

**MEDIA RELEASE**

26 March 2025



## **Liturgists and ecology scholars exploring new ecumenical Feast of Creation**

Australian Catholic University experts in theology, liturgy, and ecology are supporting a global proposal to institute a new ecumenical liturgical feast to celebrate the mystery of creation.

The proposed Feast of Creation in Christ would align the Catholic Church and several Protestant Churches with the liturgical tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Byzantine Catholic rite, which marks September 1 as the Day of Creation and the beginning of the liturgical year.

The proposal has been endorsed by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. Various churches are already seeking to embrace the new feast in 2025 to mark the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ecumenical council for the Christian Church, the Council of Nicaea.

Recommendations for a new liturgical Feast of Creation in Christ emerged at an ecumenical conference in Assisi, Italy in March 2024, attended online by ACU ecological theologian Jacqui Remond.

ACU liturgical studies expert Dr Jason McFarland and Dr Angela McCarthy of the University of Notre Dame Australia attended a second conference in Assisi in December 2024, held specifically for Catholics to consider the theological and liturgical questions around the proposed feast. ACU theologian Sr Ann-Maree O'Beirne, and liturgy and ecology PhD student Fr Michael Dyer also attended the event online.

Ms Remond, a lecturer in Ecological Theology at ACU and co-founder of the global Laudato Si' Movement, said the new feast would allow Christians to contemplate more deeply God's act of creating heaven and earth.

"God's continuous action of making the world, with you and me in it, in the past, in this moment and always, is a core belief of Christian faith," Ms Remond said.

"In this time of ecological crises within the context of the climate emergency, increasing biodiversity loss and pollution of water, soil and air, we need to remember that all is a gift from the Creator, rather than a resource to be used or the background context in which only human beings are marked for salvation.

"A Feast of Creation in Christ shines a light on the intrinsic value and worth of each thing and as a permanent feast in our liturgical calendar it has the potential to heighten awareness of God's love for all creation and the Christian faith response in returning that love towards our Creator with Creation.

"The feast would support a unified call for ecological conversion articulated by Pope Francis in his encyclical Laudato Si' and his predecessors, Pope Benedict XVI and Saint Pope John Paul II."

Ms Remond said an upcoming webinar for Australians, hosted by ACU, the Laudato Si' Research Institute at the University of Oxford, and the Laudato Si' Movement, would explore the theological, liturgical and pastoral implications of a newly proposed feast.

"We hope the webinar will generate dialogue and action at local church and national levels around the significance of a new feast celebrated by Australian Christian churches," Ms Remond said.

An increasing number of Christian churches, including the Catholic Church, dedicate a day of prayer for creation. In 2015, Pope Francis instituted the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, following the promulgation of *Laudato Si'*, the first encyclical dedicated to creation.

In the past 100 years, the Catholic Church has instituted seven new liturgical feast days, including Christ the King, the Holy Family, Baptism of the Lord, and St Joseph the Worker.

However liturgical studies expert Dr Jason McFarland said the institution of a new Feast of Creation in Christ would be a historic first for liturgical ecumenism.

“Our liturgy has been a space of ecumenical synergy throughout the history of the Church, and, for Western churches, particularly in the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council,” Dr McFarland said.

“However the ecumenical origins of this proposed feast is something new—an ecumenical common response of the churches of the West to the Orthodox Patriarch’s invitation.

“It is a movement of the Holy Spirit, urging us towards timely focus on the mystery of creation.”

Dr McFarland said while there were numerous questions to address before a new feast could be introduced to the Catholic liturgical calendar, the potential spiritual growth was clear.

“It can form and focus the faithful into a deeper contemplation of the Paschal Mystery from the perspective of the origins of the universe, which could activate a climate crisis response grounded in and motivated by our deepest Christian values and convictions—what has been called ‘ecological conversion’,” Dr McFarland said.

Register for the webinar on the proposed Ecumenical Feast of Creation on 10 April [here](#).

**Jacqui Remond and Dr Jason McFarland are available for interviews.**

**Media Contact: Emilie Ng, 0475 963 606, [emilie.ng@acu.edu.au](mailto:emilie.ng@acu.edu.au)**

Australian Catholic University has specialists who can comment on news matters relating to their area of expertise. Please direct requests to ACU's [Media Team](https://acu.edu.au/media-enquiries) at [acu.edu.au/media-enquiries](https://acu.edu.au/media-enquiries).