



INTRODUCTION TO
RESOURCES FOR
Celebrating a
Catholic Season
of Creation During
September





The core pages of this book are a Resource made up of 36 pages of materials to help celebrate September as a *Catholic Season of Creation*.

The Resource is divided into *eighteen two-page collections*. Each of the two pages offers suggestions for praying the designated Scriptural Readings of a particular Sundays in September with environmental awareness. These core pages cover eighteen Sundays to allow for the changing readings in the different liturgical years A, B and C.

The two-page September Resources follow a set schema. Each begins with extracts from the designated Scripture readings of the Catholic Lectionary for a particular Sunday. These Scriptural extracts are to be read with ecological eyes as the starting point to draw out implications concerning creation. They indicate 1/ a grace to remember about God's outpouring of love in creation and 2/ what to give thanks for. They 3/ offer a basis for intercessions.

As background to the Scriptural insights remembering God's blessings for each Sunday, the Resource has a number of short paragraphs to support liturgical preparations. The paragraphs are reminders about the breath of the Catholic tradition, past and emerging.

These two page collections were prepared particularly for the benefit of the priest-celebrant of the Sunday Mass. The role of the priest is key to the flow of the celebration, its tone and message. The collections give a framework for cooperation between the priest and those helping to prepare the Sunday liturgy.

First, the flow of the Eucharistic liturgy largely depends on how the celebrant enhances the flow of the Mass as outlined in the Missal. Commentators, readers, composers of the Prayers of the Faithful, choir leader, ushers, servers and those preparing the space all have important roles to play in working with the celebrant to fill out the flow of the Missal. However, these roles are carried through most effectively when the Sunday liturgy is prepared in collaboration with the celebrant. It promotes participation of all the faithful in a structured way.

Second, the tone and message of the Eucharistic celebration depends in many ways on the celebrant. According to the Instructions in the Missal itself, the priest has the leeway and even the duty to adapt the initial greetings to the needs of a particular congregation. For example, pro-forma suggested greetings are just that. The celebrant has a strict duty to prepare a homily that applies the designated Sunday Scriptural readings for the spiritual uplift of the congregation leading to suggestions for daily Gospel living. Pope Francis spelt out this duty in great detail in his 2014 *Exhortation on Mission* #135-159.

The aim of the suggestions in this Resource is to introduce ideas and various starting points to help draw out implications for the congregation's sense of belonging on our common home, Earth.

Sunday liturgy planners and the celebrant can weave Resource suggestions into the Mass or homily in any way they like as a way of helping bring to life the environmental encyclical of Pope Francis *Laudato Si'* (LS). Teachers can adapt these suggestion into weekday liturgies. Flexibility is called for. In creating these two page collections some guidelines were followed.



Some guidelines for creating a Catholic Season of Creation Resource:

- 1 CREATION** – with the world in environmental crisis, a pastoral need arises to systematically help Catholics to address the crisis in prayer, and Sunday offers the best framework to build on.
- 2 CATHOLIC SEASON OF CREATION** – it is called Catholic to avoid confusion with existing Protestant schemas and emerging Orthodox ones.
- 3 SEPTEMBER** – the Season will run for the four Sundays of September each year. This aligns with Protestant schemas. It also aligns with the Orthodox liturgical calendar which begins 1 September. Some communities finish celebrations on the Feast of St Francis 4 October.
- 4 EXISTING CATHOLIC LECTIONARY** – so as not to create a break with the present Catholic liturgical cycle, the existing Lectionary is taken as the guiding spirit for each Sunday. The designated readings set the tone and grace to be remembered in relation to creation.
- 5 18 SUNDAYS YEARS A,B, AND C** – while the Season runs for only four Sundays of September in any one calendar year, the liturgical year fluctuates over six Sundays. Resource suggestions have been prepared for six possible sets of Readings for the Years A, B and C thus adding up to 18 Sundays.
- 6 GRACE TO CELEBRATE RATHER THAN THEME** – Liturgy remembers God's action in prayer. To focus on 'the theme' of a moral response to a crisis, environmental or other, could turn the liturgy into an educational session 'about' or even become a campaign slogan. The Eucharist itself supplies the primary model: remembrance leading to offering thanks and intercession.
- 7 BREADTH OF GRACES** - God's grace is active in both the goodness of creation and in addressing human abuse of creation. An emphasis on the 'nice' parts of creation is not enough. Remembrance of God's graces in the totality of creation history leads humanity to feel grief and lament for abuses, to ask for forgiveness and guidance to heal. The God-Earth-Humanity relationship is the touch stone (LS #66).

Format of the Resources

Side One

- Names the Sunday of the Liturgical Year
- Identifies a Grace to celebrate inspired by the Sunday Scripture
- Excerpts from the Sunday Prayers and Lectionary
- Introduction and Dismissal suggestions
- Prayers of the Faithful suggestions inspired by the Readings and *Laudato Si'*
- Season of Creation as a liturgical period explained
- Hymn suggestions connecting the Readings with creation (cf. *As One Voice Vol II*)
- Action: What can I do?
- Quotations from *Laudato Si'*

Side Two

- Covenant reflection focusing on God's loving action in creation as salvation history
- Saints and Champions as examples of people spiritually inspired by creation
- Mysticism styles that support creation spirituality
- Ecological Insight to help in learning from science
- Poem to exemplify Australian place and culture
- Quotations from *Laudato Si'*.



¹ A set date for Easter might solve this problem. It would also be the opportunity for a more radical 21st century liturgical renewal in which the Lectionary was rewritten (cf Appendix).

² The style for the Prayers of the Faithful has been amplified for pastoral relevance. The grace of the petition in first named. An action of God is remembered as the basis on which to make intercession. This feature is added from the General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours to petition 'drawn out of praise (#179). The content of the petitions is informed by the Instruction to the Missal and the phrase integral ecology as taught by Pope Francis. There needs to be a pause for silent prayer before ... we pray.

THIRSTING FOR GOD

My soul is thirsting for you my God Ps 62

READ THE LECTIONARY ECOLOGICALLY

[Jr 20; Ps 62; Rm 12; Mt 16]

*You have seduced me Lord
I will bless you all my life
Dry, weary land without water
In the shadow of your wings I rejoice
Offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice
Modelled by your new mind
Enlighten the eyes of our heart
Destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer
The way you think is not God's way but man's
Take up his cross and follow me
What offer in exchange for life*

GREETING

Today's Scripture tells how the will of God works in our lives. Earth's cycles of life and death, rebirth and transformation are God's first teaching. Have we rebelled against God's ways?

the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour. ... The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #6

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

1. Water - God gave water as a sign of refreshment and the baptismal sign of new life in Jesus. That our Church promote the UN resolution that clean water be recognised as a human right ... we pray
2. Public Life - The public life of Jesus ran over three years. That we let the Spirit guide us and our nation into transitions of goodness for all generations ... we pray
3. Ridicule - Jesus was scorned. That our parish not be deterred by ridicule as it publicly campaigns for Earth Care in service of the Risen Christ ... we pray
4. Crosses - Jesus went willingly up to Jerusalem accepting the Cross. That we grow the clarity of mind and courage of spirit to thirst for the revolutionary way of Jesus in our lives ... we pray
5. Care - All good comes from a faithful God. That we support workers who sacrifice themselves to care for people on the margins of society and for Earth as our common home ... we pray
6. Inquisitive – God led his People to search and plan. That believers appreciate the inquisitive minds of scientists who expand human knowledge ... we pray

DISMISSAL

The bread of life has strengthened us for our journey to do what is good for ourselves, for those we meet and the Earth community which upholds us. We go forth as part of God's cycles of life.

SEASON OF CREATION

Education offices in Australia have produced On Holy Ground as a framework for school teachers. Students are led to meditation, to pray and celebrate communal liturgy around creation. Prayer is integral to the schema. It is like water for the thirsty. In the spirit of the early Church theologians, On Holy Ground affirms that creation is good (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons). It helps all believers avoid the mistake of the Gnostics, repeated in most heresies, who fled from the world as evil. On Holy Ground gives a framework of values not only to children but to all Catholics, a solid base for their communal liturgy celebrating the goodness of the total Earth community. www.catholicearthcare.org.au

Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #12

HYMNS

1. Seek, O seek the Lord
2. Psalm 42: My Soul Is Thirsting
3. A new heart for a new world
4. Open my eyes
5. Bring forth the Kingdom



WHAT CAN I DO?

- Learn what bio-diversity means
- Find out how 'nature conservancy' groups function
- Join a Land or Beach Care group

the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #48

COVENANT

God constantly acts in the universe creating a 'History Covenant'. It extends over cosmic, geological and human time scales.

God tells Job in no uncertain terms that setting the planets in space and the Earth on its foundation are all works of God (Jb Chs 28-40). Salvation History for the People of God runs from stories about Abraham and his descendants, judges and kings, prophets and priests until its fulfilment in Jesus the Christ (Mk 1:9-11). It is both human history and personal journey. The history of Israel became a spiritual journey with God at its side (Ps 46:1-4). Called to endure trials and fight the good fight people should not become obsessed with worry about what they need for life but trust the providence and faithfulness of God (1Tm 6:12). Earth and history is the stage where salvation and life to the full is played out (Mt 6:25-34).

CHAMPIONS AND SAINTS

Archbishop Bartholomew I of Constantinople, Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, was born on the island of Imbros in 1940. Part of his studies was at Catholic colleges in Rome. He became the leader of Orthodox Christians worldwide as 'first among equals'. His tenure has been characterized by dialogue and his initiatives to promote protection of the environment, earning him the title The Green Patriarch. He declared environmental abuse as a sin. He first focused on the ecological death of the Black Sea from pollution and overfishing. He has inspired many water-projects worldwide to care for rivers, lakes and sea. He is a friend of Pope Francis and Australian Fr John Chryssavgis is his theological advisor.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFpXuwmlIBe>

If a mistaken understanding of our own principles has at times led us to justify mistreating nature ... , we believers should acknowledge that by so doing we were not faithful to the treasures of wisdom

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #200



MYSTICISM

Mystical union with God and all creation was the aspiration of many saints. They thirsted for this union. Phrases from the poems of the Irish hermit Marban express something of this union – for I inhabit a wood unknown but to my God ... women disguise as blackbirds talk their word from the gable... for music I have pines. A householder absorbed in his garden, a farmer looking over her fields, a fisher immersed in ocean waves: each experience a feeling of wonder. The natural world is a place where mystics find God and their Earth kin. Their experiences blossom in poems and singing.

ECOLOGICAL INSIGHT

Environmental education strengthens the ecological literacy of individuals and society. A bio or eco-centric view offers a paradigm, an overarching story - human systems are nestled within natural systems. In one interconnected Earth community all species are seen as kin and community, respected and loved. Environmental education equips human communities to sustain and enhance this link, cultivating a deep sense of moral responsibility towards all parts of Earth. Instead of degrading natural systems, it invites humanity to make lifestyle choices that grow ecological sustainability. The whole Earth community is on a trajectory of growth.

http://www.jsedimensions.org/wordpress/content/awareness-to-action-the-journey-toward-a-deeper-ecological-literacy_2013_05/

LOCAL CULTURE

A 'bush', country or coastal background has helped forge the Australian culture and language, even for city dwellers. Poets capture these cultural characteristics. The forest, wilderness and oceans give images to express both the reality of place for Australians and common yearnings. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4473&context=theses>

*I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of rugged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.*

Dorothea Mackellar My Country

<http://www.dorotheamackellar.com.au/archive/mycountry.htm>

HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS

Listen to his voice, harden not your hearts Ps 94

READ THE LECTIONARY ECOLOGICALLY

[Ez 33; Ps 94; Rm 13; Mt 18]

*Appointed you as sentry
Warn them in my name
Listen to his voice
Harden not your hearts
Kneel before the God who made us
They tried me even though they saw my work
Love your neighbour as yourself
News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us
Go and have it out with him
Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there
The evidence of two or three witnesses.*

GREETING

Today the Readings remind us that where two or three gather, God is there guiding us. We ask forgiveness for the times we have ignored the advice of others and hardened our hearts.

recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change ... We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #218

