

2026 Month for Protecting All Life Bishop's Message from the Laudato Si' Section "Living Water"

Each year, from September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation¹, through October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Christians around the world celebrate the [Season of Creation](#). The Church in Japan, responding to Pope Francis' call during his visit in 2019, designated this period as the Month for Protecting All Life starting in 2020 and continues to take concrete actions while deepening awareness.

The theme for the 2026 Season of Creation is "Living Water." This theme originates from the vision of the prophet Ezekiel.

I saw water flowing out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east. ... Wherever it flows, the river teems with every kind of living creature; fish will abound. Where these waters flow they refresh; everything lives where the river goes. (Ezekiel 47:1, 9)

A small stream of water rises from beneath the temple, eventually becoming so great it cannot be crossed. It waters the wasteland wherever it goes, turning dead water into living water, and restoring life. This vision shows that the interconnectedness of life in the world we share is rooted in God's grace. The water of life that God gives flows without ceasing, healing the earth we have wounded and renewing life that seemed lost.

We humans continue to disrupt this interconnectedness of life, causing both people and the earth to cry out. Consider water. Climate change is causing record-breaking heavy rainfall and droughts, while the world is also facing frequent floods, water pollution, rising seawater temperatures, and rising sea levels. Hundreds of millions of people worldwide lack access to safe drinking water. In Japan as well, the increasing severity of torrential rains and typhoons in recent years has made us realize that water, while sustaining life, can also pose a major threat when development proceeds without due regard for the environment.

Water reminds us Christians of the grace of baptism. Through the water of baptism, we are born into new life and become united to Christ's death and resurrection. Just as the water in Ezekiel's vision rose from the temple, flowed out, and spread like a great river, we must not keep within ourselves the grace of new life we have received through baptism. As *Laudato Si'* teaches, everything in this world is connected and needs one another to live. During this Month for Protecting All Life, let us continue our small efforts to cherish the interconnectedness of all life, striving to let those efforts flow into our homes, communities, and all of creation.

¹ While the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation is celebrated worldwide on September 1, the Catholic Church in Japan has designated the first Sunday of September as the day on which it is celebrated.

An invitation to get involved

Prayer and Mass: Above all, praise God's work of creation and give thanks for the gift of life. Cherish all things in this world as gifts from God and pray for God's guidance so that we can live together with them. Please refer to the resource listed in the Reference Materials section below when celebrating [the Mass for the Care of Creation](#).

Ecological conversion: Reflect on your own lifestyle. We were created by God as beings of immeasurable worth. Do we truly recognize this truth in our own lives and give thanks for it? And, as those entrusted with caring for and governing the whole world, which was created as very good, are we living in a way that is worthy of this calling and in accordance with the will of the Creator? (See the Japan Bishops' document *BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD: An Invitation to Integral Ecology*, 36–45, “Towards Changing Our Lifestyles.”)

Ecological Education: Create opportunities for children growing up in the age of AI to learn and gain experiences that will help them cherish the preciousness of life and its interconnectedness.

The cries of the poor and the earth: Who are the people suffering around you? And where is the natural environment crying out? In a world created so that we can live only through our connections with one another and with the natural environment, let us especially during this season keep in our hearts the cries of people and the earth, and walk together in this interconnectedness.

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Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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Reference Materials

- 1) Laudato Si' Section Website: <https://laudatosi.jp/>
- 2) Guide to Mass for the Care of Creation, 2026 Edition (Japanese only)
<https://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/2026/07/15/39088/>