



JAEI

August 2026 Environmental Prayer Diary

• Woman's month

The purpose of this Prayer Diary is to provide subjects for your reflection and prayer as the Spirit moves you

Saturday	1	Women form over half of the world's population yet there are very few women in decision-making positions. Women are also most often the members of the community who are directly involved in the land. Many women are farmers and yet often cannot own the land, which they farm because of patriarchal (male dominated) systems of land ownership and access to credit. By giving women more rights and decision-making powers, they will be able to have more say in creating more sustainable lifestyles and improving the quality of life for themselves and their families. In South Africa, women and youth are specifically identified as being significant role-players in sound environmental management. Increased environmental awareness, opportunity and environmental education for youth and women are direct means of improving environmental quality in South Africa, and of ensuring greater action to improve the quality of the existing environment. <i>Prayerfully reflect on this</i>	
Sunday	2	God of heaven and earth, you are calling us to play our part in the care of your creation and to manage carefully the land you have given us to tend. We pray for wisdom as we seek an agriculture designed, not for money-making, but for feeding the world. Guide our policy-makers, planners and farmers, and help us all to understand that we hold land, not in perpetuity, but in trust for generations to come	
Monday	3	People are often unreasonably illogical and self-centred Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse of selfish ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. What you may spend years building, someone may destroy overnight. Build anyway. The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow. Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give the world the best you have anyway. <i>Mother Teresa</i>	

Tuesday	4	Psalm 65 ¹ Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. ² You who answer prayer, to you all people will come. ³ When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions. ⁴ Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple. ⁵ You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, ⁶ who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, ⁷ who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations. ⁸ The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. ⁹ You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. ¹⁰ You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. ¹¹ You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. ¹² The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. ¹³ The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.
Wednesday	5	All-holy Trinity, through all eternity your praise is chanted by the heavenly hosts. With them, we join every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the seas, every creature singing - blessing and honour and glory to you forever and ever. Radiant God, you are the fullness of light for your new creation. Because you are faithful, we await with hope the new Jerusalem, our eternal home, your promised city. As we wait, use us to bless the cities we inhabit, that they may be environments of mercy, justice and peace for all.

