

Creation Awaits with Eager Expectation

A Daily Ecological Advent Prayer Resource



Introduction and Dedication

We asked a diverse group of 26 U.S. Catholics, of all ages and from all walks of life, to reflect on Romans 8:19: "For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God..." and to contribute a prayer or a reflection that would inspire us during the 2025 Advent season. This resource is the amazing and moving result.

We hope that each day during Advent, you take five minutes to sit and meditate with these daily prayers and reflections; let them accompany you as you reflect on how to reveal yourself in these times when creation groans and awaits the coming of the Redeemer.

May this Advent season be a time of holy anticipation, deep reflection, and active preparation so that we and all of God's creation can "be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

This resource is dedicated to *all* who take action to protect God's creation and, in so doing, reveal themselves as children of God.



Hope



Sunday, November 30



Graphic design by Beth Ponticello, CEDC



Bridget Bearss, RSCJ

Leadership Conference of
Women Religious &
Catholic Climate
Covenant Board Chair

Monday, December 1

Dear God,

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to create positive change in our environment, despite the constant battle of climate change. Thank you for giving us the resources to better appreciate the importance of nature and the beauty of conservation. Let us be guided by your light and wisdom to continue to do what is right by your beautiful Earth, Amen.



Julia Walsh

Boston Catholic Youth
Climate Leadership Team

Tuesday, December 2

Sometimes I can fall into the trap of blurring the distinction between hope and wishful thinking. To say, “I hope I win the lottery,” is pure fantasy and a wishful concept. It is a transactional thing that might work if you defy the odds and get “lucky.” It is mechanical and based on chance. On the other hand, to say “I hope in the future where goodness, charity, and justice will transform the world” can be understood as hope. While it is true that the likelihood of seeing the fulfillment of such a hope might not be fully realized in my lifetime, elements of that hope are recognized and are signs of encouragement. The source of our hope is in a relationship with God, who created all life and called it good. In Jesus, the love and mercy of God are our truth and reality now. I might not know or understand how the future will unfold, but I know that I am not walking alone. In Christ, all things are possible. I act on my hope and become a sign of the love of God for all. We need Advent to refocus on God’s gracious love in order to be an instrument of hope and encouragement for the future.



Fr. John Grace

Immaculate Conception
Catholic Church,
Hampton, VA

Wednesday, December 3

We are not the only ones waiting for the Redeemer who will make all things new. Creation also waits with eager longing for our renewal – not in despair, but with hope that we see each day in the sunrise or hear in morning bird songs. When we live as true children of God – in love, justice, and care for one another and the earth – all of creation will be healed.

In this season of Advent, let us also wait with hopeful expectation. This hope is grounded in our trust that Christ is already at work and healing what is broken. As you prepare for Advent, take time in nature to reflect on God’s transforming love and ask, “How can I live each day as a sign of hope that creation longs to see?”

Thursday, December 4

Loving Creator,

I come before you this Advent Season in humble gratitude for your gift of creation – the sky, the seas, the trees, and the earth that sustains me. For Our Sacred Mother: Pachamama, Tonantzin, La Madre Tierra, Mother Earth.

When all looks broken in the face of pollution, poverty, and despair, I turn and trust in Your promise of restoration and healing. For this is a season of spiritual renewal: a time to slow down, notice Your beauty, and make space for gratitude.

May Your guidance move us to care for the poor, protect the Earth, and see each act of justice as synonymous with love for You, each other, and Sacred Mother Earth.

Amen.



Indu Spugnardi

Catholic Health
Association of the United
States



Jesus "Paco" Estrada

Catholic Young Adult and
Environmental & Justice
Advocate

Friday, December 5

Today, we hear the groan of creation in the melting sea ice. We hear the groan of creation in the cries of hunger from people and animals facing food insecurity in periods of prolonged droughts.

We hear the groan of creation in forests ravaged by wildfires. We hear the groan of creation from toxic pollutants in our bodies and all God's creatures.

