

# Season of Creation : "Jubilee for the Earth"

Mathur

The announcement of the month long celebration of the "Season of Creation" was enthusiastically welcomed by our community. Soon enough we chalked out a plan of activities that would be possible for us to carry out.

Following our plan, the first thing we decided to do was to conduct a **Rosary Procession** covering the whole length and breadth of our land, that is in fact, a tiny portion of the face of "mother earth" we are entrusted with to till, use and care for. Besides our Rosaries, we also carried a Crucifix and a statue of Mother Mary for the purpose of blessing and sanctifying every part of the land and everything it holds- food crops, vegetables, fruit trees, flowering plants and natural vegetation made alive with exotic birds and other creatures. As our procession progressed with praying and singing, our sense of appreciation also grew stronger for the Creator who lavished upon us such bountiful gifts. When we reached back the house we gathered in the chapel to pour out our gratitude for the variety, the beauty, the grandeur, the splendour and uniqueness of everything that touched us and we perceived in a way that was never before. This occasion also gave us the opportunity to realise the plight of those who are denied of the privilege of having even a tiny spot in the vast space of this earth and will never experience the joy of picking a natural flower or soothing their eyes looking at the green grass. This realisation of the glaring inequalities existing all around us brought up a surge of contrition in our hearts and an urge to ask pardon from the Lord for our casual – if not heartless – attitude towards such people hitherto, and prayed for a change of heart and the willingness to share of our abundance in a big or small way with those within our reach. All of us found it a transforming experience.

## In union with creation, singing the praises of God our Creator



As another day's prayer was centred on the **theme, the element of Water**, we had placed a bowl of water in a prominent place in the Chapel. Our eyes could not escape its presence each time we came in for prayer. It constantly reminded us of its importance for our very existence and helped us to reflect on how we use or abuse it; what we can do to keep it clean and pure; how we can avoid wastage;

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Mathur Video.mp4

## Thank you Lord for your gratulations gifts

The nature meditation was an enjoyable exercise which led every one into easy communion with God to experience his presence, thanks to the luxuriant and colourful surroundings we are blessed with. Each one's reflection and prayer were, by far, expression of immense gratitude, overflowing joy, wonder and admiration. There were also some feelings of regret at having lost a lot because of their taking everything for granted and not paying enough attention to the surroundings. All in all a keen sense of awareness was created and this exercise brought home the message that everything in nature, whether big or small, beautiful or ugly, attractive or repulsive, sweet or bitter, is created by God for a plan and a purpose. As such we must always respect them, nurture them, use them well and not destroy them.



Clean spaces create happy faces

Some of us made it a point to give a "face lift" to this small part of mother earth. Together with some of our helpers we decided to clean up the litter thrown by highway travellers outside our main entrance gate. The travellers find the clean and shady area between the highway and our boundary wall an ideal place for stopping for their rest and refreshment. When their need is over they throw their unwanted items on the open place and speed away without giving a thought about their responsibility towards a clean environment. Unfortunately they seem to have forgotten our honourable prime minister's campaign for a "Swatch Bharat". Of course it was a long time ago! Hopefully the poster on the wall will help the travellers to respect the place and do the needful in the future. We believe in the slogan "Go green". So we work towards it with the assistance of our gardeners. Since "Corona" is still continuing to have her sway over everything we could involve a few students and the members of the staff only for activities such as planting of trees, preparing a herbal garden, campus cleanliness programme etc.

However competitions such as Painting, Essay writing, Declamation, Poem writing, Collage making etc. were held "Online" on the topic celebration of the "Season of Creation."



For the culmination of the celebration General Chapter Orientation 1 was used as the theme for our prayer. The tastefully decorated chapel depicting the story of creation with all the five elements prominently placed, among which water was in the centre provided an inspiring as well as a conducive atmosphere for prayer. After the reading every one shared the fruits of their reflection which again mostly consisted in expressing their overwhelming gratitude and praising the all – loving Creator God for giving us mother earth as our home and providing everything in it as a Gratuitous Gift for our use. There was also appreciation of life in all its form – from the highest to the lowest. When we ran short of our own words for our litany of praises we joined Daniel (Dan. 3:57 – 88) to bless and praise the Lord in song through all created things. We did not forget to think and pray for those people and places where there is acute scarcity of water not only in our country, but also in other parts of the world.



