

All Things in Christ
Proclaiming the God of Creation in the Lectionary
Lectionary Readings for the Mass for the Care of Creation
Preparing for September 1

INTRODUCTION

The lectionary readings for the *Mass for the Care of Creation*, celebrated on September 1, offer a remarkably unified theological vision. Taken together, they guide the Church through a coherent movement: creation reveals God, Christ stands at the center of creation, human beings are called to trust rather than dominate, and all things are ultimately ordered toward reconciliation.

At the same time, these readings invite us to reflect more deeply on the meaning of the word *creation* itself. In a rich and important sense, “creation” refers to two inseparable realities: first, God’s act of creating – the divine initiative by which all things come to be; and second, the created world itself – the reality that flows from that act and continues to exist in relationship to its Creator. These two meanings cannot be separated, yet distinguishing them helps illuminate the theological depth of the readings.

What emerges, then, is not simply a collection of texts about the natural world, but a profound proclamation about God, Christ, and the destiny of all that exists.

CREATION AS REVELATION: WISDOM 13:1–9

The reading from the Book of Wisdom offers a crucial starting point. It observes that human beings can be deeply moved by the beauty and power of creation – the brilliance of the stars, the force of the wind, the vastness of the waters – and yet fail to recognize the One who stands behind them.

This is not presented as a harsh condemnation. Rather, the text acknowledges that such people are, in fact, searching: they are drawn by beauty, captivated by order, and attentive to the created world. Yet their vision remains incomplete. They mistake the sign for the source.

The key insight is expressed in a single line of great theological depth:
“Through the grandeur and beauty of creatures, their Author is perceived.”

Creation, then, is not an end in itself. It is revelatory. It bears within it the trace of its origin. The beauty of the world is not ultimate; it points beyond itself to the Creator whose act of creation gives it meaning and existence.

For preaching, this establishes a foundational principle: the proper response to creation is not merely admiration, but recognition. Creation leads us toward God.

CREATION AS PRAISE: THE PSALMS

The responsorial psalms deepen this perspective by giving voice to creation itself.

Psalms 19 presents creation as a universal proclamation: “The heavens declare the glory of God.” This declaration is without words, yet it resounds throughout the entire earth. It is constant, pervasive, and accessible to all.

Psalms 104, by contrast, offers a more expansive and contemplative vision. It celebrates the richness, diversity, and interconnectedness of the created world. It speaks of springs that sustain life, of creatures that depend upon divine providence, and of a world ordered by wisdom. Here, the focus shifts from proclamation alone to the ongoing relationship between Creator and creation, in which God continually sustains what has been made.

In both cases, the theological message is clear: creation is already oriented toward praise. The world, in its very being, glorifies God.

Human beings are not asked to begin this praise, but to recognize it and enter into it. Liturgy, in this sense, becomes a participation in a hymn that is already being sung.

CHRIST AND CREATION: COLOSSIANS 1:15–20

The reading from the Letter to the Colossians forms the theological center of the entire set. Here, the relationship between God, creation, and Christ is expressed in its fullest and most profound form.

Christ is proclaimed as “the image of the unseen God, the firstborn of all creation.” The text then unfolds in three movements. First, Christ is identified as the origin of all things: “in him were created all things... all things were created through him and for him.” Second, Christ is revealed as the one in whom all things continue to exist: “in him all things hold together.” Third, Christ is presented as the one through whom all things are brought to their fulfillment: “through him to reconcile all things... making peace by the blood of his cross.”

What emerges is a comprehensive vision: creation is not separate from salvation. The act of creation and the work of redemption form a single Christological arc.

In Christ, we see both the origin of creation and its fulfillment in what can rightly be

called a new creation. The world is not only brought into being through him; it is also drawn toward reconciliation in him.

This has profound pastoral implications. Care for creation cannot be reduced to an ethical obligation or a social concern. It is fundamentally Christological. To care for creation is to participate, in however partial a way, in Christ's own work of sustaining and reconciling all things.

CONTEMPLATION AND TRUST: MATTHEW 6:24–34

The first Gospel option brings these theological themes into the concrete reality of human life.

Jesus addresses the tension between trust in God and anxiety over material security: "You cannot serve both God and money." Yet significantly, he does not begin with a command, but with an invitation: "Look at the birds of the air... consider the flowers of the field."

This is an invitation to contemplation. Before any ethical demand is made, the disciple is asked to see — truly to see — the world around them.

The birds and the flowers are not presented as sentimental images, but as theological witnesses. They reveal a pattern of existence marked by receptivity rather than grasping. They do not store up wealth or strive for appearance, yet they are sustained and adorned.

The deeper issue addressed here is anxiety. Much of what distorts the human relationship with creation arises from fear — the fear that there is not enough, leading to accumulation, exploitation, and imbalance.

Jesus offers an alternative: "Seek first the kingdom." Right relationship with creation begins not in control, but in trust. It begins in learning to receive the world as gift.

FAITH IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS: MATTHEW 8:23–27

The second Gospel option complements this teaching by presenting a moment of crisis.

In the midst of a storm, the disciples are overwhelmed with fear, while Christ appears asleep. When he rises, he rebukes the wind and the sea, and there is a great calm. The question he poses is as penetrating as it is simple: "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?"

This passage highlights the power and unpredictability of creation, but it places that power firmly under the authority of Christ. Creation is not divine; it is not ultimate. It is subject to the Lord who stands at its center.

In a contemporary context, this text resonates with the experience of ecological crisis. Many communities face the reality of storms, floods, droughts, and other disruptions that evoke fear and uncertainty. The Gospel does not dismiss these realities, but neither does it allow fear to be the final word.

Instead, it calls for faith—confidence that Christ remains present and active within creation, even in moments of turbulence.

A COHERENT VISION

When these readings are considered together, a clear theological and pastoral vision emerges.

Creation reveals God and invites recognition of the Creator. Christ stands at the center of all that exists, bringing creation into being, sustaining it, and leading it toward fulfillment. Human beings are called not to domination or anxiety, but to trust, contemplation, and right relationship. And ultimately, all things are ordered toward reconciliation in Christ.

Seen in this light, the dual meaning of “creation”—both the divine act and the created world—comes into focus. The world we inhabit is not self-originating; it is the fruit of God’s creative love. At the same time, that creative act is not confined to the past; it continues in the sustaining and reconciling work of Christ.

PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PREACHING

For those preparing to preach, the most fruitful approach may be one of simplicity and clarity.

The task is not to introduce an entirely new theme, but to help people see what is already present: the beauty of creation, the presence of Christ within it, and the invitation to live with trust and gratitude.

From this perspective, care for creation is no longer an “extra” concern or a secondary topic. It becomes integral to the Church’s proclamation of the Gospel. It is a matter of faith, an expression of worship, and a participation in Christ’s ongoing work of reconciliation.

CONCLUSION

The celebration of the *Mass for the Care of Creation* invites the Church to recover a fundamental vision: that all things come from God, exist through Christ, and are destined to return to him.

To see creation rightly is to perceive both the gift and the Giver. It is to recognize the world not as an object to be used, but as a reality held together in Christ and ordered toward communion with God.

In this light, care for creation becomes not an added concern, but a faithful response to the truth of the Gospel itself.