



GOD IN THE STREETS

TWELVE SCRIPTURAL
REFLECTIONS:

**Year B Ordinary
Sunday Masses**

Fr Charles Rue
[www.columban.org.au/media-and-
publications/liturgical-resources/](http://www.columban.org.au/media-and-publications/liturgical-resources/)



Liturgy is a privileged activity where believers meet God, or to use a favoured word of Pope Francis, *encounter God*. The worshipping church community enfoldes each believer within the Body of the Risen Christ.

The life of God flows through the person of Jesus, sent on mission by his Father to bring life. Believers belong with Jesus and his followers, through baptism and new life in the Holy Spirit.

God is present in the historical realities of every place and time on earth. It is our common home. In liturgical prayer, the gathered community of the faithful express and experience more deeply the very life of God active in the real lives of every believer journeying in this world.

The entire People of God have the task of hearing, distinguishing and interpreting the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the Divine Word, so that revealed truth can be more deeply penetrated, and better understood (Gaudium et Spes #44).

At the heart of Christian liturgical worship is proclamation of Scripture. It reveals by remembering the works of God since the time of creation. The earth and all it sustains is the first witness to the outflow of *God's loving kindness*. This love continues in the Salvation History of God's Chosen People, Israel. It culminates in the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus who is at the center of a new People of God. Church community liturgical rituals remember Scriptural stories of God's out-reach and varied human responses. This form of worship leads to Eucharistic praise

for what God is doing in the great Prayer of Thanksgiving.

The Holy Spirit is present in the earthly journey of all people, their joys and hopes, anxieties and pain. God is active in the history of earth and humanity so that the daily life of people becomes the meat of liturgical prayer. God in the world sets the agenda. It is the job of worship leaders to help proclaim this connection and lead believers to experience this active presence of God.

To take an image from music, the design and structure of liturgy bounces the daily experiences of believers off Scripture in a type of counter-point. Like the blending of two melodies, liturgical prayer remembers and celebrates God at work in the realities of life on earth.

This resource offers suggestions to help orchestrate this counterpoint during the Year B Ordinary Sunday Masses. It begins with examples of life-realities related to the designated Scripture read on a particular Sunday. What are believers thinking and feeling? Excerpts from the Sunday readings set the scene - the real lives of people matter; likewise the active presence of God there matters.

Suggested prayers and reflections aim to help worship-leaders tease out the link between the realities of human life and what God is doing. God works within the human enterprise hence the title of this resource, ***God in the Streets***.

This resource does not focus on moral dictates, nor does it encourage escape into 'paradise'. It aims to help believing communities pray about

contents

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1. 10th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – Counter Cultural
 2. 11th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – Small Beginnings
 3. 12th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – God of Surprises
 4. 13th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – Faced with Death
 5. 14th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – Formation and Prophets
 6. 15th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – Truth and Mercy
 7. 16th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – Leaders as Good Shepherds
 8. 17th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – One God in All
 9. 18th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – God Nourishes Life
 10. 19th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – God does not Hide
 11. 20th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – Life Beyond Life
 12. 21st SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – Choose Life

their lives in the here and now. Suggestions offer hope for the believers to both return to what God wants, to do God's will, and consciously cooperate in growing new life in God. Liturgy celebrates that a loving God is to be found in all that works for the common good, as well as in the often-messy realities of ordinary life. It tells of a God who understands, who cares and guides. With the Holy Spirit, believers are *writing a Fifth Gospel with their very lives* (2 Cor 3:3).

Preparation is needed, both by readers and a choir backing up the priest as community leader. Because liturgy is a public event, worship-leaders try to present a professional tone. Clear, measured proclamation of Scripture and prayer is powerful. Hymns chosen to amplify the emotional tone of the Readings is equally powerful. Good preparation leads to clear communication and a good feeling of assured belonging within a believing community. *Taste and see that the Lord is good.*

Suggested *Prayers of the Faithful* reinforce connections between the Sunday Scriptural

messages and the realities of life. Petitions begin by naming what God has already done as the basis for a particular request. It does not have intercessions for church leaders or for those who have died because both are included in every Eucharistic Prayer. Vatican II liturgical reforms wanted to eliminate repetitions (SC #34).

This resource can be freely adapted to local needs since the realities of life are environmentally local and community specific. As every liturgical context is unique, so must its liturgical reflections and prayers. Adaptations however need to preserve the *principle of bouncing real life situations off the designated Sunday Readings*. This helps preserve genuine tradition.

Of note was an appeal arising at the 2023 Synod to use clear and culturally moving English in liturgical prayer. It would first, promote heart-felt participation by the faithful and second, help priests articulate God at work in the real life of a believing community (Thomas Reese NCRonline February 16, 2024).

1. 10th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Counter Cultural

Life Realities

Scripture tells stories of issues we meet in our lives everyday – being embarrassed or afraid, blame and guilt, family and social pressures, mental capacities and madness, corruption and integrity, faith and going against the tide of opinion.

Grace to Celebrate

Today the Book of Genesis tells how evil came into the world. Adam disobeyed God by eating fruit from the forbidden tree. He fails to take responsibility for his decision, complicating matters by blaming Eve, who in turn blames the serpent devil. But, hope is not lost. The grace of living with integrity comes through Jesus who crushes the serpent's head. Graced, we can celebrate choosing to live as God wants.

Scriptural Excerpts

Gen 3: 9-15; Ps 129; 1 Cor 4: 13 – 5:1; Mk 3: 20-35

*the Lord God called Adam
heard but was afraid, naked
who told you, eaten of the tree?
the woman gave me and I ate
the serpent deceived me
enmity between you and
her seed will crush its head
from the depths I cried
with you merciful forgiveness
will redeem Israel's iniquities
you raised Jesus, will raise us
grace abounds
to the glory of God
outwardly corrupted
inwardly renewed daily
things not seen, eternal
have a house in heaven
draw everyone to myself
friends went to lay hold of Jesus
he has become mad
scribes: by the prince of devils
he casts out devils
blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
who is my mother and brethren?
whoever does the will of God.*

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. Called to Integrity – Our calling is to obey the ways God created. That our pride not divert us away from the pathways God opens for each of us. We pray ...
2. Blame – Jesus called his followers to repent. That we listen to the judgement of our own conscience and not escape into blaming others. We pray ...
3. Mental Health – Even the family of Jesus wondered if he had gone mad. That we care for our own mental health and be slow to judge others. We pray ...
4. Unafraid – Jesus called his followers to be a light to the nations. That we not be afraid to face ridicule in living out of the Gospel, or in raising our voice as citizens. We pray ...
5. Care for Earth – God lives in us and our world. That our church community welcome the encyclical Care for Earth, our Common Home, creating opportunities to make it real. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being, it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives. After life as a carpenter and synagogue member Jesus travelled preaching and healing in spite of misunderstanding and ridicule accepting his pathway to crucifixion. Obedient to his Father, his integrity brought new life to the world. So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...





Life, for all its confrontations, is the art of encounter.

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #215

First Chapters of Genesis

Genesis introduces the Bible. Its first eleven chapters tell of God creating the cosmos and humanity. Later chapters tell origin stories of the Jewish people - descendants of Abraham, Chosen People of God. Oral and written traditions were drawn together between the 5-6th century BC to compile the Hebrew Scriptures. Its first chapters carry three major theological statements. First, God made the cosmos and it was very good. Second, God created humankind in God's own image. Third, People can use their freedom to rebel, thus sin entered the world.

Faith is Anti-cultural

The family of Jesus thought he was mad and came to take him home. Prophets were often eccentric. One walked naked as a sign that Israel was morally bankrupt. St John of the Cross was locked away by his fellow Carmelites because of his radical mystical teachings. After he wrote about God in the cosmos, Teilhard de Chardin SJ was banned from publishing. A century later Pope Francis quoted his insights about Mass on the altar of Earth. Poets often captured this 'mad' God's presence in an often 'messy world'.

... learn from the saints ... confronted the difficulties of their own day ...

