



March Domestic Church Project

Spring is almost here! After a long, cold, snowy winter, the renewal that is Spring will be especially welcome. With the change of seasons, we see God's good creation coming back to life. Our Church mirrors the cycle of the earth, with *the penitential season of Lent* giving way soon to the light and glory of *Jesus' Resurrection on Easter Sunday*. It is time for us to celebrate and rejoice, breathing deep and taking in the beauty of all that our God has given to us!

Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV has declared 2026 to be a *special year of remembrance* for one of the Church's most popular and well known Saints – Francis of Assisi. Even non-Catholics know that Francis is the patron saint of animals and nature. Eight-hundred years ago, in 1226, St. Francis ended his earthly life and returned home to God. Pope Leo wants us to keep in mind the great influence Francis has had during the 800 years (that's a long time!) on how the Catholic faithful see and treat our environment. Francis rooted his love of creation deeply in the teachings of Jesus. Pope Francis (who intentionally took the Saint's name) wrote a letter to the whole world back in 2015, saying: "Saint Francis invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness." The Church honors Saint Francis on his *Feast Day, October 4th*. We also have a special day of prayer set aside for the *Care of Creation – September 1st*.

For our *March Domestic Church Project*, we invite you to reflect on the life of Saint Francis (see the attachments) and how you and your family can contribute to building a safer, cleaner environment for all God's creatures. Spend a few minutes watching this brief video about the letter Pope Francis wrote a decade ago, called *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIVuISZGdug>). The video gives some simple ideas that will help.

You can also pray the attached prayers for Creation every day from *March 20th* (the first day of Spring) until *April 22nd* (Earth Day) – and keep on praying them for as long as you want. Maybe make them part of your morning wake-up routine!

Let's enjoy the coming season of renewal, and have a blessed Holy Week and Easter!

Psalm 19: 1-7

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the firmament proclaims the works of his hands.^a
Day unto day pours forth speech;
night unto night whispers knowledge.
There is no speech, no words;
their voice is not heard;
A report goes forth through all the earth,
their messages, to the ends of the world.
He has pitched in them a tent for the sun;
it comes forth like a bridegroom from his canopy,
and like a hero joyfully runs its course.
From one end of the heavens it comes forth;
its course runs through to the other;
nothing escapes its heat.

Canticle of Creation

O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God,
to you belong praise, glory,
honour and all blessing.
Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation
and especially for our Brother Sun,
who brings us the day and the light;
he is strong and shines magnificently.
O Lord, we think of you when we look at him.
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon,
and for the stars

which you have set shining and lovely
in the heavens.

Be praised, my Lord,
for our Brothers Wind and Air
and every kind of weather
by which you, Lord,
uphold life in all your creatures.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,
who is very useful to us,
and humble and precious and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom you give us light in the darkness:
he is bright and lively and strong.

Be praised, my Lord,
for Sister Earth, our Mother,
who nourishes us and sustains us,
bringing forth
fruits and vegetables of many kinds
and flowers of many colours.

Be praised, my Lord,
for those who forgive for love of you;
and for those
who bear sickness and weakness
in peace and patience
- you will grant them a crown.

Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister Death,
whom we must all face.

I praise and bless you, Lord,
and I give thanks to you,
and I will serve you in all humility.

St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) is a well-known Creation Care Saint. He spent much time praying where nature's beauty surrounded him. He lived simply, in caves or in tumbling down churches, waking to the sunrise and voices of birds praising God. Francis loved all of God's creation: rocks, wind, fish, birds, sheep, and people. Francis talked to all of them, calling them his sisters and brothers. And a story claims that he was greatly challenged to help his brother, the wolf:

Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio

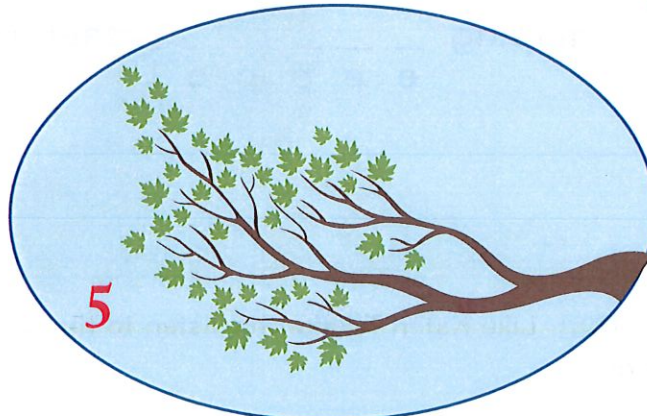
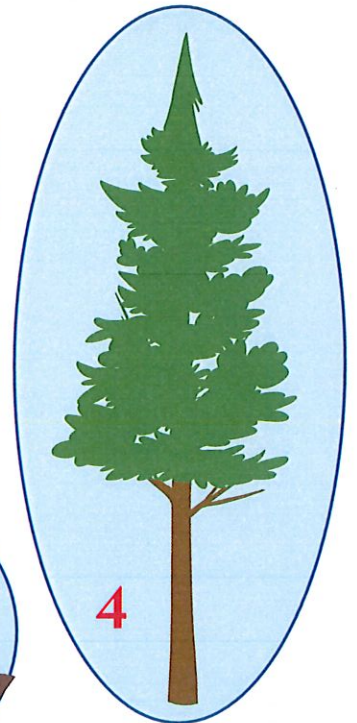
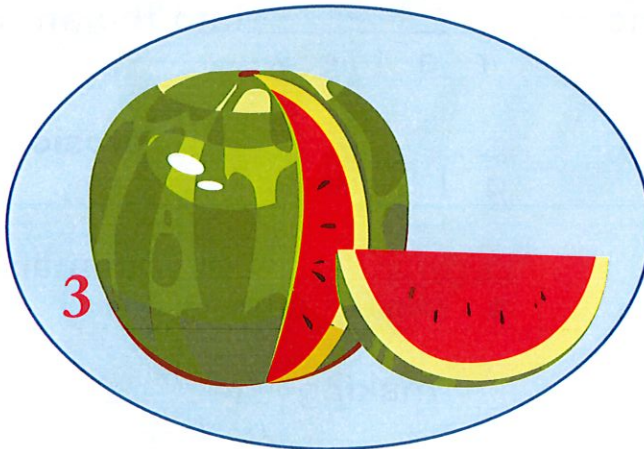
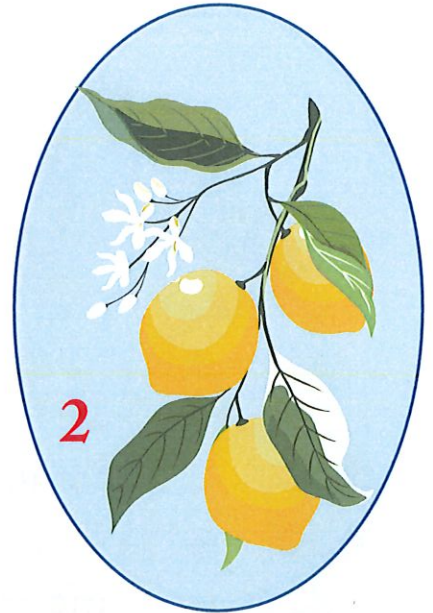
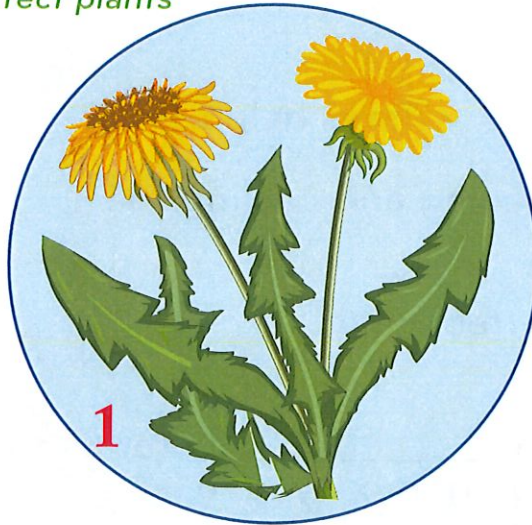
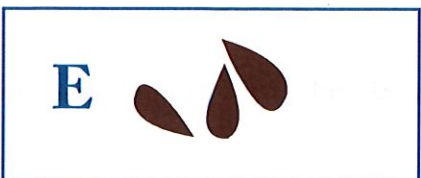
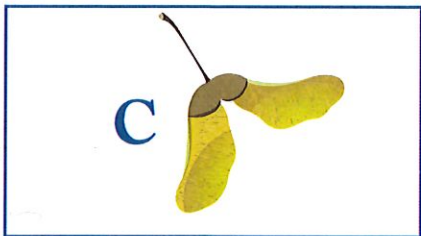
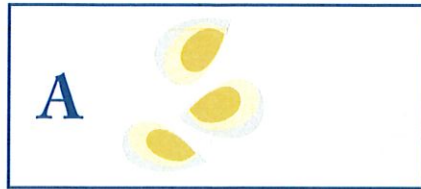
A wolf had come to the edges of the town of Gubbio, stealing chickens and other animals. A hungry wolf is very dangerous to all in a town. The terrified townspeople asked St. Francis to help, knowing he had a way with animals. As Francis approached the wolf, it started to lunge at him with bared teeth. Francis said, "On behalf of Jesus, I command you to not hurt me or any other of God's creatures." The wolf backed off and sat down at Francis' feet! "You must not harm creatures," Francis scolded the wolf. "But I know you are hungry. Promise you will not hurt anyone in Gubbio and I will promise the people will give you food." Francis and the wolf went into Gubbio, where Francis explained. Still frightened, the people listened and saw the wolf put his paw into Francis' hand to show his promise. The townspeople cried with relief and amazement. And they all kept their promises: the wolf was fed each day, and was so trusted, people let him into their homes. And later when the gentle wolf died of old age, people cried again, at the loss of their Brother Wolf.



Packages Filled with Life

Our Creative God has given us clever little "packages" -- seeds of many shapes and sizes which bring us all kinds of life, producing much of our food. Plants that came from seeds produce seeds to grow new plants. Where are they? Some hide inside flowers or cones, animals move some, others float on air or water. And others move around by hitchhiking, helicoptering, or parachuting!

Match the seeds to the correct plants



Trees: Our Giant Friends

Trees are a big presence in our lives. They stay in one place and grow large. You can't miss them, but do you notice them? Some people are very drawn to certain trees, as if they were quiet friends. Trees are helpful friends. Unscramble the words to learn how they help.

Trees help us by:

cleaning and cooling the
r a i

reducing
s l o o f d

creating for us to breathe
g n x y e o

moving into the atmosphere
r a t e w

 erosion
g l o w s i n

 animals
s i n g u o h

making
o i l s

helping feel happier
e e p p o l



Creation celebration Like Kateri Tekakwitha, listen to the wind and feel God's presence in the glory of trees and wind!