



No. 10 (Winter 2016)

Jubilee Year of Mercy
International Year of Pulses

Newsletter of Ballarat Diocesan Ecological Sustainability Group

12-19 June: Laudato Si' Week

One year ago, on June 18th 2015, Pope Francis released his historic encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home*. - See more at:

[https://catholicclimatemovement.global/ready-to-celebrate-the-laudato-si-anniversary/
#sthash.ml6KIXSS.dpuf](https://catholicclimatemovement.global/ready-to-celebrate-the-laudato-si-anniversary/#sthash.ml6KIXSS.dpuf)

Join others to celebrate Pope Francis' message for care for our common home.

You are invited to use resources from Catholic Climate Movement to celebrate the message of *Laudato Si* in your own parishes during *Laudato Si* Week.

Join Pope Francis in his call...“Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation” (P.14 *Laudato Si*)

Faith Commitment and Ecology Workshops

Facilitator's Veronica Lawson rsm (theologian) and Fr. Barry Ryan invite participants to revisit and critically analyse scripture using a holistic approach including an ecological perspective. God's revelation in nature.

The main resources being used are the Bible, John F. Haught's book "Resting on the Future" and "The Blessing of Mercy: *bible perspectives and ecological challenges*" by Veronica Lawson.

This six - two hour sessions, held over several months, explore the theological question of religion, our faith in light of natural sciences and refers to various fields of scientific inquiry that demonstrate the evolution of the cosmos and nature as being an unfinished story. Participants read and discuss scripture through a different perspective bringing to the surface the whole of God's creation.

Drawing upon Haught who was deeply influenced by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Bernard Lonergan, Karl Rahner and other modern theologians and philosophers, participants are challenged to explore the relationship between religion, evolution, ecology and the value of all life - human and non humankind.

In our session this month (May), participants were encouraged to think of God as inviting the universe into a new future. Reference was drawn to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ a Jesuit priest, a palaeontologist and top geologists in the Asian continent, suggestion to *“adjust the religious furniture in our mind, to think about God, not so much as pushing creation from behind, but as inviting the universe into a new future. The God that calls Abraham into the new future, that calls the Israelites into a new future, actually calls the whole universe into the new future”, and that being the “ultimate explanation, theologically of evolution.”*

Another aspect discussed was, faith, faith as being an important aspect and that faith being the way in which the universe, now that it has reached consciousness, has become conscious of itself and opens itself to a new future.

We re-read the story of Moses' birth (Exodus) through the lens of ecology. This was a very worthwhile and eye opening exercise, re-reading scripture and seeing how many elements are interconnected. i.e. human and that of nature.

We were strongly encouraged at all times, in any dialogue or reflection, to always start with, and finish with, a Christian understanding of God.

That we live in an unfinished and a continuing evolving universe and we are all tied up with the universe. God is in the past, the present, the future. God is in the possible but not in the actual. God's enduring love, mercy and compassion.

Sue Searls
Workshop Participant.

“If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith.” (Paragraph 64 Laudato Si)

STEWARDS OF CREATION; A CHANGE OF HEART. LAUNCH

On 15th march this year, the Catholic Education Office launched the Sustainability Framework - *Stewards of Creation: A change of heart*. The framework is aimed at assisting schools and the Education Office to focus on educating students and staff in environmental sustainability.

Much of the thinking surrounding this framework was informed by Pope Francis' encyclical *“Laudato Si’: on care for our common home”* (2015) and various education for sustainability documents from both government and Catholic Education sources.

One of the major reasons for developing the framework is to link the work schools currently implement as part of the Victorian Curriculum with the Diocese's Religious Education Curriculum *Awakenings* and the Catholic belief that we are indeed responsible for caring for the earth.

There are three focus areas -
 Respect for Earth,
 Respect for People and
 Respectful Distribution

and the endeavour has been made to link actions for each of our Aspects for School Improvement to these focus areas. The foci and actions are elaborated upon in the framework document.

The working party and others, will now take on the task of looking at curriculum and other resources to see where schools can be further assisted in developing and implementing the framework: *Stewards of Creation: A Change of Heart*.

