

# **Live Simply September 2023**

## **Season of Creation 1 September – 4 October**

### **Let Justice and Peace Flow like a River**

The Season of Creation starts every year on the Sept 1<sup>st</sup> World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and ends on October 4<sup>th</sup> the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. It is a special time for all Christians to pray and work together to care for our common home dedicated to prayer and action.

#### **Pope Francis has written a letter to mark the start of the Season of Creation**

<https://laudatosimovement.org/news/message-of-pope-francis-for-creation-day-2023/>

#### **Pope Francis says :-**

“Let Justice and Peace Flow” is the theme of this year’s ecumenical Season of Creation, inspired by the words of the prophet Amos: “Let justice flow on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” (5:24). The evocative image used by Amos speaks to us of what God desires. God wants justice to reign; it is as essential to our life as God’s as water is essential for our physical survival. This justice must flow out wherever it is needed, neither remaining hidden deep beneath the ground nor vanishing like water that evaporates before it can bring sustenance.

#### **Pope Francis asks us to:-**

*First*, join the mighty river by transforming our hearts. This is essential for any other transformation to occur; so that we no longer see our earth as an object to be exploited but cherish it instead as a sacred gift from our Creator.

*Second*, add to the flow of this mighty river by transforming our lifestyles. Starting from grateful wonder at the Creator and his creation, let us repent of our “ecological sins”. These sins harm the world of nature and our fellow men and women.

*Lastly*, for the mighty river to continue flowing, we must transform the public policies that govern our societies and shape the lives of people today and tomorrow. Economic policies that promote scandalous wealth for a privileged few and degrading conditions for many others, spell the end of peace and justice.

#### **Suggestions for Action**

##### **Transform our Hearts.**

**Take a walk, by a river or stream.** Look at the plants, listen to the birds, lift a rock and marvel at the insects living under there. Search for a fungus and imagine the great web of threads called mycelia reaching out from it under the soil breaking down dead plants and animals transforming them into nutrients for new life to grow. Contemplate the life force running through the plants, birds, insects and fungi sustained by the water from the river.

*Alternatively - Take a walk in your imagination down your favourite river or stream*

##### **Transform our Lifestyles**

###### **Eat less meat and dairy products.**

The Amazon rainforest and rivers are home to more species of plants and animals than any other ecosystem on the planet. An incredible diversity of plant and animal life, perhaps 30 percent of the world's species, are found there. From the birds and bees of the forest canopy to the sloths and snakes beneath and the fish in the rivers, the Amazon has a dazzling array of species, most of which remain undiscovered.

However the forest is being cut down and burned at an alarming rate, agriculture is responsible for more than 80% of deforestation. About 17% of the Amazon has already gone, if that figure reaches 20% to 25%, scientists believe the rainforest will lose the ability to sustain itself, with disastrous consequences. The cleared lands are used to raise beef cattle and to grow soya beans; the majority of the soya beans are exported for animal feed to China, the EU and the UK.

## **Good News !!**

The Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has made a commitment to Zero deforestation by 2030. Brazil covers 60% of the Amazon Rainforest.

Both Brazil and Columbia have reported a big fall in the rate of deforestation in their countries this year.

On 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023 the eight countries that share the Amazon basin created a historic alliance aimed at reducing deforestation. Although it is disappointing that a commitment to zero deforestation was not achieved, the countries agreed to pursue their own individual deforestation goals. The nations pledged to cooperate on cracking down on illegal activities that are contributing to the deforestation of the Amazon. They will promote sustainable development and ensure the rights of the rainforest's indigenous people. Haug Larsen of the Rainforest Foundation Norway said " If properly implemented, the agreement would be a giant leap in the right direction."

## **What can we do?**

Eat less meat and dairy products - since most of the soya beans are exported for animal feed and it will take many years to reach net zero deforestation.

## **Transform the public policies that govern our societies**

### **Campaign for water companies and all polluters of our rivers to be held to account**

<https://riveractionuk.com/>

Our rivers at home are in a desperate state, they are flooded repeatedly with human sewage, animal slurry and chemical spills. More than three million tons of precious and irreplaceable topsoil are washed into our rivers each year, river banks are littered with plastic and disposable wipes. 10% of our river species face extinction, including the Atlantic salmon and European eel, and 60% of our river species are in decline.

The polluters responsible for causing this damage are rarely inspected and until recently they were almost never fined. Monitoring of river water quality has also been cut in half over the last decade, resulting in much of the pollution caused by sewage and agriculture going unrecorded.

## **What can we do?**

Call for Governments and political leaders to act now, and to act boldly, to rescue our rivers for nature and people and restore our rivers to health by 2030 by:-

1. Ending sewage pollution
2. Stopping agriculture polluting our rivers
3. Preventing harmful chemicals at source
4. Securing water supply for everyone
5. Bringing nature back from the brink
6. Reforming planning rules and prompting natural solutions
7. Protecting river habitats and wildlife
8. Monitoring pollution of all rivers
9. Inspecting polluters and enforcing the law
10. Working together to restore our rivers

**Sign the petition** calling on the government to restore our rivers to health by 2030

<https://38degrees.org.uk/petitions/-restoreour-rivers-and-freshwaters-to-health-by-2030>

## **Transform our life styles.**

Only flush the 3 P's – paper, pee and poo down the loo.

Never flush disposable wipes down the toilet!

## **Good News**

Southern Water, Severn Trent, Anglian Water and Yorkshire Water were prosecuted by the Environment Agency and fined a total of just over £94mn this year. (This is nowhere near enough!!)