
Sunday 7 November 2021

Introduction to the day of prayer for COP26

(It can be announced at the beginning of the celebration of the mass)

Dear brothers and sisters, in today's Eucharist, we celebrate the Feast of All Saints, of those men and women who more closely imitated the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and are offering us a shining testimony of faith and love. Today also, we like to remember and pray for all our deceased brothers and sisters. We commend them to the mercy of God who may grant them eternal happiness and peace in Heaven.

In celebrating today's feast of All Saints, we would like to call on them to intercede for a very special need: we want to ask them to pray for the successful outcome of the International Conference on Climate change, COP26, which is held in Glasgow, Scotland. Over one hundred world leaders and thousands of representatives from civil society have been meeting there in the last days to discuss and lay out plans on how to tackle the unprecedented ecological crisis. Urgent decisions need to be taken to stop the rising in temperature of atmosphere, land and oceans caused by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, petrol and gas. Droughts and extreme weather accompanied by wildfires and severe storms and flooding are the signs of the climate change due human activities.

Pope Francis, who for more than two years has been working for a successful outcome of COP26, is relentlessly calling on all of us Christians and people of good will to «listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor». He is inviting those in authority and every one of us to work together for a more sustainable economy that respects nature and guarantees an equitable distribution of the goods of the earth among all the peoples of the world.

In harmony with the Pope's appeal and in communion with all the Christians around the world we are summoned to pray together to the Lord for the world leaders in Glasgow who are about to take important decisions on climate change. Let us invoke the Holy Spirit upon them that they may be able to take speedy and ambitious commitments on reducing carbon emission in order «to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and our common home, the planet, entrusted to our stewardship. » (Pope Francis)

Prayers of the faithful

With Saint Francis of Assisi, patron of ecologists, let us bring before the Lord our requests for all of us gathered here, for the Church and for the whole world:

We pray that the Holy Spirit may guide the world leaders gathered in Glasgow to take ambitious steps aiming at a more equitable and environmentally sustainable economy.

Lord, hear us

We pray for the Church: that she may be a beacon of hope throughout the world, reminding us all of our responsibility to care for and protect God's precious gift of creation. *Lord, hear us*

We pray for the world, our common home: that through God's grace we may hear its cry for the damage done and be moved to protect it for future generations to enjoy. *Lord, hear us*

We pray for those people who are already facing droughts, floods and storms: that God may grant them strength and hope for the future as they work to adapt to the changing climate.
Lord, hear us

We pray that we may always acknowledge and uphold the right of every person and of every living being to a healthy environment.
Lord, hear us

Conclusion to intercessions:

Let us bring before the Lord the prayers that lie in each of our hearts and ask for the prayers of Mary, our mother and Queen of Creation, as we say, Hail Mary...

God, source of all goodness, we call you Creator; you have made our wonderful world out of nothing and constantly keep it alive. Help us to be full of care and grateful for our home received from you as a gift. May we work to keep this, our common home, filled with peace and justice.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

A Prayer for our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your 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.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the 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 on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize 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, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

By Pope Francis

Points to be considered for the homily

The Beatitudes of the Gospel on this Sunday are a call to conversion, to change attitudes and behaviours towards our fellow human beings. Yet the Beatitudes are also a call addressed to each one of us to be just and caring towards the earth, our common home, to preserve its beauty and share its bountiful fruits with others especially with those who have less.

Following are some points raised by Pope Francis in his latest messages for 1 September, Day of creation.

Help the faithful to realize that ‘living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience’” (LS 217).

To endeavour to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us.

We frequently hear from young people who understand that their futures are under threat. For their sake, we must choose to eat, travel, spend, invest and live differently, thinking not only of immediate interest and gains but also of future benefits.

We have greedily consumed more of the earth’s resources than the planet can endure. We also face a profound injustice: the people bearing the most catastrophic consequences of these abuses are the poorest on the planet and have been the least responsible for causing them. We serve a God of justice, who delights in creation and creates every person in God’s image, but also hears the cry of people who are poor.

Now, in this moment, we have an opportunity to repent, to turn around in resolve, to head in the opposite direction. We must pursue generosity and fairness in the ways that we live, work and use money, instead of selfish gain.

Let us awaken our God-given aesthetic and contemplative sense” (*Querida Amazonia*, 56). The capacity to wonder and to contemplate is something that we can learn especially from our indigenous brothers and sisters, who live in harmony with the land and its multiple forms of life.

In some ways, the current pandemic has led us to rediscover simpler and sustainable lifestyles. The crisis, in a sense, has given us a chance to develop new ways of living.

The pandemic has brought us to a crossroads. We must use this decisive moment to end our superfluous and destructive goals and activities, and to cultivate values, connections and activities that are life-giving. We must examine our habits of energy usage, consumption, transportation, and diet.

This time should lead to long-term action plans to practise integral ecology in our families, parishes and dioceses, religious orders, our schools and universities, our healthcare, business and agricultural institutions, and many others as well.