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

1. Truth - God is truth. That our Church recognise the witness of climate scientists and publicly oppose those who sow doubt in people's minds ... we pray
2. Reconciliation – In Jesus God gives the power to be reconciled. That as a nation of migrants, we replace fear and ridicule of migrants with outreach and listening ... we pray
3. Virtue – Like trees covering the land, God clothed the Chosen People with teachings from Moses. That our parish live out its baptismal calling and ecological vocation with integrity ... We pray
4. Debt - God favours the oppressed. That we campaign to cancel the debt of nations lured into unsustainable development that turns their people into environmental refugees ... We pray
5. Universe – God scolded Job for not seeing the Creator's handy work in the Universe. That we care for oceans and forests as habitat for God given plant and animal communities, our kin ... We pray
6. Doubt – God led his People in gradual steps. That we be open to the provisional findings of scientists and not condemn their guarded findings and doubts ... We pray

DISMISSAL

God has drawn us into diverse cycles of life as part of many communities. We go forth to find God given life in all creation, speaking of them in the words of St Francis as brother and sister.

SEASON OF CREATION

Rev Dr Norman Habel inspired an ecumenical group in Adelaide to create a Season of Creation for worship during September. The group married Scripture with scientific insights to rediscover the hidden voice of the Earth in the Bible. It softened hearts. To underpin communal liturgical prayer, the group developed a new three year cycle of Scriptural Readings. Four Sundays are theologically themed to in turn address creation, alienation, passion and new creation. A preaching commentary was written. <http://seasonofcreation.com>

The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #2

HYMNS

1. For the fruits of this creation
2. Psalm 95: If today you hear his voice
3. I heard the voice of Jesus say
4. A new commandment I give unto you
5. Amazing grace

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Learn some facts about global warming
- Learn the Young Christian Workers' method of See-Judge-Act campaigning
- Make a list of environmental websites

COVENANT

In salvation history God looks with favour on the lowly, not the hard hearted. The female side of God's activity is powerfully expressed in the Magnificat of the 'Mary Covenant' (Lk 1:46-55). Jesus taught through female images of God as he compared himself to a hen gathering her chicks (Mt 23:37-38). Paul likens setting up Church communities to giving birth (Ga.4:19). Women were prominent in God's economy of salvation. Deborah was a leader (Jdt 4:4-9) and mother to Israel singing a worship hymn (Jdt 5:7-13). Judith counselled the elders not to put God to the test (Jdt 8:11-17) and Huldah the female prophet called for repentance (2 K 22:15-20). Mary Magdalene is sent by Jesus as a messenger to the disciples (Jn 20:17) while Phoebe and other women were deaconesses among the apostles (Rm 16:1)..

CHAMPIONS AND SAINTS

The Dalai Lama is a leader among Tibetan Buddhists. Formed in prayer and studies as a monk, he assumed political leadership before he escaped Chinese control to go into exile. He became a wanderer for peace, embracing dialogue and preaching non-violence. A similar spirit of dialogue has helped create a Sydney based Faith and Ecology Network (FEN). The inter-faith group uses the common language of ecology. FEN promotes a change of heart in its members by helping them tease out their own tradition. Starting with scientific insights, it runs public information sessions to show ways of human living as part of the total Earth community and taking responsibility for its care. <http://www.faithecolony.net.au/>

(Mary Mother of God) grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #241

MYSTICISM

Combining the insights of ecology and scriptural scholarship helps reveal depths of spirituality in the Lord's Prayer. Vicky Balabanski writes that the Our Father is like a window into Christian living - its petitions are about bread, debt and our being put on trial. Earth is our focus if we believe all people and species need food; our overuse of Earth resources puts us into a debt which must be paid; un-serviceable loans and over-development test nature's life support systems has the Planet charge us with abuse. The mysticism of the Our Father embraces Earth. Readings from the Perspective of Earth p151, ed. N C Habel, 2000.

