



YEAR C

7 Days of Creation:

SCRIPTURAL PRAYERS AND REFLECTION

Striving for Transformation in God

Helping prepare to celebrate 1st September as
World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

Proclaimed jointly by Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Francis,
and September as a **Season of Creation**
Endorsed by the Office of Integral Human Development
and Conferences of Bishops.

CHARLES RUE

Columban Mission

***“...our human ability to transform reality must
proceed in line with God’s original gift of
all that is ... all the creatures of the
material universe find their true
meaning in the incarnate Word
of God ... a seed of definitive
transformation..”***

– Pope Francis Laudato
Si’ #5 and #235



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Ten Nature Symbols of Long Life (Sip Chang Seng) with the Lamb of God. The mosaic was created by the Youth Group of the Korean Sar Jik Parish.

Introduction

Jesus was teaching in the Portico of Solomon when an unbelieving crowd confronted him. He replied, “*Is it not written in your Law: I said, you are gods.*” (Jn 10:34).

Believers over millennia have wondered about this teaching. Some developed a purely spiritual meaning for this teaching - setting out on a pathway of purification, illumination and mystical union with God. While true, for others this heady approach did not capture the joy and pain of the bodily dimension of life in God. Meditating on the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus as the incarnated presence of God with us makes this teaching more real, but also more scary. Finding God in daily living is not for the faint hearted.

Pope Francis warns us not to forget the bodily existence of Jesus (LS 221) With the Incarnation, God assumes and glorifies the world of flesh and matter. Incarnation illuminates our human link with the world of planets and earth, water and dirt, plants and animals including the human species. God has chosen the pathway of struggling creation, evolving over billions of years that leads to fullness of life in God. Struggle is God’s chosen way to glory.

United with Jesus the Christ as the head of his body, the church immerses itself in a process of acquiring godly characteristics as it gradually grows into the experience of communion with God. The Greek word used in the Orthodox tradition, *Theosis*, translates into English as *Deification*. It embraces other more familiar terms that help express the journey - Sanctification and Eternal Life, Resurrection and New Creation. The radical transformation of all that exists sets up a radically close and ongoing relationship with God.

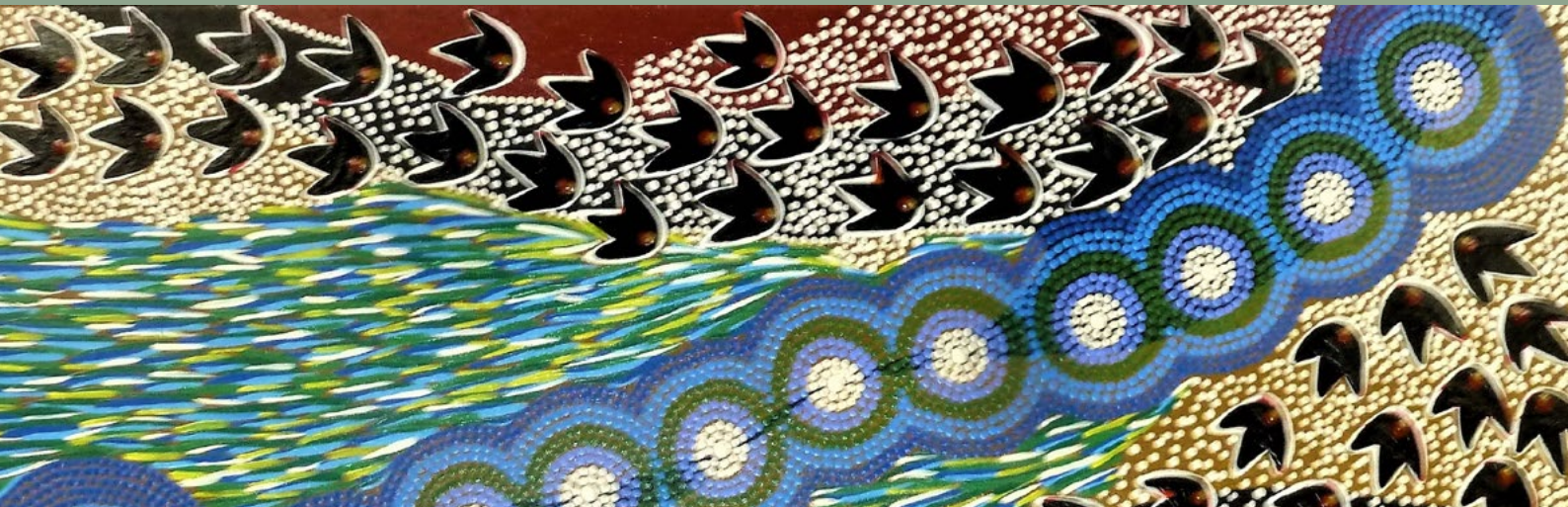
The Spirit of the Risen Jesus leads this process until the end of time. All people are destined to enter this pathway of glorification, making it a reality through the struggles of daily life. The Spirit leads Christians to become more like Christ as they witness, in word and work, to this journey of deification for humanity and all that exists. Searching the New Testament gives witness to this task. <http://ww1.antiochian.org/content/theosis-partaking-divine-nature>

Over 7 days this resource offers points for reflection and prayers based on Scripture. It encourages all people to commit to becoming gods, finding mystery in creation and transformation in God. Christians in particular have a vocation in Christ Jesus to proclaim this truth to the world. (LS 117).

In our time, the environmental challenge and quest for peace among nations confront us. Many people have grown tired of prophets of gloom and look for people with vision and imagination. Followers of Christ have a message that the process of transformation is more than survival. It is an odyssey for all creation into the glorious mystery of God.

