

# A Catholic Season of Creation – Sundays in September

## 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time – September 21<sup>st</sup> 2014

### NO. 3

### Wilderness

*I will plant trees in the barren desert*

Isaiah 41:19

*My mother's land can be dry and harsh. Yet every cluster of rocks, is sacred – every feature.*

Maisie Cavanagh  
(used with permission)

### Hymns

Songs of Creation puts ecologically aware words to familiar hymns and challenges us to try.

[www.willowconnection.com.au](http://www.willowconnection.com.au)

- Song of the Wild
- Be still and feel the Presence
- For this Great Sunburnt Land

### Dismissal

Remembering that God's law of love guides us on our journey and having celebrated God-given power to be generous, let us go forth on our mission to appreciate the land where we live. May we be living signs of giving rather than grasping, sharing the earth with other people and the wildlife which St Francis called our brothers and sisters.

### Greeting

Today the Readings invite us to celebrate the grace of being led by God's law of love. God's thoughts are often not ours. Jesus tells the story of the generous landowner who gives equally to all his workers. The land itself, wild parts and settled areas, is an ever present sign of God's generosity. We ask forgiveness for the times we have taken the gift of country for granted and the gift of the people surrounding us.

### Prayers of the Faithful

- That we will seek out the spiritual depths of the natural world and be grateful to the scientists who help reveal it to us.
- That we will act to conserve the diversity of species in our country by protecting the diverse habitats that nurture them.
- That we will support government expenditure on ecological research to preserve the gift of wilderness for this and future generations.

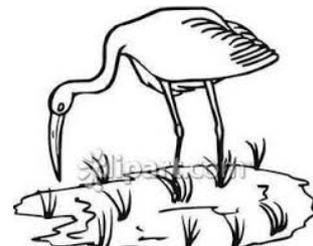
### Lectionary and Worship Phrases (Is, Ps 144, Phil, Mt)

Guide us as you guide creation according to your law of love  
All humanity is in need of your law

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 creatures  
The kingdom of God is like a landowner  
Why be envious because I am generous?  
May these gifts become for us the Eucharist of Jesus Christ

May we put into action the saving mystery we celebrate.



According to St Thomas Aquinas and St Bonaventure, the diversity of species represents the wonder and beauty of God that transcends any one creature.

'The Gift of Water' 2004, quoted on  
On Holy Ground p12

### Season of Creation

The Season of Creation runs during the Sundays of September. Scripture scholars drew on social justice principles. <http://seasonofcreation.com>

Much injustice in western cultures sprang from dualistic philosophy - reason/feeling; civilised/primitive; sacred/profane. Six Eco-justice Principles were created (Readings from the Perspective of Earth ed. NC Habel 2000, *Pilgrim Press*) - a summary:

1. Intrinsic worth – the earth and all its parts has value, not a place of 'exile'.
2. Interconnectedness – a community of mutually dependent life, not merely for our 'use and benefit'.
3. Voice – earth can raise its voice in celebration and against injustice, not a 'passive object'.
4. Purpose – a dynamic cosmic design with all parts contributing to a goal, not aimless.
5. Mutual Custodianship – responsible custodians function as partners to sustain a balanced diversity, not 'rulers'.
6. Resistance – earth actively resists abuse, not a passive 'helpless victim'.

## Connecting Justice, Peace and Care for Earth (JPIC)

Columban JPIC believes that there is an intimate connection between the action of social justice, growing peace and care for earth. We cannot properly work for one without caring for all three of Connections. [www.columban.org.au](http://www.columban.org.au)

Long term harm can be done through bio-technology. [www.madge.org.au](http://www.madge.org.au) Planned conservation benefits Aboriginal peoples, rural communities, tourism and food for the spirit.

ABC clips: *The Wild West* 25 May 2014; *Battle for Pagoda Country* 2 May 2014 [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)

Francis of Assisi - For me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation; these days we do not have a very good relationship with creation, do we?

Pope Francis Audience with Media 16.03.13

There are other weak and defenceless beings who are frequently at the mercy of economic interests or indiscriminate exploitation. I am speaking of creation as a whole. We human beings are not only the beneficiaries but also the stewards of other creatures.

Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel #215

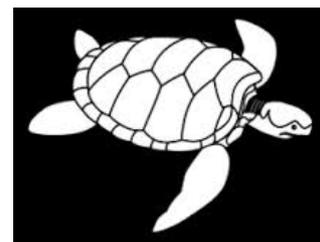
## Lectionary's Hidden Voices

Saying *Mother Earth* is a common way of speaking for indigenous peoples. The metaphor captures the reality that the earth embraces and nurtures us, is resilient and persists in caring for us. We must not forget the stories of nurturing and courageous women in the Scriptures.

The midwives Shiphrah and Puah defied the pharaoh's law (Ex 1:8-22). Esther bravely pleaded to save her people from annihilation. (Esther 4:16) Judith was another heroine. (Judith 8:2- 8) These passages are not in the Sunday Lectionary. In a parallel way, we often fall short in recognising Mother Earth.

## Church Teaching

In 1971 Pope Paul VI was first to publish on environmental issues (*Eighty Years*). St Pope John Paul II developed Catholic Teaching when he gathered religious leaders to Assisi in 1986. Care for earth was a call common to all humanity and religions. Pope John Paul's II 1990 New Year Message outlined the main issues and he chose St Francis as the Patron Saint of the Environment. He and following Popes have detailed the Catholic call to *ecological conversion* and to fulfil an ecological vocation. Pope Benedict XVI called for 'a new understanding of the inseparability of Creation and Redemption'. (20.08.08)



*Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert.* Mt 4:1

The vocation of being a "protector", however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human.

Pope Francis Homily 19.03.13

## Ecological Insight

Wilderness means living plants and animals evolving within their particular geological area. Within its dynamic structure, wilderness carries the cumulative wisdom of millions of years. It is good for the human spirit and the wellbeing of future generations. [www.wilderness.org.au](http://www.wilderness.org.au) [www.australianwildlife.org](http://www.australianwildlife.org)

### What can I do?

Strive to bring Earthcare into your Sunday Liturgy. The US Catholic Bishops Climate Covenant publishes a newsletter and worship resources. [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org)