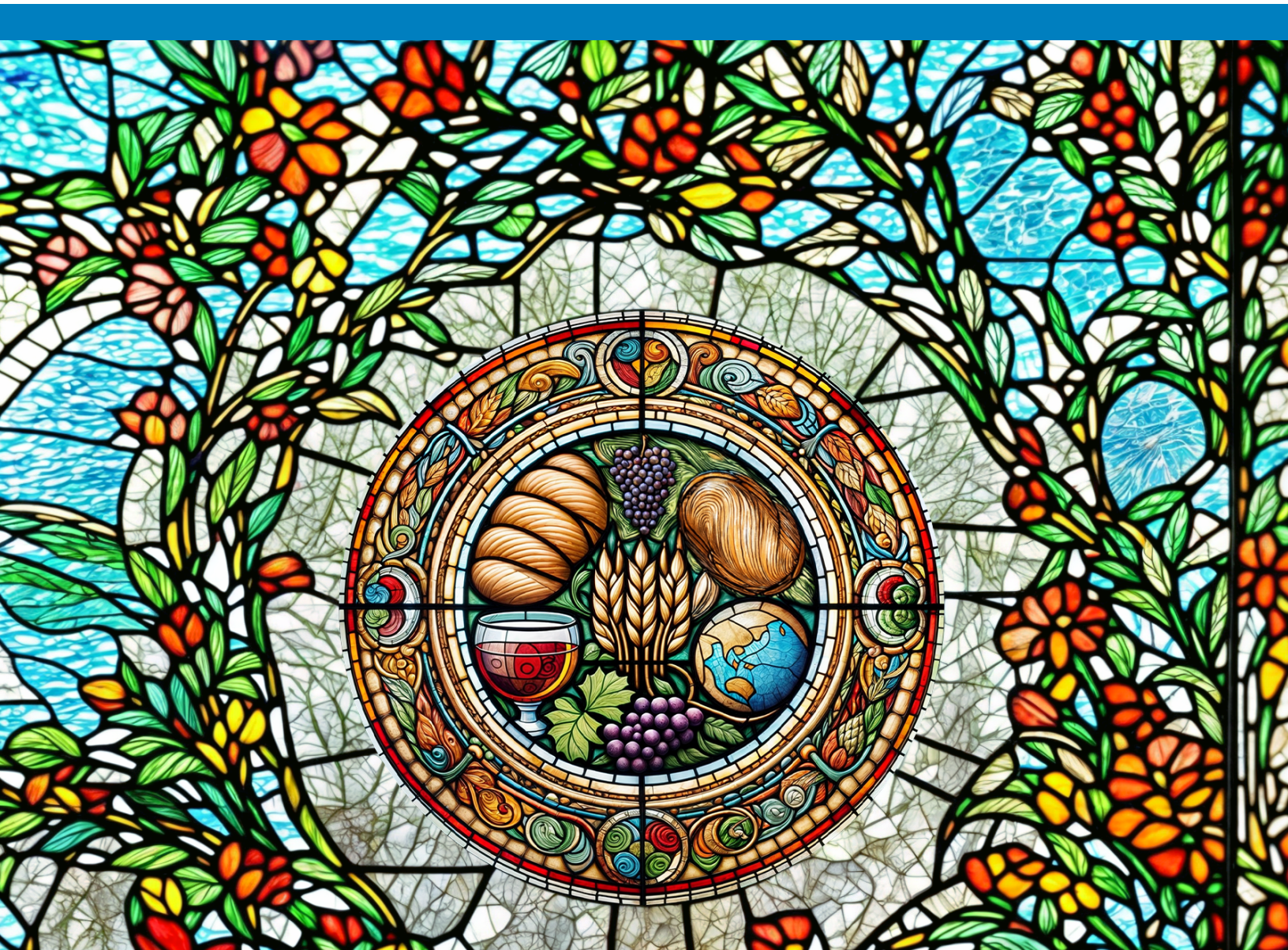


MASS FOR CREATION

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO CELEBRATE



**LAUDATO SI'
MOVEMENT**
Catholics for Our Common Home

“Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love.”

