

International Solidarity Days-September 2019

September 1—World Day of Prayer for Creation



The world-wide Season of Creation opens on Sunday, September 1st, the World Day of Prayer for Creation. The season extends through the feast of St Francis, the patron of ecology, on October 4th. This year's theme for the season is: The Web of Life-Biodiversity Is God's Gift. This day and throughout the month, we are invited to marvel at the wonders of creation, taking time to appreciate and savor nature's many gifts. It is also a time to take action to protect and promote biodiversity. Each creature on our richly diverse planet reveals something of the divine to us. All ecosystems are to be respected and cared for if life is to continue to flourish. Human activities that contribute to global climate change and environmental pollution are threatening the intricate web of life on Earth. This day, let us renew our commitment to sustainability and care for Earth and for the poor who often are impacted the most by climate change and environmental degradation.

God, we thank you for the gifts of your wonderfully diverse creation. We ask your forgiveness for the many ways that we have contributed to the degradation of the environment and to climate change. Open our hearts and reveal to us the many ways that we can each make a difference in restoring the health of our planet. Help us all to make the necessary changes in our lives that will preserve the web of life and maintain the biodiversity that is needed for a sustainable future.

September 8—World Literacy Day



The 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goal #4 called for universal primary and secondary education for all children worldwide, regardless of religion, gender, economic status or nationality. Presently, over half of the world's population is illiterate, including 2 of every 3 women. World Literacy Day is a time to call attention to the urgent need for literacy education throughout the world, especially for women. Goal #4 emphasizes that without improved literacy it is impossible for communities to eradicate poverty. Education is the key to self-determination, just governance, elimination of hunger and economic sustainability. The 2019 theme is "Literacy and Multilingualism." This year's theme is meant to express solidarity with the

celebrations of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages. Embracing linguistic diversity in education and literacy development is central to addressing global literacy challenges and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

We praise you, God, for the great diversity of people around the world. Bless all those working to bring literacy opportunities to those in need, so that we can grow in our understanding of one another. Bless us with enhanced communication through literacy so that we can learn from one another, sharing our hopes and dreams for the future. Inspire each of us to become involved in literacy and education in some way so that all people have an opportunity to reach their full potential and build up the common good of their communities and the world.

September 10—World Suicide Prevention Day



The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that someone takes their own life every 40 seconds. That's about 800,000 to 1 million people worldwide every year. Suicide is the leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 29. Each person who takes his or her own life, leaves behind grieving spouses, friends, siblings or other family members, colleagues and/or classmates. For every person who succeeds in taking their own life, there are 25 others who have made unsuccessful attempts. Severe depression leading to suicide is often untreated, due to the stigma of mental illness resulting in many people refusing to seek help. This year's theme is "Working Together to Prevent Suicide" and will continue to be the theme for 2020. Each of us can do something to lessen the risk. First, know the warning signs. Encourage those who exhibit signs of depression to seek and receive professional help. Work to eradicate the stigma of mental illness, so that those in need are not ashamed to get help. Address bullying that can significantly contribute to hopelessness. Seek help for anyone who has suffered a catastrophic loss if they seem to be unable to function in their daily activities. Seek help immediately if anyone expresses thoughts of suicide—take this warning seriously. Most of all, be a loving and supportive presence.

Holy One, we pray for all lonely, hopeless and suffering people who feel that they have no way out except suicide. Give them the courage to seek help. Surround them with the love and care that they need to begin their healing journey. Open our hearts so that we may recognize and respond to those in need of our love, support and assistance. Bless the caregivers who work to restore hope and well-being. Bless those families who have lost loved ones to suicide. May they be comforted in their sorrow.

September 16—International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer



This year marks the **32nd anniversary of the Montreal Protocol**. The protocol is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production and use of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion. This year's theme is "32 Years and Healing."

"For over three decades, the Montreal Protocol has done much more than shrink the ozone hole; it has shown us how environmental governance can respond to science, and how countries can come together to address a shared vulnerability. I call for that same spirit of common cause and, especially, greater leadership as we strive to implement the Paris Agreement on climate change and mobilize the ambitious climate action we so urgently need at this time."

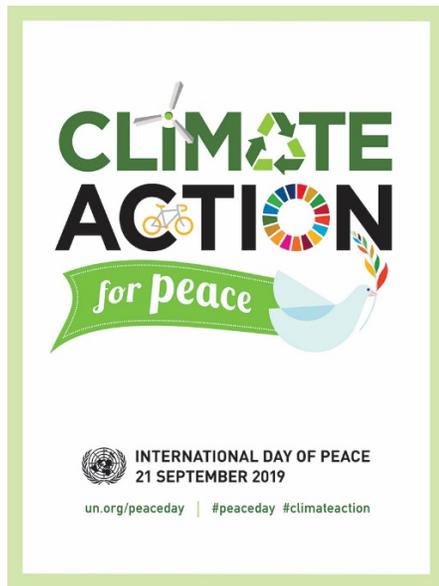
UN Secretary-General António Guterres

This day we celebrate the fact that through worldwide international action, the phaseout of controlled uses of ozone depleting substances has not only helped protect the ozone layer for this and future generations, but has also contributed significantly to global efforts to address climate change. On this day we remind each other that we must keep up the efforts to protect not only people, but the health of the planet, by protecting the ozone layer. This effort is essential to curbing climate change. Let us be vigilant so that the gains accomplished will be maintained and improved upon as we strive to meet the Paris Agreement goals.

God, we thank you for the gifts of creation and the gift of Earth. We are grateful for the successful effort that we have made to protect the ozone shield which deflects harmful

components of the sun's rays. We ask that you give us the determination and courage to continue our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, live sustainably and protect our planet.

September 21—International Day of Peace



International Day of Peace is a day that reminds us that peace is not merely the absence of violence and war, but the presence of justice and respect for human dignity. As we strive to build a culture of peace worldwide, we are aware that as long as basic human needs are not met, there can be no lasting peace. Respect for human dignity and justice means providing access to food, water, a safe place to live and basic healthcare. This year's theme of "Climate Action for Peace" recognizes that global climate change, which affects supplies of food, water, and health, threatens peace and stability throughout the world. Natural disasters displace three times as many people as conflicts, forcing millions to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere. The salinization of water and crops is endangering food security, and the impact on public health is escalating. The growing tensions over resources and mass migrations of people are affecting every country on every continent.

Peace can only be achieved if concrete action is taken to combat climate change.

"It is possible to achieve our goals, but we need decisions, political will and transformational policies to allow us to still live in peace with our own climate." -- Secretary-General António Guterres, 15 May 2019

God, on this special international day of peace, we pray for peace based on our shared common humanity, respect for human dignity, justice for all, and care for our common home. Help us to reach out to those in need of food, water, shelter, safety and hope. As we care for the poor and care for Earth, challenge us to examine our lives and discern how we can live more sustainably. May we be instruments of your peace in our world.

September 25—United Nations 4th Anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals



Adopted on September 25, 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) outline 17 goals that must be achieved in order to eradicate extreme poverty, address inequalities, and reduce climate change worldwide by 2030. This day marks the 4th anniversary of the UN SDG's. These goals are a call for action by all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social issues while tackling global climate change. On September 25th the UN will convene the Sustainable Development Goals summit in New York to comprehensively review progress made toward implementation of the SDG's by 2030. The ultimate goal is to ensure fair and just globalization while protecting the planet from climate change and preserving its biodiversity. It aims to transform our world and to improve people's lives and prosperity on a healthy planet. Countries, regions, cities, the business sector and civil society are actively engaged in implementing the agenda of the SDGs. They are mobilizing efforts to end all forms of poverty, fighting inequalities and tackling climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The summit will be a space to discuss the huge efforts that are being made and to identify future actions for accelerating progress towards the SDGs.

Holy One, today we pray that all people will continue to work together and re-double our efforts to help all people of the planet live in peace and promote prosperity for all in an equitable and sustainable way. Thank you for the blessings of Earth and the unique gifts that each person brings to life on our planet. We, along with all creation, give you praise and thanks.