

# Season of Creation

Theme: Jubilee for the Earth

September 1- October 4, 2020

*All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.*

LS #14

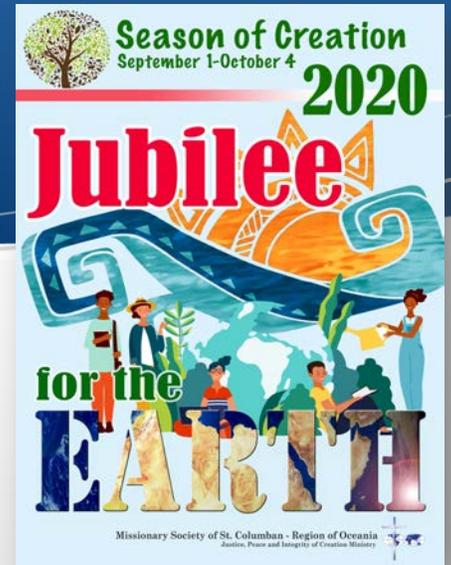
## Jubilee for the Earth

Climate crisis is a result of the intersection of greed, inequality and destruction of God's creation. The theme of Jubilee is chosen for this year's Season of Creation as it reflects those three interlocking themes. Jubilee is a time to renounce overconsumption and economic systems based on constant economic growth at the cost of the Earth and those who are poor. Jubilee is a time when those who have consumed the most must make restitution to those who have suffered the most. Jubilee is a time of rest for the land from constant exploitation, to restore ecosystems and people.

The concept of Jubilee is rooted in the holy wisdom that there must exist a just and sustainable balance between social, economic and ecological realities. When one variable is exploited to maximize growth of another, the whole system will eventually suffer. When one part of the Earth community is stressed, every part is affected. This year, the novel coronavirus pandemic demonstrated this reality on a global scale. While the experience of living with the COVID-19 outbreak points back to this need to maintain justice, the lessons that we learn may point us towards the need for a Jubilee and motivate us to restore the balance to the very systems that sustain life.

*(Global Catholic Climate Movement)*

*And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. (Leviticus 25: 10, NRSV)*



## Global Events

- Sept 1 Creation Day
  - World Day of Prayer for Creation
- Sept 21 International Coastal Cleanup Day
  - International Day of Peace
- Oct 4 St Francis of Assisi Day



## A Climate Emergency

We are in the midst of a climate emergency. Several studies have indicated that the world is nowhere near meeting pledged emission reduction rate targets. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report highlights that “only with rapid and far-reaching” transitions in the world economy, on a scale and at a rate without historical precedent, can the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit be achieved. It is therefore a time to reconcile ourselves with creation through concrete repentance and urgent action. The Season of Creation is a time to acknowledge that tipping points are being reached, threatening the lives of the most vulnerable and putting the lives of future generations in jeopardy. As people of faith, we are being called to stand up against climate injustice in prophetic ways.

The Season of Creation 2020 will also be an important moment for the Christian family to raise a united voice for rapid and radical ambitious action ahead of the 26<sup>th</sup> annual United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP) to address the climate crisis. COP 26 is particularly significant, as parties are due to announce how they will implement the Parish Climate Agreement (and whether they will fall short). It is a time when faith communities are called to support and challenge their countries’ leadership to implement visionary and significant goals. It is also a time when we must listen to the prophetic voices of young people.

*(Global Catholic Climate Movement)*



*Greta Thunberg, Swedish teen environmental activist who promotes the view that humanity is facing an existential crisis arising from climate change.*

*“Adults keep saying: ‘We owe it to the young people to give them hope.’ But I don’t want your hope. I don’t want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear that I feel every day. And then I want you to act.*

*I want you to act as you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is.”*



*Settlers of Nanuku Settlement in Vatuwaqa during their community cleanup drive*

### Suggested Activities:

- 1. Launching of Season of Creation 2020**
- 2. Inter-religious or Ecumenical Prayer Service for Peace and Environmental Justice**
- 3. Promote Ecological Rosary**
- 4. Community/Coastal Clean-ups**
- 5. Planting Activities (Mangrove, Trees, Yasi, etc)**
- 6. Encourage your local ecology through Earth Examen**
- 7. Carbon Fasting Campaign**

