

A Catholic Season of Creation – September 2015

23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time – 6th September 2015

In the beginning was the Word Jn 1:1-14

We believe in God, Creator of heaven and earth

Inspiration from Sunday Lectionary and Worship Prayers

(Isiah; Ps 145; James; Mark)

justice and mercy meet
drawn into the circle of life
have eyes to wonder
courage, God coming
blind, deaf, lame, dumb healed
waters gush in the desert
welcome stranger, widow
divisions - seek best seats
preach Good News kingdom
He has done all things well

Season of Creation

A major stimulus to creating a Season of Creation came in 1989 when Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Dimitrios 1 named the beginning of the Orthodox liturgical year, 1 September, as Creation Day.

Pope John Paul II in his 1990 New Year Message wrote that the natural world has its own integrity and nominated Francis of Assisi as the Patron Saint of the environment.

*God, maker of heaven and earth, and
the sea and all that these hold*

Ps 146:6



Greeting

Today the Readings invite us to remember and give thanks for the grace of God filling all creation – humans and the natural world together. We are challenged to be neither blind to God present in every cycle of life, human and cosmic, nor dumb to preach the Good News by the way we act. In God, justice and mercy meet, for people and the earth.

Prayers of faithful

- Creator God, you are the author of billions of years of cosmic and earth's evolution. Draw us into the full circle of your life present with us in diverse ways and connections.
- Generous God, you have created a diversity of species and peoples as our brothers and sisters. Open to us the secrets of life on earth, let us respect its full story.
- Spirit of Wisdom, may we not remain blind and dumb to finding you present in water and fertile land, and not become lame in fighting to care for it.
- In you Oh God justice and mercy meet. Drive out of us the devil of complacency so that we may re-make economic structures that abuse people and land.

Connect Justice, Peace and Care for Earth (JPIC)

Pope Francis uses the phrase 'integral ecology' and warns against a narrow scientific focus on the modern environmental crisis. Just as the theological word 'inculturation' has challenged us to embrace the riches offered by local churches, he proposes a new phrase - Integral Ecology. It might best be seen as a type of package to guide our daily living.

Focused first on Christian worship of the Creator of all, Integral Ecology has implications for choices in the human journey, our life style and values - to confront the impact of 'dictatorial economics' on the world's poor and the earth itself. The Pope invites us to revisit the integral connection between Justice, Peace and Care for Earth (JPIC).

Another View

Protestant promoters in the USA and Australia have written on Creation Time worship and produced a special set of Scripture lessons.

www.seasonofcreation.com www.webofcreation.org
They have also published a preaching commentary *The Season of Creation* (eds. Norman C Habel, David Rhoads and H Paul Santmire, Fortress Press 2011).
<https://goo.gl/leRDis>

The four Sundays in each September are theologically themed towards successively addressing creation, alienation, passion and new creation. For the first Sunday in cycle B, the Prologue of John's Gospel is chosen - a hymn of praise for Jesus as the Word of God (Jn 1:1-14).

Champions

Jesuit priest Fr Tielhard de Chardin (1881-1955) was the first Catholic in modern times to write on the links between the earth sciences and faith. As a scientist he explored the wonder of God's cosmos. As a believer in the Cosmic Christ he wrote prayers as part of developing a theology of *infatuation* with God's earth. Often misunderstood and maligned he suffered with Christ to open wider God's revelation and a fuller human vocation. <http://goo.gl/AaMYyU>



Dismissal

Along with all creation we know that God loves us. Even though humans and the natural world both groan to be set free, we can go forth from this Eucharist confident in the Gospel message about Jesus who came into this world to bring fullness of life.

Hymns

For the beauty of the Earth

From Thee all skill and science flow

www.ecocongregationscotland.org

Ecological Insights

Earth systems science covers a wide range of complex studies. Our knowledge and appreciation of the earth's cosmic systems continues to expand. These systems continually interact locally to sustain life on earth. Because they are evolving and subject to human influence, some people throw up their hands and look for simple one dimensional explanation. For others they are a reason for wonder, for some a reason to praise God.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_system_science

What can I do?

Be a local contact person for
Catholic EarthCare.

