

MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

PRAYING WITH LAUDATO SI'

**A Retreat Guide for Individuals
and Communities**



WRITTEN BY THE GENERAL SERVICE OMI-JPIC

Praying with Laudato Si:
A Retreat Guide
for Individuals and Communities

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Preface of the Guidebook



In my correspondence dated August 15, 2023, titled *"Let us walk together listening to the call to care for our common home,"* I encouraged all members of our charismatic family to pursue integral ecological conversion as a foundation for renewing our lives and mission. Furthermore, I said: *"I have requested that our General Service for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation prepare resources to support communal prayerful reflection on 'Laudato Si', affirming its significance and urgency within all our communities."*

This tool that we present today is the answer to that request. I thank all those who have participated in its elaboration and I hope that their work will bear much fruit and help us in our common pilgrimage with all those who feel part of the same charismatic family. Of course, in each context this material not only can, but must be adapted in a creative way.

May each one of us and each community be able to discern the concrete actions we should take to commit ourselves in a more prophetic and concrete way to the care of all that is created while at the same time caring to grow in a missionary spirituality that embraces conversion, also integral ecological conversion.

At the dawn of our 200th anniversary of the pontifical approval of our Congregation, we feel that we want to walk united with the Church in responding to the calls to care for creation and the poorest of the poor. Trying to be a seed of beatitudes in the heart of our world (OMI Constitution n. 11) we also want to walk with so many of our brothers and sisters of all humanity to build a universal fraternity that guarantees responsible care and reverential respect for all creation.

Your brother, pilgrim of hope in communion.

Fr. Luis Ignacio Rois Alonso, OMI

Superior General

Introduction

This retreat guide was developed by the Congregation's General Service of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (GS-JPIC), in response to a mandate of our 37th General Chapter. It has been prepared as a guide for individuals and communities to pray using Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*. It is developed as a response to the Superior General's request that the Service "prepare tools to help us do that prayerful reading" of *Laudato Si'* (Letter of Superior General, August 15, 2023)

Using insights from the encyclical letter, this guide presents Scripture passages, texts, stories and images from the Oblate tradition. Its aim is to lead to reflection, prayer, and commitment to action. The guide is not intended as a study guide to *Laudato Si'*. Texts from the letter are presented for the purpose of inspiration and prayer.

The guide may be used by individuals or communities. One theme may be selected for a day of prayer, or several themes may be used over an extended time of retreat. The themes presented are suggestions; others may be developed by users. The motivation for the choice of these is that they show an aspect of the Pope's encyclical letter as it is read through the chosen lens of GS-JPIC: *Praying with Laudato Si' using insights drawn from listening to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*. Some of the themes include the voices of the poor with whom the Oblates are working.

Each of the themes is presented following a unique structure, but they all contain, in some way, the following characteristics:

- Introduction to the theme of the retreat
- Suggested Scripture passage(s)
- Texts from *Laudato Si'*
- Elements from the Oblate tradition
- Suggestions for reflection and prayer

- Suggestions for sharing and discussion.
- Call(s) to action.

Our hope in preparing this guide is that it will facilitate a spiritual experience which should lead to conversion of heart. To sustain commitment to action, a plan of action for individuals and communities will have to be developed. At the end of the guide, we present a selected bibliography for those who may wish to deepen their knowledge of the issues of justice and peace raised by the Pope's letter. "... *put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.*" (Ex. 3:5).



Chapter 1

Integral Ecology

Our faith affirms that everything that exists was created by God. Everything that exists is connected to God and to everything else. Everything has value in and of itself. When one part of creation is not respected, eventually everything suffers. Those who suffer the most, however, are the poor.

Integral ecology shows us how things are connected to each other and to God and invites us to treat everything with respect because we are all connected.

Scripture

Choose one passage from the following to use for your prayer.

- **Gen. 1: 31** And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.”
- **1 Cor. 12:26** If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Laudato Si'

- “We are not God. The earth was here before us, and it has been given to us.” (LS 67).
- “The environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.” (LS 95)

Oblate Resources

In 2023 and 2024, many countries in southern Africa experienced severe drought. As a result, the earth is starved of water, plants for food cannot grow, animals are starved, and the poor are facing death by starvation. Many are looking to the

Oblates for help. Some people have linked this to the deforestation which has been happening in the region and to climate change. In this situation, Oblates are called not only to feed the hungry, but to work for justice so that “those whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can bring” (C.5) may no longer need to beg.

