



Mary Ward JPIC Office
Freedom - Justice - Sincerity - Felicity

SEASON OF CREATION



JUBILEE OF THE EARTH.
Renew. Repair. Restore.
- September 2020 -

During 2020 Season of Creation we celebrate the **JUBILEE OF THE EARTH**. A time to give the earth a long Sabbath to Renew, to Repair and to Restore. This year our world has been hit by the COVID 19 pandemic that brought it to a halt. It has meant less movement, fewer social activities etc; consequently, the earth began to reclaim her Sabbath as is evident in clearer skies, waters and vegetation.

The ancients believed the World to be composed of 4 basic elements – Fire, Water, Air, and Earth. These were considered the critical energy forces that sustained life. All of these elements are integral parts of matter or the physical universe, and the human body is a physical creation existing in the material realm. Therefore, the human beings were seen to be made of and governed by the four elements. The purity and integrity of these elements ensure the balance our body, mind and soul needs to live a full life.

Jesus cleans the waters through His baptism (Mt. 3:13-17), He uses soil to give sight to a blind man (Jh 9, 6), rebukes the wind and calm the sea (Mc. 4, 39) and brings fire (the Kingdom of God) to the earth (Lc. 12,49).

Today, the biblical call to love our neighbor extends to nature as the vulnerable, outcast, poor, and marginalised. Deepening our relationship with nature can help us to respect nature more and become its protector and advocate.

At the end of this Season of Creation we invite you to let yourselves be touched by the four elements of nature to feel, admire, treasure and celebrate their presence in your life. May it become more integrated into your lives beyond the celebrations, as we are more aware that we are tiny little part of an amazing and blessed **WHOLE**. Lets celebrate now and in everyday of our lives the mystery and beauty of me, you, the other and the Universe. We are one!

But ask the animals, now, and they shall teach you; the birds of the sky, and they shall tell you. Or, speak to the earth and it shall teach you. Ask the plants of the earth and they shall teach you. The fish of the seas shall declare to you. Who doesn't know that in all these, the hand of God has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all humankind? - Job 12:7-10

Season of Creation 2020 Prayer

Creator of Life,
At Your word, the Earth brought forth plants yielding seed and trees of every kind bearing fruit.

The rivers, mountains, minerals, seas and forests sustained life. The eyes of all looked to You to satisfy the needs of every living thing.
And throughout time the Earth has sustained life.



Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons, renewal and growth, you open your hand to give creatures our food in the proper time.

In your Wisdom, you granted a Sabbath; a blessed time to rest in gratitude for all that you have given; a time to liberate ourselves from vicious consumption; a time to allow the land and all creatures to rest from the burden of production.

But these days our living pushes the planet beyond its limits. Our demands for growth, and our never-ending cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world.

The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail, the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify.
We have not allowed the land to observe her Sabbath,
and the Earth is struggling to be renewed.

During this Season of Creation, we ask you to grant us courage to observe a Sabbath for our planet.

Strengthen us with the faith to trust in your providence. Inspire us with the creativity to share what we have been given.

Teach us to be satisfied with enough. And as we proclaim a Jubilee for the Earth, send Your Holy Spirit to renew the face of creation.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus

Amen.

Day 1 WATER

All praise be Yours, my God, through Sister Water, So useful, humble, precious, and pure.

—St. Francis of Assisi, Cantic of the Sun



In the first Genesis creation story, the waters exist before the light and creation emerge. In Christianity, the font of holy water is the place of baptism and initiation into the community.

In the gospel at the moment when Jesus offers the Samaritan woman living water, we too are invited to consider how that healing water restores us to wholeness.

- What is staying with me as I reflect on water in my prayer?
- What do I want to give thanks for?
- How am I drawn to respond to God?
- What action do I take: draw, write or make something?

Transporting water from distant sources is no less difficult now than it was then. In most of the developing world, women and girls disproportionately bear the burden of collecting water for their families.

