

Laudato Si' Action Platform special edition



November
2021

Whāia te Tika

Seek Justice

Justice & Peace Commission Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Statement from Bishop Pat

“Pope Francis continues to call us to the profound conversion of heart that will enable us to care for the earth and for the poor.

I am strongly supportive of families, Parishes, Ethnic Communities and Schools in the Auckland Diocese embarking on a seven-year journey towards the Laudato Si' Goals articulated by the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development's Laudato Si' Action Platform and outlined in this special edition of *Whāia Te Tika*.”



The Laudato Si' Action Platform offers a supported and guided - yet flexible - seven-year journey towards sustainability. The aim is to reach one or more of seven goals:



- Response to the cry of the earth
- Response to the cry of the poor
- Simple Lifestyles
- Ecological Spirituality
- Ecological Economics
- Ecological Education
- Community engagement & Participatory action

You and your family, your parish, your diocese, your business, your religious order, your school may be ready to start the journey. Or perhaps you are ready to start to explore making a decision about the process. Please read on!



Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si' – on Care for Our Common Home* (2015) has been a great inspiration for us in our committee work as it has been an inspiration to countless other people, churches, schools, dioceses and religious congregations ever since. This quote from *Laudato Si'*, #217 explains why:

“The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.” (Quote from Benedict XVI). For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.

Since 2015 many initiatives have followed to care both for the earth and for the poor in what our Holy Father calls “Integral Ecology”. This year the Vatican has opened a new initiative, the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. It started in May at the end of the *Laudato Si'* Week and more resources were released on October 4.

In this special edition of *Whaia Te Tika* our committee describes the platform, which is a worldwide opportunity to move towards

sustainability, both social and environmental, for the Universal Church and all its institutions and people and for all people of good will. We present the goals of the platform and some of the resources available. We also offer inspiration from the journey already started by others.

On November 14, the World Day of Prayer for the Poor, more resources will be released, the very important *Laudato Si'* Planning Guides.

The journey towards sustainability is a flexible and individual one, but leadership, resources and support will be provided through the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform.

On behalf of our committee, Susanne Rehder Montgomerie, convenor.



Environment and Sustainability Committee

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What is happening overseas?

Justice & Peace Commission Catholic Diocese of Auckland:

<https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/care-of-the-poor/justicepeace/>

Environment & Sustainability Committee has many resources available at this website - at the tab for the committee. Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/JusticeAndPeaceCDA>

Contact person: Peter Garrick, Executive Secretary, Justice & Peace Commission, Catholic Diocese of Auckland.

peterg@cda.org.nz

Phone: 09 378 4380 Mob 022 130 0730

The seven Laudato Si' Action Platform goals



Graphic from <https://www.columban.org.au/media-and-publications/articles/features/2021/st-columbans-mission-society-commits-to-the-vaticans-seven-year-laudato-si-action-platform-launched-by-pope-francis>

The adoption of sustainable lifestyles is grounded in the idea of having enough to meet one's needs and sensible use of resources.

- Build sustainably by using more efficient lighting, reducing heating and air conditioning and installing low-flow taps
- Travel sustainably by increasing use of electric vehicles or bicycles and replacing air and car trips
- Eat sustainably by reducing food waste, composting, buying food locally and eating less meat
- Shop sustainably by not buying disposable plastic and styrofoam, recycling and reducing purchases of new consumer goods

For full details on the goals, go to <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/app/uploads/2021/05/overview-of-laudato-si-goals-and-actions.pdf>

Reconnect with nature in a spirit of wonder and praise

Ecological Spirituality recovers a religious vision of God's creation.

- Celebrate the Season of Creation by co-hosting an event with another community and praying for our social and ecological redemption
- Encourage community reflection on Laudato Si' themes
- Praying in nature by blessing a natural space as a reflection/meditation area and regularly praying there

Ecological Education is about fostering ecological awareness and transformative action.

- Implement a Laudato Si' education plan to ensure the community is familiar with the local ecosystem and the social dimensions of the crisis
- Ensure education is community-led by creating ways for educators to undergo ecological conversions and recognise young people's leadership
- Weaving Laudato Si' themes into the community's communications and by encouraging community members to develop Laudato Si' Plans
- Delivering equitable access to education by ensuring under-represented groups are educated and ensuring that education promotes human rights and dignity

Laudato Si' Action Platform goals

Ecological Economics acknowledges that the economy is embedded within the biosphere—our common home.

