

Prayer to Care for Our Common Home

Father of all,
Creator and ruler of the universe,
You entrusted your world to us as a gift.
Help us to care for it and all people,
that we may live in right relationship--
with You,
with ourselves,
with one another,
and with creation.



Christ our Lord, both divine and human,
You lived among us and died for our sins.
Help us to imitate your love for the human family
by recognizing that we are all connected—
to our brothers and sisters around the world,
to those in poverty impacted by environmental devastation,
and to future generations.

Holy Spirit, giver of wisdom and love,
You breathe life in us and guide us.
Help us to live according to your vision,
stirring to action the hearts of all—
individuals and families, communities of faith,
and civil and political leaders.

Triune God, help us to hear the cry of those in poverty, and the cry of the earth, so that we may together care for our common home. Amen.

~ The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops based on
Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*: *On Care for Our Common Home*.



***“Be praised, my Lord,
for Sister Earth, our Mother,
who nourishes us and sustains us,
bringing forth fruits and vegetables of many kinds
and flowers of many colors.”***

~ From the Canticle of Creation

About Earth Day

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated around the world on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First celebrated in 1970, it now includes events coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network [www.earthday.org] in more than 193 countries. This year 2020, marks its 50th anniversary.

This year, because of the coronavirus pandemic, Earth Day is going digital. As we all continue practicing social distancing, we can still do our part to care for God’s creation, Sister Mother Earth, as we are self-isolating. Check out the Earth Day Network live broadcasts.

***“We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors;
we borrow it from our children.”***

~ Native American Proverb

DID YOU KNOW?

Earth Day Was Created Through The Tireless Efforts Of Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson

Senator Gaylord Nelson arrived in Washington in 1963 looking to make the fledgling conservation movement — sparked in part by Rachel Carson’s New York Times bestseller **Silent Spring**, which warned against the harmful effects of widespread pesticide usage — a part of the national discourse. After witnessing the aftermath of an oil spill in California in 1969, Nelson doubled down on his commitment to raising environmental awareness. Drawing inspiration from the energetic anti-war movement of the time, he enlisted support from both sides of the political spectrum, and on April 22, 1970, Earth Day was born.

To head up the Earth Day project, Senator Nelson enlisted Denis Hayes, then a graduate student at Harvard University. As national coordinator, Hayes recruited a staff of 85 energetic young environmental crusaders and grassroots organizers, along with thousands of field volunteers, in order to promote the fledgling holiday across the nation. The team knew that in order to gain the most traction, college students would need to play a central role, as they did in the Vietnam protests of the era. The date that Hayes selected for the first Earth Day was a calculated choice: April 22 on most college campuses falls right between Spring Break and final exams.

In 1990, Earth Day expanded to include countries and peoples across the globe, with 200 million people in 141 nations getting involved. A decade later, at the turn of the new millennium, Earth Day shed light on the emerging Clean Energy movement and expanded its reach, spreading to 184 countries with the help of 5000 environmental organizations. According to Earth Day Network, after 40 years, more than 1 billion people participate in Earth Day activities, making it the largest secular civic event in the world.

Earth Day is now observed around the world, albeit under a different name: In 2009, the United Nations General Assembly decided to designate April 22 as International Mother Earth Day. The symbol of Mother Earth serves as a common metaphor and representation of our planet in many countries and cultures. In the United States, the holiday is still commonly referred to as Earth Day.



“The Earth is what we all have in common.”

~ Wendell Berry

This year also marks the 5th anniversary of the much anticipated encyclical, *Laudato Si*; which marked a timely and important turning point in the global conversation about the state of our common home. I invite you to read or re-read the document in the light of this global pandemic we are all experiencing. See what new insights or thoughts come up for you.

If we approach nature and the environment without...openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously. (LS #11)

There is a growing sensitivity to the environment and the need to protect nature, along with a growing concern, both genuine and distressing, for what is happening to our planet... Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it. (LS #19)



Your Weekly Call to Action

Single-use plastics, often also referred to as disposable plastics, are commonly used for plastic packaging and include items intended to be used only once before they are thrown away or recycled. These include, among other items, grocery bags, food packaging, bottles, straws, containers, cups and cutlery.

Think about your experience and use of single-use plastics. Pick just one plastic item: straws, grocery bags, bottles, or cutlery. Replace this item with a more eco-friendly replacement, like having reusable bags with you when you grocery shop. Or, keep a set of metal or bamboo cutlery wrapped in a reusable cloth napkin with you when you go to eat. How about using paper, metal or silicon straws instead of wasting the plastic ones? Just replace one item this week and see how it feels. It may not seem like much, but in the long run, it will end up making a big difference.

Also, I invite you to sign onto the **St. Francis/Laudato Si' Pledge** at the **Catholic Climate Covenant** (catholicclimatecovenant.org). You will commit or re-commit yourself to:

- **Praying** with and for creation.
- **Living** more simply by lowering your family's, parish's, and/or religious community's carbon footprint.
- **Advocating** to protect our common home.

Please feel free to share your thoughts and insights with me at [ctownes26 @ gmail.com](mailto:ctownes26@gmail.com). Use "**Creation 3, 2, 1**" as the subject line. I would love to hear how you are making a difference for Sister Mother Earth.



Thank you for making a difference.
Feel free to share this **Creation 3, 2, 1** with friends and family.