

Caring for Creation (CfC) movement news (May 2024)

Currently the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn is undergoing a journey of preparation and discernment, the “Year of the Holy Spirit, ahead of a planned assembly 18-20 October 2024. The assembly would pave the journey towards the work of a Diocesan Pastoral Council and our responses to 2023 Plenary Council outcomes.

Roundtable on Care for Our Common Home

As part of preparation for the assembly, the Archdiocesan Office for Evangelisation is planning a synodal Roundtable encounter, discerning the way forward on Our Common Home at **4.30-6pm Friday 24 May 2024**. The encounter will be both online or face-to-face at the Haydon Centre alongside the Cathedral in Manuka. Three aspects of Our Common Home teachings are to be considered at the Roundtable including Justice, Outreach & Integral Ecology (JOIE). For example the theme “Outreach” explores the integrating nature of care of the earth in our faith journey - in connecting to other faith communities, to regional leadership, to younger generations, and to First Australian perspectives, etc (see below).

Registering on-line for the 24-May RoundTable on Our Common Home should open soon at <https://www.cgevangalisation.org.au/roundtables/> . If not RSVP to LaudatoSiACT@gmail.com .



Laudato Si week is coming up **19-26 May 2024** . The Archdiocese will mark it through the synodal Roundtable encounter (above). Parishes and schools celebrate Laudato Si week locally in liturgy, in practical actions and in communications. Resources for the week are available under a theme this year of “seeds of hope” [at national](#) and [at global levels](#). Belconnen South parish is [screening a film, The Letter](#) 1-3.30pm Saturday 18-May. The film brings the global encyclical to life in the lives of young people. All welcome RSVP LaudatoSiACT@gmail.com .

Laudato Si action planning

Laudato Si week 2024 marks 3 years since Archbishop Christopher first commissioned the [archdiocesan CfC movement](#), 2 years since [reflection on archdiocesan directions](#) (under the 2015 papal encyclical), and a year since launch of the first archdiocesan [Laudato Si Action Plan 2023-2030](#).



Canberra-Goulburn
Laudato Si' Action Plan
2023 - 2030

The 7-year Laudato Si Action Plan for the archdiocese is designed to enable and assist local responses in parishes and schools.

Comments are welcome as the plan will be regularly updated - this year after the Roundtable encounters (above).

Actions listed in the plan include a project to help measure and understand entities' greenhouse gas emissions.

Carbon 'footprints' are currently being prepared for several parish pilot operations.

Care for the Earth - an integrating faith pathway

Sparked by Pope Francis's teaching 'to all people of goodwill', the Laudato Si movement is universal and truly catholic in nature. The movement seeks common ground with other Christian communities and other faiths. The CfC movement has an ecological spirituality focus group that, amongst it works, aims to foster understanding of First Nations spirituality of country and to encourage relations on care for the earth between local Christian faith communities. In Australia, the ecumenical Season of Creation traditionally runs from 1-September to 4-October each spring. It is a time when moves towards Christian unity comes into particularly close focus.

The annual United Nations Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the Conventions on Climate Change, Biodiversity and the like provide opportunities towards year-end also for us to come together in common faith-interests with members of the Canberra Inter-Faith Forum. Inter-faith prayer support for international actions may become a regular annual vigil in Canberra at the time of relevant UN and Parliamentary deliberations.

Pope Francis' exhortation of October 2023, *Laudato Deum* focuses on an urgent need for effective international and transnational actions on climate. In November 2023, with the Canberra Inter-faith Forum, ACT Churches Council, and the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), the CfC movement facilitated inter-faith prayer vigils on the front lawns at Parliament House prior to the COP28 UN conference on climate actions.



These prayer gatherings were greatly blessed. Our guitar group led us all in song. Faith groups included Anglican, Ba'hai, Buddhist, Greek Orthodox, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Uniting Church communities and pastors along with our CfC chaplain, Fr Mick MacAndrew, and retired Columban missionary Fr Charles Rue. Notably, the other faiths participating included their younger generations in the gatherings.

King Charles also referenced care for our common home and care for creation extensively in his Christmas message. And in February 2024, Islamic scholars published [Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth](#), a ground-breaking document that has been described as a Muslim equivalent to the 2015 papal encyclical *Laudato Si*. The document makes it clear that the Muslim faith tradition also requires active stewardship of creation.

The CfC movement's cross-faith connections include with organisations like the Faith Ecology Network (FEN), an Australian network for interfaith dialogue between ecological science and religion. FEN is currently organizing [online workshops](#) on tips to help care for biodiversity.

Thinking globally, acting locally

- The global Laudato Si Movement has cancelled plans to gather in Assisi in May 2025 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*. They see it as more ecologically responsible to encourage local and national encounters instead.
- Australian dioceses do not have a national chapter of the movement as such. However, **Catholic Earthcare Australia**, a unit within Caritas Australia, are charged by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference with support in line with the Bishops 2021 Social Justice statement [Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor](#).
- [Earthcare](#) runs ways for schools, parishes, families etc to exchange ideas and experience on practical responses and actions. In February 2024 Earthcare convened a network meeting of Catholic Earthcare schools at Merici College. Merici has long been the leading ACT school in the area of sustainability.
- The schools recommended a meeting of student leaders in the field to raise the level of understanding of the Care for the Earth teachings. A student meeting may not only assist implementation of action plans in our schools, but also could help underpin formation of a post-school CfC young leaders network.
- Earthcare is to convene a national convocation 12-14 September 2024, comprising two days of online sessions on implementing Laudato Si teachings, and with a hands-on activity day in diocesan 'hubs' on Saturday 14-September. Marist College intends to convene the hub in Canberra-Goulburn archdiocese.

To contribute or to express interest in these and other developments contact LaudatoSiACT@gmail.com.