# Prophetic Call of Hope

*As a people of faith we are called to sound a voice of hope, like the Jubilee. We lament, for everywhere we hear the groaning of creation. So we act as carriers of creation, and we sound the horn of hope, for the Earth and all they that live in it belong to the Lord. We know that God has promised the renewal of this Earth.*



*Preserve that which sustains life.*

During this critical and trying time, we acknowledge our role as people of faith in sounding hope amidst this current crisis and affirm ourselves as prophetic witnesses. Jesus has given us a choice between God and Mammon. For the sake of the Earth and all creatures, we have no choice but to pursue Justice (Micah 6:8).

Season of Creation 2020 is an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of Jubilee today, especially in the lead-up to COP26. How will we, as persons and as the Church:

- Recognise God’s ownership of the whole Earth, and all our ‘possessions’?
- Release what we have back to God, both spiritually and practically?
- Recognise our total dependency on God and creation?
- Receive God’s provision, in patience and trust?

What does it mean for the church to declare ‘the Year of the Lord’s Favour’? How can we glorify God for the hope we have in Christ, who restores and redeems the Earth? What changes will we see for those who are poor, and the land we enslave? We are far from a picture of Jubilee provision. As God’s Earth suffers, God’s people suffer also. Season of

Creation 2020 encourages churches and Christians to participate through:

- **Prayer:** including praise for God’s provision, repentance for our greed and complicity in the suffering of Earth and our neighbours, intercession for those vulnerable to climate chaos, and releasing all we have back to God;
- **Practice:** auditing our own mistreatment of the Earth, and committing to new practices individually and as worshipping communities;
- **Advocacy:** encourage states to ensure that climate justice and steps to a green economy are part of the COVID-19 economic recovery plans;
- **Action:** participate in civil action to put pressure on Governments to produce ambitious national targets (NDCs) for COP 26.

*(Global Catholic Climate Movement)*



## 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. 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, Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.***

## Integrate Creation into Sunday Liturgies

We encourage our priests and catechists to preach a sermon on creation or integrate creation themes into prayers during the Season of Creation.

The following ideas will help our priests, catechists or prayer leaders shape a sermon or prayers. Each week in the Season of Creation has a suggested theme. Scriptures from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and Gospels are listed along with a synopsis of how they connect with the theme. Any or all of these may be used during the season.



### **September 6 (23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time)**

**Readings:** Ezekiel 33:7-9; Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 18:15-20

**Theme: Earth Sunday (Harden not your hearts-Ps 94)**

*It is a day to celebrate God's creation. When God created the world, God blessed it and called it very good (Gen 1: 2-31). God is revealed through the beauty, power, abundance, and mystery of the natural world. Through wind and flame, water and wilderness, creatures and seasons, God is continually present and active in the world.*

*The earth and all that is in it belongs to God (Ps 24:1). As Christians, we are called to celebrate and care for creation. Cultivating and caring for the land is central to God's first mission for humans (Gen 2:15). Just as ancient stewards managed the household resources of their master, we must wisely manage the abundant resources of God's earth.*

<https://www.creationjustice.org/educational-resources.html>

*The health of humanity is linked to the health of the environment. The present coronavirus pandemic is a global health crisis that has affected every country around the world. The changing of climate is one factor to consider in the spread of the virus. Now more than ever we should promote climate emergency and work towards the care for our common home and thank God for the gift of creation.*

*Our readings call us to open our hearts to God and listen to God's voice - the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. When you hear his voice, harden not your hearts, exclaimed the psalmist. Jesus in the Gospel invites us to live in harmony with others and recognize our need for fraternal correction because no one is perfect and without fault.*



### **September 13 (24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time)**

**Readings:** Sirach 27: 30-28:7; Romans 14: 7-9; Matthew 18: 21-35

**Theme: Ecological Migrants Sunday (Kindness and Mercy-Ps 102)**

*Ecological Migrants or Environmental migrants are defined by the International Organizations for Migrants as persons or groups of persons who, for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to have to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently and who move either within their territory or abroad.*

