



Season of Creation 2021 Prayer-Reflection Guide 5

Opening Song/Reflection: [The Cry of the Poor](#)

Scripture Reading: James 5:1-6 (second reading for September 26)

Prosperity: Hearing and Responding to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor

Scripture and Catholic teaching highlight the special relationship and love that God feels for the poor, the vulnerable, the outcast, and the marginalized. And we also know that God loves each of us equally and unconditionally, even with our mistakes, failures and sins. There is a special place in the heart of God for the poor, and at the same time we are all loved equally.

What, then, to make of the second reading from last Sunday? : *“Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries”* (James 5:1)

If you are reflecting in a group, please pause and reflect together on the question:

In light of our certainty of God’s love, what does this very strong condemnation of the rich mean?

Perhaps we are invited to understand it in this way: Out of God’s love for all people, God calls the wealthy into right relationship with the poor, and uses the very strong words from the prophets, as well as James, the Servant of God, to call the wealthy to accountability. James goes on to say:



Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. (James 5:4)

James accuses the well-off of hoarding wealth at the expense of their workers (James 5:5). The Earth’s resources are finite. When one group of people takes more than they need, there will be another group of people who lack the basic needs for survival. James says that ultimately the rich will suffer for their hoarding (James 5:2), and so James calling the rich to accountability and conversion is an act of love toward both the poor and the rich.

Unfortunately, a world tarnished by excessive division between the rich and poor is still what we are facing today.

- Many CEOs make thousands of times the salary of their workers, and the wealth of the world’s billionaires increased by 69% during the pandemic, while millions of people lost their jobs and livelihoods. ([See this report from OxFam.](#))
- Wealth and climate change are connected. The richest one percent of the world’s population are responsible for more than twice as much carbon pollution as the 3.1 billion people who made up the poorest half of humanity. ([See this report from OxFam](#))

- Climate change has also increased economic inequality since the 1960s. Temperature changes caused by growing concentrations of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere have enriched cool countries in the Global North, while dragging down economic growth in warm countries in the Global South. ([See this Stanford University study](#). See also [this report](#) on climate-related inequality in the US.)

If you are reflecting in a group, please pause together and reflect on these words from [A Joint Message for the Protection of Creation](#) released on September 7, 2021 by Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and Archbishop Justin Welby:

We call on everyone, whatever their belief or worldview, to endeavor to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behavior and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us."

In light of our mission to discover and reveal God's love, what responses and actions do these twin crises of climate change and global inequality call us to?

Prayer Response: [Shepherd Me O God](#)



Opportunity for Action

This fall, global political leaders will gather twice to consider meaningful global targets to protect Creation as well as to meet previously set goals to mitigate the effects of climate change. Pope Francis is expected to attend the November climate change meeting in Scotland.

We have an opportunity to raise our voices on behalf of the Earth and the Poor by signing a global Catholic petition designed to influence leaders attending these two United Nations meetings.

You can read the petition and sign here: <https://thecatholicpetition.org/>. Note that it is available in multiple languages; click on your language at the top right.

If you are reflecting in a group, please pause together to read the petition and sign.

Closing Song/Reflection: [Canticle of the Sun](#)

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