

News from the Caring for Creation (CfC) movement

Year in review

The year 2021 was a momentous one for the Caring for Creation (CfC) movement in Canberra-Goulburn:

- During Laudato Si week in May, Archbishop Christopher publicly initiated the [CfC movement](#) at a prayer gathering in the grounds of St Peter's, Yarralumla. Aboriginal Catholic Ministry led off the gathering with a welcome and smoking ceremony from Ngunnawal elder Caroline Hughes. Young people from schools read from the Franciscan *Canticle of Creatures*, ahead of a tree planting. ACT Churches Council members offered prayers and St Vincent de Paul Society outlined their energy initiatives.



Following the *Heal Country* theme in July's NAIDOC week, the Australian Bishops issued the statement [Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#) in August. This strongly endorses Church teachings in the papal encyclical *On Care for Our Common Home* and commits to their implementation (see Laudato Si action platform below).

Discernment papers in 2021 for the Plenary Council strongly referenced the encyclical as a way of Church mission relevant to our times. The report on the first Plenary assembly in October also references Laudato Si - in particular in terms of solidarity with our First Australians respect for country.

Why Caring for Creation?

Eco-theology as contained in the Laudato Si teachings provides a coherent approach to God's plan in Creation, to humankind's place in the plan and to an understanding of the 'integral ecology' of the world in which we live and properly share with others. Global ecology is seen as one of the great moral issues of our time.

Laudato Si presents the "gospel of creation" as a way of Church mission for our times. It provides a major opportunity for human well-being in care of the Earth's natural environment, for the Church to engage anew with people of all ages, and to bring people together in a common understanding for our future.

A global movement

The Caring for Creation movement is part of a global [Laudato Si movement](#) that stemmed from Pope Francis' revolutionary [encyclical Laudato Si'](#). The Vatican is working with the world-wide lay movement's network of Laudato Si 'circles' all around the world, including in [Belconnen South](#) and in Gungahlin. They are seeking to promulgate and to encourage implementation of the [encyclical teachings](#) through local involvements.



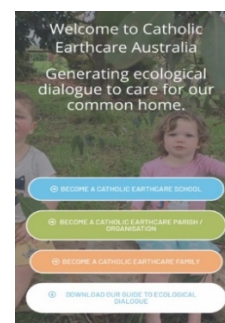
"How inseparable is the bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace" (Pope Francis 'Laudato Si' – On Care for Our Common Home' 2015)

- The Laudato Si movement is ecumenical and universal in nature. Ahead of the UN conference on climate action in Glasgow recently, the Pope issued [a joint message](#) with the Orthodox Patriarchy and the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury. This urged people to 'choose life' in responding to the ecological crises.

Following the UN 2021 climate conference in Glasgow, there is a need for urgent building of support - such as through the Laudato Si messaging, advocacy and action at global, national and 'grass roots' local levels. Conferencing also on a UN treaty for biodiversity is timed for 2022 and a Vatican 'roundtable' group has formed in this area of ecological distress, along with priority areas such as ocean pollution.

Laudato Si implementation plans

In November 2021 the Vatican launched the [Laudato Si action platform](#) to help entities such as schools, parishes and families to develop their local responses and to undertake practical actions on the encyclical -



- The Laudato Si action platform provides resources and support across different sectors (also including individuals, businesses, etc) working across various domains, over 7 years (the first year being for planning and reflection and Year 7 for review). [Catholic Earthcare Australia](#) and [others](#) also have resources online.
- Organisations are invited to enroll [on-line](#) for the Laudato Si action platform preferably by May 2022. This is a means to build the momentum world-wide for urgency and change. Over 4,000 bodies (including 1,000 families) have already committed to put Laudato Si integral ecology principles into practice.

The year ahead

Interested people from throughout the archdiocese have been following the Caring for Creation movement.

- In town CfC is encouraging **growth** through formation of Laudato Si circles in North Canberra and in South Canberra to complement the groups active in Gungahlin and Belconnen South. The Circles aim to help instill and implement Laudato Si teachings in our communities. This may involve opportunities for practical improvements to ecological 'footprints' at parish and archdiocesan levels.
- **Regional areas** of the Archdiocese are to be a major focus for the movement for 2022 given their recent experiences of ecological calamities like drought, plagues and bushfires and their closeness to the land and waters. For example the CfC chaplain, Fr Mick MacAndrew PP, reports that the movement has strong affinity with emerging aspirations in his parishes in the Monaro high country
- **Younger people** 'get' the ecological imperatives of Caring for Creation and there is scope for them to inject energy and new perspectives into its theological basis and growth. A number of schools (such as Merici College, Braddon and St Michael's Primary, Kaleen) have made huge strides in leading their school communities along on this type of journey. There is scope to recognise and to promulgate such good practices. Catholic Education is considering how it can best help at a system level. In addition, there is scope for engaging with younger generations at a tertiary level and in youth ministry.

Laudato Si week (15-22 May22) and Season of Creation (1 Sep to 4-Oct 22) will be times of special celebration. Holy Spirit parish, Gungahlin is planning to host a Caring for Creation weekend conference in mid-September.

To express interest in these and other developments please contact us. And we invite you to tell us what your organization is doing or planning to do. Contact us at LaudatoSiACT@gmail.com.