



ST FRANCIS REFLECTION PRAYER AND BLESSING.

ST FRANCIS - MODEL FOR ALL WHO LOVE AND CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION. PRAY FOR US.

Climate change is a matter of great concern across the world, whether we are believers in the world as God's creation or are only aware of physical symptoms like excessive heat, cold, floods, droughts, air and water pollution. Every aspect of our lives in families and society today is affected and urgent action to address the factors that contribute to climate change are needed.

We as human beings have contributed to the harm done to our natural world, and can and should take responsibility, acknowledge our failings and sinful acts and take action in whatever ways we can. Many initiatives, like the Season of Creation, exist to choose from to save and protect our planet.

St Francis lived 1000 years ago and is an example to us still today through his passionate love of God and all of God's creation. He praised God for the elements such as the sun, moon and stars, water and fire, calling them brothers and sisters and the earth as our mother. He loved all living creatures, trees, plants, animals and people and especially the suffering and the poor. He chose to live in total poverty, owning nothing and experienced joy in his complete abandon to God's love. He worked for peace during his time of the Crusades.

St Francis had a special relationship with many animals who came to him and responded when he spoke to them, like the rabbit and lamb in the icon. Stories are told about him preaching to a flock of birds and to a shoal of fish in a stream. A fierce wolf was terrorizing the people in a small village and Francis was called in. He negotiated with the wolf that the people would feed him and he would no longer harm them. His well-known love of animals has made him the patron saint of animals as well as all of creation. On or around his feastday prayers of remembrance and a special blessing can be given to pets to show our love and appreciation for the joy, love and blessings they give to so many in the human family.

Francis' way is for every creature, as a brother or sister, to experience God's love and joy and live in peace. St Clare, one of his earliest followers, was his close companion in his short life. She with the women, and he with the men developed the mission of love of God, the poor and all creation that is one of the strongest callings in the church today, to praise God by our lives.

Pope Francis has a great devotion to St Francis, whose name he chose on his election in 2013. In 2015, inspired by Francis' way he published the encyclical LAUDATO SI' – ON CARE OF OUR COMMON HOME. "Faithful to scripture St Francis 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." His prayer expresses this vision and can be used for reflection, sharing and blessing.

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A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH from Laudato Si '246

All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with tenderness all that exists. We praise you and thank you and ask for your blessing:

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.
Help us to rescue and abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives that we may protect the world and not prey upon it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen