



2026 OUR WORLD, FAMILY OF FAMILIES –

MARFAM THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

THEMES: SEPTEMBER - OUR WORLD OF FAMILIES
OCTOBER 1-4. FAMILY ON MISSION



Living Water
Season of Creation 2026

IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER
Ezekiel 47:9, 12

SEASON OF CREATION -

1 SEPTEMBER TO 4 OCTOBER 2026.

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY are available on www.marfam.org.za, facebook and whatsapp. email request to info@marfam.org.za.
Abbreviations: Pope Francis: LS = Laudato Si. AL = Amoris Laetitia FT = Fratelli Tutti. Pope Leo Magnifica Humanitas = MH

THE ECUMENICAL SEASON OF CREATION - 1 SEPTEMBER - 4 OCTOBER 2026

The season was initiated in the Eastern Orthodox church in 1989 and has been supported by many churches over the years, from 2019 including the Catholic Church. It offers a range of suggestions, resources, liturgical celebrations, and a possible blessing of animals, pets, domestic and wild, around feast of St Francis. Visit www.seasonofcreation.org
The season begins on 1 September with the Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation proposed by Pope Francis and approved by Pope Leo XIV. A liturgy for a special Mass has also been approved. Download from www.sacbc.org.za
Our common prayer and action can support us as we lament the individuals, communities, species, and ecosystems that are lost, and those whose livelihoods are threatened by habitat loss, climate change and conflicts. The overall action is a response to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor.

2026 ECOMUNICAL SEASON OF CREATION SYMBOL AND LOGO. Our Biblical text for this year is drawn from Ezekiel 47: 1- 12, which portrays God's life-giving water flowing from the temple of God. The river grows deeper and deeper restoring barren land, reviving waters, and sustaining flourishing ecosystems. The vision invites human responsibility: recognising ecological damage, embracing interconnectedness, we are called to immerse ourselves in the water, and actively safeguarding and working for the renewal of creation so that environmental healing and human well-being may flourish together. The symbol call is for transformation – that Christians would be immersed in the living water flowing from the throne of God, stepping in deeper and deeper, inspired by the Spirit of God, working together for the renewal of Creation.

POPE LEO 2026 Theme and message: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isaiah 2:4). The message to be released for 1 September. Its core focus :

- **Connection to War:** Highlights the direct link between armed conflicts and severe environmental degradation.
- **Violation of Duty:** Frames ecological destruction from war as a serious violation of the moral duty to care for the Earth.
- **Threat to Humanity:** Warns that the environmental fallout of conflicts poses a long-term threat to hundreds of millions of people.
- **Call for Sustainability:** Uses Isaiah's prophecy to invite global leaders to prioritize human development, peace, and sustainability over violence and destruction.

DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES:

- **The Season of Creation Celebration Guide** a comprehensive overview with references can be downloaded. "Remember that rather than events we are building encounters, to cultivate listening in the spirit of ecumenism, engaging in prophetic action for our common home and strengthened by eco-spirituality to commit and follow-up on our responsibilities as stewards of creation." Check out www.seasonofcreation.org, and resources
- Check resources and social media posts from www.laudatosimovement.org and www.laudatosiainctionplatform.org on facebook, X, Instagram and register for regular emails.
- Google SEASON OF CREATION 2026 for many other materials from different sources including the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference. www.sacbc.org.za
- Check out the MARFAM resource booklets **FAMILIES CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION** and **BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES**. and **FAMILIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE**. Available as print or e-books. Request by email info@marfam.org.za or go to www.marfam.org.za/shop/
- As an interdenominational project approach other Christian churches to share resources and activities.

MARFAM INTRODUCTION SEPTEMBER. Our World of Families and Season of Creation. Newer insights in Church thinking expressed by Pope Francis in *Laudato si - Care of our Common Home*, are the awareness of all of creation and our responsibility for it. His vision was reinforced in *LAUDATE DEUM*. The vision is taken up in the MARFAM annual theme **OUR WORLD, A FAMILY OF FAMILIES**. We, the various forms of the human family, with different religions, political ideologies and experiences of wealth and poverty are the greatest threat to our world's security and stability today. Every other family in creation will suffer because of our actions. Is this the heritage we want to leave to our children? How can our harmful attitude be redeemed during the ecumenical season. **Pope Francis: : Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. We cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and a throwaway culture. LS 43 Culture is more than what we have inherited from the past; it is also, a living dynamic and participatory present reality, which cannot be excluded as we rethink the relationship between human beings and the environment. LS143.**

MARFAM INTRODUCTION. OCTOBER. Family on Mission. Every single family of any description, human, plant or animal has a role to play, to sustain our world as a family of families. As the human family, we have the power to deliberately choose our sense of mission. As Catholic Christians we are "baptized and sent." We cannot afford selfish greed, or hurtful violence, but are called to adopt God's mission of love, love of creation and of all its creatures. St Francis, the patron saint of ecology is our inspiration on our mission. **Pope Francis: The family is an agent of pastoral activity through the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, their witness, solidarity with the poor, openness to diversity of people, protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families and commitment to the common good. AL 290**

Setting the scene for the MARFAM DAILY THOUGHTS Parishes and families are encouraged to promote the concept of **BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES** as all parishioners are connected with a family in some way, married couples, singles, parents, children, grandparents, aunts and uncles and other relatives.

Some articles from the MARFAM booklets *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES, FAMILIES CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION* are used as a resource. The See-Judge-Act approach is used. 1. SEE. A look at life. 2. JUDGE: Scripture, Pope Francis writings, 3. Daily Eco-tip and Prayer from the Season of Creation.

PRAYERS FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION.

2026 SEASON OF CREATION PRAYER on Living Water

Holy God, whose Spirit hovered over the waters at the beginning, we gather as part of your community of all creation, thirsty for your grace. We give thanks for the gift of water, the veins of our common home, that sustains the cedar and the whale, the pasture and the city. We are grateful for the local waters that nourish our homelands and our fellow creatures. We give thanks that in your well-watered garden, every drop is a sacred testament to your love. Yet, we confess that we have treated this gift as a mere commodity. We have choked the seas with our waste and watched the warming tides rise in judgment. We lament the cracked earth of the drought-stricken and the salty tears of the climate refugee. Melt our frozen hearts, O God, and let the waters of repentance flow.

Lord of all Life, you promised that wherever the river flows, everything shall live. Stir in us a calling to care for the waters — to protect the watershed, defend the rights of water, and honor the dignity of the thirsty. May your Word be a spring within us, gushing forth for the healing of the nations.

May **God our Father** who brought water from the rock sustain us in the desert. May **Christ our Lord** who is Living Water refresh us for the work of restoration. And may the **Holy Spirit** carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION during the Jubilee Year of St Francis.

St Francis, our brother, you who 800 years ago, went to meet Sister Death as a man at peace, intercede for us with the Lord. You who recognized true peace in the Crucifix of San Damiano teach us to seek in Him the source of all reconciliation, that breaks down all walls. You, who unarmed, crossed the lines of war and misunderstanding, give us the courage to build bridges where the world erects borders, in this age marked by conflict and division. Intercede for us that we may become artisans of peace; unarmed and disarming witnesses to the peace that comes from Christ.

St Francis Canticle of the Creatures

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing,
To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no human is worthy to mention Your name.
Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun, who is the day and through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night, and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.
Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.
Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.
Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.
Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.

Peace Prayer of St Francis

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.
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's in giving that we receive
And it's in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born...
To eternal life. Amen.

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.
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

MAGNIFICAT

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him in every
generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy
Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.
Amen.

Ecological education can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere. Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life. LS213

INTRODUCTION.

The SEASON OF CREATION from 1 September to 4 October. is an interdenominational event celebrated annually worldwide with Christians from many countries and many organisations including those linked to *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis' encyclical on "Caring for our Common Home." Pope Leo XIV says, "*Environmental justice - implicitly proclaimed by the prophets - can no longer be regarded as an abstract concept or a distant goal. It is an urgent need that involves much more than simply protecting the environment.*"

The theme chosen by the Season of Creation ecumenical steering committee for 2026 is **LIVING WATER** Inspired by the prophet Ezekiel 47:9, 12. "*Wherever the stream flows, there will be all kinds of animals and fish. The stream will make the water of the Dead Sea fresh, and wherever it flows it will bring life.... on the bank of the stream all kinds of trees will grow to provide food. Their leaves will never weather, and they will never stop bearing fruit. They will have fresh fruit every month, because they are watered by the waters from the temple. The trees will provide food, and their leaves will be used for healing people.*" (Isa 32: 15-20).

The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference is collaborating and has produced resources, including the liturgy for the Mass of Creation, weekly reflections and a Novena before the feast of St Francis. Visit www.sacbc.org.za



WEEK ONE (2 - 5 September 2026)

Theme: "They beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks." (Is 2:4)

Opening Prayer: The Prayer for Peace on the Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi

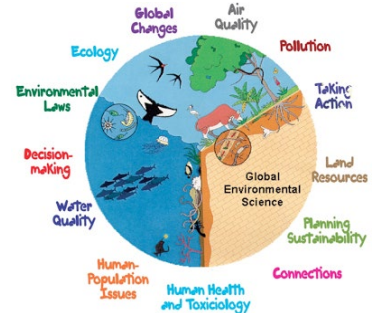
Introduction:

Pope Leo XIV, in the face of devastation on the environment and widespread human suffering, which is caused by humans, invites us to pause, reflect, pray and implement attitudes and behaviours that rehabilitate Our Common Home". This is exactly what Isaiah prophesied, that in the face of war, oppression and suffering, there is a call to conversion.

