



24 August 2020

**Season of Creation
1 September – 4 October 2020**

Dear People of the Diocese,

Five years ago, Pope Francis issued the first encyclical that he had himself initiated (after completing an earlier encyclical that was begun by Pope Benedict XVI). The topic he chose was *On Care for our Common Home*, and he entitled it with a quote from a canticle of St Francis of Assisi, the figure who he chose as inspiration and guide when he was elected pope. *Laudato si'* is a truly prophetic document, calling us to renew our awareness of and care for God's creation as the common home that we share with all living creatures and also with future generations.

In this fifth anniversary year, Pope Francis has made a special invitation for us to participate in the annual Season of Creation, which runs from 1 September (the World Day of Prayer for Creation) to 4 October (the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi).

While the Season of Creation is normally focussed on organising prayer services, community litter clean-ups, or advocacy actions, this year it will necessarily be more reflective. I am therefore grateful for the initiative of the Diocese's Adult Faith Education Reference Group, which has assembled a group from across the diocese to prepare a statement on the *Care of Creation*, which aims at encouraging a greater appreciation of creation and a deeper understanding of our responsibility for its care.

I commend this statement to you as a valuable prompt to help each of us reflect on what actions are possible in our local community, and how we might contribute to wider community debates.

Yours sincerely,

MOST REV. SHANE MACKINLAY
BISHOP OF SANDHURST