OUTLINE OF A 7 DAYS OF CREATION REFLECTION-RETREAT YEAR C

1. The scripture readings for these 7 Days follows the Lectionary practice of using the Gospel of Luke in Year C. Other readings (OT, NT, Ps) are selected to reinforce the Gospel message. Theologically the gifts of creation run as a progression – 1/ creation 2/ kingdom life growth 3/ sin and reconciliation 4/ the end time of union with God.
2. The schema collects passages that plays back and forth between God’s initiatives and varied human responses – awe and wonder, lament and forgiveness, hope and action. Remembering stories of God’s saving actions helps grow a *new creation* in the risen Christ.
3. Day 5 focuses on *liberation* images of grace. These images apply in this age when the twin cry of the earth and the poor grows louder, and the need for liberating care for individuals grows more urgent (LS 64).
4. Day 6 uses the existing Common Lectionary readings for the first Sunday in September Year C.
5. Day 7 uses new readings that celebrate the Feast of Francis of Assisi (and Clare).



A TEMPLATE FOR PERSONAL, GROUP OR LITURGICAL REFLECTION

This *7 Days of Creation Reflection-Retreat* can be an individual exercise. However, it is better prayed with a group. The format imitates the *Liturgy of the Word* segment of the Eucharist. Proclamation and Response sets the rhythm. A number of short readings is best unless there is a reason for longer and fewer ones. To ensure a flow to the prayer, one person should be seen to be leading the group while not doing everything. Simply, dignity is the hallmark of good liturgy or communal prayer. Hymns can dot the reflection but care needs to be taken that they neither take over nor become a chore for participants. Scripture based hymns are best. The same hymn can be repeated so that it becomes familiar. Sharing the *Our Father* expresses common commitment.

1. Opening Hymn – Chosen to set the mood and settle participants.
2. Introduction – Name the grace to celebrate ('theme' has an educational tone).
3. Ritual (Optional) - Have an action to symbolise the group's aim (eg. sprinkling water).
4. Opening Prayer – Ask God to be with this specific group in its faith sharing.
5. First Scripture Reading – This reinforces the Gospel.
6. Psalm – Chosen as a Response to the First Reading in the light of the Gospel.
7. Second Scripture Reading – Remembers an aspect of the grace being celebrated.
8. Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia or silence).
9. Gospel – Sets the tone for the entire celebration.
10. Reflection on the Word – It might be a homily, story-telling or Scriptural sharing.
11. Pause – Times of silence can be a powerful shared experience.
12. Intercessions – Prepared texts can combine with free sharing.
13. Our Father – This prayer acts as a sign of communion among those gathering.
14. Closing Prayer – The leader recalls God drawing us forward to fulfil the grace celebrated.
15. Blessing – An option may be a shared prayer of blessing with a common gesture.
16. Closing Hymn – Chosen to reinforce conversion and vocational aspects of the readings.



Hymns

Just as hymns helped Catholic communities understand and act with feeling in response to *Vatican II*'s call for renewal, hymns can help us be passionate in care for the totality of creation. The selection below link us with Scripture, focus our prayer or amplify an intercession.

Hymn Suggestions (courtesy Beth Riola, Wollongong Education)

DAY ONE *Magnificat* - Simon de Voil © 2019 www.simondevoil.com
Magnificat - Bernadette Farrell © 1993 Published by OCP.

DAY TWO *See, I Make All Things New* - Trisha Watts & Monica O'Brien © 1995 Willow Connection Pty. Ltd.
God Has Chosen Me - Bernadette Farrell © 1991 Published by OCP.

DAY THREE *Turn Around* - Nancy L. Uelmen / Jueun Bai © Copyright Gen Verde della P.A.F.O.M.
Though the Mountains May Fall - Dan Schutte © 1995 Willow Connection Pty. Ltd.

DAY FOUR *A New Heart for a New World* - Trisha Watts & Monica O'Brien © 1975 New Dawn Music

DAY FIVE *Hearts of Courage* - Timothy Hart © 2020 https://drive.google.com/file/d/18_l1yGsrS-UO8glU_oqJuvFKHwTIZ0Cd/view

DAY SIX *For Everyone Born a Place at the Table* - Shirley Erena Murray © 1998 Hope Publishing Company.

DAY SEVEN *Canticle of Creation* - Simon de Voil © 2019 www.simondevoil.com





**CHRIST HAS TAKEN UNTO HIMSELF
THIS MATERIAL WORLD.**

– Laudato Si' #221

Day One

MAGNIFICAT

Naming a grace to celebrate - The sexual dimension of life is often not spoken about in church circles. The secular world has no qualms. That Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph is a good place to begin reflection. We learn from science that sex sparked an advance in the process of evolution beginning with organisms and plants. Sex is a part of human DNA and part of religious growth. Mary as nurturing and loving mother of God shows the way. (pause)

PRAYER

God, as Lover and Creator, you have blessed us in the loving relationships among human beings, the primary way we experience your love for all that exists. May the birth of Jesus, God incarnate, to Mary and Joseph, lead us to respect all sexual relationships so we can grow in our lives a pathway of transformation into the creation you want us to be ... We ask this ...

SG 5:10-11, 16 – THE BELOVED

My beloved is all radiant and ruddy,
distinguished among ten thousand.

His head is the finest gold;

his locks are wavy,
black as a raven.

His speech is most sweet,
and he is altogether desirable.

This is my beloved and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

PS 46:2-3, 10 – FEAR NOT

² We will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

¹⁰ Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.

RM 16:1-4 – WOMEN DEACONS

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord God as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well. Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their lives for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

LK 1:46-55 – MARY'S MAGNIFICAT

And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for God has looked with favour on
the lowliness of the servant.

Surely, from now on
all generations will call me blessed; for
the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is the name.

God's mercy is for those who fear
from generation to generation.

God has shown strength of arm;
has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts.

