

June 2015 Staff Meeting

Leader: With the release of the encyclical of Pope Francis on the environment, this is a worthy time to reflect on our relationship with Creation, as we consider five reasons Catholics should care for the environment, which we will intersperse with our prayer.

Reader: Number 1: Creation takes care of us.

We know the expression “don’t bite the hand that feeds you.” This saying couldn’t apply more readily to care for creation. The earth literally *feeds us*. Everything we eat, from arugula salads to hot dogs at the ball game, comes from the earth. The healthier our relationship with creation, the healthier we’ll be in turn.

May we come to deeply appreciate the importance of our interconnectedness with the earth, we pray to the Lord... *R. Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader: Number 2. It promotes peace.

Scarcity and uncertainty breeds competition and mistrust: it’s an unfortunate human reality. Which is why a world whose future is uncertain and whose resources are in flux is probably not going to be a peaceful place.

If there isn’t harmony in the ecology of nature, then there probably won’t be harmony in what Pope Benedict XVII called “human ecology.” As the pope emeritus said in his 2007 World Day of Peace address, experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence. So if we truly desire peace, we “must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology.”

May we come to see our personal daily actions as important as the world struggles for peace. We pray to the Lord...*R. Lord hear our prayer*

Reader: Number 3. It’s part of the preferential option for the poor.

The poor and vulnerable are those most connected and immediately dependent upon the land. This why the degradation of creation is a social justice issue. Changing climates and altering ecosystems cause immense hardship on the world’s poor. Pope Francis continuously emphasizes that care for creation is really care for our fellow man. as a requisite of solidarity and justice.

May we be reminded of the needs of the developing world as we participate in decisions which affect their environment, we pray to the Lord...*R. Lord hear our prayer.*

Reader: Number 4. Beauty matters.

There are few things in life that can lift our mind to contemplate the divine better than the splendor of nature. God created the world, and his mark is everywhere in it; we learn about Him through his creation.

But as modern man increasingly treats creation as meaningless raw material, this transcendental dimension gets lost. As Pope Francis said, “We are losing the attitude of wonder, contemplation, listening to creation.” We can restore this attitude, this sense of wonder and appreciation, by remembering what it means and who it comes from. This in turn will draw us closer to God. The beauty of creation is a gift that keeps on giving, and should be cared for lovingly.

May we come to deeply value connection to the Divine through the beauty of Creation, we pray to the Lord...R. *Lord hear our prayer.*

Reader: Number 5. We love God through respecting the things he gives us.

God gave us creation and He called it good. If it's good enough for God, it ought to be good enough for us. Scripture reminds that we are stewards of the gift of creation, not exploiters who use it and abuse it as we want. Instead, we cooperate with God as His co-creators. Caring for creation, the material of our partnership with God, is an undeniable charge of those who want to live the Christian life and love their God.

May we resolve to tangibly show our love and respect for our God who graces us with so much, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We pause for a moment of silence, bringing to mind our own desires to be reconciled with Creation, and our personal intentions.

(Pause)

Loving and gracious God,
We give you thanks for the many blessings of this year.
As we move into these summer months that afford time for rest and reflection,
May we be drawn to consider your beautiful Creation and the words of Pope Francis.

Bless our community throughout these summer months with rejuvenation and safety.

We ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.

(Adapted from <https://catholicrurallife.org/5-reasons-catholics-and-countryfolk-should-care-for-creation/>, through [www. http://ignatiansolidarity.net](http://ignatiansolidarity.net))