

SEASON OF CREATION
25th September – 03rd October
Novena to Saint Francis of Assisi



Southern African Catholic
Bishops' Conference

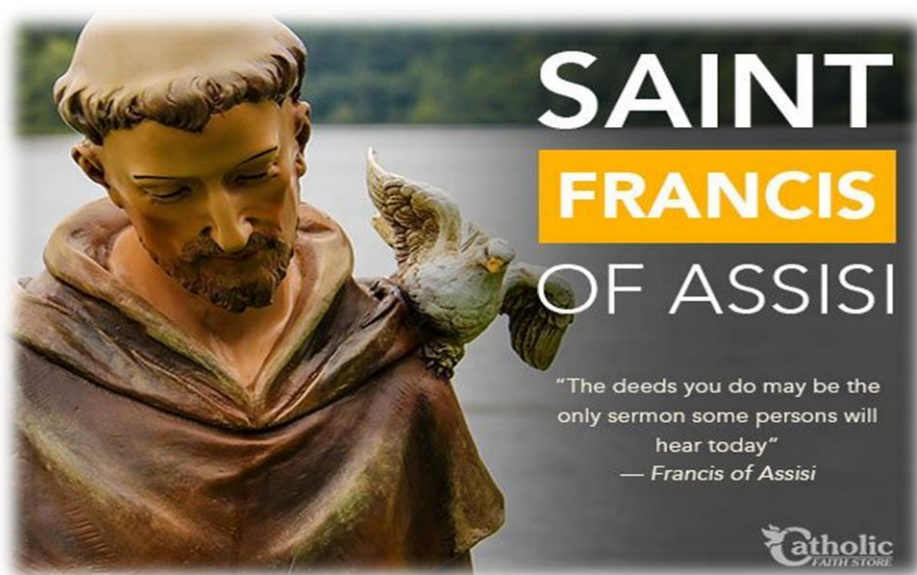
"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – Praise be to you, my Lord"

"In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

Saint Francis "shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace." (Laudato Si' #10)

Over the next nine days we will be interceding with Saint Francis of Assisi to pray for us and our world, based on his beautiful 'Canticle of the Sun'.

Individuals, families, small Christian Communities, parish groups, associations, organizations, religious congregations etc. are invited to join in this novena at the conclusion of the Season of Creation.



PATRON SAINT OF ECOLOGY

The novena prayer for each day is divided into four parts:

1. An extract from the Canticle of Saint Francis of Assisi.
2. An quote from the Encyclical of Pope Francis Laudato Si'.
3. A Prayer of Intercession followed by the Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, concluding with one Our Father, one Hail Mary and one Glory be, followed by the invocation:
Saint Francis of Assisi, Patron Saint of Ecology, pray for us – (for the intentions of Our Holy Father Pope Francis).



**DAY ONE - THE SUN:
WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF THE SUN**

"We praise you, Lord, for all your creatures, especially through my lord, Brother Sun, who brings who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all splendour! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness." (St Francis of Assisi)

Laudato Si' # 1

"In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. 'Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs'".

Let us pray

Creator God, we are nourished by Your radiance.

Forgive us for the harm we cause your earth, the heat and drought unleashed by climate change. Through the example of Saint Francis, may we too learn to love Your sacred world, and to praise You ceaselessly for Your dazzling creation. Amen.

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS (to be prayed each day of the Novena)

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light; And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

*For the intentions of our Holy Father Pope Francis:
Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory be to the Father...*

Saint Francis of Assisi, Patron Saint of Ecology, pray for us.



**DAY TWO - THE MOON AND THE STARS:
WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF THE MOON AND
THE STARS**

“Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them bright, precious and beautiful.”

Laudato Si' # 10

“I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically.

He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians.

He was particularly concerned for God’s creation and for the poor and outcast.

He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself.

He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace”.

Let us pray

Creator God, your night sky offers rest and stillness, yet we flood our cities with artificial light.

Forgive us for our wasteful ways.

May we, like Brother Francis, who chose poverty not plenty, walk lightly on the earth. May we follow in his path and reduce the trace we leave behind us. Amen.

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**DAY THREE - WIND AND AIR:
WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF THE WIND AND THE AIR**



"Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance."

Laudato Si' # 11

"Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human.

Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise.

He communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them 'to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason'."

His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. That is why he felt called to care for all that exists."

Let us pray

Creator God, we have disturbed the natural cycle, upset Earth's fragile balance. Forgive us for our lack of care. St Francis was a joyful steward of creation, who lived in peace with nature and with God. Inspired by his witness, may we defend our common home. Amen.

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**DAY FOUR – WATER:
WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF WATER**

“Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water, she is very useful, and humble and precious and pure.”

Laudato Si’ # 30 & 28

“Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights”.

“Water supplies used to be relatively constant, but now in many places demand exceeds the sustainable supply, with dramatic consequences in the short and long term.

Large cities dependent on significant supplies of water have experienced periods of shortage, and at critical moments these have not always been administered with sufficient oversight and impartiality. Water poverty especially affects Africa where large sectors of the population have no access to safe drinking water or experience droughts which impede agricultural production. Some countries have areas rich in water while others endure drastic scarcity”.

Let us pray

Creator God, from your gift of water flows all life, yet we pollute your clear springs.
Forgive us, as the earth cries out.
St Francis, drank deeply from Christ’s living water.
May we, like him, live simply and value the good things of the earth. Amen.

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**DAY FIVE - FIRE:
WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF FIRE**

"Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong."

Laudato Si' No 87

The universe as a whole, in all its manifold relationships, shows forth the inexhaustible riches of God.

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. Creator God, your flames blaze, yet leave us whole.

