

# Concerned Catholics Tasmania

## Regional *Laudato Si* Seminars, August 2021

*The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast'. For this reason, the ecological crisis is a summons to profound interior conversion. (Pope Francis , Laudato Si, 217*

During August 2021, CCT facilitated three seminars across Tasmania to open up Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* encyclical (2015) and the *Laudato Si* Implementation Platform (2020-2027).

We acknowledged the call of the most recent Popes: St John Paul II, Benedict and Francis, to 'ecological conversion', as a fundamental aspect of our Baptismal commitment. We also recognised that ecological devastation of planet Earth is the most pressing contemporary 'Sign of the Times', and that the encyclical calls us to discern how to both understand and sincerely respond to that crisis, linking the 'Cry of the Earth' with the 'Cry of the Poor'.

The facilitators were Dr Trish Hindmarsh, Fr Krish Mathavan MSC, and Mr Tony Smith (UTAS).

### Process:

Trish introduced the encyclical and its six chapters and the *Laudato Si* Implementation Platform. Krish introduced 'Integral Ecology' (Chapter 4) and shared how this is expressed in Moonah Parish through (a) Establishing a *Laudato Si* Action Group in the parish. (b) Focusing on the "Season of Creation" (September 1 to October 4<sup>th</sup>, Feast of St Francis of Assisi) with different speakers addressing aspects of the document over the four weeks. (c) The school's ecological awareness, and production of a 'St Francis' play (e) Establishing a school vegetable garden and installing solar panels on the roof.

Tony spoke of how our response flows from Faith, Hope and Love. Connectivity can result in more powerful results. While the big solutions lie with business and government, he is part of the SERINA project in which engineers worldwide draw ideas and support from each other as to how ethical engineering can mitigate against the effects of climate change.

Regional Summaries: From shared discussion after each speaker, the following points were made:

**HOBART Sat. August 7<sup>th</sup> at Corpus Christi Bellerive Parish Hall, 10.00-12.30pm, with 55 attendees**

- Make *Laudato Si* a key message at all levels of the church- ask, what can the laity do to bring about change from the 'bottom up'?
- We need to communicate these documents through small group gatherings, eg parish Lenten or Advent groups, St Vincent De Paul, Social Justice groups.
- Encourage the use of *Laudato Si* in all Catholic schools.
- Promote Catholic environmental teaching in the wider community.
- As individuals we can spend more time in nature to tap into 'wonder and awe'.
- Make deliberate decisions about the types of gifts we give – can they be something we make, recycle, grow or do?
- Be reflective on who I vote for – research candidates on their position with respect to the environment.
- Declutter our own lives to enable a smaller footprint.
- Use the tip-shop, buy recyclable products and refill where possible.
- Encourage our young people with the values underpinning *Laudato Si* to consider a career in politics.

**1. LAUNCESTON, 14<sup>th</sup> August at Church of the Apostles Parish Centre, 35 attendees.**

- We have great faith in young people – they are fearless in pursuing ecological responsibility... but it is regrettable that the Archbishop didn't want them at the recent climate change demonstration wearing Catholic School uniforms!!
- Science and Technology are making great advances if only we are open to hearing about them
- The devastation caused by climate change is having the greatest effect on the poorest countries
- We need personal conversion but also to change other people's attitudes – we can each be influencers!!
- We live in a throw-away culture – a recent episode of Foreign Correspondent highlighted how many used clothes were bundled up and sent offshore – over 90% was unusable
- We need to grow a circular economy – not a linear one – and build in reuse of materials after the lifetime of objects being manufactured
- (From a youth chaplain): Young people get “pissed off” at being the hope of the future – you are not dead yet, so do something yourself too!!! For example, demand investment in sustainable industries by your Super fund...
- Use the perspective of our indigenous brothers and sisters to “see country deeply”
- Interconnectedness is vital. COVID isolated us but also highlighted how important community is. Zoom is not enough – we need good conversations
- *Laudato Si* is for all the world – not just we Catholics. How do we get it out? The 2021 Social Justice Statement *Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor* released on August 28 will be an essential resource.
- Why aren't our Catholic Bishops speaking about this in our Churches? (Lots of resources are available on line to support Social Justice Sunday and the Bishops' Statement).
- The urgent need is to stop the global temperature rising by 1.5deg. Keep at the politicians – local, but also PM and Angus Taylor
- A questionnaire will be distributed to explore how the Church of the Apostles Parish might respond to Francis' '7/7/7' Plan, the *Laudato Si* Implementation Platform.
- Make more opportunity for outdoor prayer
- Keep housing simple – “less is more” – and consider solar panels and composting
- Get government involved - from the local to the Federal level. Convince them it is in their best interests to do so.
- Our Churches should introduce solar panels (some churches are combining to research this)
- Put pressure on Cath Ed to integrate this information across the curriculum – not just in a token way.
- Encourage students to study STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) to get our best minds to work on viable solutions

### 3. BURNIE, August 28th McAuley Centre, Marist Regional College, 35 attendees

- We need to develop an awareness that we are part of nature, not 'above', in a position of dominance. This requires an ECO-based, rather than an EGO-driven worldview, seeing everything as inter-connected. (from Khris' talk)
- Education is the key to the future, opening minds, changing hearts and inspiring commitment to care for Earth. (Seven members of the Marist Regional College staff in attendance expressed the hope that the College can incorporate the spirit of *Laudato Si* into both its renewed vision for the future and in the planning process for the next Trade Centre building development).
- Catholic parishes need to visibly show their commitment to the implementation of *Laudato Si* both through spreading the message and modelling good practice, eg. through installing solar panels, rain water tanks.
- Many practical ways of living out *Laudato Si* are possible in daily life, eg. recycling of plastic waste into new products, awareness of energy conservation, decluttering, purchasing goods made from organic materials eg. bamboo, reducing packaging, mulching and composting, ethical investment (eg superannuation funds, Church organisations' funds).
- Appreciation of the natural world so richly reflected in our state can be nurtured through bush-walking, gardening, outdoor education and working for conservation.
- We have the power to bring about change through advocacy with our political leaders.
- There is hope that we can change the direction of the planet's destruction through our collective human consciousness and committed action for ecological sustainability.
- Science and technology can continue to help us find creative, ethical solutions to the ecological crisis. They have enabled much positive progress, eg. the disposal of human waste through efficient sewerage systems.

We went away energised and heartened by the commitment our Church has expressed in Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*, wanting to continue conversation and initiate action in our beautiful Tasmania.



*'If you keep a  
green bough in  
your heart the  
singing bird  
will come'*