

# Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor

**A prayer vigil in solidarity with vulnerable people affected by climate change**

## MATERIALS

Audio-visual equipment and internet access

[PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Bible open to Genesis 1:9-12

Copies of the solidarity vigil for the leader, cantor and readers

Music for "[Canticle of the Sun](#)," OCP, and song sheets for participants

Table (on which to place symbolic objects)

Symbolic objects to represent each story:

- A pitcher or basin of water
- Soil
- Bread or other symbol of food

Videos from CRS' website and YouTube channel:

- "[CST 101: Care for God's Creation](#)"
- "[Ethiopian Women Pray for Rain](#)"
- "[Julio's Interview](#)"
- "[Behind the Scenes: Lake Poopó](#)"
- "[Climate Change | It Changes Everything](#)"

If handwriting/handsigning - letter writing materials

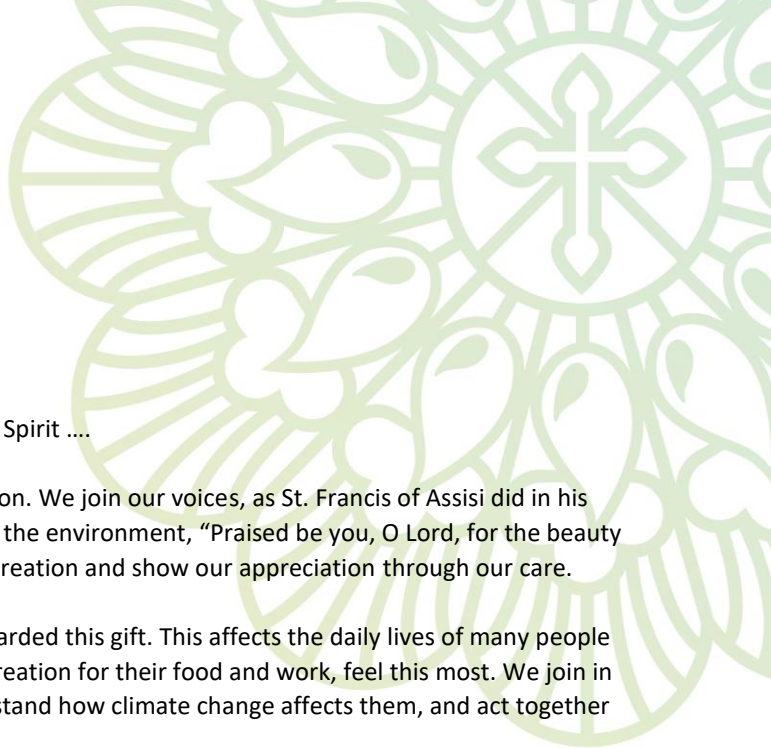
- Baskets to collect letters
- Copies of letters to members of Congress personalized for your community.
- Pens for participants

## PREPARATION

- Set up the vigil space:
  - Place the table in a central place at the front of room. Place the symbolic objects at the back.
  - Place baskets, copies of letters to Congress and pens at the front of the room.
  - Test videos.
  - Place a Bible and a copy of the solidarity vigil at the podium or lectern.
- Prepare the cantor to lead "[Canticle of the Sun](#)," OCP.
- Prepare one leader and six readers. Give each reader a copy of this solidarity vigil with their part highlighted.
- Invite and prepare three participants to bring the symbolic objects up to the table at the appropriate time.
- Prepare someone to cue the PowerPoint presentation and play the videos.



