



Honoring the Season of Creation: Political Actions On Behalf of our Common Home

During the liturgical Season of Creation, from September 1 to the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on October 4th, Christians around the world will be celebrating the gift of creation with special services, reflections, and prayers. How very welcome it feels to have Creation at the center of our worship! But, today unfortunately, when our own government has unleashed a war against clean air, clean water, and protected public lands, thoughts and prayers are not enough. As Pope Francis himself reminds us in *Laudato Si*, to do our part in halting environmental degradation, we must also act –and we must learn that activism on earth’s behalf is an essential “part of our Christian spirituality” (p. 149).

What sort of action can we do in four weeks that will make a difference? Here are five possibilities:

1. Read, reread, study and take to heart Pope Francis’s analysis of our ecological situation in *Laudato Si*. If possible, study the encyclical with others from your church or community. The powerful insights in this text call us persuasively to conversion and to new ways of living in harmony with the earth and each other.
2. To learn about dynamic steps being taken by local communities across the nation to combat climate change, watch “Paris to Pittsburgh,” a 2018 documentary directed by National Geographic filmmaker, Sidney Beaumont. You can find it on You-Tube or the National Geographic site or at Amazon. Consider holding a group showing at your church or school.
3. Listen to our young people. They know that they will be the inheritors of whatever we do or fail to do to curb the climate crisis. They speak with passion and a wisdom beyond their years. You can begin by listening to Severn Suzuki, a 12 year-old girl from Canada who addressed the plenary session of the Rio summit in 1992.
<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/severnsuzukiunearthsummit.htm>
You can also read Greta Thunberg’s book, “No One is Too Small to Make a Difference.” Greta is the Swedish teenager who has come to the U.S. (by boat, in order to lessen the carbon footprint) to participate in the Climate Strike at the United Nations. Or you can follow –and even join—the Sunrise Movement, a group of young people whose commitment to solving the climate crisis has motivated thousands.
4. Join the Climate March which is taking place in all fifty states and in 150 countries on September 20th. This is an intergenerational, non-violent event; young people and adults are coming together to demand transformative action on behalf of the environment. You can find a march near you at: <https://peoplesclimate.org/> or <https://350.org/support-climate-strikes/>

5. Write to your congressman and your senators and let them know that you expect them to support legislation that supports clean air, clean water, forest preservation, and climate health. Tell them you oppose deregulation that permits methane to be emptied into the air. Tell them you want them to protect our national forests and parks. And given the administration's recent disastrous declarations, you can afford to be more specific. Tell your representatives that you do not want the Tongass, our nation's largest national forest, turned over to private mining companies. Remind them that public lands are the people's lands—or that, more precisely, the Lord's lands. Feel free to quote Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein."

And finally, let us make clear to our political representatives that, in the spirit of St. Francis and the words of Pope Francis, we refuse "to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled," and we are coming together with other Christians to take charge of caring for "this home which has been entrusted to us" by our Creator. Could there be a better way to honor the Season of Creation?