We pray for the global will to ensure everyone has access to safe drinking water.

Day 2

EARTH

All praise be Yours, my God, through Sister Earth, our mother, Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces Various fruits and colored flowers and herbs.

—St. Francis of Assisi, Canticle of the Sun



In the second Genesis creation story, God forms humans from the dust of the earth and breathes the breath of life into our nostrils. Sometimes it is easier to pray when we feel the earth in our hands, when we work in the garden tending our flowers or vegetables. Or when we cook, preparing the vegetables that the earth has given us, mixing in the herbs and spices. Looking around me and seeing the earth full of plants, trees, flowers I feel my heart full of gratitude.

- What is staying with me as I reflect on the Earth in my prayer?
- What do I want to give thanks for?
- What action do I take: draw, write or make something?

God has given us life, God is life. We and the earth are made from the same matter so we can sense its suffering: the physical suffering we see in the dying species and polluted waters, the deeper suffering of our collective disregard for its sacred nature.

We pray for the global will to ensure everyone has food every day.

DAY 3

FIRE

All praise be Yours, my God, through Brother Fire, Through whom You brighten up the night.

How beautiful he is!

Full of power and strength.

—St. Francis of Assisi, Canticle of the Sun



Fire is hazardous. How useful fire is to man, but oh, how dangerous it is. Respect fire and it will bless you, transgress its laws and it will destroy you. Fire represents many things in Scripture. It illustrates purity, it is a representation of power, it is energy or it is the image of the Holy Spirit.

- What is staying with me as I reflect on fire in my prayer?
- What do I want to give thanks for?
- What action do I take: draw, write or make something?

This year has seen unprecedented wildfires cause havoc across the world. Australia recently battled its largest bushfire on record, while parts of the Arctic, the Amazon and central Asia have also experienced unusually severe blazes. Research suggests that human-induced climate change increased the risk of the weather conditions that drove the wildfires by at least 30%.

We pray to understand how we can help in rehabilitating the forests and healing the web of life hurt and destroyed by the fires all over the world.

DAY 4

WIND

All praise be Yours, my God, through Brothers Wind and Air, And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods, By which You cherish all that You have made.
—St. Francis of Assisi, Canticle of the Sun



God is as close to us as our very breath. Ruah is the wind that parted the waters and created dry land, it is the very breath that God breathed into humans in our creation, it was this spirit that parted the seas and allowed the people to escape from slavery in Egypt, it is the same spirit that Jesus claims and empowers the early church in Acts. This ruah is active throughout our sacred stories. God's breath, His creative power, His Holy Ruah is responsible for all that is created: the universe, the earth, and even the spirit of each one of us.

- What is staying with me as I reflect on the wind in my prayer?
- What do I want to give thanks for?
- What action do I take: draw, write or make something?

The COV-19 virus reportedly attaches itself to droplets which are emitted when infected people sneeze or cough or by droplets exiting an infected persons mouth when speaking. Breathlessness is a common symptom of coronavirus (COVID-19). Some people describe it as feeling 'puffed', 'short of breath' or 'winded'. The feeling of shortness of breath may continue for a while after your illness. This is a normal part of the recovery process.

We pray for the vulnerable, for the Church, for our communities and all medical staff engaged on the front line to save the lives of thousands of people.

EARTH, TEACH ME



Earth teach me quiet as the grasses are still with new light.

Earth teach me suffering as old stones suffer with memory.

Earth teach me humility as blossoms are humble with beginning.

Earth teach me caring as mothers nurture their young.

Earth teach me courage as the tree that stands alone.

Earth teach me limitation as the ant that crawls on the ground.

Earth teach me freedom as the eagle that soars in the sky.

Earth teach me acceptance as the leaves that die each fall.

Earth teach me renewal as the seed that rises in the spring.

Earth teach me to forget myself as melted snow forgets its life.

Earth teach me to remember kindness as dry fields weep with rain.

An Ute Prayer