Pope Francis, Laudato Si' 236

Mass for Creation



Introduction

A Mass for Creation is a Eucharistic celebration with a special focus on celebrating God’s gift of creation. It follows the structure of a standard Catholic Mass, but enriches it with symbols and a setting that strengthen the biblical notion of prayer together with all creation. This way it invites the faithful to intentionally reflect on the connection between our faith and God’s creation. As stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “In the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ.” ([#1359](#))

There is no one way to celebrate a Mass for Creation. Laudato Si’ Circles and other communities throughout the world have found creative ways to lift up creation through word, song, art, dance, and symbolic gestures. Holding the mass in an outdoor setting or doing a reading from the “Book of Creation” have been especially important to enable intentional prayer with creation. Below are some suggestions, inspired by the experiences of local members of the Laudato Si’ Movement.

If you have other ideas, please share them at suzi@laudatosimovement.org. We also encourage you to explore other ideas found in the “Liturgical and Spiritual resources” section of the [Season of Creation resources page](#).

When to celebrate Mass for Creation: Year round



The Season of Creation (September 1 - October 4) is a very special time of the year to pray in creation, with creation, and for creation through a Mass for Creation. See SeasonOfCreation.org.

Yet, all other times throughout the year are also good for a Mass for Creation. In fact, ongoing celebration throughout the year can help the group or congregation connect more intentionally with the changing seasons and the rhythmic cycles of the natural world.

Where to celebrate a Mass for Creation: Outdoors

The Season of Creation (September 1 - October 4) is a very special time of the year to pray in creation, with creation, and for creation through a Mass for Creation. See SeasonOfCreation.org.

Yet, all other times throughout the year are also good for a Mass for Creation. In fact, ongoing celebration throughout the year can help the group or congregation connect more intentionally with the changing seasons and the rhythmic cycles of the natural world.



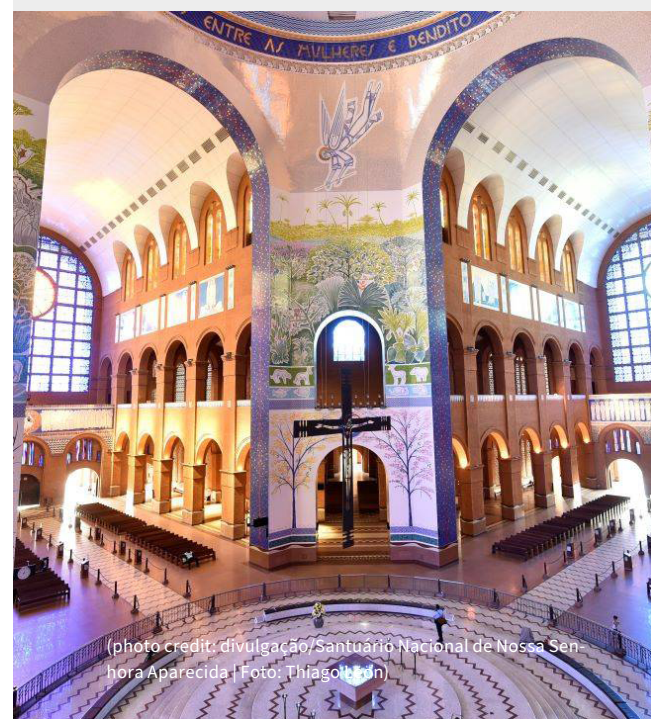
Based on the Code of Canon Law, there are some considerations to keep in mind:



- Some parishes, convents, and shrines have blessed or dedicated altars (either fixed or movable) for liturgical celebrations in their gardens and green spaces – those are perfect for Masses for Creation. You might want to find out if there are any of those in your area. If there is no such altar available and if you plan to celebrate Masses for Creation regularly, you might want to consider identifying a suitable place where an altar could be erected and blessed or dedicated (Can. 1237).

- If a blessed or dedicated altar is not feasible and/or if you opt for celebrating the Eucharist in a site in nature, you can use a portable table (either small or large), always with a cloth and a corporal. As per the Code of Canon Law, it can be argued that there is “necessity” for it, given the urgency of the ecological crisis and the imperative to undergo an “ecological conversion” (as proposed by St. John Paul II) through an “ecological spirituality” (as proposed by Pope Francis, LS 216).

