On Sept. 1, the Church joins people of all faiths as we pray for the Care of Creation.

Pope Francis published the following prayer in his Laudato Si’ encyclical, and is meant for us as Christians to ask for inspiration to take up the commitment to creation set before us by the Gospel of Jesus.

Father, we praise you with all your creatures. They came forth from your all-powerful hand; they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.

Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus, through you all things were made. You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, you became part of this earth, and you gazed upon this world with human eyes. Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory.

Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light you guide this world towards the Father’s love and accompany creation as it groans in travail. You also dwell in our hearts and you inspire us to do what is good. Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty.

Praise be to you! Amen.
WITH LOVE THERE IS NO COMPROMISE

With love for Christ, for His Word, for Truth, there are no compromises. This is what we learn from St John the Baptist, martyred for “his fidelity to God's commandments, without giving in or drawing back, carrying out his mission to the very end”.

His role in relation to Jesus stands out clearly in the Gospels. St Luke in particular recounts his birth, his life in the wilderness and his preaching, while the Gospel St Mark tells us of his dramatic death.

John the Baptist began his preaching under the Emperor Tiberius in about 27-28 A.D., and the unambiguous invitation he addressed to the people, who flocked to listen to him, was to prepare the way to welcome the Lord, to straighten the crooked paths of their lives through a radical conversion of heart (cf. Lk 3:4).

However, John the Baptist did not limit himself to teaching repentance or conversion. Instead, in recognizing Jesus as the “Lamb of God” who came to take away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29), he had the profound humility to hold up Jesus as the One sent by God, drawing back so that he might take the lead, and be heard and followed. As his last act the Baptist witnessed with his blood to faithfulness to God's commandments, without giving in or withdrawing, carrying out his mission to the very end. In a 9th century the Venerable Bede says in one of his Homilies: “St John gave his life for [Christ]. He was not ordered to deny Jesus Christ but was ordered to keep silent about the truth”.

And he did not keep silent about the truth and thus died for Christ who is the Truth. Precisely for love of the truth he did not stoop to compromises and did not fear to address strong words to anyone who had strayed from God's path.

We see this great figure, this force in the Passion, in resistance to the powerful. We wonder: what gave birth to this life, to this interiority so strong, so upright, so consistent, spent so totally for God in preparing the way for Jesus? The answer is simple: it was born from the relationship with God, from prayer, which was the thread that guided him throughout his existence. John was the divine gift for which his parents Zechariah and Elizabeth had been praying for so many years (cf. Lk 1:13); a great gift, humanly impossible to hope for, because they were both advanced in years and Elizabeth was barren (cf. Lk 1:7); yet nothing is impossible to God (cf. Lk 1:36). The announcement of this birth happened precisely in the place of prayer, in the temple of Jerusalem, indeed it happened when Zechariah had the great privilege of entering the holiest place in the temple to offer incense to the Lord (cf. Lk 1:8-20). John the Baptist's birth was also marked by prayer: the Benedictus, the hymn of joy, praise and thanksgiving which Zechariah raises to the Lord and which we recite every morning in Lauds, exalts God's action in history and prophetically indicates the mission of their son John: to go before the Son of God made flesh to prepare his ways (cf. Lk 1:67-79).

The entire existence of the Forerunner of Jesus was nourished by his relationship with God, particularly the period he spent in desert regions (cf. Lk 1:80). The desert regions are places of temptation but also where man acquires a sense of his own poverty because once deprived of material support and security, he understands that the only steadfast reference point is God himself. John the Baptist, however, is not only a man of prayer, in permanent contact with God, but also a guide in this relationship. The Evangelist Luke, recalling the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, the Our Father, notes that the request was formulated by the disciples in these words: “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his own disciples” (cf. Lk 11:1).

Dear brothers and sisters, celebrating the martyrdom of St John the Baptist reminds us too, Christians of this time, that with love for Christ, for his words and for the Truth, we cannot stoop to compromises. The Truth is Truth; there are no compromises. Christian life demands, so to speak, the “martyrdom” of daily fidelity to the Gospel, the courage, that is, to let Christ grow within us and let him be the One who guides our thought and our actions. However, this can happen in our life only if we have a solid relationship with God. Prayer is not time wasted, it does not take away time from our activities, even apostolic activities, but exactly the opposite is true: only if we are able to have a faithful, constant and trusting life of prayer will God himself give us the ability and strength to live happily and serenely, to surmount difficulties and to witness courageously to him.