Thursday	6	Encyclical Letter <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> of Pope Francis on the Fraternity and Social Friendship Chapter Five Forms of Populism and Liberalism The benefits and limits of liberal approaches 168. The marketplace, by itself, cannot resolve every problem, however much we are asked to believe this dogma of neoliberal faith. Whatever the challenge, this impoverished and repetitive school of thought always offers the same recipes. Neoliberalism simply reproduces itself by resorting to the magic theories of “spillover” or “trickle” – without using the name – as the only solution to societal problems. There is little appreciation of the fact that the alleged “spillover” does not resolve the inequality that gives rise to new forms of violence threatening the fabric of society. It is imperative to have a proactive economic policy directed at “promoting an economy that favours productive diversity and business creativity”^[140] and makes it possible for jobs to be created and not cut. Financial speculation fundamentally aimed at quick profit continues to wreak havoc. Indeed, “without internal forms of solidarity and mutual trust, the market cannot completely fulfil its proper economic function. And today this trust has ceased to exist”.^[141] The story did not end the way it was meant to, and the dogmatic formulae of prevailing economic theory proved not to be infallible. The fragility of world systems in the face of the pandemic has demonstrated that not everything can be resolved by market freedom. It has also shown that, in addition to recovering a sound political life that is not subject to the dictates of finance, “we must put human dignity back at the centre and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need”.^[142] 169. In some closed and monochrome economic approaches, for example, there seems to be no place for popular movements that unite the unemployed, temporary and informal workers and many others who do not easily find a place in existing structures. Yet those movements manage various forms of popular economy and of community production. What is needed is a model of social, political and economic participation “that can include popular movements and invigorate local, national and international governing structures with that torrent of moral energy that springs from including the excluded in the building of a common destiny”, while also ensuring that “these experiences of solidarity which grow up from below, from the subsoil of the planet – can come together, be more coordinated, keep on meeting one another”.^[143] This, however, must happen in a way that will not betray their distinctive way of acting as “sowers of change, promoters of a process involving millions of actions, great and small, creatively intertwined like words in a poem”.^[144] In that sense, such movements are “social poets” that, in their own way, work, propose, promote and liberate. They help make possible an integral human development that goes beyond “the idea of social policies being a policy for the poor, but never with the poor and never of the poor, much less part of a project that reunites peoples”.^[145] They may be troublesome, and certain “theorists” may find it hard to classify them, yet we must find the courage to acknowledge that, without them, “democracy atrophies, turns into a mere word, a formality; it loses its representative character and becomes disembodied, since it leaves out the people in their daily struggle for dignity, in the building of their future”.^[146] <i>Prayerfully consider how this affects our Country</i>
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Friday	7	God, we cry to you for justice for women and girls. Help us to dig out the roots of gender-based violence and discrimination. Inspire us to break down the structures that silence and disempower women. Make us united in condemning abuse, in all its forms. God, we cry to you for refuge for the survivors of violence. May those in power recognise their responsibilities to support survivors. Show us how to amplify the voices of women and girls speaking up for change. Give us the courage to act against inequality. God, we cry to you for change, for transformation. Send us the strength to persist in activism when we face barriers. Fill us with determination as we seek to renew our world. May we see a day when every girl will be free to flourish and know life in all its fullness. Amen
Saturday	8	Women's Day (9 August) As we celebrate Women's Day by commemorating our history and the many achievements of women, somewhere in some corner of the world there are plenty of girls and women for whom a healthy, happy life free from oppression and tortures are still a dream. Educated and aware women of today's world stand for the exploited lot to help them overcome all barriers and reach for their rights. It is a woman who understands a woman's woe and hence they have a crucial role in changing lives of subjugated and deprived women for better. 
Sunday	9	Our God, you hold our lives in your hands. You have promised to give us a new heart and to put a new spirit in us. We pray, renew us every day. Forgive us where we have failed to be good stewards and to be good neighbours. Give us the courage to think beyond our own lives; to live and consume responsibly so that our near and far neighbours can experience their full dignity, and that we can help restore and admire the beauty of our communities and of this earth. Our God, you hold our world in your hands. You hear your creation groaning but you have promised to liberate it from its pain. We pray, renew our world. Forgive those of us who haven't used their power wisely. Give us and our leaders the courage to think beyond our own economies; to seek genuine partnerships so that all people can experience the fullness of life, and that our planet is known to be the common home for all creation and future generations. Amen