Teaching of the Church

Conversion (*metanoia*) is the radical reorientation of one's entire life, turning away from sin and sinful attitudes and behaviours, then turning toward God. It is a lifelong process that inspired and supported the grace of the Holy Spirit. This process involves: first, interior conversion – a change of heart, without interior changed disposition, it is impossible to act justly. Second, first conversion occurs at baptism – through faith and the sacraments, where a person receives the forgiveness of sins and the gift of new life. Third, a second conversion; a vocation to Christian life. Since all people are weak and prone to sin, thus Christians are invoked to embark on an ongoing journey of purification and penance. Finally, the role of grace and penance – everything is possible with God; mortal exercises are empty without a contrite heart that responds to mercy and love of God.

LS 220 *This conversion calls for a number of attitudes... First, it entails gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works.... It also entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion...*



FAITH RESPONSE: ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

Stewardship vs. Exploitation: God entrusted the earth to humanity to cultivate and care for it (see CCC 302, 2415).

Respect for Creation's Integrity: "*You shall not kill*" prohibits any form exploitation, hating, hurting, abuse, dumping or ignoring the damage that will result from such acts; such as to other humans, animal and environment or earth's resources.

Liturgy in the Environment: organizing liturgical or paraliturgical in Creation (i.e. an ecumenical prayer service in the park, or on the mountain, or in a garden.)

Promote Becoming Eco-Friendly Families in action, visit: <https://laudatosimovement.org/pray> and www.marfam.org.za

September 1. LISTEN TO THE CRY OF THE POOR. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*)

Families are asked to reflect and share together. Who are the poor? Jesus, in his Beatitudes – his blueprint for life – said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Is poverty an attitude, a spiritual vision of life, or is it material, having little or nothing by way of resources? Are these different aspects of poverty? Disadvantaged, disenfranchised and homeless people are often hopeless and even helpless. They may have little except their own selves and yet have the same dignity of the children of God as those with more material possessions.

Saint Mother Teresa, the most recognised champion of the poor, worked tirelessly with her sisters caring for the destitute in Calcutta, providing food and care for the sick and dying. She said that the greatest poverty in the world is to feel unloved. St Francis chose and embraced poverty as a treasure, like Mother Teresa showing how a passionate love of God is an antidote against poverty. But what is a child crying for, who is forced to go to bed hungry, as there is no food in their shack for her or her brothers and sisters? Is it love, or is it a simple piece of bread, maybe with jam or peanut butter? Are the poor the mothers or fathers with no work or shelter, desperate to care for their children? Are the poor crying out of resentment, out of pain or misery?

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. Luke 4:16-30. Pope Francis: The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together. The gravest effects of all attacks on the environment (by humanity) are suffered by the poorest. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. LS 30. A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness. Love is more than just a series of benevolent actions. Our love for others for who they are moves us to seek the best for their lives. FT 94. Eco-tip.* Prayerfully consider: The poor should be directly involved and take responsibility in addressing the issue of poverty, which should not only be a case of handouts and decisions by those in power and church leadership. How can each family take responsible action?

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 2. FEED THE WORLD, DON'T KILL THE WORLD. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) The Boney-M Song “Don’t Kill The World” goes back some 40 years. Environmental awareness was just starting and the song made a strong impact then. But it hasn’t stopped us killing the world, which continues unabated. In those early days activists were often ridiculed, seen as tree huggers or bunny huggers but they were already aware of the hunger caused by droughts, famine and the extreme weather patterns which are now almost accepted as normal. The average world temperature is rising almost every year, heating the oceans, melting icecaps, affecting marine life, causing hurricanes and floods as well as drought in other places.

Killing the world is killing opportunities to produce food to feed the world, resulting in hunger. This affects especially the poorest people in villages and small towns, who often grow some of their own food. Feeding the world and the hungry is also providing aid to those affected by no, or low, rainfall and crop failures or floods and destroyed farmlands. Those displaced due to the wars and internal conflicts in parts of the world are among the hungry. Such conflicts kill the world through the massive damage to infrastructure that we see daily on our TV news programmes. War cuts food production, as in Ukraine where reduced wheat and sunflower exports are affecting staple foods of other countries. In addition wild fires brought on by temperature rises destroy many of God’s creatures and their habitats.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever and they asked him about her. He stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left her and immediately she rose and served them. Luke 4:38-44. Pope Francis. Approximately a third of all food produced is discarded and whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor. LS 50 With the money spent on weapons and other military expenditure let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and provide development in the most impoverished countries so that their citizens will not resort to violent or illusory solutions or have to leave their countries to seek a more dignified life. FT 262. Eco-tip.* Offer help to someone who is sick, mentally or physically challenged or works with sick animals. As families revive the song, listen and meditate on the words, share and sing along.

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 3. WATER WARRIORS ARE WATER WISE. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) Cecilia is involved with a water provision project in a poor rural area. She arranged for tanks for harvesting rain water to be donated. Georgina laughed when she heard about it, "O mom, it hasn't rained there in 4 months so how can one harvest rain water." "Well there are times of the year when this is possible and then you save it. But talking of harvesting water, what about putting a basin in the shower and taking shorter showers. Use that water in the garden or the toilet – if you have such luxuries, not every family has. We can use "grey water" from washing dishes for gardens and aim for indigenous drought-resistant plants. We can think twice when we brush our teeth or wash hands not to let the tap run. Saving water at home is a mindset that we all need to develop.

Water is an essential element of creation and makes our earth habitable. It is too often contaminated from mining and industrial use and dumping all kinds of stuff, making it unsafe to drink. 70% of earth surface is sea water and desalination could be done. In gardens choose indigenous plants that are drought-resistant and need less water. Water shortages are felt today, in rural and urban areas due to poor water infrastructure management. Families as water warriors can work at checking on water spills, fighting pollution, doing clean-ups and much else for the common good,

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Jesus said, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. Henceforth you will be catching men." Luke 5:1-11. **Pope Francis:** 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 continues to be wasted not only in the developed world, but also in developing countries which possess it in greater abundance. Clearly the problem of water is partly an educational and cultural issue, since there is little awareness of the seriousness of such behaviour within a context of great inequality. LS 30. **Eco-tip.** Read the Canticle of Creation of St Francis focusing on "Praise God for Sister Water who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste."

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 4. ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*). What is this strange ideal? Terms like environment, ecology, climate change or biodiversity all address the same urgent need, not only to understand the impact of climate change, but also to respond in our daily lives. Its effects such as extreme weather conditions are experienced throughout the world, where more rain or less rain, hurricanes, typhoons, floods and landslides affecting everyone and everything are causing deaths, destruction and losses, also of livelihoods. This was noted by the 2024 UN International Year of the Family 30th anniversary theme of "Families and Climate Change."

Family is a reality and a form of family living is the most common way of life. Becoming an eco-friendly family is an ideal, a vision and a journey in faith, accepting the reality and dealing with issues as they arise. There are many facets and differences in being and becoming eco-friendly families. These are our vision and goals :

- We see families as units, ideally choosing common causes e.g. save the rhino, protect unborn life.
- We recognize individuals; gender, age, relationships within a family.
- We recognize differences and needs: abilities and interests – from sport to technology, science or nature in men, women, children, young to old
- We motivate for environmental awareness – often in competition with other interests e.g. sport.
- We aim to share eco-friendly values, "refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle, repair. "
- We promote saving water, energy – electricity, electronics, travel.
- We aim for healthy eating – diets with less meat and more plant-based.
- We encourage joint activities and causes – "clean-up campaign, maintain a veggie garden..
- We aim for shared faith and spirituality, recognizing God as creator as the basis of all life. Synodal sharing means to reflect, share and pray in developing this spirituality.
- We put our money where our mouth is. Eco-awareness and action require money and investment but ultimate outcomes make any expense worthwhile.
- We take what starts at home out into the world, school, work, sport etc.

All family members can engage in different ways, feeding tiny infants in most healthy ways, ideally through breast-feeding, toddlers not being fed on junk food and sweet drinks. School-age kids are encouraged to be health conscious about smoking, drinking, food and sexual behaviour. It is for their whole world all around i.e. the school, sportsfield and shopping mall.

Eco-sensitivity starts in homes and is put into practice in creative and innovative ways by young people's technological ability for design and inventions, The elderly are still active in their families in water and energy saving and clean-ups, when they are more fragile they may need special care and healthy diet. Appreciating beauty in nature and architecture is for everyone

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Trust in the Lord and do good, then you will dwell in the land and safely pasture. Find your delight in the Lord who grants your heart's desire. Turn away from evil and do good and you may abide forever for indeed the Lord loves justice and will never forsake his faithful. Ps37. Pope Francis:* Authentic development includes efforts to bring about improvements in the quality of human life which involves settings in which people live. These influence the way we think, feel and act in our rooms, homes, workplaces and neighbourhoods, as we use the environment as a way to express our identity. If it is chaotic, filled with noise and ugliness it makes it more difficult to keep calm, relaxed and happy. LS147. **Eco-tip:** Evaluate together how eco-friendly we are.

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 5. St Mother Teresa of Calcutta. PEACE ON EARTH BEGINS IN THE HOME. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) The world of today is experiencing wars and conflicts on very serious levels and in many places. The news we see and hear in our homes is constantly filled with reports of war and violence. How can this not influence our attitude towards life, peace and harmony? Peace is not only an absence of war but also the harmony of right relationships and living happily, practicing the life skills that build and strengthen family relationships especially gender relations. Peace is not something passive but needs to be built.