*According to the March 2018 report from the World Bank, Climate change, already a growing driver of migration, forcing families to flee water scarcity, crop failure and rising sea levels, may cause as many as 143 million people to be displaced by 2050. It covers three regions - Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America – that are major ‘hot spots’ and account for 55% of the developing world’s population. People who are looking for viable places to live in involve the poorest people from the poorest countries moving in large numbers from rural regions to increasingly overburdened urban areas. Without prior planning, such dramatic swells of migration could lead to major disruption and instability, the report says.*

*Pope Francis clearly stated in his encyclical letter, “Laudato Si’”, our responsibility to our fellow men calling us to respond. He said, “There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women which all civil society is founded.”*

*As we come together to pray for these migrants, let us be empathetic to their plight of leaving their homelands because of extreme weather events like flooding, drought and more effects of climate change. May we be kind and merciful to them and work together to reduce our contribution to the destruction of the environment and the suffering of the people around us.*

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/expect-tens-of-millions-of-internal-climate-migrants-by-2050-says-world-bank>



### **September 20 (25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time)**

**Readings:** Isaiah 55: 6-9; Philippians 1: 20c-24, 27a; Matthew 20: 1-16a

**Theme: Biodiversity Sunday (Near to all who call - Ps 144)**

*God created an abundant Creation, filled with glorious creatures both large and small. As stewards of God’s creation, we are called to protect all life, to keep and care for the garden. The blessing of fruitfulness is given to all of Creation in Genesis, and it is our duty to ensure that all life is allowed the opportunity of fruitfulness. The Creator blessed the Earth so that all creatures will prosper with great abundance and diversity. The protection of biodiversity, or the diversity of all life, is an essential part of our role as stewards of Creation.*

*God’s creatures are valuable not because of their usefulness to us but of their essentials to our well-being. They, too, are valuable for each other - the trees are valuable as places for birds to nest and the mountains are valuable as places for refuge. Where are the birds to nest if we remove the cedar? Most importantly, they are valuable because they are simply created by God.*

*The parable in the gospel tells us that God is the landowner; we are the labourers in God’s vineyard. What a great privilege it is for us to be called by God to work in God’s vineyard!*

*As Christians, we are called to preserve and promote biodiversity and protect the endangered species under our care. Together with St. Francis we exclaim, “All praise to you, O Lord, for all these brother and sister creatures.”*

<https://www.creationjustice.org/educational-resources.html>

*“Tending the Garden: Stewardship of Biodiversity and Endangered Species”*



**September 27 (26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time)**

**Readings:** Ezekiel 18:25-28; Phil 2: 1-11 or 2: 1-5; Matthew 21: 28-32

**Theme: Ocean Sunday (God-given integrity - Ps 24)**

*The oceans, teeming with sea life, vibrant coral communities, and vast beauty, are part of God’s treasured creation. When God created the oceans, God declared them “good”. As God’s children and people of the ocean, we receive the ocean’s bounty on our tables and experience its beauty as we participate in recreation activities. As God’s stewards, we are called not only to enjoy the oceans, but also to care for them as a sacred gift from God. As we are people of God, we are to maintain the bounty of the oceans’ waters and the integrity of oceanic systems that support an*

*abundance of life and an untold wealth of beauty.*

<https://www.creationjustice.org/educational-resources.html>

“S.acred O.ceans. S.eas”

**Our oceans are in trouble.** Nearly 300 million tons of plastic are produced each year to make bags, bottles, packages, and other commodities for people all over the world but only ten percent of this plastic is properly recycled and reused. The rest ends up as waste in landfills or as litter in our natural environment, where it leaches dangerous chemicals into the nearby soil and water, endangering humans and wildlife alike. Plastic pollution not only affects our waters and marine life, but also the food chain and our overall health. Many organizations are mobilizing institutions and citizens across the globe to bring about a new level of consciousness about plastic pollution and a paradigm shift. The world must perceive plastics not only as an environmental challenge of global proportions but also as a symbol of the values that need to change in order to build a more sustainable and just world.

