Creationtide



The 4th of October is the feast day of St Francis of Assisi, one of the most popular and much-loved saints within Christendom, and this year has particular significance for two reasons.

Born in 1181, in Assisi in Italy, this year marks the 800th anniversary of his death at the relatively young age of 45. Within his short life, Francis inspired many to follow his example in renouncing the riches of the world - he himself had been born into a wealthy family – and live a simple, contemplative life, more at one with the natural world. Shortly after his election, Pope Leo XIV declared 2026 a Jubilee Year in honour of St Francis, emphasising the values of simplicity, fraternity and the care of creation. In essence the year is a challenge to everyone to focus on the essentials of life, the building of bridges across politics, class and culture, and the need to respect and to share in taking responsibility for our planet home.

Over the past thirty years or so, much debate has taken place within the synods and councils of the worldwide church on the need for the global human family to reassess and review its place within the natural world order. Beliefs held by previous generations that planet earth was a resource given by God to be exploited for the benefit of humankind has come to be recognised as increasingly in conflict with the growing realisation that our planet's resources are not infinite. Furthermore, the decline in eco-systems and biodiversity have brought home the impact that the growth in human population, and the unchecked patterns of human behaviour, not least in relation to changing patterns of climate, is having on the whole of life, human, animal and plant. It is this understanding of the interconnectedness of all life, and that all life should be honoured, in the words of St Francis, "*Mother earth who sustains and governs us*…" that has brought about a new liturgical season within the church's calendar.

We are familiar with the seasons of Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas. This year however has seen the introduction of a new season, Creationtide. Beginning on the first Sunday of September with the Feast of Creation in Christ, incorporating Harvest Festivals, it concludes on the first Sunday in October with commemorations of St Francis. Globally, and locally, we are all challenged to pray, and to act, celebrating the beauty and wonders of God's creation and become more aware of the impact that our own lifestyle has upon the environment around us. In doing so, to respond to the call to live lives that will ensure a future home for future generations of people and of all life, as God intended it to be.

God Bless.

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