

Jubilee for the Earth 2020

The Earth is “a gift of God for mankind and for all living beings. It is, therefore, our responsibility to protect it as good and reliable stewards, and as faithful servants of God.” (Pope Francis)

The theme for the Season of Creation Celebration for the year 2020 is ‘*Jubilee for the Earth*.’ This idea has a Biblical background based on Leviticus 25:10. “*And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family*”. The concept of Jubilee is rooted in the holy wisdom that there must exist a just and sustainable balance between social, economic and ecological realities. When one part of the earth community is stressed, every part is affected. In 2020, the novel corona virus pandemic demonstrated this reality on a global scale.

Greed, inequality and destruction of God’s earth is the result of all the natural and man-made calamities. The songs of the trees, land, birds and winds are cries for help for the dying and decaying earth. Therefore this year of the Jubilee for the Earth gives us an opportunity to repent, repair, restore and rejoice by maintaining a balance in the very systems that sustain life.

The SCJM communities have been committed to the cause of trying to do whatever we could to save the earth, though it may be like a drop in the ocean. The following pages will give you a glimpse of the activities that were going on from September 1st to October 4th in our communities.

Prem Ashram, Una

Prem Ashram community Una joined the rest of our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home. For the celebration, we had chosen the theme suggested by the World Council of Churches “**Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope.**” This year, amid crises that have shaken our world, we’re awakened to the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and each other. COVID-19 affected our everyday activities and during the lock down we



Each one of us in the community dedicated ourselves to an eco-friendly lifestyle in our personal life and in the usage of things. To safe guard the integrity of God's creation and sustain and renew our earth, Sisters regularly engaged themselves in working and taking care of the land, garden and animals and using bio-gas, home grown vegetables and other resources instead of buying them from the market.



On September 26th in the evening we had a meaningful prayer service for the earth, and the chapel was decorated according to the theme of the year "Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope." Prayer service was conducted according to the suggested themes of each week. We raise our hearts to our Creator who loved the creation into being and called us to care for it. At the end of the prayer service, each sister was given a medicinal plant not only to plant but also to take care of it.



The Special school teachers were made aware of the season of creation through a short session by the Sister - in-charge and made them to understand the individual responsibility of each one to save the earth. As a group we took decisions to care for the earth by planting trees and encouraging others to do so. Teachers were asked to spread awareness about the season of creation to parents while they give online classes to the children of our school. Sr.Lucy Jacob's circular on Season of creation mentioned a saying by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world" these words were an inspiration for us to share plants with our workers and teachers. We continue engaging ourselves in caring for our "sister-mother earth"

Sr. Sanjana, Una

Aya Nagar



“Jubilee for the earth” celebration was a time to reflect and raise our hearts to our God and Creator in gratitude for His wonderful creation. We became much more aware of our responsibility to take care of our common home.

Keeping in mind the season of creation, we reflected on the topic ‘Water is a source of Life’. Since we experience water shortage, this theme came alive and became more real to us as we cautiously use this precious gift. As a symbol of our inter connectedness, we planted vegetables and flower plants. One evening, we set aside to pray the 14 “Stations of Beauty” modelled on the ‘14 Stations of the Cross’. We moved around in our garden, carrying the cross, soil and a plant. It symbolized for us life and death in creation. The ‘Stations of Beauty’ led us to journey from creation (Genesis) till Revelation. This way of praying inspired us to appreciate and care for the earth with joy and commitment. We also realized that being in the nature brings more harmony to oneself and others.



The concluding day, we had Eucharistic Adoration. As a gift of thanksgiving we offered the symbols of water, plant, vegetables and fruits at the altar. The legacy and gift of St. Francis of Assisi and his spirituality was crystal clear from the visuals and the arrangements in the Chapel. In silence, awe and reverence we contemplated and thanked the Creator.

Sr. Jessy Kurian, Aya Nagar

Goalpara—Assam

Psalm 8 says: O Lord, our Lord, how great is Your name throughout the earth! You have exalted Your glory above the heavens.”



Responding to the invitation of Pope Francis in his encyclical ‘Laudato Si’ to pray and act for our Common Home, Goalpara community began certain significant activities to mark the Season of Creation from September 01 to October 04, 2020. It was indeed very enriching to spend some quality time on a daily basis to consider and deepen the eco-spiritual dimension of our life. The call is to recognize the imprint of God’s presence in the whole creation and understand our just place and role in creation so that we are able to choose the attitude of respect for Nature. In the creation account in the Bible, the concept of Adamah (‘soil’ in Hebrew) seems to be similar to that of the Indian Bhumdevi (Goddess Earth). There exists an intimate bond of affection and veneration between an Indian farmer and his land. The earth is so close to him that it is called mother.



