**CARING FOR GOD’S CREATION: Living Laudato Si**

**Helping to bring Pope Francis’s encyclical to life in our community**

**From the Diocese of Syracuse “Care for Our Common Home” Task Force**

*It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is interconnected. … We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. (LS, 138-139)*

The **Season of Creation (SoC)** is an annual celebration in which Christians worldwide are invited to both listen carefully and respond generously to Pope Francis’s “Cry of Creation,” especially the cries of the Earth and of the poor and marginalized. It began September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

The 2022 theme, **“Listen to the Voice of Creation,”** emphasizes how humankind has silenced Creation by exploiting its abundant resources, while muting the voices of people in poverty and need. This year’s logo, a **burning bush**, can symbolize both the untimely fires and weather disasters wreaking havoc on communities, as well as the holy fire that revealed God’s presence to Moses without destroying the bush.

The Syracuse Diocese held a prayer service in the Cathedral Garden September 1 to launch this year’s Season of Creation. Dick Scheutzow, a member of the Diocesan Care for Our Common Home task force, reflected: “I believe each of us has within us our own burning bush, one that is not consumed by flame, rather it is the flame that sustains us. Yet, all too often, like Moses, we look away from our flame: ‘For he was afraid to look at God.’ We lose sight that we … are standing on holy ground, indeed, upon Creation itself, always. And that we, too, are *of* Creation.”

All parishes and individuals of faith are invited to celebrate the Season of Creation through prayers and contemplation, sustainability projects, and advocacy. The following are just a few activities in the Diocese:

**Prayer:** In addition to the prayer service kickoff, the **Diocese** shared prayers of petition for healing Creation that parishes may use each week of the season. It also offers resources to guide prayer, contemplation, and service on its website, [www.syracusediocese.org/being-catholic/pope-francis/laudato-si/](http://www.syracusediocese.org/being-catholic/pope-francis/laudato-si/). **St. Francis of Assisi** in Binghamton will close the season with a prayer service Monday evening, October 10.

**Sustainability: St. Francis of Assisi**, like many parishes, is including SoC news and helpful tips in its bulletins. The September 4 bulletin had an item about school transportation options, including forming a “walking school bus” with neighbors taking turns leading it. **St. Augustine’s** in Baldwinsville is including sustainability activities and creation-care-themed games in its New Beginnings Weekend and church picnic.

**Advocacy:** The **Diocese** created SoC brochures for parishes’ use, describing the purpose and offering links to many resources available on its website. **All Saints**, Syracuse, is offering a 5-week book study beginning September 18 on Robin Wall Kimmerer’s “Braiding Sweetgrass” to discover how the Native American practice of *reciprocity* (mutual exchanges) pertains to the relationships that exist among all of Creation.

Culminating the Season of Creation, the **All Saints** Creation Care task force hosts a **“Day of Reflection, Prayer and Action,” Saturday, Oct. 1, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m**. Presenters will focus on eco-spirituality, the impact of Western diet on climate and health, and what affects our engagement in sustainable behaviors. Brady Market will provide a vegetarian/vegan lunch with gluten free options. Participants are asked to bring their own non disposable place settings. A fee of $30 at the door covers the cost of speakers and lunch. Register by September 23 on the All Saints website, allsaintssyracuse.org

Next month we will share ways to lessen the impact of “fast fashion” on the environment.

*– Katy Benson*

*Cathedral Garden Prayer Service 9/1/22*