The main goal is to pray with creation, to jointly praise and thank our common Creator, as encouraged by both Scripture and Church teachings. We are called to integrate the beauty and the pains of our natural world into our liturgies and to bring our liturgies into the natural world. Outdoor liturgies have a long tradition in the Church: Eucharistic celebrations in St. Peter’s Square, liturgies in forests and mountains of shrines and pilgrimage sites, masses during World Youth Days and many other Church events with large crowds.



¹ Can. 932: §1. The eucharistic celebration is to be carried out in a sacred place unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise; in such a case the celebration must be done in a decent place. §2. The eucharistic sacrifice must be carried out on a dedicated or blessed altar; outside a sacred place a suitable table can be used, always with a cloth and a corporal.



In many regions, such as Latin America, parish outdoor masses are frequent, particularly in the warmest months. There are also numerous experiences of youth groups - for example Scout groups - who regularly celebrate masses in creation that take participants to new spiritual experiences.

The most prominent champion of outdoor Masses was St. John Paul II, both as a priest who celebrated Masses in nature with young people and as a Pope who regularly escaped from the Vatican to pray in the Italian mountains, in line with his vision of creation as a “cosmic church, whose apse is the heavens and whose aisles are the regions of the world, in which the choir of God’s creatures sings his praise” (17 January 2001). On one occasion he explained: “What are the methods? They are simple, basic. A daily Mass on a portable altar in various corners of our Earth: an altar on oars, an altar on the snow, an altar on backpacks – nature (and not only the creation of human hands) participates in the sacrifice of the Son of Man.”

Naturally, outdoor Masses are not meant to replace those in church buildings – they are simply meant to be complementary. It is worth noting that the Catechism of the Catholic Church stresses that there is no one place with the “monopoly” to host Masses:

„Where is the liturgy celebrated? The worship ‚in Spirit and in truth‘ (Jn 4:24) of the New Covenant is not tied exclusively to any one place. The whole earth is sacred and entrusted to the children of men. What matters above all is that, when the faithful assemble in the same place, they are the ‚living stones,‘ gathered to be ‚built into a spiritual house.‘ (1 Pet 2:4-5)“ (CCC 1179) If weather conditions are not favorable or if it is too hard to find a convenient outdoor location, a Mass for Creation can of course be celebrated indoors.

¹Karol Wojtyła, „Letters to the Editor on Camping“, Homo Dei No. 3 (81), May-June 1957.



Reading from the “Book of Nature”



Reading from the book of nature is a key moment of the Mass for Creation, particularly when it is held outdoors. As St Augustine, St Bonaventure, and so many others taught through Church history (including Pope Francis most recently in *Laudato Si'*), God wrote two sacred books: the book of Scripture and the book of nature. Both books communicate God's message to us. Reading from the book of nature often occurs before the usual readings from the Book of Scripture. Given this is new to most people, it is recommended that the presiding priest or another organizer introduce it with an invitation such as:

In silence, we encourage you to contemplate the scene that surrounds us for 7 minutes



(recalling the 7 days of creation). You can walk around, touch the plants, smell the flowers, and contemplate clouds, trees, and water as you immerse yourself in creation to “see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness.” (LS 12)

Depending on the setting (i.e. if there is a lot of space or not) and on your preference, you can encourage the congregation to remain seated in silence or to stand up to walk around (or offer participants the option to choose).

If it is not possible to read from the book of nature before the other readings, consider including a similar meditation after the homily or as a meditation after Communion.

Creation and the Eucharist

As you prepare to celebrate the Mass for Creation, remember that each Mass is the ultimate celebration of God's great love for us and the whole of creation manifested in and through his Son Jesus Christ. Here are some helpful quotes to help you reflect on the connection between creation and our celebration of the Eucharist:

Catechism of the Catholic Church: "The Eucharist, the sacrament of our salvation accomplished by Christ on the cross, is also a sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for the work of creation. In the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ. Through Christ the Church can offer the sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for all that God has made good, beautiful, and just in creation and in humanity." ([paragraph 1359](#))

