



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.