

- 6 Reduce waste: depositing waste for recycling is good; reducing waste is better. Where using throwaway articles seems unavoidable, opt for compostable ones, if possible.
- 7 Re-use and recycle.
- 8 Raise our voice on economic and ecological issues in our communities and beyond: we need to push our governments to enact national and international policies that will support just and sustainable ways of living

Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Archdiocese of Brisbane sums it up on the Seasons of Creation Facebook page:

“As we turn the calendar to September and Spring spreads its wings, we begin the month-long celebration of the Season of Creation. We all know the planet is in trouble with the ecological crisis upon us. All kinds of voices are heard in the debate about the crisis and how to address it. The question is what kind of voice the Church should have in the debate. We certainly don't speak the language of ideology, politics or economics. We leave that to others. But we speak a language of our own, a biblical and Gospel word which no-one else can or will speak. This is because at its heart the ecological crisis is a spiritual crisis; and unless that is recognised our response to it will be one-dimensional. As Pope Francis has said, the crisis begins with the desertification of the heart and leads to the desertification of the planet. So we need to listen to the cry of the exploited earth, but we also need to go down into the desert of our heart. As Christians, we need to embrace a contemplative ecology which learns to look at and listen to creation in a new way. That's what will energise us to work for change that is deeply grounded and truly effective, the kind of change made possible by the power of the Gospel.”

NAMBUCCA VALLEY ANGLICANS WORSHIP at HOME

12.09.2021

SUPPLEMENT

SENTENCE, COLLECT, READINGS & HOMILY for today 12 September 2021

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sentence

Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for the sake of the gospel will save it.

Mark 8:35

Collect

Prayer of the Day

**God of mercy,
help us to forgive as you have forgiven us,
to trust you, even when hope is failing,
and to take up our cross daily
and follow you in your redeeming work;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

COLLECT for The Season Of Creation

Creator God,

to whom the earth and all that is in it belongs;
guide us and gift us with open hearts and minds
during our Season of Creation services,

So that we can match our beliefs of
your presence in the natural realm,

With our behaviours as caretakers of your creation's
diversity and abundance.

Through Jesus we pray.

Amen.

by Lesle Cropp

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Reading from the Old Testament: Prov 1: 20-33

- ²⁰ Out in the open wisdom calls aloud,
she raises her voice in the public square;
²¹ on top of the wall she cries out,
at the city gate she makes her speech:
²² 'How long will you who are simple love your simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate
knowledge?
²³ Repent at my rebuke! Then I will pour out my thoughts to you,
I will make known to you my teachings.
²⁴ But since you refuse to listen when I call and no one pays
attention when I stretch out my hand,
²⁵ since you disregard all my advice and do not accept my rebuke,
²⁶ I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you; I will mock when

- 2 Reflect on the ecological cycles of this place with gratitude for all that it provides. What nutrient cycles are supported by this place? What plants, animals, microbes and minerals are sheltered here? How do they serve the whole earth in their being?
- 3 Pay attention to what you feel as you contemplate the fragility, health of this site. What are the keys to sustaining the equilibrium and balance of this place? What is your effect on this balance?
- 4 Choose one feature of the site and pray for it, its rest and its renewal. What needs to be conserved for this site to heal itself? What parts of creation need to be restored to their rightful home here?
- 5 Look toward your response. What can you do to ease demands or promote the rest of this ecological site?

Our actions should show that we have fallen in love with the earth. There are many things we as a community in Christ can do, such as:

- 1 Create a community garden. We don't have a lot of space, but there is the lawn in front of the Office. A garden could be a symbol of life and communion with creation. It could be a wonderful meeting point and help to deepen relationships within the community.
- 2 Promote sustainable use of water: say no to bottled water where tap water is safe or look for alternatives, where it is not.
- 3 Monitor energy consumption and move towards renewable energies.
- 4 Deal with energy and materials consciously: every time we consume something, we pay twice: for its cost and for the disposal of waste. Small changes can be effective - like duplex printing on recycled paper, avoiding plastic and styrofoam cups or installing switchable electrical outlets.
- 5 Buy ecological, fair, and regional products.