Monday	10 World Lion Day World Lion Day turns our attention to one of the most majestic creatures on Earth. The day is not just a celebration of these incredible animals but also a crucial reminder of the challenges they face and the urgent need for conservation efforts. Unfortunately, the unnerving reality is lion populations are dwindling Lions are a keystone species, meaning their presence has a disproportionately large impact on their ecosystem. This significant role makes it crucial to protect and conserve their populations, as their presence maintains vital balance in their environments. As apex predators, lions regulate the populations of herbivores like zebras and wildebeests. This helps maintain the balance between different species and the vegetation in their habitats. The loss of a keystone species can lead to dramatic changes, often resulting in the decline or loss of other species within the ecosystem. Although the South African government announced that it would be clamping down on the controversial multimillion-dollar lion-breeding industry, this has opened yet another can of worms! In a Pretoria High Court case in 2019, initially about setting quotas for lion bone exports, has now evolved into a broader test of conservation ethics and constitutional principles. It declared the government's 2017 (800 skeletons) and 2018 (1,500 skeletons) lion bone export quotas unlawful and constitutionally invalid, ruling that the Minister failed to consider animal welfare in the decision-making process. Lion breeders argue that the absence of quotas since 2019 unlawfully suspends their trade, infringing on their constitutional right to choose their occupation. The case pits economic rights (Section 22) against environmental rights (Section 24), with courts increasingly recognising animal welfare and ecological integrity as part of constitutional protections. The on-going litigation may force government's clarity on policy, test whether constitutional environmental rights can limit exploitative wildlife practices and potentially shift conservation from a "use-based" model toward one grounded in ethics and welfare. This issue is an extremely controversial, delicate and complicated matter – but our lions are still bearing the brunt of our greed and complacency. At stake is not simply whether lion bones may be exported. It is whether South Africa will continue to treat its wildlife as a commodity – or begin, finally, to reckon with the limits of doing so. <i>What we can do to help the conservation of Africa's most famous animal:</i> • Pray for an ethical and binding solution to this very involved and convoluted problem! • Pray for all involved in lion conservation and awareness. • Do some research into canned lion hunting and become disgusted by this industry. Get motivated to do your bit. • Resist the urge to pet those cute little cubs. No matter what you are told – lions cannot be released back into the wild. South Africa does not have enough
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		sanctuaries to take them. Very few lions have been rehabilitated and released back into the wild. Some lions have been rehabilitated (Elsa, the lioness of <i>"Born Free"</i> being the most famous), but it is a very costly and time consuming process. • Raise awareness of the plight of these magnificent creatures and urge people to help in whatever way they can.
Tuesday	11	
Wednesday	12	World Elephant Day World Elephant Day generally focuses on overarching global campaigns rather than adopting a strictly designated annual theme. The movement primarily centres on raising critical awareness about anti-poaching, habitat loss, human-elephant conflict, and the humane treatment of both African and Asian elephants.  Elephants are more than gentle giants – they're "eco-systems engineers. From shaping landscapes to spreading seeds, they play a crucial role in nature. However, specific regions in South Africa face localised elephant overpopulation. While national numbers are carefully managed, confined parks—most notably in Kruger National Park and provincial reserves in KwaZulu-Natal have seen population densities exceed the ecological carrying capacity. Instead of drastic measures, most reserves housing elephant use "adaptive management", a smart, flexible approach to balance conservation and ecosystem health. Whether South Africa has "too many" elephants is a highly debated ecological and ethical question. While populations have recovered successfully from historical lows, localized overpopulation is a major conservation and management challenge in South Africa. With over 44,000 elephants - a massive conservation success - herds are causing severe habitat destruction, threatening local biodiversity, and driving human-wildlife conflict. Recently, there have been documented elephant attacks and aggressive encounters in South Africa. While most interactions between safari vehicles and elephants end peacefully, several tragic and near-fatal incidents have occurred in national parks and game reserves. Many of these incidents stem from vehicles getting too close, unexpected encounters in dense bush, or tourists breaking park rules by getting out their vehicles or aggravating the animals to "get a better video for TikTok". While poaching is largely considered under control nationally - especially when compared to the catastrophic declines seen elsewhere in Africa - the Kruger

		National Park and other areas are continually monitoring emerging poaching threats to prevent them from escalating. The welfare of captive elephants is another prominent issue. A landmark court case is currently under consideration by the Constitutional Court regarding the protection of wild animals in captivity, specifically advocating for the release of the remaining elephants at the Johannesburg Zoo to accredited, spacious sanctuaries. Elephants aren't just part of the wild – they help shape it! - let's protect and co-exist with these incredible creatures. What can we do to help? • Don't buy ivory and inform others why they shouldn't either. • Support ethical eco-tourism that benefits elephant conservation and local communities • Raise awareness by sharing information about the elephant crisis • <i>Pray continuously</i> for everyone involved in conserving these gentle giants!
Thursday	13	Touch the earth lightly Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently, Nourish the life of the world in our care: Gift of great wonder, ours to surrender, Trust for the children tomorrow will bear. We who endanger, who create hunger, agents of death for all creatures that live, we who would foster clouds of disaster— God of our planet, forestall and forgive! Let there be greening, birth from the burning, water that blesses and air that is sweet, health in God's garden, hope in God's children, regeneration that peace will complete. God of all living, God of all loving, God of the seedling, the snow and the sun, teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us, using us gently, and making us one. Words By Shirley Erena Murray Words © 1992 Hope Publishing Company <i>The hymn famously calls for responsible ecology with the opening line: "Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently, nourish the life of the world in our care".</i> <i>First published in 1992, the hymn was specifically written as an ecological plea to respect the health and protection of the planet, drawing attention to human-caused damage and the desperate need for environmental regeneration.</i> Listen

