



DICASTERO PER IL SERVIZIO  
DELLO SVILUPPO UMANO INTEGRALE

23 May 2019

My brother in Christ:

Warm greetings to you from Rome.

On the occasion of the International Day of Biodiversity and in anticipation of the fourth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development invites you to prayerfully consider caring for creation as part of your pastoral leadership.

Caring for creation protects the inheritance the Creator has given us, an inheritance that is essential to our well-being. As Pope Francis said in *Laudato Si'*, "Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it." (LS 139) Protecting this inheritance is a way of fulfilling our role as the stewards of creation; as Pope Benedict XVI said in a meeting with the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone, "the task of 'subduing' it was never intended as an order to enslave it but rather as the task of being guardians of creation and developing its gifts."

In fulfillment of this role as the guardians of God's creation, **we extend a particular invitation to join the ecumenical family in celebrating the Season of Creation.** During the Season of Creation, which runs from September 1 to October 4 each year, Christians unite in praying and acting together to care for our common home.

September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, was proclaimed by the Patriarch Dimitrios I for the Orthodox in 1989 and endorsed by Pope Francis in 2015. The season that begins on that date and lasts until October 4, the Feast of St. Francis, is widely embraced. Cardinal Turkson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and many others have supported this season.

An ecumenical steering committee provides resources to celebrate the Season of Creation, and proposes a theme for each year. The theme for 2019 is "the web of life," a theme that connects our role as the stewards of God's creation with the urgent need to protect biodiversity. This theme has important connections to this October's Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian region.

More information about the Season of Creation, its connection to the synod, and the wealth of resources available is in the attached overview. I encourage you to share this with all of your parishes.

I am praying for you and all those in your diocese, and I ask that you pray for me.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

Msgr. Bruno Marie Duffé

Secretary

Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development