

Leader: Let us pause briefly for reflection:

Leader: The Church also speaks to us about our responsibility to care for creation and on the role we as Church, communities and individuals must each play in this task.

4. Pope Benedict XVI Caritas in Veritate (48 & 51). *“The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole ... The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere.”*

5. The Cry of the Earth, Irish Bishops Pastoral p21. *“God intended the earth and everything in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should flow fairly to all. All other rights, whatever they may be, including the rights of property and free trade, are to be subordinated to this principle. They should in no way hinder it; in fact, they should actively facilitate its implementation. Redirecting these rights back to their original purpose must be regarded as an important and urgent social duty (Populorum Progressio, 22).”*

6. More recently Pope Francis has further emphasised the link between social justice and care for creation. In his Encyclical Laudato Si he states: *“A true ecological approach must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”* No. 49 *“This sister [our common home - the Earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.* No. 2

Leader: Let us again pause briefly. There is no doubt that Governments and international agencies must lead the way in promoting action to reduce the carbon emissions that cause climate change. But as individuals we too can make a contribution by changing the way we live and by being more careful in the choices we make about using electricity, gas, petrol, oil and about buying food and other goods. Let us also consider how we, even though we live far away from Africa and the developing world, contribute to the global warming that is damaging the environment and lives of our distant neighbours. *(Pause)*

Leader: The causes of climate change and the injustice it entails involve human weaknesses such as greed, selfishness, carelessness, laziness, ingratitude, wastefulness and indifference. To remedy this lack of care for our created world we are called on to change how we live and to opt for positive values such as courage, imagination, compassion, generosity and commitment.

Heavenly Father, help us to change - help us reflect these positive values in the lives we lead and in the choices we make. Help us to be mindful of the impact our choices and actions have upon your world and its people, near and far, now and in future generations. May we may be faithful stewards of all that you have entrusted to us, until that time when all things are reconciled to you.

Response: Creator and Redeemer, hear our prayer.

We pray for your wisdom, to safeguard the earth, its soil and all that grows in it. **R.**

We pray for your understanding, to cleanse the air and all that breathes. **R.**

We pray for your knowledge, to find ways to preserve our waters and all that live in them. **R.**

We pray for your guidance, to protect all living beings with whom we share our planet. **R.**

We pray for your compassion, to reach out to all those affected by extremes of weather, changes in climate, and the degradation of the environment. **R.**

We pray for your insight, to use the resources entrusted to us wisely and well, justly and safely. **R.**

We pray for your perseverance, to ensure that all humanity may have adequate food and water, shelter and sanitation, peace and well-being, and so can live in dignity, without fear. **R.**

We pray for your courage, to do all that is necessary to restore the beauty of your handiwork wherever we have damaged or harmed it. **R.**

We pray for your grace, that each of us may be faithful stewards of all you have given us, in the choices we make and how we live our daily lives. **R.**

(Taken from Glas, Trocaire)

Leader: Creator of the universe help us to be caretakers of your gifts, protecting the land from abuse, and ready to share with all in need. Deepen our awareness of our connectedness with all your creation, so that future generations will also enjoy every blessing. Help us to be less wasteful, to use your gifts more wisely and to make the lifestyle changes needed to protect and nurture creation. **Amen.**

Commitment to Action

Leader: As a sign of our commitment to act for Climate Justice I now invite you all to come forward and to place your Thumbprint on the poster and on a Pledge Card. Just



as our thumbprint is unique and individual to each of us so too is the action we can undertake and the choices we can make about how we as individuals use materials and resources each day. Once we have all completed this symbolic action we will then collectively recite the Pledge on the Card.

Hymn: All people that on earth do dwell.

Leader: We have placed our Thumbprints on the Pledge Poster and on the Pledge Card as a sign of our commitment to act for Climate Justice by using the resources of our world more carefully. The back of the Card lists simple things that we can all do and these are only a start in the contribution that we as individuals can make to reduce the unjust effects of Climate Change. Let us now recite together the Pledge to act for Climate Justice.

Lord God, You made us stewards of creation, yet greed and misuse of resources are destroying the world you entrusted to us. Those who do least to cause climate change are unjustly suffering the most. They are without water, land, livelihoods and many are forced to leave their homes.

I pledge to take greater care of my environment, to do what I can in my own home and place. I pledge to use your gifts wisely and carefully, mindful that what I do today will affect our world, the lives of others far away and generations yet to be born.

I place my thumbprint here as a sign of this pledge and I ask you for the strength to put it into action in my life and in the witness that I give to others. I make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen

Leader: Lord God and Creator bless the work of our hands, strengthen us to act with courage, generosity and commitment so that we may become agents of mercy through which you can water the earth and protect all creation. We make this Prayer through Christ our Lord.

Let us now go forth in peace to love and serve the Lord and to fulfil the Pledge that we have made.

Hymn: Walk in the Light



Adapted from: "Glas a pastoral resource to supplement The Cry of the Earth" and resources from the Ecocongregation Ireland website.



Prayer Service CARE FOR CREATION

an essential part of faith.



(Place Thumbprint Pledge poster on a Flipchart stand or small table together with the Pledge Cards for each participant and an ink pad. Some tissues for cleaning fingers should also be on the table. A Candle can also be lit.)

Opening Hymn: All the nations of the earth.

INTRODUCTION

Leader: In this Prayer Service we focus on what Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Laudato Si* (par 64), refers to as "an essential part of our faith" – that is: **our responsibility and duty towards nature and the Creator.** Climate change caused by human misuse of the world's resources is a clear testament to a failure in this duty of care for creation. It is also a failure to love our neighbour and an injustice both to future generations and the poor who are affected the most. In this service we reflect on our part in causing this injustice and also on the role we can play in rectifying it. We begin by listening to what Scripture and the Church has to say.

(Use different readers for each of the quotations – begin with the reference.)

1. Genesis 1:31. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.* Genesis 2:15. *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."*
2. Leviticus 26:3-4. *"If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."*
3. Psalm 65:9-13. *"You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing."*

