

Season of Creation 2022

Resources



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2022 Season of Creation Logo: The Burning Bush



*“I have heard their cry...I know their sufferings...Come, now!
I will send you...I will be with you” (Ex 3:1-12)*

The burning bush is the Symbol for the Season of Creation 2022. Today, the prevalence of unnatural fires are a sign of the devastating effects that climate change has on the most vulnerable of our planet.

Human greed, desertification and land misuse lead to the disintegration of ecosystems, the destruction of habitats, and the loss of livelihoods and species at an alarming rate. Creation cries out as forests crackle, animals flee, and people are forced to migrate due to the fires of injustice that we have caused.

On the contrary, the fire that called to Moses as he tended the flock on Mt. Horeb did not consume or destroy the bush. This was a flame of the Spirit that revealed God’s life sustaining presence. This holy fire affirmed that God heard the cries of all who suffered, and promised to be with us as we followed faithfully to deliverance from injustice.

During the Season of Creation, this symbol calls us to listen to the voice of creation, and faithfully respond through worship, repentance and action. Moses was told to remove his sandals, for he was standing on holy ground in God’s presence. May this symbol move us to remove the “sandals” of our unsustainable lifestyles that disconnect us from creation and our Creator, contemplate our connection to the holy ground where we live, and listen for the voice of creation.

Prayer Service for the Season of Creation

(For use in a school/parish setting)



**A selection of hymns, scripture readings, prayers and
suggested tableau ideas**

Prayer Service for the Season of Creation

(For use in a school/parish setting)

This prayer service can be used/adapted for use in a school or parish setting throughout the Season of Creation. As you plan your service, consider creating a Burning Bush (see resource for creating a Burning Bush) as the centrepiece to your tableau/prayer space. It serves as a symbol of the community's intention to recognise the Earth as holy ground, and a commitment to listen for the voice of God directing our stewardship of creation. In contemplative wonder we also appreciate the voice of creation praising God.

Already in situ, or brought up in procession, participants may create a space for some additional items which represent the voice of the land and creatures who share our common home, as well as symbols which reflect our exploitation of God's creation. Below are possible suggestions:

Water

Water can be drawn from streams, lakes, springs, or holy wells in the locality and presented in separate containers. Water is the source of life that brings life to our land, waters our crops, sustains creation and its creatures, and beautifies our common home.

Soil

Depending on resources and time, soil could be collected from each townland in a parish, drawing the community together as a common home. Alternatively, containers of soil from areas of the parish which are agricultural, residential, recreational, rural etc can be used.

Otherwise, a single container of soil can be used.

Leaders may use the soil to reflect on how we use soil to grow our crops, enjoy recreation in sport, playgrounds, gardens etc. It can also symbolise the way we move soil to create our homes and communities, develop infrastructure, and extract natural resources.

It may be worthwhile reflecting on how land/soil has become a battleground for nations at war with one another as they fight over territories or exploit prized natural resources.

With the growth of human population centres, the balance of creation is disturbed, and flora and fauna lose their natural habitat.

Sand

A container of sand may be associated with recreation, but it also represents the desertification of lands because of climate change, resulting in drought, the failure of crops, the destruction of habitats, and famine.

Small Tree

This represents the oxygen supplied by plants. The Amazon rainforests are described as the 'Lungs of the Earth' producing 20% of the world's oxygen. While the tree reminds us of the importance of sustainability, it also reminds us of the destruction caused by intensive deforestation.

Small Burning Bush

It represents the large swaths of land devastated by fire across Europe in recent years. While there are all sorts of reasons why these fires start, climate change aggravates their intensity and the destruction caused.

Plastic bottles, papers, tins

These items symbolise the way we contaminate and pollute our land, waterways, oceans and air. They also remind us of the impact of waste on our common home: releasing powerful greenhouse gases linked to climate change. Attention can also be drawn to the ways waste litters our environment.

