



# TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024



*Believing in a better  
future means  
taking action to  
bring it to life.*

# Welcome

Welcome to the 2024 Season of Creation! The season starts on Sunday 1st September, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and concludes on Sunday 4th October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the beloved patron saint of ecology. During this period, the global Christian community unites in a worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home. As followers of Christ from around the world, we are called to care for creation. We are co-creatures, integral to all that God has made, and our wellbeing is deeply connected to the wellbeing of the Earth. We rejoice in this opportunity to safeguard our shared home and all its inhabitants. This year's theme is "To hope and act with Creation," and the symbol is "The first fruits of hope," inspired by Romans 8:19-25.



## Contents

Welcome	2
Theme	3
Papal message for Creation Day: <i>Hope and Act with Creation</i>	3
Season of Creation 2024 Prayer	4
Resources to celebrate the Season of Creation	4
First Sunday of the Season of Creation	5
Second Sunday of the Season of Creation	6
Third Sunday of the Season of Creation	7
Fourth Sunday of the Season of Creation	8
Fifth Sunday of the Season of Creation	9
Feast of St Francis of Assisi	10
Liturgical Resources	11



# TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

*The first fruits of hope*  
(Rom 8:19-25)

## Theme

The theme for 2024 is "To hope and act with Creation" and the symbol is "The first fruits of hope", inspired by Romans 8:19-25.

The selected text explains the significance of capitalizing the word "Creation" in this year's theme. It emphasizes that "Creation" is not just an object for human use but a subject that invites engagement and co-operation. The capitalized term signifies both the tangible world and the ongoing creative process of God, acknowledging the entire cosmos and highlighting our interconnectedness and responsibility towards the natural world. This approach reflects respect and reverence for the natural world.

## Papal message for Creation Day: *Hope and Act with Creation*

The papal message is entitled "Hope and Act with Creation," and in it, Pope Francis reminds us that "Hoping and acting with creation means first of all joining forces and walking together with all men and women of good will." In this moment of struggle for our common home, we are united. We join together with our sisters and brothers throughout the world in common purpose.

But hope is not the end of the story. We are also called to action. Pope Francis tells us that the Holy Spirit "keeps the believing community alert and continually instructs them, calls them to conversion in lifestyles, to resist human degradation of the environment."

Believing in a better future means taking action to bring it to life. We respond to Pope Francis' message with hope, prayer, and action.



*Scan image  
to read the  
Pope's full  
message.*



## Season of Creation 2024 Prayer

Triune God, Creator of all,

We praise you for your goodness, visible in all the diversity that you have created, making us a cosmic family living in a common home. Through the Earth you created, we experience love and nourishment, home, and protection.

We confess that we do not relate to the Earth as a Mothering gift from you, our Creator. Our selfishness, greed, neglect, and abuse have caused the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, human suffering as well as the suffering of all our fellow creatures. We confess that we have failed to listen to the groans of the Earth, the groans of all creatures, and the groans of the Spirit of hope and justice that lives within us.

May your Creator Spirit help us in our weakness, so that we may know the redeeming power of Christ and the hope found in him. May the groans of the Spirit birth in us a willingness to serve you faithfully, so that we may hear and heal Creation, to hope and act together with her, so that the first fruits of hope may blossom.

Loving and Creator God, we pray that you will make us sensitive to these groans and enable us to have the same compassion as that of Jesus, the redeeming Lord. Grant us a fresh vision of our relationship with Earth, and with one another, as creatures that are made in your image.

In the name of the one who came to proclaim the good news to all Creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen.