Today's reading from Isaiah 29:17-24 provides us with a vision of hope:

"Lebanon shall be changed into an orchard,
and the orchard be regarded as a forest!
On that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book;
And out of gloom and darkness,
the eyes of the blind shall see."

We see the evidence of hope as more people open their eyes to the cries of the earth and the poor, attuned to ever more conclusive science. Individuals, communities, the Church, and companies are experiencing an ecological conversion of heart leading to individual, institutional, and policy changes. Praise God!

We know that the Kingdom cannot be built in a day. In this Advent season and Jubilee year, we maintain our hope and keep working despite the occasional stumble.

While the nights are still growing longer, new light and new life will soon emerge as we celebrate the birth of Jesus and the passing of the winter solstice. Even in the darkness of winter, Advent reminds us that hope is essential. Our hope in Christ who saves us will strengthen us to continue our work for a just and integral ecology for all God's people.



Chloe Noel

Environmental Research and
Policy Advisor, Secretariat for
Justice and Peace, United
States Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Saturday, December 6

Romans 8:19...For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God...

This phrase, a segment of the writer's larger thought, draws our attention to God's literal life-giving actions at the "beginning of creation" and ongoing indefatigable offer of vitality to sustain all creation. Our response must be to join our efforts with the Divine, and thus, empowered, experience HOPE.



**Dawn M. Nothwehr,
OSF, Ph.D.**

The Erica and Harry John
Family Professor Emerita of
Catholic Theological Ethics,
Catholic Theological Union



Peace



Sunday, December 7

All of creation is crying out for peace: from children affected by mass shootings at schools; to extractive mining in Latin America; to the violent cycles of militarism, racism, and poverty — all of these examples are void of any vision for the common good. We may very much feel like John the Baptist in today's Gospel — "a voice of one crying out in the desert" — while we are inspired by Romans 8, "waiting with eager expectation" to be "set free from slavery to corruption" (v. 19, 21).

Pope Leo XIV tells us that "Nonviolence, as a method and a style, must distinguish our decisions, our relationships and our actions." May Gospel Nonviolence, as an individual and collective anecdote to the fractured relationships in our world, be the driving force to restore, repair, and promote a just and lasting peace. As our prayer today, I invite us to listen to "Wage Peace" by Lori True and pray the question: What would it mean to "wage peace with our breath, wage healing with our touch, and wage compassion with our eyes" this Advent?

Monday, December 8

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, we hear scripture proclaim that from the womb our great transformation is born entangled with the rhythms and relationships of one another and creation. This connection is derived from the soil beneath our feet through consent and not extractive intentions that hijack our dignity. To prepare for this fullness, we must be awakened to and aware of our cosmic web, listen attentively to creation's joys and sorrows, and be open to a human evolution that disrupts our content with violence. We are made for mutual stewardship that quenches the parched nature of our hearts, where peace comes not from dominion but from compassion that reverences the sacred.



Michelle Sherman

Pax Christi USA, Project Director for Nonviolence and Campus Outreach



Amy Westphal

A wandering wild spark traversing fault lines in a time of collapse passionate about repair and right relationship. Navigating in-between spaces on the lands of the Coahuiltecan and Coastal Miwok.

Tuesday, December 9

In these troubled times, plagued with discord, together with the whole creation, we eagerly await the redeemer that makes all things new; we joyfully expect the only one who can make blossom the fullness of peace among us and all the nations.

We pray to the Lord of all creation that, like Elijah and Saint Lucy, we may be centered on the light of His face, so we can have the strength to die to all the things that sow division and decisively participate in His work of salvation to help bring forth that love which is the foundation of true peace, harmony, shalom!



"Fruits from my home garden"

Marco Raposo

Director, Diocesan Peace and Justice Ministry, Diocese of El Paso

Wednesday, December 10

Our diocese was one of the first in the country to establish a Laudato Si' Action Plan. The ambitious plan will span decades. Simple, easy elements of the plan have been achieved. Now comes the hard work. The Lord, "Creator of the Ends of Earth," is who renews our strength. Dear Lord, your Creation awaits with eager anticipation. Be with us, help us gain strength and courage in caring for your creation. Amen.