- The Lutheran World Federation at its 12th Assembly in Windhoek in 2017 clearly pointed out that salvation, humans and creation are not for sale and urged for the development of alternative economic models that could be practised at large and small scales.
- The 26th General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in Leipzig in 2017 called for churches to present themselves as beacons of change and alternative communities amidst growing socio-economic and ecological challenges.
- The Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha in 2018 called us to a transforming discipleship.
- The Papal Encyclical *Laudato si'* has led to many Roman Catholic initiatives for lifestyle changes that reflect respect for creation.”

How, then, can we reflect our relationship with Christ and truly follow him? There are many practical suggestions, some easier to implement than others, For example: take the train; don't fly on holiday; draught proof and insulate your home; wear another layer so you can turn the heating down; walk not drive; eat less meat; eat less cheese and dairy; buy food grown locally; mend things, don't buy new.

Our attitude should be to individually fall in love with the Earth. Thank God for his world and everything on it and in it. Look carefully at the natural objects around us: a flower, a tree, the ocean, birds, the starry sky. Use our senses of sight, touch and smell. Ask God to help us see it with our heart and soul as well. Maybe engage our local ecology through an **Earth Examen**, as described in the season of Creation 2021 Celebration Guide, abbreviated here.

- 1 Become aware of God's presence in a natural or agricultural place. How is God present in this place? How does all the life you see exist in God's spirit?

- calamity overtakes you –
- 27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,
when distress and trouble overwhelm you.
 - 28 “Then they will call to me but I will not answer;
they will look for me but will not find me,
 - 29 since they hated knowledge and
did not choose to fear the Lord .
 - 30 Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke,
 - 31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled
with the fruit of their schemes.
 - 32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;
 - 33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease,
without fear of harm.”

Psalm 19

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God:
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork;
- 2 One day tells it to another:
and night to night communicates knowledge.
- 3 There is no speech or language:
nor are their voices heard;
- 4 Yet their sound has gone out through all the world:
and their words to the ends of the earth.
- 5 There he has pitched a tent for the sun:
which comes out as a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run his course.
- 6 Its rising is at one end of the heavens, and its circuit to their farthest bound:
and nothing is hidden from its heat.

- 7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul:
the command of the Lord is true, & makes wise the simple.
- 8 The precepts of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart:
the commandment of the Lord is pure, and gives light to the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the Lord is clean, and endures for ever:
the judgements of the Lord are unchanging, and righteous every one.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold:
sweeter also than honey, than the honey that drips from the comb.
- 11 Moreover, by them is your servant taught:
and in keeping them there is great reward.
- 12 Who can know their own unwitting sins?:
○ cleanse me from my secret faults.
- 13 Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins,
lest they get the mastery over me:
so I shall be clean, and innocent of great offence.
- 14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight:
○ Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

that God called good. To align ourselves with Jesus, whose stories talk about wheat and sheep and grapes and sparrows, and who showed his control of wind and waves. We are part of a community which bears the message of the kingdom in its concrete participation in activities of liberation, restoration, mutuality, forgiveness, and charity. We are to be the fragrance of Christ in the world he loves. Although this inevitably involves how we conduct our relationships with the people of our world, today we are focusing more on our relationship with our environment, the ecology of our world.

Pope Francis wrote in “Laudato Si” 217:

“It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.”

The effects of our following Jesus, as a community of believers, are that our relationship with the world around us is also changed. We are no longer able to have an attitude of consumer or exploiter. If we feel intimately connected with all that exists, then we will feel a sense of responsibility to use the resources of our world well, within limits, sustainably.