Saint John Paul II: "I have been able to celebrate Holy Mass in chapels built along mountain paths, on lakeshores and seacoasts; I have celebrated it on altars built in stadiums and in city squares... This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation. The Son of God became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of his Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation redeemed. He does so through

the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. Truly this is the *mysterium fidei* which is accomplished in the Eucharist: the world which came forth from the hands of God the Creator now returns to him redeemed by Christ." ([Ecclesia de Eucharistia 2003](#))

Benedict XVI: "We cannot take credit for the fact that the earth produces fruit; the Creator alone could have made it fertile. And now we too can expand a little on this prayer of the Church, saying: the bread is fruit of heaven and earth together. It implies the synergy of the forces of earth and the gifts from above, that is, of the sun and the rain. And water too, which we need to prepare the bread, cannot be produced by us. (...) In this way we begin to understand why the Lord chooses this piece of bread to represent him. Creation, with all of its gifts, aspires above and beyond itself to something even greater. Over and above the synthesis of its own forces, above and beyond the synthesis also of nature and of spirit that, in some way, we detect in the piece of bread, creation is projected towards divinization, toward the holy wedding feast, toward unification with the Creator himself." ([Corpus Christi homily 2006](#))

Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses: "The fact that we use bread and wine, simple elements of creation, reminds us of the sacredness of creation... The Eucharist has a cosmic character. Teilhard de Chardin has written beautifully of the Eucharist in terms of the 'hymn of the Universe'." ([2011](#))

Ideas for Liturgy

Below are some suggestions of how to incorporate creation elements into a Mass for Creation liturgy. Suggested prayers are in italics.

Before Mass

The same way that in many parishes there is the tradition of the Rosary before Mass, a special prayer could be convened for those arriving early and willing to have more prayer time with Creation. You can find some examples like the Laudato Si' Chaplet or the Ecological Rosary in the [Laudato Si' Movement Prayer Book](#).

Procession

Incorporate symbols of creation into the procession. You can invite youth to carry a globe and candles, symbolizing being children of God on Earth. If you are celebrating during the Season of Creation, check the ideas on how to incorporate the symbol of the Season of Creation from the [official celebration guide](#).



Opening Hymn (and other hymns throughout Mass)

Choose hymns that talk about the elements of creation, such as the Cantic of Creatures, or any other cantic that especially highlights creation or any of its elements.

Introductory Comments

We gather today as sisters and brothers created by God in communion with all of creation. As we prepare our minds and our hearts for our celebration today, let us remember the words of Pope

Francis in his encyclical: "The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation." (Laudato Si' 236). May we grow deeper in communion with heaven and all of creation through this Eucharistic celebration today.

Opening Sign of the Cross

(Suggested greetings after the official sign of the cross:)

*We are gathered here today in the name of the Creator Spirit of God who gives birth to the entire universe of creation in love,
And in the name of the Word of God, spoken into the silence, giving shape and form to all creation,
And in the name of the Wisdom of God, who weaves the evolving web of life, revealing her wisdom through the many different voices of creation.
Amen.*

*May the grace and peace of our Creator God, who places us in the midst of the vast and expanding Universe on this beautiful and fragile planet, be with you!
(adapted from [LISTEN 2022](#))*

Penitential Rite

Lord, you invite us into a communion of love with all of creation

Lord, have mercy

Christ, we are a people longing for the healing of the wounds of Mother Earth

and our reconciliation with our fellow creatures

Christ have mercy

Lord, open our hearts so that we may hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor

Lord have mercy

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

*“All-powerful God, you are
present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.*

*You embrace with your
tenderness all that exists.*

*Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.*

*Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.*

*O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and
forgotten of this earth,*

so precious in your eyes.” [\(Laudato Si' 246\)](#)

*We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns
with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.*

Amen.



Reading from the Book of Nature

As described above.

Responsorial Psalm

Incorporate symbols of creation into the procession. You can invite If you are having a special mass that allows some flexibility on the Scriptures, select a psalm that enables the community to join the singing of earth's creatures such as Psalms 98, 104, 148, 150, Daniel 3: 56-88.

Homily

Incorporate themes related to creation into the homily. See points for reflection for the homily found in the "Liturgical and Spiritual resources" section of the [Season of Creation resources page](#) or the reflections on this year's theme and symbol in the [official celebration guide](#).

