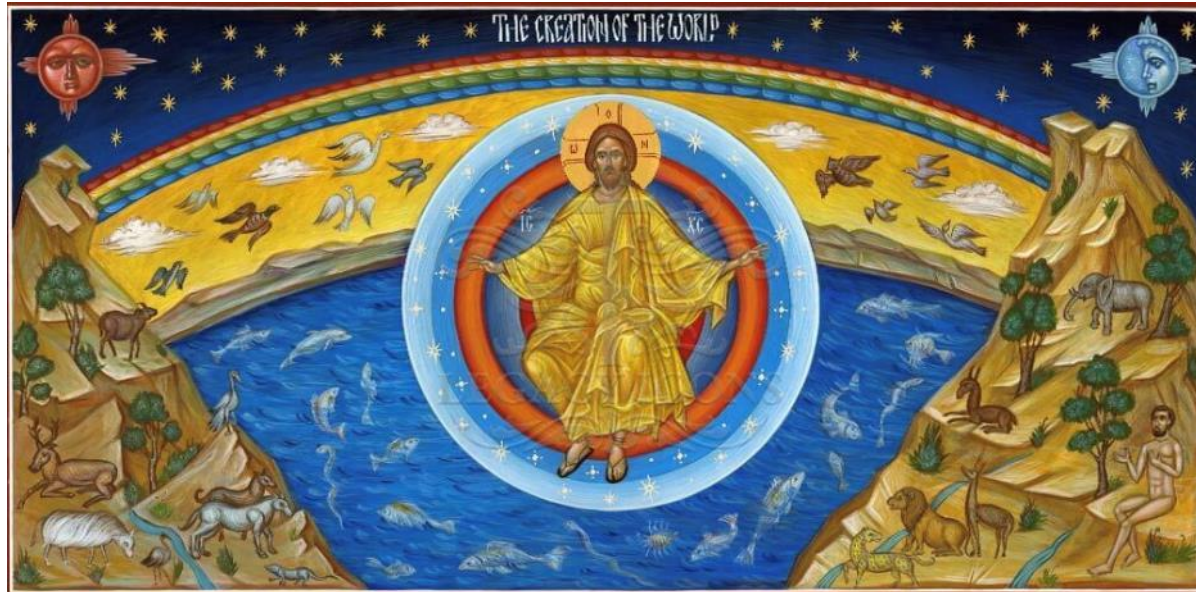


# THE FEAST OF CREATION

*A new liturgical feast in Western denominations*



*Tomás Insua – Laudato Si' Research Institute, Oxford University*



## September 1

*Known as "Creation Day", "Feast of Creation" or "World Day of Prayer for Creation".*

***First day of the liturgical calendar of Eastern Orthodox churches  
(aka Feast of the Indiction)***

# GROUNDING IN ANCIENT TRADITION



The Eastern Church celebrates September 1 since the 5th century.

Among other things, September 1 represents **“the day of Creation”**, when God began the creation of the universe.

Thus, it is the **first day of the liturgical year** of Orthodox and Catholic byzantine churches.

# 1989: its Creation symbolism is expanded

Ancient tradition

+

“Signs of the times”

*(ecological crisis)*

=

**World Day of Prayer for Creation**

# 1989: INVITATION TO WESTERN CHURCHES



“We invite through this our Patriarchal Message the **entire Christian world**, to offer... **every year on this day prayers and supplications to the Maker of all**, both as thanksgiving for the great gift of Creation and as petitions for its protection and salvation.”

*- Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios, 1 September 1989*

# FIRST EMBRACED BY EUROPEAN CHURCHES & ECEN

- **CCEE-KEK's** Ecumenical Assembly in Graz (1997):

*"Recommendation 5.1:*

*Plan, following the example of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the celebration of a common **Feast of Creation**."*

