

Justice & Peace Commission

on the release of *Laudate Deum*



It is often said that in hindsight we are all philosophers. With the release of the '**Apostolic Exhortation, *Laudate Deum* of the Holy Father Francis to all people of good will on the climate crisis,**' on 4 October 2023 to coincide with the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi, the Patron Saint of Ecology, Pope Francis has achieved what many have tried and failed. He has philosophically revised and reflected on eight long years since his first world climate entreaty was delivered through his **Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'* - "Care for Our Common Home."**

In *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis challenges us anew. We grasp in this Exhortation a sense of urgency imperceptible in *Laudato Si*. Pope Francis presents eight years of hindsight, scientific data, experience, passion, advocacy, joy, prayer, and heartache to envision a metamorphosis of the past and present suffering of our planet [\[#2\]](#) in climate travail, to a prospective future of 'communion and commitment' [\[#66\]](#) by reversing 'irresponsible lifestyles [and] making indispensable political decisions' [\[#72\]](#) toward the progress of genuine care and concern for each other and the world at large.

In 73 compelling and commanding points, we read that the time to respond and act on climate change is at hand. [\[#6\]](#) We, our national and international political and business communities, must take responsibility and be held accountable for our own inertia and regrettable contribution to the world climate crisis. [\[#6,69\]](#)

Pope Francis reiterates: "**Everything is connected**" and "**No one is saved alone**" [\[#19\]](#) However, it can often feel as though the problem of climate change is far beyond our personal control. [\[#71\]](#) What can I, as one person in a country of over 5 million people, do to create lasting, mature, cultural change and decision-making toward climate improvement? [\[#70\]](#)

As New Zealanders cast their vote over these final six days until the general election this Saturday, will our minds and hearts be drawn to vote with a climate crisis examination of conscience aligned to the sentiments in *Laudate Deum*?

Laudate 40:

It is not a matter of replacing politics, but of recognizing that the emerging forces are becoming increasingly relevant and are in fact capable of obtaining important results in the resolution of concrete problems, as some of them demonstrated during the [Covid-19] pandemic. The very fact that answers to problems can come from any country, however little, ends up presenting multilateralism as an inevitable process.

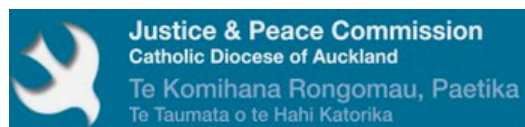
In the broader expanse of this world, New Zealand is a comparatively small island country, yet time and again we are reminded that any change for the better, no matter how small, can have a lasting positive impact. As we all discern the ultimate meaning of our works and efforts [\[#33\]](#) in this new political term in New Zealand, may we continue to "Praise God," in word, action, deed, and decision-making for the betterment of our lives and the future of our fragile planet.

I runga i te tika me te rangimarie | In justice and peace

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