We found the prayer sessions and associated activities as positive, spiritually enriching and energising experiences. At the same time they are also challenging us to a critical examination of our life-style, our attitude towards the poor who are at least in our neighbourhood and their needs, issues of global concerns which make glaring headlines frequently etc. it is challenging us to rise and act if not in a big way at least in a small way. May be the most we can do at this time is to engage in minor activities such as planting and nurturing, resisting destruction and encouraging protection, using only what is needed and avoiding wastage and pollution, replenishing and beautifying, stopping the habit of heaping up the wastage in the residential areas and on the road side as it is a health hazard as well as a blot on the face of mother earth. Above all an attitude of gratitude and appreciation for all forms of life and all that is in Creation

## Ashirbhawan

Ashirbhawan community had decided to have the Holy Rosary every day especially for the protection of the Earth. Daily there were other prayers for the earth and on Wednesdays there was special prayer for the Earth.



Sisters, along with the helpers took special care of the compound and surroundings by involving themselves in removing the grass and weeds and planting a few more fruit bearing trees around the compound. The flower garden was also taken care by cutting and pruning for better growth. It is also a joy to behold and a feast to the eyes to see how what has been planted is thriving. Not only the community is able to enjoy the veggies produced by the land, we are also happy to share it with nearby communities.



**Sr. Annie Mathew, Ashirbhawan**

## Chogawan

On 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the Sisters at Chogawan community celebrated the theme “Jubilee for the earth”, a theme which had worldwide celebration in order to protect our common home. A meaningful prayer meeting was conducted by Srs. Cicily Lukose and Deepa Joseph, where every member of the community played a role to remind oneself and others that as caretakers of God’s creation, our wellbeing is interwoven with that of the earth.

Every Sister came in procession, having a mask, and also carrying a sapling which was placed on the altar, representing different elements of the earth, like water, water bodies, tiger ,etc. and through a role play, they told us the uniqueness of every creature on this earth in order to sustain

its originality and preciousness. We also had the coming of God the Father, to remind ourselves that ultimately everything belongs to Him, who has created this universe.

By having such a prayer meeting, we vowed to ourselves that we too should observe a Sabbath for our planet and also cultivate an attitude of being satisfied with enough, thus caring for those who are deprived of the minimum. As we go through these difficult times of pandemic, we are reminded once again that our life on this earth depends totally on Him who gave it to us at our conception and He is the Master and we are the creatures. So like good stewards we pledged to respect and revere our common home for all the generations to come.



The prayer service was concluded with the following hymn:

“Jubilee, jubilee, jubilee, we sing for our Mother Earth,  
A time to thank and love it more,  
For the thousands of years of its existence,  
A time to respect and honor for its preciousness and beauty  
A time to tell the generations to come,  
About its generosity, availability and openness,  
Jubilee, jubilee, jubilee, we sing for our Mother Earth”.

Sr. Cicily Lukose, Chogawan

## Kathalguri

Our community had special prayer services on the occasion of the ‘jubilee for the earth’. Each Sister in their turn conducted it highlighting the points given for the day, and according to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The prayer helped us to be more aware of our connectivity with the whole cosmos and how we are indebted to our Creator, for sustaining us each moment of our lives. It also made us conscious of our ingratitude to God by taking His gifts for granted. The prayer helped us to be more responsible, with regard to how we can contribute positively to protect and take care of creation.

It was an invitation to use the gifts of water, electricity, soil, etc. carefully and with caution. We were also aware of the need to totally avoid or minimize the usage of plastic items. We decided to do whatever is possible of us to keep the surroundings clean and tidy, and plant more trees and vegetables where ever possible in order to enhance the beauty and utility of the land and surroundings. On 4th, October, we concluded the prayer by a meaningful Eucharistic adoration conducted by Sr. Alice ,in a well decorated chapel, with beautiful flowers and flowerpots, symbolizing the creation.



Sr. Marina, Kathalgun

### Dalhousie

Years ago one of the Scientific Climatologists echoed the sinking condition of our mother earth, like a prophet he announced that “the Earth is groaning under the weight of wounds we have inflicted upon our mother earth”. Unfortunately hardly anyone paid heed to his prophecy, then comes the right time to take practical action to this disaster which is affecting the whole universe. Like a prophet Pope Francis’s Encyclical “Laudato Si” awoke the slumbering people who began to find ways to come closer to nature. When nature started to threaten humankind she/he bent her/his knees to praise the creator and beg pardon for the negligence shown to our mother earth.