St John the Baptist intercede for us, that we may be ever able to preserve the primacy of God in our life.
HOSPITALITY HOUSE EMPOWERS FAMILIES TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES

By: Katie Hinerman Klug, Catholic Charities West Virginia Marketing Communications Specialist

Many families are one unexpected expense away from experiencing homelessness. Without a support system, families are often separated at homeless shelters and continue to struggle to save money.

The Catholic Charities Hospitality House in Wheeling is a unique solution to this problem.

The Hospitality House provides transitional housing for a family for three to six months. The family is able to stay intact and sleep under one roof while receiving intensive case management services to get back on their feet.

Recently, the Womack family stayed at the Hospitality House. Maria Womack and her husband had been sleeping in their car while their four kids were being juggled between friends’ couches. They struggled to pay for food and other basic needs, and they were not able to even begin to save money for rent payments.

Read the Womack family’s story in the Aug. 28 issue of The Catholic Spirit.

For more news and information from The Catholic Spirit visit THECATHOLICSPIRITWV.ORG or follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheCatholicSpiritWV

THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IS NOW AVAILABLE BY E-MAIL!

You are invited to join our new e-list to receive The Catholic Spirit by e-mail. To be added to the e-list, send an e-mail to Colleen Rowan, CROWAN@DWC.ORG, with “The Catholic Spirit e-list” in the subject line. Please let us know your preference saying: “E-mail only, and remove me from print mailing list” or “I would like both print and e-mail versions.”

By joining the e-mail list, you will receive an e-mail on each issue date of The Catholic Spirit with a link to the full issue.

The Catholic Spirit will now be available under “Downloadable Spirit” at THECATHOLICSPIRITWV.ORG.

SOMETHING TO PONDER

Whether it be a pandemic, social unrest, a boiling over need cast blame, shameful ignorance, or total lack of empathy, actions of society have historically stirred leaders to speak up and share their words of wisdom with the hope of helping create peace and unity.

This is an excerpt of a speech written by President John F. Kennedy. It was to be delivered at the Texas Democratic State Committee in Austin on the evening of November 22, 1963. However, sadly, he did not get to share these words, he was assassinated earlier that day in Dallas – fallen victim to what he detested.

Let his words reverberate across the decades to our present time and place.

“For this is a time for courage and a time for challenge. Neither conformity nor complacency will do. Neither the fanatics nor the faint-hearted are needed. And our duty as a party is not to our party alone, but to the Nation, and, indeed, to all mankind. Our duty is not merely the preservation of political power but the preservation of peace and freedom.

“So, let us not be petty when our cause is so great. Let us not quarrel amongst ourselves when our Nation’s future is at stake. Let us stand together with renewed confidence in our cause–united in our heritage of the past and our hopes for the future — and determined that this land we love shall lead all mankind into new frontiers of peace and abundance.”
First Reading JEREMIAH 20:7-9
You duped me, O LORD, and I let myself be duped; you were too strong for me, and you triumphed. All the day I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I must cry out, violence and outrage is my message; the word of the LORD has brought me derision and reproach all the day. I say to myself, I will not mention him, I will speak in his name no more. But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it.

Responsorial PSALM 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9
R. (2b) My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.
O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.
R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.
Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary to see your power and your glory, For your kindness is a greater good than life; my lips shall glorify you.
R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.
Thus will I bless you while I live; lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name. As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied, and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.
R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.
You are my help, and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy. My soul clings fast to you; your right hand upholds me.
R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Second Reading ROMANS 12:1-2
I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

Alleluia MATTHEW 11:29AB
R. Alleluia, alleluia.
Take my yoke upon you, says the Lord, and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel MATTHEW 16:21-27
Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, “God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you.” He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.” Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct.”

PRAYER INTENTIONS
For all those who exercise authority in the Church, that their words and actions may inspire us to take up our crosses and follow Christ, we pray . . .
For legislators, that they may listen to the all those who cry out for justice and mercy, as they enact laws and policies, we pray . . .
For all those who have been effected by natural disasters: storms, floods, droughts and fires, that they may experience healing and hope, we pray . . .
For an end to the Coronavirus pandemic and for all those who work in the healthcare profession, that they may be kept safe from harms, we pray . . .

Lord hear our prayer

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER
My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.
Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at DWC.ORG.

Below are four options for enriching your spirit through daily Mass online.

- EWTN airs daily Mass from Our Lady of Angels Chapel, in Irondale, Alabama, at 8am, noon, and 7pm: HTTPS://WWW.EWTN.COM/Tv/WATCH-LIVE
- St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York has daily Mass live streamed at 7am: HTTPS://SAINTPATRICKSCATHEDRAL.ORG/LIVE
- Catholic TV also streams its daily Mass: HTTP://CATHOLICTV.ORG/Masses/CATHOLICTV-MASS