God has brought down the powerful from
their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;
has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.
 God has helped servant Israel,
 in remembrance of mercy,
 according to the promise made to our
 ancestors,
 to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

STORY TELLING

Mary tells the story of how God is constant in her life and culture. As a young girl, her parents Anne and Joachim loved her. They told Mary stories of how God cared for and guided the wanderings of the People of Israel to find a safe home. Each of our families has a story to tell, including both hopeful and difficult times. Their stories name people and places as blessings of God. We can find God's provident care revealed in their stories.

REFLECTION IDEAS

In every age and corner on Earth, people have tried to flourish. They dreamt about what they wanted and acted to make their dreams a reality. They learnt to negotiate with family and neighbours, to deal with changing climates and new ideas. In our time, people reinvent their old locality or move home, always with the danger of being enslaved or suffering ecological disasters.

In his 2015 environmental encyclical, Pope Francis teaches us to reflect, in the light of faith on Earth as our common home. Scripture reminds us of the constant ebb and flow of life, for both Israel and the followers of Jesus. Importantly, it tells of the providence of God who is ever faithful, one with the human journey, prompting choices in relationships.

Jesus calls us to 'be in the world' and listen to God speaking to us through interpreters of Earth and human events. The Wisdom of God wraps their explorations. In Jesus we act with people of good will in their care for all creatures on Earth, as kin, growing equity and opportunities for transformation.

INTERCESSIONS

1. God of history, you are our heritage. Just as you gave a place to live to a starving migrant Israel, may we be grateful for the blessings given to our families, and may our community welcome ecological refugees, providing for their needs with generosity. Father of Jesus ...
2. Knowing that the Earth belongs to you our God so that no creature is an orphan, inspire us to respect the very existence of every creature and its habitat, and urge our leaders to face the human causes of destructive climate change. Father of Jesus ...
3. Wise and Nurturing God, you have destined many forms of sexual intimacy. May we respect the bodies of all as temples of the Holy Spirit, and give nurture to every evolving form of life. Father of Jesus ...
4. God of human history, just as you raised up women leaders in Israel and the early church, let us give opportunity to advance women leaders in society and church, recognising their unique gift to families, society and Earth. Father of Jesus ...
5. Rejoicing that you our God have willed to bind yourself, Earth and Humanity together in one mystery of glorification, may care for the whole family of creation be the driving force in our lives as we work to live out our ecological vocation. Father of Jesus

PRAY AS JESUS TAUGHT: "OUR FATHER ..."

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of cosmic and human history, every life and era has a time to flourish, playing its part in the journey to completion in the end time. You led this journey over billions of years and active in our time, prompting imaginations and nourishing. The intricate life of fungi, flora and fauna inspire us to explore the depths of human relationships. Loving God, may we see that you are with us in our journey of transformation into the mystery you will for us. We ask ...

"God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters." Fratelli Tutti #5

**MARY,
GENTLE
MOTHER,
PRAY FOR US**





**SON OF GOD ... PLANTING A SEED
OF DEFINITIVE TRANSFORMATION.**

— Laudato Si' # 235

Day Two

MUSTARD SEED

Naming a grace to celebrate - A small mustard seed grows to become a bush. Jesus jokingly exaggerated to call it a tree. Individual human lives begin as small babies but grow to become teenagers, then adults. It is a process of gradual transformation. God willed this cycle of growth for all of creation, and even cultures. It includes struggle and setbacks but even these can turn to good in the mystery of creation and give reason for thanksgiving. (pause)

PRAYER

God of the Sabbath, may our gathering remember the works of yours that we can see, and wonder about your gifts we cannot see. May we make time to praise you as the Creator of all and thank you for being with us as the bigness of history unfolds. May we find ways to lead others to know of your creative love and your abiding presence in all events. We ask this ...

LEVITICUS 25:2-4 – SABBATH REST

Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to God. For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to Yahweh.

PSALM 90:4-6 – GOD'S TIMELINE

- ⁴ A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.
- ⁵ Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—
they are like the new grass of the morning:

- ⁶ In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it is dry and withered.

ACTS 13:44-47 – TO ALL LANDS

On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of God. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what God has commanded us: I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

LUKE 13:18-21 - PARABLE

Then Jesus asked, What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches. Again he asked, What shall I compare the reign of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.



STORY TELLING

Since the 1919 apostolic letter of Benedict XV, all Popes have written on the call to mission given to every believer. Benedict recalled the great missionary commission of Mark 16:15: Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to all creation. Significantly, he broke with Eurocentric and colonialist thought to push for parish supported enterprises. He endorsed varied cultural expressions of faith, separation from political alliances and the goal of developing self-ministering local indigenous churches. The histories of modern missionary movements are fascinating.

REFLECTION IDEAS

It is common to all cultures to hold celebrations to remember and give thanksgiving. We all know stories about heroes in our communities who rescued people in a flood, established a local school, went to war in defence. We can delve into the history of our local place and find hero stories.

Scripture is a collection of stories about God active among people, men and women – Joseph migrating to Egypt to find food for his starving family, or Ruth calling the People of Israel back to God. Scripture also has many stories about God acting with the natural world – giving manna to people starving in the desert, or healing the sick through the blessings of water.

We can be on the lookout for stories about farmers, builders, financiers or research people creating ways to face the challenges of climate change. We can promote stories of success and not be overcome by waves of misinformation.

GOSPEL OF LUKE

The gospel was most probably composed around AD 80–110. Luke divides the history of first century Christianity into three stages: the birth of Jesus and the beginning of his mission; his public ministry; and lastly, his passion, death, and resurrection. Luke takes the reader on a journey to Jerusalem because it is from there the Good News goes out to the whole world. He crafts material not found in other Gospels to emphasise the kind outreach of Jesus and how under the Holy Spirit it goes out to the Gentiles. Luke's extended telling of the infancy story is like a mini-Gospel in itself.

