



National Catholic Health Care Week

Daily Reflections and Prayers

National Catholic Health Care Week (Sunday, February 2 to Saturday, February 8, 2025) recognizes the mission of Catholic health care organizations across Canada.

This year, we focus on the theme of “Caring for our Common Home,” which celebrates the interconnectedness of all creation and helps us examine how our individual and collective actions and our systems—health, social, economic—can promote a healthy world where all can thrive. It reminds us that care for nature is an integral aspect of our Catholic health mission and is central to building the capacity for living together in harmony and compassion.

As we carry on the healing ministry of Jesus in hope for those we accompany today and for the generations to come, may be inspired to greater appreciation, creativity, enthusiasm and resolve in caring for our common home.

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning.

Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

Earth Charter
(The Hague, Netherlands, June 2000)

I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile”.

Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.

Pope Francis
Fratelli Tutti (October 2020)

For more information and resources for action:

[Laudato Si’ Action platform](#)
[Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care](#)



National Catholic Health Care Week

Monday, February 3

Caring for our Common Home: Earth

When we heal the earth, we heal ourselves.

David Orr

“Everything is connected.” This refrain, in various forms, appears at least ten times in Pope Francis’s 2015 encyclical [Laudato Si’](#). This week, as we reflect on our calling to care for our common home, we acknowledge the profound connections between ourselves and the earth we call home, and between the natural environment and our own wellbeing and purpose.

We are invited to live each day in unity with God’s beautiful creation and our mother earth: “The earth is our origin and destination. The ancient rhythms of the earth have insinuated themselves into the rhythms of the human heart. The earth is not outside us; it is within: the clay from where the tree of the body grows. When we emerge from our offices, rooms and houses, we enter our natural element. We are children of the earth: people to whom the outdoors is home. Nothing can separate us from the vigour and vibrancy of this inheritance. In contrast to our frenetic, saturated lives, the earth offers a calming stillness. Movement and growth in nature takes time. The patience of nature enjoys the ease of trust and hope. There is something in our clay nature that needs to continually experience this ancient, outer ease of the world. It helps us remember who we are and why we are here.” (John O’Donohue, *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*)

Further exploration and action:

1. Identify your local conservation authority and explore opportunities to volunteer or participate in nature conservation efforts (see [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#))
2. Seek out a local tree planting or re-greening effort in your community. Consider whether there might be public or private lands where you can add some local vegetation.
3. Make every day Earth Day. Visit the many resources at [earthday.ca](#).

Prayer for the Earth

Creator,
You entrusted this earth to us--a common home to share in reverence with all you have created. Help us to care for it and all people, that we may live in right relationship--
with You,
with ourselves,
with one another,
and with creation.

Amen



National Catholic Health Care Week

Tuesday, February 4

Caring for our Common Home: Air and Water

All I really need is a song in my heart | And I need some clean water for drinking | And I need some clean air for breathing | So that I can grow up strong | Take my place where I belong.

Raffi, All I really Need

The magnificent interplay of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the land we live on gives all things life. Our bodies are about 60% water. We breathe about 22,000 times in a day, taking in about 16 kg of air. Clean air and water impact our health and well-being every day and are the very foundation of our ability to survive and thrive as humans and communities. These gifts of creation are an inheritance that we hold in our hands for today and the future.

“Water is considered sacred in many indigenous communities and cultures around the world. For these communities, water is more than just a resource, it is a way of life and a crucial aspect of their cultural identity. Indigenous peoples have relied on water for their livelihood, spiritual practices, and traditional knowledge for generations. They have a deep understanding of their interconnectedness between water, land, and all living things. In many indigenous cultures, water is seen as a living entity with its own spirit, and it is believed that human have a responsibility to protect and care for it. For Indigenous peoples, water is not just a commodity, but a language, a community, and a source of knowledge and law.” (*Native Women’s Association of Canada*)

Further exploration and action:

1. Consider starting a [Walking School Bus](#) effort in your local community to promote physical activity, reduce emissions, and strengthen the social fabric!
2. Get familiar with the efforts behind [Ducks Unlimited Canada](#) in preserving our wetlands and find ways to help.

