



Feast of St. Francis Evening Prayer October 4, 2024

Opening Hymn: Mu-535

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Introduction

The ice caps are melting, the seas are rising, forests are burning, crops are decimated, and people are suffering. How could we possibly feel hopeful? However, feeling hopeful about the future is not only possible but is also an essential part of our faith journey. Let us be instruments of God's peace, and where there is despair, let us sow hope — by taking action. As [Fr. Richard Rohr](#) reminds us, "We do not think ourselves into a new way of living, but we live ourselves into a new way of thinking." Let us take this time to explore how we can live ourselves into a new way of thinking about the climate crisis and our call to be an instrument of God's peace and be sowers of climate hope.

Readings

Reading #1

I have realized that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point. In addition to this possibility, it is indubitable that the impact of climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons. We will feel its effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing, forced migrations, etc. ... Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident... To say that there is nothing to hope for would be suicidal, for it would mean exposing all humanity, especially the poorest, to the worst impacts of climate change.

~*Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis

Reading #2

Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often, we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope... "Since we are justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing in the glory of God... Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:1-2.5).

~*Spes Non Confudit*, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee 2025, Pope Francis

Reading #3

We all have a right to grieve the loss of a future free from the climate crisis. It is a deep, hard loss. And it's particularly painful, because those of us who read these reports bear a great responsibility in passing an unsafe planet on to our children and future generations. But grief that stops at despair is an ending that I and many others, most notably those on the frontlines, are not prepared to accept. We also have the responsibility – and the opportunity – to shape the future differently. We must take stock of the science, triple down on our efforts and deploy the perspective of possibility.... It will take much more courageous collective action to turn the seemingly impossible into the new normal. But we are on the brink of positive societal tipping points. I believe that the children of children born this year will be the first fossil-fueled generation in modern history. Their generation, just a few years from now, will benefit from development and smart climate adaptation based on the certainty of abundant, homegrown and distributed clean energy. It doesn't mean they will live in a utopian future – we know too much climate change is already baked into the system – but enormous positive change is coming.

~Christiana Figueres, *I understand climate scientists' despair – but stubborn optimism may be our only hope.*

Individual Reflection

In the midst of the climate crisis, how are you called to sow hope?

Litany

A Litany Based on Psalm 23

L: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

All: In your gift is daily bread, sustenance for each day. From you comes wisdom and understanding – the gift of peace.

L: The Lord desires green pasture and clear waters, wooded hills that clap their hands, streams that overflow with joy – a world where all may rest in peace.

All: You restore my soul, forgives my sins and heals my pain.

You renew my confidence so I too may renew broken relationships.

L: The Lord leads me in right paths.

All: You go before us, leading by example and marking the way – on earth as in heaven.

L: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, even though the news is of floods and drought, fires and tempest, I am comforted for the Lord is my steadfast companion.

All: I hear of evil – of warfare and greed, of persecution and oppression; of self-interest and self-delusion– yet I fear not evil, for You are our righteousness.

L: You prepare a table before me where bread and wine will satisfy my wants.

In the face of adversity, You anoint me with the Holy Spirit.

All: Your goodness and mercy shall stay with me all the days of my life, for You are my shepherd and I shall not want.

Our Father

Closing Prayer

Loving God, Shepherd of your people:

When we walk along pilgrim ways, You lead us and we thank you.

When we sing and pray for your guidance, You are with us, and we thank you.

When we stand alongside our brothers and sisters, You are with us, and we thank you.

When we call on those in authority to take action, You inspire us and we thank you.

As the days unfold, keep within us the hope of change.

Softening the hearts of those in authority in industry, in government and in the churches, that all may respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

Amen

~ adapted from a prayer by Judith Russenberger, *The Green Tau Prayers* (Used with permission)