

# Prayer and reflection resources

**‘Environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole...’**

Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (nn 48, 51).



## Prayer for climate justice

### Creator God,

We give thanks for the magnificence of your creation and for entrusting us with the privilege of caring for it.

We give thanks for the sun, which brings us daylight and warmth.

We give thanks for the moon and the stars, which give us hope in moments of darkness.

We give thanks for air, which gives life to all creatures.

We give thanks for water, which cleanses and rejuvenates.

We give thanks for plants, which bring colour to the world and fruit for nourishment.

We give thanks for all living creatures, which bring diversity and order to your creation.

We give thanks for your creation – Earth, which sustains and keeps us.

### Loving God,

We confess that we have not cared for your creation with the nurturing love that you require of us.

We confess that we have allowed our greed to blind us from the environmental degradation our actions have caused.

We confess that we have forgotten that we are all interconnected and that all of our actions impact those who are most vulnerable in our world.

### God of justice,

*Open our eyes, to see the destruction that we have caused environmentally and to reconnect with the majesty of your creation.*

Open our ears, to hear the cry of people in poverty who are already suffering and will continue to suffer water and food shortages and who will be displaced by climate change.

Open our minds to work together as a global community to find creative and just solutions that protect the people who are most vulnerable in our world and all of creation for future generations.

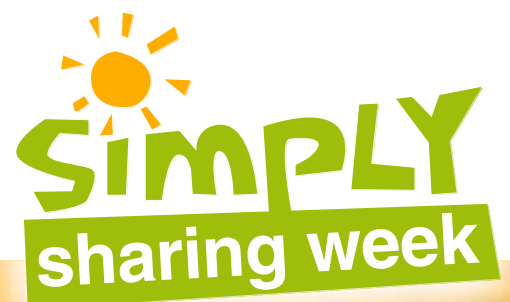
Open our hearts and give us the courage and perseverance required to work for justice for those most affected by climate change.

### Creator God,

Send forth your Spirit to inspire us to care for your creation as you had intended with a self-sacrificing and nurturing love.

Send forth your Spirit to empower us to work together as one global community, to restore your creation.

Amen.



## Ecological commitment

The following extract from 'Earth Charter' [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org) could be read by a leader from your school/community or simultaneously as a group in a prayer service.

I / We, [Name], stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future.

As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise.

To move forward we must recognise that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny.

We must join together to bring forth sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.

Toward this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

## Theological reflection

*Read the following extracts from Micah Challenge Australia's 'Theology of Climate Change'. Use the questions highlighted as discussion points.*

As Christians, our faith shapes the dimensions of our moral and ethical response, which includes a strong imperative to fulfil Jesus' most basic teaching "to love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt 22:39). We are also called to advocate for those who are voiceless or marginalised, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Lk 4:18-19). In developing a theology of climate change, this bias for the poor and tackling injustice is paramount.

Christians must be wary of the trap of thinking there is choice between caring for people and caring for creation, when in reality, the two are inseparable. To care for people and particularly those living in impoverished countries means that we need to address climate change, as this will have disastrous implications for humanity. To care for the Earth is to care for ourselves.



The creation stories in Genesis (Gen 1 and 2) provide two perspectives on how we are to relate to God and the natural world – **are we called to have dominion over creation or are we called to be stewards?**

The creation story in Genesis 1 has been widely discussed in relation to the instruction to humanity to subdue the Earth and rule over all creatures. However, the more dynamic implication of this passage rests with the first part of verse 26, "Let us make mankind in our image according to our likeness." In this passage, humanity is placed in a particular relationship with God, we are called to be God's likeness. **What does it mean to be created in God's likeness?**

In Genesis 2, humanity is given the task as gardener, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." (Gen 2:15). As gardeners we have a relationship with the Earth. We can choose to let things be or we can choose to plant things in particular places, pull weeds out, add nutrient to the soil, harvest, we make decisions. However, these decisions need to reflect what else we know about God's likeness and the teachings of Jesus. **How can we tend God's world in a way that allows the creation to flourish and cares for human life, particularly those who are marginalised?**

The key challenge is to see if we can manage the garden in a way that all life is sustained. Instead of the soil being stripped of its nutrient, the nutrient is maintained and life is abundant for future generations as well. Instead of a model that assumes we can control the garden, we recognise the limits and the needs of the garden itself in order to allow it to be naturally fertile and to go on feeding us. Whilst we acknowledge our power and our ability to subdue, we remember the example of Jesus who came "not to be served but to serve" (Matt 20:28, NRSV). Adopting an attitude of humility will help ensure that all are adequately fed.