- Building and supporting the circular economy by launching trading communities and purchasing from retailers who use recycled materials
- Ensuring financial investments are sustainable by divesting from fossil fuels and choosing ethical banking and insurance companies
- Supporting ethical businesses, taking a “total cost of ownership approach” to purchases, making a sustainability shopping list and buying from local shops
- Ensuring the dignity of workers by supporting good jobs with liveable wages and benefits, supporting cooperative management, supporting care labour and buying from ethical enterprises

The Response to the Cry of the Earth is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability.

- Protect the climate by installing solar panels, insulating buildings, buying renewable energy credits where available and installing cleaner or more efficient cookstoves or appliances
- Protect biodiversity by planting native trees, planting native gardens, removing invasive species, practicing regenerative agriculture and protecting bees and other pollinators
- Protect waterways and land by ensuring sensible fertiliser use, instituting drop irrigation and other conservative irrigation models, planting waterway buffers, avoiding the installation of impermeable surfaces around buildings and removing litter.



The Response to the Cry of the Poor is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend all forms of life on Earth.

- Protect all life through education
- Deliver water, sanitation and hygiene services, ensuring access to clean water and hygiene training
- Promote Indigenous leadership by ensuring Indigenous communities have the rights to their land
- Ensure community members have free access to green space and that children's spaces are free of air pollution
- Grow in solidarity with vulnerable people, being aware of community challenges, delivering basic needs and addressing failed systems
- Learn from elders, sharing social resources and money and holding community action days

Photo from <https://slmedia.org/blog/deacon-structuring-the-cry-of-the-poor-part-1>

Community engagement and participatory action

encourages the development of cultures and policies that protect our common home.

- Advocate for social and ecological causes, meeting officials to discuss advocacy issues, maintaining a regular review of policies and sharing updates with the community
- Engage with the wider public by organizing regular events and writing for local newspapers or commenting on local news stories related to Laudato Si' themes
- Develop a response to shared challenges by collaborating with leaders to identify ways the Church can support your social/ecological programmes
- Analyse the physical, social, and spiritual ways your community is likely to be affected by climate change and make a plan to prepare for those changes

**Laudato
Si'
Action
Platform
goals**

Cardinal advocates for Pacific Islands in lead up to COP26

Speaking ahead of the COP26 climate change meeting in Glasgow, Tongan Cardinal Soane Patita Mafi had a message for the politicians attending COP26: Listen.

"We want those big nations to really see and to really hear," he said in an interview with the British Catholic magazine, *The Tablet*.

"Not to pretend. Not to turn away. We want them not to be deafened to the cry of reality. Can they turn an ear of love, not of political expediency? Are they prepared to hear the voice of the voiceless?"

Inspiration from others inspires our own journey

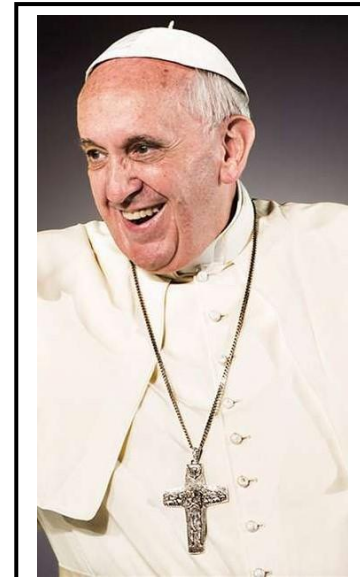
The journey to sustainability is made in co-operation with others who are part of your family, parish, diocese, school, business, congregation.

The Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP) will give direction, resources and support and hopefully lots of inspiration. Input from others who have walked before us or alongside us will also be invaluable!

A newly established project, Eco Church NZ offers extremely useful, free resources which have been adapted to New Zealand conditions. You can find them here:

<https://www.ecochurch.org.nz/>

Here and on page seven we share three stories from the Eco Church, which show how different denominations are contributing to care of the planet through a range of activities from planting trees to baking biscuits.



