

Caring for Creation movement - News for 2022-23

Season of Creation September 2022

Highlights of 2022's Season of Creation included a Caring for Creation conference hosted by Holy Spirit Parish, Gungahlin. Attendees came from across the archdiocese, from Yass to Braidwood and everywhere in between. They considered how to give practical effect to the encyclical *Laudato Si' - On Care for Our Common Home*.

- For example St Gregory's Parish, Queanbeyan was well represented at the Conference. The movement has emerged strongly there since that time, with both practical actions and faith formation elements.

The Season ended with an ecumenical prayer service and tree planting on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi in the grounds of St Peter Chanel's, Yarralumla -

- Archbishop Christopher, Greek Orthodox Bishop Bartolomew, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran and Uniting pastors and faith groups joined interested students from St Clare's and St Edmund's Colleges, and others.



- Presence of both Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and third order Franciscans (both Anglican and Catholic chapters) demonstrated their special spiritual kinship with nature.
- a group of people from 'south of the Lake' has been meeting ecumenically since to reflect together on the encyclical. People can register interest in joining such dialogues at LaudatoSiACT@gmail.com.

Jewels on the South Coast

The Social Justice Advocates Network on the Sapphire Coast is a fine example of people working together in ways similar to our Caring for Creation movement.

- The Advocates are secular, from various faith communities and spiritualities in the Bega Valley Shire, including those of no religious affiliation- Their innovative ecological and social outreach work is epic.
- The Advocates work in friendship with local Yuin communities, as do the Uniting Church based at Eden, and
- a vibrant Junior Advocates network is based at Lumen Christi College, Pambula.

Eco-theology

In January, the Caring for Creation (CfC) movement convened a one-day eco-theology workshop in the Bega Valley, at Desert Creek House, Numbugga. The edgy forest venue epitomizes ecological harmony.

- CfC movement members from Canberra learnt from parishioners from as far as Eden, from local landholders and from the Social Justice Advocates from Lumen Christi College.
- The aim was to bring simple faith understandings and spiritualities into focus with the science of ecology.
- Jacqui Rémond from the global *Laudato Si'* movement and the Australian Catholic University facilitated.



- In welcome, Yuin elder 'BJ' Cruse shared on his First Nations heritage, both Christian understandings and spirituality of country. Our own Aboriginal Catholic Ministry offered him a message stick in thanks.
- The group discussed papers and CfC presentations on the eco-theology literature - with a focus on the work of internationally-acclaimed theologian, the late Fr Denis Edwards of Adelaide.
- The output is helping distil simple messaging to underpin our Movement's directions (snippet below).

To express interest in these developments please contact us at LaudatoSiACT@gmail.com.

Caring for creation, in partnership with our living creator God, is a key part of the Christian faith and a way the Spirit is moving in the world today. Actively caring for God's gifts of creation (which includes all humanity) is not a side show or an option, but is central to our faith.

- The incarnation of God through Christ gives purpose and meaning to creation. Creation as it evolves and the incarnation are part of an integrated action of God's loving, self-revelation and self-giving.

Cry of the Earth

As our movement has been evolving in 2022-23, we see continuing desperate pleas for urgency being identified by the world-wide community.

- Our Bishops met recently in Fiji in solidarity with their colleagues in Oceania. They witnessed dramatic impacts of the human and ecological crises there.
- Global pandemics and animal epidemics being experienced are being identified as linked with a stressed natural environment.
- With strong support from Rome, the United Nations has convened international conferences in North America to identify critical issues concerning global biodiversity loss, ocean issues and water justice.
- And the 7-year summary report from an International Panel on Climate Change confirmed the climate outlook and response needed, and that current trends are dire.



Yet the Christian message is one of hope - that humanity can choose a pathway through the crises we face, a pathway that will give life. This year's theme for Laudato Si' week 16-24 May 2023 in Australia (or globally 18-28 May 2023) is **Hope for the Earth, Hope for Humanity**.



Launch of the Laudato Si' Action Plan

In accordance with the Vatican's framework, with the 2021 recommendations from the Australian Bishops and now with the entire Church in Australia in Plenary Council in 2022, the Archdiocese has developed a draft Laudato Si' Action Plan. The Action Plan features First Australian artwork and care for country on its cover.

The draft Plan follows the Archdiocesan reflection in May 2022 on the seven Laudato Si' goals and now looks at practical implementation of Laudato Si'.

- The scope of the draft Plan is for the Archdiocese to undertake actions that will enable parishes, schools, families and other institutions to develop their own plans of action and to walk forward together.
- The draft Plan contemplates us all being invited to undertake a 7-year journey 2023-30 and beyond. Several parishes are already launching their parish action plans at the same time.
- Importantly the Archdiocese is committed to listening to the Voice and perspective of our First Australians, and to also walking together with Christian and other faith communities.

Archbishop Christopher is to launch the draft Plan at the 11am 21-May-2023 Cathedral Mass (streamed live at and recorded at <https://www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online/>). Then the action planning will be found at <https://cgcatholic.org.au/services-directory/caring-for-creation/>. With consultation (LaudatoSiACT@gmail.com) the draft Plan will be finalised in September 2023 (for Season of Creation) and will be regularly reviewed.

C4C young leaders

Schools are showing particular interest -

- As well as the social justice network at Lumen Christi College at Pambula Beach, interest is stirring at southern deanery colleges such as St Clare's and St Edmund's.
- In the northern deanery Merici College continues to show leadership in its sustainability program. And the Environment Group at Daramalan is also working on recycling with the St Vincent de Paul Society as part of a whole-of-school mission on care for our common home.
- Catholic Education's online Integral Ecology Network also includes primary schools. Schools have potential for stimulating and leading response in the whole school community and in their home parishes.

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