INTERCESSIONS

1. God of Wisdom, you gave nature itself as our first teacher. May we learn from its patterns, actively working with scientists to understand its wisdom and respect its life giving processes for the benefit of life on this planet. Father of Jesus hear us ...
2. God of David, the psalmists gave us words to praise your works and to weep for sins of self-absorption and pride. May we find new music to let the Spirit into our hearts, inspiring us to love both the gifts of this planet and our neighbour. Father of Jesus hear us ...
3. God of mystery, you reveal your own self in the Cosmos and all it holds. May we as church people be not afraid to search out the spiritual leaders in every age and culture so we can better experience the way you reveal your own mystery. Father of Jesus hear us ...
4. God of Freedom, each decade discovers more about the mystery of the cosmos. May we humbly remember that a thousand years is but a day in your timeline as you freely play in an expanding universe. May we grow your freedom in our hearts. Father of Jesus hear us ...
5. God of Job, you scolded Job for not seeing a Creator's handy work in the Universe. May our care for the biodiversity of earth's species and habitats not be derailed by the false economic dreams or hard hearts that ignore the suffering of any creature. Father of Jesus hear us ...

PRAY AS JESUS TAUGHT: "OUR FATHER ..."

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of endless ages, you plant deep in every human heart a desire to celebrate with all of your gifts of creation. From mountaintop to sweeping plains, from isolated lagoons to ocean, we join with peoples around the globe to remember your loving acts of creation. By this Eucharist, sustain us for the journey so we may evolve according to your will until all is complete in your new creation.

We ask ...

"Renewal ...is closeness; it is the culture of encounter." Fratelli Tutti #30



**REASON CAN ALWAYS REAPPEAR
IN DIFFERENT GUISE ... INCLUDING
RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE – LS 199
MYSTICAL MEANING TO BE FOUND
IN A LEAF ... IN A POOR PERSON'S
FACE – Laudato Si' #233**

Day Three

PRODIGAL SON

Naming a grace to celebrate - God nurture the descendants of Adam and Eve. But they ate from the forbidden tree as a sign of rebellion, wanting to make the world as they wanted. They learnt that the gifts of life come through struggle. The seeds of what is life-giving have to be sown before enjoying the fruits of the harvest. Jesus leads the way in transforming a self-centred mindset. The story of the prodigal son and his generous father captures the human journey of transformation lived in the realities of earthly life. (pause)

PRAYER

Lord, in spite of your generous gifts in creation we have often rebelled claiming your gifts as our own achievements. Give us the wisdom and courage to live within the realities of life on Earth. May we know that you are always faithful to your covenant promises as you journey with us, living in compassion and forgiveness, content in enjoying you gifts. We ask ...

GENESIS 3:17, 19 – HUMAN LABOUR

And to Adam God said, Because you ... have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, You shall not eat of it, cursed is the ground because of you ... In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

PSALM 126:4-6 – WIPE AWAY TEARS

⁴ Restore our fortunes, O God,
like streams in the Negev.

⁵ Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

⁶ Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:45-49 – NEW ADAM

So it is written: The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

LUKE 15:11-13, 17, 20-24 - THE LOVING FATHER

There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, Father, give me my share of the estate ... Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living ... he came to his senses ... So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him ... Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

STORY TELLING

The best story-tellers often end their tales with hope. The story might begin with a sad event but often turns and twists, includes doubts and struggles, as it zigzags its way and moves towards a happy ending. Research people at the CSIRO or in Medical Laboratories experience this pattern as they try to address a problem. They experience failures as they wind their way towards solutions. Life's journey is often similar.

REFLECTION IDEAS

Most of us can name a truly generous person. A smile comes to our face. They may have been generous with the time they give to growing a local club or supported it financially. We remember a kind person who has patiently taught us a new skill or shared a joke with us. We remember a leader who led a generous response to refugees.

Equally, most of us can name a mean person and the way we distanced ourselves from them. Their self-centred ways looked only to their own advantage. They are mean in the way they limit their time in listening to others. They narrow their interests and concerns.

Probably the greatest contribution of ecological scientists has been the depth given to the word *interconnected*. They explore links between species and their habitats. They have helped re-connect humanity with the natural world. Implications are huge, including the impacts of rapid climate change. Their work is *in the order of love*, wrote Pope Francis.

REMEMBER – FORGET – RECONCILE

Get over it is a common response to an individual who have suffered a social hurt. More seriously, it is a common response to indigenous people as they learn more about the suffering of their ancestors under colonial rule and experience its legacy. The tension between remembering and forgetting is often fractious for individuals and groups. Remembering too much can eat up the heart. Forgetting too much can excuse injustice. The example of Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Tutu underpinned a process of reconciliation for South Africans. A just and forgiving God was present there.

INTERCESSIONS

1. Loving Father of Jesus, you led him to teach in parables. May our church leaders and believers grow in compassion as in the story of the prodigal son and his loving father. Inspire them to listen to each other as they proclaim a new creation. Father of Jesus hear us
2. Caring God, you led the descendants of Abraham from being wandering outsiders to live among foreign peoples and share their land. May we respect the gifts of the land where we live as your gift. Father of Jesus hear us ...
3. God of every epoch, you gave us the Equinox to show the new life of spring and the maturity of autumn. Teach us to bring its rhythmic flow into our lives and its harmony of peace to nations. Father of Jesus hear us ...
4. God ever close to us, you are with us in the turmoil of doubts and uncertainties. Help us to escape the temptations of pride, learning to humbly respect Earth's rhythms as we strive to use its gifts sparingly and share them fairly. Father of Jesus hear us ...
5. We remember that you our God was with the celebrations of the prodigal son and his father. May we prepare our liturgies to be a joyful celebration for the whole community, clear and growing feelings of belonging. Father of Jesus hear us ...

PRAY AS JESUS TAUGHT: OUR FATHER ...

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Generous and Forgiving God, in this Eucharist you have given us a sign of being reconciled with you, each other and Earth itself. United in your Son, may it be a sign of union with you on Earth as a foretaste of your eternal inheritance. We ask ...