Fishing net

The inclusion of a fishing net draws attention to our waterways and oceans as sources of beauty and food. They provide a livelihood for those who fish our seas. It also draws attention to the ways in which we exploit of our oceans and the need to safeguard against depleting our oceans of their resources.

Flowers

Flowers and plants adorn our cities, homes, parks, towns, and countryside. As Jesus spoke about the beauty of the lillies of the field and their beauty, flowers and plants give us a glimpse of God's divine artistry. Flowers and plants are essential for bees, insects, animals, and human beings. Their fragrance and colours stimulate our senses, provide our food, contain medicinal properties, produce wood for crafting and building, and encourage biodiversity.

Seed and leaves

The seed and leaves remind us of the seasons, the cycle of life. They symbolise how our common home provides in plenty for our needs. They symbolise hope, abundance, growth, revival, fertility and growth.

OPENING HYMN

(a suitable alternative may be chosen as the opening hymn)

All creatures of our God and king

Lift up your voices and with us sing

Alleluia, alleluia

Thou burning with golden beam

Thou silver moon with softer gleam

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

Thou rushing wind that art so strong

Ye clouds that sail in heav'n a long

Alleluia, alleluia

Thou rising morn in praise rejoice

Ye light of evening find a voice

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

Thou flowing water pure and clear

Make music for thy Lord to hear

Alleluia, alleluia
Thou fire so masterful and bright
That gives to man both warmth and light
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Leader:

Praise be to the Holy Trinity!
God is sound and life, Creator of the Universe,
Source of all life, whom the angels sing;
wondrous Light of all mysteries known or unknown to humankind,
and life that lives in all.

(Hildegard of Bingen, 13th Century)

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation,
Your spirit dances throughout the earth.
You give drink to the trees,
shade for the birds,
bread for the hungry,
you bring life and make all things holy.

Flood us with your grace,
so we may sow seeds of love, justice and beauty,
and reflect your kingdom here on earth.
We ask this through Christ your Son, Jesus Christ
Amen.

FIRST READING

Ex. 3:1-6

Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses

thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.” “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (a suitable alternative may be chosen)

**Response: Send forth your spirit, O Lord,
 and renew the face of the earth.**

You founded the earth on its base,
to stand firm from age to age.
You wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak:
the waters stood higher than the mountains. **R.**

You make springs gush forth in the valleys:
they flow in between the hills.
On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;
from the branches they sing their song. **R.**

From your dwelling you water the hills;
earth drinks its fill of your gift.
You make the grass grow for the cattle
and the plants to serve people's needs. **R.**

How many are your works, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.
Bless the Lord, my soul! **R**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 13: 1-3, 31-33

That same day, Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the shore, and he told them many things in parables.

He put another parable before them, 'The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air can come and shelter in its branches.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

The priest/leader may choose an extract from *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis' message for the Season of Creation, a short personal reflection, or a Powerpoint/video message/reflection for the Season of Creation.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Invitation to prayer

Creator God, the parables through which Jesus taught are rich reminders of care for creation: the shepherd seeking the lost sheep, the farmer allowing the 'weeds' and the wheat to grow together until harvest time or the mustard seed growing into a plant that will shelter the birds of the air. May we follow him in having that same care for creation today.

1. For our Church, that it may encourage and support the "ecological conversion" which calls all humanity to responsible stewardship of creation.

Lord, hear us.

2. For the poor, the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; may they be taken into account by those societies and industries contributing the most to world pollution and climate change. **Lord, hear us.**
3. Believing God can make crooked paths straight, we pray for action to protect and care for all creation and set our economies on new more life-giving paths. **Lord, hear us.**
4. Inspired by our Catholic faith, help us optimise our resources, reduce greenhouse gases, and take action which allows us to transition to clean, sustainable energy. **Lord, hear us.**
5. With a shared sense of responsibility to care for God's beautiful, life-giving creation, we pray that the goals to reduce global warming, and protection of life for all are attained. **Lord, hear us.**
6. Creator God, the sun, the wind and the waves are your gifts for the flourishing of the whole community of life on earth. Help us to use them creatively to produce sustainable energy for all. **Lord, hear us.**
7. Creator God, we pray for visionaries, artists and writers, that through their work we may see Creation afresh. **Lord, hear us.**
8. As we have been generously blessed with an abundance of gifts in this world, help us to share what we have with the poor and those most in need. **Lord, hear us.**

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father,

we thank you for Your many good gifts

For the beauty of Creation and its rich and varied fruits,

For clean water and fresh air for food and shelter, animals and plants.

