

Sources for Prayer in a time of Drought

The ACBC has republished a request for prayers in the current crisis of drought and offers resources (CatNews 20.12.19). I recall the words of Helder Camara, 'when I helped the poor they called me a saint. When I asked why they are poor they called me a communist.' The ACBC resources offered neither ask why a rapidly changing climate is happening nor how should we transition to other economic and lifestyle ways of handling drought. The wisdom of the original peoples of this land is not mentioned. Truly, the trauma of drought for individuals and families is real, as it is for the land and all species which depend on it. Rightly, we need to pray to better help each other in this crisis. However, a Christian prayer response needs to include the *integral ecology* insights of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. Reflection on the resources below has led to suggest a prayer in that vein at the end of the document. It might form part of CEA resource gathering.

I am establishing my covenant with you and ... every living creature Gen 9:9
God watches over all the inhabitants of the Earth Ps 33:14
Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Mt 6:25

Covenant – God made an everlasting covenant promise with Noah never to again harm creation. Forgive our greed, guide our law makers, and give us the courage to care for Earth as our common home.

Ecological migrants – God gave land to a starving migrant people Israel. May our community welcome ecological refugees, guide their journey and provide for their needs as we confront the human causes of climate change.

Providence - Jesus taught us to consider the lilies of the field in their beauty, to look to the birds of the air and not to worry. To grow a post-carbon nation, may we seek renewable ways of production which preserve the beauty in Earth's free gifts that nourish this and future generations.

Lifestyle – Scripture says, seek first the kingdom of God. God, clothe believers with your Son's teachings to live out their baptismal and ecological vocation with integrity, offering their lives as hymns of praise and blessings to the nations. Father of Jesus hear ...

Prayer - God of all history, in loving kindness you formed an everlasting bond between your own self, Earth and humanity. You granted a covenant to your chosen people, guiding them on their journey and generously provided for their needs. In our time; may we witness to your blessings to all the nations, remembering your deeds with joy as we sing your praise. God feeds us, like the birds of the air, with Earth's free gifts and nourishes us by the work of human hands. May these gifts we offer as a community become a sign of dedicating ourselves to tell of your abiding presence with us in our journey. Loving God, in the Eucharist you have shown yourself faithful to your Covenant promise. May this eternal pledge guide our journey with the peoples, cultures and the Cosmos in every age until your new creation is made complete.

you love all things that exist Ws 11:4
God will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth Ps 96:13
God allotted the times of their existence, boundaries where they would live Ac 17:25
Let anyone with ears, listen! Mt 13:9

Eons – Over billions of years God created all that exists and brought forth humanity to flower as diverse cultures. May we thank the scientist who reveal God's many works and be led by the Holy Spirit to love Earth's fragile members and the fragile places where they live, rejoicing as in a mosaic.

Indigenous Peoples – Before the last ice age Aboriginal peoples cared for the continent of Australia. Let us listen to their stories mapping land and waters, remembering climate signs and variations. May we too learn from the trees and animals so to better care for country.
Praise and Lament – Psalmists both danced to praise God and wept for their sins of being unfaithful. As the heavens are glad and Earth rejoices, may we sing in praise of our Creator. As the sea roars and forests wail in lament, may we repent of our destructive ways.
Hildegard of Bingen – Hildegard found God present in herbs, singing and poetry on her journey to be a saint. May we immerse ourselves in the mystery of God's own self revealed in the Cosmos and all it holds, learning to live in wisdom, fully alive in God's presence.
Vision – God displays truth in the detail of Creation. May we not be deceived by the false dreams of ambition. Knowing that the poor suffer first may we not harden our hearts. Help us hear the witness of climate scientists, cooperate, and oppose those who sow doubt aimed to distract and disrupt.

Prayer - Remembering that God has planted deep in every human heart a desire to celebrate with a festival meal, we gather these gifts at this holy table. As culturally diverse Christian communities around the globe we gather to remember God's loving acts of creation, we offer ourselves and ask that as one human family we care for all creation. Loving God, in this Eucharist you have nourished us for the journey. May we continue to grow and evolve according to your will until you wait on us and nourish us in the banquet of heaven.

*The Earth lies polluted under its inhabitants for they have transgressed laws, Is 24:5
This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me Mt 15:8*

Nurture – God made dry bones in the desert grow to live. Unfaithful to your covenant our actions have created deserts and polluted waters. With the Mother of Jesus, may we nurture and care for Earth, and all its poor, so that as one family we may praise you.
Homeland – God gave Canaan as Israel's portion and cared for Abraham's descendants as refugees in Egypt. Guide us to be generous and share the gifts of this land, remembering that all of us came here as outsiders.
Traditions – Jesus condemned the Pharisees for letting their traditions void the word of God. May we not become hypocrites by giving god-like status to our cultural and economic ways, even to our well-being preferences, all to maintain our personal lifestyle choices.