## Resources to Celebrate the Season of Creation

**THE FOLLOWING CAN BE USED FOR ONE  
OR ALL OF THE SUNDAYS  
BETWEEN 1 SEPTEMBER-TO 4 OCTOBER**

The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all Creation through liturgy, celebration, conversion, and commitment. It is an annual season where we pray and act together as a Christian family for our common home. As you celebrate the Season of Creation, remember that rather than events we are building encounters, to cultivate listening, engaging in action for our common home and strengthened by our spirituality to commit and follow up on our responsibilities with Creation. There are many different ways to celebrate the season, but we offer the following liturgical resources and reflections. We hope that the following resources will help you and your parish community to celebrate the Season of Creation 2024. The following soul food reflections are compiled and prepared by the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) advocacy and reflection group of the Irish Spiritan Province.

*All photographs used in this brochure were supplied by Carol McCabe, a Spiritan Associate.*





Reflection for the  
Twenty-second  
Sunday in  
Ordinary Time,  
September 1st  
2024



## FIRST SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

It is very easy to take our natural world for granted. We see nature all around us, but do we really see it?

The whole cycle of life & creation is in our seasons – waiting, being fully alive, decline and death – a mirror of our own lives.

There is a whole world out there, not so different to us and our life cycle. Look at the birds of the air and fish of the sea which do not worry about what they have to eat or where to live. They are provided for since creation began, and we too were promised that we would be looked after. We only have real difficulties when those with more than they need do not share with those who do not have enough to survive.

The Global North has an abundance of food and wealth while in other parts of the world people are starving and living in poverty – an imbalance in our shared world due to greed. War was never part of Creation; everyone had an equal share at birth, but their place of birth may determine the share of earth's abundance that some people receive. Greed creates difficulties in our natural world where rain forests are cut down and land is used for industrialisation in an unbalanced way.

We must come back to the realisation that earth / nature is a gift to use and enjoy, not to abuse.

Human life is only one form of life on this earth. We must respect and live in harmony with all other forms of life that have been created – forests, birds of the air, fish of the seas and all other living creatures – and that we are blessed to have on our temporary home, called earth. (God's creation)

*Carol McCabe is a Spiritan Associate, the Sacramental Co-ordinator in Rathfarnham parish and a member of the Spiritan school-retreat team.*



Reflection for the  
Twenty-third  
Sunday in  
Ordinary Time,  
September 8th  
2024



## SECOND SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

### *Ephphata* (Be opened).

The man who can't hear and can't speak hears and speaks in today's Gospel.

As we begin our second week of the Season of Creation, we too seek to hear and speak of the Creation of God who has made us in God's own image and likeness and shared with us the entire beauty of Creation of which we are a part. This year the theme of the Season is: To Hope and Act in Creation.

This year the theme of the Season is: To Hope and Act in Creation.

We have been celebrating the Season of Creation for 35 years now. This wonderful ecumenical event brings together Christian churches throughout the world in this time of prayer and action of all Christians. It is the Eastern Orthodox Church Patriarch Demetrios of Constantinople who declared the 1st of September the Feast of Creation. This celebration was extended to the feast of Francis of Assisi on October 4th with the participation of the World Council of Churches, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans and other denominations and many Christian organisations throughout the world. This makes it one of the great ecumenical events of the year.

To hear and to speak are the fruits of the healing in the gospel today. It is a sign of what the Lord wishes us to do in living in and as a part of Creation. To listen and hear what Creation is saying to us: its' growth and development, its' 'pain' in its' destruction. Likewise, to listen and hear the Word of God in our lives both written and other aspects of our life.

We can celebrate the concrete gains that occur as we also perceive the faults. In 2023 in Ireland the greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 6.8%. While falling short of our more ambitious target it is a good signpost for the future. Public transport has also notably improved with the addition of new routes and timetables in the Dublin area and elsewhere. There are so many community and individual initiatives. In the Catholic tradition there is the aim of making 30% of church grounds natural habitats. Smaller projects are to be seen in so many places. Small and large initiatives complement each other.


Let us continue to hope and act in Creation.....

There is a short refrain attached to capture the spirit of this movement - (Ephphata is an Aramaic word, Jesus' native language, meaning Be opened).

Ephphata – Be Opened  
Ephphata, ephphata, be opened says the Lord  
Ephphata, ephphata be healed.  
Ephphata, ephphata Jesus says to me.  
I can hear, I can speak, I can sing.