- Prepare the letters to your members of Congress, as necessary, depending on your choice out of the below options.
  - Option 1 - Online Letters: instruct participants to sign the online letter at this [link](#) (which can also be navigated to via [www.university.crs.org/climate-change](http://www.university.crs.org/climate-change) and selecting the “Advocate to Congress” button). Participants will need to access the Internet. You can either set up laptops/tablets connected to Wifi or rely on participants to use their smartphones.
  - Option 2 – Handwritten/Handsigned letters
    - COPIES: Each participant will need three copies of the letter: one for each of their two senators and one for their representative.
      - To make copies of the letters, you will need to insert the text from the most recent [action alert](#) into the to blank letter template available [here](#) to download and adapt.
      - There is also a section, where you should ask attendees to personalize with a closing remark, such as a story or reason in their own words to share why they care.
    - ADDRESS: Decide if you will ask participants to use their home or university address.
      - Option 2A - Home Address
        - During the letter-writing section, offer to show participants how to find their members of Congress online at <https://www.confrontglobalpoverty.org/find-members-congress/>, Ask them to enter their ZIP code when prompted. After they enter it, the names of their two senators and representative will pop up. They should write the full names of their senators and representative at the top of each letter.
        - They should put their home address at the bottom of the letter underneath where they will sign their name.
      - Option 2B - University Address
        - Pre-address the letters with the senators and representative information corresponding to your University’s district at the top of the letter.
        - Pre-insert the University address at the bottom of the letter underneath where they will sign their name.
    - DELIVERY: Decide how you will get your letters to your senators and representative.
      - Your letters will have the most impact if they are hand delivered to the local offices. [Check out these tips](#) on how to set up a meeting with your members of Congress.
      - If you are mailing letters to several states and/or districts, be sure to mail the letters separately to each senator and representative. You can find senators’ addresses by visiting [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov), and representatives by visiting [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).
      - MEDIA & FOLLOW UP: It helps to send along a copy of any press coverage of the solidarity vigil along with the letters. Also, be sure to follow up with each member of Congress you sent a letter to so you’ll know whether they received it.



## Welcome

CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 1.

### Opening prayer

LEADER: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ....

Today, we gather to pray in thanksgiving for the goodness of creation. We join our voices, as St. Francis of Assisi did in his Canticle of the Sun, and as Pope Francis echoed in his encyclical on the environment, “Praised be you, O Lord, for the beauty and goodness of the created world!” We thank God for the gift of creation and show our appreciation through our care.

We also join together because we realize we have not always stewarded this gift. This affects the daily lives of many people around the world. The poorest and most vulnerable, who rely on creation for their food and work, feel this most. We join in solidarity today to pray for these people, learn their stories, understand how climate change affects them, and act together to create a better world.

Amen.

### Scripture reading

READER ONE: A reading from the book of Genesis:

“Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. God called the dry land ‘earth,’ and the basin of water he called ‘sea.’ God saw that it was good. Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened: the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1:9-12)

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Thanks be to God.

### Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor: Reflection and Ritual

CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 2.

PLAY VIDEO: “[CST 101: Care for God’s Creation](#)” from CRS’ YouTube channel.

LEADER: Cardinal Turkson’s words at the end of the video are powerful. He says caring for creation calls for unity and a reciprocal relationship between people and their environment. “We received the earth as a garden. It would be very unfair if we pass on the earth as a wilderness.” We—the people in this room—share a common home with all of creation, and also with everyone in our house, on our block, in our city, in our country, on the other side of the world. The common home is our planet, which we have been given by God as a gift, and which reflects God’s goodness. But when that home is damaged, not everyone feels it in the same way. Although we all rely on the earth for food and sustenance, many in our global family are more vulnerable to changes to the environment and have fewer resources to adapt. Furthermore, vulnerable communities are typically those least responsible for degrading the environment. For example:



**CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 3.**

**READER TWO:** Each year, drivers in the United States release 3.3 trillion pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Your car alone releases around 24 pounds of carbon dioxide for every gallon of gas you use. This contributes to global warming.<sup>1</sup>

**CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 4.**

**READER TWO:** Each year, throwing away junk mail produces 56.2 million tons of greenhouse gases. One hundred million trees are destroyed to produce 100 billion pieces of junk mail annually. About 850 pieces of junk mail get delivered to every household in the United States. Throwing them away results in 56.2 million tons of greenhouse gases—more air pollution than every car in New York City and Los Angeles combined.<sup>2</sup>

**CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 5.**

**READER TWO:** Each year, Americans use about 30 million plastic bags, and it takes about 12 million barrels of oil to make them. That leads to carbon dioxide build-up in our atmosphere. But it doesn't stop there. Plastic bags often end up in our landfills or in our oceans, disrupting the ecosystem.

