

## **“The Four – Legged Ones”**

**Reader 1: Welcome:**

**Land Acknowledgement:** (use the one appropriate to your region)

The theme this year for the Season of Creation is:

**“Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation”.**

The prophet Amos spoke these words as he called the people of Israel to recognize that their prosperity was at the expense of the poor. With conversion from their oppressive ways, they might count on God’s forgiveness and mercy in order to save their nation. (Amos 5:24)

We are invited to take these words to heart in our own time.

**Opening Hymn:**

### **Stewards of Earth**

Catholic Book of Worship III #634.

Melody: Finlandia (#635)

1. All praise to you, O Lord of all creation:  
You made the world, and it is yours alone.  
The planet earth you spun in its location  
Amid the stars adorning heaven's dome.  
We lease the earth but for a life's duration,  
Yet for this life it is our cherished home.
  
2. With wondrous grace you clothed the earth with splendor;  
With teaming life you filled the sea and land.  
Instill in us a sense of awe and wonder  
When we behold the bounty of your hand.  
Then when we hear the voice of bird or thunder,  
We hear the voice our faith can understand.
  
3. To tend the earth is our entrusted duty,  
For earth is ours to use and not abuse.  
O gracious Lord, true source of all resources,  
Forgive our greed that wields destruction’s sword.  
Then let us serve as wise and faithful stewards  
While Earth gives glory to creation’s Lord.

## Opening Prayer: All

O God, Creator and Sustainer of all living beings, the beauty and goodness of your creation surround us. In your ever-unfolding creation, since the moment of the great flaring forth of your love, you have fashioned and cared for countless beings: sun, stars, moons, oceans, mighty rivers, and wandering streams, giraffes and raccoons, bears and bumblebees, carrots and kiwi fruit, great maples and tiny violets. Gracious, Gifting God, how wondrous and awesome your creation is!

**Refrain-All: Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation.**

**Reader 2:** God, Your Grace has gradually awakened our hearts to hear the cry of the earth, all Earth's creatures and species. We are grateful that our ears and eyes now can hear and see what, in the past, we hardened our hearts against.

<sup>1</sup>We focus today on the buffalo, one of the four-legged creatures which share our earth. The buffalo, like many creatures, have faced near extinction.

In the 1860s American Hunters were told: *“Kill every Buffalo you can. Every Buffalo dead is an Indian gone”*<sup>2</sup>. Today this statement brings us to our knees.

**All:** We pray for forgiveness. *(pause)*

**Refrain-All: Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation.**

**Reader 1:** This Mighty animal was slaughtered by the thousands for sport, for financial gain.

**All:** We pray for forgiveness. *(pause)*

**Refrain-All: Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation.**



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/en/free-download.php?image=bison-buffalo&id=223463>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2016/05/the-buffalo-killers/482349/>

**Reader 2:** We humans thoughtlessly cleared land and forests to build our cities and homes, depriving the needed shelter and food for the buffalo, leaving them exposed to predators.

**All:** We pray for forgiveness (*pause*)

**Refrain-All: Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation.**

**Reader 1:** Today many Buffalo face threats from unregulated hunting, a habitat loss and disease.

**All:** We pray for forgiveness. (*pause*)

**Refrain-All: Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation.**

**Reader 2:** Pope Francis in Laudato Si says, *“When we speak of the ‘environment’, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it... We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and at the same time protecting nature. (L.S. # 139)<sup>3</sup>*

**Reader 1:** Today our indigenous brothers and sisters are sharing their wisdom with us in how they extend respect and gratitude to all creatures, like the buffalo, which provided food and clothing for their families and community.

**All:** We pray with gratitude. (*pause*)

**Refrain-All: Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation.**

**Reader 2:** Our awakened hearts are now working for solutions with cooperation in many spheres, religion, science, environmentalists.

**All:** We pray with gratitude. (*pause*)

**Refrain-All: Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation.**

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<sup>3</sup> Laudato Si’ on Care for Our Common Home Encyclical letter of Pope Francis © 2015 Libreria Editrice Vaticana #139

**Reader 1:** Indigenous and conservation management groups, including in Alberta, have recognized this threat are working together to provide safe, infection-free habitat for the buffalo so that their population may increase. <sup>4</sup>

**All:** We pray with gratitude. (*pause*)

**Refrain-All:** **Let Justice and peace flow like a river for all creation.**

**Reader 2: Closing prayer:** O God, your gentle Spirit is active all over our planet. We are waking up and recognizing the sacredness of all creation. You are present in every person, every species. We are moved to act together, some even laying down their lives to protect our planet and its people. Grant us inner peace, so that we will be guided by your wisdom, and courage to stand in solidarity.

**Amen.**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/aep-wood-bison-canada-alberta-draft-conservation-agreement-fact-sheet.pdf>