Friday	14 Kinship with All Life <i>Joanna Macy vividly reconnects our seemingly separate selves with nature, both present and past:</i> The conventional notion of the self with which we have been raised and to which we have been conditioned by mainstream culture is being undermined. What Alan Watts [1915-1973] called “the skin-encapsulated ego” . . . is being replaced by wider constructs of identity and self-interest—by what philosopher Arne Naess [1912-2009] termed the ecological self, co-extensive with other beings and the life of our planet. It is what I like to call “the greening of the self.” . . . Among those who are shedding these old constructs of self . . . is John Seed, director of the Rainforest Information Centre in Australia. One day . . . I asked him: “You talk about the struggle against the lumber companies and politicians to save the remaining rain forests. How do you deal with the despair?” He replied, “I try to remember that it’s not me, John Seed, trying to protect the rain forest. Rather, I am part of the rain forest protecting itself. I am that part of the rain forest recently emerged into human thinking.” This is what I mean by the greening of the self. It involves a combining of the mystical with the pragmatic, transcending separateness, alienation, and fragmentation. It is . . . “a spiritual change,” generating a sense of profound interconnectedness with all life. Unless you have some roots in a spiritual practice that holds life sacred and encourages joyful communion with all your fellow beings, facing the enormous challenges ahead becomes nearly impossible. . . . By expanding our self-interest to include other beings in the body of the Earth, the ecological self also widens our window on time. It enlarges our temporal context, freeing us from identifying our goals and rewards solely in terms of our present lifetime. The life pouring through us, pumping our heart and breathing through our lungs, did not begin at our birth or conception. Like every particle in every atom and molecule of our bodies, it goes back through time to the first splitting and spinning of the stars. Thus the greening of the self helps us to reinhabit time and our own story as life on Earth. We were present in the primal flaring forth, and in the rains that streamed down on this still-molten planet, and in the primordial seas. In our mother’s womb we remembered that journey, wearing vestigial gills and tail and fins for hands. Beneath the outer layer of our neocortex and what we learned in school, that story is in us—the story of a deep kinship with all life, bringing strengths that we never imagined. When we claim this story as our innermost sense of who we are, a gladness comes that will help us to survive. <i>From Richard Rohr’s daily meditations</i> www.cac.org 
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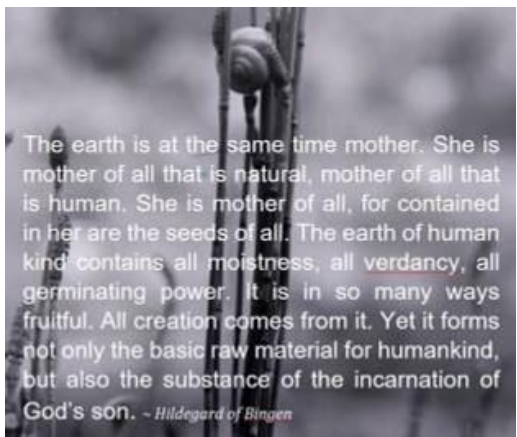
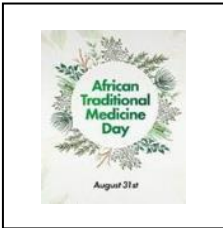
Saturday	15	
Sunday	16	Gracious God, you have given us much this day: the wheat and grapes which found our feast, the wisdom and will to transform them into bread and wine, and the precious presence of your Son who transfigures and redeems all that we have broken and lost. Send us out now to care for this fragile earth, our island home. Grant us the wisdom and the will to transform the toxic, irreverent ways we live, and the saving presence of your Son, Jesus Christ, who goes before us and calls us into this world you love. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit be honour and glory, now and forever, Amen
Monday	17	Lord, Renew our spirits and cleanse our hearts. Renew our minds and transform our lives. Renew our cities and rebuild our ruins. Renew our world, in your name we pray, Amen. Credit: TEAR Australia
Tuesday	18	International Orangutan Day International Orangutan Day is a day on which we focus attention on the conservation status of the wild Orangutans facing extinction in their home rainforest habitats on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Rainforests on these two islands are being destroyed to grow Palm Oil trees and with palm oil an ingredient in half of the products in supermarkets we are silently condemning these amazing apes. South Africa does not commercially cultivate palm oil due to its climate, which lacks the required tropical conditions. Instead, the country imports its palm oil - primarily from Southeast Asia and West Africa—but leads the continent as the largest consumer of Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certified sustainable palm oil

