



May 2021

Whāia te Tika

Seek Justice

Justice and Peace Commission Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Christians cannot opt out of their vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork

When it comes to looking after the planet and protecting our battered home, Christians do not have a choice, says Pope Francis.

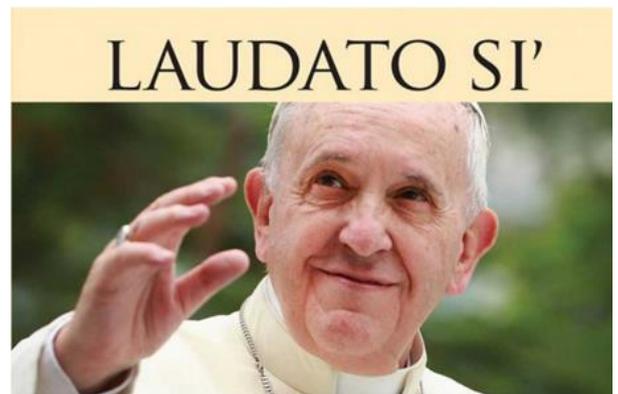
According to Francis, it's an obligation we all have to meet. Quoting Benedict XVI, the Holy Father wrote in *Laudato Si'* (LS 217): "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast."

"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



Above: Pope Francis has called for an interior conversion to deal with climate change.

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 secondary aspect of our Christian experience."

Welcome to our special edition heralding the Laudato Si' action plan

From Justice and Peace Commission chairperson Pat Lythe

Welcome to this special issue of *Whāia te Tika*, which heralds the Laudato Si' Action Platform for a seven-year sustainability journey. The Action Platform will be made public on May 24, the last day of Laudato Si' Week, which begins on May 16. We will report on the platform in our next edition in June.

Care for the environment and sustainability are issues to be seriously considered by our parishes and communities. Are these among your goals? What plans have you made? Read on for suggestions and send us your ideas! Be inspired by *Laudato Si'*.



May 2021

The Justice and Peace Commission has been very busy in the past three months.

Following the month's delay in the Commission meeting due to Covid Auckland lockdown, various committees have made written and oral submissions to the government.

The first one was in response to the Finance and Expenditure Committee Budget Policy statement, where we urged the government to adopt a sustainability outlook to match their wellbeing one.

In particular the Justice and Peace Commission focussed on climate change, child poverty, housing and prisoner rehabilitation. At the end of March the Environment and Sustainability Committee submitted to the Climate Change Commission's draft advice to the Government.

In April there were three more submissions, calling for 1) a more pastoral approach to Student Accommodation, 2) Fair and effective reinforcement of offenders for drug driving, and 3) concern about the possible introduction of 'safe areas' around abortion clinics. All these submissions involved meticulous work, backed up by oral submissions via Zoom.

This year Earth Day was well promoted to parishes. Unfortunately, it coincided with Good Shepherd Sunday and Anzac day so was rather marginalised. However much of the rest of the year will have an ecological focus.

- Pat Lythe

Kaitiakitanga and climate change

Kaitiakitanga – the Maori belief in our role as guardians - can teach us a lot about our responsibilities in dealing with climate change. Kaitiakitanga involves the conservation, replenishment and sustainability of the environment. It is about safeguarding the future.

According to the Science Learning Hub, Maori believe people are part of the environment, not superior to it. The well-being of the people and the environment are closely related.

There is a traditional Maori saying: "Ko ahau te awa, ko te awa ko ahau" (I am the river, the river is me) which shows the relationship between people and the environment. If a river is polluted, there is something not right with the people (and vice versa).

It is up to the tangata whenua (the people of the land) to take responsibility for the environment and take action when necessary.

This sense of responsibility is at the core of statements from Pope Francis and before him, Pope Benedict XVI, who warned: "Our earth is talking to us and we must listen to it and decipher its message if we want to survive,"

Adapted from the Science Learning Hub educational resource

<https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/2544-understanding-kaitiakitanga>

**Justice and Peace Commission
Catholic Diocese of Auckland**

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A year of environmental and climate change action, but is our government doing enough?

