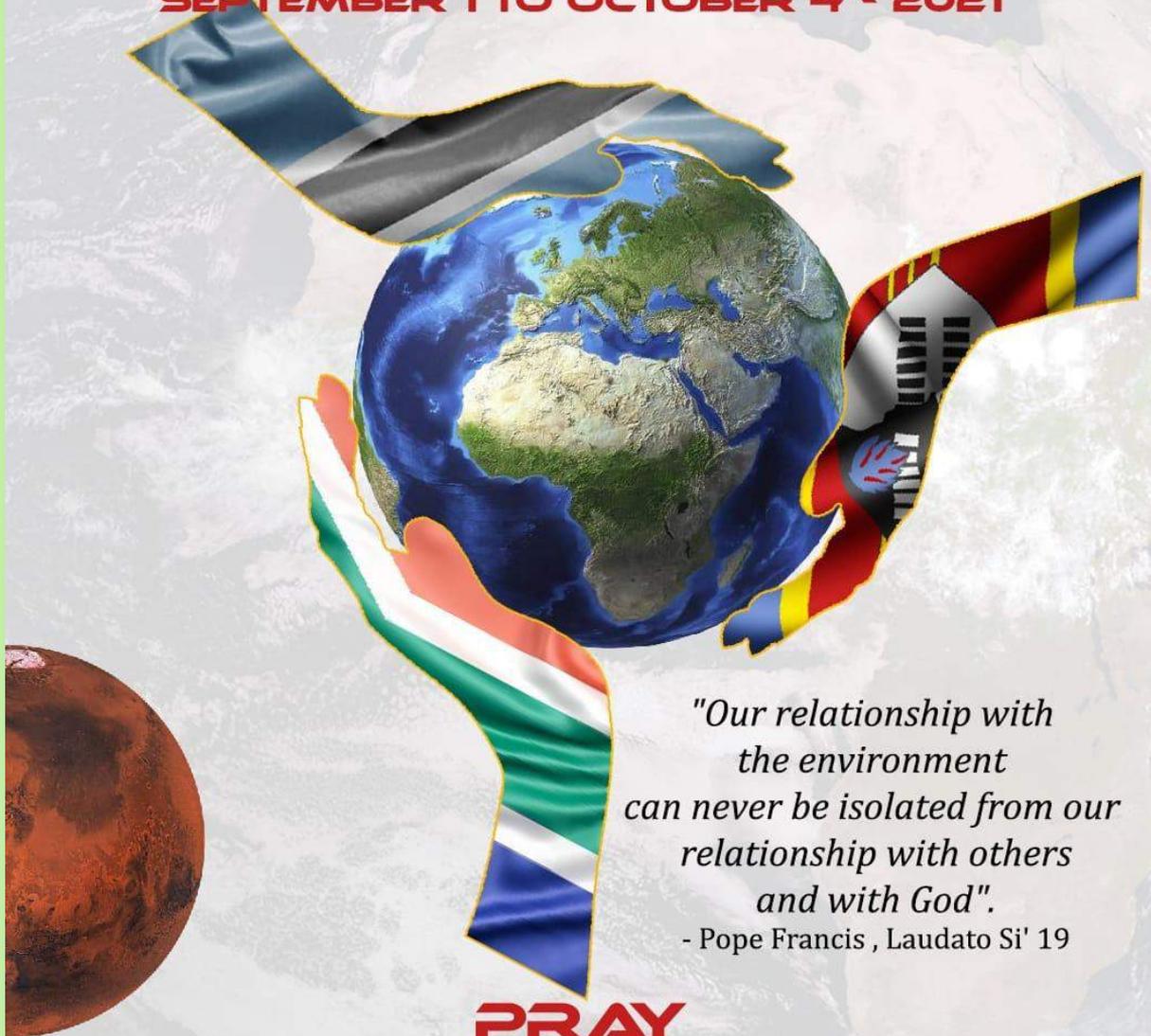


SEASON OF CREATION

SEPTEMBER 1 TO OCTOBER 4 - 2021



*"Our relationship with
the environment
can never be isolated from our
relationship with others
and with God".*