Watch Pope Francis invite Catholics to use the Laudato Si' platform here:

<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>

Anglican diocesan staff go tree planting

The Anglican Diocese of Auckland, a partner of Eco Church NZ, is committed to reducing its carbon footprint. As part of this commitment, 15 diocesan staff organised a half-day planting exercise earlier this year at Matuku Link. Staff from Neligan House and Henderson-Swanson Parish. Most people got involved with planting and weeding and few worked on repotting seedlings in the nursery. Matuku Link is 37 hectares of wetland and native bush located at 111 Bethells Road, Te Henga, West Auckland.

It is located at the head of the Te Henga Wetland, the largest wetland in the Auckland region. The group was hosted by John Staniland who is one of the trustees of Matuku Reserve Trust which owns Matuku Link.



ABOVE: Anglican diocesan staff took part in a planting exercise at Matukau Link earlier this year.

This edition

Editor: Pat Lythe

Guest editorial: Susanne Rehder

Montgomerie and Environment and Sustainability Committee members Frances Clayton and Marion Feeney.

Layout: Philip Cass

Baking was the key to sustainability for Tribe Church children



How to get children engaged in sustainability? At the Tribe Church in Masterton, the team decided baking was the answer.

“This term, our Kids' Church has been learning about the wonder of Creation, how it's struggling, and how we can participate in God's healing work,” Anna Baird said.

She said that when asked how they could reduce waste at Kids' Church, the children suggested baking to replace the plastic packets of biscuits they consume each week for morning tea.

“So a few weeks later, we ran with their idea and had a baking session making

marshmallow balls and chocolate chip biscuits,” she said.

“The goodies have frozen beautifully and the children are reminded every Sunday of one of the simple ways we can reduce our waste by being producers and not just consumers.”

Mid-winter tree planting marks Matariki

Children from Cityside Baptist Church celebrated Matariki this year with a tree planting at Te Auaunga (Oakley Creek).

The children cleared small patches, made a hole, popped in a little tree and tramped down the soil. The children involved saw the work as important.

“Planting is good because you're helping the world against climate change. And it's more fun than sitting at home,” Elijah said. Estelle said: “I'm keen there should be enough trees. My grandparents live near Oakley Creek. We played beside it.”

The adults supervising the children said it was a great opportunity for them, where they learned as they worked together and made a place they could come back to.



Are you ready to begin your journey?

The decision to embark on the Laudato Si' journey is a meaningful one. Prayerful reflection, a spirit of unity and an awareness of our social-ecological crisis are important elements of your discernment. You are warmly invited to use these resources as part of your discernment process. This is about a journey and setting out on that journey. We will strive for progress, not perfection. Of course, we would hope to be in a much better place after seven years, but the journey is your journey, designed by you, but supported by the Laudato Si' resources found on the platform.

A description of what the decision-making process could look like:

<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/app/uploads/2021/05/ensuggested-discernment-process-updated.pdf>

Some prayers and other resources relevant for the process:

<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/app/uploads/2021/05/endiscernment-resources-and-prayers.pdf>

If you are ready to start the journey and sign up then here is the link. You may of course also start the journey without a formal commitment to the platform.

<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/pledge-your-commitment/>

What is happening outside Aotearoa New Zealand?



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.
Summary of
Laudato Si': On Care for
Our Common Home

In the United States the **Catholic Climate Covenant** has published a summary of *Laudato Si*, along with suggested action steps and resources. They can be found here: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/laudato-si-summary-action-steps>



In August this year the **Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference** has declared: "The signs of the times are clear - we know that we

human beings need a change of heart, mind and behaviour."

"Pope Francis calls us to an ecological conversion and an economic conversion. This includes embarking on a seven-year journey towards the goals set out in the Laudato Si' Action Platform." For more information, go to <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Social-Justice-Statement-2021-22.pdf>



Several religious orders already walk a path inspired by Laudato Si. One example is the **Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet**. The front page footsteps image is from their presentation:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=sisters+of+st+joseph+of+carondelet+laudato+si+action+platform

On their website, the Sisters quote section 11 of Laudato Si': "if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs."