

# Online Resource - Lenten Reflections

# The Grace of Coastal Places

GOD REVEALING, GOD INSPIRING, GOD CHALLENGING

*"Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us." St Francis of Assisi*

## 3rd Sunday of Lent

Jesus said to them in reply,  
"Do you think that because these  
Galileans suffered in this way  
they were greater sinners  
than all other Galileans?"  
Lk 13: 1-9

## God Revealing.....

Australia has one of the longest coastlines of any country - thirty six thousand km (*Australian Bureau of Statistics*). More than a quarter of its population live within 50km of the coast. People love to spend leisure time on our famous beaches. Coastal ecosystems literally link the land and the sea. Many species move between complex and sensitive ecosystems – such as estuaries, freshwater wetlands, coastlines, and forested floodplains - to feed and breed throughout their life cycles.

Australia's diverse seagrasses represent half the number of species in the world. Our coral reefs, including the Great Barrier and Ningaloo Reefs are unique. Shore birds, including migratory birds, make up 10% of Australia's birdlife. The 2 million migratory shorebirds that fly to Australia each year are born in the arctic tundra of Russia and Alaska. [goo.gl/vwt6Fs](http://goo.gl/vwt6Fs)

Human uses of coastal areas tend to conflict with the conservation of flora and fauna. Population growth, agriculture, mining and technology have placed coastal ecosystems under great pressure. [goo.gl/FmGqF4](http://goo.gl/FmGqF4)

In 2004, the Bishops of Queensland wrote a pastoral letter about these concerns and the impact on the Great Barrier Reef, called "Let the Many Coastlands Be Glad". [goo.gl/Q5uhOX](http://goo.gl/Q5uhOX)

***"To a person uninstructed in natural history, his country or seaside stroll is a walk through a gallery filled with wonderful works of art, nine-tenths of which have their faces turned to the wall."***

– Thomas Huxley

***"I define sacred as living life by the grace of God"***  
Lailah Gifty Akita

## God Inspiring.....

Jesus spent much time in coastal places. It was along the shores of Galilee that he gathered his disciples, taught, ate, listened, told parables and accompanied fisherfolk. We can ponder whether Jesus and his disciples paused to play with the sand as they talked and walked along the constantly moving and changing coastline.

Reflect on the words of Rachel Carson:  
"Once this rocky coast beneath me was a plain of sands; then the sea rose and found a new shore line. And again in some shadowy future the surf will have ground these rocks to sand and will have returned the coast to its earlier state. And so in my mind's eye, these coastal forms merge and blend in a shifting kaleidoscopic pattern in which there is no finality, no ultimate and fixed reality – earth becoming fluid as the sea itself", *Rachel Carson, "The Earth Speaks"*.

These places provide the context for Jesus' message in the Gospels.

Prayer:  
With your grace loving God, teach us more of your unfolding gift of life by wondering about coastal places.

***"When human beings fail to find their true place in this world, they misunderstand themselves."*** Pope Francis LS #115



Image: [goo.gl/W2Xp2B](http://goo.gl/W2Xp2B)



Image: [goo.gl/FWaaqT](http://goo.gl/FWaaqT)

## God Challenging.....

The critically endangered curlew sandpiper, is currently declining at the rate of 8% per year. When Jesus teaches that God feeds and clothes each bird of the air, and we learn this information, what is the challenge for us as followers of Jesus? Join the Birdlife Australia Shorebirds 2020 program. [goo.gl/pAgXYW](http://goo.gl/pAgXYW)

Discuss what impact humans and pet dogs have on beaches. Take into consideration the other species that inhabit and depend on the beach. Discuss the impact plastics have on coastal places. Learn practical actions from Take 3. [www.take3.org.au](http://www.take3.org.au)

Coastcare is a community of volunteers caring for their coast who identify local environmental problems and work together to achieve practical solutions. There are currently 2,000 Coastcare groups all around the country. Support Coastcare. <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/coastcare>



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