New Zealand is not doing enough in the fight against global warming, the Climate Change Commission has warned.

The CCC said the government's commitment under the National Determined Contribution - its promise to cut greenhouse gases and by how much - was insufficient to stay below a 1.5C temperature rise. The CCC will formally present its advice to the government in May.

"The Government's commitment to reduce net emissions by an average of 30% from 2005 emissions levels over the 2021-2030 period is incompatible with global efforts," the CCC said. "If Aotearoa is to play its part as a developed nation, the NDC would need to be strengthened to reflect emission reductions of much more than 35% below 2005 levels by 2030."

The Environment and Sustainability Committee urges our government to strengthen Aotearoa New Zealand's 2021-2030 NDCs.

Strengthen

The next major UN-organised climate change summit, COP 26, will be held in Glasgow on November 1-12. There will be a pre-COP meeting in Milan on September 28-October 2. At COP 26 countries are due to strengthen their contributions to the cuts in green house gases. In the lead-up the Glasgow summit, the United States under its new leader, President Joe Biden, has re-joined the Paris Agreement.



ABOVE: *New Zealand school students held protests on May 9 this year. Photo RNZ.*

He recently convened a high-level online meeting of 40 world leaders, which produced a number of commitments:

The US has committed to reducing emissions 50-52% against the 2005 baseline and to [doubling climate finance](#) to developing countries by 2024. The United Kingdom has committed to reducing emissions 78% by 2035 against the 1990 baseline. The new [pledge](#) will incorporate the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions for the first time.

Emissions

The European Union has said it will reduce emissions at least 55% by 2030 against the 1990 baseline.

Canada has increased its emissions reduction target to 45% by 2030 against the 2005 baseline. Japan has raised its emissions reduction target from 26% to 46% by 2030 against a 2013 baseline.

Brazil has pledged to end illegal deforestation by 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. South Korea said it would end all new public financing to overseas coal projects and submit new emissions targets later this year.

China, the world's largest consumer of coal, [announced](#) it would attempt to "strictly limit increasing coal consumption" over the next five years.

From garden to table

By Frances Clayton, member of the Environment & Sustainability Committee and Garden Specialist at Marist Primary Mount Albert.

In March 2020, championed by Principal Carolynn Phillips and Head of Environment and Sustainability Sheila White, Marist Primary Mount Albert decided to further its sustainability journey by joining the Garden to Table programme.

As urban planning continues to shrink our living environments and access to green spaces becomes more difficult, the importance of our children knowing where their food comes from and maintaining a connectiveness with their environment is becoming increasingly important. Not only do they learn hands-on skills in the garden and kitchen, but many areas of the programme lead back to the curriculum and children are able to experience Maths, English and Social Studies in a different way.

Our school had just undergone a new build in 2019 which freed up an amazing space towards the back of the building full of sunshine and weeds. On Saturday March 21, a team of people cleared away the weeds in preparation, but alas, on Sunday March 22 our school went into lockdown.

Our return to school months later was with trepidation. Our expectation, to be greeted with an overgrown wilderness of weeds. Much to our surprise the garden was weed free and waiting for us with open arms (we suspect that somebody up there was looking after it for us while we were away.)

The children started by planning their space with a Mood Board for their ideas. They measured out what an ideal garden bed would look like from height, width and length to the ideal gap between beds. **Continued P5 ▶**



ABOVE: *The harvesting team gathering food before taking it through to the kitchen*

BELOW: *where the kitchen team are preparing culinary delights.*

In the words of our children:

“I love how we eat the children’s enemy - vegetables - but it is not just stew or salad. It’s the most delicious thing I’ve ever tasted.”





ABOVE: *The way the garden area looked before it was cleaned up, complete with weeds.*



LEFT: *The garden beds under construction*

...

BELOW: *And 12 beds now full of vegetables.*



◀From P4

That formed the basis for the garden beds that now exist in the area. The children were able to put together the first set of kitset beds in July. They added the dirt and planted vegetables. Then came the second lockdown and, to our delight, instead of coming back to wilted and forlorn beds we were greeted with a thriving luscious garden.

