

Climate Sunday Mass: Suggestions from CAFOD

Leader's Notes

Note on Covid-19

Celebrating the Eucharist under Covid-19 restrictions has left us without many of the material and sensory elements of God's creation that are at its heart. We are without song, incense, the common cup, the physical sign of peace, the welcoming of all to the table of plenty where the "fruits of the earth and works of human hands" can be shared.

Yet we can still connect the sacrament to the wonders of creation by celebrating Mass in the open air, if restrictions allow. If indoors, we can include plants, seeds or other fruits of the earth in our Mass.

Set the date

This Mass can take place on any Sunday before the beginning of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) to be held in Glasgow on 1 November 2021. The Climate Sunday ecumenical project suggests that if possible it be celebrated before the National Climate Sunday service in Glasgow on Sunday, 5 September 2021. The Season of Creation, (1st September–4th October) may also be a suitable time. You can choose to dedicate the Mass as a celebration of any *Livesimply* or other actions your parish has taken to care for creation.

Whether your Mass takes place in person or virtually, consider inviting your MP, to make them aware of your commitment to building a better and greener world.

Step 1: Prepare your celebration of Climate Sunday Mass

- Celebrate the Mass outside in nature if possible.
- Make use of candlelight if it is an evening service.
- Include symbolic items for the offertory that represent our common home, eg seeds or soil or plants, to be arranged around the altar. If taking place online, these can be indicated by the priest or a member of the liturgy team.
 - A bowl of soil and a bowl of seeds to represent the abundance of creation.
 - A plant from a community garden, allotment or school garden project.
 - A globe to represent the earth, our common home.

- Photos of your community helping to tackle the climate crisis in any way, however small. Is your parish a *livesimply* community? Have you taken steps to become more energy efficient? Have you done any awareness raising of the climate crisis?
- Homily optional resource:
The readings for the Sunday in which the Mass is celebrated should be used. Catholic Climate Covenant and the Integral Faith team provide resources for homilists as well as other materials that can help you integrate the rich insights of *Laudato Si'* and Christian care for creation into Mass. These include highlights from Scripture, readings, quotations from *Laudato Si'*, illustrations, anecdotes, and bulletin notes. Search: catholicclimatecovenant/resources
- Edit and copy the service pages of this Mass to share, or email the link in advance

Step 2: Arrange an informal event following Mass

Set up an opportunity for people to meet and talk after Mass, ideally in person to share refreshments, but if necessary online.

Parishes are often home to diverse communities, so we encourage you to invite different parish groups to the event.

Share thoughts about climate change and our responsibility as Christians to care for Creation. Ask yourselves, what more can I do to help the environment? What more can we do as a parish community? Where does Christian responsibility fit into the climate change debate?

Or set up a climate quiz, which can also work well online.

Find more information on the CAFOD website: cafod.org.uk/climate

Climate Sunday Mass sheet

Opening hymn suggestions: Praise of the Creator, for example – *How Great Thou Art* or *All creatures of our God and King*.

Opening reflection: Our world is God's creation

Welcome to today's Creation Celebration. We will give thanks for the gift of God's creation and be reminded that we share it with all life on earth.

Let us begin with a reflection written after the 2018 UN climate meeting in Poland. It presents the concerns of the Church for creation and is taken from *The Ecologist's Breviary*.

The sacrament of the Eucharist, holy Mass, is at the very centre of our Christian life. It gives us a unique opportunity to establish deep communion with God and with all material reality. It is a unique place of encounter of the Divine and the earthly.

Here, we give thanks for all that is good in us and around us. Here, we express our love for the Creator and Lord of the Universe and for the great works that he unceasingly accomplishes. Here, we ask that our thoughts, our hearts, and our senses be renewed so that we can see our neighbour and nature as God does. Here, at last, we ask forgiveness for the evil and sin that destroy the divine harmony of the world.

(Adapted from 'The Ecologist's Breviary' by Zdzislaw Kijas OFM Conv, Katowice 2018.)

Introduction to the Penitential Act

Our earth is not a paradise, but it is not a "valley of tears and despair" either. It is a great gift for us, but also a huge task.