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #263

Reforms of Vatican II

Pope John XXIII called bishops of the world together in the 1963-65 Second Vatican Council (Vat II) - a pastoral council to renew the church. A story captures his radical spirit. The Pope flung open a window in the Vatican and said, let in the fresh air of the Holy Spirit. Vat II mined the origins of the church for inspiration. To reform its outreach, it removed 'barnacles' that had attached

to the 'barque of Peter'. The 'Constitution on the Church in the Modern World' began, the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age ... [are those] of the followers of Christ. Every Sunday the liturgy invites us to remember these words.

London – Blake poem 1794

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man, In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

[environmental] crisis requires bold decisions

– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #49



... unless we struggle ... our concern for ecology will [not] produce results ...

– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #160

2. 11th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Small Beginnings

Life Realities

Scripture raises issues we encounter in our ordinary lives – sowing seeds of hope, patience to appreciate slow growth, life moves on while we sleep, growing old with grace, making a place for others, cultivating welcoming human habitats and natural ecosystems.

Grace to Celebrate

Today's Scripture invites us to observe how trees and plants grow slowly in nature. God has planted us in the world to grow. Humbly we appreciate small beginnings. We gradually grow, nourished by those around us in life. God is ever-present, guiding and strengthening us on our journey. We can celebrate living the vision God has for each of us.

Scriptural Excerpts

Ez 17: 22-24; Ps 91; 2 Cor 5: 6-10; Mk 4: 26-34

*God said: I will plant a twig
become a great cedar
all birds will make it a nest
caused the dry tree to flourish
mercy in the morning, truth at night
flourish like the palm tree
planted in the house of the Lord
a fruitful old age
always confident walk by faith,
not by sight labour to please God
the seed is the word of God
Christ is the sower
kingdom of God like seed on earth
night and day grows while we sleep
the blade, the ear, the full corn
the harvest is come
kingdom of God? a parable
like a mustard seed
less than all the seeds of earth
grows, shoots great branches so
the birds of the air may dwell.
Jesus spoke as were able to hear
apart, he explained all to his disciples.*

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. Lessons from the Natural World - God willed the slow evolution of the universe. That we see ourselves as important parts of a wondrous creation. We pray ...
2. Humble Beginnings - Jesus began life in a small household in Nazareth. That we relish the place of our birth, its people and the opportunities given to grow skills for life. We pray ...
3. Old Age – God has designed our span of years. That we change and grow with God in every new stage of life, bearing the fruit God wills for us. We pray ...
4. Farmers and Foresters – God willed for humankind to till the land. That all linked to life on the land let the wisdom of God guide the sweat of their brow. We pray ...
5. Caring for Nature's Gifts – God places us within a unique time and place. That we learn about earth as our common home and commit to care for our local place. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being, it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives. The cycle of seasons, diversity of plants each show the love and wisdom of God. The prophets of Israel leading to Jesus himself tell us to observe the natural world and learn. As part of creation, humankind grows slowly but strongly into diverse maturity revealing God's loving reign. So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...



... actions, great and small ... intertwined like words in a poem ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #169

Power of Language

Many of the world's best writers in English hail from Ireland. It has a fractured history optimised by the mid-1800s famine when millions starved or migrated. Their collective trauma inspired artists. Writers linked the musicality of the Irish language with themes of poverty and social repression, but also with survival and flourishing. Historian Adrian Hastings said, *Irish writers and songsters took the language of the oppressor (England) and used it against them*. Church wise, they opened a post-colonial mission pathway in writing new theology.

Food and Farming

Australian farmers are creating new practices to face the accelerating climate change – Farmers 4 Climate Action, Regenerative Farming. Care for soil is basic. They research new options, ecologically safe and biodiversity friendly - run economically viable enterprises while belonging to a local community, wary of controlling agro-chemical companies which hold allegiance to no nation. Food distributors need to supply citizens with healthy food at affordable prices. Faith sees these actions as the will of a caring and creative God.

... evangelizing community ... celebrates every small victory ...

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #24

Gospel of Mark

Mark runs from the baptism of Jesus, through his public life as preacher and miracle worker, to his death and empty tomb. His Gospel gradually reveals this *Son of Man* as the *Son of God*, the *Suffering Servant*. Written in Greek around AD 70 when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, Mark serves as a summary of the person of Jesus for faith communities scattered throughout the Roman world.

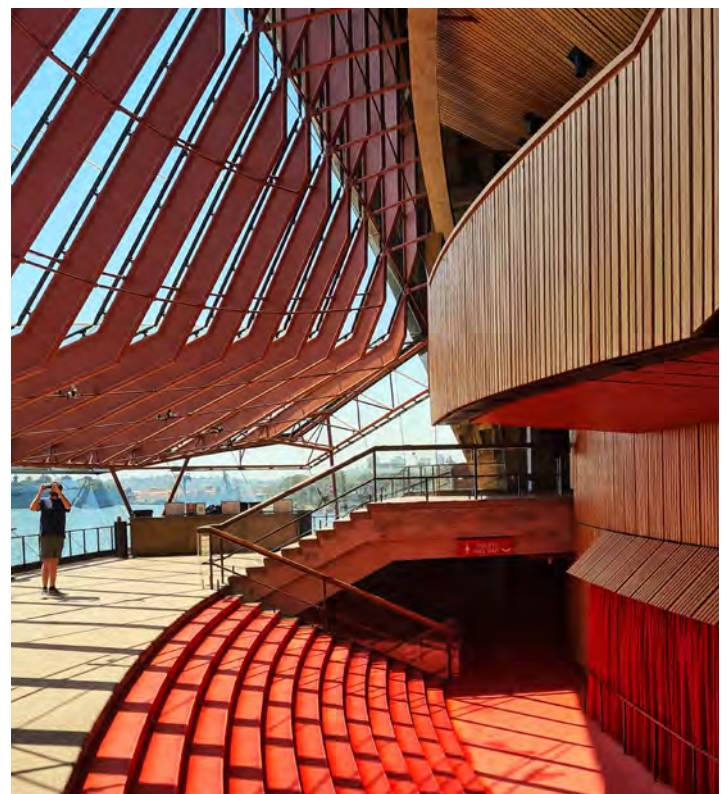
The Gospel ends at the empty tomb with women told by an angel to witness that he is risen. Later editions amplify this 'Great Commission'.

War on Waste

Local efforts matter. At home, check for unused 'stuff' in wardrobes asking, do I need to buy more? Create a worm farm to turn food scraps into soil. At school, inspired by the ABC's *War on Waste* videos, a teacher and students can begin with a simple audit of school waste. Ratepayers might ask their local council to provide multi-coloured waste bins for easier sorting - cheaper too for waste disposal companies. Pope Francis lamented *turning the world into a garbage dump*. Ocean pollution is an obvious sign.

... work on a small scale ... with a larger perspective ...

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #235



... independence from reality ... human kind sets up in place of God ...

– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #117



3. 12th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

God of Surprises

Life Realities

Scripture raises issues confronting us in our ordinary lives – recurring wars, weather disasters, loss of hope. Mass-media amplifies these realities - fires and floods, youth losing ideals, couples' reluctance to bring children into a messy world, fear of artificial intelligence (AI), declining trust in democracy, even disturbing astronomical discoveries about an expanding universe.

Grace to Celebrate

In today's first reading, God confronts the small thinking of Job. God points to the wonders of sea and sky and asks, who put all this in order? Job has no answer except to admit that he is small-minded before the depths of God. The works of the Creator show the bigness of God. The Gospel story of Jesus calming the storm has a similar message. We celebrate our confidence in a limitless creative God.

... world searching, with anguish, with hope ...
– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #1



... good seed that grows amid the weeds ...
surprises us ...
– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #278

Scriptural Excerpts

Job 38: 1, 8-11; Ps 106; 2 Cor; Mk 4: 35-41

the Lord answered Job
Who shut up the sea
made a cloud its garment
set my bounds around it?
God's love is everlasting
sailors saw God's wonders.
God made the storm a breeze
waves were stilled
brought them to a safe port
the love of Christ presses us
died for all; that they live
in Christ a new creature
the old passed away
all things are made new
they take Jesus in the ship
a great storm arose
Jesus sleeping; they wake him
Master, not care that we perish?
He rebuked the wind
stilled the sea made a great calm
Why are you fearful?
have you not faith yet?
The disciples said:
Who is this? wind and sea obey him.

