

# The Season of Creation

**Dermot A Lane**, a priest of the archdiocese of Dublin serving as chaplain in the parish of Balally, writes about the Pope's Intention for September and the influence of *Laudato Si'* five years on. He is the author of *Theology and Ecology in Dialogue* (Messenger Publications, 2020).



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**Pope's Intention (universal):** We pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner.

entitled *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home* (LS), namely a call for all Christians to

There are a number of reasons why this particular theme has been chosen for September. It complements the Season of Creation which takes place in parishes from 1 September–4 October 2020.

Another reason why this particular theme was chosen is that it reflects an underlying concern of Pope Francis put forward in his encyclical

hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Last May, Pope Francis celebrated the fifth anniversary of *Laudato Si'* and announced that May 2020–May 2021 be set aside as a special year for reflection and action on the encyclical. After five years the encyclical is as important today as it was in 2015.

Pope Francis is very concerned that

multinational corporations have been exploiting the planet's resources by drilling for fossil fuels, forgetting that these resources of the earth are finite and limited (LS, 106). This exploitation of the earth's resources, according to the best science, is contributing to global warming. Global warming, in turn, is causing forest fires, melting ice caps, flooding lands, drought, storms, and the pollution of the oceans. There is a danger that the natural world is being used as a 'dump' for waste (LS, 173).

Pope Francis points out that 'For human beings ... to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation ... to degrade the integrity of the earth ... to contaminate the earth's water, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins' (LS, 8).

### Disfiguring the Face of God in Creation

Why does the Pope use such strong language here? When we trample aggressively on the earth, we disfigure the face of the Creator within creation. For Francis 'nature as a whole not only manifests God but is also a locus of his presence' (LS, 88). During the COVID-19 crisis, many people turned to nature to rediscover the presence of God all around them in a flower, in a sunset, or in a starry sky.

### A Matter of Justice

There is another reason why we should respect the resources of the planet. Creation is God's gift to humanity and its resources are

intended for all. There is a justice issue at stake when discussing the resources of the planet. Pope Francis talks about the importance of social justice, climate justice and intergenerational justice.

When social justice is ignored it is the poor who suffer. When climate justice is neglected it is again the poor who suffer most. Intergenerational justice is also important. Pope Francis asks the telling question: 'What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us?' (LS, 160). In answer to his own question he points out: 'We may well be leaving to the coming generations debris, desolation and filth' (LS, 161). Every generation has a duty in justice to hand on to the next generation a world that is habitable and healthy.

### Some Suggestions

What then can you do to promote respect for the planet's resources? Here are a few suggestions: (1) find out about the resources for the Season of Creation in your parish for the month of September, (2) watch out for 'the little miracles of creation' in the changing of the seasons and the autumn colours of September, (3) set up a *Laudato Si'* reflection and action group in your parish, (4) cut back on the use of plastics which are choking marine life. ❤️

Helpful resources for the Season of Creation are available on the website of the Irish Episcopal Conference: [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie)