



A home for all? Renewing the oikos of God

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Christians around the world are joining this month in the annual Season of Creation, with a focus of prayer and action for our common home. The season begins on September 1, World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends on October 4, feast of St Francis of Assisi and patron saint of ecology, known and loved by many Christian denominations.

The theme this year is ‘A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God.’ Oikos is the Greek word for ‘home’ or household’ and highlights the integral web of relationships that sustain the wellbeing of Earth and God’s plan that the whole of life should flourish. The theme will strike a chord for Sisters of Mercy and their companions in Aotearoa New Zealand, many of whom will remember participating in Te Whakaruruhau mo ngā iwi katoa – Shelter for All, a pilgrimage that led around 500 of us to the steps of Parliament in September 2016, urging our political leaders to see access to housing as a basic human right and to take steps to honour the Paris agreement on climate change. Concern was expressed for Pacific Islanders whose homes and livelihoods were even then being threatened by rising sea levels. Congregation Leader at the time, Katrina Fabish rsm described the event as not political but an

exercise in consciousness raising. “We are responding to the call from Pope Francis in this Year of Mercy to turn the works of mercy into action.”

In the five years since that event, the needs in our nation and world have only increased, as natural disasters such as fires, floods and landslides affect the planet with growing ferocity, the damage caused by Covid 19 places thousands

more of our children below the poverty line, refugees and migrants search for a place to call home. Care for our common home, the central theme of

Laudato Si’, remains a priority for Pope Francis who hopes, despite his recent spell in hospital, to travel to Glasgow in November for the COP26 summit, where world leaders will be challenged to tackle climate change with fresh energy and commitment.

This Season of Creation brings a call to each of us to be more fully converted to prayer and action for our common home. No action is too small; no one is too young not to be engaged, as Swedish activist Greta Thunberg reminds us. Perhaps there is a way you could use the prayer below, either in your daily routine this month, or as something to share with work colleagues or friends, perhaps with time out and a Mercy cup of tea to mark the occasion. May this be a time of grace and hope for us all!



For more details, visit SeasonofCreation.org

E te Atua, Kaihanga o te Ao, Creator of All, we are grateful that from your communion of love you created our planet to be a home for all. By your Holy Wisdom you made the Earth to bring forth a diversity of living beings that filled the soil, water and air. Each part of creation praises you in their being, and cares for one another from our place in the web of life. We remember that you call human beings to keep your garden in ways that honour the dignity of each creature and conserve their place in the abundance of life on Earth. But we know that today our will to power pushes the planet beyond her limits.

In this Season of Creation, we pray that the breath of your creative Word would move our hearts, as in the waters of our birth and baptism. Give us faith to follow Christ to our just place in the beloved community. Enlighten us with the grace to respond to your covenant and call to care for our common home. In our tilling and keeping, gladden our hearts to know that we participate with your Holy Spirit to renew the face of your Earth, and safeguard a home for all. In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. Amen

*Adapted from **Season of Creation***