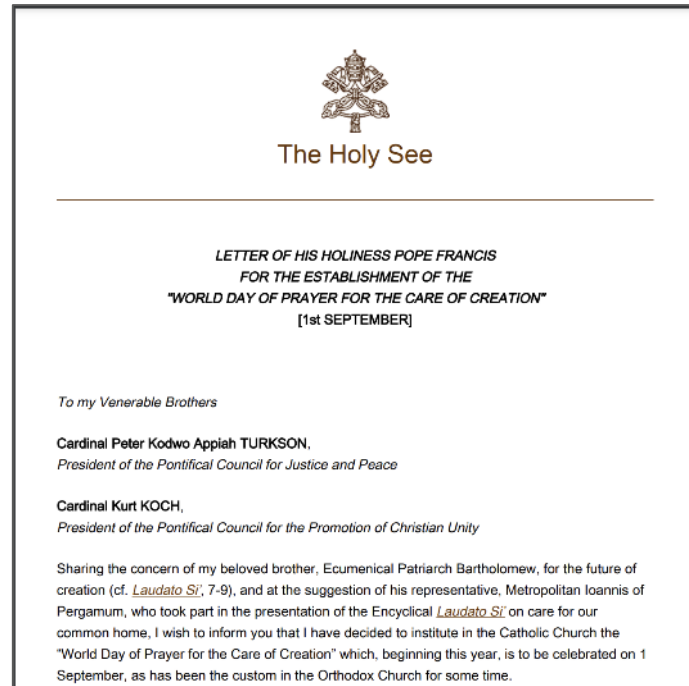
- **ECEN's** continued animation since then

# THEN ADOPTED AS “WORLD DAY OF PRAYER” BY

**WCC (2008)**



**CATHOLIC CHURCH (2015)**



# MOMENTUM ACCELERATES SINCE 2015



**Annual statements by high-level leaders**  
continually promote Creation Day.



**Growing grassroots momentum**  
thousands and thousands of local churches  
celebrate the feast annually.



# CREATION DAY: MUCH DEEPER THAN MOST PEOPLE THINK

- Not only a '**World Day of Prayer** for Creation' (dozens of such days on random themes; Grandparents, Human Trafficking, Vocations, the Church in China, Sanctification of Priests, etc).
- Creation Day has much **deeper theological underpinnings**. Grounded in an ancient tradition of the Orthodox Church, it is a day to:
  - commemorate the **theological mystery of Creation**
  - honor **God as Creator**

# CRUCIAL DISTINCTION

Two different **meanings of the word "Creation"**.  
In Italian, distinct words are used:

- **"la Creazione"** stands for God's *act* of creation of heaven and earth.  
*i.e. Creation as **theological mystery**.*
  
- **"il Creato"** stands for the *result* of the act of creation, the fruit of la Creazione.  
*i.e. Creation as the **created world**.*



# CRUCIAL DISTINCTION

*Main symbolism of Sept 1st  
and focus of the new feast*

- **“la Creazione”** stands for God’s *act* of creation of heaven and earth.  
*i.e. Creation as **theological mystery**.*

- **“il Creato”** stands for the *result* of the act of creation, the fruit of la Creazione.  
*i.e. Creation as the **created world**.*



# CRUCIAL DISTINCTION

- ***“la Creazione”*** – Creation as theological mystery.

- ***“il Creato”*** – Creation as the created world.

**Merits a “World Day of Prayer”**



# CRUCIAL DISTINCTION

- ***“la Creazione”*** – Creation as theological mystery.

**Merits a liturgical feast**

- ***“il Creato”*** – Creation as the created world.



# IN A NUTSHELL: CREATION DAY IS...

NO



... not a “**Christian ‘Earth Day’**”

YES



... but a **celebration of the Mystery**  
of God’s Creation of Heaven and Earth

*(Which, by reminding us of its source and sacredness,  
can also inspire care for the created world)*

**THE PROCESS TO  
ENHANCE THE FEAST IN  
WESTERN DENOMINATIONS**

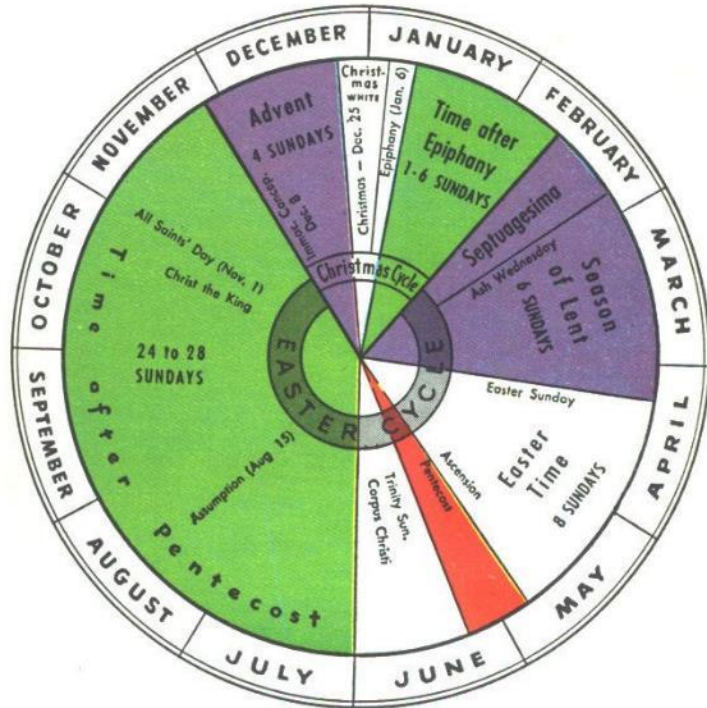
# PROPOSAL: “UPGRADE” TO LITURGICAL FEAST

- Despite its **growing popularity** and rich **theological underpinnings**, it is still **absent from liturgical calendars** of Western denominations. So a proposal emerged to “upgrade” Creation day to become a liturgical feast in Western calendars.
- Ecumenical process underway co-sponsored by **World Council of Churches** (umbrella for Orthodox and Protestant churches) and Protestant denominations, accompanied by the Orthodox Church and in dialogue with the Vatican.





# KEY INSIGHT: ENRICH THE CHRISTOLOGICAL NATURE OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR



*"Within the cycle of a year, [the Church] unfolds the **whole mystery** of Christ."*

Sacrosanctum Concilium

*"In the beginning was the Word...  
All things came to be **through him**."*

John 1

# HISTORIC ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE IN ASSISI



# PROCESS ACCOMPANIED BY ORTHODOX CHURCH



“As you gather in the historic town of Assisi to explore **how this day of prayer can be embraced more deeply** and more meaningfully in Christian Churches, **particularly in liturgy** and spirituality, our sincere wish and fervent prayer is that you may experience a moment of inspiration and kairos... **May God abundantly bless your deliberations and decisions.**”

— Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, 15 March 2024

# DRIVEN BY WESTERN CHURCHES



“The **Anglican Communion enthusiastically supports...** adding the Feast of Creation to our liturgical calendars.”

— Archbishop of Canterbury (Anglican Primate)

“The Lutheran World Federation **rejoices in this initiative.**”

— Rev. Lange, A. General Secretary, Lutheran World Federation



“An ecumenical creation liturgy each year on the Sunday after September 1 would be an **excellent idea.**”

— Bp. Bedford-Strohm, President, World Council of Churches

“It is important to deepen this ecumenical celebration and **further mainstream it** in the spiritual life of our communities.”

— Rev. Franklin-Ross, Ecumenical Chair, World Methodist Council



“We give **thanks to God for this initiative** to unite in having this common Feast of Creation.”

— Rev. Nyomi, General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches

# KAIROS MOMENT – STRONG CONSENSUS EMERGED



*The “Assisi Consensus” board*

Upgrade from “Day of Prayer” to become a Liturgical Feast

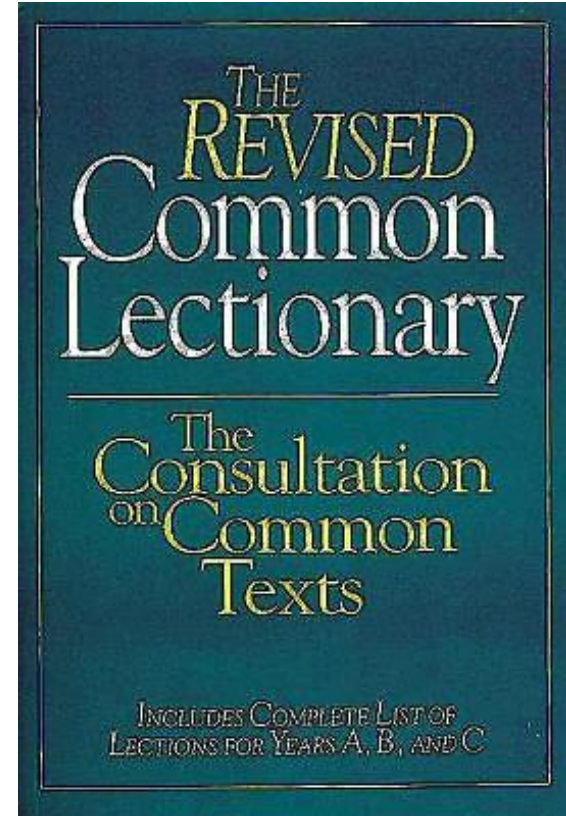
# PROTESTANT CHURCHES: CONFIRMED TO GO AHEAD