Answer to this clarion call of the Pope many religious houses organized extra prayer sessions to praise, thank and ask pardon for the sins committed against the love and care for the creation, hence our community decided to have once a week special prayer session. On 1<sup>st</sup> September was the inaugural prayer session organized with the theme “**Radical change in our life with the renewal of the celebration of season of creation**”. The second session was on 12<sup>th</sup> September based on the theme “**In prayer recognizing God’s ownership of the whole earth, repenting on our share in the suffering of the earth, our neighbours and interceding for those vulnerable, to climate Chaos.**”

The prayer meeting was organized in our chapel in a very picturesque and meaningful manner. As we stepped into the chapel we could see the aura of beautiful creation represented with colour and hues. On the alter a small globe representing the universe was placed, among the lush green creepers, twigs and leaves around which a variety of colourful flowers were placed artistically to indicate the vegetation and beautiful nature in which we are living. An introductory reading and meaningful hymns prepared us to enter into a world of creation. It culminated with the scenes depicting celebration of creation with the help of the animated videos. The scenes were so real that they stirred the depth of our heart, we could hear the chirping of a variety of birds, see myriads of crawling creatures, the reflection of sunrise and sunset, twinkling little stars and radiating moon, everything reminded us of the craftsmanship of God's mighty power.



Alas! The earth began to revolt against the ruthless activities of the hunters of animals, bird shooters, woodcutters, land miners and illegal constructors with violent storms, and gruesome floods, uprooting of trees and human habitats. This chaotic scene was a moment when we raised our hearts to God and bowed our heads in repentance for our negligence and lack of care for the earth. We then praised and thanked the Almighty for the beautiful creation, for awakening the mystery and the deep meaning of God's plan of creating this vast universe, for enlightening us to recognize the greatness of ecology. After the reading of Psalm 104 which is a psalm of creation each one shared her prayer in the form of her repentance and failures to take care of our mother earth. It was a mini confession to the mother earth. We resolved to God that we would be kind to all the needy human beings and the beautiful earth on which we are depending for our livelihood. With the hymn of '*Laudato Si O mi Signore*' the prayer was concluded.

On 18<sup>th</sup> September the third prayer meeting was held on the theme "**acknowledging our own mistreatment of the earth and committing ourselves to new and sustainable practices.**" We were



invited to gather in front of the Grotto of Mother Mary. The organizer of this session made us aware of the purpose of choosing this particular spot to conduct the prayer. She read out a passage from Genesis 1:1 which said "Earth is the Lord's, God gave dominion over the earth to man". The presence of the Grotto and our Blessed Mother is the symbol of the first universal incarnation and we prayed through her intercession to bless the earth during the season of creation. Being in the open we felt one with nature and the natural setting too was conducive. The grotto itself was adorned with placards and enlightening and prayerful quotes. At the Grotto we prayed the Mercy to Earth Rosary and the Litany, a hymn of praise to the creator and we had a prayer dance. That was followed by spontaneous prayers of praise and thanksgiving and asking God Pardon for our negligence towards the earth. A few motivational passages from various sources which reveal the purpose of the celebration of jubilee were also read out.



We were also reminded of the patron saint of the environment St. Francis of Assisi and the present eminent visionary of creation Pope Francis. Before concluding this prayer session we listened to a passage: today humanity is at crossroads. Having read the signs of the times we committed ourselves to take responsibility in whatever way we can to protect and care for the earth. At the end of the prayer session, one of the sisters offered obeisance to the mighty power in the form of 'Cosmic Aarti' to four directions of the earth.

On 26<sup>th</sup> September the fourth prayer session was conducted with the theme "**Integral Ecology.**" After a hymn to the Holy Spirit we recited the Rosary on Creation. It was followed by a reading explaining the theme and the five elements of Integral ecology; they are Social Ecology, Cultural Ecology, Ecology of daily life and the Ecology of justice between the generations. Pope Francis emphasised, in the encyclical 'Laudato Si' that "the world is a gift, we have freely received and we must share it with others and the coming generation. These aspects were thought provoking, insightful, enriching and soul searching to be grateful to God for the wonder of creation. The prayer was concluded with a hymn in praise of the creator.

The last day was the valedictory address to the celebration of jubilee for the earth. It was a befitting day to conclude the jubilee year with thanksgiving to the Creator and creation as it was the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron of ecology. Once again the prayer began with the recitation of Mercy Rosary, asking forgiveness and mercy from God the Creator and mother earth for all our inequities committed against the Creation. We were reminded of the grandeur and splendour of creation by the animated videos accompanied by meaningful hymns. It was a Sabbath Day for the creation and for us it was a day to renew and take a pledge to commit ourselves to take care of our Common Home that continues to sustain us. We concluded the jubilee of the Earth with the hymn 'Laudato Si O mi Signore.'