Let us ask, therefore, honestly: how do I care for the world in which we live? Do I want it to be beautiful and rich in various forms of life? How do I behave towards nature, towards plants and animals? Do I know the dangers that other creatures suffer from my careless behaviour? Let us ask our good Lord for His mercy.

Lord, who created the whole world and constantly fill it with your presence, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, who, through the Cross and your saving work, have united heaven with the earth, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, who have prepared a new heaven and a new earth for us, have mercy on us.

Lord have mercy.

Collect

Let us pray: Almighty God, Creator and Lord of the world, you have blessed the whole creation and made humanity its guardian. Let all your children in spirit and truth rejoice with you. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Homily

Prayers of intercession

With Saint Francis of Assisi, patron of ecologists, let us bring before the Lord our requests for all of us gathered here, for the Church and for the whole world:

We pray for the Church: that she may be a beacon of hope throughout the world, reminding us all of our responsibility to care for and protect God's precious gift of creation. *Lord, in your mercy...*

We pray for the world, our common home: that through God's grace we may hear its cry for the damage done and be moved to protect it for future generations to enjoy. *Lord, in your mercy...*

We pray for those people who are already facing droughts, floods and storms: that God may grant them strength and hope for the future as they work to adapt to the changing climate. *Lord, in your mercy...*

We pray for our parish and our local community: that through the grace of God we may hear the urgent cry of the earth and of the poor and be inspired to respond at this crucial time. *Lord, in your mercy...*

Conclusion to intercessions:

Let us bring before the Lord the prayers that lie in each of our hearts as we listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. [Pause] *Lord, in your mercy...*

We ask for the prayers of Mary, our mother and Queen of Creation, as we say: **Hail Mary...**

God, source of all goodness, we call you Creator; you have made our wonderful world out of nothing and constantly keep it alive. Help us to be full of care and grateful for our home received from you as a gift. May we work to keep this, our common home, filled with peace and justice.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Offertory hymn suggestions: Gifts of the earth, for example – *Blessed be God.*

Prayer over the gifts

Lord God, accept our gifts: the fruit of the earth and work of human hands. Teach us to be humble and grateful for the great things you do among us.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Introduction to the Our Father

Together with all creation, which in its own way loves its Lord and Creator; together with the whole Church celebrating the Eucharist in different places around the world, let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us:

Our Father...

Invitation to exchange the sign of peace

(If indoors, and covid rules are in place, we are invited to extend a non-contact greeting: turn to each other with palms together in prayer, or with the right hand over the heart.)

Peace is God's gift, both peace with God the creator and peace with all creation. May our gesture be the expression of this gift. Let us give one another a sign of peace.

(Or, if celebrating outdoors, we are invited to bow and touch the earth, with these words:)

Peace is God's gift, both peace with God the creator and peace with all creation. May our gesture be the expression of this gift. In absence of the physical sharing of peace, we invite you to touch the common ground on which we stand.

Communion hymn suggestion: Presence of Christ, for example: *Bread of Life, Truth Eternal* or *Be still for the presence of the Lord*.

Prayer after Communion

Loving God, may the grace of the Sacrament we have received remain in our hearts, so that strengthened by it, we may accomplish your plan to renew all Creation. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer of commitment (by Canon Michael Fitzsimmons)

Lord, I come to do your will

Lord, allow my ears to listen to the cry of the earth, the voices of my sisters and brothers, those who face the harsh reality of climate change.

Lord, I come to do your will

Lord, allow my eyes to see the beauty of creation, in flowers, creatures, forests and cities alike.

Lord, I come to do your will

Lord, allow my voice to speak out for justice and ensure people living in poverty are heard.

Lord, I come to do your will

Lord, allow my hands to care for the earth, to toil, to reap, to celebrate.

Lord, I come to do your will

Lord, allow my feet to take the path less trod, to walk the extra mile, to take your message out to the world.

Lord, I come to do your will.

Recessional hymn suggestions: Thanksgiving, for example – *Praise my soul the King of heaven* or *You shall go out with joy (Trees of the Field)*.

(Acknowledgement: Some of the prayers in this Mass have been adapted from The Ecologist's Breviary by Zdzislaw J Kijas OFM Conv, Katowice 2018).