Reflection and Prayer

Human activities, such as mining, deforestation and the production of dangerous chemicals, have caused damage to the environment. This affects all living creatures, including human beings. Among human beings, it is the poor who are suffering the most because of this damage. Inspired by the Oblate charism, we want to listen to the cry of the earth and to the cry of the poor.

- *Spend time alone in prayer, listening to what God is saying to you with these texts. After the time in prayer, review the experience, focusing on movements of the Spirit at the deep emotional level, to things you may be resisting, etc.*

For Sharing

Sometimes we are not aware of how our actions contribute to the damage of the environment. At other times, we may feel powerless to do anything about caring for the environment. God, however, invites us to recognize that each one of us can play a role, no matter how small it may seem.

- *What do you “hear” God saying to us, as individuals and as a community? Ask yourself, is this good news for the poor?*

Call to Action

“... faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” (James 2:17)

- *What action(s) are you called to take concerning the care of the environment?*

- *Some suggestions from Laudato Si':*
 - *limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources*
 - *moderating their use*
 - *maximizing their effective use,*
 - *re-using and recycling them (LS 22)*



Chapter 2

Listening to the Cry of the Poor

The tears of those who suffer, including our common home, the earth, should move us to compassion – feeling with. This reflection invites us to take courage, to observe how the earth is crying and calling us to action.

Scripture

Choose one passage from the following to use for your prayer.

- **Psalm 62:1** O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where no water is.
- **Rom 8:22** We know that the whole creation has been groaning with labor pains until now; not only the creation, but we ourselves...

Laudato Si'

The Earth “now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the good with which God has endowed her... the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22).” (LS 2)

There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. (LS 25)

Oblate Resources

The 37th General Chapter reminds us of that care for the Earth “is of special concern to us in our missionary work. We have become aware of our insufficient efforts to care for the environment. “We are challenged, therefore, to commit ourselves to the fullest extent possible to make ecological conversion a priority as a fundamental part of our lives and as an integral part of our evangelization.” (PHC 11.1)

Also, “We must not forget that the cry of the earth is the cry of the poor, to whom we are to give preference (c. C 5).” (PHC 11.2)

Reflection and Prayer

- *Think of the different ways in which the cry of the earth has become visible today?*
- *Have you been aware of the cry of the earth in your local situation?*

For Sharing

- *Talk to others about their experience.*
- *What strikes you from their sharing?*

Call to Action

Opportunities to Witness

Jesus teaches us how to live in the present time. He identifies our present time as the end-time, the time that offers us countless opportunities to testify for Jesus and his Kingdom. The many disasters in our world, and all the tragedies that happen to people each day, can easily lead us to despair and convince us that we are the sad victims of circumstances. But Jesus looks at these events in a radically different way.

Jesus reminds us that we do not belong to this world. We have been sent into the world to be living witnesses of God's unconditional love, calling all people to look beyond the passing structures of our temporary existence to the eternal life promised to us.

- Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*.



Chapter 3

Earth, our common home

God has created our universe, world, common home, planet, and all it contains. We and all living beings are in constant flux and change. This marvellous world is constantly changing; Change is normal and natural. Yet, somehow, we human beings have participated in causing such rapid change that nature is finding it difficult to maintain its balance. The disturbing concern is that too often we are not good at telling the difference between abusive relationships and sustainable ones. Our future likely depends on embracing an entirely different view.

A Moment of Prayer

This prayer time can be individual, in the community or with members of our charismatic family. It can range from the Liturgy of the Hours to a simple heartfelt prayer prepared by one of the participants.

