

Duty to Care

In his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis links the environmental crisis – pollution, climate change and land and water degradation – with global poverty, reminding us that the greatest impact of these developments will be suffered by the poor. Thus he has placed the poor at the heart of the encyclical and “at the heart of his own personal vision and universal mission” (Kureethadam, p37).

This observation by Pope Francis calls on all of us to share this mission and to seek ways not just to address climate change but also to reach out to those whose lives are affected. Indeed, our changing environment prompts us to continually stop and think about how we live on our planet. We are called to respond and to adopt new ways of living.

Some of these responses may include:

- “... a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all” (Pope Francis)
- a conversion of our hearts to encounter God in Creation. To look, reflect upon and celebrate the natural world. our relationship with the natural world while also working for environmental justice
- sharing fairly resources the earth gives us and speaking out when resources are not shared equitably
- advocating for those affected by environmental degradation of the natural resources such as

quality of air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystems; habitat destruction; the extinction of wildlife; and pollution

- supporting aid agencies in countries affected by rising sea levels, drought and climate emergencies
- making better choices as consumers to reverse the negative effect unbridled consumerism has on the poor
- engaging in actions to put pressure on governments and businesses to care for the planet
- embracing the *Laudato Si* Action Plan established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), which is led by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (Holy See) *Laudato Si* Action Platform
- empowering friends, family, parish, communities, schools, agencies and ministries within and beyond our reach to pursue and achieve sustainability in the spirit of integral ecology.

Monsignor Denis Edwards, in his article “Hope for our Common Home” wrote of Pope Francis’ call for “an ongoing ecological conversion, to a spirituality of love and respect for other animals, and their habitats, for the land, the seas, the rivers, in the one community of life on Earth”. This conversion of ourselves and our cultures, challenges us constantly to avoid a consumerist individuality in preference for the care of the common good and our common home.

**“THERE IS A NOBILITY IN THE DUTY TO CARE FOR CREATION
THROUGH LITTLE DAILY ACTIONS, AND IT IS WONDERFUL HOW
EDUCATION CAN BRING ABOUT REAL CHANGES IN LIFESTYLE.”**

(LAUDATO SI’ #211)

REFLECTION

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us? (*Laudato Si*’ #160)

References: 1. https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf; 2. <https://lsri.campion.ox.ac.uk/open-access-laudato-si-integral-ecology-collection-as-acbc-president> 3. <https://catholicearthcare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TreeofLifeResource-FinalJune2016-2.pdf>

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.