

Season of Creation 2020 – ‘Jubilee for the Earth’

Joint statement issued by Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, President of CCEE, and Rev. Christian Krieger, President of CEC

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From 1 September to 4 October, Christians all over the world celebrate the Season of Creation, as well as the Day of Creation on 1 September. Following the tradition from previous years, in CEC and CCEE, we have taken advantage of this occasion and have encouraged our Member Churches in Europe to acknowledge these days to celebrate the richness of our faith as an expression to protect our common home.

The values of Season of Creation go back to the roots of the Christian faith. Creation is a gift of God for mankind and for all living beings. It is therefore our responsibility to protect it as good and reliable stewards, and as faithful servants of God. “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it,” (Psalm 24:1).

Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudato Si’* underlined that “the urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development.” At the same time, he strongly appealed “for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.”

Similarly, one of the significant theologians of our era Jurgen Moltmann has made it clear that “today the theological adversary is the nihilism practised in our dealings with nature” and called for “a discernment of the God, who is present in creation through his Holy Spirit,” a discernment that “can bring men and women to reconciliation and peace with nature.”

Celebrating the Day of Creation and the Season of Creation has a significant ecumenical dimension. While celebrating these days, we look back and give thanks for the proposal of the late Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I in 1989. Since that time, the idea of the Season of Creation and its ecumenical spirit has been further confirmed by the European Ecumenical Assemblies organised jointly by CEC and CCEE in Basel 1989, Graz 1997 and Sibiu 2007.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed how deeply the globe is interconnected. We realised more than ever that we are not isolated from each other and that conditions related to human health and well-being are fragile. Impact of the pandemic forces us to take seriously the need for vigilance and the need for conditions of sustainable life throughout the

earth. This is even more important when considering the environmental devastation and the threat of climate change.

We invite you to celebrate the Season of Creation this year under the heading of Jubilee for the Earth. The concept of Jubilee is rooted in the Bible and underlines that there must exist a just and sustainable balance between social, economic and ecological realities. The lesson from the biblical concept of jubilee points us towards the need to restore balance in the very systems of life, affirming the need for equality, justice and sustainability and confirming the need for a prophetic voice in defence of our common home.

We invite all of the shepherds and European Christians, the parishes, church communities and every person of good will to pay attention to the Season of Creation and to live it with an ecumenical spirit, united in prayer and action.

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