



HOMILY MASS FOR THE CARE OF CREATION  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
Fr. Manuel Barrios Prieto

*Readings:*

Wisdom 13, 1-8

Psalm 18A

Matthew 8, 23-7

Today we celebrate this Mass in the European Parliament during the **Season of Creation**, which begins every year on 1 September and concludes on 4 October, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. This year on this day we will celebrate the **800th anniversary** of the death of Saint of Assisi. He died the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 1226.

It is worth remembering that this is not originally a political or even exclusively Catholic initiative. It began as an ecumenical initiative: in 1989, the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I established 1 September as a day of prayer for creation, and gradually other Christian Churches joined in extending it into a season. Pope Francis introduced the Season of Creation into the Catholic calendar in 2019. Its purpose is very simple: **to renew our relationship with the Creator and with creation.**

And I think today's readings tell us why this is important.

**First: creation invites us to contemplation.**

The Book of Wisdom says:

“From the greatness and beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen.”

Creation is not simply something that surrounds us, nor simply a collection of resources at our disposal. **Creation is a gift, and a gift can reveal the one who gives it.**

This is perhaps the first meaning of caring for creation: learning again to look at the world **with wonder** and gratitude.

We rightly discuss environmental questions in terms of economics, technology, legislation and public policy. And reasonable people can disagree about the best policies, about their costs, their priorities and their consequences.

But the Christian question comes before all of these:

**What is the world we have received? And from whom have we received it?**

The Season of Creation invites us, before anything else, to recover this contemplative gaze.

**Second: creation calls us to conversion.**

This year Pope Leo XIV in his message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation **has connected the care of creation very explicitly with another wound of our world: war.**

He observes that war does not only destroy human lives. It also destroys ecosystems, contaminates water and land, produces poverty and leaves wounds that can last for generations. But he goes deeper: **the wounds of creation and the wounds we inflict upon one another ultimately reveal something wounded in the human heart.**

This is important because Christian care for creation cannot be reduced to a particular political programme.

It begins with the **conversion of the human heart**: moving from domination to responsibility, from possession to gratitude, from indifference to care.

Pope Leo speaks beautifully of transforming what has been used for destruction into something that serves life: **beating swords into ploughshares, into instruments for cultivating the land.**

And this is not only about weapons.

It is a question for every human being: **What do I do with the power, intelligence, resources and responsibilities that have been entrusted to me? Do they serve life, or do they ultimately serve only myself?**

**Third: the Gospel reminds us that we are not masters of the storm.**

The disciples are in the boat when the storm suddenly breaks out. They are frightened because they discover that, despite all their experience, **they cannot control everything.**

And Jesus is there.

This is perhaps one of the most important Christian contributions to the discussion about creation: **we have responsibility, creation has been entrusted to us, we are its stewards, its caretakers, but we are not its owners. Creation belongs to God.**

We should care. We should act. We should use our intelligence and our political responsibilities wisely. But we should never fall into the illusion that we are the absolute masters of creation, that we can do with it what we want.

The disciples cry out to Jesus, and he calms the storm.

And perhaps this is ultimately what the Season of Creation is asking of us: not simply to change some external structures, but **to allow Christ to reorder something within us** — our desires, our fears, our relationship with power, with other people and with the world we have received.

The world outside us cannot be healed without some healing of the world within us.

So perhaps today we can ask for three things:

**the eyes to contemplate creation**

**the heart to care for what has been entrusted to us,**

**and the faith to know that Christ is in the boat, even when we think he is not there.**

Because creation is God's gift, our common home is our responsibility.