Prayer for Lifegiving Elements

Eternal God,
whose Spirit moved over the face of the deep bringing forth light and life;
by that same Spirit, renew your creation, and restore your image in your people.
Turn us from careless tenants to faithful stewards,
that your threefold blessing of clean air, pure water and rich earth
may be the inheritance of everything that has the breath of life
and one generation may proclaim to another the wonder of your creation.
Amen

Rt. Rev. Libby Lane, Anglican Bishop of Derby



National Catholic Health Care Week

Wednesday, February 5

Caring for our Common Home: Food

Good nutrition creates health in all areas of our existence. All parts are interconnected.

Dr. T Colin Campbell

Food is more than just sustenance. It is a deep expression of care, culture, and community. Each dish prepared tells a story about traditions, flavours and ingredients all steeped in personal heritage. Sharing a meal with friends or family is an act of hospitality that allows us to connect and build relationships. It is through the communal act of eating, sharing dishes and exchanging stories, that bonds of love are formed. Food also speaks to the care and love invested in its preparation – from the hands that care for the soil and harvest the crops to the ones that transform these ingredients into nourishing meals. Stronger and more resilient food systems means a more resilient climate, a healthier population, and a better life for all.

“Our lifestyles and daily consumption practices influence global and environmental dynamics, but if we are to make a real difference, we must encourage producers and consumers to make ethical and sustainable choices and raise awareness among the younger generations of the important role they play in making a world without hunger a reality. Each of us can play our part in this noble cause, starting with our daily lives and the simplest gestures. Knowing our Common Home, protecting it and being aware of its importance is the first step towards being stewards and promoters of the environment.” (Pope Francis, World Food Day 2021)

Further exploration and action:

1. Learn about the efforts taking place across [New York City hospitals](#) as they shift to plant-forward diets, including a [booklet of recipes](#) shared with discharged patients. These actions have reduced food-related GHG emissions by 36% and saves the hospitals an average 59 cents per meal.
2. Join many other healthcare institutes and consider supporting your workplace in taking the [Coolfood pledge](#) to promote climate-friendly meals.
3. Develop policies and programs that involve residents and volunteers in growing herbs and vegetables, such as this Canadian [example](#).

Prayer for Nourishment

Loving God,

Bless the gardens of the world, the soil and rain and sunshine, and the work of all who sow and reap. Give abundant harvests, and teach us to share them with justice. God of grace, bless the gardens of our community, the shelter of families, the fragrance of friendship. Open our eyes and hearts to those who are hungry in body and spirit in our communities. Teach us to live and act with intention and to eat more simply, so that there may be more to share. In all our care for one another, make us grow in wisdom and love, in gentleness, kindness and truth. Amen.

(Adapted from [Prayers on a Garden Theme](#) and [Prayers on a Food Theme](#))



National Catholic Health Care Week

Thursday, February 6

Caring for our Common Home: Nature

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better. Albert Einstein

The healing power of nature is something we instinctively understand. In many Indigenous cultures Nature is viewed as a living entity, where a spiritual and deep relationship with Nature is fostered in a spirit of respect and reciprocity, exchange and caring. Nature is filled with words of love, says Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, opening us up to beauty, harmony and fraternity. Spending time with nature centres us in our relationship with all living things and connects us to a bounty of gifts that foster health and wholeness—body, mind and soul.

Everyday interactions with nature have been shown to benefit heart health and help reduce anxiety and depression. And people in cities with lots of green space are more likely to report having more energy, good health and a sense of purpose. According to a 2015 research study, looking at a stunning waterfall or undulating countryside can elicit feelings of awe that bring a number of health benefits, including lower levels of inflammation. People who spent 60 seconds looking up at towering trees were also more likely to report feeling awe, after which they were more likely to help someone they didn't know. 'Experiences of awe attune people to things larger than themselves,' says researcher Paul Piff. 'They cause individuals to feel less entitled, less selfish, and to behave in more generous and helping ways.' ([The Healing Power of Nature](#), TIME Magazine 2016).

Further exploration and action:

1. Learn more about [Indigenous traditional medicine and land-based healing](#), the [tiny forest movement](#), or [Shinrin-yoku](#), the Japanese practice of forest-bathing.
2. Organize a health care forest event for your staff and community partners using the [resources](#) available from the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care.