“A healthy culture, is open and welcoming by its very nature; indeed, a culture without universal values is not truly a culture.” Fratelli Tutti #146





**TYRANNY OVER CREATION, TO
ENGAGE IN WAR, INJUSTICE AND
ACTS OF VIOLENCE ... SO DOING
WE WERE NOT FAITHFUL TO THE
TREASURES OF WISDOM**

– Laudato Si' #200

Day Four

THE WORD

Naming a grace to celebrate - That God is in every event is a profound truth. God shaped the evolving universe and created every living being as a work of wisdom. God went further to shepherd humanity over time and joined the journey through the Word made flesh, Jesus the Christ. His Spirit empowered his followers to listen to the processes of Earth and human events, discerning with others the signs of an emerging new creation. (pause)

PRAYER

God of light and wisdom, you are eternal yet present with us in our human journey, listening to our griefs, anxiety, joys and hopes. As our beginning and our end, grow within us your spirit of wisdom so that we can find you present in all the workings of Earth, in every living creature and culture. May we love Earth and each other as one mysterious web of life. We ask ...

WISDOM 7:26, 28, 30 – ETERNAL LIGHT

For wisdom is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of goodness. God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun ... against wisdom evil does not prevail.

PSALM 23:1-2,4-6 – SHEPHERD

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;

² makes me lie down in green pastures.
leads me beside still waters;[
for God's own name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death, I fear no evil;

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of God for ever.

REVELATION 21:1-3, 6 – NEW EARTH

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ... God will dwell with them, and they shall be the people, and God will be with them ... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life.

JOHN 1:1-5, 9, 14 – BEGINNING

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... all things were made through the Son, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of humankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light that enlightens all was coming into the world. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld the glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

STORY TELLING

Good stories about wisdom always make us pause and reconsider the way we live. Some stories are like puzzles. Some tell of a personal experience of enlightenment. Many such stories revolve around discovering new depths to the natural environment. Australian ecological pioneers (Mulligan and Hill, 2001) often began

their commitment to action through a mystical like experience of wisdom embodied in natural world, as have many Catholics. (cf Rue, CSJS NO.57)

REFLECTION IDEAS

The dialogue of speaking, listening and hearing to discern action is the modern way to do mission. Acting in partnership leads to new ways of thinking and involvement. It is a pathway to face the twin challenge of care for Earth and care for peoples of all nations.

The Holy Spirit is the source of wisdom for the followers of Jesus. By baptism, they are caught up in the very life of God, Alpha and Omega, beginning and end. This is an awesome calling. They are part of what David Christian calls *Big History*, and Tom Berry calls a *New Story*.

There is mutual blessings when Christians engage with all fields of knowledge. If they are open, they grow to where the Holy Spirit leads them. They find wisdom and courage to dream of new ways to a sustainable future, forming new friends while the language of faith and prayer evolve.

SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Some leaders try to set up a dichotomy between studying sciences or humanities. They make marked distinctions in finance and social standing, reducing both students and teachers to mere cogs in an economic machine. The human quest for meaning and happiness is more than being contented cows on a vast feedlot. Saint and Cardinal Henry Newman wrote *The Idea of a University* and composed the hymn *Lead Kindly Light*. The full person in God displays multiple facets.



INTERCESSIONS

1. God of Wisdom, you are ever working in our church community. May we own the task set by Vatican II to shed the light of the Gospel on modern issues. Help us hear Pope Francis asking us to care for Mother Earth and the whole Human Family. Father of Jesus hear us...
2. God of Wisdom, you empower us as co-creators with the new Adam. May we act to grow rural and urban jobs, ready to question the wisdom of decisions made by business and political leaders. Father of Jesus hear us ...
3. God of Wisdom, you have given us five senses to link us with a revealing Earth. May we be sensitive to the less abled, thank the medical people who advance their cause, be open to their enhanced abilities and never push them to the margins. Father of Jesus hear us...
4. God of Wisdom, you have raised up mystics in every age and culture. May we search their pathways of transformation to find the way you want for us, finding the Word newly revealed in our place and time. Father of Jesus hear us ...
5. God of Wisdom, you inspired the songs of the psalmists to praise the works of God and lament our fickle responses. May our church worship be an experience of your presence with us as we, and all creation as kin, are transformed into your mystery. Father of Jesus hear us ...

PRAY AS JESUS TAUGHT: OUR FATHER ...

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Father of Jesus, you have nourished us by this holy meal so that we may grow more deeply into your Son, Alpha and Omega. You increase your gifts of wisdom and courage given us in baptism, inviting us to be words of witnesses to all travellers journeying to your eternal presence. We ask ...

“...seek the truth that responds to life’s deepest meaning ... born of age-old reflection and great wisdom.” Fratelli Tutti #207



**STIMULATING WONDER BEFORE
THE PROFOUND MYSTERY OF
CREATION**

– Laudato Si' #199

Day Five

FINAL DAYS

Naming a grace to celebrate - We are told to remember the works of God as the starting point for prayer. After creation, the first great work was to form a People who every year feasted to commemorate their Exodus from slavery to freedom. Scripture also tells how the prophets confronted the People for forgetting that God had saved them. Jesus taught these stories, warning that we must always be prepared to give an account for our blessings in God. (pause)

OPENING PRAYER

Father of Israel and every church community, your care extends over ages. May we remember your great works in every era and give thanksgiving in the Eucharist. May it nourish us in our journey, as our learning grows deeper and transform into the likeness of your Son. May we freely choose to strive for a new creation so that with every creature as kin we sit with him at your right hand,
We ask ...

EXODUS 12:14, 16-17 - NEW PASSOVER

This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to God; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever ... on the seventh day a holy assembly, no work shall be done ... you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt: therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as an ordinance for ever.

