

The Season of Creation 2019



What is the Season of Creation?

The **Season of Creation** is a global, ecumenical event that takes place yearly from September 1, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, to October 4, the Feast Day of St. Francis. This celebration began in 1989 with Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, has been embraced by the global ecumenical community, and in 2015 Pope Francis joined Church leaders asking us to participate in the Season of Creation.

What is the Season of Creation Theme for 2019?

The theme for this year is **“The Web of Life: Biodiversity as God’s Blessing.”** We are called to celebrate that we are part of a wondrously complex web of life woven by God.

The web of life – biodiversity – matters not only because human well-being depends on stable and thriving ecosystems and the services that they give us (e.g., clean water, food, oxygen, clothing, climate regulation); biodiversity matters firstly because God gives value to every single dimension of creation. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato si*:

It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential ‘resources’ to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never see again, because they are lost forever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right (33).

How might we Participate?

1. During September 1 to October 4 we can pray, reflect, study, and take bold action to live in mutual life-enhancing relationship with all of creation. We can act especially by staying informed and being supportive of the [UN Climate Summit](#) (September 2019), the [Vatican Synod on the Amazon](#) (October 2019), and the [UN Climate Change Conference](#) (December 2019).

2. Another way we can celebrate this year’s Season of Creation might be to embrace the spirit of Rachel Carson (1907-1964), famed American writer of the book, *Silent Spring*. Rachel Carson is credited with advancing the global environmental movement. While she decried our use of pesticides and other environment toxins, Carson believed most deeply that, “The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.”

3. During this year’s Season of Creation let us **become lost in wonder, awe, and gratitude** for the great web of biodiverse life in the universe in order to commit again to justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Here are some insights from others to encourage us:

“As the desire of Jesus that all be one becomes more fully our own, our striving for unity embraces all humanity and all of creation (*You Are Sent*, C9).”

“If we pollute the air, water and soil that keep us alive and well, and destroy the biodiversity that allows natural systems to function, no amount of money will save us (David Suzuki).”

“Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without (William Sloane Coffin, Jr.).”

“Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts (Rachel Carson).”

“The finest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. He who does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer feel amazement, is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle (Albert Einstein).”

“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye (Antoine de Saint-Exupery).”

“Be thankful for what you have; you’ll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don’t have, you will never, ever have enough (Oprah Winfrey).”

“To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour (William Blake).”

“A painting is a symbol for the universe. Inside it, each piece relates to the other. Each piece is only answerable to the rest of that little world. So, probably in the total universe, there is that kind of total harmony, but we get only little tastes of it (Corita Kent).”

“Gratitude turns what we have into enough (Aesop).”

“See, Lord, at thy service low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art (Gerard Manly Hopkins).”

“Instructions for living a life.
Pay attention.
Be astonished.
Tell about it.” — Mary Oliver

“Gratefulness is the inner gesture of giving meaning to our life by receiving life as gift (David Steindl-Rast).”

“We must reinvent the way we are living on earth (Matthew Fox).”

“Almost the entire world is asleep. Those who are awake live in constant amazement (Tom Hanks, *Joe vs. the Volcano*).”

“If you can’t be in awe of Mother Nature, there is something wrong with you (Alex Trebek).”

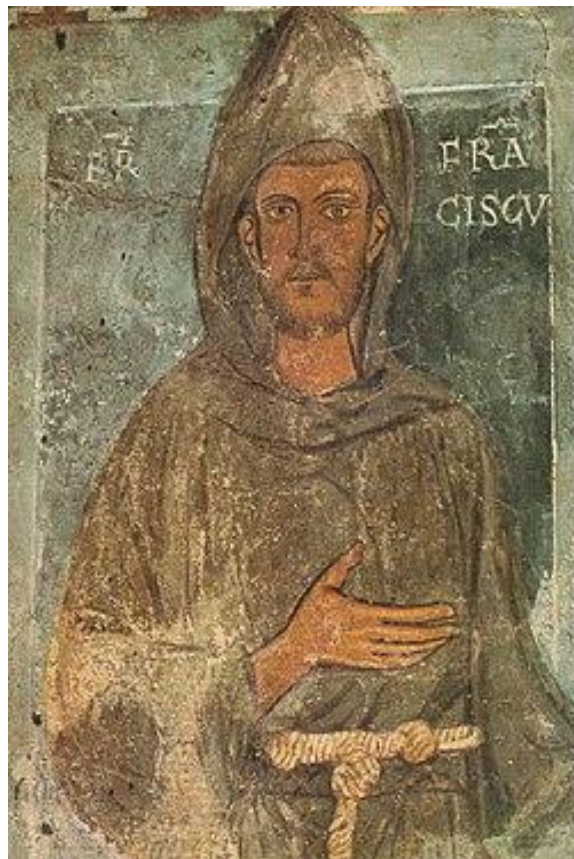
“We are perishing for lack of wonder, not for lack of wonders (G. K. Chesterton).”

“Look at the earth crowded with growth, new and old bursting from their strong roots hidden in the silent, live ground, each seed according to its own kind...each one knowing what to do, each one demanding its own rights on the earth (Emily Carr).”

Religions in general have to rediscover their roots. In Hinduism and the Koran, animals are described as equals. If you walk into a cathedral and look at the decorations of early Christianity, there are vines, animals, creatures and birds thriving all over the stonework (Margaret Atwood).”

"Alice laughed: "There's no use trying," she said; "one can't believe impossible things." "I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was younger, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast (Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*).”

**“Start by doing what is necessary,
then what is possible,
and suddenly you are doing the impossible (St. Francis of Assisi).”**



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