The topic of peace brings to mind important world figures, religious, political and social such as Mahatma Ghandi, Archbishops Oscar Romero and Desmond Tutu. St Mother St Teresa of Kolkata left a comfortable teaching job to go and work in the slums with the poorest of the poor, the sick and dying became her mission. At the same time she has written: *"Let us not use bombs and guns to overcome the world. Let us use love and compassion. Peace begins with a smile. Smile five times a day at someone you don't really want to smile at; do it for peace. Let us radiate the peace of God and so light His light and extinguish hatred and love of power in the world and in the hearts of all people. Today, if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other- that man, that woman, that child is my brother or my sister. If everyone could see the image of God in his neighbor, do you think we would still need tanks and generals? Peace and war begin at home. If we truly want peace in the world, let us begin by loving one another in our own families.*

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me." Matthew 25. Pope Francis.* Some parts of our human family can, it appears, be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence. Ultimately persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled, not yet useful – like the unborn, or no longer needed, like the elderly. We have grown indifferent to all kinds of wastefulness, starting with the waste of food. FT 18. **Eco-tip:** Make a study of the life of St Mother Teresa and show support for her Missionaries of Charity. Pray the Peace Prayer of St Francis.

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September 6. TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME. WEEK TWO (6 - 12 September 2026) Theme: "I have made a watchtower for the house of Israel" (Ez 33:7)

Opening Prayer: The Prayer for Peace on the Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi

Introduction

All the readings of Sunday, 23rd Ordinary Time A speak of collective human responsibility. This is grounded on our stewardship, unless we know what is right, we will not know what our responsibility is. The result, when sin through abuse, killing, indifference and insensitivity towards others and the environment, until we continue to witness climate disasters and human



suffering thereof. The core and ground-breaking process of stewardship is to listen and respond to the “voice of the poor” and “cry of the earth”, and to respond in love.

Teaching of the Church

Stewardship is defined as the responsibility to manage God’s gifts – including the earth, personal talents, our material wealth and our appreciation as benefactors. Human beings are not called to be consumers but caretakers of God’s creation. Stewardship calls us to remember God as the source and origin of all creation, on the other side, to recognize the ultimate destination of good. We are free to love and use the gifts, such as earth’s resources, but we are not free to manipulate, abuse and destroy. We are called to act as God’s co-creators, caretakers and watchtowers over all God’s creation.

IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER (see from SOC guide visit [Season of Creation](#))

In light of this year’s theme, consider intentionally involving a group and individual, engaged in social action, such as peace-building, and environmental advocacy. Emphasize the need for collective responsibility caring for our common home.

JUSTICE FOR CREATION: ADVOCACY

“There is something cooking in the atmosphere. It is very hot! - Where will we find some cooling shade?” Support a project to combat wasting and polluting water.

Advocacy is supporting and standing up for a cause and taking appropriate action. For example clean the nearest stream or river.

What can I (we) do this week to advocate for and be a watchtower or steward of God’s creation? Consider how to measure your activities against the [Laudato Si Action Platform and the various sectors](#)

September 7. Ecumenism. PEACE WITH CREATION IN THE SEASON OF CREATION. (From *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES*). This is an interdenominational event celebrated annually worldwide with Christians from many countries and many organisations including those linked to *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis’ encyclical on “Caring for our Common Home.” Pope Leo XIV says, “*Environmental justice - implicitly proclaimed by the prophets - can no longer be regarded as an abstract concept or a distant goal. It is an urgent need that involves much more than simply protecting the environment.*”

The theme chosen by the Season of Creation ecumenical steering committee for 2026 is **LIVING WATER**. Inspired by the prophet Ezekiel 47:9, 12. “*Wherever the stream flows, there will be all kinds of animals and fish. The stream will make the water of the Dead Sea fresh, and wherever it flows it will bring life.... on the bank of the stream all kinds of trees will grow to provide food. Their leaves will never weather, and they will never stop bearing fruit. They will have fresh fruit every month, because they are watered by the waters from the temple. The trees will provide food, and their leaves will be used for healing people.*” (Isa 32: 15-20).

Pope Leo XIV decreed a Franciscan Jubilee and extended it to all the faithful and beyond to follow the example of St Francis of Assisi, to adhere to the Christlike values, especially attending to the ‘cry of the poor’ and ‘cry of the earth’. St Francis maps out for all people of goodwill the concrete actions which are necessary and urgent for the “caress of God” in the world (cf. LS #84).

The Holy Father invited us to become aware that “*on all sides, injustice, violations of international law and the rights of peoples, grave inequalities and the greed that fuels them are spawning deforestation, pollution and the loss of biodiversity*” and they have become a norm. “*Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; - it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience*” (cf. LS #217).

The **SOUTH AFRICAN** reality is that extreme natural phenomena are now affecting most coastal regions in our country. The widespread repeated extreme weather bringing heavy rain caused serious flooding, washing away and destruction of homes and many human lives, animals and livelihoods lost throughout Northern, Central and Southern regions of our country signifying an urgent call to wake up and respond rather aggressively to the Care of our Common Home.



A Call to Action. The Biblical text for this year portrays God’s life-giving water flowing from the temple of God. The river grows deeper, restoring barren land, reviving waters, and sustaining flourishing ecosystems. Unfortunately, we are already experiencing the opposite due to the effect of indifference. This

initiative calls for human accountability; recognizing ecological damage and embracing interconnectedness. We are called to immerse ourselves in the living water by actively safeguarding and working for the renewal of creation.

Pray and respond to the cries of communities losing land and livelihoods due to war, climate change, unsustainable practices and debt. The Spirit guides us to understanding, ecological conversion and a transformative outcome, – not mere restoration of previous conditions.

Proactive steps should respond to Jesus' teaching of repentance and restorative justice. Hope fuels action. **Through prayer, discernment and commitment** we create a foundation for change. Peace emerges from **work** as transformation takes patience, understanding and trust. **Action** includes advocacy on local issues, sustainability projects, cleaning campaigns. Education shows how care for Creation is central to faith. Collaborate as interreligious communities for peace in diversity and unity, through reforestation, river cleaning, water and food security projects. (TR) Get full SOC guide at <https://seasonofcreation.org>

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *It happened that on a Sabbath, when Jesus entered the synagogue and taught, a man was there whose right hand was withered Jesus said, "I ask you is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" Luke 6:6-11. Pope Francis:* *The majority of people living on our planet profess to be believers. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor and building networks of respect and fraternity. LS 201. Eco-tip and prayer:* As an ecumenical initiative check out how different believers practise listening to the voice of creation, to the "cry of the poor and the cry of the earth." Hold a combined prayer service.

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 8. The birthday of Our Lady. PRAY AND PLAY. (*From Becoming Eco-friendly Families*) The saying "the family that prays together, stays together," refers to the Rosary campaign of the 1950s when families were encouraged to pray a family rosary together every day, meditating on the lives of Mary and Jesus. In our busy lives today a quick grace before or after meals or morning or night prayer may be all that is done but family prayer in different formats can also be encouraged. Synodality is currently promoted. It is a deeper experience of prayer, as dialogue with one another and God, a sharing from the heart, attentive listening and acceptance of one another's thoughts and feelings. It is not easy for us Catholics, who are used to formal, prepared wording, often beautiful and meaningful or by using scripture passages and meditation. If we add "play" to the slogan we highlight that prayer need not always consist of words. A definition "prayer is raising the mind and heart to God" allows us to accept different ways to pray, make up our own, and be in relationship together, celebrating, eating, singing, and other activities keeping in mind that God is present with us wherever we are and Our Lady can be invited too. "The family that prays and plays together, stays together."

POEM DOES GOD REALLY LIVE IN OUR HOUSE? (*From Families Caring for God's Creation*)

Does God really live in our house?
The little one wanted to know
Or does he just live in that place down the road
where we go to say our hello.

Does God ever sit in his heaven
And look down on the earth here below
And wonder if we ever notice him
As we rush through our lives, to and fro?

When he sees moms and dads and their children
Or sometimes a mother alone,
Someone who is sick or an elderly gran
Does he find himself there in their home?

Is he part of our everyday doings,
Do we feel all his mercy and love
In the ups and the downs in our dealing with kids
And at times when the going gets tough?

Yes, God really does have a place in each home.
He is there, if we see him or not,
By the TV, in bedrooms or kitchen or lounge
Whether couple or granny or tot.

Let's remember to greet him and thank him and pray
For the needs of his world. Every creature he's made
-Whether, people or animals, plants, birds and bees-
Builds a home where God's love lives each day.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, Abraham was the father of Isaac..... Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken. "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which means God with us. Matthew 1: 18-23* **Pope Francis:** *If a family is centred on Christ, he will unify and illumine its entire life. Moments of pain and difficulty will be experienced in union with the Lord's cross and his closeness will make it possible to surmount them. Family prayer is a special way of expressing and strengthening its faith. A few minutes can be found each day to come together before the living God, to tell him our worries, to ask for the needs of our family, to pray for someone experiencing difficulty, to ask for help in showing love, to give thanks for life and its blessings, and to ask Our Lady to protect us beneath her maternal mantle. AL 318.*

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 9. SAVE. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) This word, "save" is interpreted nowadays in lots of different ways, sometimes useful, sometimes not. Of course my computer constantly asks me to "save" or "don't save." Much of what I have saved is clogging up the works, but extra space is constantly being created, rather than scrap some. Is it in the cloud or under the sea? Keeping it is costing, through wasting energy as I discovered. Are you a hoarder, and should you be dumping or giving away all the knick-knacks and useless items you have saved?

A better use of the word is in saving money, for a rainy day, for one's old age, or for a special item one. This happens, maybe less than before. Do parents encourage children from a young age to save a little? We, even kids, buy on credit rather than save up for what we want. But credit is not unlimited and a day of reckoning is coming.

Reckoning applies to ecology and creation too, which certainly needs to be saved from destruction of biodiversity, loss of plants and animals. Human population is more complex. Are we too many or not enough? The peace and harmony of established cultures is at risk. Some important old and well-functioning cultures need saving from being overwhelmed by outsiders or newcomers. Migrants should have rights as they have left their home country due to conflict and poor governance, or for more selfish economic reasons. What is the impact on their host countries which also have rights and may want to save what they have developed over time. Saving, sharing, scrapping. Where are the rights and where the wrongs? The Beatitudes of Jesus are as countercultural now justice as they were in his day.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Woe to you that are rich for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger. From Luke 6:20-26.* **Pope Francis:** *We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. LS 49. A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment. Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. LS 222.* **Eco-tip:** Reflect on and share on your understanding of the deeper meaning of saving and salvation. Pray the eucharistic acclamation: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 10. FAMILIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE. (From *Families and Climate Change*) The UN International Year of the Family 30th anniversary in 2024 chose *Families and Climate* as its focus theme with 2 main areas: 1. The impact on families. 2. The response of families.

IMPACT. The direct and indirect impact on families is largely negative. Extreme weather, cold to heat, floods to drought, result in loss of life, damage and destruction of homes and livelihoods, displacement and the break-up of family units. The impact is not only on humans but on all ecosystems and all families of creation.

THE ROLE OF FAMILIES IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND ACTION.

Humans' lifestyle has a profound and mostly negative impact on the planet's health. Use of power for lighting, cooking, heating, cooling, modes and frequency of travel, what we eat, what we use from clothing to plastics and electronics all contribute to greenhouse gas emission i.e. higher CO₂ levels in the atmosphere which then leads to changes in the climate. Materialist attitudes, fed by advertising, contribute to consumerist behaviour, encourage people to buy more than they need, resulting in waste. Every family member in every way contributes in greater or lesser degrees. Diets, eating habits, sports and entertainment industries matter. A carbon footprint measure demonstrates how the more wealthy, who use more power, contribute many times more to this harmful situation.

THE NEED FOR RESPONSIBLE ACTION BY EVERYONE.

Drastic action is needed. Responsible role players are government, civil society organisations, including churches, the private and business sectors mainly. Power and food producers, even our leisure activities can act to limit harmful effects of our lifestyle. A mindset change can improve productivity, limit use of water and power, and of course Reuse, Reduce, Recycle. Every role player in any situation is a family member, but change at home is a place to start.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Love your enemies, and do good and lend expecting nothing in return., and your reward will be great and you will be sons of the Most High. For he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. "Be merciful even as your Father is merciful. Luke 6: 27-38. Pope Francis: If we can overcome individualism we can truly bring about change. LS208. Eco-tip: Act and pray for the motivation to provide the family with tools to develop family spirituality and form strong positive foundations and habits so that civic awareness and activism can increase.*

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September 11. EACH ONE TEACH ONE. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) Dominic was a science teacher, Phumzile a learner with a great interest in animal trafficking, particularly of rhinos and pangolins. Her uncle Boris was a big game hunter. Imagine the debates and the arguments that raged about the merits of trophy hunting or any type of hunting. Who knows all the facts, the truth and the financial implications of game farming?

Environmental awareness is still a relatively new science and a growing field of knowledge, so it may be children from nursery school up who can teach their parents, who may have had little exposure. Young children learn even just through growing a bean plant, share their observation and so build a knowledge base. We parents can tell traditional stories of Jack and the Beanstalk but also revisit traditional folk tales and fairy tales of talking animals. TV has so much educational material, but in our families do young and older adults share from their particular perspective. Important and ethical issues for families are around the growing body of debates on climate justice, research into renewable energy or recycling, the place of AI and other technology. Together families can devise their own circular economy projects, reusing items, practicing recycling, making compost, – all on the way to **become eco-friendly families!**

Adult education, self-empowerment for eco-friendly decision-making, supporting community initiatives and integrating family-centred intergenerational approaches into policies can ensure meaningful climate action.

Advocacy, by all for all, is a necessary attitude towards a co-responsible way of life with the ideal of "Each one, teach one" being adopted beyond families by those in the workplace and areas of control and power.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully taught will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" Luke 6: 39-42. Pope Francis: the contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us. LS 85. Authentic development includes efforts to bring about improvements in the quality of human life which involves settings in which people live. These influence the way we think, feel and act in our rooms, homes, workplaces and neighbourhoods, as we use the environment as a way to express our identity. If it is chaotic, filled with noise and ugliness it makes it more difficult to keep calm, relaxed and happy. LS147. Eco-tip and prayer. As a family group, face to face or on social media and whatsapp choose to reflect and share on current ecological issues.*

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September 12. GO GREEN, GROW GREEN. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) If a teacher at school asks, “Who here considers themselves green, or is going and growing green?” What answers would she get? Do young people understand what going green is better than adults in families? It is growing to be more environmentally friendly, making efforts to protect and build rather than destroy the earth. The ideal was adopted about 50 years ago and is presented in documents such as the 2000 Earth Charter. Some social or church programmes promote “Greening the parish” by using plants and trees to beautify the setting, keeping the area clean and using solar heating and water harvesting. So are you a greenie? Do you ever think of the Tree of Life and the Cross?

Going green’s 10 points for you to check your attitudes.

- Praise and thank God for the gift of his creation.
- Lobby and vote with your mark and your feet with elections coming up.
- Be conscious of plastic’s uses in all forms, avoid single use plastic and recycle.
- Educate yourselves around best eating habits and foods.
- Check your carbon footprint, make changes to reduce carbon emission.
- Save money – buy fewer unnecessary or new items, repair what you can.
- Use biodegradable and sustainable cleaning and beauty products
- Practice sustainability out- and indoors. Don’t litter, pick up others’ rubbish.
- Support environmental causes, sustainable businesses and investments,
- Spread the word, even facing ridicule at times.

Growing green is also an activity.

- Plant trees, especially indigenous or fruit trees or those needing little water.
- Grow your own vegetables and herbs, quick growing and water-wise
- Grow highly nutritious micro-greens in a pot
- Make compost, feed and care for the soil.
- Take frequent walks in nature, appreciating that green means beautiful.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said, “no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good and the evil man of his evil treasure produces evil. Luke 6:43-49. Pope Francis: St Francis, faithful to scripture invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks, granting us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there and those who saw them could raise their minds to God the Creator of such beauty. LS 12. Eco-tip.* Research “greening” projects in Africa like the “Great Green Wall” across the Sahel in North Africa. Pray for greater greening awareness for all, e.g. tree planting but note the value of indigenous and edible plants and shrubs.

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SACBC REFLECTION. WEEK THREE (13 - 19 September 2026)

Theme: “Forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done” (Sir 28:2)

Opening Prayer: The Prayer for Peace on the Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi

Reflection

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.” (Nicene Creed) Our belief in baptism is tied to the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead. This calls us to confess our sins not only against God, but also our neighbour, self and all creation. Often, we rush to ask for forgiveness from God for self, yet not open to extending first the same forgiveness to neighbour and creation. In actual



fact, lack of forgiveness blocks the flow of life-giving grace, blocking it from self, others and the environment. The result is disastrous for all creation.

Teaching of the Church

Forgiveness can be divided into two primary dimensions: receiving God's mercy and extending that same mercy to others, including to the environment. Firstly, the sacrament of baptism stands at the centre of conversion and forgiveness, the outpouring of unlimited and unconditional mercy of God. Secondly, the Sacrament of Confession (Penance and Reconciliation) invites us to take ownership of our sins, taking the first steps to approach the throne of mercy and readiness to repair damage (reparation).

Truth and Love

LD 69 *"I ask everyone to accompany this pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home and to help make it more beautiful, because that commitment has to do with our personal dignity and highest values. At the same time, I cannot deny that it is necessary to be honest and recognize that the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on national and international level."*

JUSTICE FOR CREATION: CULTURE OF CARE

Collect glass, plastic containers, bottles and bottle tops and drop at the recycling spot.

Prepare a spot at HOME OR THE PARISH yard to start a vegetable garden.

Show tangible reconciliation and forgiveness through care and be at peace with others and the environment.

What can I (we) do this week in line with the above sharing?

Have you considered to measure your activities against the [Laudato Si Action Platform](#)

September 14. Triumph of the Cross. Everybody has got his one favourite "love is....." saying. Melody asked the family to sit together and share their own. Eventually they concluded that maybe our general concept of love can be rather too sentimental. Reflecting on this feast of the Triumph of the Cross the pains and joys of love made their thoughts more comprehensive and real. "We learned a lot about love and care and responsibility during the covid-19 pandemic." Pauline reflected. "It also makes me think of the poor little scaly pangolins that somehow got blamed for causing the start of the pandemic. They are the most trafficked of all the animals on earth, even here in South Africa they are captured and sold. Surely they need love and protection as much as the poor and all the human family." Dad reminded them again that the cross is a very real sign of suffering but on this day it is also a sign of conversion and of faith, hope and love, of God, of one another and of nature.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. therefore God has exalted him. Philip 2:6-11. **Pope Francis:** As part of the universe called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family. God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement. LS89. **Eco-tip.** on social media start an ecological renewal campaign with the slogan "Love is Pray for an increase in love as the basis for ecological conversion and change.