[The melody is available from the Soul food section on the Spiritan website with this reflection and the refrain can be used in different settings as appropriate: Resp. Psalm, prayerful chant...]

**Paddy Cully**, A Spiritan Priest who worked in Brazil and briefly in Haiti and now chaplain to Cherry Orchard Hospital.



Reflection for the  
Twenty-fourth  
Sunday in  
Ordinary Time,  
September 15th  
2024




THIRD SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

**W**e can see someone every day and still not know them. Getting to know someone is an ongoing work of love, wonder and patience. The disciples are attracted to Jesus as a powerful figure who heals and leads. Jesus asks, "Who do people say that I am?" Peter digs deep and says "You are the Messiah". Jesus invites the disciples to understand more about himself. Jesus is not just a powerful figure who heals and does wonders. He is a powerful figure who suffers the consequences of his confrontations with the Jewish authorities and Rome.

Saint Augustine in his Sermon on the Shepherds wrote "A Christian's strength includes not only doing what is good, but also enduring what is evil." Jesus takes us the way of truth and vulnerable love in a conflict-ridden world.

In this month too, we ask "What is creation? We can be attracted to its beauty and see also a beauty that is damaged. As with each person, as with Jesus, so too with creation we are faced with a mystery that is unfolding in a landscape of crime and hope.

*Jim O'Connell is a Spiritan priest who has recently returned to Ireland. Jim has recently published 'Echoes of Pakistan -1979-2020', in conjunction with Spiritan archives. This unique publication tells of his 40 years' experience through short stories*



Reflection for the  
Twenty-fifth  
Sunday in  
Ordinary Time,  
September 22nd  
2024



## FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

**A**t the beginning of this reflection get into a comfortable position so that your whole person is open to the Divine within and around you. Become aware of your breathing as it enters your nostrils and exits through your mouth, do this three times, then become aware of your tummy as you fill it with air, like a big balloon and let go again, now fill your lungs with air and let it go again. Do this slowly once again, filling your tummy and then your lungs. See which is the strongest area and stay with this as your anchor for a few more seconds.

During this Season of Creation, Christians are invited to think more deeply about what is happening to the earth and to be advocates for the common good in numerous ways.

### **A Visualisation using the Senses.**

Whether you grew up in the city or countryside most of us have a memory of either being close to nature whether it was for picking blackberries or being near a meadow that was soon to be harvested.

I want you to picture a setting close to hills as you enter a meadow. The grasses invite you to lie down in their midst. As you stretch out on the soft ground you enter a world which is now taller than yourself with buttercups, pink clover, scabious and a swath of different grasses. You look up at the blue sky through this a greenish haze and fill your lungs with the fresh air and smells of the grasses as you enjoy the sounds of birdsong and the grasshopper which is more audible. You enjoy this peaceful colourful scene for a few more minutes and watch the clouds as they float by. You are slowly woken out of your reveille. Make a prayer that your heart may be open to the natural beauty of this world as it was when you were a little child. Welcome Christ anew who welcomes little children and what they can teach us.

Now listen to: Walk on Holy Ground (with or without the video) on YouTube.

*Susan Boyce is a religious sister of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ). She lives in the parish and is an energetic participant in the Environmental Group in the parish among many other ecological pursuits.*







Reflection for the  
Twenty-sixth  
Sunday in  
Ordinary Time,  
September 29th  
2024



FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF CREATION

In today's gospel, the disciples are too busy with their own plans for the future & so are unable to hear the critical message Jesus is giving, even when he speaks of his own life being threatened. He concludes by asking the disciples to be attentive to the "little ones." We too can be busy with our plans, so busy as not to notice what is happening all around us; where life is threatened, where the "little" ones are being threatened. Several times Jesus speaks of having ears and not hearing.