Prayer for Nature (or Beauty)

Creator God,
Thank you for Nature's bounty and beauty.
May we act with intention each day,
treating with care, love and respect and gratitude
Nature's gifts of healing medicine for body, mind and soul.
Grant us the mindfulness to intentionally deepen our bonds with all that you have made--
Walking barefoot on a sandy beach, playing in the rain, lifting our faces to the blue sky;
Plunging our hands into the soil, planting a seed, creating space for all your creatures;
Teaching our children to embrace and rejoice in the wild-ness and wonder.
Heal and restore us as we live and walk in grace and harmony with all things.
Amen



National Catholic Health Care Week

Friday, February 7

Caring for our Common Home: Green Living

A vibrant, fair, and regenerative future is possible — not when thousands of people do climate justice activism perfectly but when millions of people do the best they can. Xiye Bastida Patrick

Intentionally integrating green practices into your everyday life is the first step towards building a greener future for all. The change you wish to see starts with you! But it requires us to move beyond our acceptance of conventional consumerism and embrace our complex identities as citizens, voters, employees, leaders, neighbours and community members who have a responsibility to care for each other, for creation, and for future generations. True change requires a shift in our collective mindset.

Pope Francis encourage us to embrace this shift as an expression of love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care that seek to build a better world. “Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practice the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. We can amplify our impact by supporting local businesses, engaging in community initiatives, and ensuring our choices are made with consideration for their ecological footprints.” (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*). From the ways we manage our household utilities and waste, to the ways we choose to move around our cities, to the food and clothing brands we support with our dollars—every choice counts.

Further exploration and action:

1. Consider organizing a “[clothing swap](#)” or a [repair café](#) at your workplace, in your neighbourhood, or through your parish.
2. Consider coordinating a [Tool Library](#) in your parish or neighbourhood to share resources and minimize waste. Share items like power drills or tools, lawn mowers, shovels, baking pans, puzzles, car seats, toys, bikes or even footwear, thereby reducing demand on new products. Did you know? The average power drill is used for just 20 minutes in its entire lifetime!

Prayer for Change

Creator God,

We can choose to live differently! Inspire us as we make choices so that we will recognize the impact our lives have on our environment and our human family around the globe. Encourage us to be people of hope as we look forwards in faith, knowing that we can build a world of justice and peace. Help us choose each day to live in a way that creates a better world for everyone and help us to know that our individual actions are made in solidarity with our sisters and brothers. You invite us to live simply, to live sustainably, and to live in solidarity with the poor. Help us to respond to that invitation with conviction and generosity. With Your grace and guidance, help us to reclaim the future.

Amen

(Adapted from [Prayer for the Sustainability of Our Earth](#), CHAUSA)



National Catholic Health Care Week

Additional Resources

Food Business Case

This [Business Case and Implementation Guide](#) from the [Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care](#) outlines why health care facilities need to prioritize the transformation of their food services and how they can implement a sustainable food service model through:

- Embracing food as medicine
- Reducing food waste
- Implementing plant-forward menus,
- Shifting to values-based procurement for food

Laudato Si Movement Canada

The [Laudato Si' Movement](#) is a coalition of 650+ Catholic member organizations dedicated to turning Pope Francis' Encyclical Laudato Si' into action for climate justice. MLSM Canada is hosted by the Canadian, interfaith, environmental charity Faith & the Common Good and seeks to ignite, inspire, and grow as a community of persons and institutions on a journey of integral ecological conversion, and that acts courageously to care for our common home.

Faith for Earth

[The Faith for Earth: Achievement Reports](#) produced annual by the [United Nation's Environment Programme](#) highlight the achievements of the Faith for Earth Initiative and progress made towards the attainment of its three overarching goals:

- strengthen partnership with faith-based organizations' leadership for policy impact
- green faith-based organizations' investments, operations and assets
- establish an accessible knowledge-based support system

Science-based Targets for Faith

The [Science-based Targets for Faith: Technical Guidance Document](#) developed by [World Resources Institute](#) aims to provide a global standard for Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) to measure, manage, and report their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in alignment with the Paris Climate Agreement, and to advance FBOs as prominent environmental leaders that operate their physical assets in a climate positive manner.

COP29 prayer guide

The [COP29 prayer guide](#) is a spiritual resource in prayer for world leaders who gathered at the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) for two weeks of critical climate negotiations in Baku, Azerbaijan November 2024. The guide reflects deeply on the conference themes through a spiritual lens. This guide was produced by the Jesuits for Climate Justice.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

In [What Can Christians Do to Protect the Environment?](#), the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops offers seven recommendations for action, along with links to resources.