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September 15. ALL CREATURES MATTER. (From *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES*) **Our Lady of Sorrows..** When you think "matter" it's either of something important or something material. In both senses everything that God created matters, from every part of the nearly unlimited universe, to the tadpole that has not yet grown into a frog. All creatures have a physical nature, a value and a role to play. We may be disgusted by a cockroach or "parktown prawn" (which is actually a type of king cricket) but they are part of the cycle of life, they feed on something and are food for something else.

Biomimicry is a facet of creation that looks for lessons from nature. Those big anthills in parts of the country go deep underground and can teach us about air-conditioning in a natural way. Modern-day science is studying and making many discoveries, invisible as well as visible things, large and microscopic. The very air we breathe matters, it is alive with gases, particles and carries all types of messages across the world.

But are creatures only important for their usefulness? We, oldies, were taught in our long ago catechism days, “Why did God make me?” “to know God, to love him and serve him in this world and to be happy with him in the next.” How does that still apply? Becoming more and more eco-friendly over time, comes from lived experience and, I believe, follows Pope Francis’ “Everything is connected.” Every creature has value and is to be loved and served. This world is not only for serving God, but for service to God’s creation and for ultimately achieving a taste of the happiness to come in spite of the fact that we humans have maltreated our world so badly. Does creation really matter to us as it should and do we take responsibility for its suffering? On this day the Church commemorates Mary, as the Mother of Sorrows, who shares in the sufferings of her son and our world.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *At that time the father and mother of Jesus marvelled at what was said about him. Simeon said to Mary, his mother, behold this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is spoken against and a sword will pierce through your own soul also. 2 Luke 33-35. STABAT MATER. At the cross her station keeping, stood the mournful mother weeping, close to Jesus to the last. Through her heart his sorrow sharing, all his bitter anguish bearing, now at length the sword had passed. Pope Francis: The earth’s resources are being plundered because of short-sighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production. The loss of forests and woodlands entails the loss of species which constitute extremely important resources in the future, not only for food, but also curing disease and other uses. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, or convey their message to us. LS 6. Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. LS 241*

Eco-tip and prayer: Reflect and share together on worth and what really matters to each one? Is “to die for” concerned with chocolate goodies, or for the values that control our lives. Discuss your attitudes towards the worth of every creature, human and animal, the unborn, abandoned and disabled. Pray to share the compassion of Mary in her suffering on our behalf.

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September 16. LOVE GIVES LIFE - LOVE KEEPS US TOGETHER. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*)

Ask yourselves or one another, “What do I really love?” Human beings have been created by God with inherent needs to love, to belong and to be in relationship. God, as the Trinity, is the first and most perfect love relationship and our model for loving. Family relationships, marriage and parenting in particular, are ideally prime examples of unconditional love and acceptance, because they naturally last across the years, even if members don’t see each other all the time. Other relationships between people of all ages, friendships, interest groups and physical attraction are aspects of love and deep commitment too but may change over time.

God’s love is the life force in all of creation. Lifegiving is a very special attribute and gift from God. Sexuality, as God’s gift, is primarily a family gift. The ideal loving marriage relationship gives life to the spouses and children. Sex is a physical expression of life-giving in almost every form of created life. Love is present in different degrees in all of creation, human, animal and even plant life, as is now being studied. A visit to a National Park and observing the behaviour of a family of elephants or warthogs or a wounded cheetah, still striving to protect her cubs are heart-warming and teaches about life and love in nature. Humanity is greatly blessed by its greatest potential for life-giving and life-sustaining love, making us most God-like.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Love is patient, love is kind..... Faith, hope and love, these three remain and the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor 13 Pope Francis: Love always gives life. Conjugal love does not end with the couple. They, in giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of their unity. AL 165. The family protects life in all its stages, including the last. The Church not only feels the urgency to assert the right to natural death without aggressive treatment and euthanasia, but likewise firmly rejects the death penalty. AL 83. For Christians, believing in one God who is trinitarian communion suggests that the Trinity has left its mark on all creation. Creatures tend towards God, and in turn it is proper to every living being to tend towards other things, so that throughout the universe there are any number of constant and secretly interwoven relationships. LS 239-240. Eco-tip: Carefully read and share on the famous passage on love. 1 Cor 13. Explore how animals and plants are also able to relate and communicate. Thank God for this ability.*

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carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.
St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 17. Saint Hildegard von Bingen, Doctor of the Church. PRESERVE WILD LIFE. I remember being amused by a car bumper sticker I saw ages ago, “preserve wild life, pickle a squirrel.” With a much more finely honed environmental conscience I don’t find that funny any more. We have done too much harm to wild life, destroying their habitats and migration routes, poaching and trafficking in rhino horns and pangolins. At the same time nature conservation is a growing industry, enjoyed widely by tourists – families of course too. It is to study and be able to protect species that are at partial or total risk of extinction. Many thousands of plant and animal species do become extinct each year, but rewilding projects and ongoing research in scientific study of all aspects of wild life are a sign of hope.

Few things can beat a couple of days in a game park where many of us chase around looking for the big five – lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, buffalo. Others study birds, trees and all types of vegetation, insects and the myriad other elements that are needed to make up a successful eco-system. The majority of people have not experienced this luxury but many do have knowledge and love of wild life, while others know little and care less.

St Hildegard von Bingen, was a remarkable holy woman, way ahead of her time in the 12th century. She was a religious abbess and founded monasteries, but was also an artist, writer, composer, a nature conservations and pharmacist who studied the environment and created medicines which she administered to the sick who came to her.

A mystic and theologian, she received visions which caused her to see humans as “living sparks” of God’s love, coming from God as daylight comes from the sun. Sin destroys the original harmony of creation; Christ’s redeeming death and resurrection opened up new possibilities. Virtuous living reduces the estrangement from God and others caused by sin. Like all mystics, Hildegard recognised the harmony of God’s creation and the place of women and men.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Simon, do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Her sins, which are many are forgiven for she loved much.* Luke 7:36-50. **Pope Francis:** *It may well disturb us to learn of the extinction of mammals or birds as they are more visible. But the good healthy functioning of ecosystems also requires fungi, algae, worms, insects, reptiles and an innumerable variety of microorganisms to maintain the equilibrium of a particular place. Many birds and insects which disappear due to synthetic agrotoxins are helpful for agriculture: their disappearance will have to be compensated for by other techniques. A sober look at our world shows that the degree of human intervention often in the service of business interests and consumerism is making our earth less rich and beautiful. We seem to think that we can substitute an irreplaceable and irretrievably beauty with something which we have created ourselves.* LS 34

Eco-tip: Reflect on and discuss scientific developments in medicine that support or manipulate life and if possible advocate for justice and the right to life.

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.
St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 18. HEALTHY FAMILIES ARE HAPPY FAMILIES. (From *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES*) “A healthy mind in a healthy body” This ancient Greek philosophy of Hippocrates, refers to physical and mental health and still applies as a goal for our day. Healthy doesn’t just come about on its own but is influenced by food, habits and behaviour. Health can make us happy and happiness improves health, physical, mental and spiritual. Wellness also encourages reaching beyond oneself and taking care of the health of others and of creation.

Money plays a role in wellness, providing food security as a bare minimum, but how it is spent affects the enjoyment and health. For rich and poor how and what we eat and our lifestyles do matter. Taking care of our bodies, how we treat them, what we put into them and through optimum, not excessive, exercise we can develop a personal sense of wellbeing. Even appreciating beauty like watching a sunrise can create a mood, produce a sense of inner joy and peace and relieve stress from the start of the day.

This applies to individuals but to families too. Good and open communication is an important key to happiness and to health. Nevertheless in spite of our best efforts sickness, debilitating chronic disease and natural ageing and its limitations upset a family equilibrium. Patience, tolerance and love are likely to be tested to the limit and so support at such times is necessary for a patient and those providing care.

The happiness of a healthy family should not make us inward looking but be an invitation to look out for others and aim for "Healthy Families for a Healthy Planet."

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus went out through cities and villages, preaching, and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And with him were the Twelve and some women who had been healed by him and provided for them out of their means. Luke 8:1-3.* **Pope Francis:** *A healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change. LS 218. Human ecology involves the relationship between human life and the moral law inscribed in our nature and which is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment. The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning in its femininity and masculinity is important in an encounter with someone who is different. LS 155.* **Eco-tip and prayer.** I was recently told that tinned fish and chicken livers are good for anyone's health, rich or poor. How. can these contribute to our happiness? Pray around the K I S S principle. (Keep it simple stupid!)

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 19. LOCAL IS LEKKER. "MAKE MOTHER NATURE YOUR FOOD GARDEN." (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) Indigenous trees and shrubs, suited to the particular environment can save a lot of water, fight pollution and be sources of nutrients and medicinal help. Promoting their commercial cultivation can be beneficial to food security.

TONI'S CAMPAIGN WITH SPEKBOOM AND EDIBLE INDIGENOUS PLANTS. My food security campaign began when I was introduced to the spekboom by our Cape Town Laudato Si' community. September 2 2023, Day 2 of the SEASON OF CREATION was the occasion of the Spring Breakfast at our retirement village. In 2022 I had promoted the health and environmental benefits of the edible spekboom and in 2023 I had gone further. Having researched and using recipes, which we gave out at the breakfast, we made spekboom jam and a breakfast smoothy, with the spekboom leaves, blueberry fruit and yoghurt. Leaves can also be added to salads and cooked in chutneys and pickles and jams.