		When grown sustainably, palm oil helps protect the wellbeing of the environment, communities, workers and wildlife. But when it's grown unsustainably, palm oil production can be destructive and damaging. Palm oil cannot be avoided, but palm oil that has been produced according to strong and rigorous sustainability standards are far preferable. RSPO Standards bring positive impacts to <i>People, Planet</i> and <i>Prosperity</i>. The workers and communities involved in the production have been treated fairly and respectfully. Good working conditions and ethical business practices are fundamental to sustainable palm oil production. Forests are protected from deforestation, and no harm is done to endangered species, ecosystems and habitats. To protect the climate, new plantations must not be developed on peatlands, and carbon emissions must be reduced. South African companies, like Woolworths, Pick n Pay, The SPAR Group, Rhodes Food Group and Pioneer Foods (Parent company to brands like SASKO, Bokomo, and White Star) actively pursue RSPO certification for their suppliers and encourage the adoption of sustainable palm oil practices. South Africans should care about this global observance for several key reasons: • Shared Conservation Struggles: South Africa is globally recognised for fighting wildlife crime. Supporting orangutan conservation means standing in solidarity against similar localized threats: illegal wildlife trafficking, habitat loss, and human-wildlife conflict. • Protecting the Planet's Lungs: Orangutans are "umbrella species." By protecting their rainforest habitats in Borneo and Sumatra, we mitigate global climate change and ensure the regulation of weather patterns that directly affect African agriculture and environments. • Crucial Forest Regeneration: Known as "gardeners of the forest," orangutans play an indispensable role in spreading seeds and maintaining the health of the rainforests, which are massive global carbon sinks. • Local Action, Global Impact: As a megadiverse country, South Africa's conservation mindset sets a high standard. Standing with global campaigns highlights our commitment to preserving life on Earth. <i>Are you aware of the palm oil content in the products you use?</i>	
Wednesday	19	Read Mark 12:38-44 <i>“This poor widow has put in more than all.”</i> Hypocrites come in many disguises – false friends who never tell you the truth but try to tell you what you want to hear. Or they can be the people who hide their real nature under a veneer of respectability. These are the hypocrites Jesus identifies in this gospel – those who pretend to be very holy, letting their religion be seen as important in their lives, while in reality they are ruthless and vicious in their dealings with others.	