*(Excerpts taken from Catholic Climate Covenant)*

***As people of the ocean, our immediate action to save our home is urgent.***



**October 4 (27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time)**

**Readings:** Isaiah 5: 1-7; Philippians 4: 6-9; Matthew 21: 33-43

**Theme: Ecological Vocation Sunday (Mission Month - “Here Am I, Send Me”)**

*Ecological Vocation Sunday is observed to remember our responsibilities as stewards of God’s creation.*

<https://www.eficor.org/ecosunday>

*Our world and everything in it belongs to God. It has been entrusted to us, human beings, and to all living things that inhabit this land. Our practices that cause ecological crisis are also a call for us to acknowledge our ecological sins. It includes not only our destructive behavior but also the things that we have failed to do to care for our common home. We are called for a total conversion of heart and to turn away from our indifferences and selfishness.*

*Each one of us has received the vocation to care for our fellow creatures on this planet. This mission that God entrusts to us leads us to realize that we are part of the earth community. We are totally interdependent and interrelated to one another. Our vocation springs from the love of God for us and for the rest of God’s creations.*

*During this difficult time brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, people across the world experience suffering from illness, fear, isolation, hunger, and poverty. We are called and challenged to be responsible with everyone and the rest of God’s creation. The present situation calls us to bare witness to the love and compassion of God in the midst of suffering and uncertainties. May we have the courage to respond to God’s question: Whom shall I send? Here I am, Lord send me!*

## Engage Your Local Ecology through this Earth Examen:

An examen is a way of beholding an object or being in prayerful wonder. Through questions, you are invited to reflect on God's presence and the goodness of that which you behold. During this Season of Creation, consider contemplating a part of your local ecology. This is an exercise that you can choose to do alone, or with a group.

Pick a natural or agricultural place to contemplate. A forest. A river. A city street with a natural area. An urban park. A farmer's field. A hilltop. Find a comfortable place to rest in or near this place. Enter into prayer in whatever way is natural to you. Invite Holy Wisdom to open the eyes of your heart. When you are ready, reflect on the following questions:

### **1. Become aware of God's presence in a natural or agricultural place that you are contemplating.**

How is God present in this place? How does all the life you see exist in God's spirit? How do you feel knowing that the Holy Spirit has filled this place for geological ages, with every creature that has been here in the deep past, is here with you now, and will be here with creatures in this place in the future? How do you feel knowing that you, Earthling, belong to this place, are made of the same carbon, breathe the same air, are nurtured by the same cycles and life processes, and are enlivened by the same Spirit of the Creator?

### **2. Reflect on the ecological cycles of this place with gratitude for all that it provides.**

What nutrient cycles are supported by this place? Is this a watershed that filters water? Is this a rainforest that fixes nutrients? Is this a meadow or field that fixes nitrogen? Is this a green space that absorbs CO<sub>2</sub> and cleans the air? What plants, animals, microbes and minerals are sheltered here? How do they serve the whole Earth in their being? For all that this place provides, let a feeling of gratitude fill you.

### **3. Pay attention to what you feel as you contemplate the fragility, health of this site.**

Is this ecosystem healthy? How is this ecosystem at risk of illness? What are the keys to sustaining the equilibrium and balance of this place? What niches and diversity must be protected to maintain the health of this habitat? What are the sources of stress that threaten the balance of this particular ecosystem? How do you feel when you consider the fragility of life that depends on the health of this place? What is your effect on this balance?

### **4. Choose one feature of the site and pray for it, its rest and its renewal.**

When you consider the ways that this place is under stress, what does it need for rest, restoration, and renewal? What needs to be conserved for this site to heal itself? What features need to be reclaimed? Pray for this site, and the wisdom to care for it.

### **5. Look toward your response. What can you do to ease demands or promote the rest of this ecological site?**

Based on your examination, how do you identify with this place? What have you discerned is required to care for this place? What will be your act of compassion to promote rest for this place?

*(Global Catholic Climate Movement)*

# 10 FACTUAL OCEAN PROBLEMS

**Fact #1:** About 8 million tons of plastic are thrown into the ocean annually. Of those, 236,000 tons are micro plastics – tiny pieces of broken-down plastic smaller than your little fingernail.

**Fact #2:** There are five massive plastic patches of plastic in the oceans around the world. These huge concentrations of plastic debris cover large swaths of the ocean; the one between California and Hawaii is estimated to be larger than the size of Texas.