Preghiera dei fedeli

- *O Creator God, as we celebrate the Season of Creation (or Creation Time), teach us to see your footprints in the beauty of creation. Help us to listen to the voice of creation, inspire us to respect the rights of all people, and all living species to share in your gifts today and to be always mindful of those who come after us.*

Creator God, Hear Our Prayer

- *God of all life, we give you thanks for the gift of Earth, our common home. At this time, many people, the oceans, and the ecosystems of the earth are struggling to survive. Help us to change our ways and guide us to live a life of simplicity and inclusivity, making the needs of others and the worship of you our ultimate concern.*

Creator God, Hear Our Prayer

- *At this time in human history, we are mindful that the survival of our planet and the well-being of humanity*

is threatened. Let us pray that global agreements to reduce our impact on the planet and to care for the poor will be honoured by governments throughout the world. Give courage to world leaders to prioritize the wellbeing of our planet and make crucial decisions for the benefit of the entire Earth-community.

Creator God, Hear Our Prayer

- *Let us pray for each other that we may live the vision and values of Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*, *On Care for our Common Home*. In particular we pray for greater attention to social justice, climate justice, and intergenerational justice.*

Creator God, Hear Our Prayer

- *Lord, we pray that we may gain a deeper appreciation of the beauty and diversity of all that you have created. As we journey through*

our Synodal process, help us to also listen to the voice of creation, to acknowledge how deeply interconnected we are with each other and with the natural world.

Creator God, Hear Our Prayer

- *Lord, in the spirit of the call of your Son, Jesus, to follow Him by renouncing ourselves, may we resolve to curb all harmful consumerism, waste, and pollution and instead build harmonious relationships with each other and the natural world. We pray for wise stewardship of our investments away from fossil fuels and a commitment to building renewable energy systems so that we will better share the gifts of creation.*

Creator God, Hear Our Prayer

You may also invite the faithful to spontaneously offer their own prayers related to creation.

Prayer over the Gifts

Offertory

Include symbols of creation such as a basket of food or flowers from people's gardens, or invite children to present animals or an animal craft, perhaps focused on endangered animals (this could be previously created during catechesis). You are especially encouraged to include the symbol for Season of Creation this year (ideas can be found in the [official celebration guide](#)). On this occasion, it is important to be attentive to the bread and wine that are brought to the table. Perhaps a member of the community might make the bread so that it is truly "the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands." (Hosts are most often manufactured by machines.)

Second collection

Host a second collection for solar panels for the church or for sustainability initiatives of the parish Laudato Si' group/creation care team (for example, the collection could be used to buy reusable tableware to avoid the use of single-use plastics). Or collect donations for an environmental group such as the Laudato Si' Movement.

Preface

Common Preface III

Praise to God for the creation and restoration of the human race.

Eucharistic Prayer

We suggest Eucharistic Prayer III or IV which has a cosmic setting and works well for Masses for Creation.

Meditation after Communion

Consider incorporating liturgical dance that acknowledges the land, oceans, rivers, sky, plants, animals, and the elements. The dance could be performed after communion, as it is common in Masses celebrated in rural communities in Latin America or Africa.

Prayer After Communion

*God of all goodness,
you have fed us with these sacramental gifts.
"Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace."
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen.*

Final Blessing

As we go forth, walking in the light of Christ, savior of the whole cosmos, we give thanks for the way we are held and nurtured by our common home of creation. Nourished by bread and wine, body and blood of Christ, may our hearts be fixed as steadfast pilgrims on a journey towards healing and reconciliation between the human and non-human natural world. May our gratitude lead us to live humbly and walk with care and respect for all that God has created.

Prayer from Laudato Si'

The Opening Prayer and the Prayer After Communion are taken from the final prayers of Laudato Si'. If these prayers are not used, you might also consider ending mass praying one of the final prayers from Laudato Si', such as "A Prayer for our Earth," before the Sending Forth. In this case, the whole community might pray the prayer together.

*All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten
of this earth, so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts of those
who look only for gain at the expense of the poor
and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of
each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.*

After Mass

Once the liturgical celebration has ended, consider organizing a gathering to exchange ideas on how „to cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.“ (Laudato Si' 14).

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