PSALM 106:3-5 – ISRAEL FREED

- ³ Blessed are they who observe justice,
who do righteousness at all times!
- ⁴ Remember me, O God, when you shower
favour to your people;
help me when you deliver them;
- ⁵ that I may see the prosperity of your chosen
ones,
that I may rejoice in the gladness of your
nation,
that I may glory with your heritage.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13, 16-17 – SECOND COMING

But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For God own self will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first ... and so we shall always be with the Lord

LUKE 17:26, 30-31

As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the days of Lot ... so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed.

STORY TELLING

Most people can tell stories about how God's creation is abused. Even an elementary knowledge of evolutionary processes leads us to question over fishing oceans or over stocking farms, putting little tested chemicals into the food chain or the proliferation of garbage dumps. Some people respond with legitimate anger but many are prompted to care. Their loving actions to heal abuse and create alternatives give people the freedom to make new choices.

REFLECTION IDEAS

Trauma affects many in mind and body. Earth suffers similar suffering under the impacts of human indiscriminate exploitation. But we also see the actions of teachers and scientists, social workers and union leaders dedicated to serve and care.

The psalms lament the suffering of the people and often picture it as parched land starved of water. They also sing of the healing embrace of God where hope is pictured as tree filled hills and a fruitful land flowing with milk and honey.

Pope Francis calls believers to live responsible lives to bring hope to a suffering world. They are called to freely choose to mimic the faithfulness of God's own self. Generations will die and continue in trauma if they encounter an uncaring humanity.

WAR

Significantly, Pope Francis presents *Fratelli Tutti* (256-282) as an encyclical to promote peace among the human family. War rages from Yemen to Ukraine, from Sudan to Myanmar. While we praise the courage of soldiers killed in defence of their homelands, the trauma of war lasts for decades as *collateral damage*. Impacts range from family violence among refugees, to stunted growth among hungry children living under ecological collapse. The Pope calls for active solidarity that goes beyond sentiment to create caring relationships grounded in justice.

INTERCESSIONS

1. God of both Creation and Judgement, may we neither become captive to the lure of escape to heaven nor the false promises of paradise on Earth. Keep us close to the way of your Son Jesus in whom life, death and resurrection are one mystery. Father of Jesus hear us ...
2. God of both Creation and Judgement, Jesus patiently led his disciples to accept that he must suffer and die. Lead us to commit ourselves to treading the zigzag pathways of life trusting that you are with us in our uncertainties. Father of Jesus hear us ...
3. God of both Creation and Judgement, you open our minds and hearts by what scientists and poets say to us. May we know you are there when we feel happy at the beauty of nature and people surrounding us, and feel sad at the opposite. Father of Jesus hear us ...
4. God of both Creation and Judgement, you fill Scripture with stories of favouring the outsider. May we be sensitive to those suffering personal trauma or trauma by fear of the impacts of climate change. May we act in prevention and to care. Father of Jesus hear us ...
5. God of both Creation and Judgement, you give us the varied books of Scripture to guide our way. May we study their depths to better interpret messages relevant for our times, growing in light and courage in the face of conflicting voices. Father of Jesus hear us ...

PRAY AS JESUS TAUGHT: OUR FATHER ...

CONCLUDING PRAYER

In this community celebration of the Eucharist we remember that you our God both Create and Judge. Nourished by the holy meal celebrated in memory of you Son, continue to transform us so that we choose to live as good news for our neighbours and Earth itself, journeying towards our home with you. We ask ...

“...once kindness becomes a culture within society it transforms lifestyles, relationships and the ways ideas are discussed.” Fratelli Tutti #224



**STIMULATING WONDER BEFORE
THE PROFOUND MYSTERY OF
CREATION**

– Laudato Si' #199

Day Six

PLACE AT TABLE

Naming a grace to celebrate - Jesus used parables to make his teaching clear. Humility grows from recognising that a generous God is the giver of all gifts. We deceive ourselves when we claim status and privilege on the presumption that we have earned them. Jesus chastises the proud by using the simple example of people pushing themselves forward a place of honour at a dinner. (pause)

OPENING PRAYER

God, you are our Guide and our Strength in your Son, Jesus the Christ. Lead us to be glad in the gifts you have given us through our families and mentors but to be humble in the way we use what we have received. Guide all the baptised gathered at your table to humbly turn to one another for help on the journey, striving to respect you in our neighbour and every creature on Earth. We ask ...

SIRACH 3:17-20, 28-29 – BE GENTLE

My son, perform your tasks in meekness ... The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself; so you will find favour in the sight of God ... God is glorified by the humble. The affliction of the proud has no healing, for a plant of wickedness has taken root in them. The mind of the intelligent person will ponder a parable, and an attentive ear is the wise desire.

PSALM 67:4-5, 7, 68:10 – GIVE A HOME

⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.

⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

⁷ God has blessed us;

¹⁰ (68) your flock found a dwelling
in your goodness, O God.

HEBREWS 12: 19, 22-24 – LIVING GOD

You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. And come to innumerable angels in festal gathering and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven. And come to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

LUKE 14:1, 7-11

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisees, they were watching him. He told a parable to those who were invited when he marked how they chose the places of honour. He said, when you are invited to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honour ... but when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place ... your host may say to you, friend, go up higher ... the one who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

STORY TELLING

Stories about proud people are many but stories about humble people are told less often. It takes effort to find stories of humility, as these people are less showy. It takes effort to find the right words and tone in telling their stories with respect and admiration. People who gently go about their lives caring for the environment, a farmer, gardener or bush volunteer, often do not get much attention. Searching out their stories and telling them with conviction is a service to goodness.

REFLECTION IDEAS

In modern society the pronoun, 'I', has become the most used word. It takes effort and even sacrifice to think about 'we', and find good things to say about others. An exclusive focus on telling good news stories has sent many media companies broke. It takes skill to tell stories of humble service, such as on *Landline*.

