

Litany for a Changing World

Reader One: The Earth's climate is changing and around the world we see the signs of the times. The seas are weeping and the land is in grief.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change.

Reader Two: Everywhere on Earth, ice is changing. The famed snows of Kilimanjaro have melted more than 80 percent since 1912. Most central and eastern Himalayan glaciers could virtually disappear by 2035.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change.

Reader Three: Arctic sea ice has thinned significantly over the past half century, and its mass has declined by about 10 percent in the past 30 years. NASA's readings show the edges of Greenland's ice sheet shrinking.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change.

Reader Four: Spring ice breakup in the Northern Hemisphere now occurs 9 days earlier than it did in the last century, and autumn freeze-up 10 days later, causing the thawing of permanent frost in places such as Alaska.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change.

Reader Five: From the Arctic to Peru, from Switzerland to the equatorial glaciers of Irian Jaya in Indonesia, massive ice fields, huge glaciers, and sea ice are disappearing, effecting animals and humans.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change.

Reader Six: In the Antarctica, the sea ice has shrunk by a fifth, making it more difficult for penguins and birds of the region to survive. In Canada, the winter ice melts 2-3 weeks earlier than usual, and polar bears are having difficulty finding enough food.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change.

Reader Seven: In the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, as in many other reefs, the warmer ocean water is destroying coral and other organisms. In the Virgin Islands in the Caribbean, the sea turtles are being affected by the warmer weather and their birth patterns are changing.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change.

Reader Eight: The climate in Africa's Sahel region shifted during the 1960s. Thirty-five years after the sudden decline in rainfall there is still no sign of the life-giving monsoon rains. The 500 million people who live in the world's desert regions will find life increasingly unbearable as temperatures soar and water is used up or turns salty.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change.

Reader Nine: In poor countries in Africa, such as Kenya and Tanzania, warmer weather has increased mosquitoes which carry malaria. Poor countries and people in poverty will have to bear much of the burden of climate change, as they live in vulnerable areas and have few if any resources to cope with its effects.

All: God, give us the grace to help heal this world and to reverse the effects of climate change. The seas are weeping and the land is in grief. But we are called to be signs of hope in this world, to be co-creators with God of a global community where the earth is respected and cherished. We ask our Creator to give us discernment and to guide us as we become active members of the human family, working with our sisters and brothers to change the destructive trends that are causing global warming. We have been given a great gift, the richness of Creation, and as we celebrate the earth on this day, we pledge to protect this gift of God. Hear us Creator, and be with us every day as we seek to restore and preserve your Creation. Amen.

- Adapted from Education for Justice's "A Prayer Service for Earth Day 2006" by Jane Deren