Recognizing our responsibility as committed humans towards our Mother Earth, we had different activities related to the celebration of the “Season of Creation” and concluded it with a well-prepared prayer service on the 4th October. Besides, what is already done for the protection of our Common Home, we had **nature meditation in the garden** in the morning on every Friday and Saturday, Recited the Rosary specially for the protection of Mother Earth, **recited the Canticle of St. Francis of Assisi** during the community prayer, **updated ourselves on the topic of eco spirituality** and its crisis, **motivated and trained the village youth, animators of vocational training centre and widows of the village** and enlightened them on their responsibility towards the Earth and encouraged them to plant more saplings of any kind. In order to initiate this process we **distributed vegetable seeds to 103 widows of 15 villages.**

Sr. Gladys Sandhu, Goalpara

Pattikalyana

“You carry Mother Earth within you. She is not outside of you. Mother Earth is not just your environment. In that insight of inter-being, it is possible to have real communication with the Earth, which is the highest form of prayer.” Thich Nhat Hanh



Care of our Common Home during the Season of Creation celebration in our community took different forms. Every day we had different themes for the prayer for mother earth. Our Community felt the need to be very close to the nature and so we spent some quality time enjoying the touch of the soil by digging, weeding, planting and watering the plants.

We began our prayer service on the theme ‘Season of Creation’ by thanking and praising the Triune God- the Creator, protector and sustainer of the universe. We thanked God for the many good gifts, for the beauty of creation and its rich & varied fruits, clean water, fresh air, food, shelter, animals & plants. Meaningful readings were taken from Laudato Si where Pope Francis invites us to show respect for the creation by our stewardship.



The chapel was well arranged with plants and fruits. Looking into our life styles and our daily activities, we became aware of our selfishness and self-centeredness. Each one offered symbols like cross, soil, water, plant, seeds, and fruits on the altar. The Word of God, Psalms, readings from different Sacred Scriptures and hymns awakened in us awe and wonder for every creature on our mother Earth. The prayers and reflections enriched one another.

We asked God’s grace that we may learn to value and respect life in all its forms. We also realized our responsibility to be stewards and care takers of our planet earth. At the end of our prayer service, we sowed the seed offered on the altar in our land.

Sr. Rose Mary Ekka, Pattikalyana

Jaipur

During the season of creation, every day we took up different themes for prayer and reflection which were depicted in the form of models, pictures, symbols and fantasy meditation. This Jubilee year was acknowledged as a “Gift of the Almighty” to make us conscious of who we are: the image and likeness of God, the crown of creation entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of His creation.



During the season of creation we got an opportunity to have a survey of the whole creation through a virtual tour from the Garden of Eden to the present day. The present pandemic situation made us aware of the fact that when the elements of nature are disturbed by human selfishness and greed, it brings havoc to the human beings in many forms.

We realized that the earth around us can be beautiful by giving it all the possible care we can and we too can become channels of love for all creatures of this earth. We thanked God for the many ways He has gifted our land and we resolved to cherish and protect what remains of this bounty for the future generations. We became aware of the fact that this is the best time to repent and turn to our roots. We also found that it is the time to renew our relationship with the Creator and all creation.

Lisieux Antony, Jaipur

Pathankot

In our prayer and reflection we took up some prominent things from the nature.

Earth: - The mother earth is associated with the qualities of patience, thoughtfulness, practicality, tolerance and stability. The earth nurtures and draws all things together unto it in order to bring harmony, rootedness and stability. The mother earth is the womb for new life, lap for the growing ones and the resting place for everyone at the end.

Prayer: - Lord our God, we thank you for the mother earth which sustains our life that provides food for all the living beings without asking. Help us Lord to value the earth and protect it. Give us the grace to be patient, tolerant and accept everyone as brothers and sisters.

Water: - water is the life giving liquid. Without water there would be no life on earth. All plants and animals must have water to survive. It is clear, transparent and purifying. It has the ability to flow, adapt and has healing nature that nourishes the body.

Prayer: - Lord we praise and thank you for the precious gift of water. Help us to use it carefully and allow us to convey this message to all those who are with us. Lord makes us life givers than destroyers. Fill us with your Spirit to enable us to adjust and adapt to the various situations of life without losing our gaze on You.