Texts for Reflection and Prayer

“The continued acceleration of changes affecting humanity, and the planet is coupled today with a more intensified pace of life and work which might be called “rapidification”. Although change is part of the working of complex systems, the speed with which human activity has developed contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution. Moreover, the goals of this rapid and constant change are not necessarily geared to the common good or to integral and sustainable human development. Change is desirable, yet it becomes a source of anxiety when it causes harm to the world and to the quality of life of much of humanity.” (LS 18)

“For as long as Earth lasts, planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never stop.” (Gen 8:22)

“Cranes know when it is time to move south for the winter, and robins, warblers, and blackbirds know when it is time to come back again. But my people? My people know nothing, not the first thing of God and his rule.” (Jer 8:7)

“Change your life. God’s kingdom is here.” (Mt 4:17)

We might find inspiration in an understanding of the world held by the Ojibwe, native North Americans whose homeland is in the Upper Great Lakes region. They believe the wolf is their brother—not metaphorically, but literally.

Shortly after creating heaven and Earth, Gichi Manito (the Great Spirit) created Anishinaabe (the original human) and Ma’iingan (the wolf). They were created as brothers and tasked with travelling throughout all creation together to honour the plants and animals by giving them names.

Anishinaabe and Ma’iingan were close and realized they were siblings with all the animals and plants. When the two completed their task, Gichi Manito informed them that they would go their separate ways. The Great Spirit foretold that both would be hated, hunted, and misunderstood; ultimately, they would share the same fate. (*Other similar local stories can be chosen*).

“Formation is a process which aims at the integral growth of a person and lasts a lifetime. It enables us to accept our- selves as we are and develop into the persons we are called to be. Formation involves us in an ever-renewed conversion to the Gospel and a readiness to learn and to change in response to new demands.” (C 47)

Suggestions for Sharing and Discussion

- How do I understand myself as a living being on Mother Earth?

- Am I consciously aware of our common home around me and how it is changing?
- Is the place where I live better because I am amid everything and everyone else?
- Will what I do make this place better for the coming generations?

Calls to Action

What can I (or we) do?

- Do I take time to appreciate, think and consider these things?
- In our homes?
- In our community?
 - In our neighborhood?
 - To waste less, to have healthier air and good potable water...
 - To find ways to grow better-tasting food...
 - To clean our environment...
 - Other small, clear objectives to make a difference where live...



Chapter 4

Ecological Conversion

Personal Preparation

If we pause for a moment in the midst of our missionary work and begin to contemplate God's creation, we may realize that both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (LS 49) resonate intensely throughout our common home. These are not two distinct cries; they are one, because everything is connected. Our planet is in continuous risk. We cannot be indifferent to this cry. The climate crisis, the overheating of the earth, and all the disastrous consequences are related to our Christian faith and our Oblate vocation. This is the new 'kerygma' that must be strongly proclaimed: Listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor! This listening is part of a coherent faith in a God of life and following Jesus, because he wants to reconcile Creation on Earth.

Therefore, conversion is ultimately reconciling with the earth and with other beings, considering that "biodiversity" is the modern name for Creation... Asking for forgiveness and living a fraternity, in memory of all the victims of blind development.

Scripture

Choose a biblical passage to use in your prayer.

- **Is. 65:25** "The wolf and the lamb shall pasture together, and the lion shall eat hay like the ox— but the serpent's food shall be dust. None shall harm or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord."
- **Is. 35:5** "Then the eyes of the blind shall see, and the ears of the deaf be opened."

- **Rom. 8:22** “We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now.”

Laudato Si'

- “The ecological crisis is a summons to profound interior conversion” (LS 217).
- “So, what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.” (LS 217).

Oblate Resource

The Church entrusts the Oblates with caring for creation, guarding it, and protecting it. If we care for it, we are also caring for the poor. Our Oblate vocation takes the path of ecological conversion not as an invitation, but as a mandate. Love involves putting into practice care and foresight for all creation. Committing ourselves to the earth and to the people, who in many places are suffering the great impacts of pollution and the climate crisis, is an identity challenge for us Missionary Oblates. “Action on behalf of justice, peace and the integrity of creation is an integral part of evangelization.” (Rule 9a)

Making Space for Others

To share

- Why an ecological conversion? Pope Francis in LS 217 says: “We must recognize that some committed and prayerful Christians, under the guise of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule concerns for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent.”

