

Laudato Si' Action Platform Reflection Archdiocese of Brisbane

For many decades, successive Archbishops of Brisbane have prioritised a commitment to care for creation. That commitment has grown in many ways in both ecological education initiatives, advocacy and practical action at various levels within parishes and schools, in archdiocesan agencies, religious congregations and through whole of archdiocese responses.

Since the release of Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si', we have grown in our understanding of the Holy Father's invitation to embrace the notion of an integral ecology. He challenges us to hear the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor as one, and to respond concretely to what we hear.

Our commitment to healing our relationships with First Nations people of this continent has grown, especially since the release of our first Reconciliation Action Plan in 2020. Laudato Si' challenges us to bring First Nations people of this country to the centre of our reflection and action to heal country and to heal our relationships with the people who have cared for it for thousands of generations.

We have also reached out to the peoples of our region, the Pacific, to build stronger relationships with them and to accompany them in responding to the significant ecological and social concerns we now face together.

Archbishop Coleridge issued a joint statement with the Archbishop of Suva, Archbishop Peter Loy Chong, here in Brisbane in the Season of Creation in September 2019. They said:

In Laudato Si the Holy Spirit has inspired Pope Francis to speak not as a scientist, a politician or an economist but as an apostle whose voice is authentically Christian and biblical. The word he speaks is a call to action which is Christian and biblical. He urges us to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, and to act on what we hear.

We in Oceania are on the front line of climate change. Elsewhere it may seem a matter of scientific debate or a distant prospect, but for the peoples of the Pacific it is becoming a very serious matter. That is why there is an urgency in our response to the Pope's call for 'ecological conversion' and the action flowing from it.

In Oceania and around the world, there is movement. Religious men and women, Church agencies, ecumenical and interreligious groups and especially young people are part of this journey; and we as bishops want to walk with them into an ever greater awareness of the interconnectedness of all things in the God-given web of life.

Together in Brisbane to launch the Season of Creation, we make a joint commitment to listen to the voice of creation across the Pacific, seeking to hear the voice of the Creator. We commit to acting upon what we hear – in the belief that we are not powerless but have been entrusted with the power of Easter faith which not only opens the eye and ear but also enables us to act so that humanity may find a way home to Paradise. "To God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine be the glory from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

In the spirit of Laudato Si', we are committed to accompanying the suffering earth, the First Nations people of this country, our sisters and brothers in our Pacific region and all our fellow Australians as they face ecological and social challenges. While we are mindful of the importance of the technical, environmental, economic, political and social initiatives that are needed to respond effectively to the ecological and social challenges that we all face, we are particularly mindful of the unique contribution we offer through the spirituality we embrace as we continue on our journey towards the ecological conversion to which Pope Francis invites us.