... no fear of the other ... [nor] desire to erect
walls ...
– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #146





Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. The Unknown – God forever surprises the scientific world. That we be ever open to new revelations in both the world of science and the spiritual realm. We pray ...
2. Fear – God gently dissolves the fears of people. That we put our fears before God in prayer and share them honestly with those close to us. We pray ...
3. Wonder – The works of God are called wonders. That we be generous in praising both the wonders of creation and achievements of people around us. We pray ...
4. Human Pride – Pride is at the root of all rebellions against God. That we reject the temptation to control others, rather, cultivating humility in our human journey. We pray ...
5. Solstice – God ordered the seasons of earth. That we celebrate nature's seasons of dark and light, and the gifts each brings to our hemisphere. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being
it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus
and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives.

God forever surprises humanity
in the endless variety of life in nature
and in the many twists of history.
Jesus taught his disciples not to fear
convincing them by calming the storm.
So we join the messengers of God
the saints and all people of good will
and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...

God Unlimited in Jesus

*I am father, I am brother, I am bridegroom, I
am home, I am sustenance, I am garment, I am
root, I am foundation - all that you desire, I am.
I am servant, come to minister. I am friend, both
member and leader, brother and sister and
mother. I am all things - simply cling close to me. I
was poor for you, wander for you, upon the Cross
for you and in the tomb. On high, I intercede to the
Father for you, on earth I come as ambassador of*

*God your Father. You are all things to me - sibling
and co- heir, part of me. What more could you
desire? (John Chrysostom, Homily 76)*

Social Evolution

Questioning accepted attitudes on the roles of women, the right to a safe environment, respect for people of colour and more have emerged as Catholic thinking grows. In the 1850s, Henry Newman wrote on the development of dogma, an application of the Gospel. Believers should not be surprised when Pope Francis writes on the environment nor when he names the armament-trade as a key threat to peace. They should not be surprised when he calls for a caring pastoral response in recognising gay relationships.

Calamities

Covid-19 deaths turned the world upside down - home, work, travel. Human history sees it differently - plagues, flu, invasive species and other killers keep recurring. Images of trauma keep showing up even in art. What does the Bible say? Blame the victims, blame God or blame leaders? Or, does it point to human complicity? Science tells us the 'how' of God's evolutionary way of creation, including calamities. Faith guides our obedience to God's way of unfolding love in dedicating our talents in responsible planning.

Sundays 2-6 Ordinary Time

Scripture for the Sundays after Christmas start Ordinary Time in the liturgical Year. It begins again post-Pentecost. Year B fluctuates between readings from the Gospels of John and Mark. Mark introduces the mission of Jesus as a teacher with authority, who works miracles to show power over devils. Constructed like a liturgical scaffolding, the first readings act as a foil for Jesus as prophet and leader. The obedience of Jesus to God as his Father frames his mission. His message is simple, boast in the Gospel and do all to the glory of God.

*... liberation from fear, greed and compulsion ...
– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #9*



4. 13th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Faced with Death

Life Realities

Stories of death are part of our ordinary lives – tragic wars and starvation, gang violence and wife bashing, misplaced sacrifices and forever-young health products, declining health, unexpected deaths, feeling life is a drag.

Grace to Celebrate

In today's Gospel, Jesus says to the synagogue leader Jairus, whose daughter is dying, fear not but believe. The death of people close to us, killing of innocent people, even our own approaching death challenges us. God created the earthly cycles of life and death as the start of life eternal. Remembering God's promise of continuing life, we celebrate without fear.

Scriptural Excerpts

Wis 1: 13-15; 2: 23-24; Ps 29; 2 Cor 8: 7, 9, 13-15; Mk 5: 21-43

*God did not make death
created all for health not poison
made in God's own likeness
by the devil's envy death came
God, you uphold me, saved me
evening weeping, morning gladness
in faith, knowledge, care,
fullness and love, grace abound
Jesus Christ, rich but poor for us
let your abundance supply want
one with little has no want
multitude assembled by the sea
Jairus saw Jesus and fell at his feet
my daughter is at the point of death
come, lay your hand on her
your daughter is dead
why trouble the master further?
Jesus heard and said fear not, only believe.*

... life is stronger than death ... [not] live as islands ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #87

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. Celebrate Death – God shares life with all creation. That we fill funerals with hope, recalling moments of God given life and forgiveness. We pray ...
2. Declining Health – God has destined life as a journey. That we knowingly recall and humbly praise the cycles of earthly life and death ordered by God. We pray ...
3. Sacrifice – Jesus took on the limits of humanity to bring life. That we willingly serve the poor and grow the life of those considered un-deserving. We pray ...
4. Life choices – The devil's envy sows self-seeking ambition. That we shun the world of self- entitlement and use our skills to co-create with God. We pray ...
5. Life of Earth – God created the richness of earth's biodiversity. That we learn to love our links with all created things and work to grow their evolving cycles of life. We pray ...





Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being
it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus
and his Spirit who guides our daily lives.

Death is a pervasive reality
for individuals and nations
but Jesus came to bring life.
Faced with suffering and despair
God tells us to call out in hope
and God will listen
strengthening us for the journey.
So we join the messengers of God
the saints and all people of good will
and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...

*... passed from death to life because we love
one another ...*

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #61

War

Two enduring stories come from WWI and WWII:
defending world freedom against dictators; the
value of camaraderie among soldiers. Few stories
tell of the physical horrors of war or the mental
trauma of soldiers and their families at home.
The World at War TV series in the 1960s awoke
Australians to the evils of war. Media showing
the realities of war in Vietnam turned attitudes
and now exposes ideological reasons for going
to war and the lies of well-armed local thugs.
Pope Francis points to profit-making by the arms
industry. Maybe we should re-purpose the War
Memorial in Canberra as a Peace Memorial.

Wealth Gap - Structures of Death

Church social teaching for a century called for
a wage sufficient for a family to live with dignity
and fulfilment. Social structures change - single
parent households; more women in paid work;
government support. Regardless, family financial
security remains key to living a full life. The
Church teaches that amassing wealth beyond
reasonable need constitutes injustice. The richest
5% in Australia hold one-third of the country's
wealth. The Gospel questions lifestyles based on
unbalanced tax regimes and Pope Francis warns
about the *dictatorship of economics*.

... evil embedded in social structures ... death ...

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #58

Law of Discovery

Legal fictions can hide injustice. From the 15th
Century, explorers claimed colonized lands
under the *Doctrine of Discovery*, distorting a
papal exhortation to share faith in new lands.
Bartolomeo de las Casas argued for the rights
of local peoples in Spanish colonies. However,
competing colonial powers ignored the dignity of
indigenous peoples. Colonizers of Australia used
the legal construct of *terra nullius* to take the land
from its First Peoples (rejected 1992 by the High
Court). This abuse of law prompts both lament and
commitment to grow paths of reconciliation.

Edith Stein and The Beauty of God

Edith was born in 1891 to an Orthodox Jewish
family in Germany. She studied philosophy and
lectured for ten years before Nazi authorities
forced her to resign. In 1922 she was baptized
as a Catholic. After reading the mystical writings
of Theresa of Avila, she entered the Cologne
Carmelite Convent as Sister Teresa. As an ethnic
Jew, she was sent to Auschwitz concentration
camp. Killed in the gas chamber in 1942, she was
declared a martyr in 1998. Edith searched and
found the beauty of God present in all things,
including the twists of life.



*... air pollutants causes millions of premature
deaths ...*

– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #20



5. 14th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Formation and Prophets

Life Realities

Today's Readings alert us to look at the twists and turns in our lives - seeking trustworthy information, humble before real data, mass media dis-information, stubborn denial, being open to new ideas, correcting mistakes, patient searching, internal doubt and external pressure, environmental warriors.

Grace to Celebrate

The Hebrew prophets lead us to Jesus as God's last Prophet. Sent on mission to the rebellious People of Israel, Ezekiel said turn back to God. The teaching and miracles of Jesus challenged the people of his own town. But they would not accept him because of their lack of faith. Even with limited faith, let us celebrate Jesus the Prophet of God among us.