One of the greatest concerns for our children was that we were having to use our mains water supply to water the gardens (via individual watering cans). They identified very early on that we should have a rainwater collection tank so that the gardens could be self-sufficient. This was put on our wish list with a hope that we would accomplish this dream within two years. Thanks to an extremely kind donation our tank was in by December, only five months after planting our gardens.

In the first six months the children were able to donate their produce to the community. It arrived each Wednesday at the Parish office to be bagged up and distributed where needed.

In February we moved to the full Garden to Table programme with the introduction of Johanna Smith and Christina Pelecudis as our kitchen specialists. In a just a few months the confidence the children have gained in the kitchen is an inspiration. The pride in having grown, cooked and eaten their own produce is evident.

Recently we held a Garden to Table open day. The children invited Jacinda Ardern to visit. Unfortunately, she was unable to make it that day but turned up the next. To share what they accomplished in under a year with the Prime Minister was truly special.

Every step of our journey has been aided by kind donations from all areas of our community. I would love to name all the suppliers in this article who have assisted us, but it is a long list and growing by the day.

We are truly blown away by the generosity of these businesses, organisations and individuals. You know who you are and we could not have done it without you. The programme would not exist without the help of our generous volunteers who give us their time to help us run our sessions.

If you want to know more about Garden to Table go to: <https://www.gardentotable.org.nz>

Worldwide resources to support work on climate change as we await release of Laudato Si' action plan



While Catholics around the world wait for the release of the Laudato Si' Action Platform on May 24, they have been offered a range of resources to help them bring the ideas of *Laudato Si'* to life.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development said *Laudato Si'* could not remain merely a document on paper. Its vision required incorporation into the Church's self-identity and spirituality.

"Integral human development and creation spirituality must become a pastoral priority for every Catholic and every Catholic institution," he said.

As we reported in our last edition, the seven year Laudato Si' action plan will help guide people, parishes, dioceses and organisations on a seven-year journey to full sustainability.

Here in Auckland our own environmental committee has released *23 Green Tips – Small Steps Towards a Sustainable Life*. It can be found here: <https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/23-Green-tips-Small-Steps-Towards-a-Sustainable-Life.pdf>

In Scotland, the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund has provided resources for school children to help understand the Pope's message.

In New Zealand Caritas has taken the same action to educate our children about the threat of climate

change in our region and what can be done.

Of course climate change is not just a challenge and a responsibility for Catholics. In the United States several Catholic associations have collaborated on a 56 page guidebook to working with other Christians and faiths to bring *Laudato Si'* to life. You can download it here: <https://creation.cadeio.org/ecumenical-and-interreligious-guidebook-care-for-our-common-home/>

"This is something we hope will offer good foundation, but also some very practical suggestions for action," lead author Sr Pamela Smith told the *National Catholic Reporter*. Sr Smith said the guide also contributed to the Laudato Si' Action Platform.

Graphic: *The seven Laudato Si' goals are from* <http://www.laudatosi.org> -Philip Cass

Sacred Heart pro-life group inspires vision for other parishes

The Human Life Committee is planning to establish groups to provide support for those facing a crisis. Committee convenor Catherine Gillies said a model had been established in Epsom with the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish Pro-Life Group.

The project has the support of Bishop Pat and Auxiliary Bishop Micheal Gielen.

The group draws attention to pro-life issues for the Parish in liaison with appropriate Diocesan bodies such as the Human Life Committee and Auckland Catholic Network and outside organisations such as Voice for life, as well as encouraging prayer to respect life from conception to natural death. They also provide easy access for educational talks, movies and debates.

Continued P8▶

So happy we bought our cheap “luxury” electric car

By Susanne Rehder Montgomerie, convenor of the Environment and Sustainability Committee and co-deputy chair of the Commission.



The Nissan Leaf recharging simply by attaching it to a cable coming through the window.



Inserting the recharging plug.



Charging underway.

In 2019 the Environment and Sustainability Committee finished and published the folder 23 green tips – small steps towards a sustainable life.

One of the tips we have says: “when buying a car let us consider a smaller car or an electric car if we can afford it.”