- Do you know who the Christians are who are taking up the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor? How do these people inspire you?
- How does living an authentic Christian faith eventually activate an ecological conversion?

Call to Action

Therefore, ecological conversion is not just a matter of solidarity. It is action in favor of creation. It is opening the heart and listening to this daily cry. From the Christian faith, from our Oblate vocation, we cannot be indifferent to what happens to the Earth, our mother.

Therefore, assuming ecological conversion, as Oblates we are called to lay the foundations of a Pastoral of Integral Ecology in our homes, missions, parishes, and works.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

In inner silence, you can make this prayer your own. Echo the phrase that touches your heart.

Prayer for Ecological Conversion

by Fr. Tim Galvin, Laudato Si Animator. Riwoto, South Sudan

Creator God, we thank you for the wonder and beauty of all you have created. You have created us humans to be the protectors and caretakers of creation. However, we are the ones who now spoil the works of your hand. Your Son Jesus Christ continues to suffer and die in the suffering earth and in the suffering poor. Forgive our sins against your creation and against the poor of the world.

We join all the creation in thanking and praising you. We thank you, Creator God, for all the good things we enjoy; help us to live more simply. Give us the courage you gave the Apostles on

Pentecost to proclaim and defend the care of our common home
and the poor. Amen.



Chapter 5

The Interconnectedness of Creation

In our journey of faith, we recognize that all creation is woven together by God's design. This connection underscores our responsibility to care for the environment and one another, especially those who are marginalized. The ecological challenges faced by the Pygmies in Yokaduma serve as a reminder of the importance of respecting and nurturing the environment that sustains us.

Reflection

The Pygmies are located in Yokaduma, Indigenous people situated in the south-western region of Cameroon, surrounded by the Lobeke Forest. This forest is a critical habitat for both the Pygmies and numerous species of flora and fauna. However, they are experiencing significant struggles due to deforestation and illegal logging, which threaten their cultural heritage and survival. The Oblates have been a source of support, providing pastoral care and advocating for the rights of the Pygmies. Their commitment to justice is crucial in addressing the injustices faced by these communities.

Scripture

- **Genesis 1:31:** "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."
- **1 Corinthians 12:26:** "If one member suffers, all suffer together."

Insights from *Laudato Si'*

- "We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us." (LS 67)

- “The environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.” (LS 95)

Oblate Impact

The Oblates are actively engaged in advocating for the Pygmies' rights and providing essential support for sustainable practices. By listening to their needs and concerns, the Oblates foster a sense of dignity and empowerment among the Pygmies, helping them reclaim their voice in the face of environmental degradation.

Contemplative Practice

In silence, reflect on the interconnectedness of all life. Consider how your actions impact both the environment and the communities that depend on it. Allow the Spirit to guide you in understanding the depth of this connection.

Discussion Points

Engage in dialogue about how the ecological crisis affects not only the environment but also the lives of the people. Share thoughts on the responsibility we bear towards our brothers and sisters who suffer due to environmental degradation.

Call to Action

Recognizing our collective responsibility, identify practical steps you can take to advocate for the rights of marginalized communities and the protection of the environment. Consider how you can support initiatives led by the Oblates aimed at restoring and preserving the natural habitat of the Pygmies.

