

2023 Season of Creation

Cultivate a Listening Heart

Reflection Seven: October 1-3

"We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next."
~Laudato Si #226

READ: Seventh part of Pope Francis' letter for the 2023 Season of Creation (on page 2).

REFLECT: Have you heard of the term *lebh shomea*? In Hebrew *lebh shomea* means "listening heart." In synodality Pope Francis calls the church and all people to a process of heartfelt listening, lest we fail our mission and our humanity. We have failed to hear the cries of Earth and people made poor, and it's no coincidence that the next step of the synodal process begins on the feast of St. Francis. Let us immerse ourselves in the river of listening so that we become "a church increasingly capable of making prophetic decisions that are the fruit of the Spirit's guidance."*

ACT: What are *you* listening to? As we are bombarded each day with messages surely *not* from the Spirit, what filters can you creatively construct, so as to limit exposure the junk that comes your way? That way we make space within our hearts to listen deeply to each other. We can become the synodal church that Francis is leading us toward: one that sows justice and peace, one that gives life to all.

PRAY: 1 Kings 3: 5 – 12

*from *Instrumentum Laboris* #31, published May 29, 2023

"Trees do bend, though straight and tall; so must we to others' call."
~song "Hosea" by Weston Priory

Resources for October 1-3

Pope Francis' letter for the 2023 Season of Creation (Excerpt 7 of 8)

7 Another parallel perspective has to do with the Catholic Church's commitment to synodality. This year, the closing of the Season of Creation on 4 October, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, will coincide with the opening of the Synod on Synodality. Like rivers in nature, fed by myriad tiny brooks and larger streams and rivulets, the synodal process that began in October 2021 invites all those who take part on a personal or community level, to coalesce in a majestic river of reflection and renewal. The entire people of God is being invited to an immersive journey of synodal dialogue and conversion.

So too, like a river basin with its many tiny and larger tributaries, the church is a communion of countless local churches, religious communities and associations that draw from the same shared waters. Each source adds its unique and irreplaceable contribution, until all flow together into the vast ocean of God's loving mercy. In the same way that a river is a source of life for its surroundings, our synodal church must be a source of life for our common home and all its inhabitants. In the same way that a river gives life to all kinds of animal and plant life, a synodal church must give life by sowing justice and peace in every place it reaches.

From: <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2023/documents/20230513-messaggio-giornata-curacreato.html>

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