

Greetings!

We pray that all is well with you especially as the new school term begins.

As you may know the Franciscan Institute has a Season Creation Challenge which started on May 24 and ends on September 23, 2021. I am very delighted to share with you that we have been receiving so many outstanding and creative submissions from primary and secondary schools, parishes and youth groups in the 3 islands we serve in i.e. Grenada, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

A gentle reminder, for teachers or parents to please state the name of the category the child has chosen, the child's age and standard/grade/form. You can also let us know a telephone contact for you so we can get in touch with you to collect your prize for the St. Francis Canticle Creation Award Ceremony. The results will be released by October 12-13, 2021. Note all participants who submits an entry receive a regional certificate and winners receive a certificate of excellence and a prize. There is a best overall school for primary and secondary schools and parish challenge plaque for each country.

This week, persons have been asking the Institute to clarify on the following questions. Therefore, the answer to the questions is typed in blue below. In addition to this, the Institute will be having a Zoom webinar on the Season of Creation theme for children ages 5 -11 years old at 4pm-5pm (AST). You are most welcome to join this educational session with Sr. Delia Monroe and Sr. Roxanne Neckles, SSM. Here is the zoom link to connect <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84126668503?pwd=a1k4bjFPVWFZb1FWM3ZtZ1YwamNxQT09>. Meeting ID: 841 2666 8503. Passcode: 992553.

The Institute extends our deepest gratitude to all our partners in the 3 islands for their hard work and many sacrifices in promoting the Season of Creation month.

1. Why it is called “Season of Creation Challenge” and not “Season of Creation Competition”

When creating the name as Franciscans, we refrained from using the word “Competition” ; it was rephrased to “Challenge” to encourage fraternity which means creating a more collaborative relationship among our participants. It is a family approach to encourage working together using our creative gifts to care for our common home.

2. What is the meaning of “Oikos”

The international theme for the Season of Creation 2021 is “A Home for All, renewing the oikos of God.” Oikos means “household” in Greek. It is also the root of our words starting with 'eco' like 'ecology (oikologia)’ and 'economics ((oikonomia)’. This points to the integral web of relationships that sustain the wellbeing of the Earth.

Human relationships have an ecological significance whereby our economic, social and political relationships affect the balance of creation. Everything that we use and produce has its origin in the Earth, whether mineral, plant or animal based. Our habits of consuming energy and goods affect the resilience, the capacity of the Earth to heal itself and sustain life. “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?” (Laudato Si’ encyclical letter paragraph 160). This question is at the heart of Laudato Si’ (Praise be to you), the Encyclical Letter on the care of the common home by Pope Francis.

God gave humans the ministry to take care and cultivate this oikos of God (Genesis 2:15). The oikos is a home for all of creation including the pollinators, marine life, vegetation, animals, and human beings. Today our biodiversity is in danger because of greed, exploitation, disrespect, disconnection and systematic degradation caused by human beings.

This Season of Creation, we call on every household and society to repent and reshape our political, social and economic systems towards just, sustainable life.

All of which are interconnected and can respect the life-giving ecological limits of our common home so all creatures can find their home to flourish (Renewing the Oikos of God).

3. This year's logo for the Season of Creation is Abraham's tent, what does this symbolise?

Abraham's tent, symbolize "A home for all". Abraham and Sarah opened their tent as a home for three strangers, who turned out to be God's angels (Genesis 18). By creating a home for all, their act of radical hospitality became a source of great blessing. Abraham's tent is a symbol of the ecumenical (all Christians) call to practice creation care as an act of radical hospitality, safeguarding a place for all creatures, human and more human, in our common home, the household (oikos) of God.

Have we considered whether our home is welcoming to the homeless, refugees or migrants? Source information; Season of Creation Guide 2021 <https://seasonofcreation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-SOC-Full-Guide.pdf>

4. How can I join a group to help support my ideas and passion for caring for creation?

The International Laudato Si' Movement was the founding convener of the Season of Creation ecumenical Steering Committee which coordinates this annual initiative, and continues to coordinate Catholic participation in the season, in collaboration with hundreds of members and partners.

The Franciscan Institute and the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother have been registered partners with the international Season of Creation since 2018. The Franciscan Institute serves in 3 Caribbean islands, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago and Saint Lucia. You can follow the institute's Facebook page for <https://www.facebook.com/franciscaninstitute> or website <https://www.franinstitute.org/> to join our care for creation activities (Grenada, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago)

This year, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother through the ministry of the Franciscan Institute formed the Laudato Si Movement National Chapter in Trinidad and Tobago. For persons in Trinidad and Tobago you can register to become a member of our Laudato Si family at <https://forms.gle/EjyXss7u5KRC9zzFA>

Regards,
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FI Regional Programme Coordinator