Scriptural Excerpts

Ez 2: 2-5; Ps 122; 2 Cor 12: 7-10; Mk 6: 1-6

*the spirit entered into me, I heard
Son of man, I send you to Israel
rebellious people of obstinate heart.
lest the message exalt me
was given a sting in my flesh
God's grace is sufficient for you
power is made perfect in infirmity
I glory in my infirmities
that Christ's power dwell in me
when I am weak, then I am strong
Jesus went to his own country
what wisdom is given to him and
such mighty works by his hands?
Is this not the carpenter, son of Mary
are not his brothers and sisters here?
they were scandalized
prophet, no honour in his own place
and among his own kindred
Jesus could not work miracles
because of their unbelief
so went to nearby villages teaching.*

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. Christian Prophecy – Jesus is the final Prophet sent by God. That we accept our gifted vocation to be prophets of God in our personal, work and communal lives. We pray ...
2. Challenges – God gives us the strength to face our daily challenges. That we reflect on evolving social changes, calling the Spirit of Jesus to give us light for the journey. We pray ...
3. Arrogance – God named pride as the great sin against faith. That we be open to learn, rejecting the arrogance of certainty that leads to division and war. We pray ...
4. Ridicule – God chose the lowly as leaders of the oppressed. That, in spite of limitations, we look for opportunities to speak up in serving the outsider. We pray ...
5. Climate Change Activists – God raised up leaders to bring the People out of famine. That we choose a cause to support local and global climate activists. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanking

God in whom we live, move and have our being, it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives. God's prophets renewed the hard of heart forming the people to face chaos and injustice. They showed the mercy of God to the intransigent and challenged leaders to embrace integrity. Jesus as Prophet taught and healed supporting those weak of faith. So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...





... prophets invite us to find renewed strength in times of trial ...

– Pope Francis *Laudato Si'* #73

Family Prayer

South Korean Catholics published a daily family prayer book in the 1970s. Half of it changed each day - Scripture from the Lectionary, prayers of the faithful and a profession of belief. The other half repeated set prayers, ending with the Our Father as a sign of unity. Families grew in Catholic identity - connecting Catholic traditions with the realities of daily life. With no Catholic education system, family prayer was a bedrock of church communities. In spite of a history of persecution, Catholics led lives of meaning that helped form a just nation.

Cardijn Formation Method

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis shows how to use the well tested Cardijn method of formation – See.Judge.Act. He pleads for priests and lay leaders alike to engage in *formation programs that address both human weakness and divine grace in a journey of faith*. The method takes many names – Pastoral Cycle, Action Reflection, Conversations for Action. Key to the ‘methods’ success is that formation happens in the process of getting involved and reflection, like a rolling ball. A *deductive way of learning*, it contrasts with an inductive way where learning is dictated from outside.

Prophets ... embracing everyone on the basis of our shared humanity ...

– Pope Francis *Fratelli Tutti* #60



David Suzuki

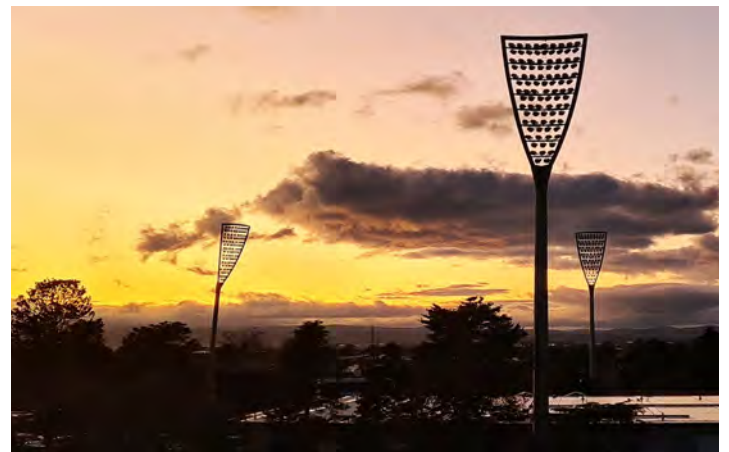
Jesus often taught in parables - simple stories with a message. Over five decades, David Suzuki worked as a prophetic teacher and environmental activist. His TV series spread scientific understanding of earth's processes to stimulate *earthcare*. Notably, his starting point was peoples' concerns, not the science itself – fascination with insects or ocean currents, worries about nuclear power or genetically modified foods. Pope Francis quotes Suzuki. Living out a way of *seeing the world* helped form them both as communicators.

... globalization still lacks the prophetic and spiritual contribution of unity ...

– Pope Francis *Fratelli Tutti* #280

Shakespeare and Humanity

Love and death, ambition and killings, fantasy and comedy, envy and hate – qualities like these appear often in the writings of William Shakespeare. Mirroring life, his stories capture facets of the human character, teasing out what it means to be human. He draws on history in a post- Catholic era to image human life. For *those with eyes to see*, he offers insights on their faith journey. Reading Shakespeare can be likened to liturgical prayer - a meeting between real life and Gospel.



... not take time to hear God's word with an open heart ... false prophets ...

– Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* #151



6. 15th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Truth and Mercy

Life Realities

Some life situations this Sunday's Scripture point to – overwhelmed by a mystery of nature, sense of a world beyond, coming face to face with people who act differently, confronted by a work of art, faced with an inconvenient truth, surprise at the obvious goodness of someone.

Grace to Celebrate

Today's readings combine what seem like opposites - truth and mercy. God sends the prophet Amos to open the way of peace to Israel, a peace resting on truth and mercy. God as Father of Jesus has sent him to bring true justice. We celebrate that Jesus shares this mission with us.

Scriptural excerpts

Am 7: 12-15; Ps 84; Eph 1: 3-14; Mk 6: 7-13

*Amos, seer, and prophet
speak peace to the people
mercy and truth have met
justice and peace have kissed
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
chose us before the world began
adopted children to his purpose
filling us in wisdom and prudence
knowing the mystery of his will
in the fullness of time
re-establish all things in Christ
those in heaven and on earth
unto his purpose, to his glory
heard the word of truth
signed with the holy Spirit
the pledge of our inheritance
enlighten the eyes of our hearts
the hope of our calling
Jesus sent the twelve two by two
power over unclean spirits
cast out devils, anoint with oil.*

God never tires of forgiving us; we ... tire of seeking his mercy.

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #3

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. God's Children – God claims all peoples as divine children. That we see unique revelations of God in the diversity of human colour, face and culture. We pray ...
2. Two by Two – Jesus sent his disciples two by two to preach and heal. That we join a service group in our parish community, offering our skills and time. We pray ...
3. Truth and Mercy Kiss – Jesus showed a new way during his three years of ministry. That we shun harshness in truth telling and the image of weakness in showing mercy. We pray ...
4. Justice and Peace – Justice is a gift of God's own self. That we help grow the peace God gives by living justly, and by creating just social structures. We pray ...
5. Inconvenient Truth – God speaks through an evolving earth. That we listen to the Antarctic Ocean speaking as its ice melts and its circling cold current slows. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit guiding our daily lives. Justice and Mercy are of your being but you give them as gifts to all peoples basic elements for growing peace. In your Son justice and mercy meet healing those on the fringes for your own purpose and pleasure. So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...





Pacific Neighbors

Caring starts with knowing what others care about. Pacific Islanders worry about the impact of mining on their ocean floors and electric generators that depend on imported oil, the impact of rising sea levels on their island homes. They fear being turned into environmental refugees and the Pacific becoming a 'play-ground' for contending militaries. These worries set the agenda when we want to know about Pacific Peoples or act so that *truth and mercy kiss* (Pacific journalists ABC podcasts).

AI Control

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the focus of the Pope's New Year 2024 Message. He praises its potential to foster friendship but warns that AI is not a value free zone. Inclusion, transparency, security, privacy and reliability matter. Fake news fosters conflict. Personal and political freedom, and the dignity of local cultures, are in danger when profit and power abuse the power of AI. The use of *Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems* grows in 2024 wars. Nations have a duty not to lose control of AI research and production, distribution and marketing.

