

FIVE QUESTIONS IN CARING FOR CREATION
Ascension of the Lord ~ 24 May 2020



Ascension of the Lord

POPE FRANCIS CONTINUES TO SURPRISE US

Pope Francis continues to surprise us.

After an international **Laudato Si' Week on the Earth: Our Common Home**, he now invites us today to begin a whole year, an anniversary **Laudato Si' Year**.

There was wonderful cooperation in preparing a [local video clip](#) for today's launch of the Laudato Si' Year.

We shall view it in a few moments.

It was made for use in our parish and in our local schools.

Thank you to Phil and the team.

In the clip, the first line of paragraph 160 is quoted.

Let us take the time to read the whole paragraph.

I have highlighted the *five* questions in the text with a different colour print.

LAUDATO SI' - PARAGRAPH 160

1. *What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?*

*This question not only concerns the environment in isolation;
the issue cannot be approached piecemeal.*

*When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind,
we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values.
Unless we struggle with these deeper issues,
I do not believe that our concern for ecology will produce significant results.
But if these issues are courageously faced,
we are led inexorably to ask other pointed questions:*

2. *What is the purpose of our life in this world?*
3. *Why are we here?*
4. *What is the goal of our work and all our efforts?*
5. *What need does the earth have of us?*

*It is no longer enough, then, simply to state
that we should be concerned for future generations.
We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity.
Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us.
The issue is one which dramatically affects us,
for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.'*

WE REPEAT THE FIVE CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

We repeat the *five* challenging questions from the text.

1. *What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?*
2. *What is the purpose of our life in this world?*
3. *Why are we here?*
4. *What is the goal of our work and all our efforts?*
5. *What need does the earth have of us?*

WE REFLECT ON THE FIVE QUESTIONS AS WE TURN TO TODAY'S READINGS

We reflect on the questions as we turn to the readings for today's
Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 1:1-11

From today's first reading we hear that

during the forty days between Easter and his Ascension, Jesus

'continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God.'

Before he ascended Jesus promised the apostles:

***'you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you,
and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem
but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'***

Part of the answer to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th questions of Pope Francis is in the texts above.

2. *We are called to be open to the gift of the Holy Spirit,*
3. *To share with others about the Kingdom of God*
4. *And to be witnesses to Jesus Christ wherever we go.*

LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 1:17–23

In today's second reading, Paul prays for the disciples that God

- *'give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him.'*
- *"May he enlighten the eyes of your mind... "*
- *"This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ... "*
- That Christ is *"the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation."*

Responding to the questions of Pope Francis, we learn from the Letter to Ephesians

- That it is Christ who is the ruler of everything, not us.
- That we pray that Jesus Christ will give us a spirit of knowledge and perception
- That we pray that Christ will enlighten our minds
- That is not ourselves working alone, not ourselves doing our own thing, but that, as disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, we are in humble communion with the strength of God's power at work in Christ.
- That as a church, we see and hear and feel the fullness of Christ who fills the whole creation.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 28:16–20

In today's Gospel, we learn of the great command of Jesus.

He says to the eleven disciples gathered on a mountain in Galilee, and to his disciples today throughout the world

'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

We acknowledge our mission as disciples of Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ is with us always, yes to the end of time.

PLENARY COUNCIL

Our national voice as church during the Plenary Council has been postponed because of COVID-19 restrictions.

The first Plenary Council assembly is now planned for Adelaide in October 2021 and the second Plenary Council assembly will be in April 2020 in Sydney.

The Plenary organisers inform us that next weekend,

"papers prepared by the Discernment and Writing Groups will be released. Each group was tasked with writing a document on one of the six national themes for discernment, which emerged from the voices of more than 220,000 people who participated in the Council's Listening and Dialogue phase." [ACBC Blog]

Which of those insights next weekend will help us in our response to paragraph 160 of Laudato Si' - To Care for the Earth: Our Common Home?

How has the Plenary Process so far responded to the questions of Pope Francis in 2015.

- 1. What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?*
- 2. What is the purpose of our life in this world?*
- 3. Why are we here?*
- 4. What is the goal of our work and all our efforts?*
- 5. What need does the earth have of us?*

Let us now view our local video on the ***Laudato Si' Anniversary Year***

24 May 2020 – 24 May 2021 and on the invitation during the Year ahead to set out on a seven-year journey into the future.

Thank you.

Fr Gerry

Readings: <https://universalis.com/Australia/20200524/mass.htm>

[Laudato Si' - On Care for Our Common Home, 24 May 2015](#)

[Parish video clip for Laudato Si' Year 24 May 2020 – 24 May 2021](#)

[YouTube video of the Ascension of the Lord, 24 May 2020](#)