Sr. Carmel, Dalhousie

### Provincialate

The Provincialate community joined the rest of the world, who are concerned about the degradation of the environment and are ready to respond to the urgent need for its restoration, to celebrate 'a jubilee for the earth' from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Almost every day of the month we set aside time to read, reflect and pray on various topics concerning the destruction of the earth in many ways and to find new ways and means to redeem it. Our efforts may seem insignificant yet there cannot be an ocean without every drop of water that goes in to make it a mighty ocean. Videos and hymns like Canticle of Daniel, Creation Psalms, song of the flowers, the nature sings your praise, the fragile web, the web of life and preciousness of water helped us to praise and thank the Lord for all these beautiful gifts which God has given us. Realizing the sacredness of these gifts we asked the Lord pardon and forgiveness for our neglect, lack of care, indifference towards the gifts of nature, the cry of the poor and neglected. We realize that a sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.... Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society, says Pope Francis." (Laudato Si', no. 91)



Two days we spent reflecting and praying on the "way of beauty". The whole episode began with the creation story from the book of Genesis and in a way it went through the whole process of birth, journey of life, suffering and pain, death and resurrection. It depicted the normal process that takes place in the life of anyone and even in nature in many ways. Just as our death is with the hope of resurrection, we need to become channels to find ways for resurrecting and restoring the decaying creation.



On the final day the prayer was centered on the attitude and love of St. Francis of Assisi towards every creature on the earth and the way he treated them. He has shown us how to love others as we love ourselves. At the end of the prayer service the community took a pledge to contribute our mite and care for the earth in whatever way we can. We are fully aware of the terrible pollution that kills not only humans but also the nature. So, we try to keep our surroundings neat, clean and dirt free at least if not pollution free by planting a number of flowering plants.

The 'Season of Creation 2020' gave us an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of Jubilee today, especially in the face of the corona pandemic. It was a time to:

- ◆ Recognize God's ownership of the whole Earth, and all our 'possessions'
- ◆ Release what we have back to God, both spiritually and practically
  - ◆ Recognize our total dependency on God and his creation
  - ◆ Receive God's provision, in patience and trust

**Sr. Teresa Thomas, Provincialate**

**Sangrur**

Pope Francis's encyclical 'Laudato Si' care of our 'Common Home' published in 2015 was an invitation to each of us in our community to hear the "cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor". Through this encyclical Pope invites us to be ecological citizens, to come together, to deepen our commitment and to protect the goodness and beauty of God's great gift.

Pope's invitation to be care takers of our Common Home is an echo of what God our creator has commanded us in the book of Genesis to "Till the earth and care for it." Hence, in keeping with the invitation from Pope and the guidelines given by our Provincial Sister Teresa Attupuram, our community at Sangrur, participated in this Celebration of the Season

at Sangrur, participated in this Celebration of Season of Creation with much enthusiasm and a sense of great responsibility. Daily we had special prayers on the theme of the day. On the final day, 4th October, we spent the whole day in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as we had two great reasons to rejoice in the Lord: our Community Feast and Celebration of Season of Creation. The special theme of that day was "Pray and take action for our Common Home." Throughout the adoration this theme kept us attuned to our call to be care-takers of our Common Home.



Realizing the implications of this call, our prime concern in our apostolate is to educate the young ones, youth in the school and adults in the Parish to become care-takers of our Mother Earth. In order to make it possible we use all the resources available in the websites, sharing with them and teaching them through various eco-friendly activities. These activities stimulate not only the intellect of the students but also make them active warriors of ecology.

Since last year, we have been engaging our students very actively in this campaign, to play our role to replenish our Common Home to its original beauty. Establishment of Eco Garden by Eco Club was a commendable initiative in this direction and since then the members of this club have been taking care of this Garden. Even during the lockdown some of our students from the vicinity managed to come to take care of their garden. We also conducted various competitions to conscientize our students and inspired the parents to inculcate in their wards love for nature by helping them to take care of their small garden or plants at home. On the whole, we feel convinced that we all have been called to hear the cry of our Mother Earth and become its healers in our own little ways.

Sidhpur

Sr. Ann Poriath, Sangrur

Sidhpur Community had special prayers on the theme 'Season of Creation'. On the 4th October we had the finale; coincidentally it happened to be the day when Holy father Pope Francis, signed the encyclical titled "*Fratelli Tutti*", at the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi, an ardent admirer of the nature. This encyclical asserts and affirms that God is the creator and the master of the universe and all human beings are children of God, sisters and brothers, while '*Laudato Si*', the previous encyclical of Pope focused on protection of nature. A special prayer was prepared by the liturgist. The Sisters assembled in the porch and went in procession to a beautifully decorated Chapel. The Season of Creation logo was carried in front, followed by flowers, saplings, plants, fruits, vegetables and flowers

from our own garden. Some of it had been planted by the community Sisters during the celebration of the season of creation last time.