		Jesus now points out the person he really admires – a poor, humble widow. She has very little means but she gives her all. Through her generosity, she gives glory to God who is loving and merciful. Let us be open, honest and generous in our giving, in prayer, and working life. May we allow God to touch us and open us to become the people the Lord wants us to be. <i>Loving God</i> <i>We pray for all refugees and for people struggling to live on benefits or with very little income. May we share with them, and by God's grace may they have the means to live and provide for their families in their time of need.</i> <i>Amen</i> <i>This reflection and prayer were written by Sister Bridgetta Rooney of Saint Joseph of Peace. This congregation is dedicated to bringing peace and justice to the world by work and prayer. Taken from CAFOD – www.cafod.org.uk</i>
Thursday	20	World Mosquito Day You're settling in for a lovely, peaceful night, but just as you drift off to sleep, you hear it! <i>Buzzzzzzing!</i> That dreadful buzzing of a mosquito! – that's the sound of a female mosquito's wings and she's on her way to bite you. Malaria in South Africa is transmitted exclusively by the <i>Anopheles</i> mosquito. These mosquitoes thrive in low-altitude, tropical environments, making the risk highly localized to specific regions rather than a nationwide threat. The types of mosquitoes you will typically encounter in Gauteng include: • <i>Culex</i> mosquitoes: These are the most common household nuisance mosquitoes in the province. They are primarily active at night, produce a high-pitched buzzing sound, and leave itchy bites. • <i>Aedes</i> mosquitoes: These mosquitoes have distinct black and white markings on their bodies and legs. Unlike <i>Culex</i>, they are most active during the day, particularly around sunrise and sunset. • The "Elephant Mosquito" (<i>Toxorhynchites</i> spp.): This is the largest mosquito species in the region. It has white-striped legs but is harmless to humans - adults feed only on plant nectar and do not bite.  <i>Culex mosquito</i>  <i>Aedes mosquito</i>  <i>"Elephant Mosquito"</i> (<i>Toxorhynchites</i> spp.): Gauteng is historically a non-endemic malaria zone, meaning the mosquitoes do not permanently breed or transmit the disease locally. However, climate change and extreme flooding are increasing imported cases. Gauteng recorded 414 cases

		and 11 deaths in early 2026, primarily due to residents contracting it while traveling and falling ill upon returning. When traveling to endemic areas (like the lowveld or northern Kwa-Zulu Natal), use repellent, wear long sleeves and pants, and sleep under a mosquito net. Malaria symptoms are flu-like (fevers, chills, headaches, body aches) and can show up weeks after returning home. If you experience these, seek immediate medical care and specifically request a malaria. <i>Even though we thoroughly dislike mosquitoes, they do play a part in the greater eco-system ... and they ARE part of God's plan!</i>
Friday	21	"Because a woman brought death, a bright Maiden overcame it, and so the highest blessing in all of creation lies in the form of a woman, since God has become man in a sweet and blessed Virgin." <i>Hildegard of Bingen</i> 
Saturday	22	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 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.
Sunday	23	Loving God, Blessed be the works of your hands, Your Spirit inspires trees and birds and waves into song and dance, It is that same holy wind that you breathed on your disciples and on all creation, Let your Spirit blow us to creative love and stewardship that shows reverence for your creation. Blessed be the works of your hands O Holy One, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God now and forever. Amen. <i>The late Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya of Swaziland</i>

Monday	24	"We need beauty because it makes us ache to be worthy of it." Mary Oliver (Poet and Author) 
Tuesday	25	
Wednesday	26	World Wild Dog Day Today, on World Wild Dog Day, we celebrate one of Africa's most fascinating and endangered predators – the African wild dog – Nature's Ultimate Team Players Did you know that African wild dogs are among the most successful hunters on the continent? With an incredible 80% hunting success rate, they far outperform lions and leopards – all thanks to their tight-knit teamwork and coordinated strategy. These highly social animals live in packs led by an alpha male and female, who are usually the only ones to breed. Interestingly, it's the females that leave their birth pack to find a new one, unlike most other predators! Forever on the move, wild dogs are truly nomadic, covering up to 50 km in a single day and ranging across territories that span hundreds – even thousands – of square kilometres. They also have a fascinating way of staying connected. Through gentle touch, tail wags, and unique vocal calls, they maintain the bonds that make their pack so effective. With fewer than 6,000 left in the wild, wild dogs are among Africa's most threatened carnivores. Their decline has been driven by habitat loss, conflict with humans, and diseases spread by domestic animals. And yet, despite these challenges, wild dogs remain extraordinary survivors. Known for their intelligence, strong social bonds, and highly effective cooperative hunting, they embody the true meaning of teamwork in the natural world. 

