

Season of Creation

1 September to 4 October

Stations of Creation

The 'Stations of the Cross' are a traditional and familiar part of the devotional prayer of the Church. The devotion 'Stations of Creation' are similar, in that there are specific stations to draw our attention, and invite our meditation on a particular theme.

This devotion is based on St Francis' 'Canticle of the Creatures'. It is adapted from an installation by Colin Wilfred of the Society of St Francis which is displayed in Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Stratford on Avon, England (*September 2010*).

These stations have been used by many people during the Season of Creation. In this edition, each station has two additional reflections. **Knowledge** which is informed by the science of our time, and **Charity** which draws our attention to the need for action.

The Season of Creation is an ecumenical initiative. It has the endorsement of Pope Francis who invites us to focus deeply on the gift and the state of the planet, our 'Common Home,' and deepen both our appreciation of, and our care for her.

The Vatican is promoting the next decade as "a Jubilee time" for Earth, for humanity, and for all creation. It is encouraging Catholic communities to embark on a journey towards sustainable communities in Laudato Si's spirit of integral ecology. An integral ecology understands that, from the tiniest working of a rock pool to a multi-national corporation, all things are connected or integrated in ways often deeper than we can imagine. Appreciating this, we are drawn to consider the impact of our actions on all life and the planet.

You are invited to use the Stations of Creation on the following pages, to make your own personal retreat, to pray with someone else or to share with your whole community.



Station 1 Earth

Knowledge: The force of gravity gave birth to planet Earth about 4.5 billion years ago when swirling gasses, rocks, dust and ice were pulled together into a solid spinning ball. A billion years later, the first signs of life began to appear. Photosynthesis, using sunlight and carbon to produce energy and release oxygen, appears to have begun about 2 billion years ago. Today, living organisms in a fistful of healthy soil, number in the billions. Soil sequesters carbon, purifies water, stores biodiversity and recycles nutrients. Planet Earth is perfectly and delicately poised, to support an extraordinary array of interdependant living systems.

Praised be you Most High, all powerful, good Lord. To you be the praises, the glory and the honour, and all blessing. To you alone, Most High, do they belong, and trusting in your love we dare to call upon your name.

Reflection: Help me to grow in a consciousness which embraces the vastness of interstellar space and the minuteness of a drop of water or a snowflake and to realise it is my joy and responsibility to meet you at the centre of this beautiful world you have created, moving beyond self-interest to a new set of values to protect the environment that all may share it in peace and justice.

Silence:

Prayer: Blessed are you, God of the universe; give us a vision that embraces earth and sky, constellations and galaxies, that we may know that the whole of creation is embraced in your enduring love made known to us in your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Charity: To take a moment everyday to stand in awe at the miraculous history and presence of life on Earth. To welcome each new day with joy and radical hope. To be attentive to the life-giving soil beneath my feet. To welcome each breath I take, as a sign of the wonder of creation where all life is so delicately poised and interconnected. To reach for a daily practice of gratitude.

Station 2 Light

Knowledge: The surface of the sun is about 5,500 degrees Celsius. Light travels at about 300,000km/s. It takes just over 8 minutes for light to leave the sun and arrive on Earth. Gasses in the upper atmosphere absorb ultraviolet light and create a shield protecting the Earth from harmful radiation. It is energy from the sun, filtered through the atmosphere, that drives the engine of life on earth.

Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Brother Sun, who is the day and through whom you give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour, and bears a likeness to you, Most High One. Brother sun warms our planet and gives life to all living things. But because of the machines and vehicles we use, we human beings have filled our atmosphere with carbon dioxide and other gasses that have caused our planet to warm too much. Overheating of our Earth leads to wild fires, floods, hurricanes and loss of life.

Reflection Face to face with Brother Sun, we know the immensity of his power surpassing anything on earth and yet sustaining all that lives. Help me to delight in sunrise and sunset and be grateful in acknowledging the source of my own life.

Silence:

Prayer: Blessed are you, God of the universe; open our hearts to the light that proclaims your glory day after day. The sky resounds with a song that rings in the hills, rises from the fields and enlivens the rivers and the seas. In your light may we see light, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Charity: To understand there is no such thing as rubbish. To see that each tiny packet, wrapper, box, cup, is a gift, made from Earth's precious resources and energy which has come to us from Brother Sun. To reject the throw-away culture. To recycle, to repair, to re-use and to reduce. To celebrate an empty, unused rubbish bin every day.

Station 3 Seasons

Knowledge: Earth spins at approximately 1600km/h, giving rise to our endless pattern of day and night. The tilt of Earth's axis, approximately 23 degrees, gives us our changing seasons. The movement of the moon around the Earth directs the flow of tides, the flow from fulltide to fulltide taking just over 12 hours each day. It takes Earth one year to circle the sun, then seasons repeat as do our view of the constellations in the night sky.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Reflection Holy God, thank you for the light in the darkness of Sister Moon and the stars. We thank you for the unfolding pattern of times and seasons. Help us to rediscover the natural rhythms of your creation that we may be more in tune with the universe both in the darkness and in the light of our human and earthly lives.

