



BISHOP PAUL'S HOMILY FOR THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL *LAUDATO SI'*

Bishop Paul celebrated Mass for the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* and his homily can be read below:



We are approaching the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si'". It was published on May 24 in 2015. Pope Francis has nominated this week leading up to the anniversary as "Laudato Si' Week". He has encouraged us to take time to reflect on the message he published five years ago.

The full title of the document is "Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis on care for our common home." Pope Francis begins his message with these words: "Laudato si', mi' Signore", Praise be to you, my Lord". He is quoting from a poem by Saint Francis of Assisi, giving praise to God for the wonders of creation. This is how Pope Francis starts his encyclical.

"Laudato si', mi' Signore", "Praise be to you, my Lord". In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs."

Pope Francis is recalling the message of Saint Francis of Assisi who had a vivid sense of how we are related to the world around us. We sometimes speak of the people around us as our brothers and sisters, members of God's family. Saint Francis of Assisi took this further. He saw the whole of creation as one great family, created by God. He spoke of Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Wind and Sister Water. We are linked with the people around us and with the whole of creation as brothers and sisters in one family.

When he spoke in this way, Saint Francis of Assisi was echoing passages in the Scriptures that give praise to God for the whole of creation. We had some verses along these lines in our first reading. The prophet Isaiah gives praise to God, "who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it." "Sing to the Lord a new song, God's praise from the end of the earth! Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants."

The Scriptures teach us to give praise to God for the whole of creation. They also teach us to care for creation. In the text we heard from the gospel according to Saint Matthew, Jesus speaks of God's care for creation. "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. This is how God clothes the grass of the field." As God cares for creation, so we too, as children of God, are called to care for creation in the way we live our daily lives.

God has given us the world around us to be our common home. May God guide us in our care for creation so that creation might be the beautiful common home that God intended.

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