Telling stories of humble service in a self-centred culture means making a positive decision to do so. It means learning communication skills and being aware of the listener's ways of thinking. Remembering the compassionate outreach of God bolsters the decision of the storyteller.

Telling good stories is a faith driven *integral ecological vocation*. It is not straight forward. It requires a humble re-affirmation of our baptismal conversion, remembering that God took the initiative with us.

FAITH AND ECOLOGY NETWORK

The network began in 2002 when 200 followers from twelve faith traditions used the neutral language of ecology to gather around the banner of *Wonder and the Will to Care*. As an interfaith hub, it promotes the interface between faith and science. Several times a year a scientist presents on a topic and commentators respond from several faith traditions. It fosters a respectful and professional dialogue to the benefit of all. FEN aims to both bring a deepened understanding of the word ecology to each faith community and engage in common actions to influence public environmental opinion. <https://www.faithecolony.net.au/>

INTERCESSIONS

1. Creator God, source of all good gifts, you gave Jerusalem as a physical sign of the junction of the three Abrahamic faiths, Jewish, Christian and Islam. May we respect each tradition and be open to the way their followers reveal your life. Father of Jesus hear us ...
2. Creator God, source of all good gifts, you made home and the family table as a place of love in all cultures. May we feel with the isolated and homeless, reaching out to those in our locality and nation, and carry special concern for refugees. Father of Jesus hear us ...
3. Creator God, source of all good gifts, may pride never separate us from you. Let us use well the gifts and opportunities given us to grow into the fullness you wish for us, while humbly serving our sisters and brothers in justice. Father of Jesus hear us ...
4. Creator God, source of all good gifts, we remember that you love all creation. When we pray the Our Father, may we consciously include all creatures on Earth and the cosmos itself as our kin under you. Father of Jesus hear us ...
5. Creator God, source of all good gifts, we can love because you have loved us first. May service of other people and care for Earth as our common home show in our lifestyle, particularly in our commitment to slow climate change. Father of Jesus hear us ...

PRAY AS JESUS TAUGHT: OUR FATHER ...

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of all good gifts, by celebrating word and sacrament around the holy table of your Son, you unite and nourish us, empowering us to humbly work with our neighbours close by and around the planet. May every human family and faith tradition grow into the fullness of life you have destined for them. We ask ...

"...a concept of popular and national unity influenced by various ideologies is creating new forms of selfishness and a loss of the social sense." Fratelli Tutti #11



**RESPECTING THE POSSIBILITIES
OFFERED BY THE THINGS
THEMSELVES**

– Laudato Si' #106

Day Seven

SAINTS FRANCIS & CLARE OF ASSISI

Naming a grace to celebrate - Prophets as the messengers of God called the people back to be faithful to God's covenants. Saints in the church act in a similar way as the example of their lives shows how to respond to the outreach of God. Francis of Assisi abandoned a life of frivolity to adopt the simple life of a labourer and care for the poor. His way attracted followers. They became an international movement of monks and sisters. His way of simplicity reformed the church of the middle ages. (pause)

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, you raised up Francis and Clare of Assisi as saints to challenge the frivolity of their times. May the way they embraced a simple lifestyle and cared for the marginalised in society inspire us to return to the Gospel. Renew your covenant promises as we face the major challenges of our times and act to serve like your saints. We ask ...

LEVITICUS 26:41-42, 45 – COVENANT

If then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob. And I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land ... I will, for their sake, remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the Lord.

PSALM 106:43, 45-47 – HAPPY IN PRAISE

⁴³ Many times God delivered them,
but they were rebellious in their purposes,
and were brought low through their iniquity.

⁴⁵ God remembered, for their sake, the covenant,
and relented according to abundant steadfast love.

⁴⁶ God caused them to be pitied
by all those who held them captive.

⁴⁷ Save us, our God,
and gather us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name.

ACTS 5:38-41 – WORK OF GOD

I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God! ... when the council called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name.

LUKE 1:67-72 – GOD FAITHFUL

Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for visiting and redeeming the people, raising up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David, as spoken by the mouth of holy prophets from of old ... to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and remember the holy covenant.

STORY TELLING

Catholics now tell stories of saints and holy people living in modern times. We hear stories of ecological martyrs prepared to suffer in caring for Earth. We learn how they grew a spirituality to underpin their actions. Sainly stories coming

from our own circles may surprise us, but, they strengthen our commitment and broaden our vision.

REFLECTION IDEAS

Pope Francis often talks about the exploitative nature of modern lifestyles. It is not merely the waste of resources while many remain poor, or even the ecological damage of pillaging land and sea, it is more deeply the corrosive effect of self-centredness on the human heart.

Catholic social teaching has mined the Scripture to speak of justice for all. In the last century, it has often focused campaigns around rights. Faith invites us to go deeper. Pope Francis teaches that care for Earth is in the order of love. He asks all of humanity to live as one family.

Stories from the lives and prayers of Saints Clare and Francis have radical implications for a simple way life in modern times. Deep respect for people and all species on Earth as kin led them to compose numerous prayers in praise of God found in simple love.

RIDICULE

St Francis never set out to establish an order of monks. He just wanted to live out the Gospel in simplicity. Things evolved. His way of life attracted others and the number of monks grew rapidly. Bands of them began travelling to other towns and even nations. They peached and worked, begging as they went, choosing to maintain personal and institutional poverty. The Pope recognised the Order of Friars Minor and Francis handed over organisational matters to others. Ridicule of the way Francis embraced Sister Poverty was never far away. Reforms of the Friars over the centuries often divided over this issue.



