

Earth Day Prayer Service

SIGN OF THE CROSS

OPENING PRAYER

Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, wondrous community of infinite love, we praise you as your glory shines through all of creation.

Teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe which you have made for us.

Give us the grace to be true stewards of your creation by making us channels of love for your people; caretakers of our common home, the earth, and its creatures.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ who has risen from the dead. Amen.

REFLECTION

Let us reflect upon the words from Pope Francis's Homily for the Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry- March 19, 2013

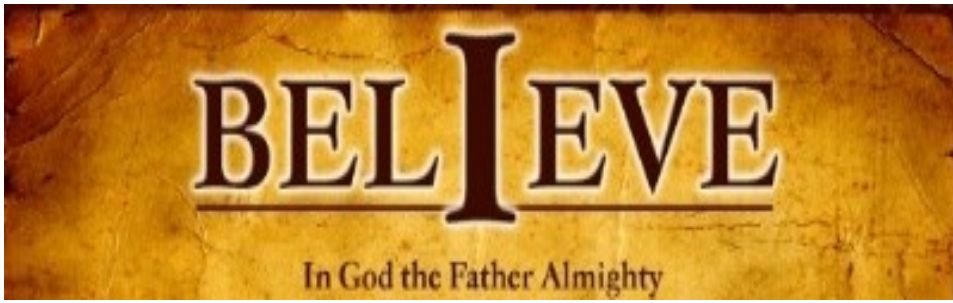
-Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation! The vocation of being a "protector", however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone.

-It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!

-Whenever human beings fail to live up to this responsibility, whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened. Tragically, in every period of history there are "Herods" who plot death, wreak havoc, and mar the countenance of men and women.

-Please, I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be "protectors" of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and the environment.





-Let us not allow the demons of destruction and death to advance this world! As protectors, we must watch over ourselves and not forget that hatred, envy and pride defile our lives.

-To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope!

-For believers, for us Christians, like Abraham, like Saint Joseph, the hope that we bring is set against the horizon of God, which has opened up before us in Christ. It is a hope built on the rock which is God.

-To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves: this is a service that the Bishop of Rome is called to carry out, yet one to which all of us are called, so that the star of hope will shine brightly. Let us protect with love all that God has given us!

GENERAL INTENTIONS

As we praise God for the glory of his Creation, let us place our needs before him:

-The response is: Lord hear our prayer.

-For Pope Francis and Church leaders, that they remind us of the sacredness of God's creation, we pray...

-For civic leaders, that they strive to create laws which protect the world's resources, we pray...

-For the nations of the earth, that the fruits of God's creation are shared among all, we pray...

-For all of us gathered today, that we grow deeper in our respect for the sacredness of your creation, we pray:

For these and all the intentions that we hold in our heart, let us pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us.

All: Our Father...

ENDING PRAYER

O Lord, we thank you for gift of this earth, our common home. Keep us mindful of its needs and the needs of all with whom we share its abundance. Help us to be open to your Holy Spirit so that we may discern and take actions now that will protect your creation for generations to come. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son.

All: Amen.

ENDING SONG:

Let There Be Peace on Earth (Video presentation)



To the Teacher:

Earth day is a wonderful opportunity to teach our students about the wonder, awe, majesty and glory of God found in creation. It also reminds all that God chose us to be his stewards of the earth, a hugely blessed privilege.

The prayer service incorporates our Catholic beliefs regarding creation as a gift from God and humankind's call to protect the earth, all living things and live in harmony with each other.

The opening and closing songs can be sung or use video presentations which are posted on You tube at:

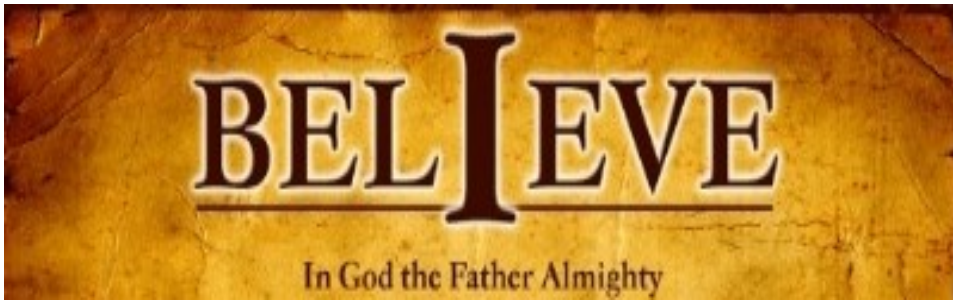
- ◆ *Canticle of the Sun*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGMIjwf0SVw>
- ◆ *Let There Be Peace on Earth*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icx7cDBuyNc>
—this video was taped at an Interreligious prayer service during Pope Francis's trip to the US/ New York City in September, 2015.

A song sheet is included with the lyrics from *Canticle of the Sun* and *Let There Be Peace on Earth* are also included for your convenience.

The Prayer leader parts are bolded.

The Reflection is formatted in paragraphs so multiple readers can proclaim.

Thanks for all you do in passing on the Catholic faith to our students.



Opening Song: Canticle of the Sun

Refrain

The heavens are telling the glory of God,
And all creation is shouting for joy!
Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the
field, And sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!

Praise for the sun, the bringer of day, he carries the light of the Lord in his rays; the moon and the stars who light up the way unto your throne! R.

Praise for the wind that blows through the trees, the seas' mighty storms, the gentlest breeze; they blow where they will, they blow where they please to please the Lord! R.

Praise for the rain that waters our fields, and blesses our crops so all the earth yields; from death unto life her mystery revealed springs forth in joy! R.

Praise for the fire who gives us his light, the warmth of the sun to brighten our night; he dances with joy, his spirit so bright, he sings of you! R

Closing Song: *Let There Be Peace on Earth*

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be.
With God as our Father
Brothers all are we.
Let me walk with my brother
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take
Let this be my solemn vow.
To take each moment
And live each moment
With peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.