One must practice what one preaches, so my husband and I decided to buy an electric car because we wanted to reduce our carbon footprint - and replace a 20-year-old car.

We got so much more than carbon emission reduction and air pollution reduction: a fantastic, quiet and cheap car. However, as the advertisements say, conditions apply.

It is fantastic if you like quiet driving and are not thrilled by a roaring engine. It is cheap, if you can afford the lay-out upfront. Many think that purchasing an electric vehicle is expensive, but the savings are enormous. Our electricity cost per km driven is between 3.5 and 4.5 cents.

Savings

We bought a second-hand 2014 Nissan Leaf X for \$14,750. If we had bought another second-hand petrol car for \$6000 then the additional \$8750 outlay would be saved in about six to seven years by using no petrol and with lower service costs. The car battery will probably run until 2035 - meaning that after 2028, we will still save about \$1300 each year.

The Leaf is also a huge improvement in comfort and ease of driving. We will keep our other 16-year-old petrol car, which is useful for occasional long holiday trips.

Some people may be put off by a range of 150 km, but for us it is not a problem in our Auckland-region commutes and weekend outings. Of course, one also must be able to charge the car. For us, again, this is not a problem, as we can park at home, just outside a window and then run the charging cord through to a power point.

The other option is to use a (free or chargeable) quick-charging station nearby.

Transport

Transport is the biggest component of most New Zealanders’ carbon emissions. Most car trips are short ones which are relatively more polluting per kilometer than long trips because of inefficient motor performance.

Now, I have two environmentally friendly alternatives: I have recently walked short distances where I would previously have driven; or I can use the electric car.

So having bought an electric car, certainly does not feel like I have made a “sacrifice” at all!

Want to know more?

If you are inspired to seek more information, testimony and informed speculation about climate change, here are some suggestions.

To begin with, our own website has a presentation about climate change and climate change solutions (at the environment/sustainability "tab"): <https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/care-of-the-poor/justicepeace/>

The podcast *Outrage and Optimism* gives up-to-date information about climate change and environmental action both at government level worldwide, the United Nations and businesses and NGOs. Christiane Figueres was the top UN negotiator for the Paris agreement. She and her two friends are very knowledgeable and mix friendly banter with high level information.

The Global Catholic Climate Movement has podcasts, events, a website and zoom webinars.

Sir David Attenborough's *A Life on Our Planet My Witness Statement* is easy to understand and



accompanies an excellent television series. We would also recommend Kate Raworth's *Doughnut Economics*, which argues for a new model that would allow for a fair and sustainable economy.

Finally, American science fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry of the Future* asks what might happen if somebody was actually given the authority to save the planet.

These three books are available from the Auckland library, but be warned, there is a waiting list.

◀ From P4

Pro-life group offers Pastoral outreach training

The group plans to use the parish networks built during the euthanasia campaign to encourage greater participation in events and better education on life issues and advocacy.

In light of the euthanasia law, nurturing elderly, disabled and lonely is an important service. People are trained for pastoral outreach such as the weekly meeting of about 20 residents in a Henderson rest home who come to share the Liturgy and the Eucharist.

The group will train people in facilitating healing programmes for birth losses and childhood neglect

Using local contacts, it will befriend and encourage vulnerable pregnant women.

It will also liaise ecumenically and encourage participation in conferences, the March for Life, prayer vigils, pro-family conferences and on-line activity.

Where to get Help:

Depression Helpline-0800 543 354
 Kidsline:0800 942 8787
 Lifeline: 0800 543 354 Free text 4357
 Need to Talk? Call or text 1737
 Victim Support: 0800 842 846
 Rainbow Youth: 09 376 4155
 Samaritans: 0800 726 666
 What's Up: 0800 942 8787
 Youth line: 0800 376 633 or text 2342
 Shine (get-help):0508 744 633
 Safe to talk 0800 044 334 FT 4334
 Better Blokes: 09 378 6812
 Rape Crisis Centre: 0800 88 33 00
 Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation: 09 623 1700
 Youthline 0800 376 635 Free text 234
 Women's Refuge 0800 733 843
 Suicide Crisis Helpline 0800 543 354