ECOLOGICAL INSIGHT

The CSIRO has been an iconic research unit in Australia for nearly a century. The breadth of its work into atmosphere and land, rivers and oceans, and the multitude of animals and plants living there has been a 'work of love' for thousands of scientists. Not only does CSIRO science expose how nature's systems come under pressure from misguided human activities, it explores ways forward. It applies science to help grow an ecologically sustainable future for this and future generations while preserving economic and social benefits for people now. This forms a solid base for ethics and hope filled responses. www.csiro.au



LOCAL CULTURE

Land helps form people. The Murray-Darling River Basin in the interior of southeastern Australia is twice the size of France. Over millennia it has nourished Aborigines and later foreign settlers, helping mold their cultures. The Basin depends on flows from mountains in its eastern rim but its rich soils helped form four States and their towns. These river flows are now under treat from excessive use of water by industrial scale farming and mining. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray%E2%80%93Darling_basin

*It is your land of smiles: the wattle
Scatters its pollen on the doubting heart;
The flowers are wide awake; the air gives ease.*

James McAuley Terra Australis
<http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/mcauley-james/terra-australis-0151014>

The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #204

KINDNESS AND MERCY

The Lord is kind and merciful Ps 102

READ THE LECTIONARY ECOLOGICALLY

[Si 27; Ps 102; Rm 14; Mt 18]

Remember the last things and stop hating

When you pray your sins will be forgiven

Never forget all God's blessings

The Lord is kind and merciful

As the heavens are high above Earth so is his love

The life and death of each of us has its influence

Love one another as I have loved you

How often must I forgive my brother?

I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me.

GREETING

Today, we celebrate the grace of God loving us into existence and giving Earth as our home. As we come to worship, we ask forgiveness for the times we have failed to forgive the people around us.

Bartholomew ... asks us to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing, an asceticism which "entails learning to give, and not simply to give up.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #9

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

1. Share - God cares for this and future generations. That our Church promote the fair distribution of Earth's resources and foster reconciliation among warring factions ... we pray
2. Technology – God willed the evolving design of our world. That our nation be cautious in adopting bio-technologies that harm nature, farmers and consumers alike ... we pray
3. Ecological migrants – God gave land to the people of Israel when they were starving. That our local community welcome eco-refugees and confront the human causes of climate change ... we pray
4. Sustainable – God called humanity to be co-creators. That we create sustainable rural and urban communities with jobs for young people, to give hope and prevent suicides ... we pray
5. Forgive - Jesus showed that forgiveness renews lives. That we forgive ourselves for our misuse of fossil-fuels and resolve to grow alternative energy sources ... we pray
6. Application – God led the People of Israel to apply the Law in their lives. That we encourage lawmakers to quickly apply proven scientific findings ... we pray

DISMISSAL

God has given us the power to forgive, let us go forth on our mission to be signs of reconciliation, showing care for people and Earth as the common home of all creatures.

SEASON OF CREATION

The Introduction to the Missal is a rich source of theology. The entire Eucharistic celebration is planned in such a way that it leads to conscious, active and full participation of the faithful. In body and in mind believers can burn with faith, hope, and charity #18. Believers remember the loving kindness of God as they use material things in prayerful actions to convey sacred mysteries - signs and symbols. The water of baptism and oils of anointing; bread and wine bringing spiritual nourishment: these are all gifts of Earth and work of human hands.

HYMNS

1. All creatures of our God and King
2. Ubi Caritas (Taize)
3. The Beatitudes
4. A new heart for a new world
5. Shine, Jesus Shine

Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #13

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Review the ecological impact of your life-style
- Grow herbs and vegetables at home.
- Visit a local community garden

COVENANT

God created a home for his people in a 'Land Covenant'. Jesus chided the Jewish leaders for not being faithful to the covenant God formed with their ancestors (Mt 15:1-9). The story of Adam and Eve exiled from the Garden to become wanderers, and their descendants after them, sets the scene (Gn 3:23). Through loving kindness God had won the hearts and minds of a landless-migrant people, giving them a place to live and belong as the descendants of Abraham (Gn 12:1-3). The migrations of the People of God through many lands forged a spiritual language that spoke of God in terms of belonging to a place and enjoying its natural gifts. Later exiled in Egypt, God freed the people (Ex 3:7-8). David sings the story (2 S 23:3-5). Later when they were exiled captives weeping in Babylon (Ps 137:4) through Queen Ester God returned them home to their own land (Ze 8:7-8). Jesus widens the vision to embrace the universal Reign of God (Mt 16:5-12).