Worldwide churches co-sponsoring the process (Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed) confirmed their desire for a “Joint statement of intent”.

**When?** September 2025 (Nicaea centenary).

**How?** Add to their **Common Lectionary** (RCL\*).  
Then implement nationally.

*\* The Consultation on Common Texts (ecumenical liturgical body in charge of Revised Common Lectionary) already set up a committee to add the new feast.*



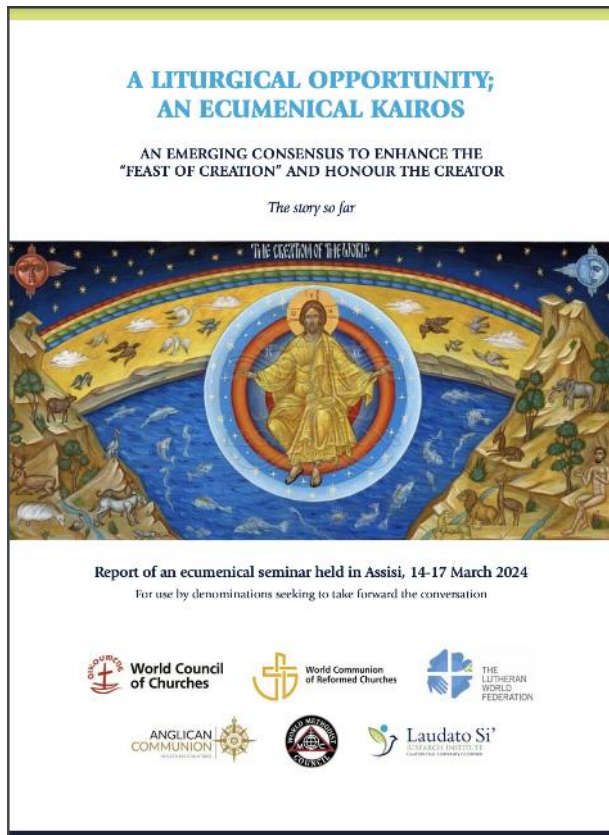
# CATHOLIC CHURCH: UNDERGOING CONSULTATIONS

Following an encouraging [statement](#), Dicastery for Divine Worship clarified the **next step: requests** for the feast **from bishops' conferences** and others.

1. **Synodal approach**, which – before taking a step at global level – would first be sure that there is a desire from local churches and the People of God.
2. Precedent of recent **“new feasts”**, **preceded by requests** to the Vatican from various corners of the Church.

*E.g. Feast of Holy Family (1921), Feast of Christ the King (1925), Feast of Christ the Priest (2012), etc*

# NEXT STEP #1: START CONVERSATIONS NATIONALLY



Resources available:

- [\*Assisi report\*](#)
- [\*Theological paper\*](#)



# NEXT STEP #2: THE NEW CHARTA OECUMENICA?

Charta  
Oecumenica  
Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation  
among the Churches in Europe

*"We recommend the introduction in European churches of an Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Preservation of Creation"*  
Charta Oecumenica, 2001

Contribute to the 2025 process: see [Memo](#)

# NEXT STEP #3: ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE



- **May 3-8**, in Assisi
- Broaden the scope to include **more denominations**
- **Hybrid** (in-person & online)
- Contact: [CreationFeast@gmail.com](mailto:CreationFeast@gmail.com)



**THANK YOU**

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