INTERCESSIONS

1. God faithful to your covenant promises in every age, may we never despair or give up hope in doing what is right. You were faithful to the house of David in spite of his sins and gave hope to the faithful of Israel. Father of Jesus hear us ...
2. God faithful to your covenant promises in every age, may the allure of glitter and fame not capture us. Just as St Francis embraced poverty as a loving sister, may we turn away from wasteful lifestyles and manage Earth's resources with equity. Father of Jesus hear us ...
3. God faithful to your covenant promises in every age, aware that Francis of Assisi was ridiculed for leaving a home of luxury to tend to outcasts, may we stop blaming those who suffer need and create ways to include them, Father of Jesus hear us ...
4. God faithful to your covenant promises in every age, may we introduce ourselves to members of other faiths, inviting them into social activities that care for Earth as our common home or serve those on the fringes of community. Father of Jesus hear us ...
5. God faithful to your covenant promises in every age, St Francis carried stigmata wounds of the cross on his body. May we willingly take up our cross in service of our brothers and sisters and all our earthly kin. Father of Jesus hear us ...

PRAY AS JESUS TAUGHT: OUR FATHER ...

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Abiding and caring God, Jesus gathered his friends around the Eucharistic table as the final sign of unity with his followers, so may we be united with the saints in every age. As we remember Francis and Clare, may this sharing give us their vision and strength in re-building your church suitable to serving our times and as a foretaste of your eternal Jerusalem. We ask ...

“Often the voices raised in defence of the environment are silenced or ridiculed.”

Fratelli Tutti #17



Scripture Readings

YEAR A, YEAR B & YEAR C

SCRIPTURE YEAR A (EMPHASIES MATTHEW'S GOSPEL)

DAY ONE – PROVIDENT GOD
Gen 9:9-11 – Noah Covenant
Ps 33 - God over Earth
Ac 7:1-4, 6-8 – Stephen
Mt 6:25-29 – birds of the air

DAY TWO – GOOD SEED
Ws 11:24-26 – God loves all
Ps 96 - declare God's works
Ac 17:24-28 – live in God
Mt 13:4-9 – a hundred fold

DAY THREE – VOIDING PROMISES
Is 24:4-6 – covenant broken
Ps 105 - covenant forever
1 Thes 5:14-17 – seek peace
Mt 15:1-9 – deceit

DAY FOUR - SPIRIT TEACHES
Pv 3:13-14; 6:6-9 – wisdom
Ps 148 - God's glory
Ac 15:6-9 – Spirit in all nations
Jn 6:7-8, 12-13 – Advocate

DAY FIVE – DEVIL
Is – free captives
Ps 137 - sat and wept
Rm 8:19-22 – creation groans
Mt 4:23-25 – care for the outcast

DAY SIX – AGREEMENT
Ez 33:7-9 – wicked repent
Ps 94 - harden not your hearts
Rm 13:8-10 – mutual love
Mt 18:15-17 – agree

DAY SEVEN - ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
Jer 7:3-7 – reform ways
Ps 91 - will find refuge
Ac 2:42-45 – pray and share
Mt 23:37-38 – care

SCRIPTURE YEAR B (EMPHASIES MARK'S GOSPEL)

DAY ONE - SPIRIT UPON ME
Gn 12:1-3 – covenant blessing
Ps 24:1-4, 10 – Earth is God's
1 Jn 4:7-13 – love one another
Mk 1:9-11, 14-15 - Spirit

DAY TWO - STORM
Jb 12:7-10 – ask the beasts
Ps 104: 5, 10, 19, 24 – praise
Ac 5:25-26, 40-42 – witness
Mk 4: 35-41 - storm

DAY THREE - TAKE HERITAGE
Is 24:4-6 – Earth suffers
Ps 51: 1, 13-14, 17 – mercy
1 Co 11:18-22 – share food
Mk 12:1-9 - Pharisees

DAY FOUR - BAPTISM SPIRIT
Is 55:1-3 – covenant and water
Ps 65: 5, 11-13 – clothes fields
1 Co 15:45-49 – co-create
Mk 1: 4-8 - baptised

DAY FIVE - TRULY FREE
Is 40:1-3 – freed from sin
Ps 119:1-5 – free in God's law
Ga 5:1, 13-14 – use freedom
Jn 8:31-36 - truly free

DAY SIX - A PURE HEART
Dt 4:1-2, 6-8 – laws of life
Ps 14:2-5 – act with justice
Jm 1:17-18, 21-22, 27 – new
Mk 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-22 - defiled

DAY SEVEN - ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
Dt 15:7-11 – poor among you
Ps 69:9-13 – zeal
Ac 2:42-47 – share in common
Jn 2:13-17 – money

SCRIPTURE YEAR C (EMPHASIES LUKE'S GOSPEL)

DAY ONE - MAGNIFICAT
Sg 5:10-16 – the beloved
Ps 46:2-3, 9-11 – fear not
Rm 16:1-6 – women deacons
Lk 1:46-55 - Mary

DAY TWO - MUSTARD SEED
Lv 25:2-7 – rest
Ps 90:4-6 – God's timeline
Ac 13:44-47 – to all lands
Lk 13:18-21 - parable

DAY THREE - PRODIGAL SON
Gn 3:17-19 – human labour
Ps 126:3-6 – wipe away tears
1 Co 15:45-49 – new Adam
Lk 15:11-32 - Son

DAY FOUR - WORD
Ws 7:26-30 – eternal light
Ps 23:1-2, 4-6 – shepherd
Rv 21:1-3, 6 – new Earth
Jn 1:1-5, 9, 14 - beginning

DAY FIVE - FINAL DAYS
Ex 12:14-17 - new Passover
Ps 106:3-6 – Israel freed
1 Th 4:13, 16-17 – Second Coming
Lk 17:26-32 - signs

DAY SIX - PLACE AT TABLE
Si 3:17-20, 28-29 – be gentle
Ps 67:4-7, 68:10 – give a home
Heb 12:18-19, 22-24 – living
Lk 14:1, 7-14 – exalt self

DAY SEVEN – ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
Lv 26:41-45 – covenant
Ps 106:43-47 – happy in praise
Ac 5:36, 38-41 – of God
Lk 1:67-73 – God faithful

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