

Homily 23rd Sunday Year B 2021 Season of Creation

Intro to Penitential rite: O Gracious God, Creator Spirit, Source of life, you have given order, light and life to the world around us, and you have expressed delight in your creation. You commanded us to till and care for the garden of life. And yet, we have trampled on the beauty of your creation and neglected to keep your Word. As we begin our eucharist today, we seek God's mercy and forgiveness for the times that we have offended against the integrity of God's creation.

In healing the deaf man today, Jesus identifies with him, groaning like him, using his own spittle to touch the deaf man's tongue. Being the creator of the universe, of the earth, God also identifies with creation, offering us another bible that speaks of God's love for us and for all that he has created. Trusting us, God made us stewards of creation and we have seriously let God down. Pope Francis wrote **Laudato Si'** – On Care for Our Common Home, in 2015, reminding us of our responsibility and calling us to listen to the ***cry of the earth*** and the ***cry of the poor***. 16 Years later we are only just beginning to wake up. Our eco system is in crisis because we have not protected our common home. We must now live even more sustainably and continue to raise concerns for our ecosystem in the public sphere. The Season of Creation offers a unique opportunity to renew our vocation as stewards of God's creation. Pope Francis continually reminds us that the care of God's creation lies at the core of our Christian calling; it is not an optional extra! *"The ecological crisis is a summons to profound interior conversion... whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us. Living our vocation of being 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."* (Laudato Si' §217)

The scientific community tell us that we are now living through the 6th mass extinction of life on our planet, with the catastrophic destruction of biodiversity due to human activity. We have plundered the earth. This Autumn, two vital UN conferences will take place, the UN Conference on Biodiversity (COP15 in China) and the UN conference on Climate Change (COP26 in Glasgow). As Catholics, the Vatican urges us to sign a petition addressed to the Presidents of these conferences, to raise our voices for God's Creation and to urge world leaders to act. The petition is called the *"Healthy Planet, Healthy People Petition"* and can be found at www.thecatholicpetition.org. Please sign this petition in solidarity with the poor and with creation and encourage friends and families to do the same. This very simple action calls for the Restoration of Our Common Home, God's creation. *"I wish to address every person living on this planet... I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all."* (Laudato Si' §3, 14)

A boy was standing in his father's wheatfield for several hours..... His father finally asked him *"son, what are you doing standing out here?"*

His son replied. *"Father, I am not wasting my time, I am trying to win a Nobel prize!"*

The father thought he was studying the environment and was impressed, so he asked *"how do you plan on doing that?"*

His son replied *"I have heard that people who won Nobel prizes were outstanding in their field. So, I'm doing the same."*