Join a local earth care group

A Catholic Season of Creation – September 2015

24th Sunday of Ordinary Time – 13th September

The first among you must be slave to all (MK 10:44)

Jesus lived, died and rose to new life

Inspiration from Sunday Lectionary and Worship Prayers

[Isiah 50; Ps 114; James 2; Mk 8]

The Creator looks to the needs of people
dignity of the poor in spirit
share the peace of Christ
opened my ears
walk in God's presence, land of the living
prove faith by deeds
glory in cross, crucified to world
your way not God's way
renounce self, lose life for Gospel



Greeting

Today the Readings invite us to remember the grace of God present in our joys and hopes, anxiety and pain, in all struggles on earth. God has shown the way for our human journey. Humbly opening our spirit, we are to walk in the land of the living and share the peace Christ brings. Our faith leads us to choose good for all people and the earth, to serve and even be willing to suffer for the Gospel.

*Global warming is the earth's
judgement on the global market
empire, and on the heedless
consumption it fosters.*

Michael Northcott *A Moral Climate 2008*

Season of Creation

Liturgical reform post-Vatican II focused on pastoral effectiveness. The gospel runs through many lands and must be localized - inculturated.

In recent decades we have grown to recognise that the Gospel River runs through a world of new ecological and cosmic awareness. This awareness seems to demand further 21st century liturgical reform based on an expanded new story of a Creator God, a cosmic story of salvation. A major new pastoral need has emerged and worshipping God in a new Season of Creation is one way forward.

Prayers of faithful

- Father, you created humans in your own likeness. As stewards within your economy of creation, help us manage for earth's long term good, all people's common home.
- Father, your messengers accepted abuse and your Son was misunderstood. Let our ways be corrected so we become authentic prophets and disciples.
- Father, you bathe us in the peace of Christ. Through promoting the good of others and your earth, may we not feel alienation but the freedom of living the Gospel.
- Father, you gave humankind the cosmos and all creatures on earth as brother and sister. May we reach out to live in joy, harmony and at peace with your gifts.

Connect Justice, Peace and Care for Earth (JPIC)

An unofficial *ethically orientated liturgical year* has emerged in some churches in modern times – Refugee Sunday, Human Rights Sunday and the like. This emphasis on ethics could distract from God as Creator. Even campaigns on environmental-justice for the world's poor or the extinction of species can become a human focused control. Further pressure for an ethical focus comes from society campaigns such as Earth Day or Earth Hour). Honouring the Creator is more than just another 'special day'. For Catholics a *Care 4 Creation Month* should not be re-moved from the liturgical life of average faith communities.



***The Bible is easy to understand.
But we Christians are a bunch of
scheming swindlers. We pretend to be
unable to understand it because we know
that the minute we understand, we are
obliged to act accordingly.***

Soren Kierkegaard

Another View

On this Sunday many communities celebrating Creation Time focus on the human vocation to be responsible stewards of within creation Mk 10:41-45. Leaders are not to lord it over either people or the earth. They are to reject the model of captains of industry who exploit the earth's natural resources and make workers into slaves. Jesus teaches that leaders are called to serve. They are called to reverse ideas of power and willingly make themselves slaves in the service of all God's creation.

Champions

Thomas Berry observed that we have changed the very chemistry of the planet, we have altered the bio-system, we have changed the topography and even the geological structure of the planet, structures and functions that have taken hundreds of millions of years and even billions of years to being into existence.

(Fr Thomas Berry CP quoted in 'On Holy Ground')

What can I do?

Does your local council use the Triple Bottom Line test?
Twin with another Parish

Dismissal

Jesus tested the leadership of Peter. Peter resisted but came to realise that the way of Jesus challenged his ideas of leadership. We go forth with new awareness of how we can be leaders in our community, serving the good of neighbours and the earth itself.

Hymns

*Lead kindly light
Come Holy Spirit*

Ecological Insights

Leadership in university studies, commerce and government now accept the triple bottom line way of judging the benefit of a project – economic, social and environmental. This has been a major breakthrough in the thinking of planners. <https://goo.gl/HIFwzv>

The Earth Charter movement suggests a fourth test, spiritual benefit. The world holds more believers in God than unbelievers. Decision makers must respect the fact that these believers carry a spiritual view of the land and sea, of diverse species and natural systems. They aspire to wonder and care.

