

BLESSING OF THE LAND

Season of
Creation



trócaire

SEASON OF CREATION

The Season of Creation is a time for Catholics to join the wider Christian family in celebrating the gift of creation. The theme for this year's celebration is The Web of Life. We are protecting biodiversity in all its wonderful complexity because each member of God's creation reveals a piece of the Creator's glory. Many of the communities Trócaire works with depend on land for their livelihoods and security. Some communities have been seeing the impacts of climate change on their land and livelihoods for many years, and others face daily threats to their land and home from large corporations.

In celebration of our common home, and in answering our call to care for it, Trócaire invites you to pray this land blessing at home, at school or in the parish. Adapt it for your particular setting. This might be on farm land, in a garden, at home, in a park, in a forest, wherever people feel a sense of connection to a place and to nature. Music and songs that echo the gift of home and land would greatly enhance the service.

Reader: Letter from Pope Francis to Cardinals Koch and Turkson, 6 August 2015:

'As Christians we wish to contribute to resolving the ecological crisis which humanity is presently experiencing. In doing so, we must first rediscover in our own rich spiritual patrimony the deepest motivations for our concern for the care of creation. We need always to keep in mind that, for believers in Jesus Christ, the Word of God who became man for our sake, "the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us"' (Laudato Si', 216).

We pray together.

Leader: Yours is the land, sea and sky.

All: O God, creator of all, hear our prayer.

Leader: You have given us the earth for our home.

All: O God, creator of all, hear our prayer.

Leader: May we all share in your gift of the earth.

All: O God, creator of all, hear our prayer.

Psalm 65:8-10

Reader: The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call

forth songs of joy. 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 corn, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

In Uganda:

Evelyn and her family live in two small traditional grass thatched huts with no electricity and no running water. There is a borehole a five-minute-walk away. The houses are surrounded by long grass on one side and their neighbours' land on the others. One of the huts is used mainly for cooking. They use a solar light for the children's homework.

Evelyn's daily schedule begins at 6 a.m., preparing the children for school, followed by work on her small patch of land. Evelyn depends on this land to feed her family and generate income, and also for her children's future. She worries that in the future the little land she has will be exhausted because she will have overused it.

Blessing of the Land

Each person is given a small container of water.

Leader: Let us bless the land given to all.

All sprinkle the earth with water.

Leader: Let us bless the land given to all, as a home to all.

All sprinkle the earth with water.

Leader: Let us bless the land given to all, for food for all.

All sprinkle the earth with water.

All: We bless you Lord for this gift for all.

Reader: We listen to a great witness for Season of Creation.

In October 2019, bishops from all around the world will gather in Rome for a special month-long conversation, known as a synod, on the Amazon. At their gathering, which is called 'The Amazon: New paths for the Church and for an integral ecology', they will reflect on and commit to care of the Amazon and its people.

The synod builds on decades-long work to protect the Amazon and its people. Sr Dorothy Stang, Martyr of the Amazon, was born in the United States but moved to live with the poor in rural Brazil. There, she witnessed ranchers and loggers exploiting farmers and indigenous people, stealing land, cutting down forests, and murdering those who spoke up.

Sr Dorothy had a great love for creation. She once wrote, 'I'm trying daily to fill my lungs with the beauty of our cosmos – her energy – so all that it is to be woman can be felt in me.'

Take a moment now to take a few deep breaths. Imagine that you are breathing in the beauty of the cosmos. What images come to mind? Can you

imagine that this is God breathing life in you to be your fullest person? Give thanks for the gift of creation, of air, and of the cosmos.

Let us pray for the fathers of the synod, that they will use the example of Sr Dorothy to guide them and that we will be inspired by her in all that we do to protect our land, home and all God's creation.

(Adapted from GCCM)

We pray together:

'O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, who are so precious in your eyes ...

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth'

(Laudato Si', 246)

God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness and convey your mercy throughout our common home.

Praise be to you!

Amen.

Leader: Love casts out all fear. We can love because God has first loved us.

Let us go from this place acting in love and justice for all.

All: O God, we go in your name.

Amen.

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Trócaire gratefully acknowledges support received from Irish Aid to conduct Development Education and Public Engagement activities in Ireland. The content, approaches and activities outlined in this resource are entirely the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent or reflect the policy of Irish Aid.

Front cover: Evelyn (36) farming on her plot of land in Northern Uganda.
Photo credit: Gary Moore

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