



**Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development**  
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**Statement on World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation**

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Today marks the one-year anniversary of Pope Francis' call for Catholics to observe the World Day of Prayer for the Care for Creation. We would like to invite all faithful to join the Pope to pray for the care of creation, united with our Orthodox and Christian sisters and brothers of other denominations who already celebrate this day. We also respectfully invite members of all religions to join in prayer, particularly our Jewish and Muslim friends who, like us Catholics, see Abraham as our "father in faith."

In his encyclical, *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis called us to live out an "integral ecology," which in simple terms means having right relationships with God, other human beings and the good things of the Earth. When one relationship suffers, all the others will suffer as well.

The foundational relationship in our lives is the one with God, who invites us to turn to him in daily prayer. It also reminds us that amidst the great challenges of global climate change, pollution in our local communities, and the deepening ecological and social crises all around us, we can relate to a Creator who is greater than any challenge and for whom "all things are possible" (Mt 19: 26). We can turn, then, in confidence to our Lord in prayer and ask for his grace and assistance.

In friendship with Christ, we begin to look upon creation in a renewed way. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of a certain "reciprocity" between God and our care for creation, a concept which is developed further by Pope Francis in *Laudato si'*: as we care for the environment, we encounter God, and in this encounter we are moved to care for creation. We are reminded of the Pope's insistence on practicing what we preach (and pray), and the need for Christians to be visible witnesses of the care for creation. We are called to an "ecological conversion" (no. 217), which must be rooted in Jesus' invitation to a change in lifestyle, reverence for others and a renewed simplicity of life. These personal transformations pave the way for the work we must do together in order to address the global concerns of our day.

Finally, we would like to suggest a few tangible ways in which we can turn our prayer into witness. In *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis reminds us of the "nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions," and suggests various practical steps such as recycling, turning off unnecessary lights and using public transportation (see no. 211). So many of these "daily actions" occur in the context of our families and in our places of worship and work. We can begin, in these ordinary settings, to care in deeper ways

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September 1, 2016

Page 2

for the good things God has given us. This attitude of stewardship, forged in daily life, will, in turn, allow us to participate in the greater national and international efforts to care for the Earth and for future generations.

As we expand our work together as good stewards, it must be marked by care and respect for the dignity of every human being, especially the poor. Those who are impacted the most by our poor environmental decisions often lack the influence to have their suffering addressed. As Christians and people of good will, we must seek out their voices and extend our hands in help, making their pleas our own.

The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation is also an occasion for spending time with family and friends as we transition into the beauty of the fall season. We invite you to integrate experiences of creation into your day so that you never lose your wonder in beholding God's unmatched artistry. Whether we take a walk in a local park, visit a place of striking natural beauty, or even celebrate a festive meal in which we enjoy the "fruits of creation" grown in our own gardens, we can come together with loved ones to pray and give thanks to our Creator for the abundance of blessings given to us this day, and for our life with him always.