<http://goo.gl/w0yo>



A Catholic Season of Creation – September 2015

25th Sunday of Ordinary Time – 20th September

There was darkness over the whole land Mk 15:33

Jesus will come to judge – goats? sheep?

Inspiration from Sunday Lectionary and Worship Prayers

[Wis 2; Ps 53; James 3; Mk 9)

humankind needs your law

love each other and find justice

the godless lie in wait

if of God, God will rescue

The Lord upholds life

jealousy and ambition brings disharmony

wisdom is from above

fights start with inside desires

called us with the gospel

argue on the road

first will be last

welcome me and one who sent me



Invitation

Today the Readings invite us to embrace the grace of how God brings life from death. Studies of evolutionary history have deepened our understanding of the way God has chosen to act in all natural life processes, including human evolution and history. The death of Jesus is not some payment to be made or some punishment arbitrarily imposed. Jesus shows us the importance of life and how to choose to live a life with purpose.

Season of Creation

The post-Vatican II liturgical reform is a wonderful gift to the church in our time. The new Liturgical Year and its Lectionary was a collaborative work of teams of scholars and bishops organised over a decade under Father Annibale Bugnini. It offered worshippers a deeper pastoral and communal experience of God present in the human spiritual journey.

But the task of applying this marvellous work of creative reform falls largely to liturgical leaders.

Pope Francis wrote:

The preacher also needs to keep his ear to the people and to discover what it is that the faithful need to hear. ...learns "of the aspirations, of riches and limitations, of ways of praying, of loving, of looking at life and the world.

Mission Exhortation 2013 No 154

Prayers of faithful

- Father of Jesus, our minds have grown clouded with ambition and self-indulgence, like air pollution. May we be disciples of the life-giving law of your Son.
- Father we have insulted you with our godless plots. Help us to stop persecuting campaigners for good, especially women as prophets of well-being.
- God you have rescued us with wisdom from above. May we welcome the one you have sent, his Gospel and the Pope's message of integral ecology.
- Father you want the good for all people and the earth. May we not hide behind faceless centres of control but take our part in growing the common good for earth and peoples.

The Eucharist is celebrated in order to offer on the altar of the whole Earth, the world's weak and suffering (in the beautiful words of Tielhard de Chardin).

John Paul II 1995, *Gift and Mystery*

Another View

Some churches recall the passion and death of Jesus on this Sunday in Creation time (Mk 15:33-39). They recall how when Jesus died the sky darkened. Mark has the natural world itself recognise a world-changing event.

The Bible is easy to understand. But Analysis of the lectionary reveals that a disproportionate number of passages about the women of the Bible have been omitted

<http://goo.gl/EbMMF6>

Champions

Rachel Carson (1907-1964) grew up enjoying the river near her home and later studied marine biology. A communicator, she wrote radio scripts to popularize the emerging science of ecology and was recognised as a lyric poet writing of wonder and beauty. She was alarmed by the effects of the profligate use of synthetic chemicals. In response to birds being killed off she wrote the Silent Spring in 1962. The chemical companies persecuted her. www.rachelcarson.org

What can I do?

Learn more about air pollution in the Hunter Valley NSW

Learn more about pollution in road tunnels

Connect Justice, Peace and Care for Earth (JPIC)

Ecumenical dialogue among Christians and dialogue with peoples of other faiths benefit us in our common search to find God. The climate change crisis opens up the new arena of respectful dialogue with scientists and puts us in a better position to serve both humanity and the earth as our common home. Such dialogue is good pastoral practice and makes for better witness.



Dismissal

We go from this celebration with a new understanding of suffering and death. The human is called to knowingly enter many cycles of death and new life. The life cycle of every species acts in God's name to guide us.