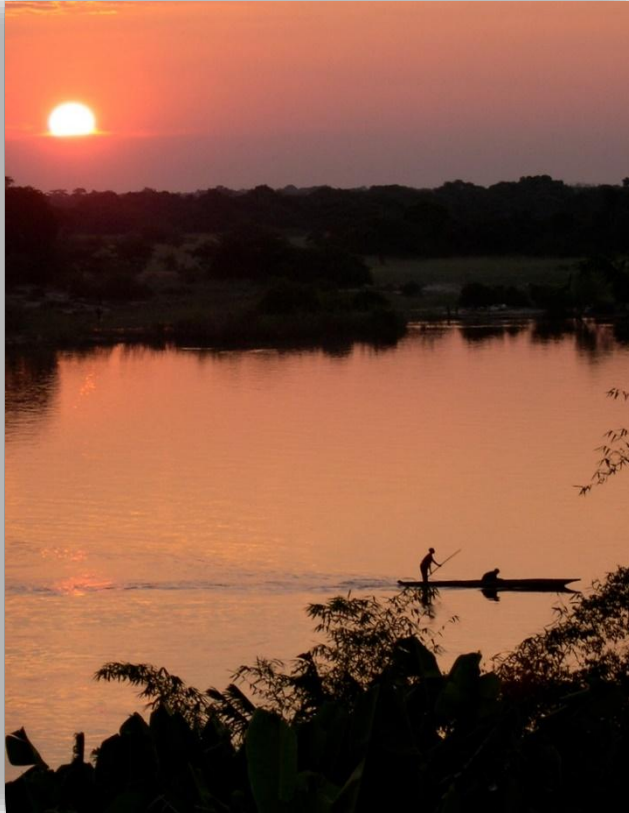
The Sacredness of God's Handiwork

How do we live in creation? Do we relate to it as a place full of “things” we can use for whatever need we want to fulfill and whatever goal we wish to accomplish? Or do we see creation

first of all as a sacramental reality, a sacred space where God reveals to us the immense beauty of the Divine?

As long as we only *use* creation, we cannot recognize its sacredness because we are approaching it as if we were its owners. But when we relate to all that surrounds us as created by the same God who created us and as the place where God appears to us and calls us to worship and adoration, then we were able to recognize the sacredness of all God's handiwork.

- Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*.



Chapter 6

Care for our Common Home

The pressing environmental issues we face today remind us of our collective responsibility to protect and care for creation. In Kisaju, the Maasai community is deeply affected by the ongoing drought, which exacerbates their struggles for water, food security, and livelihood. The Oblates' presence among them highlights the importance of solidarity and action in addressing these urgent challenges.

Reflection

The Maasai community is located in Kisaju, a region situated in the southern part of Kenya, near Kajiado County. This area has been severely impacted by prolonged drought, affecting livestock and agricultural production. The community's traditional reliance on pastoralism is challenged as they face water scarcity and diminishing grazing lands. The Oblates have stepped in to provide support, including the installation of boreholes, which have become lifelines for the Maasai during this crisis. These boreholes not only provide access to clean water but also promote sustainable domestic water usage, ensuring that the community can manage this vital resource effectively.

Scripture

- **Matthew 25:35:** "For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink..."
- **Isaiah 58:10:** "If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness..."

Insights from *Laudato Si'*

- “We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family.” (LS 52)
- “Access to safe drinking water is a basic and universal human right.” (LS 30)

Oblate Impact

The Oblates are actively engaged in addressing the challenges faced by the Maasai, advocating for water access and supporting social development projects. Their efforts in providing boreholes and promoting sustainable domestic water usage empower the community to navigate the impacts of drought while preserving their cultural heritage.

Contemplative Practice

Spend time in quiet reflection, considering the fragility of our ecosystems and the interconnectedness of all life. Pray for the wisdom to recognize how your choices affect the environment and the lives of the Maasai community. Through the Maasai community, we see all areas and communities across the globe suffering from the effects of climate change, reminding us of our shared responsibility to care for one another and the earth.

Discussion Points

Reflect on how the drought crisis impacts not only the Maasai but also the broader ecosystem. Discuss the importance of water as a vital resource and how collective action can address these challenges.

Call to Action

In light of the urgency of the drought situation, identify ways you can contribute to efforts aimed at providing sustainable solutions for water access and environmental care. Inspired by the Oblates working in this part of the world, what do you see in your local context that could

foster community resilience, promote responsible resource management, and strengthen relationships with the environment? Consider how you can engage with your community to implement initiatives that prioritize sustainable practices and support those most affected by environmental challenges.



Chapter 7

A Dry, Weary Land Without Water

Many Oblates have had the experience of some form of “desert experience” during novitiate or the years of initial formation. The “desert experience” often entails a period of withdrawal from the ordinary comforts of everyday life, such as food shelter, mobile phone, etc. Other experiences include spending time in desolate places.

The Desert

The desert is a dry desolate land, without water. Today, many areas around the world are experiencing desertification because of human activities such as deforestation. Conditions in the desert are harsh for those who must live there.

