Conference of European Churches

CONSILIUM CONFERENTIARUM EPISCOPORUM EUROPÆ CCEE

Peace with Creation

Joint statement from the Presidents of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences *(CCEE)* and the Conference of European Churches *(CEC)* on the occasion of the 2025 *Season of Creation*

Since the beginning of his mission, the prophet Isaiah became aware of God's desire for a messenger to be sent to His people. Despite his sense of inadequacy, he committed himself to give human voice to God's design. Preaching to a people living in a disastrous and crumbling situation, he experienced bitter resistance and opposition; nevertheless, this experience brought him to a firm and lifelong resolve: he was aware of a frenzied need to call his people back from the brink of peril and decline.

In his prophecies, Isaiah compared God to a careful and diligent farmer, who, sometimes angry at the wild fruits of injustice and violence that were produced, threatened to take away his care and protection. But strengthened by his encounter with God's holiness, Isaiah also offered an alternative to catastrophe: survival depended on returning to a way of life that reflected trust and devotion toward God. This is a daily commitment that requires a sober life and respect for everything offered as a gift of creation, without any form of unfair exploitation of people or natural resources. This is for Isaiah the only way to live in peace and to prosper, and this is what we call *"peace with creation"*.
In this revealing spiritual experience, we have found the inspiration for the oecumenical celebration of this year's Season of Creation, around the theme of *«Peace with creation»*, with the symbol *"Garden of Peace"*, inspired by Isaiah 32:14-18.

As Christian Churches, this is for us a time of prayer and sincere conversion, that gives voice to our profession of faith to the God that *«created heaven and earth»*, as every Christian community has been proclaiming for centuries in the words formulated by the Council of Nicaea, of which we celebrate this year the 1700th anniversary. While proclaiming our faith in God the creator we also pray for our brothers and sisters that are victims of different forms of environmental and human injustice.
Our world can hardly be seen as a garden of peace nowadays. To the contrary, the human destruction and death brought by wars and social unrest in several countries and peoples inform our daily experiences. However, like the prophet Isaiah, we strongly believe we are called to seek peace with creation and that each of us is called to honouring the hallmarks of the *«giver of life»*.

We have also moulded this spiritual commitment in every page of the revised *«Charta Oecumenica»*, that will be signed before the end of this year. For more than twenty years this joint agreement between Christian Churches in Europe has inspired our theological reflections and pastoral work. We hope that the revised version will keep shaping our listening of Christ's prayer, that we *«all may be one»* (John 17:21).

As they work to care for our climate, we will pray for all leaders and participants of the 30º Climate Change Conference of Partners (COP30), organised by the United Nations in Belém (Brazil), from 10 to 21 November. We believe that the current climate crisis is an opportunity to reconfigure international relations toward the common good and to create a more fair and sustainable way of living for the whole of humanity. We also hope that the impact of climate change policies on the poor and vulnerable will remain well placed in the minds and hearts of the leaders and experts gathering at the conference, considering the interrelated social and environmental challenges of our time.

The Season of Creation calls us to be faithful stewards of what God has created and entrusted to us, in our daily choices and public policies, so that our prayer and our way of living may echo what we believe and confess: *«The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims the works of his hands»* (Psalm 19:2).

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