

From the G7 to CoP26 we have a wonderful opportunity to highlight the beauty of the Earth and our place within it during the Sunday Liturgy.

The Diocesan Liturgy Commission would like to offer some suggestions and resources for worship particularly for (but not excluded to) the Season of Creation which runs from 1st September to 4th October. It is hoped that these resources would bring out the rich expressions of creation within the Liturgy, leading the worshipping community to a deeper awareness of our responsibility and the inevitable gratitude to God for the gift of all of creation.

'The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration: in the bread of the Eucharist, "creation is projected towards divinization, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself". Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation.'

Laudato Si 36

7 ways to affirm God's Creation and our place within it through the Liturgy

1. Ask your Music group to choose hymns and music that are about Creation.

2. Introductory Rites

The GIRM 31 '[The Celebrant] is permitted, furthermore, in a very few words, to give the faithful an introduction to the Mass of the day (after the initial Greeting and before the Penitential Act), to the Liturgy of the Word (before the readings), and to the Eucharistic Prayer (before the Preface), though never during the Eucharistic Prayer itself; he may also make concluding comments regarding the entire sacred action before the Dismissal.

These spaces could be used to introduce your congregation to the issues surrounding our responsibility to His Creation; the Pope's encyclical Laudato Si; to address the urgency of climate justice and importance of prayer for COP26 linking them to the part of the Mass that they preface.

3. The Penitential Act

Once Creation has been acknowledged as the theme or intention for the Mass, preparing a Kyrie that recognises God's abundant mercy is a natural progression. Slowly taking your congregation to see humanity's domination rather than stewardship: the way we have plundered and stripped the earth of natural resources in the Global South; or where we have put our wants before the needs of others are areas where we have sinned and need God's forgiveness.

One example might be

Lord Jesus, you are the firstborn of all creation...

You call us to wise stewardship and care for the earth ...

You will come and judge us for our care of all people and all creation...

4. The Liturgy of the Word.

While the Readings might not at first glance offer much in the way of teaching, learning to see through the lens of Creation, the environment or Climate Justice, will help your congregation to break open the Word. For example, the first reading for Sunday 5th September, 23rd OT (B) might provide thought for reflection/homily:

Isaiah 35:4-7

'... Say to those whose hearts are frightened:
Be strong, fear not!'

'... for water gushes in the desert, streams in the wasteland, the scorched earth becomes a lake, the parched land springs of water.'

The Psalm often speaks of Creation or reminds us to attend to the cry of the poor and therefore might present suitable material for your Homily.

'The Psalms frequently exhort us to praise God the Creator, "who spread out the earth on the waters, for His steadfast love endures for ever" (Ps 136:6). They also invite other creatures to join us in this praise: "Praise Him, sun and moon, praise Him, all you shining stars! Praise Him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created" (Ps 148:3-5). We do not only exist by God's mighty power; we also live with Him and beside Him. This is why we adore Him. LS72

5. Prayers of the Faithful

This is probably the most straight forward place to bring the needs of Creation to the attention of your congregation. Both Cafod and the Laudato Si Animators UK have produced suggested Intercessions for Parishes use. They are attached for your convenience.

6. Chose Eucharistic Prayer IV

EPIV is most suited for the use for a Mass of Creation as it speaks explicitly and eloquently of God as Creator of all the earth and all that is living.

Perhaps, if using this EP the Celebrant might bring attention to various phrases by praying them slowly.

If another Eucharistic Prayer is used, then Preface V for Sundays in Ordinary Time could be used as it takes Creation as its theme.

LS43. Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So we cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture.

7. The newsletter, though not part of the Mass, can be a valuable catechetical tool:

- It might be used to explain parts of the Mass that focus on Creation and how they link with our work as good stewards.
- You might set up a permanent space in the newsletter and ask a parishioner or the J&P group to write a short piece on Creation or Climate Justice.

- If you have a Laudato Si Animator in your parish you could ask them to pick a section of the Encyclical and offering some thoughts for reflection.
- Or they might set out ways for the parish to begin an Ecological Conversion
- Offering realistic and tangible each week for parishioners to begin to address their part in the Climate emergency.
- A list of books, films, websites or groups that help your congregation gain a deeper understanding of the work at hand.
- Ask your parish council to complete a parish audit to see what changes are needed to 'Green your Parish'.

Further resources

The following websites provide information and suggestions for the Season of Creation.

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/season-of-creation/>

<https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Season-of-Creation>

<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate>

<https://seasonofcreation.org/>

<https://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/>