- “God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement.” (LS 89)

The Desert in Christian Spirituality

In the Bible, the desert is a symbolic place. It represents a place of testing, purification, and the encounter with God. In the Old Testament, the Israelites spent 40 years in the desert on the way to the Promised Land. Jesus too spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert before beginning his public ministry. In the 3rd and 4th centuries, men and women went into the desert to live their Christian lives. “The monks sought the desert, convinced that it was the best place for encountering the presence of God.” (LS 126) Today, many men and women practice “desert experience” either in religious communities or in some other ways.

... desert Christians who have never been to Egypt...But they have been no strangers to the most terrifying of desert

landscapes. They have known intimately the parched and cracked land of an AIDS hospice, the steep cliffs beyond the waiting room of radiation oncology. Through their struggle with cancer and AIDS, they have acquired much of the attentiveness, explored many of the deep caves of indifference mapped out by desert Christian's centuries before them.

...people who have trod the high country of abuse, poverty, or prejudice, dealing with levels of indifference for which we have no language. They dwell in the harsh desert of addiction and mental illness, knowing the sustained pain of unemployment, divorce, physical disability. The possibilities of desert experience in contemporary life are more varied than we can imagine.¹

Scripture

- **Psalm 63:1** O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirst for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where no water is.

Oblate Heritage

- We are to avoid all luxury, all appearance of luxury, all immoderate gain and accumulation of possessions. Subject to the common law of labor, each in his own way contributing to the support of the community and its apostolate, we gladly accept the fact of not having at our disposal the comforts we might like. (C 21)
- Novices should adopt a simple style of life that will make them sensitive to the needs of people, especially the poor. (R 56b)

¹ Belden C. Lane, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality*. Oxford, New York et al: Oxford University Press, 1998, 194.

Spiritual Practice

- *Spend some time, either a few hours or a full day, away from the usual comforts such as house, room, phone, etc. If possible, spend the day in nature, experiencing the harsh realities of nature.*
- *Take only the basic food and water for the day.*
- *Pay attention to your experience.*

Question for Reflection and Discussion

- What can I (we) do to improve the natural environment around us?



Chapter 8

Give Me a Drink, Jn 4:7

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation, Is 12:3

Water is essential for life. It is a basic right. Yet, many today do not have access to clean water. Water sources have been polluted by chemicals used in mining and other industries. In some places, public water sources have been privatized, depriving the poor of accessing them. Water, a gift from God has been commodified.

We all use water for our everyday needs, yet we take it for granted. We tend to think that it is an infinite resource; we waste water.

Jesus asks the Samaritan women for water (Jn. 4:7). On the Cross, he cries out, “I thirst” and they offered him vinegar (Jn. 19:28). Through the Prophet Isaiah, God invites us: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Is 12:3) and “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money and without price.” (Is 55:1)

Water, a Symbol of New Life



In Christian tradition, water has an important symbolic meaning. We are baptized with water, a symbol of washing and regeneration. We are blessed with water. Water is mixed with wine at every eucharistic celebration.

Laudato Si' on Water

- Water poverty especially affects Africa where large sectors of the population have no access to safe drinking water or experience droughts which impede agricultural production. Some countries have areas rich in water while others endure drastic scarcity. (LS 28)
- One particularly serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor. Every day, unsafe water results in many deaths and the spread of water-related diseases, including those caused by micro-organisms and chemical substances. Dysentery and cholera, linked to inadequate hygiene and water supplies, are significant causes of suffering and infant mortality. (LS 29)
- ... water pollution particularly affects the poor who cannot buy bottled water; and rises in the sea level mainly affect impoverished coastal population who have nowhere else to go. (LS 48)
- The Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life. Throughout worship of God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane. Water, oil, fire and colors are taken up in all their symbolic power and incorporated in our act of praise. The hand that blesses is an instrument of God's love and a reflection of the closeness of Jesus Christ, who came to accompany us on a journey of life. Water poured out over the body of a child at Baptism is a sign of new life. Encountering God does not mean fleeing from this world or turning our back on nature. (LS 235)

Reflection and Prayer

Spend some time in quiet prayer, reflecting on your daily use of water.