Ecological Insights

We are called to understand natural cycles of air currents, heat and cold, air pollution. Without this knowledge we are prone to those who lie for political or economic benefit. www.cawcr.gov.au

As Australians we are called to have special care for our poorer Pacific neighbours. As a result of elevated atmospheric carbon, the intensity of cyclones increases; sea levels rise inundating small islands; and acid seas that melt the shells of small sea creatures, often the food of the poor.

www.pacificclimatechangescience.org

A Catholic Season of Creation – September 2015

26th Sunday of Ordinary Time – 27th September

Go out to the whole world Mk 16:16

God comes to judge the living and the dead

Inspiration from Sunday Lectionary and Worship Prayers

[Num 11; Ps 18; James 5; Mk 9]

beauty in your power of love,
proclaim the kingdom to all we meet
that all people prophesy
law gives joy to the heart
rich weep, possessions corrode
cheated labourer of wages
went on living life of luxury
Your word truth, make holy in truth
if hand-eye-feet a scandal

Season of Creation

The word 'theme' often used in developing Creation liturgies sets a mistaken tone. It has an educational ring to it or even that of a campaign slogan. Remembering a grace and giving thanks is a better liturgical approach - celebrate the grace given by God in the ongoing acts of creation over billions of years.

Rather than 'about' creation, a new liturgical season might be better seen as a time 'for' creation - celebration, not education.

*It is most desirable that the faithful,
just as the priest himself is bound to
do, receive the Lord's Body from hosts
consecrated at the same Mass*

Sacramentary No 85



Greeting

Today the Readings invite us to remember the grace to be transformed. Our luxurious life style often rests on the back of slave-like labourers cheated of their wages, or soils and waters exploited to ecological ruin. These evils might happen in other lands and removed from our sight but the truth of God's word helps us to ponder and change our ways.

Prayers of faithful

- Holy Trinity, source of all goodness, may we never not stop trying to do good for members of our human and earth communities, becoming holy as you are holy.
- Holy Trinity, leader of your people through every age, may we reject the allure of corroding consumerism to be witness to new life by our service in your name.
- Holy Trinity, you sent prophets to challenge your people. May we listen to the prophecy of ecological scientists and social workers becoming prophets of truth for our times.
- Holy Trinity, you rise up saints in every age, humble and dedicated to witnessing to your goodness. Lead us to join your church saints and secular heroes.

Connect Justice, Peace and Care for Earth (JPIC)

In the 21st century as an age of growing ecological awareness, the time has come for believers to give knowing and active witness to a new awareness of the thirteen billion years unfolding the Reign of God; witness to the mystery of God present in creating the entire cosmos.

Initiatives taken in many church to insert a Season of Creation into the Liturgical Year springs primarily from the need for a structural way to help Christian communities better acknowledge the first article of the creed, God as Creator. We proclaim and dialogue with all about God's ongoing deeds in creation.

Dismissal

The way we live must never become a scandal for others. Graced by God we can live in the truth preached by His Son Jesus. We can go forth confident that the Gospel will guide us to choose a lifestyle that is good for ourselves, the planet and future generations. We are called to evangelise by the way we live.

Hymns

*Though the mountains may fall
Go to the mountain of the Lord*

Champions

We remember with thanks the Sisters and Brothers who led the way in bringing science education into Catholic schools. Leaders such as Singleton Mercy Sr Calasantus promoted biology studies among the novices at the beginning of the 1950s. Her garden was thick with trees and she gave a special place to plants mentioned in the Bible. Religious remain as models for ecological conversion and leaders for our ecological vocation.

Catholics and Nature ACSJC Series No.57

Another View

Go, preach the Gospel to all nations is the ringing commission given to the disciples at the end of Mark's Gospel. The account of the Risen Jesus sending the Eleven to proclaim the Good News to all creation is the focus in many churches for this last Sunday of Creation Time (Mk 16:16).

It is of note that Jesus appears to the disciples while they were at table, that is, while they were celebrating the Eucharist. During that holy meal Jesus both reproached and gave them a mission to go to all the nations. He sent them off with power and confirmed their work by the signs that accompanied them



Ecological Insights

To grow in appreciation of the diverse gifts of the natural world is a primary aim of many UN Environmental Programs. They detail the life cycles of species and the conditions under which they flourish. They invite us wonder and as believers to give thanks. The Programs also detail the threats to the life cycles of many species, especially human induced threats. They invite us to care and protect as as believers we can act in God's name.

<http://goo.gl/tsGHji>

<http://goo.gl/QJfOCR>

What can I do?

Grow herbs and vegetables at home.
Visit a farmers food market