The Catechism firmly states that human power has limits and that “it is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly”.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #130

CHAMPIONS AND SAINTS

History tells that on every continent when famine struck following climate changes it helped drive waves of people to migrate. Right into the 21st century, environmental migrations are causing huge social and economic upheaval. Faced with poverty, overpopulation, war, persecution, repression or drawn by hope filled visions, many forebears of Australians arrived in this land as migrants. In the 1880s Charoline Chisolm worked to find jobs for young migrants. Today the Pacific Calling Partnership helps lobby for people whose island homes are being swamped by rising sea levels.. <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/chisolm-caroline-1894> <http://www.erc.org.au/>

MYSTICISM

Jesus being freed from death was the physical sign of our being freed from sin. Liberation was the first fruit of the Resurrection. Some Asian Churches call Easter Liberation Day. The Chosen People were freed from slavery in Egypt. A modern spirituality of liberation (Gustavo Gutierrez) underpinned Church mission that opposed economic security state dictators in Latin America, South Korea and the Philippines. A similar spirituality has black people and women seeking liberation. Economist Susan George fought for poor nations to be freed from life sapping international debt. Pope Francis calls for liberation from the tyranny of economics and consumerist lifestyles.

ECOLOGICAL INSIGHT

Ecological scientists and environmental activists are often accused of neglecting people. This is a rash charge. Many fully support the insight that to care for Earth is to care for the poor. Credible scientists hold that the ecologically sustainable use of water and oceans, agricultural land and forests is the only way to protect the rights of vulnerable people and future generations. Scientists call for long term planning rather than short term profits. The word 'development' is increasingly replacing the word 'ecological' when addressing sustainability. This tyrannical economic takeover of the word poses a danger. <https://www.environment.gov.au/about-us/esd/publications/national-esd-strategy-part1>



actions can restore our sense of self-esteem; they can enable us to live more fully and to feel that life on Earth is worthwhile

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #212

LOCAL CULTURE

Many women say they seek liberation rather than equality with men. Germaine Greer is one who writes against agreeing to live the lives of unfree men. Women's liberation means asserting difference and self-definition. It is the struggle to define their own values and order their own priorities.

*Thy love I am. Thy wife I cannot be,
To wear the yoke of servitude – to take
Strange, unknown fetters that I cannot break
On soul and flesh that should be mine, and free.
Ada Cambridge An Answer*

<http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/cambridge-ada/answer-0021037>

NEAR TO ALL WHO CALL

Near to all who call Ps 144

READ LECTIONARY ECOLOGICALLY

[Is 55, Ps 144, Ph 1, Mt 20]

*Guide us as you guide creation ... law of love
My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways not your ways
The Lord is near to all who call
How good is the Lord ... compassionate to all
Avoid anything unworthy of the gospel of Christ
The kingdom of God is like a landowner
Why be envious because I am generous?
These gifts become for us the Eucharist of Jesus
Put into action the saving mystery we celebrate.*

Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he [Francis of Assisi] would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #11

GREETING

The Readings invite us to remember that God is near and like the generous landowner who gives equally to all his workers. We ask forgiveness for taking for granted the gift of country and the people surrounding us.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

1. Signs - The Earth itself is a sign that God is near and compassionate. That our Church express gratitude to the scientists who help reveal our closeness to all Earth complexities ... we pray
2. Desert lands – The people of Israel dreamt of sitting beside rivers in the desert. That our national economic dreams of irrigated lands not lead to ecological vandalism ... we pray
3. Presence – God as Creator willed a diversity of species evolve to inhabit land and sea. That we learn from native people to enjoy their presence and protect their habitats ... we pray
4. Equinox - The Equinox shows the new life of spring and the maturity of autumn. That us read God's message in the seasons and monitor the rhythm of our lives ... we pray
5. Beauty - God gladdens our hearts with the beauty of wilderness. That we grow ways for disadvantaged young people to experience first-hand Earth's wonders ... we pray
6. Material world – God led his People to love their land. That we rejoice with scientists who love the material world and explain it with respect ... we pray

DISMISSAL

We have celebrated God-given power to be generous rather than grasping. Let us go forth on our mission to appreciate the land where we live and all people who share it.

SEASON OF CREATION

Six Eco-justice Principles help create a framework for advancing a creation time of prayer (Readings from the Perspective of Earth ed. NC Habel 2000, Pilgrim Press).

1. Intrinsic worth: the Earth and all its parts have value - not a place of 'exile'.
2. Interconnectedness: a community of mutually dependent life - not merely for 'human benefit'.
3. Voice: Earth can raise its voice in celebration and against injustice - not a 'passive object'.
4. Purpose: a dynamic cosmic design where all parts contribute to a goal - not 'aimless'.
5. Mutual Custodianship: parts function as partners to sustain diversity - not 'rulers'.
6. Resistance: Earth actively resists abuse - not a passive 'helpless victim'.

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #91

HYMNS

1. For the beauty of the Earth
2. Bless the Lord, my soul (Taize)
3. In faith and hope and love
4. Peace I leave with you, my friends
5. Though the mountains may fall



contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God's grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #234

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Introduce Catholic Earthcare during Sunday Mass.
- Inquire if Catholic Schools teach ecology.
- Explore resources on the US Catholic Bishops eco-web site www.catholicclimatecovenant.org

COVENANT

God acted in the Spirit hovering over the void (Gn 1:1-2) to grow Earth and creatures that were very good (Gn 1:31). The history of the People of God is one of adaptation as it moved across deserts, the fertile Egyptian delta to finally settle in the lands of Palestine. The nature parables of Jesus about the mustard seed sprouting and the yeast multiplying can be taken as images of an 'Evolution Covenant' (Lk 13:18-21). God is author of all Earth processes. Jesus was familiar with the changing seasons. He used their images of change to teach, slowly growing the understanding of his followers about who are children of God by praising the faith of the pagan Canaanite woman (Mt 15:28). An evolution covenant was reinforced socially under the Holy Spirit as Church communities grew across nations (Acts 16:9-10). The Spirit challenged Peter and Paul to accept God's children outside of Israel (Ac 10:34-36). Disciples must not be deceived by the simplistic but read the signs of the times and grow (Mt 24:4-6).

CHAMPIONS AND SAINTS

St Hildegard of Bingen wrote of the Earth as Mother ... it forms not only the basic raw material for humankind but also the substance of God's Son. She formed the nuns in her Rhine River monastery in the middle ages to celebrate a verdant God in poetry and song, and to use herbs for healing the sick. Singleton Mercy Sisters remember Sister Calasactus who in the early 1950s was promoting biology studies among the novices. Her garden was thick with trees and there was a special place for plants mentioned in the Bible. Such formation helped many 'trees to bloom in the desert'.

MYSTICISM

Ecological conversion adds a new dimension to Christian mysticism. Becoming aware that Earth underpins all life systems leads to humility before God's first gift and first revelation; widens theological attitudes and stretches the moral imagination. Ecological conversion helps cultivate patient reflection in preparation for choosing a vocation. To especially nourish the Christian ecological vocation Catholic Earthcare produced the Garden Planet DVD, organised a 2005 Climate Change Conference and published Regional ecological statements. Crowned in 2015 by the environmental encyclical of Pope Francis, Care for Earth is part of Church mission and a spiritual pathway for every believer. It is not optional.

ECOLOGICAL INSIGHT

Wilderness is a particular geological area where plants and animals have evolved and flourish undisturbed by human activities. Within its dynamic structure, wilderness carries the cumulative innate wisdom in the form of genetic memory over millions of years. Humans respect and care for wilderness as a gift of the eons. It conveys a sense of the beyond. Wilderness is good for the human spirit to contemplate with love in the present and is heritage for future generations. It is not to be harmed by insensitive tourism or be the victim of untested bio-technology. www.australianwildlife.org . www.madge.org.au

LOCAL CULTURE

Being hard-hearted is different to being hard-headed. Migration to Australia has always involved trauma. Current border measures might help save lives at sea but often do not make compassion for refugees visible. Integration to grow a nation seems better than exclusion. <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/media-releases/28-new-detention-centre-a-hard-hearted-response-bishop>

*I miss you most
when I'm at sea the boat
sailing unaided on course I weep
bitter tears above the engine*

Lee Cataldi Letter

<http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/cataldi-lee/letter-0189023>

The Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #238