... mercy between a Samaritan and a Jew ...
– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #83

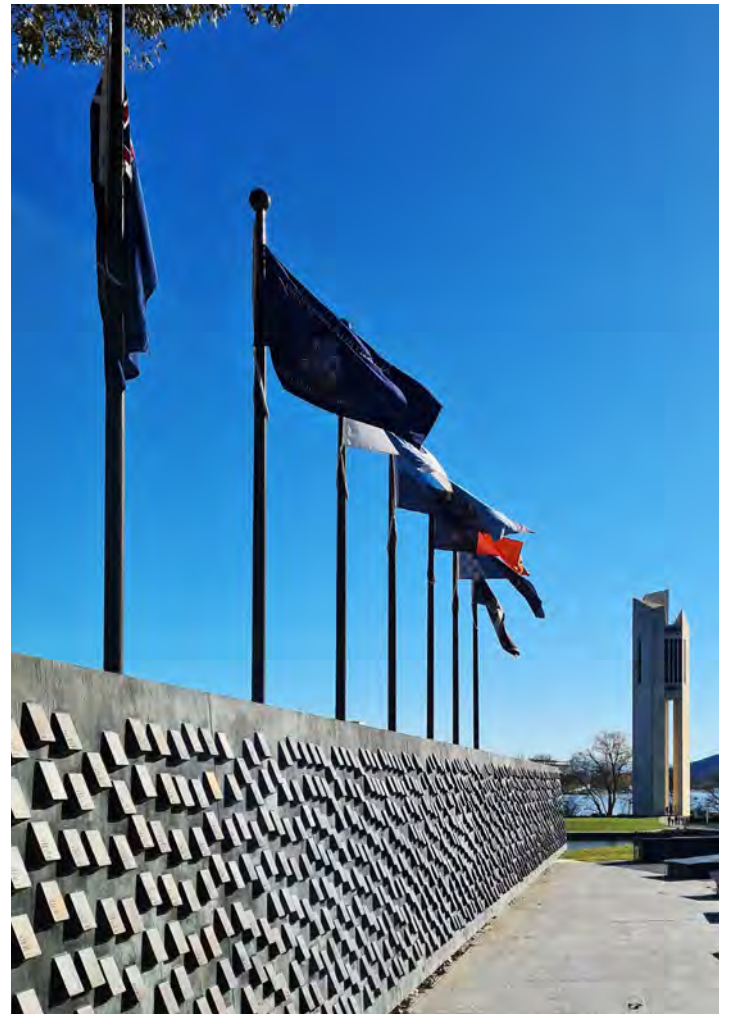
Kingdom Time

Some churches call the Sundays in Ordinary time, 'Kingdom Time'. The name captures the mood of the liturgical period after Pentecost - believers striving to bring the reign of God into their ordinary lives. Some add readings on emerging issues - friendship between David and Jonathan - to meet the pastoral needs of gay people. Sr Ruth Fox wrote about the exclusion of Scriptural passages about the ministry of ordained women ('Dreaming of a Revised Catholic Lectionary', Charles Rue *Australian Catholic Record* 99/3 (2022): 321-332).

... serve the purpose that God gave ...
– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #93

Act of Faith in the Future

The Thwaites Glacier in West Antarctica is the size of Victoria with ice a kilometre thick. Important to global weather and sea levels, it is in danger of a total meltdown. Both realists and alarmists name it as the Doomsday Glacier. Scientist Elizabeth Rush was part of a 1960s expedition to Thwaites when its death became apparent. She faced a dilemma - to bring a child into this rapidly changing world or not. In a radical act of faith, she had a child, trusting in the courage of her generation to face the climate emergency (*The Quickenings*, 2019).



... each creature reflects something of God ...
– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #221

7. 16th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Leaders as Good Shepherds

Life Realities

The Scripture today rings true – failures of church and political leaders, incompetent and self-serving officials, greedy business leaders, aggressive competition and oneupmanship, feeling abandoned like an outsider, searching for empathy, striving to be a good parent.

Grace to Celebrate

Today's readings invite us to remember that God cares for us even when leaders fail. God is present in those who nourish our hearts and minds, guiding our vision and giving us hope in times of doubt. We remember and celebrate our journey beyond uncertainty.

... sign of decline of popular leadership is concern for short-term advantage ...
– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #161



Scriptural excerpts

Jer 23: 1-6; Ps 22; Eph 2: 13-18; Mk 6: 30-34

*you have scattered my flock
I will gather the remnant
they will multiply
do not fear I will raise up David
to execute justice on earth
the Lord is my shepherd
I shall not want
prepared a table, anointed me
your mercy inebriated me
I dwell in the Lord's house
breaking walls, peace
apostles acting and teaching
come apart and rest a little
by ship to a place apart
people arrived before them
Jesus saw, had compassion
like sheep without a shepherd
began to teach them.*

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. Church Leaders – The Holy Spirit led decisions in the apostolic church. That we walk in synodality with Pope Francis and all believers, reading the signs of the times. We pray ...
2. Political Leaders – God raised up leaders for the People of Israel. That as citizens we vote for leaders focused on the common good of local communities and the nation. We pray ...
3. Business Leaders – God provided for a homeless and starving people. That we be thinking and responsible investors, planning for a sustainable world. We pray ...
4. Parents – Jesus grew in wisdom and maturity in his Nazareth home. That we be attentive to the needs of our own family and all parents. We pray ...
5. Carers – Out of love, God created earth and multiple peoples. That we actively imitate the loving care of God for all living things where we live on planet earth. We pray ...

... leaders ... pure ideas end up reducing faith to rhetoric ...

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #32

... leadership capable of striking out on new paths ...

– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #53

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being
it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus
and in his Spirit guiding our daily lives.

As an outpouring of your own self

You began a process of evolving life

You journey with its every stage

guiding with wisdom, forgiveness and love.

You sent your Son to be one like us

Leader, Saviour and Friend.

So we join the messengers of God

the saints and all people of good will

and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...

Reforming Church Language

John O'Malley described the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) as a language event (Harvard 2008). It began a *new way of being church*, ushered in a *synodal era of walking together*. St Pope John XXIII envisioned a *pastoral council*. Church believers became the *People of God*. Called to serve *Mission* in Christ, the faithful took *life in this world* seriously. Vatican II reclaimed the language of Scripture and learnt new language to celebrate *God active in the diversity of culture* and express a *deep relationship between God, Earth and Humanity* (Laudato Si' #66).



Saint Judge Rosario Livatino

Livatino was an Italian magistrate murdered by the mafia in Sicily. He seized their assets to weaken the clan itself and its social control. The judge put his work under the patronage of God. Targeted by the Cosa Nostra, he asked God's forgiveness for the risks his work meant for his parents. Pope John Paul II backed the judge and after his murder declared him a martyr for justice and the faith. In 2018, Pope Francis declared *You can't believe in God and belong to the Mafia*.

... fundamentalist violence ... by the rashness of their leaders ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #284

Peace Pilgrimage to Arms-Fair

Each year Christian academics, students and parishioners walk from Oxford to the military arms-fair in London under the banner *Peace, Harmony and Justice*. The UK Bishops wrote: *promoting the sale of weapons for profit is immoral*. Melbourne hosts a biennial *Land Forces International Land Defense Exposition* to show case Australian manufacturers. In 2022, 810 companies exhibited. Such public events easily morph into support for a *culture of aggression* sanctioning violence. The word 'security' can mesmerise governments. Some even build economies dependent on arms manufacture.

Radical Climate Mobilization

Australian climate change policies could be likened to political football game being refereed by vested- interests. The fossil fuel industry defends a high carbon emission economy. Now *Greenwashing* replaces denial, such as boasts about 2050 net zero targets. Zero emissions close to 2030 are needed. Climate impacts grow – storms and drought, 10% of the planet's population starving, inundated coastal lands and sea temperature rise, even confusing wildlife. Heat affects human health. If Christians are not to spit in the face of our Creator, they need to mobilise for a radical new way of life.



8. 17th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

One God in All

Life Realities

Scripture relates to our daily lives – wonder at the diversity of the natural world, news of people starving, faith community seems unwelcoming, wonder about one's role in life, what the divine means for me, feeling alone like a prisoner.