Deacon Kent E. Ferris, OFS

Director of Social Action & Catholic Charities, Diocese of Davenport

Thursday, December 11

Amid the uncertainty that surrounds creation, many hearts may feel disheartened or restless. Yet our Redeemer and Savior knows the weight we carry and calls us to transform our worries and wonderings into a wondering for Christ – to know Him more deeply. As we await the coming of the Redeemer of creation, may our restlessness be met with hope, our questions become opportunities to grow in faith, and our grief be filled with His peace. For only through His love can we become true stewards of the world He has entrusted to us. Only through His love can our hearts find the peace we seek.



Isabella Merino

Latina Young Adult, Care for Creation Advocate

Friday, December 12

Almost 500 years ago, an expectant Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego, offering this simple, quite obscure man both peace and presence. Since that time, we have turned to Our Lady of Guadalupe, also in expectation of the peace and promise her Son offers. This powerful patroness has inspired conversion, revolution, and festivity. She defies all conventions: she serenely blocks idols, she contemplatively lifts up the poor and lowly, and offers them a path to glory —her Son, Jesus. May we also live in peaceful expectation of the soon-coming of the Lord who will restore all things.



Chelsea Voboril

Program Coordinator - Office of Life & Justice, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Saturday, December 13

On a small chacra, or community farm, I visited in the Peruvian Amazon, controlled burns are common. Hopeless urbanite that I am, I was afraid the entire forest would burn to the ground while I slept, but I'd wake to a serene pile of ash, glowing with licks of fragrant flame. Today's reading from Sirach (Sir 48:1-4) describes Elijah as "fire," his words as a "furnace" or "torch." It's a challenging prophecy: before peace can come, lifeless parts of us must be purged and old structures must be cleared away. Spiritually and permaculturally, it's a delicate art: we must stop short of the inferno of wanton destruction from which periodic, intentional cleaning is meant to spare us.



Nicholas Collura

Spiritual Director, Chaplain, Director of MIT Radius, and Founder of EcoPhilly

Joy



Sunday, December 14

The promise of a dear friend's arrival stirs a quiet joy within the soul. So too, in this sacred season of Grace, our hearts awaken, waiting, trembling, rejoicing for the coming of the Infant King. For where God dwells, joy blooms; it is the infallible sign of His presence. Yet life's tempests often dim that holy light, and sorrow seeks to steal the song from our hearts. Must we yield again? Not grasping but giving; not commanding but listening. For true peace is born when we whisper, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening," and no longer cry, "Listen, Lord, your servant is speaking."

O God of joy, teach us to wait in wonder, to listen in love, and to find You again in every dawn of hope.

Monday, December 15

Loving Creator,

You gave us a world that gives us life, and through it You reveal Your love. All creation, from the smallest seed to the highest mountain, was made to help us draw closer to You.

Creation is not passive, O Lord — it waits patiently, it hopes, it longs like a child. But like a father, You draw us toward healing and redemption, inviting us to remember who we are — your children, called to grow in Love.

You hold all things together—the stars, the rivers, the soil beneath our feet, and every breath we take. Through nature, You invite us into a sacred relationship — to walk not only upon the earth but with it.

Creation's story is bound to ours — waiting for our hearts to awaken that we may reflect our divine identity as children of God.

Teach us to see Creation as a living reminder of Your constant presence and patient Love, so that Creation and Humanity together may rejoice in the fullness of Your glory. Amen.



**Fr. John Abubakar,
OSA, PhD**

Chief Sustainability Officer &
Adjunct Professor of
Sustainability at
Villanova University



**Virginia Mata, PhD (LCDR
USN, Ret)**

Director of Life & Social
Justice Ministries,
Department for Pastoral
Ministries, The Archdiocese
of San Antonio

Tuesday, December 16

I used to get Advent wrong as a kid. I thought it was four weeks of patient anticipation – that silent, jack-in-the-box anticipation – before the bright, gilded *bang!* of the Christmas season. But anticipation does not mean stasis. In his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the late Pope Francis spoke to this perpetual motion toward God: “All creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things” (LS 83). As you prepare to receive Jesus on December 25th, lead Creation in the journey toward God with the horn blasts and tambourine rattles and cymbal crashes of Psalm 105. Advent should not turn us into compressed springs full of potential energy, just waiting for Christmas; rather, it should invite us to the already flourishing dance of Creation that leads toward Him.



Elizabeth Johnstone

Student at Princeton University, Public and International Affairs and Environmental Studies

Wednesday, December 17

When we find it hard to see, Lord
make us Seekers of Joy.
Like the little ones (as You once were)
to whom Your kingdom belongs
For whom the simplest moments, delights
are no small thing
But instead, reveal everything:
glimpses of You.
Like the joy of a first snowfall
or bubbles in the bath
May we be filled with the expectant peace
of promises kept.
And when we return from our seeking
with tired feet
and nipped, perhaps, by the world's chill
Fill our cups.



Kelli Reagan Hickey

Thought Leadership & Formation Steward, Catholic Impact Investing Collaborative

Thursday, December 18

O God of justice and peace,
All Creation looks to you to shine your light through the darkness
of these times,
For you alone, in whom we place our hope, bring true joy.
You, who know our deepest longings and concerns, offer us
wholeness
Through the grace that your Son Jesus shares through His
presence in our lives.
As we draw ever closer to Christmas, may you embolden us to turn
to you in eager expectation,
So rather than dwelling on fear and despair, we may find that
pure joy alone comes through you and your Son,
Who live and reign with the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and
ever. Amen.



Patrick Barredo

Director of Social
Outreach and Advocacy,
St. James Cathedral,
Seattle, WA

Friday, December 19

**For the creation waits in eager expectation for the
children of God to be revealed.**

Be praised God of deserts, mountains, and mesas
Where eons of struggle
Breathe a quiet joy at day's end
Radiating unspeakable beauty
For those who wait.

Some call this holy place of desert mountains and mesas
The Land of Enchantment.
Others see oil, gas, and uranium money in the vastness
And carve out a holy land into toxic sacrifice zones.
We who live here face sunrises in a quiet and still joy
Holding contradictions of the ages for a new day.



Joan Brown, OSF

Franciscan Sister of Rochester,
Minnesota community, founder
and former Executive Director of
New Mexico and El Paso
Interfaith Power and Light, living
in Albuquerque, New Mexico,
working on the intersection of
community concerns around oil,
gas, uranium, water, and climate.

Saturday, December 20

As a junior, broad-based community organizer, I am often faced with the tremendous challenge of cultivating a culture of encounter. For effective social collaboration, I have the task of organizing in the often messy yet rewarding midst of people from different backgrounds, opinions, and walks of life. It has been one of the biggest challenges in my life, especially as encountering others is quite countercultural in today's world. Yet, as I read today's psalm:

"Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.
The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.
For he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers."

I am reminded to let the Lord enter into my heart and realize the joy of His fullness.

Joy indeed, because God calls us to a deep relationship and communion with others, where we experience tremendous spiritual growth. It is not always easy, but it is a joy to be called to this relational culture every day!

Lord, help me joyfully continue to answer the call to relationship, and give me the strength to accept growth towards love in the process as I prepare for your coming, my holy redeemer!



Marylu Vazquez Olvera

Catholic Young Adult
who loves creation

Love



Sunday, December 21

There is nothing we can do to make God love us more or make God love us less; God loves each of us unconditionally, infinitely, and absolutely. More than a feel-good sentiment, this profound mystery lies at the center of creation and our spiritual lives: everything God creates, God does so out of unfathomable love.

