



## From Deacon Mark Miller's Desk

For over 30 years, the Orthodox church has celebrated the first of September as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and the entire month as the Season of Creation. At the request of the Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew Pope Francis added the day/month to our calendar in 2015. So, this is also a time of ecumenical prayer. Here are some excerpts from Pope Francis' address for this year's *Season of Creation*.

"And God saw that it was good" (*Gen 1:25*). God's gaze, at the beginning of the Bible, rests lovingly on his creation. From habitable land to life-giving waters, from fruit-bearing trees to animals that share our common home, everything is dear in the eyes of God, who offers creation to men and women as a precious gift to be preserved."

"Tragically, the human response to this gift has been marked by sin, selfishness and a greedy desire to possess and exploit. Egoism and self-interest have turned creation, a place of encounter and sharing, into an arena of competition and conflict. In this way, the environment itself is endangered: something good in God's eyes has become something to be *exploited* in human hands."

"In effect, we have forgotten who we are: creatures made in the image of God (cf. *Gen 1:27*) and called to dwell as brothers and sisters in a common home. We were created not to be tyrants, but to be at the heart of a network of life made up of millions of species lovingly joined together for us by our Creator. Now is the time to rediscover our vocation as children of God, brothers and sisters, and stewards of creation. Now is the time to repent, to be converted and to return to our roots. We are beloved creatures of God, who in his goodness calls us to love life and live it in communion with the rest of creation."

"This is *the season for letting our prayer be inspired anew* by closeness to nature, which spontaneously leads us to give thanks to God the Creator. In the silence of prayer, we can hear the symphony of creation calling us to abandon our self-centeredness in order to feel embraced by the tender love of the Father and to share with joy the gifts we have received.

"It is also *a season to reflect on our lifestyles*, and how our daily decisions about food, consumption, transportation, use of water, energy and many other material goods, can often be thoughtless and harmful." "Let us make an effort

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to change and to adopt more simple and respectful lifestyles! Let us also learn to listen to indigenous peoples, whose age-old wisdom can teach us how to live in a better relationship with the environment.”

“This too is a season for undertaking prophetic actions. Many young people all over the world are making their voices heard and calling for courageous decisions. The young remind us that the earth is not a possession to be squandered, but an inheritance to be handed down. They remind us that hope for tomorrow is not a noble sentiment, but a task calling for concrete actions here and now.”

“Let us choose life! Let us say “no” to consumerist greed and to the illusion of omnipotence, for these are the ways of death. Let us inaugurate farsighted processes involving responsible sacrifices today for the sake of sure prospects for life tomorrow. Let us not give in to the perverse logic of quick profit but look instead to our common future!”

“Each Christian man and woman, every member of the human family, can act as a thin yet unique and indispensable thread in weaving a *network of life* that embraces everyone. May we feel challenged to assume, with prayer and commitment, our responsibility for the care of creation. May God, “the lover of life” (Wis 11:26), grant us the courage to do good without waiting for someone else to begin, or until it is too late.”

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