Grace to Celebrate

Building on a story from the Book of Kings about sharing the first fruits of the harvest, today's Gospel of John tells of the miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand. Remembering this divine intervention by Jesus, we gather to celebrate God present among us.

Scriptural Excerpts

2 Kgs 4: 42-44; Ps 144; Eph 4: 1-6; Jn 6: 1-15

bread of the first-fruits

ate and there was left over

meat in due season

blessing every living creature

Lord near to all who call

walk worthy of your vocation

in humility, mildness, patience

support one another in love

one body, one Spirit, one hope

one faith, one baptism

one God and Father of all

above all, through all, in us all

the paschal festival was nigh

a boy with five loaves, two fish

Jesus gave thanks

five thousand were filled

gather the remains, lest lost

filled twelve baskets

prophet come into the world

Jesus knew they wanted a king

he fled into the mountain alone.

... hunger is criminal; food is an inalienable right ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #189

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. First Fruits of the Harvest – Nature is the first revelation of the Creator. That we join other faith and secular groups to praise the One Creator of earth as our common home. We pray ...
2. Community Eucharist – Jesus gave his disciple the gift of a unifying love. That we join a local Catholic group in preparing the Eucharistic Meal as a sign of unity. We pray ...
3. People's expectations – Jesus gave his disciples the freedom to choose. That we ask the Spirit of Jesus to anchor our spirit so as not to be blown about by opinion. We pray ...
4. Times of Reflection – Jesus often retreated from the crowd to pray. That we plan times of personal rest and reflection to enjoy God's presence in our life-journey. We pray ...
5. Vocation – Jesus worked with the individual gifts of each of his disciples. That we willingly grasp the pathways of life that open for each of us. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanking

God in whom we live, move and have our being, it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives. Jesus lived among us to bring life to the full. Compassionate, preaching, healing and nourishing the hungry on the journey of life He brought love and unity to his followers opening them to oneness with God's own self. So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...





God became human and gave himself as food for creation ...

– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #236

Gospel of John

This last Gospel was compiled in Greek AD 90-100. John emphasizes a mystical experience of Jesus in a *High Christology*. Jesus said, *I am*. Like a seven-layered spiral, his life as the Son of God culminates in the promise of eternal life for all who believe in his name. The John churches lived in the Spirit of Jesus as the John Letters and Book of Revelation testify. Liturgically, John's Gospel follows after Mark in Year B. It shows a definitive break with Jewish faith to complement the straight forward message to the newly baptised presented in Mark's Gospel.

Islands in the Sky

Ecologically amazing, culturally significant and beautiful – scientists used these qualities to name eight iconic Australian trees as their favorites (iView doco). Ecologically - each tree offers food and homes to multiple animals and plants. Culturally - each tree features in the stories of Australia's First Peoples and are loved icons for diverse migrants to this land. Beautiful - their shapes and colour, mystery and magnificence inspire awe. They are like islands of life lifted over Australia revealing a mysterious beyond. Care for old growth forests praises God.

Sensuous Bible Texts

Our theology of Incarnation tells us that Jesus is truly human. He enjoyed his five senses and felt emotion like the rest of us. The Psalms link us to experiences of eating and drinking, dancing and joyful outbursts, seeing nature's glory, hearing birds sing and water babbling. Jesus used this familiarity in his teaching. Sensuous images fill the Song of Songs to exemplify Salvation History - two lovers reveal God as love. Self-giving love models the marriage covenant. The human body and its senses are of God.

... missionary fervour needs firm trust in the Holy Spirit ...

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #280

Sailors and Modern Slavery

Cargo shipping carries over 80% of world trade. In 2022, leisure cruising was a 19 billion \$US industry. International fisheries catch food for the globe. All three industries are susceptible to modern slavery. Ships are often registered under 'flags of convenience', in countries with slack maritime law and doubtful respect for human rights. Recruitment agencies often deceive sailors and force them into debt-bondage. As buyers of maritime services, consumers have the power to question this form of modern slavery.

... slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person ... object ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #24

9. 18th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

God Nourishes Life

Life Realities

Daily life resonates with today's Scripture – comparing our life with others, attraction of the 'good life', complaining, selling one's integrity for comfort, poverty fatigue, seeking food for one's spirit, wellbeing and the human journey.

Grace to Celebrate

Bread features often in today's readings, literally and metaphorically. God physically fed the children of Abraham starving in the desert. Jesus told the crowd, look for divine bread that sustains mind and spirit. So, we celebrate our belief in Jesus as the living bread given for us.

Intertwined relationships: God, neighbour and earth itself ...

–Pope Francis Laudato Si' #66

Scriptural Excerpts

Ex 16: 2-4, 12-15; Ps 77; Eph 4: 17, 20-24; Jn 6: 24-35

*Israel murmured against Moses
better we had died in Egypt
where we ate bread to the full
choice - walk in God's law or not?
quails covered the camp
manna, the bread God gives
walk not with vain minds
converted, put off the old
put on a new person in God
created in justice, holy truth
not live on bread alone
but by every word of God
labour not for the perishable
believe in the one God has sent
my Father gives you true bread
Lord, give us this bread always
Jesus said, I am the bread of life
come and not hunger
believe, will never thirst.*

... life is a time for interactions ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #66

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. Food for the Spirit – The works of God oscillate between the earthly and divine worlds. That we see the fractures in our life's journey as cracks that let God in. We pray ...
2. Expand our Hearts – God forever probes and pushes humanity. That we explore our cultural expressions of art and novels to grow our spirit to the delight of God. We pray ...
3. Hungry and Starving – God shows a preferential option for the poor. That we make mercy and justice meet in practical concern for nations that have little. We pray ...
4. Charities – Communities in the Acts of Apostles shared in times of need. That we support groups like Caritas alleviating poverty and lobbying to design more just systems. We pray ...
5. Wilderness – God has fed earth's animals for eons. That we work to preserve wilderness as mutually beneficial eco-systems sustaining all life, including human life. We pray

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives. God aware of the people's pain and worries, hears their complaints and their hopes. Jesus came into their lives and showed that God his Father cares, healing and feeding, leading them to praise the works of God. So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...





Food Systems

Corporations selling genetically modified foods (GM) are cunning, like serpents as Scripture says. First, they capture food producers and regulators. Global companies often manipulate poor people to depend on cheap but poor quality food; parade as pharmaceutical companies selling healthy products; finance compliant scientists; lobby to stop full labelling of their wares; manipulate media reports to hide long term health and ecological risks. www.gmwatch.org/en/

Christian life as a journey of growth in love ...
– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #161

Invasive Species

Invasive species drive biodiversity loss in Australia. The UN's *Invasive Alien Species Assessment Report* details how alien plants and animals unbalance local eco-systems. Extinctions follow. Australia leads the world with 3,000 known cases - cane toads, cats and fire-ants. New pressures compound the bad news – changed use of land and sea; chemical, noise and light pollution. Combined with climate change, they thrash the pace of the Creator's evolutionary processes. Believers, understanding science and finances can push for laws and monitoring that slow the pace of extinctions.

Mariana Mazzucato's 'Mission Economy'

Mazzucato holds up the 1960s moon landing push as a model of purpose. Globally nations need to adopt as their purpose an effective response to climate change in an equitable way for all nations. Governments and business have to concentrate their efforts – set inspiring goals, take risks and be prepared to spend money. Citizens can set this social goal: structure government budgets with long-term targets, rein in short-term management and corporate greed. This sets parameters so business can plan innovation, so that they, nations and the earth itself benefit. This mends capitalism. Warning on the *dictatorship of economics*, Pope Francis appointed her to his advisory group.

Landline Stories of Hope

A key to the teachings of Pope Francis is the way he links God.Earth.Humanity (*Laudato Si'* #66). Over 30 years, ABC TV has produced *Landline*. The program links ecological realities with people making a dignified living on the land while connected to a local community. Its archives gather many short, colorful and action-packed clips telling stories of practical achievements. For people of faith, *Landline* stories can only make God smile www.youtube.com/watch?v=atl-jl3glt0



... each creature transfigured will take its rightful place ...