- Pope Francis , Laudato Si' 19

**PRAY
AND
TAKE ACTION
FOR
OUR COMMON HOME**



SUGGESTIONS FOR PRE-LAUNCH OF THE SEASON OF CREATION **WEEK END 28/29TH AUGUST 2021**

1. INTRODUCTION

- The Season of Creation is a month-long observance, approved by our Bishops' Conference that calls us to PRAY and CARE for God's creation.
- It is a time to reflect on our relationship with the environment — not just "distant" nature, but crucially, the place where we live — and the ways in which our lifestyles and decisions, on a personal and community level, can endanger both the natural world and those inhabiting it, both humans and other creatures.
- Just months after publishing his 2015 encyclical "*Laudato Si'*, on *Care for Our Common Home*," Pope Francis formally added the **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation** to the Catholic calendar as an annual day of prayer. And in 2019, he officially invited Catholics to celebrate the full season which runs from 01 September until 04 October when we celebrate the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology.
- The Season of Creation "is the time to rediscover our vocation as children of God, brothers and sisters, and stewards of creation. Now is the time to repent, to be converted and to return to our roots," Pope Francis wrote in a letter. "We are beloved creatures of God, who in his goodness calls us to love life and live it in communion with the rest of creation". During this time Pope Francis is encouraging us to "pray, reflect and take action." (*Pope Francis – World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 2019*)
- Lastly, by linking the Season of Creation constantly to *Laudato Si'*, we are hoping that interest in the document will be cultivated and people might be curious enough to read it for themselves.

2. Penitential Rite - either as part of the celebration of the Eucharist, or as part of a Sharing of the Word within small Christian Communities, family groups, associations or organizations etc.

Let us confess our sin, and the sins of our society, in the misuse of God's creation.

- God our Father, we are sorry for the times when we have used your gifts carelessly and acted ungratefully. *Lord have mercy.*
- We repent for our thoughtlessness, when we abuse creation and do not care enough for the world you have given to us. *Christ have mercy.*
- We ask forgiveness for our greed in storing up goods for ourselves alone, without giving a thought for our neighbour in need. *Lord have mercy.*

3. Introduction to Scripture

The Bible teaches that every man and woman is created out of love and made in God's image and likeness (cf. *Gen 1:26*).

This shows us the immense dignity of each person, "who is not just something, but someone [...] capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving him/herself and entering into communion with other persons" (*Laudato Si'* 65)

4. Prayers of Intercession

1. We pray for every human person—born and unborn—who suffers the consequences of environmental pollution. *We pray to the Lord...Lord hear our prayer.*
2. We pray for the poorest and most vulnerable among us who are unjustly harmed by unclean water sources. *We pray to the Lord...Lord hear our prayer.*
3. We pray that we may receive the grace to “cultivate and care for” creation as God calls us. *We pray to the Lord...Lord hear our prayer.*
4. We pray that during this month we may be inspired to take in hand, read and be inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. *We pray to the Lord...Lord hear our prayer.*
5. We pray that our world will prudently respond to the Church’s teaching that climate change is a pressing moral issue. *We pray to the Lord...Lord hear our prayer.*

5. Prayer for the Care of Creation

“O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, who are so precious in your eyes... God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth” (ibid., 246), God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness and convey your mercy throughout our common home.

Praise be to you! Amen. (*Pope Francis 2016*)

6. Sunday as the day to heal our relationships with God, ourselves, others and the world

Pope Francis reminds us: “On Sunday, our participation in the Eucharist has special importance. Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world.

Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the ‘first day’ of the new creation, whose first fruits are the Lord’s risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality.

It also proclaims ‘man’s eternal rest in God’.

In this way, Christian spirituality incorporates the value of relaxation and festivity. (*Laudato Si’* # 237)

ACTION - Let us express our gratitude to God for all that He provides for us through prayer before and after our meals.

Thank God for the life-giving food that sustains and nourishes us.

Briefly consider how all nourishment ultimately comes from the earth, and for all the human hands that helped bring this food to your table.

May we recognize, as *Laudato Si’* has taught us, that this “moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life” (*Laudato Si’* # 227)

WEDNESDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE
OF CREATION (see separate booklet)**

ATTENTION

**FOR THE NEXT THREE DAYS
THE REFLECTION IS GOING
TO BE ON THE SLOGAN**

**PRAY AND TAKE
ACTION FOR
OUR COMMON
HOME**

THURSDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER - PRAY

Prayer is at the centre of our lives as Christians. Praying together deepens our relationship with our faith and brings forth new gifts of the Spirit. As Jesus taught us, “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them” (Matthew 18:20).

