



Genesis 1:26-31 (NRSV)

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and

let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” ²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

²⁹God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Matthew 6:26-30 (NRSV)

²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Connect Guide

Everything Is Connected
Week of Sunday, April 14, 2024

Opening

- 1. Pray:** God of creation, your Spirit moved over the face of the deep, bringing forth light and life. Thanks for the gift of this time, as we commit to new ways of honoring your creation as a means of sharing Jesus’ transforming love in our common home. We welcome you, O Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.
- 2. Share:** Share one experience that changed your habit of using plastic or reducing waste when you realized the unexpected consequences to the natural world.

Dive Into the Text

1. God made humankind in God’s image. We are creatures, not the Creator. According to this text, what aspects of divine nature are inscribed in humankind, and how do they manifest in your life today?
2. God’s call for humankind is to be fruitful and multiply and take charge of fish in the sea, of birds in the air, and of every living thing that moves on the earth. What does it mean to take charge of them?
3. The main objective of the teaching in the Matthew text was that we could not serve two masters, God and money, at the same time, but humans tend to seek security in what we have and prioritize economic growth. In what ways does the natural world help you shift to see more than yourself?

Quiz: Plastic Pollution

Take a quiz about plastic pollution.

1. What happens to plastic waste when left in the environment?

- It is a biodegradable material, so it eventually disintegrates.
- It never fully goes away. It just breaks into little pieces.
- There is no such thing as plastic waste, as all plastic is recycled.

2. What percentage of plastic waste is recycled globally?

- 9%
- 28%
- 70%

Laudato si'

“LAUDATO SI’, mi’ Signore” – “Praise be to you, my Lord”. In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs”. (1)

Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato si'*: On care for our common home. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Go Deeper

1. The environment has become one of the top topics people recommend avoiding in discussion. Pope Francis pointed out in his encyclical that the biggest obstacle is a need for more interest in the environment. In what ways can we raise awareness and openness to talk about it?
2. No one is free from using plastic, cars, or energy produced by oil or gas. How can we be wise and caring consumers in order to protect the natural world?
3. Everything is connected, but we don't always see it. Share unexpected connections you find and connect dots between your acts of care and their positive consequences (or vice versa).

Close in Prayer

Close your time in prayer together.