



MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE LEO XIV
**FOR THE 10th WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
FOR THE CARE OF CREATION 2025**

[1 September 2025]

Seeds of Peace and Hope

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The theme of this World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, chosen by our beloved Pope Francis, is “Seeds of Peace and Hope”. On the tenth anniversary of the establishment of this Day of Prayer, which coincided with the publication of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, we find ourselves celebrating the present Jubilee as “Pilgrims of Hope.” This year’s theme thus appears most timely.

In proclaiming the Kingdom of God, Jesus often used the image of the seed. As the time of his Passion drew near, he applied that image to himself, comparing himself to the grain of wheat that must die in order to bear fruit ([cf. Jn 12:24](#)). Seeds are buried in the earth, and there, to our wonder, life springs up, even in the most unexpected places, pointing to the promise of new beginnings. We can think, for example, of flowers springing up on our roadsides from seeds that landed up there almost by chance. As those flowers grow, they brighten the gray tarmac and even manage to break through its hard surface.

In Christ, we too are seeds, and indeed, “seeds of peace and hope.” The prophet Isaiah tells us that the Spirit of God can make an arid and parched desert into a garden, a place of rest and serenity. In his words, “a spirit from on high will be poured out on us, and the wilderness will become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field a forest. Then justice will dwell

in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, and the work of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” ([Is 32:15-18](#)).

These words of the prophet will accompany the “Season of Creation,” an ecumenical initiative to be celebrated from 1 September to 4 October 2025. They remind us that, together with prayer, determination and concrete actions are necessary if this “caress of God” is to become visible to our world ([cf. Laudato Si’, 84](#)). The prophet contrasts justice and law with the desolation of the desert. His message is extraordinarily timely, given the evidence in various parts of the world that our earth is being ravaged. 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. Extreme natural phenomena caused by climate changes provoked by human activity are growing in intensity and frequency ([cf. Laudato Deum, 5](#)), to say nothing of the medium and long-term effects of the human and ecological devastation being wrought by armed conflicts.

As yet, we seem incapable of recognizing that the destruction of nature does not affect everyone in the same way. When justice and peace are trampled underfoot, those who are most hurt are the poor, the marginalized and the excluded. The suffering of indigenous communities is emblematic in this regard.

That is not all. Nature itself is reduced at times to a bargaining chip, a commodity to be bartered for economic or political gain. As a result, God’s creation turns into a battleground for the control of vital resources. We see this in agricultural areas and forests peppered with landmines, “scorched earth” policies, [1] conflicts over water sources, and the unequal distribution of raw materials, which penalizes the poorer nations and undermines social stability itself.

These various wounds are the effect of sin. This is surely not what God had in mind when he entrusted the earth to the men and women whom he created in his image ([cf. Gen](#)

[1:24-29](#)). The Bible provides no justification for us to exercise “tyranny over creation” ([Laudato Si’](#), 200). On the contrary, “the biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world . ‘Tilling’ refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while ‘keeping’ means caring, protecting,overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature” ([ibid.](#), 67).

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. For it is a matter of justice – social, economic and human. For believers it is also a duty born of faith, since the universe reflects the face of Jesus Christ, in whom all things were created and redeemed. In a world where the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are the first to suffer the devastating effects of climate change,deforestation and pollution, care for creation becomes an expression of our faith and humanity.

Now is the time to follow words with deeds. “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” ([Lauda to Si’](#), 217). By working with love and perseverance, we can sow many seeds of justice and thus contribute to the growth of peace and the renewal of hope. It may well take years for this plant to bear its first fruits, years that, for their part, involve an entire ecosystem made up of continuity, fidelity, cooperation and love, especially if that love mirrors the Lord’s own self-sacrificing Love.

Among the Church’s initiatives that are like seeds sown in this field, I would mention the Borgo Laudato Si’ project that Pope Francis bequeathed to us at Castel Gandolfo. It is a seed that promises to bear fruits of justice and peace,and an educational project in integral ecology that can serve as an example of how people can live, work and build community by applying the principles of the Encyclical Laudato Si’.

I pray that Almighty God will send us in abundance his “Spirit from on high” ([Is32:15](#)), so that these seeds, and others like them, may bring forth an abundant harvest of peace and hope.

The Encyclical Laudato Si’ has now guided the Catholic Church and many people of good

will for ten years. May it continue to inspire us and may integral ecology be increasingly accepted as the right path to follow. In this way, seeds of hope will multiply, to be “tilled and kept” by the grace of our great and unfailing Hope, who is the risen Christ. In his name, I offer all of you my blessing.

From the Vatican, 30 June 2025

Memorial of the First Martyrs of Holy Roman Church

LEO PP. XIV

[1] Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, Land and Food, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015, 51-53.

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Jn 12:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." [return](#)

Is 32:15-18 "Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;" [return](#)

Laudato Si', 84 Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighbourhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves. [return](#)

Laudato Deum, 5 Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident. No one can ignore the fact that in recent years we have witnessed extreme weather phenomena, frequent periods of unusual heat, drought and other cries of protest on the part of the earth that are only a few palpable expressions of a silent disease that affects everyone. Admittedly, not every concrete catastrophe ought to be attributed to global climate change. Nonetheless, it is verifiable that specific climate changes provoked by humanity are notably heightening the probability of extreme phenomena that are increasingly frequent and intense. For this reason, we know that every time the global temperature increases by 0.5° C, the intensity and frequency of great rains and floods increase in some areas and severe droughts in others, extreme heat waves in some places and heavy snowfall in others. [4] If up to now we could have heat waves several times a year, what will happen if the global temperature increases by 1.5° C, which we are approaching? Those heat waves will be much more frequent and with greater intensity. If it should rise above 2 degrees, the icecaps of Greenland and a large part of Antarctica [5] will melt completely, with immensely grave consequences for everyone. [return](#)

Gen 1:24-29 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. [return](#)

Laudato Si', 200. Any technical solution which science claims to offer will be powerless to solve the serious problems of our world if humanity loses its compass, if we lose sight of the great motivations which make it possible for us to live in harmony, to make sacrifices

and to treat others well. Believers themselves must constantly feel challenged to live in a way consonant with their faith and not to contradict it by their actions. They need to be encouraged to be ever open to God's grace and to draw constantly from their deepest convictions about love, justice and peace. If a mistaken understanding of our own principles has at times led us to justify mistreating nature, to exercise tyranny over creation, to engage in war, injustice and acts of violence, we believers should acknowledge that by so doing we were not faithful to the treasures of wisdom which we have been called to protect and preserve. Cultural limitations in different eras often affected the perception of these ethical and spiritual treasures, yet by constantly returning to their sources, religions will be better equipped to respond to today's needs. [return](#)

Gen 2:15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

ibid., 67 We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us. This allows us to respond to the charge that Judaeo-Christian thinking, on the basis of the Genesis account which grants man "dominion" over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28), has encouraged the unbridled exploitation of nature by painting him as domineering and destructive by nature. This is not a correct interpretation of the Bible as understood by the Church. Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures. The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to "till and keep" the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15). "Tilling" refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while "keeping" means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. "The earth is the Lord's" (Ps 24:1); to him belongs "the earth with all that is within it" (Dt 10:14). Thus God rejects every claim to absolute ownership: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me" (Lev 25:23). [return](#)

Laudato Si', 217 "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast".[152] For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to

change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. 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. [return](#)

Is 32:15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. [return](#)