These are some of its benefits: Spekboom plants grow everywhere but extensively in the dry Eastern Cape in South Africa where they are popular with animals because of their water content and are being promoted commercially even for reforestation. It is evergreen, easy to grow, water-wise and drought resistant. It has medicinal benefits, is high in Vitamin C, used for skin ailments, stings, bites and sore throats. One of more than 2000 edible indigenous plants growing wild that were known to indigenous people, but are all becoming forgotten or rejected by younger generations who look down on such traditional foods. A special blessing for the environment is its ability to absorb larger quantities of carbon dioxide than usual, e.g. 100 times more than e.g. a fir tree of the same size.

There are many more edible indigenous plants, some are spurned, described as weeds. *Morogo*. (amaranth) a wild spinach, in different versions is traditional but still popularly cooked and eaten. It has highly nutritious leaves and seeds. Using the slogan "Make Mother Nature your Food garden" invites us to promote the use of indigenous freely available plants, especially in school food gardens and also around homesteads. They can fight poverty and increase food security, especially if leaves are dried or frozen and large amounts of seeds also kept for constant use.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *"A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trodden under foot and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock, some among thorns, some on good soil. Luke 8:4-15.* **Pope Francis:** *It is important that people experience the gospel of the family as a joy that fills hearts and lives because in Christ we have been set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. As in the parable of the sower we are called to help sow seeds, the rest is God's work. it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners in projects affecting their land. Land is not a commodity for them but a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space which maintains their identity and values. When they remain there their care is best. LS* **Eco-tip and prayer:** Learn more about edible plants e.g. the spekboom, amaranth/marog and join a food gardening programme, grow your own vegetables and compost food waste. Take action to build healthy soil. Thank you God for the food we can grow and the food we can share.

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

**September 20. TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME. SACBC REFLECTION.
WEEK FOUR (20 - 27 September 2026) Theme: "For me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21)**

Opening Prayer: The Prayer for Peace on the Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi

Reflection

St Francis of Assisi set a model of what it means to live in Christ. It is being at peace with all of God's creation. Very early in his life, he wished to reach the greatest honour as a knight, but this was human ego; trying to build a kingdom. Inspired by the story of the rich young man (Mt 19: 16-21), he emptied the store of his father, and gave all possessions to the poor. After that, he left home and felt at peace, simple, humble and poor among the poor of God. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness (Mt 6:33).



Teaching of the Church

"Life in Christ" is the third pillar of the Catechism. It summarizes moral living, emphasizing human dignity, that is rooted in being creatures of God, made in his image and likeness, and is fulfilled only when we use our freedom to lead a life of beatitudes and love. This theme covers; our vocation to know, love and serve God and come to share in His eternal happiness. Secondly, our human actions must be moral, being good and doing only good. Thirdly, our awareness that without God's grace and the Holy Spirit we cannot be or achieve anything. Finally, live out the beatitudes in our lives, to follow the example of Christ in the way we live, especially towards our neighbour and being stewards of God's environment.

JUSTICE FOR CREATION: INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND FAITH.

Whose responsibility is it to change the status quo?

Live simply: Consume consciously by purchasing only what you need, reducing waste, and minimizing reliance on single-use plastics.

Support sustainable food systems: Buy locally grown produce to reduce shipping emissions and consider composting to keep organic matter out of landfills.

Engage in creation care: Dedicate time to ecological restoration, such as planting endemic flora, participating in local cleanup campaigns, or protecting natural habitats.

Practice mindful appreciation: Take time to observe and express gratitude for the natural world. You can explore creation-centered resources on platforms to enhance your awareness.

September 21 BECOMING (From *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES*) MARFAM's history of over 30 years is closely connected to my (Toni's) personal a journey in faith and of *becoming* more and more family-centred. Originally in 1979, after a life-changing Marriage Encounter experience and gaining new insights into marriage, we, Chris and I, grew through our work in marriage ministry. Later we did *become* more broadly family-centred. Since his untimely death and my *becoming* a widow another dimension was added. More recently, again, I *became* more environmentally conscious, combining family and ecology on my own spiritual journey and incorporating these aspects in MARFAM resources.

Growing and *becoming* are life tasks at every stage of life from infancy to old age, through marriage, widowhood, divorce, parenting and grandparenting. *Becoming* Fully Human and Fully Alive is a psycho-spiritual view of growth and development that everyone undergoes in their own way as an individual as well as in their relationships. I am a woman, not in isolation but in the context of my family relationships first of all. After that my friends and colleagues, in school, work and other activities, help me on my way to *becoming* the person I am destined to be according to God's plan. Yet at the same time one's own personal journey of *becoming* is both private but an opportunity to share, especially with our loved ones

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said "no one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light. Luke 8:16-17. Pope Francis. Ecology involves protecting the cultural treasures of humanity in the broadest sense. It is more than what we have inherited from the past; it is also and above all a living, dynamic and participatory present reality which cannot be excluded as we rethink the relationship between human beings and the environment. LS 132. Pope Francis: In the family we receive an integral education which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity. The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures, as everything is interconnected. LS 240.*

Eco-tip: Reflect on and discuss the value of privacy or openness in communication for the common good.

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 22. CO- CREATORS WITH GOD. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*). This statement highlights how important we are, particularly as human beings, in God's plan of creation. Although Genesis may tell us that God created busily for 6 days and then rested, this myth only tells part of the story. Creation was and still is an ongoing process. Every living thing has the potential to reproduce, alongside God who still holds the key to life. Sexual reproduction is the key to almost every species where male and female parts combine and their reproductive acts produce one or more new creatures that continue the ecosystem. Is co-creation with God not our task too, and is the wonder of this ability, witnessed in a special way in conception and child-birth, not in the realm of the sacred and one of the greatest joys of family life?

Yet, there is another side to co-creation, at times a negative side. Understood and studied widely, science today is continuing to manipulate the elements of life. This has happened for many centuries in agriculture, but present-day genetic modifications in all areas of creation places a great responsibility on us as humankind. Do we fully recognize this responsibility and can we predict the ultimate consequences whether they are positive or negative?

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus was told, your mother and your brethren are standing outside, desiring to see you. But he said to them, my mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it. Luke 8:19-21.* **Pope Francis:** *Everything is interconnected. Just as the different aspects of the planet -physical, chemical and biological are interrelated so too living species are part of a network which we will never fully explore and understand. LS 138. God himself created sexuality which is a marvellous gift to his creatures. If this gift needs to be cultivated and directed it is to prevent the impoverishment of an authentic value. AL 150. The couple that loves and begets life is a true, living icon capable of revealing God the Creator and Saviour.* **Eco-tip:** Decide and discuss integral ecology and the family and how to become more and more an eco-friendly and family-friendly society.

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September 23. THERE IS HELP, THERE IS HOPE. (From *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES*). For all of us believers, Christians, or members of other religious faiths, even if our life and our particular situation seems hopeless and we are or feel helpless, our trust in God can sustain us. Practical help does come from somewhere, from God, our sense of community, and often our family members as the first recourse. How can the effects of climate change be so devastating for us and our family? Have we given up hope? Weather related conditions can be slow torture or quick devastation. Drought and heat are a slow creeping disaster, with the constant hope for rain to bring relief. Hurricanes, typhoons and tornadoes can bring wind, excessive rain and floods bringing sudden, even unexpected destruction. Hope for things to change and for relief remains, and help is provided by private, community or government resources.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases and he sent them out to preach the Kingdom and to heal. "Take nothing with you," he told them." Luke 9:1-6.* **Pope Francis** in his message for the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025, spoke of signs of hope. *"In every age, the Church has the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. In this way, in language adapted to every generation, she can respond to people's persistent questions about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other. We need to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves overwhelmed by evil and violence. The signs of the times, which include the yearning of human hearts in need of God's saving presence, ought to become signs of hope."* Signs of the times should be the desire for peace, enthusiasm for life and readiness to share it, concern for prisoners, migrants, the sick, the poor and the young. He concludes, *"All of us, however, need to recover the joy of living, since men and women, created in the image and likeness of God cannot rest content with getting along one day at a time, settling for the here and now and seeking fulfilment in material realities alone. Care given to those in need is a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope that calls for the choral participation of society as a whole. SNC7-9.* **Eco-tip:** Healing the damage to the world demands changes in behaviour. Discuss, adopt and promote Reuse-Reduce-Recycle not just as a practical campaign but as part of a prayer campaign for the care of creation in one's wider community.

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September 24. Heritage day. CHILDREN DESERVE A FUTURE. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) The sodality leader stated, “The attitude and place of children – or let me say offspring – changes from time to time in Our World, a Family of Families. Who can remember the time, not too long ago, when “children should be seen and not heard” as they were considered to have little intrinsic value. They were offspring to secure the future of the family or species. With greater awareness of their value, the attitude became, “children should be seen and not hurt.” Child abuse by adults, who are likely known to them, is a serious offence today, although historically it has been a reality, possibly even in Jesus’ day. Nowadays the trend is to put children first. The consumer market is certainly very child-conscious. The SA Children’s Act states that a child’s interest should always be paramount in the case of any legal or social dispute. How can family’s best serve these best interests?”

