individualism, so that 'we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society' (#208).



Remembering the words of the Earth Charter, Francis concludes: "As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life." (#148)

With Pope Francis let us pray:

*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 recognise 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. (Laudato Si)*

We would encourage you to visit this site to see a beautiful reflection on 'Laudato Si' (in Italian, English and Spanish).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=1tYdOlqvpqg

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