– Pope Francis *Laudato Si'* #243

10. 19th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

God does not Hide

Life Realities

Everyday life resonates with sad Scriptural readings – old age and weary, life tedious and the journey long, warnings that anger destroys life, seek and hear encouraging words, include hope in decision-making.

Grace to Celebrate

Today the Gospel of John continues to point to Jesus as the way to God his Father. God nourished the prophet Elijah for the journey. In spite of ridicule, Jesus says he is nourished by knowing God, and will reveal God to them. As his followers chosen to know God in Jesus we can celebrate.

Scriptural Excerpts

1 Kgs 19: 4-8; Ps 33; Eph 4: 30 – 5: 2; Jn 6: 41-51

Elijah journey into the desert.

asked that he might die

slept, an angel touched him

arise, yet a great way to go

walked forty days and nights

taste the goodness of God

searched, the Lord heard me

come, be enlightened

taste, the Lord is sweet.

grieve not the Holy Spirit

bitterness, anger, blasphemy

put away malice, be kind merciful

forgiving one another

as God forgiven you in Christ

Jews murmured at Jesus

because he said

I am the living bread

is he not the son of Joseph?

says he came from heaven?

Father draws, I will raise you up

I have seen the Father.

... disabled not 'useful' – like the elderly ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #18

Intercession in Prayer of the Faithful

1. Strength for the Journey – God guided Elijah wandering in the desert. That we remember the journeys of our forebears, with God present in every turn and twist. We pray ...
2. Old Age – God created the seasons of life and death. That we welcome each stage of life and the particular gifts they bring. We pray ...
3. Knowing God – God reveals God's own self in many forms. That we use our mind and five senses to search for God's presence in the events of everyday life. We pray ...
4. Resentment – God guided the liberated people of Israel to ever-deeper awareness. That we reject corrosive anger to grow hope, founded on justice, forgiveness and love. We pray ...
5. Positive Decision Making – Salvation begins with God giving the people choices. That we play our part in opening a future for the next generation and earth itself. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being, it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives.

You reveal your presence in human history, in human trials and accomplishments, in human dreams and failures.

In loving kindness, you raised up Jesus knowing you so closely to call you Father present with us in every age.

So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...





Old Age – Gift and Calling

Old age is not for the faint-hearted. Physical and mental decline brings pain and letting go of former abilities and ambitions. Rather than a retreat into resentment, it is a time to celebrate a new role in the cycle of life and death. This can be in spite of social expectations. An abiding dignity opens new roles. The wisdom of experience and love are gifts. The percentage of older Australians grows but, old and young can combine to make it a human time.

Gandhi ... made a journey of transformation ...
– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #287

Agnostics and Atheists

Agnostics and atheists can be evangelical in their opposition to belief in a divine world. In his interpretation of modern science, T.H. Huxley coined the term agnostic to express his ‘not knowing’ stance on faith. *Atheism* goes further, rejecting belief in any deity. Both took new life in the 16th century Enlightenment. They rightly defended the autonomy of science and secular thought but often isolated themselves disdaining other views. Pope Francis calls for a *dialogue beneficial to both*.

Growing Human Health

Jesus took on a human body, the temple of the Holy Spirit. Believers can glorify God with their bodies (1 Cor 6:19-20). Human health links to environmental, cultural and economic determinants. Managing one’s health is a task for every person. As creatures of God, believers negotiate ways of healthy living as they journey from infancy to old age, through the turmoil of teenage and adult years. Each stage has its own happiness. The *human fully alive is to the glory of God* wrote St Irenaeus.

... elderly bring the wisdom of experience ...
– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #108

... elderly lament ... beautiful landscapes now rubbish heaps ...

– Pope Francis Laudato Si’ #21



Battery Energy

Scripture tells how the People of God creatively dealt with new situations. As environmental refugees from Ur they found new foods. Freed for slavery they learnt to live with other ethnic groups in the Holy Land. 21st century people create new technologies. Faced with a global energy crisis, battery storage is part of the mix. The QUEST Hub in Queensland created Vanadium redox flow batteries - long storage life, re-usable, use readily available local minerals, create local jobs. The Holy Spirit guides new ways.

11. 20th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Life Beyond Life

Life Realities

Scripture repeatedly refers to everyday issues - seeking wisdom to live well, tempted by false ideas, avoiding manipulation by the ambitious, being careful around negative tongues, seeking what is life giving, desire to grow a better self.

Grace to Celebrate

Wisdom features in today's Scripture. Jesus invites us to eat and drink of it, giving himself as the way to know God. Notably, wisdom is presented as a feminine attribute of God, the Spirit giving life to all who embrace her. So, we celebrate the grace of living in union with God's own wisdom.

Scriptural Excerpts

Prov 9: 1-6; Ps 33; Eph 5: 15-20; Jn 6: 51-58

*wisdom has built her house
set her table, invites
forsake childishness
taste the goodness of God
the meek hear and rejoice
be not deprived, desire life
walk circumspectly, not unwise
redeeming the time
understanding the will of God
not drunk, filled with God's spirit
sing, make melody to God
thank the Father for all things
in the name of Jesus Christ
I am the living bread
flesh for the life of the world
can this man give us his flesh?
abide in me and I in you
I live by my Father
eat this bread live forever*

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. Wisdom of God - Jesus came as the Wisdom of God. That we study his life in the Scriptures to let his spirit penetrate deep into our minds and hearts. We pray ...
2. Feminine Gifts – In Scripture women often reveal God. That we officially promote the ministry of women in our church communities, and praise their leadership. We pray ...
3. Vocation of Teachers – God raised up waves of teachers to form the people. That we honour teachers in our communities, valuing their dedication. We pray ...
4. Wise Vision – Scripture says that the young die if elders lack vision. That we boldly care for the ecology of an ever-evolving planet, the inheritance of future generations. We pray ...
5. Discerning Choices – In freedom, God lets people make life choices. That we discern our dreams, choosing what is good for ourselves, society and earth. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives. You sent Jesus that we might know Wisdom a divine gift valued in every culture celebrated by scholars, poets and musicians. Followers of Jesus rejoice in their calling striving always to drink of his Spirit and be nourished by Wisdom. So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...



... community of the three divine Persons the model of all life ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #85

Wisdom and Epidemics

Covid-19 deaths turned the world upside down. The plague, invasive species and other killers keep recurring in human history. The impacts show even in art. The Bible has stories of varied responses - blame the victims, blame God, blame leaders. But, Wisdom called Joseph to responsible planning for the starving people of Israel. In our time, scientists research the how of calamities while faith teaches *God's way of evolving love* in response. *Act as if all depends on ourselves, but pray as if all depends on God* was the advice of St Augustine.

Hydrogen Energy

CSIRO research shows the advantages of Green-Hydrogen over solar-battery technology. Small storage units supply energy hungry engines in transport, manufacturing and on farms - quicker to refuel, greater range. Australia's transport accounts for 20% of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions. Farmers rely on government diesel subsidies. Iron and alumina smelting can use it to value add and create local jobs. It forms a base to produce ammonia fertilizer. Technology expands the social teaching of the church.

... sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating ...

– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #223

Silver-Travel Economy

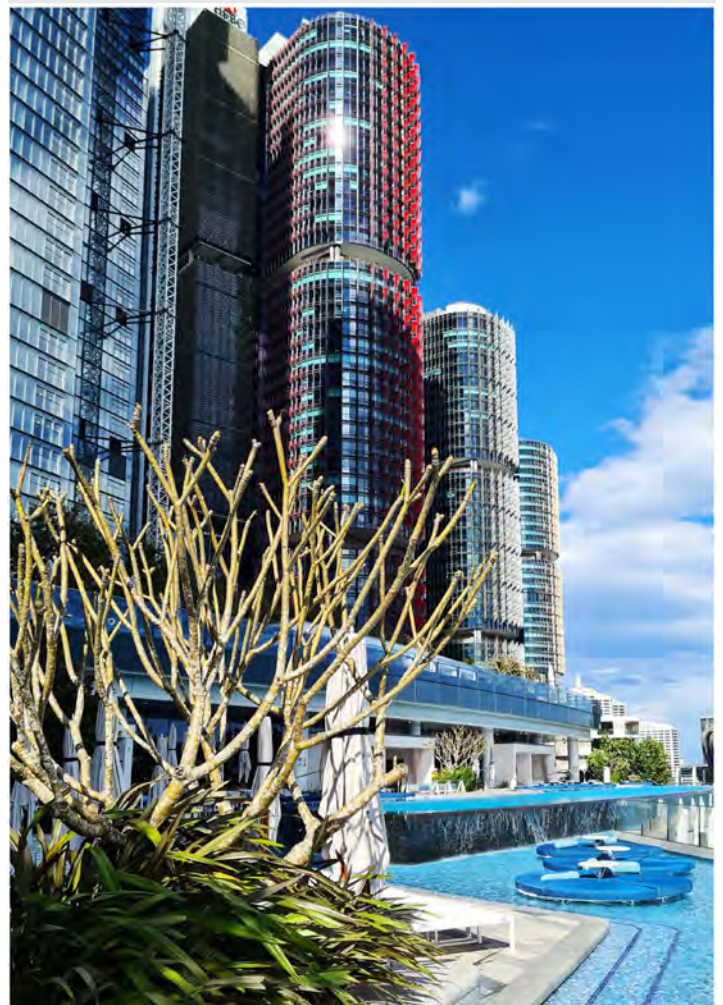
Aged people have worked hard and saved to enjoy travel in retirement, but the negative impact of tourism on land, sea and local people can be major. The invasion of tourist hot-stops, such as Venice, pollute and degrade ecosystems. In developing nations, supplying food and services can exploit local workers and distort their economy. Abandoning wisdom to revert to childish ways opens a market for tourism's enticing lies.

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who meet Jesus ...

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #1

Experiencing God in the Arts

Drawing the *Kairos* letter was a secret Christian sign in times of persecutions. As churches grew in diverse cultures, they embraced the wisdom embedded in them. Liturgy used local art and architecture, vestments and texts. New styles of sculpture, music and dance evolved. *Missa Luba* (YouTube) marries Latin language and Congo musical beat. Secular literature, poetry and philosophies all help an evolutionary moulding of the Gospel message and Church social teaching.



... faithful to this light-filled path of life and wisdom ...

– Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium #194



12. 21st SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Choose Life

Life Realities

Scripture is full of stories about making decisions - choosing a direction in life's journey, leaders deciding on priorities, confused by multiple choices, postponing decisions, how to live with diverse personalities and cultures, seeking advice, choosing a marriage partner, saying no to walk away.

Grace to Celebrate

In today's Gospel Jesus puts this direct question to his disciples, will you also walk away? Life is filled with choices but gifted by baptism we are not alone. The Spirit of Jesus guides and gives courage is with us personally, alive within the church as the Body of Christ. Let us remember and celebrate the wisdom to choose.

Scriptural Excerpts

Joshua 24: 1-2a, 15-17, 18b; Ps 33; Eph 5: 21-32; Jn 6: 60-69

*Joshua gathered the tribes of Israel
choose this day who you serve
the gods of this land or the Lord?
we will not leave the Lord
freed us from Egypt's bondage
journeying among many peoples
taste the goodness of the Lord
near to a contrite heart
subject one to another in Christ
husbands love your wives
as Christ also loved the church
clinging to his wife, one flesh
this is a great sacrament
walk in love as Christ loved us
my words are Spirit and life
many disciples walked away
will you also go? Peter answered
Lord, to whom shall we go?
you have the words of eternal life
Christ, the Son of God.*

... person with his or her own feelings, joys and family ...

– Pope Francis Fratelli Tutti #193

Intercession Prayers of the Faithful

1. Choices – God put choices before the People at key historical moments. That we listen to the Holy Spirit when making key decisions in our lives. We pray ...
2. Marriage – God proclaims his love for Israel is the model for those giving themselves in marriage. That we proclaim love in marriage as unique and God like. We pray ...
3. Human journey - Jesus understood and felt with all he met. That we walk with God in mind and heart when making decisions in our human journey. We pray ...
4. Climate Change – God guided the People of Israel through drought and plague. That we listen to land and water as guiding voices of God, humble in our responses. We pray ...
5. Stress – Jesus healed bodies and minds. That we be honest about our own worries, support friends and groups stressed by ever changing circumstances in life. We pray ...

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in whom we live, move and have our being, it is right to give you thanks through Christ Jesus and in his Spirit who guides our daily lives.

The works of God proclaim love as the source of life:

The earth itself is the first revelation of divine love grounding religious rites and cultures.

You sent your Son Jesus, uniting heaven and earth teaching, healing and giving his life in love.

The disciples chose him as the Way, the Truth and the Life convincing others by their love for one another. So we join the messengers of God the saints and all people of good will and earth itself as we say, Holy, Holy ...

... learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously ...

– Pope Francis Laudato Si' #47



Word 'life' and Pope Francis

In *Laudato Si'* (LS), 'life' is the most used word (too many references to list says Google). Pope Francis opens his encyclical with an invitation to share 'life' with earth, like a *mother and sister*. LS names Francis of Assisi as a saint sensitive to the mysteries of life. He sets a way to seek life: See. *Judge.Act*. SEE, what's happening? – pollution, loss of species, blind human attitudes to life. JUDGE, marry the wisdom of science with multi-faith cultural expressions, Scripture and Catholic faith. ACT, enhance life on earth like a rolling ball - *seeing-reflecting-acting* forms believers to link God, earth and humanity as one (LS #66).

... media ... sacredness of marriage and family stability...

– Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* #162

Women in Church Life

Phoebe, Prisca and Junia ministered with St Paul. Mary, Tryphaena and Tryphosa worked as evangelists. They knew that male and female equally image God (Gen 1:26-27; Gal 3:28). Women silent in Church was a late non-Pauline interpolation. Pope Francis made women half of the lay voters at the 2023 Synod. Walking together is a sign of church integrity held up to the modern world as the Holy Spirit prompts new and deeper theological insights.



Catechists in Mission

Five catechists strangled to death in the 1838 persecutions are among 117 Vietnamese martyrs, killed for introducing 'western learning'. French Paris Foreign Missionaries (MEP) set a mission model by working through catechists, a model later copied in China and Korea. They grafted local culture onto Gospel expression. In Korea, catechists created Buddhist like chants for the Psalms and sacramental celebrations. After Vatican II, Asian churches set up well-funded professional catechetical schools in the MEP model. Australian catechists need the same support.

Researching the Future

Planning for the future is a quality that helps define human beings. Be it church, club or nation, all falter if they lose defined aims. Falling investment in research by Australian business and universities bodes badly for future generations. In every historical age since the apostolic church, communities debated how best to preach the Good News - they wrote four Gospels for different audiences and new systems of ministry grew as diverse Rites. Future planning is a task for all humanity made in God's image, and a task of faith.



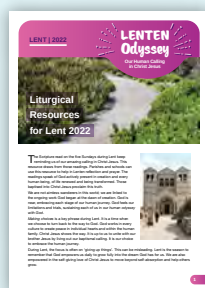
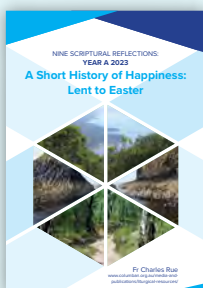
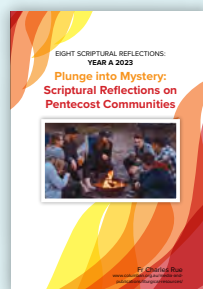
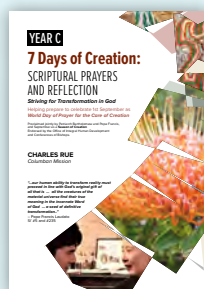
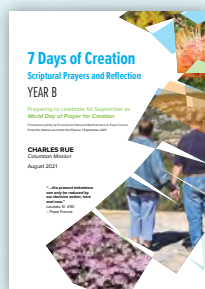
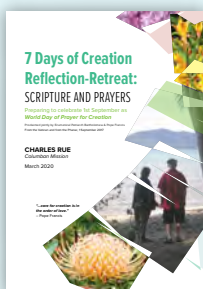
... how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure ...

– Pope Francis *Fratelli Tutti* #8



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