Let us pray But our fires destroy at reckless speed and great forests fall beneath our feet. Forgive us for our part in this terrible destruction of Your natural beauty. May our concern for the environment be joined to a

sincere love for our brothers and sisters by an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems that are destroying the earth. Amen.

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**DAY SIX - EARTH
WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF EARTH**

“Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs”.

Laudato Si' # 11 & 92

“If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs.”

“Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.”

Let us pray

Creator God, we grieve for those whose lands are wrecked by greed.
Forgive us for taking more from the earth than we really need.
Help us to become more sensitive to what is happening to our world where human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful.
May we learn from Saint Francis, who was a joyful steward of creation, to live with less, to give more.

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**DAY SEVEN - FORGIVENESS:
WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF FORGIVENESS**

“Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of you; through those who endure sickness and trial”.

Laudato Si' # 8

“There is need for each of us to repent of the ways we have harmed the planet, for ‘inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage’, we are called to acknowledge our contribution, smaller or greater, to the disfigurement and destruction of creation. [...] For human beings... to destroy the biological diversity of God’s creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth’s waters, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins”.

For to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God”.

Let us pray

Creator God, plant deep within our hearts an urgency to want to protect our common home which includes a concern to bring the human family together in seeking sustainable and integral development because we know that things can change.

You never abandon us; You never forsake Your loving plans or repent of having created us.

Plant deep within our hearts the desire to work together in building our common home.

Open our hearts to the sufferings of the poor, as Saint Francis did, and to those who are victims of human selfishness and greed. Amen.

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DAY EIGHT - PEACE
WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF PEACE

"Happy those who endure in peace, for by you, Most High, they will be crowned".

Laudato Si' # 86

"God has written a precious book, 'whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe'. To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God's love and hope'. This contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us, since 'for the believer, to contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a paradoxical and silent voice'. We can say that alongside revelation properly so-called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night".

Let us pray

Creator God, we give you thanks for those who work for peace and dignity for all your children.

When we can see You reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise You.

Help us to be able to invite others to be attentive to the beauty that there is in the world.

"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. 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". (Pope Francis)

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DAY NINE - CREATION:

WE THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR GIFT OF CREATION

"Most High, all powerful, all good Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing.
Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great
humility".

Laudato Si' # 12

"Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. 'Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker' (Wis 13:5); indeed, 'his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world' (Rom 1:20) [...rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise".

Let us pray

Creator God we praise your world and look with awe on all that is.
May we commit to heal the earth and share your gifts in faith and trust.
Help us to gaze on the world with the same purity of heart as Saint
Francis. Amen.



PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS (to be prayed each day of the Novena)

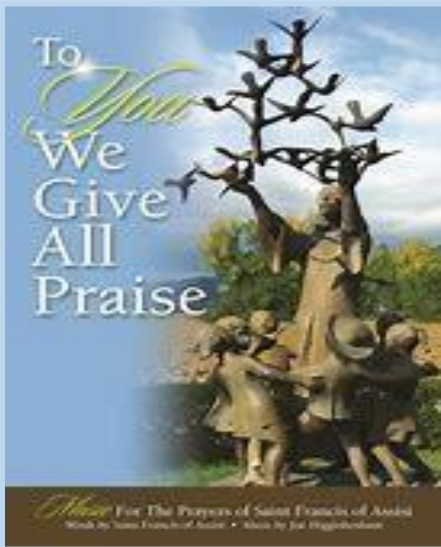
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FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI 4TH OCTOBER



Litany of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

God, the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God, the Son, redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God, the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.

Holy Virgin Mary, Protectress and Advocate of the Franciscan Family;
R/. Pray for us.
Holy Mother Clare; R/.
Holy Father Francis; R/.

St. Francis, Seraphic Father; R/.
St. Francis, Patriarch of the Poor; R/.
St. Francis, Founder and Leader of three Franciscan Orders; R/.
St. Francis, preacher of penance; R/.
St. Francis, little poor man of Assisi; R/.
St. Francis, messenger of peace; R/.
St. Francis, mighty lover of souls; R/.
St. Francis, spouse of Lady Poverty; R/.
St. Francis, master of holy obedience; R/.
St. Francis, uplifted in heavenly contemplation; R/.
St. Francis, on fire with seraphic love; R/.
St. Francis, lover of the Sacred Passion; R/.
St. Francis, lover of the Name of Jesus; R/.
St. Francis, lover of all the creatures of God; R/.
St. Francis, deacon of Holy Mother Church; R/.
St. Francis, emissary to the Sultan; R/.
St. Francis, our advocate and guide; R/.

St. Francis, mirror of the Gospel; R/.
St. Francis, herald of the great King; R/.
St. Francis, valiant knight of Christ; R/.
St. Francis, martyr in desire; R/.
St. Francis, model of dedicated chastity; R/.
St. Francis, sincere in bodily penance; R/.
St. Francis, marked with the Stigmata of Jesus;
St. Francis, lover of the Babe of Bethlehem; R/.
St. Francis, lover of the Blessed Sacrament; R/.
St. Francis, lover of the Holy Scriptures; R/.
St. Francis, patron of care for creation; R/.
St. Francis, brother to the lepers; R/.
St. Francis, confessor of the Faith; R/.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord. Lamb of
God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Let us pray:

O God, by whose gift St. Francis was conformed to Christ in poverty and humility, grant that, by walking in Francis' footsteps, we may follow your Son, and, through joyful charity, come to be united with you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

[Proposed by Cyndy Garwood, O.F.S., adapted from the following sources: Roman Missal and catholictradition.org by Deacon Dave & Thérèse Ream, O.F.S., Revised July 2017]