The Season of Creation material reports:

“We live in a time of change. Ecumenical unity and conviction about the necessity for a deep system change has never been so broad:

- The 13th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan in 2013 called for a pilgrimage towards an Economy of Life and climate justice.

- It does not call people to seek out, rest content with, or glorify in abuse or victimization.

So what does deny oneself mean? The word 'deny' is the same word used of Peter's denial of Jesus following his arrest. Peter disowned Jesus. Deny self means to disown oneself. To no longer live on one's own behalf. As Paul puts it in Galatians 2:20:

It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Self-denial then involves the relinquishment of an individual's autonomy, which goes against human habits of self-preservation and personal advancement. It is losing one's life for Jesus' sake in order to gain true life, to experience the wholeness or salvation that Jesus offers in his proclamation of the kingdom of God. Jesus calls people to embrace new understandings of identity. Disciples join a community defined by association with Jesus; they enter a new family comprising all of Jesus' followers. Self-denial is not self-annihilation, but complete redefinition.

Then there is 'take up their cross'. Jesus makes deny oneself equal with take up your cross. The two express the same idea. The cross wasn't about self-promotion or self-affirmation. The person carrying a cross knew they couldn't save themselves. It's saying, "Walk down death row daily and follow Me".

Note that we are not taking up Jesus' cross but our own cross. Everyone is to take up his or her own cross, each declaring the forfeiture of one's life. We have devoted our lives to the public demonstration or enactment of God's reign.

Self-denial and cross-bearing are indicative of what it means to follow Jesus, to live by faith in the Son of God. To live as brothers and sisters of Jesus, who created the world and everything in it, the world

New Testament Reading: James 2: 18-26

- 18 But someone will say,
 "You have faith; I have deeds."
 Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my
 faith by my deeds.
- 19 You believe that there is one God. Good!
 Even the demons believe that – and shudder.
- 20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without
 deeds is useless?
- 21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what
 he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?
- 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together,
 and his faith was made complete by what he did.
- 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says,
 "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as
 righteousness," and he was called God's friend.
- 24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they
 do and not by faith alone.
- 25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute
 considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging
 to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?
- 26 As the body without the spirit is dead,
 so faith without deeds is dead.

Gospel of Mark 8: 27-38

27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around
Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them,
“Who do people say I am?”
28 They replied,
“Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still
others, one of the prophets.”
29 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”
Peter answered,
“You are the Messiah.”
30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.
31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must
suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief
priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed
and after three days rise again.
32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and
began to rebuke him.
33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked
Peter.
“Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind
the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”
34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and
said:
“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow me.
35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but
whoever loses their life for me & for the gospel will save it.
36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world,
yet forfeit their soul?
37 Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?
38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this
adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be
ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with
the holy angels.”

Homily Season of Creation by Anne Weekley

Theme: Oikologie: Wisdom from our home planet

The 2021 Season of Creation theme is “**A Home for All?: Renewing the Oikos of God**”. This theme is in alignment with a global call to recognise that “the Earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.” This means every creature belongs to the Earth community and the entire community belongs to the Creator and we are called as custodians to care for our common home in an integral, ecological, sustainable manner.

As Christians, however, what we have to offer our world is unique. No other group interested in the preservation of our world can offer what we can. We have a living relationship with the God who made the world, a living relationship gained through Jesus Christ. Our Gospel reading today from Mark 8 shows us the way to this relationship. At the pinnacle of his earthly ministry, between his time of teaching and healing and his preparation for death & resurrection, Jesus gives his disciples, and anyone prepared to listen, what it means to follow him.

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Jesus’ call to his disciples was to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow him. As followers of Jesus, we are called to this too. We are called to deny ourselves. What does that mean? Firstly, a couple of things it does not mean.

- It is not the same as practising self-denial by giving up things or activities for a while.
- It does not negate our value as persons.
- It does not imply that God would always have us choose the most distasteful of two options, lest we be guilty of nourishing self-seeking desires.