**LEADER:** How many of us experience the effects of climate change in our daily lives? For us in this room, things might not seem much different than they did 10 years ago, but the poorest people on the planet are feeling the change. Even most the Americans who have been affected by natural disasters can still adapt, stay safe and protect their families from the worst. This is not the reality across the globe.

May we remember that we are all part of one common home, and that the energy we consume each day—in ways we may not even be aware of—directly impacts people who depend on the environment for their food and work.

[Pause]

**LEADER:** We will now take part in a prayer ritual to remind us that we all share the same resources and live in one common home.

**READER THREE:** Water. Water is a beautiful gift from God. Our seas, lakes and waterfalls are some of God's most gorgeous creations. Water is also life. Most of us use water without thinking to drink, cook, clean, bathe, brush our teeth, flush the toilet and sustain our plants. Every person around the world needs clean water on a daily basis to live, but not everyone has such easy access. Severe drought, for example, makes it extremely difficult for many people to find water.

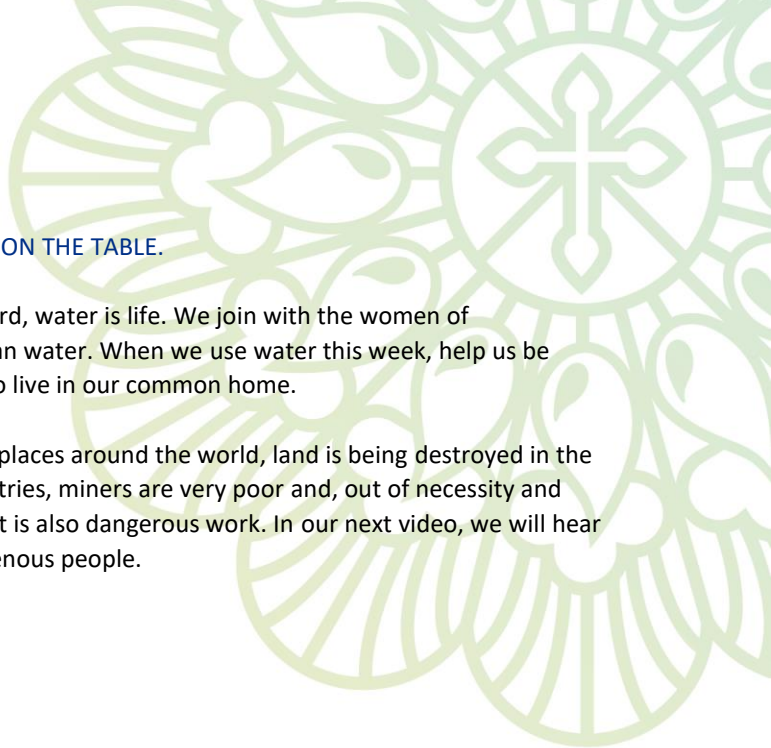
**CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 6.**

**PLAY VIDEO:** [“Ethiopian Women Pray for Rain”](#) from CRS' YouTube channel.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

<sup>2</sup> Source: TakePart.com



**PARTICIPANT BRINGS A BASIN OR PITCHER OF WATER AND SETS IT ON THE TABLE.**

**READER THREE:** [reads as participant sets basin on THE table.] O Lord, water is life. We join with the women of Ethiopia to pray for rain, and that all people will have access to clean water. When we use water this week, help us be mindful of our usage, and how important water is to all people who live in our common home.

**READER FOUR:** Soil. Soil is essential for the food we grow. In many places around the world, land is being destroyed in the hunt for resources, like oil, coal and precious metals. In many countries, miners are very poor and, out of necessity and desperation, take part in destroying the land they need to live on. It is also dangerous work. In our next video, we will hear Julio Cusirichi Palacios, from Peru, share what this means for indigenous people.

**CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 7.**

**PLAY VIDEO:** "[Julio's Interview](#)" from CRS' website.

**PARTICIPANT BRINGS UP SOIL AND SETS IT NEXT TO THE WATER ON THE TABLE.**

**READER FOUR:** [READS AS PARTICIPANT SETS SOIL ON THE TABLE.] O Lord, you created the earth, yet there was no one to till the ground until you created human beings in your own image. May we remember that from the beginning of time we have been endowed with the great gift of caring for the land. Let us remember to be conscious about buying products that were made in a way that respects the earth and those whose lives depend on it every day.

**CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 8.**

**READER FIVE:** Food. When we eat, we do so for nourishment, enjoyment and as a ritual to build community with our friends and family. Eating is also a spiritual act. In the Our Father, we pray for "our daily bread." Yet, how often do we stop to reflect before a meal or snack about where the ingredients come from? Our food comes from the labor of the hands, feet and bodies of others—labor that is often backbreaking, underpaid and underappreciated. In our next video, we will see how the effects of climate change have dramatically altered a community's ability to access food and livelihoods.

**PLAY VIDEO:** "Behind the Scenes: Lake Poopó" from CRS' YouTube channel.

**PARTICIPANT BRINGS UP BREAD OR OTHER SYMBOL OF FOOD AND SETS IT ON THE TABLE.**

**READER FIVE:** [READS AS PARTICIPANT SETS BREAD OR OTHER SYMBOL OF FOOD ON THE TABLE.] We pray that we will be mindful of our consumption, especially our eating and drinking, as we remember our connectedness and the effects of our actions on others. We also pray that "our daily bread" and that of our brothers and sisters around the world is seen as a gift from God rather than something to be exploited. Give us the courage to recognize that everything we consume comes from somewhere and affects someone, and give us the determination to act accordingly.



## Letter Writing

CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 9.

PLAY VIDEO: "[Climate Change | It Changes Everything](#)" from CRS' YouTube channel.

CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 10.

**LEADER:** In a moment, we will prepare letters to Congress. We make a difference when we lift up our voices together, but it's also important that you personalize your message. Please take a moment to explain why this is important to you.

### [IF DOING ONLINE OPTION]

Please use your smart phone, laptop or tablet and navigate to [www.university.crs.org/climate-change](http://www.university.crs.org/climate-change) and select the "Advocate to Congress" button on the page. You will be asked to enter your information. Remember to personalize your message on why this is important to you! You can edit the letter within the text box. An email will be sent to both your senators and your representative.

### [IF HANDWRITING LETTERS WITH HOME ADDRESS]

In a moment, I will distribute three letters and a pen to each person: one for each of your senators and one for your representative. If you do not know your senators and representative, use your smartphone or laptop/tablet to navigate to [confrontglobalpoverty.com/toolkit](http://confrontglobalpoverty.com/toolkit). Scroll down and click on the "Find" button under the "Meet with Congress" section. Simply enter your zip code. You may need to enter your full address if your representative's information does not populate. Remember to personalize your message on why this is important to you! Sign your name and write your home address on the bottom.

### [IF HANDWRITING LETTERS WITH UNIVERSITY ADDRESS]

In a moment, I will distribute three letters and a pen to each person: one for each of each of the senators and one for your representative who represent our University. Remember to personalize your message on why this is important to you! Sign your name at the bottom.

*[Tell the group how the messages will be delivered, either by mail to district offices or in person.]*

CUE POWERPOINT SLIDE 11.

## Closing prayer

**READER SIX:** As we close, we offer this prayer from Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*:

All-powerful God,  
You are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.  
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.  
Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.  
Fill us with peace, that we may live

as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this Earth,  
so precious in your eyes.  
Bring healing to our lives,

that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may  
sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.  
Touch the hearts  
of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the Earth.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly united

### Closing song

CANTOR LEADS: "[Canticle of the Sun](#)," OCP

with every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.  
We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace.

Amen