1. What the Word of God says: (James 5: 13; 16)

“Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise [...] The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful”.

2. What Laudato Si’ says: (# 240)

“The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity”.

3. Let us Reflect

St. James suggests that if anyone is in any kind of trouble, before doing anything else, we should turn to God in prayer.

Do we pray about the climate crisis? Do we pray for God’s mercy for people and places suffering devastating and catastrophic drought or flood, storms or erosion? Do we also pray for political leaders for a change of heart in helping them to understand difficult and unpopular decisions they may need to make regarding climate change.

The teachings of the Church, expressed by Saint John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Pope Francis, and so many others, together with science, clearly show us the actions needed to reverse the climate crisis and its effects. But there is one thing that must always precede action: **prayer**.

4. Prayer for Today

“All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen”
(*Laudato Si’* 246)

5. Action for Today

- ☺ Pray the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, either by yourself, in your Small Christian Communities, Ministry Groups or together with family and friends

First Mystery: The Baptism of the Lord

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love’”. (Mc 1, 9-11)

Without water there is no life: the beauty of our planet would not be so awesome without this wonderful gift; without water there is no regeneration, where, through the waters of baptism we are introduced into the very heart of the Trinity when the words ‘I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ are pronounced. Baptism is a sign of new life. We are all born to life out of water, and through baptism Gods Spirit uses water again to initiate us, as Christian believers, into a new existence, one that anticipates the fullness of Gods reign.

Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance, since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Sources of fresh water are necessary for health care, agriculture and industry. Water supplies used to be relatively constant, but now in many places demand exceeds the sustainable supply, with dramatic consequences in the short and long term. (*Laudato Si’* 28)

Second Mystery: The Wedding Feast at Cana

“...There was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servers, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ Jesus did this at the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.” (Jn 2, 1-5.11)

The miracle of changing not just ordinary water, but water that was to be used for the washing of feet, into the best-tasting wine of the marriage feast manifests Jesus’ power, “revealing His glory,” and making the disciples believe in Jesus as one coming from God. The water that is transformed into wine is also a symbol of the joint work between God and ourselves. Wine, which is the concentration of water, earth, grapes is one of those natural products that God gives us and places at our disposal for our enjoyment. And so that wine is not lacking, God asks us to take care of our common home.

Third Mystery: The Proclamation of the Kingdom

*“After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. **Repent** and believe the good news!’”. (Mc 1, 14-15)*

In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis asks that we experience an ecological conversion, where we seek to live in harmony with nature rather than dominate it. This, he remarks, begins by changing our lifestyles so as to ensure that all benefit equally from the Earth’s resources, including future generations. “If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society.” “Disinterested concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-

centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment." (*Laudato Si'* 208)

Fourth Mystery: The Transfiguration

"As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning... A voice came from the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him'". (Lk 9, 29.35)

Jesus is God, "the fountain of life" in Whose light "we see light" (Ps 38:10). That light changes and transfigures us, fixes and transforms us in God; that light is Jesus, "the true light, which enlightens everyone," for "what came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race". (Jn 1:9, 3-4).

The Gospel of life and light and immortality shone among all of us as material light, of this world. "The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout creation by his universal Lordship". (*Laudato Si'* 100)

Fifth Mystery: The Institution of the Eucharist

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body'. Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood'". (Mt 26, 26-27)

"It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation." In the Eucharist Jesus comes "not from above, but from within, he comes that we might find him in this world of ours". In the the whole of creation gives thanks to God. "Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love: 'Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world.' "The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration. [...] Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation." (*Laudato Si'* 236).

Pope Francis concludes his Encyclical *Laudato Si'* by paying homage to Mary the Mother and Queen of all creation.

"Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power.

Completely transfigured, she now lives with Jesus, and all creatures sing of her fairness.

She is the Woman, "clothed in the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev 12:1).

Carried up into heaven, she is the Mother and Queen of all creation. In her glorified body, together with the Risen Christ, part of creation has reached the fullness of its beauty. She treasures the entire life of Jesus in her heart (cf. Lk 2:19,51), and now understands the meaning of all things.

Hence, we can ask her to enable us to look at this world with eyes of wisdom." (LS 241)

PRAYER to MARY, MOTHER and QUEEN of the UNIVERSE

Mary, Mother and Queen of the Universe, you are a Queen because you are the Mother of the Word Incarnate.

