

Notes for Homilies – for the week 21-28 May

- During this week at the end of May, we celebrate the feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost. At this special time, the universal Church is invited to celebrate **Laudato Si' Week** which is sponsored by the Vatican [Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development](#).
- The theme is **Hope for the Earth, Hope for Humanity**: “This annual celebration allows us to commemorate the eighth anniversary of Pope Francis' historic encyclical on the care of Creation, and to reflect on the progress we have made in protecting our common home.”
- This is a way for all Catholics to unite and rejoice in the progress we have made in bringing *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* to life and to commit ourselves to further prayer and action for our common home.
- St. Pope John Paul II called for “ecological conversion” (1990) and Pope Francis echoes this in *Laudato Si'*. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html)
- In the Southern Hemisphere, this celebration co-insides with the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** (celebrated in the Northern Hemisphere in January). The World Council of Churches and the Holy See's Dicastery for the Christian Unity have prepared resources about the theme of “**Do good; seek justice**” (Isaiah 1:17). This material has been adapted for New Zealand by members of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity and emailed to parishes (13 April).
- Can these two weeks - **Laudato Si' Week** and the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** – be celebrated together? Are they interconnected? Let's look at the three “eco” words, – ecology, economy and ecumenism – all come the Greek word for “household” (*oikos*).
- This interconnection is found in the vision of the World Council of Churches that “[t]he mission of the ecumenical movement today is about transforming the world into a place of justice and peace for all God's creation... [in a] participatory search for alternatives that are centred on the people and the Earth” (Introduction, *Economy of Life*).
- In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis states: “Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.*” (Italics his. §49).
- Pope Francis calls for an integral ecology which understands that exploitation of both people and resources are the fundamental cause of the ecological crisis we are facing (*LS* Chapter 4)
- The urgency of climate change returns us to pray for Christian Unity because for Christian believers, committed to love for God's creation and to respect for the dignity of every human person, responding to this interconnection will be necessarily a central dimension of the life of faith. As Pope Francis ends his Closing Homily for this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: “All together may we journey along on the path that the Lord has placed before us, the path of unity.”