

Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

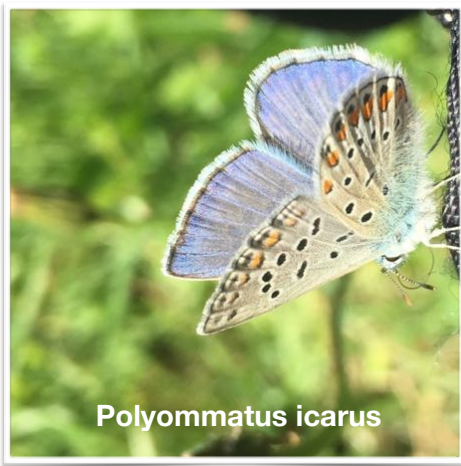
Noah was given the task by God to take all kinds of creatures into the ark of salvation so that they might live. **Psalm 36:6-10** says: "Lord, you care for people and animals alike." And Jesus lived with wild animals in the desert for 40 days. God loves everything he has created and wants to preserve it.

Biodiversity: If God cares, perhaps we should too

Our reality is different: Thousands of animal and plant species die out every year. The reasons are manifold: habitats are polluted, landscapes are cut up by roads, streams are straightened, industrial and residential areas seal the soil, and agricultural land is cultivated more intensively.

"Created out of love", that is the astonishing statement about all creatures. Every creature is a thought of God and shows the many ways in which He acts in creation. As the goal of creation, the biblical texts repeatedly say, "To live for the glory of God, to give thanks to the Creator and to include all fellow creatures in this thanksgiving".

The Bible says in many places that all creatures should praise the Creator, including the trees in the forest and the wild animals. Created together with all creatures, man is included in the web of life. Dependant on plants and animals, we are appointed to be shepherds, to provide fresh water and green pasture. And so man has responsibility for his fellow creatures, that they are not exterminated, that they can keep their habitats, that a fair balance takes place between the rights of man and the rest of



Polyommatus icarus

creation. Created with all creatures means: living in reverence for all that God has created and wants to preserve. If we forget this, we destroy our own livelihoods.

Christians in Europe can do their part to preserve biodiversity by creating habitats for animals and plants in their churches and on their properties. Churches can also demand that the guidelines for preserving diversity are implemented. Much is already being done in Christian networks, such as www.arocha.org and www.ecen.org, with expertise and projects, theological reflection and new liturgies and prayers.

The EU wants to stem the dramatic loss of species with directives: The Fauna-Flora-Habitat, the Birds and the Water Framework Directives. All very comprehensive pieces of legislation, but unfortunately, implementation is lagging far behind. New targets and measures are set for 2030: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en

Intercession:

- We ask for a new gratitude for God's creatures, wonder at the many marvels (think of the flight of birds) and respect for their habitats.
- We ask that churches, municipalities and countries recognise the urgency of protection and take action.
- Pray also for the UN conference on biodiversity, which meets between the 7th to 19th December 2022, in Montreal/Canada. The aim: To Protect 30% of oceans and land till 2030.

This is the last issue of the Canopy before Christmas.

We want to thank you all for your support and prayers throughout this year. Who would have thought at the start of this year that there would be another major conflict in Europe or that we all would be facing a winter of rising energy costs and a cost of living crisis? As an editorial team we have faced the loss of a spiritual father in Ortwin Schweitzer and many of us have also had to come to terms with changing personal situations. In all this we can see the continuing and great need for prayer on our continent. We will be back in your inboxes in January and trust that you will be once again willing to take up the call to pray regularly for Europe. It just remains for us to say thank you to our readers and also to our contributors and to wish you all a blessed Christmas and a New Year full of His Grace.

Additional Prayer Points:-

1. Let us pray for Italy as it continues to face the economic and social consequences of a dramatic fall in the birth rate.
2. Let us pray for EU ministers to find a way to release an important aid package to Ukraine, currently blocked by a Hungarian veto.

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