Our current worldview is that future generations of people and of every creature, animals and plants too, have to be assured of a future for the world to continue existing in its present form. It is also important that children and the youth especially, but also the poor and all disadvantaged people, should be involved in processes to preserve the world for the future and make it a better place. If we ask the young, some may feel anxious, concerned, depressed or disinterested while others are extremely keen to become active participants. Maybe a majority is fairly alienated, seeing environmental matters as a school subject, or a nuisance if it impacts on their time and use of their digital devices, rather than a very relevant life reality for us all. Is it up to us, families as a whole, to listen to where we each are, to motivate and even agitate for the future of our children. Will AI be on our side?

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Certain books of Scripture express hope, others express depression and hopelessness as these were and still are also life experiences of humankind. The book of Ecclesiastes states, “*Vanity of vanities. All is vanity. What does man gain by all that toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes and a generation comes., but the earth remains for ever. There is nothing new under the sun. The sun rises and the sun goes down and hastens to the place where it rises. Ecclesiastes 1:3-5.* **Pope Francis:** *The notion of the common good also extends to future generations. The global economic crises have made painfully obvious the detrimental effects of disregarding our common destiny, which cannot exclude those who come after us. We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. LS 159.* **Eco-tip.** Consider and share with youth the story of a young saint Carlo Acutis, devout boy dedicated to the Eucharist, who was born in 1991, diagnosed with leukemia and died aged 15 in 2006. As a talented web designer he created websites of Eucharistic miracles. He offered his illness and suffering to God, always remaining cheerful. His message to other youth, “*everyone is born as an original but many people end up dying as a photocopy. You are called to be greater than that, so ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to never end up as a photocopy.*”

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September 25. NOTE: *A novena leading up to the feast of St Francis can be started on this day. It includes a prayer, reflection, petition and offering of self. See SACBC Season of Creation reflections. www.sacbc.org.za*

“Today we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach: it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the ‘cry of the earth’ and the ‘cry of the poor’ (LS 49). This time has given us hope for the future, conscious that there are no simple answers but that there is a time for everything as the Bible says:

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die

A time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted

At time to kill and a time to heal

A time to break down and a time to build up

A time to wee and a time to laugh

A time to mourn and a time to dance

A time to case away stones and a time to gather stones together

A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing

*A time to seek and a time to lose
A time to keep and a time to cast away
A time to men and a time to sew
A time to keep silence and a time to speak
A time to love and a time to hate
A time for war and a time for peace. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

Pope Francis: *But we should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some considering themselves more worthy than others. We fail to see that some are mired in desperate and degrading poverty, with no way out, while others have not the faintest idea of what to do with their possessions, vainly showing off their supposed superiority and leaving behind them so much waste which, if it were the case everywhere, would destroy the planet. In practice, we continue to tolerate that some consider themselves more human than others, as if they had been born with greater rights. LS 90.* **Ecotip.** The passage from Ecclesiastes is a powerful resource to reflect deeply and possibly to identify where I and our family stand in the journey to become eco-friendly. Pray for wisdom in discerning the way forward.

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 26. ANIMAL FARMING. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*). Norah came home from her confirmation class full of fire. She shared, “We had a sexy young guy, speaking to us today, a climate activist and university student. He spoke on sustainable living and told us about climate change and the impact of animal agriculture, which of course is raising animals to provide food for humans and includes meat, fish, dairy and egg industries. Deforestation in the Amazon provides land for millions of cattle, but the methane gas that they emit increases CO2 contributing up to 18% of global warming. It also reduces the habitat for all the other natural creatures and plants that could decrease the CO2 instead.

But even more shocking for me was to hear how in every country, as human populations grow and every other creature decreases in numbers, the way animals are treated is cruel and heartless. Over 70 billion land animals are raised and killed every year for food in processes that also cause environmental damage. We want to eat meat and have milk and cheese but chickens are force fed with growth hormones to make them grow unnaturally fast so that their legs can’t even support their bodies. Cows too often live in very unnatural, even unhygienic settings where they can hardly even move. I remember a while ago we heard of some huge factory ships passing by the Cape transporting hundreds of these cattle halfway across the world, but all cooped up in cages. “

Norah took a deep breath and carried on, “Brendan had lots of stories but what really touched me was thinking what God would have to say about how badly and unfairly we treat these creatures for our own selfish wants. That isn’t why God created them and they also have rights on this earth and feelings, as we know. I think it is very important that we should all be eating a plant-based diet, at least moving in that direction, because that can go a long way to cut down on the harm of animal agriculture to the environment. We should take note that the way we humans consume food is ultimate unsustainable.” She laughed and concluded, “You don’t have to be an animal activist to think like that, but I wonder why Pope Francis didn’t have more to say about the meat thing in his writings. Maybe as an Argentinian he likes his steak too much!”

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *At that time while they were marvelling at everything Jesus did, he said to his disciples. “Let these words sink into your ears, for the Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men.” But they did not understand. From Luke 9:43-45.* **Pope Francis:** *When we speak of the environment what we mean is a relationship between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. The crisis is both a social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and at the same time protecting nature. LS 139.* **Eco-tip.** Continue to discern about the positive and negative aspects of human behaviour in creation and what action you are called on to take.

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September 27. Twenty-Sixth Sunday In Ordinary Time. CELEBRATING FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION.
Laudato Si' and Integral conversion. (*From Families Caring for God's Creation.*)

A FAMILY RECONCILIATION SERVICE.

A family reconciliation service can be held from time to time, during special seasons like Advent, Lent, The Season of Creation, or a suitable time e.g. preparation for receiving the sacraments, or even when something has happened in the family that has caused hurt. This can be done before Catholics receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Reconciliation consists of various steps.

Hurt – thinking about the hurts caused, sharing with each other how we feel, about being hurt or causing hurt.

Forgiveness – because we have hurt someone and feel sorry, for this we ask for forgiveness or we can offer our forgiveness to someone who has hurt us without them first asking.

Reconciliation – we then grant that forgiveness by a sign which allows us to be come reconciled.

THE FAMILY RECONCILIATION SERVICE.

Prepare by placing a lighted candle, a bible and a crucifix on the table. Ask those gathered together to think about what the cross means to them. Then say the prayer.

God, our Father, we needed a home, and so you made this beautiful world and filled it with all kinds of creatures.

We needed warmth and light and you hung the sun in the sky.

We needed food and you blessed the fields with rain.

We needed someone to love and care for, and you gave us each other, our families and all the families of creation.

When we quarreled and forgot your goodness You sent your only Son to live and die for us. You planted a sign of love and forgiveness for all to see. He stretched out his arms on the cross to show how you long to embrace us all.

We remember the story of Jesus, the story of YOUR love for each of us and for every creature.

We remember your gift of love that WE can have for one another with joy and thanksgiving, today and every day of our lives. Amen

Continue the process.

- In the family you can read or tell a story about forgiveness from the Bible, e.g. the story of Job, or from nature or an incident that happened. Talk about the story.
- Each one then thinks about something they have done that hurt another family member and asks themselves, "Am I sorry for this hurt?"
- Ask that person to forgive you by saying, "Please forgive me for hurting you when....."
- The other person is invited to respond. "I forgive you." Or maybe, "I understand but am not ready to forgive."
- This can be repeated if there are more needs for forgiveness.

Explain that we hurt God by neglecting him, or not being aware of his presence, but most often we hurt God through hurting one another. Together say:

"Dear God, please forgive me for hurting you through neglecting you and through hurting each other."

As a sign of God's forgiveness you can trace a cross on each other's forehead and give each other a hug. To end on a happy note, joy with creation in singing, "He's got the Whole World in His hands," including everyone's names.

Pope Francis. *"To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God's love and hope."* LS 85

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER from Season of Creation 2026. May God our Father, who brought water from a rock, sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord, who is Living Water, refresh us for the work of restoration. May the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen. St Francis guide and inspire us on our way.

September 28. Make Room for Life! One family in their sharing time reflected and shared together on the story of Job. Michael explained, "It is a teaching story of Job, who was rich, had many children but God allowed Satan, the tempter, to test him. The test was, "Would he still believe in God's goodness if all his possessions were taken away?" He lost everything, home, family, possessions and his body was covered in sores. His friends kept pestering him to

blame God. He was almost at a point of cursing God but some faith remained in him.” “I wonder if something like that happened to me how would I react?” “It makes me think of unemployment. Some youth have never worked but I know a number of men who were retrenched. That is one of the most difficult things because as bread-winner he loses his ability to provide along with his dignity and the respect of his kids. Does he blame God?” “It depends.....” “Dad decided to add the last chapter of the story. “Job did acknowledge God’s greatness and his own lack of understanding so he chose to repent and ask God for forgiveness. God then blessed him with ever more possessions.”

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.” Job 1:6-22. **Pope Francis:** Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So we cannot fail to consider the effects on people’s lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture. LS 43. Work should be the setting for rich personal growth, where many aspects of life enter into play; creativity, planning for the future, developing our talents, living out our values, relating to others, giving glory to God. LS 127. **Eco-tip:** Read up on the whole story of Job, and share on its different messages, especially his integrity, but also the focus on his wealth and possessions as blessings.