Forest: - Forests help to maintain oxygen levels in the atmosphere, facilitating breathing of human beings and animals. They help to regulate the climate. They help in absorbing the water, reduce soil loss etc. It provides shelter to all types of animals, birds and even human beings. It is a joy for the eyes to behold. Millions of people rely on forest for their living.

Prayer Lord we pray that all the concerned people be aware of the importance of forest and protect it in the right way.

Mountains: - It is another landscape of the earth. From the mountain, springs fresh water which satisfies the needs of thousands of people. They are habitat to diverse species. In the Bible, mountain is the meeting point of the Divine and the humans. "Those who trust in the Lord are like mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever (Ps 125: 1)

Trees: - Tree is a sign of strength and rootedness. The deeper its roots go into the soil the stronger it becomes and it is able to withstand the wind and storms. It stabilises the soil and gives shade to the passers-by. It gives out itself fully to others.

Prayer: - Lord gives us that love that is found in Jesus to embrace all in love, share compassion with all in need in total abandonment.

On the last day we started our prayer with a hymn. Then we read the creation narrative from the book of Genesis. We spent some time reflected on it and shared our thoughts. We concluded the prayer with the 'prayer for our earth' from 'Laudato Si'.

Sr. Neelam Pathankot

Thenery

Thenery community decided to celebrate the jubilee of our Mother Earth by setting aside an hour of prayer & praise including the Holy Rosary once a week starting from 1st September to the conclusion on 4th October, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi - patron saint of environment.

We inaugurated the prayer by going around the house praying the Holy Rosary for the protection of the Earth and admiring the natural beauty. Thanksgiving and gratitude to God for the gift of nature to us was uppermost in our hearts. We shared our reflections by spontaneous thanksgiving prayers, sang appropriate hymns and psalms.



Many Bible references about the creation of the world enabled us to deepen the awareness of God's presence in everything He created. We asked God's pardon for the sins we have committed against the Earth by misusing.

One of the days after a short prayer and the recitation of Ps: 148, a hymn of cosmic praise, we took a relaxing nature walk through our picturesque land. We spent a lot of time appreciating and admiring the towering jackfruit trees, the coconut trees, the modest coffee bushes and the very valuable spicy plants of clove, cinnamon and cardamom. It is only when we are close to the nature we realize the wealth God has blessed us with. We concluded the nature walk in the convent flower garden, after paying a visit to our faithful dogs and amicable cows.



On the concluding day's prayer the beautifully decorated chapel with plants and the scenic beauty of Wyanadan hills all around us we could spontaneously raise our hearts in praise of God for all His creation. The prayer was centered on the biblical account of creation and the hymn of St Francis of Assisi praising God with all creatures from 'Laudato Si'.

Sr. Sushila, Thenery

Lahorigate

We began our reflections with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi for all creation. It was necessary to make our collaborators (teachers) to become aware of their responsibility to take care of the earth and pass on that awareness to our students. So, we had an awareness prayer service with the teachers.

We tried to explain to them with the help of the creation narrative from the book of Genesis that it is God who has gifted us with this beautiful earth and He has entrusted us with the responsibility to take care of it.

During this season of creation the community reflected on the theme 'jubilee for the earth', its significance and what we could do as individuals and as a community. We shared our insights with one another. Through these reflections we realized that we are an integral part of creation, not outside of it.



We spent some time making ourselves conscious of the Environment concerns like the impact of the developmental works, production and consumption on the environment. It made us aware that it is the cut throat competitions, greed and selfishness of the 'haves' that has rendered the majority to be the 'have-nots'.

A few steps were taken to educate the students and teachers and they were encouraged to use the resources of the earth sparingly especially water, and electricity. They were also made aware of the harm caused by the use of plastic.

The prayer service was concluded with the following meaningful and challenging prayer :

*Dear Lord, You asked for my hands that you might use them for your purpose,
I gave them for a moment, and then withdrew them, for the work was hard.*

You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice,

I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.

You asked for my life that you might work through me,

I gave a small part that I might not get too involved.

Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you,

Only when it is convenient for me to do so,

Only in those places where it is safe to do so,

And only in those who make it easy to do so.

Lord, forgive me, renew me, heal me, and nurture me,

Empower me; send me out as an instrument of your peace and justice,

That I might take seriously, the meaning of servant-leadership. Amen

Sr. Margaret, Lahorigate
Will Continue.....