The Earth our only home is in great danger and needing our attention. Pope Francis has been speaking for many months calling us care for the Earth, God's gift to us all. We realise that more must be done to save our earth for ourselves and future generations, but we find it hard to commit; to do what is required. The challenge is there- to listen to God's call today.

Listen to the Earth –  
*(Adapted from poem by Sr Leonor de la Santa)*

Listen to the Earth;  
our Common Home  
it's in danger now.

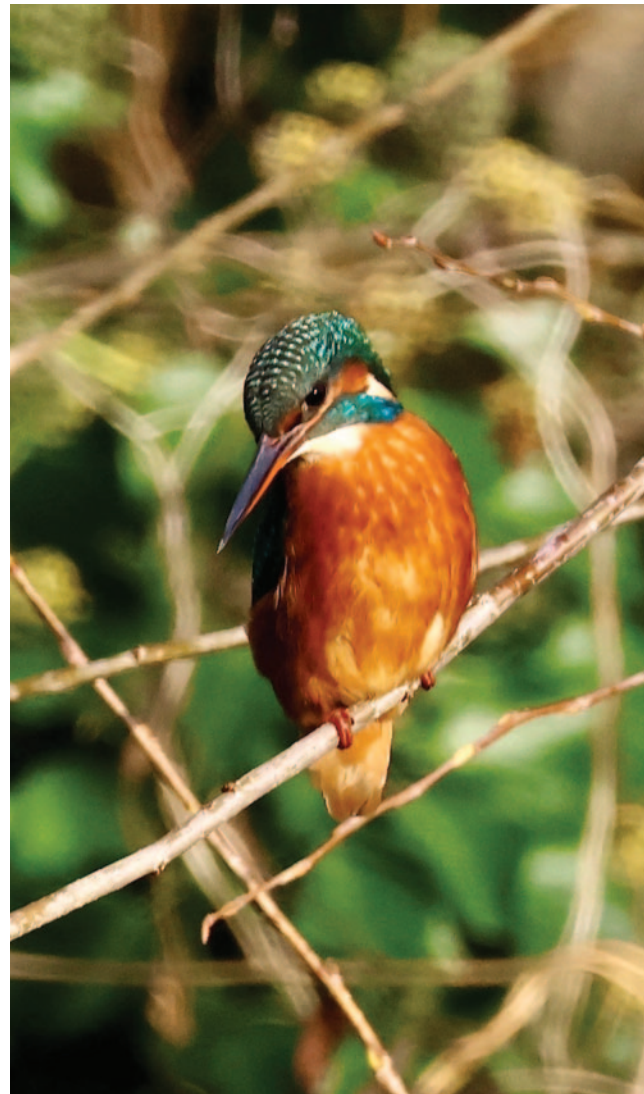
Tune into God's creation;  
God is speaking now.

Listen to the rain,  
listen to the sea,  
listen to the thunder & wind  
listen to the birds as they sing.

Listen to the flowers & trees;  
each creature has a story,  
the love of God they sing.

Listen to the poor,  
they suffer more.

**Vincent McDevitt**, a Spiritan Priest Ordained in 1968, was appointed to Brazil where he served in pastoral roles in São Paulo. Returning to Ireland in the late 1980s, he served in Ardbraccan as well as in parishes in Dublin and Elphin dioceses. He is now retired in Kimmage.





**Reflection  
for the Feast Day of  
St. Francis of Assisi,  
October 4th  
2024**



## FEAST DAY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

**T**here are many reasons for hope; creation and the challenges it is facing are now very much on many people's radar; the inspiring life and actions of St Francis of Assisi, who lived 800 years ago and whose Feast Day is today, still hold much sway and inspire many Christian denominations. We can also find hope and rejoice in the enthralling phrase that Mark gives in the final paragraph of next Sunday's Gospel passage. "I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it".

We are invited to enter and enjoy creation with the wonder and curiosity of a child. The moments when we can do this are to be held and treasured, and are vital nourishment for our journey.