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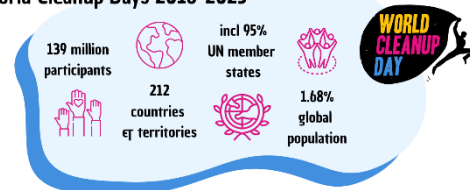
September 29. Feast of the Archangels, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael. There is a lot of interest in angels in popular culture nowadays. Fr James explained. “Angels and spirits are mentioned in various places in the Bible. Angels are creatures of God and they are given different tasks by God. They are also honoured in different cultures in different ways, while the whole spirit world is dealt with differently too. One popular Catholic devotion, from the book of Revelation, is the prayer to St Michael the archangel as defender against the devil and his lies and evil plans. Other archangels, mentioned by name are Gabriel, God’s messenger bringing good news, and Raphael, the healer in the book of Tobit, which is found in Catholic bibles. “I have always been interested in angels and think that all the angels have something to contribute to our family life.” Mom said, “We did pray to St Michael and St Raphael when we were having a difficult time. We prayed for deliverance from evil and for healing. And I do believe that they helped us.” Judy came out with, “This horrible war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas seems to go on and on. I read that the Archbishop of Jerusalem actually said that he believes Satan is working his evil in exactly the same place where Israel was answerable to God. Is that still the case? Let us pray the prayer to St Michael.”

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Jesus said, “Truly, truly I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” John 1:51 **Prayer to St Michael.** “Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray. And do thou, prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls.” **Pope Francis.** We are journeying towards the Sabbath of eternity, the new Jerusalem, towards our common home in heaven. LS 243. The Jubilee will thus be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God’s gift of creation. SNC24. **Eco-tip:** God speaks to us through his messengers who take different forms. People but also the beauty of nature, animals, plants and flowers can speak of God. Pray the prayer of St Michael for peace and to defend God’s people against evil.

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September 30. CLEANUP-TIME 2026. (From *Becoming Eco-Friendly Families*) <https://www.worldcleanupday.org> The website reports that on September 20, 2025, World Cleanup Day, In 2025, 25 million people from 190 countries and territories came together, representing 86% of UN member states, to take action for a cleaner, healthier planet. “This global movement proves that no matter where we live, every small action counts and together we can create massive change. Since 2018, when the campaign started, people in 211 countries have stood up against the global trash problem and by raising awareness and

World Cleanup Days 2018-2025



cleaning up waste, making it the biggest positive civic action the world had seen. Over 114 million volunteers have registered since the inaugural event in 2018. WCD is a gateway for lasting societal change in attitudes towards waste in general, and raise awareness of the mismanaged waste crisis. Our global network sends a clear message of collective determination to create a waste-free world.

The massive problem of waste. Each year, humanity generates 2 billion tons of municipal solid waste. Without urgent action, global waste will increase by 70% at current levels by 2050. Additionally, over 3.5 billion people lack access to efficient waste management systems, with much of their waste being incinerated, or ending up in nature, the seas, and the oceans, mainly through river systems. Earth.org [reports](#) that 60% of an annual 300 million tons of plastic waste end up in landfill or nature, with at least 8 million tons per year entering the oceans. It is estimated that + 40% of the ocean's surfaces are covered in plastic debris.

Digital Cleanup Day and its needs. In the digital world there is also a huge amount of trash. Unnecessary emails, files, apps, duplicates of photos and videos, etc. are all digital waste. This creates digital pollution that continues to consume energy, even when we have forgotten it's there. Each year the internet (and its supporting systems) produces 900 million tons of CO2, which is more than the annual output of the whole country of Germany! Digital Cleanup Day results for 2023's campaign saw over 380,000 participants, from 105 countries and territories, delete 12.7 million GB from their devices, thus preventing the annual production of at least 1,742 tons of CO2.

A major concern with the growing use of AI is the enormous amount of energy consumed in creating and managing AI systems that abound almost everywhere now. Ongoing research and development and the massive servers required use large amounts of energy – often fossil fuel generated – and contribute to CO2. Hardware and data centres that produce AI also consume large amounts of energy and need water for cooling. Think driverless cars, search engines info production save but also cost.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *When the days drew near for Jesus to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him, but the people would not receive him. Luke 9:51-56. Pope Francis:* *We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world and that doing good is worth it. LS 229* **Eco-tip. Clean-up Action:** 1. Become aware. 2. clean away waste. 3. Change behaviour, 4. Enjoy the cleaner, healthier environment.

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October 1. St Therese of Lisieux. Season of Creation. The families in the parish were invited to read her story and share their responses. Therese grew up as a pampered girl and when she felt the calling to become a Carmelite her family didn't think she would be strong enough. She persisted and entered the convent at age 15. Ill-health did prevent her from going to a mission country which is what she wanted but she kept her love for the missions. She spent the last 9 years of her life aiming at perfection through what she called "the little way" and through prayer and meditation. Her little sacrifices of ordinary events in her daily life were seen as flowers and this simple spirituality earned her the title "the Little Flower." After hearing the story little Lizzy said, "I think I can be a missionary like St Therese too, doing all my chores as best I can." Pauline added, "Why don't we use the idea of a flower for each of the sacrifices we make too. Then we can take those flowers to someone who is sick, in the parish or community." Mom added, "I think her parents and all the family were really exceptional people. Her mom had 9 children, 4 died in infancy and the remaining 5 girls all joined Therese and became Carmelite nuns."

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said, "unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. Mat 18:1-5. Pope Francis:* *St Therese invites us to practise the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. Our prayers also extend to the saints and blessed ones who made divine mercy their mission in life. MV24. Eco-tip and prayer:* Share how St Therese can be a model for each family member.

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October 2. Guardian angels. There is a very long tradition in the church of devotion to our guardian angels. In recent years this seems to have faded with a greater interest in angels in general. We often see pictures of cute cuddly little

creatures with wings and sometimes angels are portrayed as avengers at the gates of heaven or hell. All angels are messengers from God, but our guardian angels bring the message of God's care and love to a specific person. This can be a real source of comfort to children especially. Families can use the prayer with the young and you might find that as the kids grow up they may still use the prayers they learned as children. *Prayer: Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day be at my side to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.*

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said, "see that you do not despise these little ones; I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. Matt 18:10. Pope Francis: Each of us has a Guardian Angel, who acting on behalf of God, advises us and protects us from evil, if we only listen to him. 2015 message to families. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. LS 159*

Eco-tip and prayer: Examine your prayer life with your guardian angels too as Eco-friendly families. How can it be enriched? Get MARFAM'S booklet *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES* to use for sharing and prayer.

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October 3. FAMILIES WALK THE TALK. (From *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES*). To "walk the talk" means to actively live out what we believe, to "put your money where your mouth is". If some of us are doing something we think is important, and also sitting together, sharing our thoughts and feelings, listening well and feeling understood we're, "walking the talk." That is the meaningful dialogue which is being promoted through the Church's Synod process. Too often our talking is hardly a conversation, as we shout, mumble, whatsapp or text one another, talk at or past each other and hardly listen with more than half an ear. Meaningful communication is essential in building good relationships but also fixing any issues that are causing family conflict. Too often we choose to be "too busy" for one another, even as we go out to do good and help others. Why not fix family first! Walking the talk is also going beyond just talk, but taking action and standing up for what we believe, even lobbying for a cause as simple as "don't drink and drive." It is good for a family to act together when it comes to saving water, electricity and recycling at home, but adopting an external cause together can be particularly good. Example: Save the rhino, clean-up our town, protect unborn life.

A FAMILY TALK WALK is an activity for family members to take time together, ideally in nature or a pleasant setting, maybe with dog, pram or wheelchair for elderly, walking and talking as they go. No fixed distance, or time. Not a "Big Walk" fundraiser or exercise. A moment to bond that is good for family unity.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *The 72 returned with joy saying, "Lord even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them. I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:17-24. Pope Francis: writing in preparation for the Synod on Synodality 2021-2024. Co-responsibility for the common mission calls families to cooperate in building the fabric of the Church. Let us give them space and a listening ear so that they can participate in the synodal journey, showing the family face of the Church. The family is the way of the Church. The Church is in fact a family among families FT276. The family is an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures beginning in the territory in which the family lives. AL 290. Eco-tip. Examine how effectively your family does "walk the talk" as becoming more eco-family-friendly.*

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October 4. St Francis. End of Season of Creation. Michael shared with his fellow confirmation candidates. "Just like there are many Theresa's there are also many Francis's in parishes and families. Quite often children choose these as their confirmation patrons and to be their role models." "How much do you know about St Francis, so that he can really be a model for you?" Tracy asked. Michael shared, "He lived 800 years ago. He was a playboy, came from a wealthy family but in a conversion experience Jesus appeared to him and said, 'Go and rebuild my church.' At first he

thought he had to go and rebuild a broken down old building but what Jesus meant was to go and build up the people, including himself, to love Jesus, the poor and all of creation, animals and plants too. Although his later life was not easy as he suffered much from nearly going blind and the pain of the stigmata – the five wounds of Jesus on his body – he was filled with the joy of love.” Michael then added, “We, in our family, have discovered St Francis and try to follow his example. Our parents really are witnesses to us and in the world. I believe we can truly say “Our world is a Family of Families.”

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls Matt 11: 28-29.*

Pope Francis: to Youth at World Youth Day 2023 and often repeated, *The youth and elderly need one another. The elderly are their roots and wisdom and the youth the source of joy and hope. In calling to mind the figure of St Francis of Assisi, we come to realise that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change. LS 218. St 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.* **Eco-tip:** Young people could do more to make St Francis a true model of an eco-family-friendly caring way of life. Begin together with a prayer and a special blessing of all animals, pets, domestic and wild? Pray with St Francis Canticle of the Creatures or the Peace Prayer of St Francis.

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