**Fact #3:** Every minute, one garbage truck of plastic is dumped into our oceans.

**Fact #4:** The amount of plastic in the ocean is set to increase tenfold by 2020.

**Fact #5:** By 2050, there will be more plastic in the oceans than there are fish (by weight).



**Fact #6:** Plastic is found in the ocean as far as 11kms deep, meaning synthetic fibers have contaminated even the most remote places on Earth.

**Fact #7:** Many marine organisms can't distinguish common plastic items for food. Animals who eat plastic often starve because they cannot digest the plastic and it fills their stomachs, preventing them from eating real food.

**Fact #8:** The likelihood of coral becoming diseased increases from 4% to 89% after coming in contact with marine plastic. It also damages the skin of coral, allowing infection. Coral reefs are home to more than 25% of marine life.

**Fact #9:** There is more plastic than natural prey at the sea surface of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which means that organisms feeding at this area are likely to have plastic as a major component of their diets. For instance, sea turtles by-caught in fisheries operating within and around the patch can have up to 74% (by dry weight) of their diets composed of ocean plastics.

**Fact #10:** Many fish humans consume, including brown trout, cisco, and perch, have at one time or another, ingested plastic microfibers.

[\(https://www.oceansintegrity.com/\)](https://www.oceansintegrity.com/)



# Carbon Fast Campaign

## Why a Carbon Fast?

Humans were put on this earth with the responsibility to be stewards of God’s great creation. We know that some of our actions have led to a changing global climate, which translates to warmer temperatures, rising sea-levels, and severe storms, just to name a few.

It is time to repent and ask God for forgiveness for our carelessness with God’s many gifts to us. We can also take action to change our world’s projected course. Little steps can have big results.

A carbon fast is a great way to make small personal changes, while also drawing attention to our society’s unsustainable love affair with carbon.

## What is a Carbon Fast?

A carbon fast is a way to be mindful for our consumption while participating in self-imposed restrictions. These restrictions can be simple to moderately challenging depending on an individual’s comfort level with energy moderation.

*Sources:*



Missionary Society of St Columban  
**Columban Creation Covenant**



Creation Justice Ministries  
**Carbon Fasting 101**

## What can YOU do to fast?

- Unplug electronics and appliances when not in use.
- Turn off your lights when not in use.
- Utilize public transport.
- Take shorter, cooler showers.
- Take advantage of natural breezes in the summer.
- Dry clothes by hanging them.
- Try and eat local and seasonal foods that do not have to travel far to get to your table.
- Say no to bottled water.
- Choose organic food whenever possible.
- Use reusable bags at the grocery store (and at other stores).
- Save and conserve water - never leave a tap running unnecessarily.
- Limit meat consumption due to its heavy virtual water value.
- Refuse plastic where possible.
- Purchase products that are made and distributed in socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable ways.
- Grow fruits and vegetables on property if possible.
- Compost kitchen scraps.
- Participate in groups and campaigns that call for action and policy change on Climate Change and other Environmental Justice issues which are of particular importance which include but are not limited to: extractive industries, water, genetically modified organisms/patenting, nuclear energy.

# Laudato Si' Pledge

*Answering Pope Francis' urgent call in Laudato Si', I pledge to:*

- **Pray for and with Creation**
- **Live more simply**
- **Advocate to protect our common home**



**POPE FRANCIS ASKS:**

**Have you  
signed the  
LAUDATO SI'  
PLEDGE?**

[LiveLaudatoSi.org](http://LiveLaudatoSi.org)

**We know that things can change. (LS13)**



## *Sources:*

Global Catholic Climate Movement

National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Programs

Catholic Climate Covenant

[www.carbonbrief.org](http://www.carbonbrief.org)

[www.eficor.org](http://www.eficor.org)

[www.seasonofcreation.org](http://www.seasonofcreation.org)

Eucharist and Laudato Si: Care For Our Common Home (Charles Rue, SSC)

*Liturgical Resources to Celebrate a Catholic Season of Creation During September*

## *Compiled by:*



Missionary Society of St. Columban – Oceania

*Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation*

119 Queen Elizabeth Drive, Nasese

Suva, Fiji Islands