Christ is universal King because He rules all creatures by His personal union with the Divinity.

He is King and You are Queen of all hearts.

Rule over us by the queenly power of your love that the Kingdom of your Son –

the Kingdom of truth and life, holiness and grace, justice, love and peace –may come upon earth.

Grant grace to all people, the Holy Spirit for the Church, and peace for the whole world.

Amen.

FRIDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER - TAKE ACTION

1. What the Word of God says: (Leviticus 25:1-7)

“The LORD said to Moses at Mount Sinai, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten”.

2. What *Laudato Si’* says:

The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded. (*Laudato Si’* 13)

I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. The worldwide ecological movement has already made considerable progress and led to the establishment of numerous organizations committed to raising awareness of these challenges. Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest. Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity. As the bishops of Southern Africa have stated: “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation”. All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents. (*Laudato Si’* 14)

3. Reflection for Today

When we fail to see the world as God’s creation, we will end up abusing it. Selfishness and greed take over, and we end up not caring about the environment or the problems we’re creating for future generations.

Why should we be concerned about our environment? It isn’t just because of the dangers we face from pollution, climate change, or other environmental problems—although these are serious. For Christians, the issue is much deeper: We know that God created the world, and it belongs to Him, not to us. Because of this, we are only stewards or trustees of God’s creation, and we aren’t to abuse or neglect it.

4. Prayer for Today

God of all creation, your goodness and glory shine forth through everything you have made. Through the light of faith, help us to see this world, our common home, not as a resource to dominate and exploit, but as a gift to be cherished by all generations. Prompted by your Spirit, we ask this in the name of Jesus, through whom all creation was made. Amen

5. Action for Today (and suggestions for the rest of the month)

Reduce waste – separate waste – cook only what you can eat – Recycle.

Share this message with at least 10 other people and encourage them to do the same.

Start with something small today that you commit yourself and your family to continue for the rest of the month. E.g.

- ☺ Recycle everything that you possibly can into separate bins/containers. Give what you can to people who make a living from recycling.
- ☺ Make a compost heap with yard waste and vegetable peels.
- ☺ Growing a vegetable garden can be a fun family project.
- ☺ Don't throw away what can be donated
- ☺ Give your time to clean up areas where you live
- ☺ Lead by example! Take responsibility for being a citizen of the earth and encourage others as well.

SATURDAY 4th SEPTEMBER - for OUR COMMON HOME - EARTH

1. What the Word of God says (Genesis 1:24-31)

“And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’ Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.’ And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.”

2. What *Laudato Si'* says

“The entire material universe speaks of God's love, of God's endless care for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a touch of God. We can all surely remember a beautiful sunrise or sunset, a walk among plants and flowers or sitting beside a running stream drinking fresh, cool water. All these places have given us a chance to recover something of our true selves.” (*Laudato Si'* 84)

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (*Rom* 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen* 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.” (*Laudato Si'* 2)

3. Reflection for Today

Earth is our common home and our Faith gives us trust that God's Spirit is constantly renewing the face of the Earth. As part of our Christian vocation, we are called to participate in renewing the Earth, safeguarding a place for every creature and working towards reforming just relationships among all

creation. At present we are inhabitants of a world deeply troubled by environmental crisis as seen by such phenomena as global warming, soil erosion, creeping desertification, air and water pollution, etc. These problems have emerged as a result of human activity and their effects are experienced most profoundly among the poor.

Along with all “citizens” of planet Earth, we are called to take positive action in response to this world-wide environmental crisis such as reducing consumption and waste, reusing and recycling resources,

4. Prayer for Today

God of second chances, we recognise the damage we have done to the earth and the injustice we see in society every day, all of it fuelled by worship of profit and possessions. We pray for the coming of a better world with justice, kindness and humility at its heart.

We ask that you guide us to be co-creators of this new world.

Give us confidence to follow the prophetic voices to stand against injustice to people and to our common home, so that together, in your strength, we stop this climate crisis. God, in your mercy hear our prayer. Amen.

5. Action for Today

- ☺ Reduce your use of plastic by finding alternatives to plastic and wherever possible, properly dispose of the plastic you do use to keep it out of our oceans and rivers.
- ☺ Wear re-usable fabric face masks to lessen the number of disposable masks and when disposing of your mask/s, cut the elastic to prevent the feet of birds from becoming entangled.