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*As co-creators with God,
 we will promote and demonstrate
 respect for Earth, respect for people
 and respect for distribution*

Stewards of Creation: A change of heart

Education for Environmental Sustainability:

Education for Environmental Sustainability meets the needs of the present "without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."¹

The principles of sustainability are embedded within our Catholic Tradition. "Care for creation is not a new component of our Catholic identity. It is as old as Genesis, and is woven into the very fabric of Catholic mission."² This is achieved in collaboration and dialogue with all of humanity.

The dominion over creation given to humanity (Gen: 1-28³) is one of stewardship, caring for and handing on in partnership with God.³

1. Brundant, WCEB, (1997), p.92
 2. Catholic Health Association
 3. Awakenings (2005), p. 88

Diocesan Education Vision

As partners in Catholic education and open to God's presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.

Mission

We journey towards this vision through:

- proclaiming and witnessing to the good news of Jesus Christ
- ensuring quality learning that promotes excellence and fosters the authentic human development of all
- living justly in the world, in relationship with each other and in harmony with God's creation
- exploring, deepening and expressing our Catholic identity in diverse ways

*Good education plants seeds when we are young,
 and these continue to bear fruit throughout life.*
 (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* para 213)

Focus Areas:

Respect for Earth
Cultivation of the sense of the Sacred and interconnectedness which recognises and responds to God's presence

ECOLOGICAL
 Natural cycles
 Interdependence--one thing does not exist without another
 Biodiversity
 Conservation
 Habitats
 Natural Resource Management
 Ecological Footprint

Respect for People
Every human person is created in God's image and likeness and therefore is vulnerable and worthy of respect

ECONOMIC
 Energy efficiency
 Fiscal responsibility
 Sustainable consumption
 Renewable resources
 Steady state economy
 Environmental awareness
 Waste minimisation
 Resource recovery
 Consumers
 Finite resources

Respectful Distribution
Stewarding of the resources available for the common good of all creation

SOCIAL
 Respect
 Cultural heritage
 Diversity
 Participation
 Social Justice
 Community engagement
 Advocacy
 Governance
 Cooperation
 Collaboration
 Rights and duties
 Promotion of Peace

Actions:

Catholic School Culture:

- Responding to the invitation to actively carry out God's work as co-creators
- Promote a commitment to steward and care for God's gift of Creation
- Ensure a rigorous curriculum that promotes sustainability and care of the environment, founded within the Catholic story and vision

Community Engagement:

- Develop a sustainability committee inclusive of all stakeholder groups
- Promote and develop parents as partners in the journey of sustainability
- Engage with and create links with the wider community to promote sustainability
- Develop networks and create connections with industry and local business

Leadership and Stewardship:

- Develop a whole school approach to sustainability
- Promote leadership practices which lead to sustainable management of resources
- Create resource efficiency in the areas of water, waste, energy and biodiversity
- Develop policies and procedures e.g. Green purchasing policy
- Participation in environmental resource management programs and initiatives
- Undertake evidence based decision making
- Consider product life cycle and efficiency versus cost
- Embrace, harness and promote initiatives which will lead to greater sustainability
- Consider passive and active measures in building design
- Embed sustainability into the School Improvement Framework and External Review Processes
- Provide opportunities for professional development

Learning and Teaching:

- Challenge students to 'think global, act local'
- Encourage learning that is:
 - about the environment where focus is placed on students' understanding of important facts, concepts, theories and actions
 - in the environment which involves students being in direct contact with the natural world to develop awareness, affinity and care for the environment
 - for the environment where we aim to promote a willingness and ability to adopt lifestyles that are compatible with the wise use of environmental impacts on the natural and social world

Wellbeing:

- Promote healthy living across all dimensions of school life
- Provide stimulating outdoor environments for outdoor play
- Provide opportunities for sustainability themed lifelong learning experiences for the school community
- Engage with and support the individual needs of all learners leading to success for all
- Using sustainability and environment to provide opportunities for the community in practices of meditation, reflection and stillness

Resources:

<i>Laudato Si': On care for our common home</i>	Pope Francis	2015
http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf		
Awakenings Core Document	Catholic Education Office Ballarat	2005
AVAILABLE IN ALL SCHOOLS		
<i>Kinship with the Earth</i>	Sandhurst Catholic Education	2012
http://www.ceosand.catholic.edu.au/ceod/downloads/cat_view/52-learning/teaching/56-environment-sustainability/137-kinship-with-the-earth.html		
<i>On Holy Ground: An ecological vision for Catholic Education in New South Wales</i>	Catholic Earthcare Australia	2007
http://catholicearthcare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/On-Holy-Ground-Queensland.pdf		
<i>Education for Sustainability in the Archdiocese of Melbourne</i>	Catholic Education Office Archdiocese of Melbourne	2013
http://cevn.cevc.catholic.edu.au/SchoolImprovement.aspx?id=12276		
<i>Jesus and the Natural World: Exploring a Christian Approach to Ecology</i>	Denis Edwards	2012
AVAILABLE IN ALL SCHOOLS		
<i>Sustainability Curriculum Framework: a guide for curriculum development and policy makers</i>	Commonwealth of Australia	2010
http://www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/education/publications/sustainability-curriculum-framework-guide		
<i>Living Sustainability: the Australian Government's national action plan for education for sustainability</i>	Commonwealth of Australia	2009
https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/13887ab8-7e03-4b3e-82bb-139b2205a0af/files/national-action-plan.pdf		



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MURNONG TRAIL OPENING - DAMASCUS COLLEGE

Three years of hard work, passion and determination culminated at the opening of the Murnong Trail on Monday 2nd November 2015.

The Murnong Trail is an 800 metre looped walking trail located in the bushland of the Damascus College 50 acre site.

The bushland at Damascus College is traversed by several well-worn tracks, one of which has now been developed as the trail.

The presence of the murnong plant, but not its cultural significance was noted at Damascus in a plant survey in 1962. Fifty years later, Science teacher, Mr David Neate, having just returned from a professional development session on indigenous agriculture, was surprised to discover a sizeable patch of murnong in flower on a casual walk through the College bushland.

“Its short flowering season, and its similarity in flower to several introduced weeds, had hidden it from view,” he said.

“In December 2012, a fierce storm throughout the region felled many of the seedling eucalypts in the College bushland, leaving a huge mess to clean up. What we did not anticipate was the explosion of growth following this weather event, with a superb wildflower display that now graces part of the hillside.”

Due to the rarity and its significance to the Wadawurrung people, the trail has been named in honour of the humble murnong.



In 2014, the Damascus Sustainability Committee received a \$10,000 grant from the Department of Environment and Primary Industry to clear and replant the bushland and create the trail accompanied by interpretative signage.

With the dedicated support and knowledge of Bryon Powell, Wadawurrung, the murnong trail began its journey of creation.

As a Catholic school Damascus College encourages in its faith development programme an attitude of stewardship of the environment and this is put into practice in several ongoing conservation projects around Ballarat as part of the College’s Christian Personal Development Award.

Some environmentally conscious students are part of a Green Group, who assisted in trail working bees, and many students planted 500 trees and shrubs in the vicinity of the trail.

Amelia Johnson, a Year 10 (in 2015) student of Damascus College, created drawings of the murnong and other native plants, which

are showcased on the interpretative signage throughout the trail.

Amelia said that she is very passionate about the environment and feels a sense of duty to protect it.

“I also love to draw and was thrilled to be involved in the creation of the pictorial elements to be used by the College to showcase the Murnong trail,” she said.

Damascus College will use the trail as a resource across several disciplines, including Science and Humanities.

“As part of our plans to increase the trail’s usefulness, students will be involved in creating interactive resources to be accessed via an interpretive leaflet,” said Mr Neate.

Murnong was the staple food crop for the indigenous peoples across south eastern Australia, and was especially noted by early European explorers such as Major Mitchell for its abundance in the grasslands of Western Victoria. It has disappeared over much of its former range as a result of livestock grazing and the development of exotic pastures and crops.

A Murnong Trail brochure was created for the opening in November 2015, which now acts as a valuable resource to the College.

Article and picture, supplied by Damascus College, Ballarat

“All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.” (Paragraph 14 Laudato Si)

The Pope's Call to Mobilize to Protect Mother Earth

<https://www.facebook.com/GlobalCatholicClimateMovement/videos/vb.495206757286894/612043512269884/?type=2&theater>

We pray for Pope Francis; we thank him for his leadership. We thank him for the courageous words to the whole world in his Encyclical on the environment *Laudato si* and his commitment in trying to bring about a social change that reflects God’s intention for the whole of creation. “Praise be to you”

<https://www.dbb.org.au/.../Laudato%20si%20-%20Prayer%20of%20the%20Faithfu...>