Forgive us for the times we have taken the earth's resources for granted.

Transform our hearts and minds with a gentleness and love for all living things.

We pray for all those who suffer as a result of our waste, greed and indifference.

And help us to willingly share your gifts today and always. **Amen**

REFLECTION

Warned

Sylvia Stults

The sands of time have rendered fear
Blue skies on high no longer clear
Stars were bright whence they came
Now dimmed, obscured, pollution's haze

Crystal clear our waters gleamed
Fish abundant, rivers streamed
Ocean floors sandy white
Now littered, brown, pollution's plight

Trees towered high above
Trunks baring professed love
Birds chirping from sites unseen
Gone, paper joined pollution's team

One can't blame pollution alone
As they say, you reap what you've sown
So let us plant a better seed
Tear out old roots, cultivate, weed

Protect what has been given for free
Our waters, skies, wildlife and trees
For once they're gone, don't you say
Consider yourself warned of that fatal day

OR

The Canticle of Creation

St. Francis of Assisi

O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God,
to you belong praise, glory,
honour and all blessing!

Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation
and especially for our Brother Sun,
who brings us the day and the light;
he is strong and shines magnificently.
O Lord, we think of you when we look at him.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon,
and for the stars
which you have set shining and lovely
in the heavens.

Be praised, my Lord,
for our Brothers Wind and Air
and every kind of weather
by which you, Lord,
uphold life in all your creatures.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,
who is very useful to us,
and humble and precious and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom you give us light in the darkness:
he is bright and lively and strong.

Be praised, my Lord,
for Sister Earth, our Mother,
who nourishes us and sustains us,
bringing forth
fruits and vegetables of many kinds
and flowers of many colours.

Be praised, my Lord,
for those who forgive for love of you;
and for those
who bear sickness and weakness
in peace and patience
- you will grant them a crown.

Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister Death,
whom we must all face.

I praise and bless you, Lord,
and I give thanks to you,
and I will serve you in all humility.

OUR FATHER

FINAL BLESSING

May God the Father, who clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the birds of the air, provide us with all we need for life in its fullness. **Amen.**

May God the Son, who fed the five thousand and turned water into wine, feed us with his life and transform us in his love. **Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit, who hovered over the waters of creation and formed the world from chaos, form us in the likeness of Christ and renew the face of the earth. **Amen.**

In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

RECESSIONAL HYMN

How Great Thou Art

Boberg

Oh Lord, my God
When I, in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin

**Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art**

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration

And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art
**Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
How great Thou art, how great Thou art**

Creating a Burning Bush

Creating a symbolic 'Burning Bush' for a school's or parish church's sacred space may afford, chaplains, teachers or parishioners the opportunity to introduce and explain this year's Season of Creation theme and symbol.