- How much water do you use? How much of it do you waste?
- Are you aware that water is a finite gift from God?
- Are you aware that many people today do not have access to clean water?

Call to Action

Write a list of how you are going to save water. Some examples:

- don't let the tap run when you are brushing your teeth, washing dishes, etc.
- take shorter showers.
- don't pollute sources of water.

Bring your list to prayer, offer it to God and make a commitment to do the things on the list.

The Created Order as Sacrament

When God took on flesh in Jesus Christ, the uncreated and the created, the eternal and the temporal, the divine and the human, became united. This unity meant that all that is mortal now points to the immortal, all that is finite now points to the infinite. In and through Jesus all creation has become like a splendid veil, through which the face of God is revealed to us.

This is called the sacramental quality of the created order. All that is sacred because all that is speaks of God's redeeming love. Seas and winds, mountains and trees, sun, moon, and stars, and all the animals and people have become sacred windows offering us glimpses of God.

- Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*.

Chapter 9

A Prayer Service for Ecological Conversion

Ideally, this prayer should do with others, but individuals can also use it, adapting it to personal situations.

Praying with the Psalms and Creation

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty, wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a tent, you set the beams of your chambers on the waters, you make the clouds your chariot, you ride on the wings of the wind, you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken. You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they flee; at the sound of your thunder, they take to flight. They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams, the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the coney.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.



You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens. People go out to their work and to their labor until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works - who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord. Let sinners be consumed from the earth and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord! O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom have you made them all.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

O come let us worship and bow down to our King and God.

Scripture: Romans 8:18-25

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole of creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope, we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Prayer and Reflection

- What call do I experience when I seriously pray and discern on the “ecological conversion”?
- Can I share a personal experience that made me to realize this call?
- What changes do I need to make in my life because of the call I am hearing?

Choose an action or gesture that will express your commitment.



Intercessory Prayers

Creator God, may we hope and act with creation.

God of the land, the sea, the sky, Creator of all that is seen and unseen: open our hearts to the rhythm of Creation in the swells of the ocean, the movements of air and wind, the breath of all living things.

Open our eyes to the fragile beauty of the biodiversity of which we are a part. Open our ears to the sounds of life around us. Open our minds to the awareness of our deep relationship with all your Creation.

Creator God, may we hope and act with creation.

God of Light, Life and Love: help us to seek and find your presence in all Creation. Help us to understand the roots of the ecological crisis and give us the wisdom to live resiliently in harmony with your Creation.

Keep us firm in the faith that the gift of life in all its fullness is for all Creation. Help us to maintain hope that your reign of love is manifested in our common love for you, for ourselves, and for our neighbor - both human and non-human.

Creator God, may we hope and act with creation.

God of truth and justice: fill us with your spirit of compassion so we may live and act with and in solidarity with Creation. Guide us in paths of righteousness that help us to tread softly on the land and sail gently on the sea.

Give us wisdom and courage to recognize our role in the evil of systemic exploitation and extraction and to speak truth to power. Give us strength of heart and arm to be agents of the ecological conversion the world so desperately needs.

Creator God, may we hope and act with creation.

The Lord's Prayer

Concluding Prayer

Almighty and Good Lord, yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessings! To you alone, Most High, do they belong, and no person is worthy to mention your Holy Name!

Praise be you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially our Brother Sun, who gives us the day and through whom

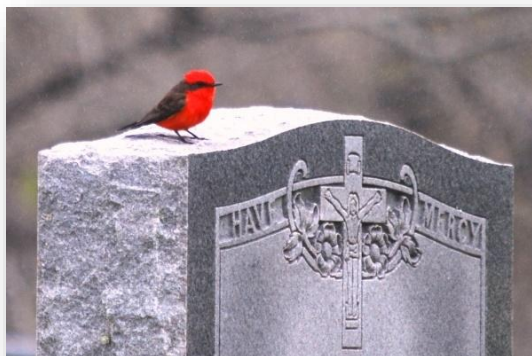
you give us light. He is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and he bears the likeness of you, Most High Lord!

