



SEASON OF CREATION

June 5, 2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

"I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature . . . on earth."

Genesis 9:9-10

We are part of a single, wondrously complex web of life that is woven by God. Each year from September 1 to October 4, the Christian family celebrates the good gift of creation. This global celebration began in 1989 with the Ecumenical Patriarchate's recognition of the day of prayer for creation and is now embraced by the wide ecumenical community.

During the Season of Creation, we unite as one family in Christ, celebrating the bonds we share with each other and with "every living creature on earth." (Genesis 9:10) The Christian family celebrates the season by spending time in prayer, considering ways to more sustainably inhabit our common home, and lifting our voices in the public sphere.

This Season of Creation, we offer our reflections on the web of life itself, in the hope that they might provoke richer contemplation and deeper responses among us, brothers and sisters. We do it in ecumenical spirit and in acknowledging that Creation is given as a gift to all of us and that we are called to shared responsibility for its protection.

The scriptures begin with God's affirmation that all of creation is "very good," and as the stewards of God's creation, we are called to protect its goodness. (Genesis 1:30, Genesis 1:28, Jeremiah 29:5-7) Every species, indeed every being of every species, is precious because it is made by God. All reflect an aspect of God. "How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures." (Psalm 104:24)

This is why we lament that God's creatures are disappearing from the Earth at a rate we can scarcely comprehend. From humble insects to majestic mammals, from microscopic plankton to towering trees, creatures from across God's dominion are becoming extinct, and may never be seen again.

This devastation is, in itself, a tragic loss. Contemplation on this loss and prayers for its stopping is the theme we would want to suggest as a particular focus for this year's prayers. What we experience is not only the loss. It is also unjust, as the most vulnerable among us suffer most deeply as the web of life begins to unravel. Our faith calls us to respond to this crisis with the urgency born of moral clarity.

We encourage the whole Christian family to join us in this special time together to pray, to reflect as individuals and as communities, and to take bold action to preserve creation in all its complexity and specificity. This year's Season of Creation, in particular, will bring us the opportunity to raise a united voice at the UN Climate Action Summit and ongoing COP negotiations.

As the psalmist sings, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who live in it." (Psalm 24:1-2) In the hope born of grace, we pray that the Lord who is our

Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer will touch our hearts and that of the human family this Season of Creation.

In God's grace,

Bishop Marc Andrus, Episcopal Diocese of California

Rev. Ed Brown, Care of Creation and Lausanne Catalyst for Creation Care

Dr. Celia Deane-Drummond, Director, Laudato Si' Research Institute, Campion Hall, University of Oxford, UK

Msgr. Bruno-Marie Duffé, Secretary, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

Josianne Gauthier, Secretary General, CIDSE

Rev. Norm Habel, Season of Creation Project, Adelaide

Bishop Nick Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury, Chair of Church of England Environment Working Group

Fr Heikki Huttunen, General Secretary, Conference of European Churches

Dr. Hefin Jones, Executive Committee, World Communion of Reformed Churches

Metropolitan of Zimbabwe Serafim Kykotis, Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Zimbabwe and Angola

Bishop Mark Macdonald, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, Anglican Church of Canada

Fr. Martin Michalíček, Secretary General, Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae

Ms. Necta Montes, General Secretary, World Student Christian Federation

Sr. Patricia Murray, Executive Secretary, International Union Superiors General

Dr. Alexandros K. Papaderos, Advisor of the Ecumenical Patriarchates of Constantinople

Dr. Paulo Ueti, Theological Advisor & Latin American Regional Director, Anglican Alliance

Dr. Ruth Valerio, Director Global Advocacy and Influencing, Tearfund