		Let's celebrate and protect these incredible animals – true icons of the African wilderness <i>Give thanks for the researchers involved in this project and pray that their efforts will be hugely blessed.</i>
Thursday	27	May none of God's wonderful works keep silence, night or morning. bright stars, high mountains, the depths of the seas, sources of rushing rivers: may all these break into song as we sing to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May all the angels in the heavens reply: Amen, amen Power praise and honour, eternal glory to God the only Giver of grace Amen, Amen, Amen <i>Third century hymn</i>
Friday	28	Reflect on the damage being done by climate change, biodiversity loss and plastic pollution since you were born. What inheritance will be left for our children and grandchildren?
Saturday	29	 The earth is at the same time mother. She is mother of all that is natural, mother of all that is human. She is mother of all, for contained in her are the seeds of all. The earth of human kind contains all moistness, all verdancy, all germinating power. It is in so many ways fruitful. All creation comes from it. Yet it forms not only the basic raw material for humankind, but also the substance of the incarnation of God's son. ~ Hildegard of Bingen
Sunday	30	Almighty God - creator, shaper and sustainer of all life, And loving Father. Thank you for the forgiveness won for us by your Son – the redeemer of all creation. We receive your grace to us, and your love for us as we are. Change us now into what you would have us be – Move us to love and care for your world And make us ready to work for the good of all creation Through the love and power of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.
Monday	31	African Traditional Medicine (uMuthi) Day African Traditional Medicine Day is observed annually on August 31 in South Africa and across the continent. It honours the integral role of traditional healing, herbalism, and indigenous knowledge in providing accessible, culturally rooted healthcare to millions of people. For many South Africans - particularly in rural and underserved communities - Traditional Health Practitioners (THPs) serve as the first point of care. Official efforts are actively focused on ensuring that 

traditional medicine is properly researched, evidence-based, and safely integrated with modern medical practices.

The downside of African traditional medicine (*muthi*) is that it heavily impacts endangered and threatened species in the country. The demand for both wild plants and animals for belief-based medicine drives intense harvesting, leading to an extinction crisis for several indigenous flora and fauna.

Overharvesting for traditional medicine is threatening hundreds of South Africa's indigenous plant species. Over 2,000 plant species are used in South African traditional medicine, with an estimated 182 medicinal plant species currently listed on the IUCN Red List. About 82 species are considered at risk of extinction in the wild.



Vulnerable Species: The pepper-bark tree (*Warburgia salutaris*) - known for treating chest and sinus infections - has been heavily stripped of its bark, making it locally extinct across parts of KwaZulu-Natal. Wild ginger (*Siphonochilus aethiopicus*) has been so widely dug up for its roots that it now exists in only 10% of its historic range.

Belief-use practices and the commercial *muthi* market take a significant toll on local wildlife, including apex predators and scavengers. Vultures are highly sought after for clairvoyant purposes, bringing good luck, and warding off evil spirits. The traditional medicine trade indiscriminately targets them, driving population declines across the country. Lions, leopards, and brown hyenas are frequently hunted or poached for their derivatives - like fat, claws, and eyes - which are used for protection, power, and traditional healing. Cape clawless otter, various pangolin species and the African rock python are also highly targeted

To combat this ecological degradation, conservationists and government bodies are taking action.

Organisations like the [Endangered Wildlife Trust](#) and [SANBI](#) collaborate directly with traditional healers. By distributing seedlings and providing cultivation training, they help healers grow their own medicinal plants, drastically reducing poaching pressure on vulnerable species like the pepper-bark tree.

South Africa endeavours to protect vulnerable animals from traditional medicine (muti) through a combination of strict national legislation, the closure of captive lion bone exports, and grassroots conservation initiatives that train traditional healers to cultivate herbal alternatives instead of harvesting wild animal parts. The [Animals Protection Act](#) (primarily driven by the NSPCA, penalizes cruelty, while the [National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act \(NEMBA\)](#) strictly regulates or outlaws the trade of endangered fauna.

Global groups like [World Animal Protection](#) actively work with communities to promote the social unacceptability of exploiting wild animals, advocating for plant-based or synthetic alternatives.

Pray for those involved in regulating this sensitive issue.