During Advent, we journey toward more deeply understanding, experiencing, and celebrating this love in our lives. And with a certain hope, we join all of creation in anticipation of the day when we will experience God's love fully and for all eternity.



Josh Van Cleef

Director of Peace and
Justice, Catholic Diocese
of Lexington

Monday, December 22

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for teaching us love, love so great that you sent your only son to die for us so that we might have life and life more abundantly. Teach us to love by your example, caring for all of creation, from the tiny house spiders to the grand oak trees to one another. Give us patience that we may appreciate the wonderful world you have bestowed upon us as we wait for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We do not know what the future of our world holds, but we know that through you, we have the power to care for our earth and all the precious ecosystems who call it home. Help us so that we may love creation so abundantly in this life, and yet ever more when we unite with you in the next. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.



Mia Rao

Chicago Catholic Youth
Climate Leadership Team

Tuesday, December 22

Loving *Creatio Continua*:

God of all before and after the formless void and sacred darkness of the deep unknown, Love was in the beginning with You. You created *ex amore* the fabric of all being. Love was cosmic dust and the whirl of stars. Love is life-breath and jet streams. Love will be meristemetic and multipotent, genetic and environmental, nature and nurture, eons and light years. Dearest Creator, how long did it take you to love us into now? 13.8 or 26.7 billion years? Help us to love with patience as we prepare to celebrate your Love breaking into “our” history. May we be co-lovers of your wisdom, creativity, and mystery in the cosmos. Amen.



**Brother Cristofer
Fernández, OFM Conv**

Order of Friars Minor Conventual,
Our Lady of the Angels Province
Co-Director, Assumption Food
Pantry & Soup Kitchen, Franciscan
Northside Ministries SYR
Adjunct Professor of Religion &
Ecology, Religious Studies
Department, Le Moyne College

Wednesday, December 24

Long before Jesus walked among us, the mystery of God becoming flesh was already unfolding in the heart of creation. The Incarnation began not in Bethlehem, but 13.8 billion years ago, at the dawn of the cosmos, in a seamless and enduring story of divine love written into the fabric of time and space.

Creation awaits with eager expectation (Rom 8:19), yearning for the moment when the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us (Jn 1:14), not only to redeem humanity, but to renew the entire cosmos (Col 1:20). This is love that transcends time, reaching into every corner of the universe.

And the story is not yet complete. Creation continues to evolve, the universe expands, and we, co-creators with God, are invited to participate in the divine love. As we journey toward the fulfillment of this sacred mystery, let us prepare our hearts in joyful hope, embracing the wonder of Jesus who is ever drawing near.



Sr. Ricca Dimalibot, CCVI

Sisters of Charity of the
Incarnate Word, Houston

Christmas

Thursday, December 25

Awaiting Our Response

The Incarnation reveals the abundant proximity
of God's love enfolding us,
streaming from us,
and gestating within us.

More than the birth
of the Anointed One, or
the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy,
the Incarnation is the expression of Emmanuel,
and a call for our discernment.

God creates us
with capacity to grow, to deepen and to expand
our understanding, our perception, our knowledge,
our experience and our awareness
of God's constant and fluid presence.

Creation reveals
the constant and fluid movement
of God nourishing, sustaining and inspiring us
in a diverse and magnificent living tapestry
across time.

Today, the ecosystems
of creation reveal the crisis of imbalance
as the damage and toxicity we generate
threaten both their existence
and our well-being.

Creation awaits
the revelation of the children of God
with capacity to steward right relationship
and to discern a compassionate response
including advocacy
for the restoration of balance.



Leslye Colvin

leslyeslabyrinth.substack.com



Catholic Climate Covenant helps U.S. Catholics respond to the Church's call to care for creation and those most affected by the climate crisis.

Our work is grounded in the Church's deep history of teaching on creation, ecology, and the most vulnerable.

Learn more at catholicclimatecovenant.org