

The Season of Creation

Every year on 1st September, Orthodox Christians begin their year with a commemoration of how God created the world. In 1989, the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios asked people to expand this into a season, which lasts from 1st September to 4th October, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron of our Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, the Sisters in Tórshavn. In 2015, Pope Francis officially asked all Catholics to celebrate this season. In May that year, he signed his second Encyclical Letter, known by its opening words, *Laudato Si'*, which are also the opening words of the beautiful *Canticle of the Creatures*, written by Saint Francis.

Laudato Si' is a long document, but various Catholics have come up with introductions to it. One of these organisations is CAFOD, the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development, which is the English and Welsh branch of *Caritas*, the worldwide charity of the Catholic Church. You can watch films and download study guides CAFOD has prepared: they show us many ways to respond to Pope Francis' call to care for our common home, which is what he calls planet earth. There are suggestions about changing our lifestyle and learning how to live more simply. The key we need is to recognise that everything God has created, not only human beings, is a precious and wonderful gift. God wants us to love Him, the Creator, and also everything he has made, the whole of Creation. Greta Thunberg has managed to prick the consciences of world leaders by shocking them with "the science" about the crisis our whole environment faces. The Season of Creation asks us to respond to that crisis in a Christian way, by loving and caring for every person and every thing God has made.

Why not watch this short film?

<https://faithcafe.org/pages/ourcommonhome-global-healing-trailer>

Then look at this page to find your way into the Season of Creation:

<https://faithcafe.org/collections/ourcommonhome>

Find out much more here:

<https://seasonofcreation.org/about/>

Here is a prayer for our earth, which is at the end of *Laudato Si'*: if you read it slowly, you will find there is a lot to stop and think about....

*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.*

If you feel inspired to suggest ways our parish can enter into the Season of Creation or become a community that lives more simply, please tell Sister Maria or Father Peter. You can begin in your own home, your school, or where you work.

Father Peter