Each year, the ecumenical steering committee suggests a theme to unify Christian communities in their celebration of the season. For the year 2020 Season of Creation, the suggested theme is "Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope". As we are aware, "The Season of Creation has a special significance for the Catholic Church, particularly since Pope Francis established September 1<sup>st</sup> as the annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. 1<sup>st</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October (Feast of St. Francis of Assisi) is a time marked throughout the Christian world, and everyone celebrates the joy of creation as well as encourages awareness-raising initiatives to protect the natural environment. The theme this year is Cultivating Hope. We celebrate it in the awareness that we are in the midst of an international health crisis called the Covid -19, which has driven home once again very forcefully that we need to strive towards the common good of all. The environmental crisis and this health crisis are interconnected. Both are global emergencies that will affect many people, both are experienced most deeply by the poor and vulnerable, and both expose the deep injustices in our societies. Both will be solved only through a united effort that calls on the best of the values we share. Amid crises that have shaken our world, we are awakened to the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and each other. During the season this year, we enter into a time of restoration and hope, a jubilee for our Earth that requires radically new ways of living with creation. Covid - 19 also brought home to us that the aspect of resilience is one's ability to sense and respond to change in a situation.



At the end of the procession the logo which was taken in procession was clipped on the altar to remind ourselves that each one of us have a role to play in protecting, promoting, and enhancing the nature and all that is in it. In the introduction it was also brought to our notice that we need to use the resources of nature such as water, produces, trees, plants, etc. judiciously. The Creator

God has invited each of us to be co-creators in the world in taking care of the beautiful creation. It is our bounden duty to be life givers and sustainers of the nature. It was also mentioned that many of the natural calamities such as earth quack, hurricanes, whirl wind, drought and tsunami are due to the undue and ruthless use of the nature by human beings in the name of development and progress. We were made to realize our lack of concern and care towards God's beautiful creation. This was followed by penitential and intercessory prayers. As a community we took a Pledge of Commitment to care for mother earth, its resource and its careful use. The prayer was concluded with the final blessing by Rev. Fr. Sebastian, the parish priest and Chaplain who was present for the occasion.



Sr. Mary Scaria, Sidhpur

## Batala

**“All things of creation are children of the Father and thus brothers of man. God wants us to help animals, if they need help. Every creature in distress has the same right to be protected”. St. Francis Assisi**

Inspired by the thoughts and deeds of St. Francis Assisi, the lover of creation, the Sisters in Batala care for the creation not only during the “Season of Creation” i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> Sep – 4<sup>th</sup> Oct, but daily we make efforts to take care of our mother earth. St. Francis campus is a witness of it where a lot of trees are being grown and taken care; various birds and animals find their shelter in the lap of St. Francis’ campus. This friendly atmosphere inspires us to be more in touch with the Creator by loving the creation. Besides this during the “Season of Creation” we had taken few articles from ‘Laudato Si’ during our prayer hours and reflected and shared our insights.

We were inspired by some of the thoughts like: The emptier a person’s heart is, the more he / she needs to buy, own and consume things. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears. So we pledged to make limited use of goods, for common use as well as personally. In the words of St. Francis Assisi, **“there is a wound in the creation and that the greatest use we could make of our lives is to ask to be made a healer of it”**.

We spent quality time in reflecting on the creation and on the other hand we engaged ourselves

in taking care of our surroundings. All the Sisters in the community committed themselves in caring for our garden here. We planted various flower saplings and veggies for which we care daily and promote eco friendliness.



The “Season of Creation was really a reminder once again to love all that is on the earth and care for it. We regularly instruct and encourage our students, co- workers and neighbors in taking the responsibility for caring for our common home, to promote eco friendliness by saying no to plastic bags, saving water and electricity, no wastage of food and paper, plant more trees and save more lives and doing something sustainable for the generations to come. It was an enriching time celebrating the “jubilee for the Earth”.



We can draw inspiration from the words of **Pope Francis**, “Small yet strong in the love of God like St. Francis of Assisi, all of us as Christians are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live and all its people”.

**Sr. Deepa Mathew, Batala**

To conclude the reports on the activities from the Province “on Jubilee for the Earth,” I quote Pope Francis, “The relationship of mankind with nature must not be conducted with greed, manipulation and exploitation, but it must conserve the divine harmony that exists between creatures and Creation within the logic of respect and care, so that it can be put to the service of our Brothers /Sisters and also of future generations.”