

Newsletter of Ballarat Diocesan Ecological Sustainability Group

“..... Here let us also seek another path, convincing ourselves that the products of the Earth have a value that can be considered “sacred”, because they are the fruit of the daily work of people, families and farming communities. A type of work that is often dominated by uncertainties, worries about weather conditions, and anxieties about the possible loss of the harvest.”

Pope Francis addressing the 39th Session of the FAO Conference (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) 11th June 2015.

The effects of Ongoing Drought in the Wimmera and the Mallee

With the recent celebration of Easter with its message of resurrection and the hope of new life, a time of grief for the old and the reception of new spirit for the new life that one is already living, how is this experienced by those in the Mallee and Wimmera who are still waiting for the rains to bring new life to their farms to end this current drought? How as a Diocese, are we supporting those Parishes? Is there more we can do?



As the effects of the El Nino continue to affect our farmers in the Wimmera and Mallee, drought relief funds from the Victorian Government have allowed the Wimmera and Mallee CMA's to continue to support people impacted by the ongoing drought, by funding further drought employment programs (advertised in March 2016). Please keep these communities in your thoughts and prayers.

<http://www.wcma.vic.gov.au/employment-contractors/drought-employment-program>

<http://www.malleecma.vic.gov.au/southern-mallee-drought-employment-program>

Catholic Earthcare and Permaculture

Catholic Earthcare in 2016 is promoting Permaculture whose ethical vision is— Care for the Earth, Care for People, and Fair Share – all living things should have an equal share of the earth's resources. These underpin a number of design principles that provide tools for a way of perceiving the world. This is a holistic and systems based approach that focuses on opportunities rather than obstacles... Simon Habel (Catholic Earthcare).

<http://catholicearthcare.org.au/2016/02/permaculture-a-new-focus-for-2016/>

<http://www.ballaratpermacultureguild.org/>

The 2015 Millenium Goals (commenced in 2000) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (commenced in January 2016)

*“..It must be stated that a true “right of the environment” does exist, for two reasons. First, because we human beings are part of the environment. We live in communion with it, since the environment itself entails ethical limits which human activity must acknowledge and respect. Man, for all his remarkable gifts, which “are signs of a uniqueness which transcends the spheres of physics and biology” (Laudato Si’, 81), is at the same time a part of these spheres. He possesses a body shaped by physical, chemical and biological elements, and can only survive and develop if the ecological environment is favourable. Any harm done to the environment, therefore, is harm done to humanity. Second, because every creature, particularly a living creature, has an intrinsic value, in its existence, its life, its beauty and its interdependence with other creatures. We Christians, together with the other monotheistic religions, believe that the universe is the fruit of a loving decision by the Creator, who permits man respectfully to use creation for the good of his fellow men and for the glory of the Creator; he is not authorized to abuse it, much less to destroy it. In all religions, the environment is a fundamental good (cf. *ibid.*).”*

From Pope Francis’ address to UN 25th September 2015 at the 2030 Sustainable Development World Summit at the UN, New York.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150925_onu-visita.html

To access the report of the work of the Millenium Development Goals (2000-2015), see below:

[http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%201\).pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf)

To follow on from the previous 15 years of work for the Millenium Goals, on 25th September 2015, at the 2030 Sustainable Development World Summit, countries adopted a set of 17 goals (with 169 associated targets to be achieved over the next 15 years, which are integrated and indivisible), to **end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all** as part of a new sustainable development agenda.

Sustainable Development Goals (2016-30)

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

The UN also has suggestions for “THE LAZY PERSON’S GUIDE TO SAVING THE WORLD”

See here : <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>

*“The ecological crisis, and the large-scale destruction of biodiversity, can threaten the very existence of the human species. The baneful consequences of an irresponsible mismanagement of the global economy, guided only by ambition for wealth and power, must serve as a summons to a forthright reflection on man: “man is not only a freedom which he creates for himself. Man does not create himself. He is spirit and will, but also nature” (Benedict XVI, Address to the Bundestag, 22 September 2011, cited in Laudato Si’, 6). Creation is compromised “where we ourselves have the final word... The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any instance above ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves” (ID. Address to the Clergy of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone, 6 August 2008, cited *ibid.*). Consequently, the defence of the environment and the fight against exclusion demand that we recognize a moral law written into human nature itself, one which includes the natural difference between man and woman (cf. Laudato Si’, 155), and absolute respect for life in all its stages and dimensions (cf. *ibid.*, 123, 136).”*

From Pope Francis’ address to UN 25th September 2015 at the 2030 Sustainable Development World Summit at the UN, New York.

Violent death of Environmentalists in South America and Asia

The assassination of indigenous leader Berta Cáceres last month showed that even internationally renowned environmental activists are unsafe in Honduras, the deadliest country in the world to defend the natural world. At least 109 people have been killed in this country between 2010 and 2015, for taking a stand against destructive dam, mining, logging and agriculture projects. Berta Cáceres Flores was murdered on 3rd March following many threats to herself and her family. She was the 2015 Goldman Prize Recipient for South and Central America

Two-thirds of environmentalists who died violently around the world since 2002 lost their lives in that region. For the five years ending in 2014, more than 450 environmentalists were killed, according to an international watchdog group Global Witness. More than half were in Honduras and Brazil. Her murder was condemned by International Governments as well as the Vatican.

She co-founded the National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) to address the growing threats posed to Indigenous communities by illegal logging, to fight for their territorial rights and improve their livelihoods.

<http://www.goldmanprize.org/prize-recipients/current-recipients/>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/for-latin-american-environmentalists-death-is-a-constant-companion/2016/03/25/85920f96-ec69-11e5-bc08-3e03a5b41910_story.html

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/death-haunts-latin-americas-environmental-activists-20160401-gnwn80#ixzz44kBidX2g>

<https://www.globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/global-witness-releases-new-data-murder-rate-environmental-and-land-activists-honduras-highest-world/>

“LAUDATO SI’, mi’ Signore” – “Praise be to you, my Lord”. In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs. (1)

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. (2)

Pope Francis Encyclical letter “Laudate Si” 24th May 2015

The InterFaith Climate Change Statement April 2016 to the UN

The Interfaith Climate Change Statement to World Leaders (2016) which supports the adopted Paris Agreement urges that it be signed and implemented as soon as possible. The statement was handed to the President of the UN General Assembly on the 18th November in New York. **Catholic Earthcare** was a participating organisation in developing the statement.

To read the six key points of the statement : <http://www.interfaithstatement2016.org/>

A proposed day of faith climate action will be held on June 12 called “Sacred Earth, Sacred Trust”.

<http://sacredearth2016.org/>



See [here](#) for the Diocesan Ecological Sustainability Group webpage.