

## WORLD EARTH DAY

Mildura / Irymple / Red Cliffs / Merbein Regional Retreat  
Saturday, April 21, 2018

Twenty members from the above Parishes gathered at the Wentworth Angling Club for a World Earth reflection retreat. The day was facilitated by both Fr Peter Wood msc and Sr Helen Nolen rsm.



What better place could you be in to reflect on the issues regarding World Earth, in bright sunshine on the banks of the Murray River. The day was divided into three sessions led by Fr Peter and each containing input, personal reflection and then coming together to share insights. Session one centered on the wonder of God around us in the many and varied forms of life, session two delved into Incarnation and session three took key statements from Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si*.

In session three the groups were invited to read ten key statements from the Pope's document and reflect on a few before sharing in an open forum facilitated by Sr Helen. Some of the results of the final discussion are as follows.

- **Climate change has grave implications.**

*The rate of the loss of many species in nature outstrips the growth of many and various natural mutations. Climate change is normal, however, human intervention has increased the rate of change.*

*The human effect on declining air quality affects everything around us, a good example is the use of stubble burning on grain crop farms.*

*Do we wait for scientific evidence to prove what we may already know about climate change or do we act now?  
Fertiliser run off and various chemicals used in industry destroy water quality as seen by hastening coral bleaching.*

- **Rich countries are destroying poor ones, and the earth is getting warmer.**

*The drastic need for reforestation, especially after surface mining.*

*The greater control of multi-nationals mining in foreign countries, e.g. Peru.*

*Do we need more cotton producing areas in Australia?*

- **Christians have misinterpreted Scripture.**

*Pope Francis addresses this point very clearly.*

*We do not have domination over the 'land'.*

*The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation is essential.*

*Sometimes governments impose unreasonable policies on farmers while farmers have a history of caring for their land.*

*Good farming practices versus poor government policies, not noting local input.*

- **The importance of access to safe, drinkable water.**

*A quote well worth remembering when we use water – I take it but I do not take it for granted.*

*Turn off taps and even check for the smallest of leaks.*

- **Technocratic domination leads to the destruction of nature and exploitation of people.**

*Does the term "market" refer to supply and demand?*

*Governments and organisations say wonderful things, but are these words backed up with positive actions?*

*Is it about maximizing profits?*

*Presently there is not an infinite supply of goods.*

- **Population control does not address the problems of the poor.**

*If we share what we already have there could well be plenty for everyone, e.g. the ability to access damaged fruit and vegetables rather than sending it to the waste disposal points.*

*As living standards increase there is a notable decrease in population.*

*Some countries still mandate family sizes.*

Time caught up with the group and following points were not fully discussed.

- **Gender differences matter.**
- **The international community has not acted enough.**

Some final thoughts regarding –

- **Individuals must act.**
  - *Gather signatures regarding a petition to be forwarded to Bishop Paul Bird seeking support for World Earth initiatives.*
  - *The refusal to purchase goods packed in non-recyclable plastic.*
  - *Avoid the use of cotton buds.*
  - *Use recycle bins for all forms of plastic that does not return to its original shape after being crunched up into a ball.*
  - *Support Coles and Woolworths by using their recycle bins.*
  - *Use cloth or paper shopping bags.*
  - *Recycle batteries and printer cartridges.*
  - *Be water conscious and limit its use.*
  - *Support our school policies regarding the creation of a better world for the future.*

**By the way, why are we here on earth in the first place?**