Season of Creation – The Mighty River

**Opening Prayer**

**Reader 1**

We begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Creator God,

You made us and all creation to share your life: all the birds and bugs of the air, the animals of the land, the creatures of the rivers and seas; all the trees and flowers and plants; and all the people everywhere. Open our minds to your way of life and teach us how to live together with hearts full of love and justice.

We ask this in your name,

Amen.

**Call of Repentance**

**Reader 2**

From deep waters and first light to living creatures of every kind: the Earth is good! Yet, we see how our planet is not being taken care of. In many places, water is no longer safe to drink, forests are being cut down and there is not enough food to eat.

**Reader 3**

 In Pope Francis’s message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, he describes the rhythms and cycles of creation as a heartbeat. We can hear the ‘heartbeat of the Earth’ when we slow down and pay attention. Pope Francis explains, ‘Just as the hearts of babies beat in harmony with those of their mothers, so in order to grow as people, we need to harmonise our own rhythms of life with those of creation, which gives us life.’

**Reader 4**

But we know that we have not always listened to ‘those heartbeats: the heartbeat of creation and the heartbeat of God.’ And this has played a part in harming the Earth and our neighbours.

So, as we think about some of the ways we haven’t listened to or cared for others, including the plane and we ask for God’s forgiveness.

Silent Reflection

Quiet, reflective music plays. Suggestions: "Prayer of St Francis"

**Let us listen**

**Gospel Reading: John 4:6b–14 NRSVCE**

Leader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John:

Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’

The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’

Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Reflection**

**Reader 5**

 Today, as we mark the Season of Creation, we gather together and think of a river.

 Rivers are special places. They are places full of movement; places where different plants and creatures and people meet; places where, all year or at just the right time of year, water flows and lifeforms flourish!

**Reader 6**

Did you know Jesus was baptised in a river? In fact, Jesus spent a lot of time near water. He met his fisherman friends beside a lake. He calmed a storm on the sea. He cooked breakfast for his friends on the beach. He even walked on water!

Today’s Gospel story tells us how Jesus was tired and resting beside a deep well. While he was there, a woman came to collect water and he asked her for a drink. As they talked, Jesus described God’s life and love as ‘living water’, saying that those who drink of it ‘will never be thirsty.’

When he said this, he meant that the God, who made the life-giving waters in the beginning, still offers us the life of love and justice we and all creation need to thrive.

**Reader 7**

So, today and any time you see a river, notice its rhythm, its ‘heartbeat’. As you watch its flow, remember the living water Jesus talked about. And let yourself be moved to action, sharing God’s life of love and justice with all the people, plants and creatures you meet.

**Prayers of the Faithful**

**Reader 8**

In Pope Francis’s letter Laudato Si’, he urges us all to love and take care of the Earth and each other. To help us do this, seven Laudato Si’ Goals have been set. Let us reflect on these goals together as we listen to the prayers of the faithful.

**Reader 9**

 Goal 1: Respond to the cry of the Earth.

Help us listen to the cry of the earth. Show us how we are one part of your big, beautiful creation. Inspire us to act with care for the environment around us. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader 10**

Goal 2: Respond to the cry of the poor.

 Help us listen to the cry of the poor. Show us how our choices affect others. Inspire us to act with compassion so that everyone can thrive. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader 11:**

Goal 3: Ecological economics.

Help businesses everywhere to be sustainable, ethical and fair in all that they do. Show us how we can encourage them to do that. Inspire us all to make the world better. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader 12:**

Goal 4: Adoption of sustainable lifestyles.

Help us not waste the Earth’s precious resources. Show us how to take greater care of the things we have access to. Inspire us to live simply. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader 13:**

Goal 5: Ecological education. Help us learn how best to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters around the world. Show us new ways and remind us of ancient ways of better tending to the Earth and each other. Inspire us with creativity and courage. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader 14:**

 Goal 6: Ecological spirituality. Help us remember to live in wonder and awe of creation. Show us how to love the Earth and each other as you do. Inspire us to say thank you every day. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader 15:**

Goal 7: Community resilience and empowerment. Help us work together to make the world a healthy and fair place for all. Show us and our community how we can act for justice at local and global levels. Inspire us to be brave and generous. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer. Leader: In Jesus’s name we pray, All: Amen.

**Act of Commitment**

Leader: Today, as we meet by the river to pray, we remember Jesus’s ‘living water’: God’s life of love and justice for all. We tune in to hear ‘the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor’.

We continue to think about all those in our world who are facing the effects of climate change and lack of safe water.

Today, as we meet by the river to pray, let this installation of plants and animals be for us a sign of our commitment to care for our common home, so that we and all of creation can experience its life and goodness.

**(At this point, invite the second group of students to add their cut-out plant or creature to the river scene installation.)**

**Final Prayer and Blessing**

Let us all pray:

God who made the world and saw that it was good, God who speaks in flows of living water,

God who breathes life and love into us all—

May that God meet us by the river,

settle us to hear creation’s heartbeat,

move us to care for the Earth

and give us all the compassion and courage you need to act for justice.

All: Amen.

**Reader 16**

With the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, let us go from here to joyfully care for creation.

All: Amen.

Closing Song –Laudati si