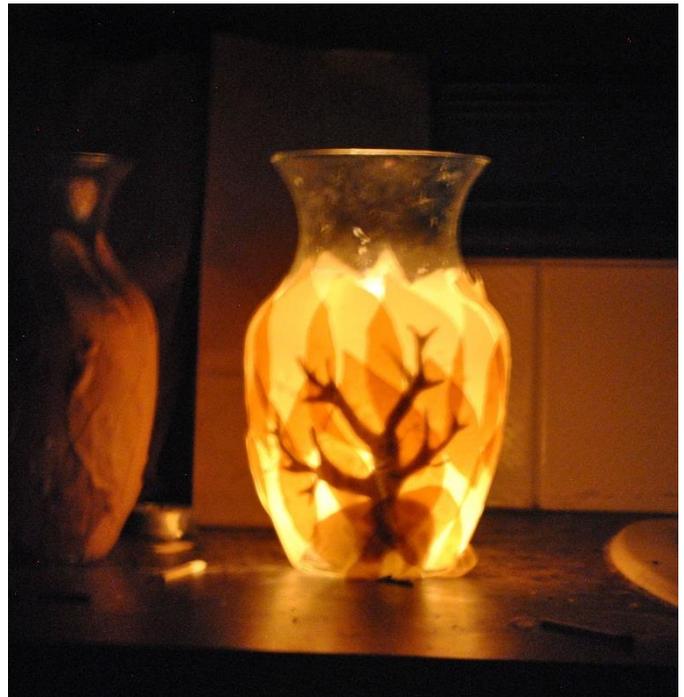
Organise an activity where participants are invited to take off their shoes to acknowledge the sacred ground on which we stand, like Moses was invited to take off his shoes to approach the burning bush (Ex 3:5). It is also an opportunity to organise a moment of prayer to recall our ancestors of faith and those who defend our common home and the most vulnerable, just like Moses heard God recalling Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 3:6-7). You may recall all those who work for socio-environmental justice.

There are a number of ways of creating a burning bush:

- (i) Supply a large potted tree or shrub. It can be in leaf or dormant depending on the time of year. Using red and orange ribbons or paper, fix them to the branches to represent the fire. The image below may provide some inspiration.



- (ii) Create a luminary of the burning bush. Using a glass jar or large clear glass vase, decorate the outside of the glass with the painting of a bush – branches, red, orange and yellow flames. Place a lighted candle inside and dim the room before beginning the prayer service. The following images may offer some guidance.



(iii) Invite the children of your parish or school community to draw the burning bush and decorate it with coloured card, fabric, etc. The children can trace their hands, group them together, and decorate them to represent the fire, or use actual leaves.



Sample Prayers of the Faithful for inclusion in Sunday Mass during the Season of Creation

1. Help us to listen to the voice of creation. May we always respect the world in which we live, and as we benefit from your bountiful gifts, we may be ever mindful of those who come after us. **Lord, hear us.**
2. God of all life, we give thanks for the gift of the earth, our common home. As the eco-systems of the earth are struggling to survive, help us to change our attitudes and ways that we may be responsible stewards of creation. **Lord, hear us.**
3. Help world leaders to realise national and international agreements to reduce global warming which care for our common home and the poor throughout the world. **Lord, hear us.**
4. We pray for political leaders. May they offer concrete hope to future generations as they take radical steps to tackle climate change. **Lord, hear us.**
5. Pope Francis said, ‘A healthy environment is a right of every human being’. We pray for those adversely affected by climate change, especially the poor and future generations. **Lord, hear us.**
6. We pray for all young people: may their courageous call for change and action awaken us all to ‘the cries of the earth and its poor’. **Lord, hear us.**
7. We pray that we may gain a deeper appreciation of the beauty and diversity of all that you have created. As we journey through our Synodal process, help us to also listen to the voice of creation, to acknowledge how deeply interconnected we are with each other and with the natural world. **Lord, hear us.**
8. Help us deepen our resolve to reduce our waste and curb our selfish actions that conflict with our relationship with each other and with the natural world. **Lord, hear us.**

9. Lord, on the seventh day, you rested. As we celebrate this day of resurrection, help us to rest in a spirit of thanksgiving and praise for the beauty of the world around us. **Lord, hear us.**

10. Lord, may we have the courage to give expression to our faith with practical actions for the betterment of each other and your creation to ensure we safeguard our common home for future generations. **Lord, hear us.**

The following sources were consulted in compiling these resources:

www.catholicbishops.ie

www.seasonofcreation.org

www.catholicclimatemovement.global