The challenges to care for and act with creation get louder. We are aware of this ever more in the realities of daily life. What may appear to be the simple activity of shopping for basic foodstuffs can become a very challenging task. How can we shop with respect for creation and our fellow humans? We try to choose wrapping that is minimal and biodegradable. This is far from easy. There is a growing body of persuasive evidence that buying plant-based foods rather than meats is better for creation. Strongly held beliefs and practices are under pressure.

As we come to the conclusion of the celebration of the Season of Creation, we give praise and thanks to the Creator. To assist us let us draw on some lines in the prayer gifted to us by Pope Francis at the conclusion of *Laudato Si'*:

**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.**

*Jim Ownes is a Spiritan Associate and a retired health-care chaplain. He lives with wife Geraldine among farmers in Co. Meath and is part of the community attached to Ardbraccan.*

## LITURGICAL RESOURCES

*How to incorporate the symbol in your events and celebrations*

### Activities

- Organise an encounter to introduce this year's Season of Creation theme and symbol. Briefly introduce and explain the theme and symbol, then dedicate a few minutes to open dialogue or small group discussions so people can share how they feel about the theme and symbol and what activities they would like to organise during the season.
- At Eucharist, hold a procession of thanksgiving for the fruits of the Earth from your local area, inviting a diversity of people to help bring these gifts to the table: different ages, different races, different genders.
- Distribute seeds that are easy to grow and cultivate where you live and see if your community or local school can offer these seeds to others. You can incorporate this at the end of a prayer service, offering some reflection on how we are all called to bear the first fruits of hope, and commit to check on how these seeds have grown by the time of next year's Season of Creation.

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### POST COMMUNION REFLECTIONS

*"Prayer for the Earth" composed by Pope Francis*

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.

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### THANKSGIVING FOR THE EARTH

God of Holy Dreaming, great Creator Spirit, from the dawn of Creation you have given your children the good things of our mothering Earth.

You spoke and the gum tree grew. In the vast desert and the dense forest, and in the cities and at the water's edge, Creation sings your praise. Your presence endures at the rock at the heart of our land.

When Jesus hung on the tree you heard the cries of all your people and became one with your wounded ones: the convicts, the hunted, the dispossessed. The sunrise of your Son coloured the Earth anew and bathed it in glorious hope. In Jesus, we have been reconciled to you, to each other and to your whole Creation.

Lead us on, Great Spirit, as we gather from the four corners of the Earth; enable us to walk together in trust from the hurt and shame of the past into the full day that has dawned in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Liturgical Resources)

## NATURE INTO LIFE

by Vincent McDevitt C.S.Sp.

Into the river of nature,  
teeming with life –  
we did come;  
to be carried through life  
with gifts most generous.

From an abundance we are fed  
We're part of each other  
as we journey together  
There's beauty too:  
In the flowers, in birds & bees  
With farm stock and animals wild.

While not forgetting the fish below  
Changed as we are by human greed,  
polluting nature  
and ruining our only home,  
as we impose our will,  
ignoring a healthy pace  
for all our human race.

On fertile lands in Ukraine  
Where once was plenty,  
now bombs we sow.

Instead of healthy seed  
With harvests for the needy  
News of humans drowning  
in a sea of indifference  
Touches our hearts; we hear their cry  
We take them in  
for there's more room in our boat.

Careful people are mending their clothes  
as a stitch in time avoids the landfill.  
There'll be a million bikes  
in our cities soon.

While an Irish church wishing to be wild –  
begins on its lawns to feed the bees.

Wash us all of our guilt  
for we have taken too much.

Heat waves speak if we can hear,  
Mother earth is under pressure  
But it's never late to learn.  
For we're all in the same boat;  
we must not sink.

So let us set a new course  
To reach new targets  
Caring for our earth  
Our Common Home,  
Bringing fairness to all  
Where justice flows like a river.

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### DISMISSAL AT THE END OF MASS

The Mass is ended, let us Go in Peace to care for our common home and live in the integrity of God's creation.



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