Silence:

Prayer: Blessed are you, God of the universe; you are the light that opens our eyes to see the divine light that penetrates the world, revealing its endless possibilities. May my eyes be gentle and my heart expansive that I may know the radiance of your timeless and transcendent love made known to us in Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

Charity: To be more grateful for food. To appreciate that, though I cannot live without food, I can live without wasting it. To be attentive to the seasons that produce food in due time; the resting winter, the flourishing spring, the hazy summer and the fading autumn. To select my food carefully, attentive to the source, processing and packaging. To take steps to ensure I share my food with those who are hungry.

Station 4 Atmosphere

Knowledge: Advancement in human knowledge, ability and technology is extraordinary, but not without cost. The level of CO₂ in the atmosphere has reached an unprecedented 415ppm. Prior to the industrial revolution the level was a steady 280ppm. This has given rise to melting ice-sheets, sea level rise, ocean acidification, violent weather events and forest fires. CO₂ producing fossil fuels are burnt to produce food, clothes, machinery, toys, computers, phones, roads, run businesses and transport people from one place to another.

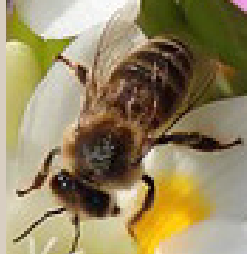
Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through whom you give sustenance to your creatures.


Reflection: Brother Wind is invisible and yet so powerful in its effect: he makes the tall grass sway on a summer's day, he whips up the sea into a dangerous frenzy, he causes an autumn leaf to jump and dance. The weather is ever changing, ever full of possibilities for new life or terrible destruction. Give me a compassionate heart for those affected by natural disasters: storm, earthquake or tsunami, drought or famine, and to work for a human community that protects both people and our environment.

Silence:

Prayer: Blessed are you, God of the universe; your Spirit like the wind, sweeps through my life. Give me the strength to accept her gifts of freedom and change that my life may be constantly transformed in and through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Charity: To be grateful for transport, cars, boats, planes, all the people movers getting us from here to there. To rationalize trips reducing three errands and three trips, to three errands and one trip. To share vehicles, use public transport, walk and ride a bike more often.





Station 5 Water

Knowledge: Washing, cleaning and drinking requires about 250l of water per person, per day. Food production also requires water; in developed countries, the water required to provide enough food for one person per day is about 2,500l. The production of one pair of jeans requires over 6,000l, a T shirt over 2,000l. Across the world water levels in rivers and streams are decreasing, waterways are polluted and the level of wetness in the land is declining. Oceans are polluted with plastic waste and chemicals, and the acidification of ocean water threatens marine life.


Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Reflection: Sister Water, you are so useful and yet you are so humble that I'm constantly tempted to ignore you and not treat you reverently as source of both life and beauty. Help me to delight in this sweet liquid that flows from the hills and springs out of the depths of the earth. May we all work together that your human children may share plentifully in this precious gift for our sustenance, cleansing and delight.

Silence:

Prayer: Blessed are you, God of the universe; your gift of water refreshes our spirit and delights our imagination. In it you offer us both hope and rebirth and its gentle force is both our way and our life. Help us to share this gift generously in the spirit of him who is the living water, Jesus our Saviour.

Charity: Sister water, without you, there is no life. May I fill with desire to care for you, to use you consciously and gratefully. To avoid purchasing unnecessary goods, things wanted but not needed. To use fully those things already in my possession. To be grateful. Grateful for your generosity, your purity and the life that comes to all through you.



Station 6 Biodiversity

Knowledge: The consumption of food and resources by the human population claims ever greater areas of land. Progressive deforestation and continual expansion of farmland into wilderness has led to desertification and a significant loss of biodiversity; 60% of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles have been wiped out since 1970. The complex and interconnected web of living things that has given rise to life itself is in decline. Yet, a planet without a diverse array of life cannot function.

Praised be you, my Lord, who guides us through the desolate places, comforts us in sorrowful times and keeps us strong.

Reflection: To be quiet and tranquil in a busy life, to withdraw to the desert, to overcome sorrow, are times where we can become close to you Lord. Let the desert in our lives be times we get to know you more clearly.

Silence

Prayer Blessed are you, God of the universe for giving us times to reflect, to renew our lives in Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Charity: To spend more time outside. To find friends to share outside time and spaces with. To walk together in the desolate places; alongside roads, footpaths and coastlines and gather rubbish strewn there. To plant trees, bushes and flowers, tend soil and care for gardens, including community gardens. To notice the tiny insects and remember their precious place in the scheme of life. To speak for animals when they are threatened or endangered. And with all kindness, to encourage others to do the same.