Prayer - Lord, dried up land and polluted oceans are signs that we have desecrated land and polluted the waters you give in loving kindness. Often we have been unfaithful to your covenant of blessings, offering but lip service in return. Remembering that you are ever faithful and merciful, may we turn back to you with all our heart. Wash us clean and give us the power to act with integrity. From the many gifts you give us Lord, we bring these gifts to you holy table. We gather our prayers knowing that we must first be reconciled with each other before approaching your altar. We pray to be washed clean in obedience of your Son and made into a new creation. Loving God, in this Eucharist you give a sign that you are close to us your family. May we encourage each other in kindness knowing that you support us in all that we do.

*Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding Prov 3:13
Praise the Lord from the Earth, Ps 148:7
God, who knows the human heart Ac 15:8
When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth Mt 6:12*

The Holy Spirit at Vatican II led church communities in every nation to look to people's griefs and anxieties, joys and hopes. With Pope Francis may we, like busy ants, work against a tyranny of economics and false lifestyle dreams that destroy our planet and deny opportunity to the young.

Cooperation – Jesus led his disciples to a common mind as they negotiated spreading Good News to the nations. May we listen to others, from ordination to immunisation and biosecurity issues, learning and witnessing to cooperation for the common good of people and Earth itself.

Harmony - Creator God, you made us your co-creators. Help us grow sustainable rural and urban communities with jobs for young people, giving them hope and preventing suicides. May we love the oceans teeming with life and not make them into a garbage tip.

Fruitful - God made all places and all things good, setting us on Earth as in a vineyard, to work it with creativity and care. Inspire each of us and our communities to know and respect the locality where we live, loving it into producing good fruit appropriate to its place and time.

Humble – Creator of the Universe, your handiwork upholds us daily. Help us to respect the scientific method and humbly heed its warnings about long term climate cycles. Guide our society leaders to choose well for the poor in this and future generations.

Prayer - God, you take on our griefs and anxieties, our joys and hopes. Grow within us your spirit of wisdom so that we can find you present in all the workings of Earth, in every living creature and culture. Guide us to love Earth and our earthly kin as a mysterious web of life, working for the harmony of this world so that in its very existence praises you. Father of Jesus, we offer these gifts of bread and wine, signs of our daily work. May our hearts and minds grow to appreciate the deep mystery of new life you give us in your Son

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept Ps 137:1

the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth Rm 8:22

people brought to him all who were ill ... and he healed them Mt 4:24

Technology - Creator God, you have willed the evolving design of our world. Temper our greed and teach our regulating authorities to be cautious in adopting technologies that harm nature and farmers alike, deceiving consumers with false promises of endless growth and idealic lifestyles.

Water - Jesus gave water as a sign of new life in baptism. May national economic dreams of irrigated lands not lead to ecological vandalism. May we protect local water systems. May our parish promote the UN resolution that clean water be recognised as a human right for all people and habitats.

Signs - Earth itself is a sign that God is near and giving, compassionate and forgiving. It inspires poets. Let our church be grateful to the scientists and poets who help reveal the depths of this planet so that believers grow a spirituality embracing Earth as Mother and Sister.

I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors Jr 7:7

I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks Mt 23:36

St Francis – God as creator willed a diversity of species evolve in our land over eons. Like St Francis, may we call them sister and brother, finding God present there. Lead us to praise activists helping to protect diverse habitats that nurture each distinct species. Climate Change – Israel saw drought and flood as reminders of God giving the fruits of Earth and the response of human arrogance. May our lives be transformed as Earth moves from drought to harvest, from sickness to wholeness, from division to wholeness, from death to life.

A Prayer in a time of Drought – Charles Rue

Creative and Nurturing God,
we weep in the face of dry land and bushfires,
dying crops and animals,
traumatised families and communities.

Our land evolved in Your wisdom over eons.
Some people learned to live within its boundaries
thriving in its fruitfulness, and in humility
responded with gratitude and praise for its gifts.

Often with good intentions,
we have imposed out ideas of progress and prosperity
demanding lifestyle benefits and production
that push the land beyond its capacities.

Teach us to listen to the land with humility.
Send the Spirit of Jesus to teach us respect.
Guide us to be co-creators with your divine providence.
Fill our hearts with patience and compassion.

May we commit ourselves to face the calamity of drought,
city and rural cooperating as one in service and generosity,
planning with leaders to create a sustainable future, so that
we can again love the beauty of Your land fully alive.

Creative and Nurturing God
Your children and land need the gift of rain
bringing life from death
transforming us day by day.

We pray through our Brother Jesus the Christ. Amen