Praised be you, my Lord through our Sister Moon, and all the stars in heaven; you formed them clear and precious and beautiful! Praise you, my Lord, through our Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through which you sustain your creation! Praise be you, my Lord, through our Brother Fire, through whom you light the night; he is beautiful and robust and strong!

Praise you, my Lord, through our Sister Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces fruits with colored flowers and herbs! Praise be you, my Lord, through those who show mercy for your love; and suffer sickness and tribulations! Blessed are those who endure in peace for by you, they will be crowned!

Praised be you, my Lord, for our Sister Death, from whom no living creature can escape! Woe to those who perish in mortal sin! Blessed are those whom death will find in your holy will, for this death will do them no harm!

Praise and bless my Lord! Give him thanks and serve him always with great humility. Amen!



OTHER RESOURCES

Oblate Prayer for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation

God, Father of all,

You have created the world as our common home.

Through your Word and your Spirit,

you have brought forth life in which we delight.

Help us to treasure this gift of life.

Grant us your strength

that we may love and protect all life on earth.

Fill us with your peace and love

that we may live in harmony with all of creation;

may we recognize others as our sisters and brothers.

Following our Founder, St. Eugene De Mazenod,

help us to leave nothing undared

in our ministry of Justice, Peace,

and Integrity of Creation

so that the “liberating presence of Jesus Christ

and the new world born in his resurrection”

may be a reality today.

As Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate,

help us to be close to the poor with their many faces.

We implore from Mary, our Mother,
the strength to stand at the foot of the Cross
where many of our brothers and sisters suffer today.
This we ask you, Father of all,
through the intercession of our other Mary,
St. Eugene and all our Blessed Oblates. Amen.

A Prayer for Our Earth

All-powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world
and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite life.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace. Amen.

A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation

Father, we praise you with all creatures.

They came forth from your all-powerful hand;
they are yours, filled with your presence

and your tender love.

Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus,

through you all things were made.

You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother,

you became part of this earth,

and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.

Today you are alive in every creature

in your risen glory.

Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light

you guide this world towards the Father's love

and accompany creation as it groans in travail.

You also dwell in our hearts

and you inspire us to do what is good.

Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,

teach us to contemplate you

in the beauty of the universe,

for all things speak of you.

Awaken our praise and thankfulness.

for every being that you have made.

Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for none of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good,
advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.

The poor and the earth are crying out.

O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.

Praise be to you!

Amen.

*We know how unsustainable is the behavior of those
who constantly consume and destroy, while others
are not yet able to live in a way that is worthy of their
human dignity.” (LS 193)*

*Live simply
so that others
may simply live.*

*This person took his part,
but affected others.
He exercised his freedom,
but with injustice.
Freedom can't be exercised as
everyone wants.
Justice disappears when you harm
others.
I'm not talking about morality.*

*I'm talking about the bad exercise of freedom.
- Rumi*

We would like to thank all the services of the General Administration that have supported us in one way or another. We would like to extend our gratitude to the Superior general and his Council, who have encouraged us in preparing this guide for the whole Oblate Congregation and Oblate Associates.

THE COMMITTEE OF G.S. OMI-JPIC 2023–2026
APPROVED ON MAY 19, 2023

Fr. Jean-Herick JASMIN, OMI

Director General, GS OMI-JPIC

Appointed: October 13, 2020 – October 13, 2023.

Confirmed for a second term in October 2023

Fr. Raymond MWANGALA, OMI

First Assistant General, for Mission (October 2022-2028)

Fr. Daniel LEBLANC, OMI

Representative: ONU – JCOR – VIVAT INT.

Appointed: October 11, 2018 - (2023-2026).

Fr Daquin Iyan IYO, OMI

Appointed: May 31st, 2023 – May 31st, 2026.

Fr. Jakkop Robinson SATHEESKUMAR, OMI (Known as Fr. Ramesh)

Appointed: May 31st, 2023 – May 31st, 2026.

Fr. Roberto CARRASCO ROJAS, OMI

Appointed: May 31st, 2023 – May 31st, 2026.

Fr. Jim BROBST, OMI,

General Councilor (October 2022 -2028)

Contact Person with the Central Government