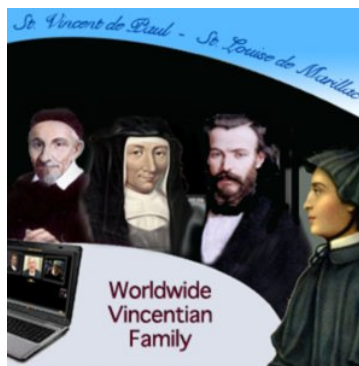




## *The Vincentian Family Joins in the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*

Leader: Pope Francis has established September 1 as an annual **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation**, inspired by the example of the Orthodox Churches who have observed this day for a number of years. Pope Francis wishes to remind us that: “Christians are called to an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.” Thus, “living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (*Laudato Si'*, 217). As members of the Vincentian family, we are deeply inspired by the connection Pope Francis makes between ecological devastation and those made poor. We begin our prayer singing St. Francis’s Canticle of the Creatures which so inspires the ecological vision of Pope Francis. Perhaps St. Vincent learned to sing it himself in the Franciscan school in Dax where he received his first formal education.



*Canticle of the Sun, David Haas*

Refrain:       The heavens are telling the glory of God,  
                  And all creation is shouting for joy!  
                  Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field,  
                  And sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!

Praise for the sun, the bringer of day, he carries the light of the Lord in his rays;  
the moon and the stars who light up the way unto your throne!

Praise for the wind that blows through the trees, the seas' mighty storms, the gentlest  
breeze; they blow where they will, they blow where they please to please the Lord!

Praise for the rain that waters our fields, and blesses our crops so all the earth yields;  
from death unto life her mystery revealed springs forth in joy!

Praise for the fire who gives us his light, the warmth of the sun to brighten our night;  
he dances with joy, his spirit so bright, he sings of you!

## *EARTH*

Reader: The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighborhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves, (*Laudato Si'*, 84).

Reader: The saints were out of their minds when it came to love. Their love was limitless, embracing God, humanity, nature. [...] And so, my dear friend, are we not going to do anything to become like those saints whom we love?  
Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Leader: In silence, press your feet into the ground. Become aware of the earth beneath your feet. Pray for a limitless love that embraces God, humanity, nature.

Silent Prayer

## AIR

Reader: The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters...The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. (*Laudato Si'*, 2, 21).

Reader: Oh God, please accept every breath I inhale as an act of love for what you are in yourself, and every breath I exhale as an act of love for what you are to me.  
St. Louise de Marillac

Leader: Become conscious of your breathing. Be grateful for the gift of air and resolve to use your voice to advocate for the purity of Earth's atmosphere.

Silent Prayer

## FIRE

Reader: Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades...Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded. (*Laudato Si'*, 25)

Reader: "If love of God is the fire, zeal is its flame. If love is the sun, then zeal is its ray."  
St. Vincent de Paul

Leader: Open and close your hands, aware that our ability to do so is fueled by the sun's energy that is captured by the plant life that we eat. Rejoice in the love of God that comes to us in the energy of the sun and resolve with zeal to face climate change, one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.

Silent Prayer

## WATER

Reader: Access to safe, drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. (*Laudato Si'*, 30).

Reader: Delight to sit alone at the waterside – wandering hours on the shore humming and gathering shells – thoughts of God and heaven.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Leader: Breathe again deeply, taking in molecules of water that have also passed through the bodies of all breathing creatures. Like Mother Seton, find the presence of God in the gift of water and resolve to use it with reverence and justice.

Silent Prayer

*FAITH SHARING*

*If the group wishes, there can be a period of faith sharing on the question:  
How has the emphasis of Pope Francis on the care of creation made you more aware that ecological concerns are “not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience”?*

Closing Prayer:

God of Charity, inventive to infinity,  
at the beginning of time  
you joyfully shared your self in creation  
in all its breathtaking beauty  
and wonderful diversity.  
Help us to choose life  
that we and all Earth’s creatures might live.  
We call on heaven and earth to witness the choices we make.  
We call on Vincent and Louise,  
we call on Mother Seton, and on all who walked the way of Charity before us.  
We call on our kin, all Earth’s creatures, to witness the choices we make.  
For the sake of Earth,  
for the sake of those made poor,  
we choose life!

Prepared by the Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity  
Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth