

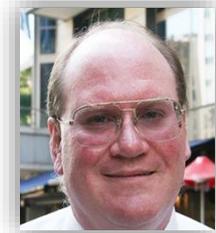
*Health in the Lord and the Blessing of the Holy Spirit..[Rule of Saint Albert]*

**JPIC 101 – DECEMBER 2020**

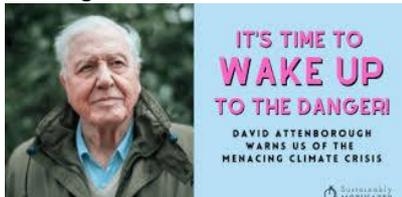
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## ***'Ecological conversion' and divestment needed to avoid climate disaster***

**by Roland Ashby**



"We are facing a man-made [environmental] disaster of global scale," Sir David Attenborough\* warned last month. Speaking to Leigh Sales on the ABC TV's 7.30 program, the world-renowned 94 year old naturalist and broadcaster said the world is "heading for disaster", with irreversible tipping points now looming.



*"For the first time now you can sail from the Pacific into the Atlantic across the North Pole in the summer, and before long it looks as though you are going to be able to do that the year round and if you do that... [it's] what people call a tipping point, when in fact it is not reversible.*

*"If you are going to have all of those thousands of tons of freshwater in the icecaps melting and going into the sea, rising the sea level, changing the salinity, changing the climate and the way the winds circulate around the world, you are interrupting and changing a fundamental rhythm that our world has lived with for... millennia."*

Prince Charles, another long-term and passionate advocate

for the environment, had earlier warned of the "comprehensive catastrophe" climate change was in danger of becoming, and called for a "Marshall-like plan for nature, people and planet".

"We must now put ourselves on a war-like footing, approaching our action from the perspective of a military-style campaign," he said in a video.

Both men made their pleas for urgent action while unprecedented fires swept across the west coast of America, mirroring similarly devastating and unparalleled fires across Australia earlier in the year.

Two years ago, in October 2018, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that the world had only 12 years to limit the increase in global warming to no more than 1.5c. To go beyond this, the panel warned, even by half a degree, would lead to catastrophic droughts, floods and extreme heat.

Faced with such a doomsday scenario, how should Christians and other people of faith respond?

Pope Francis in his encyclical on ecology and climate, *Laudato Si' – On Care For Our*

*Common Home*, quotes Benedict XVI in calling for an "ecological conversion": "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast."

*"For this reason," Pope Francis adds, "the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits..."*



*So what they all need is an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."*

*“Science tells us, every day with more precision, that we need to act urgently ... if we are to have any hope of avoiding radical and catastrophic climate change,”* he said.

Last month Pope Francis spoke in a video message for an online event called “Countdown Global Launch, A Call to Action on Climate Change”.

He also urged people to divest from companies not committed to the environment and a transition away from fossil fuels.

“One way to encourage this change is to lead companies towards the urgent need to commit to the integral care of our common home, excluding from investments companies that do not meet [these] parameters ... and rewarding those that [do],” he said.

Speaking on the World Day of Prayer in September last year, Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and a former oil executive, also specifically addressed the issue of divestment, urging fund managers to divest from fossil fuels. *“It is in investors’ power to help avert the disastrous consequences – ethical and financial – of failing to achieve [the goal of the Paris Accord]”*, he said.



### **Divestment for individuals**

For individual Christians in Australia concerned about the environmental impact of their investments, and who would

like find out more about how the banks and Super funds invest their funds, assistance is available from Market Forces, an affiliate project of the Friends of the Earth Australia.

Market Forces tracks the lending of banks to fossil fuel companies, as well as the investments that Super funds make in fossil fuels, and posts the information on its website.

Market Forces’ Campaigner, Pablo Brait, says the aim is to *“empower bank customers, Super fund members and shareholders to take action in line with their values, and to hold to account the institutions that have stewardship over their money.”*

*“We work closely with shareholders,”* he says, *“who own shares directly across a whole range of companies, and help them engage these companies through a variety of means including shareholder resolutions, such as calling on a bank to align its lending with limiting global warming to 1.5c degrees. We also work with shareholders who want to attend AGMs, or who want to appoint proxies to attend AGMs on their behalf, and help them formulate questions to the CEO and Board.”*

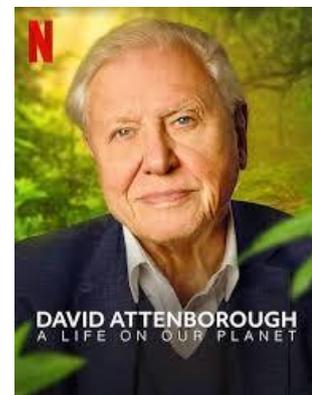
He says people who don’t own shares directly still have a role to play in shareholder activism through their Super fund. “They can do this by writing to their Super fund, which Market Forces can assist with, and lobbying the fund to vote in favour of shareholder resolutions related to climate change.”

He says it’s good that some Super funds offer some options that are fossil fuel free, but Market Forces would like to see more Super funds - like

Australian Ethical and Future Super, which are entirely fossil fuel free - divesting all of their funds under management of companies that are undermining the Paris Accord.

***“Helping to destroy life on earth should not be a consumer choice!”***

\*Sir David’s latest film *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet* is available on Netflix. He describes it as *“My witness statement and my vision for the future. It’s the story of how we came to make our greatest mistake, and how, if we act now, how we can put it right.”*



*Roland Ashby is a member of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC). See his blog Living Water at:*

[www.thelivingwater.com.au](http://www.thelivingwater.com.au)

Roland recently retired after many years as editor of The Melbourne Anglican. He is a member of the World Christian Meditation Community and has a Masters Degree in Theology.

*For more information about Market Forces, and how the banks and Super funds compare, see:*

[www.marketforces.org.au](http://www.marketforces.org.au) or email [contact@marketforces.org.au](mailto:contact@marketforces.org.au)

## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CARMELITE JPIC TEAM

*This year we celebrate 10 years of the Carmelite JPIC Commission in its present form. This month we introduce you to our final two members of the JPIC Team, Paul Sireh and Gabrielle Fogarty*



### Paul Sireh O.Carm

When I come across the words, social and justice, what immediately springs to mind are the relationships and

interaction which surrounds us. That is, our environment and its people. How do we care and treat each other?

Growing up in a caring, nurturing Melanesian clan on the beautiful, tropical island of Manus, I can remember a childhood spent in a tranquil environment with vast forests, mountains, and rivers. White sandy beaches, coconut trees swaying over the sand and the blue waters. Lovely birds and an abundance of fish in the sea. In other words, a Paradise on earth. Sadly, over the past two decades, I have experienced the reverse of those two aspirations, social and justice. What we recognise as our social and environmental life has been bombarded with greed, corruption, misuse of power, bias and inequality, racism, environmental pollution and destruction.



*The white sandy beach on Manus Island about 100 metres destroyed by king tide*

To the contrary, my motivations are to associate with peace and justice. That there be respect for life and that there will be harmony in our environment. It will be protected and cherished. I hope that with our involvement on Justice and Peace, we can preach a gospel of non-violence so that we can all truly live in a "Paradise on earth" as I remember my home island of Manus to be. living creatures. With God, we develop a spirituality that truly respects all life and avoids injury to anything on earth in thought, word and action".

With social justice we can be kind to each other and to our environment and find the true value of all living creatures.

With God, we develop a spirituality that truly respects all life and avoids injury to anything on earth in thought, word and action".



### Gabrielle Fogarty

Spiritual awakenings or calls to any apostolate are never meant for us alone.

Supported by likeminded friends in my parish

community in Kiama, NSW, I was drawn to express my faith experiences 20 years ago by becoming part of our Parish social justice group.

Formation as a Lay Carmelite has given me a deeper understanding that the energy and enthusiasm for making the world a better place is sustained by the God within; a partnership with the Holy Spirit; the reign of God here and now, and I am called to do my part, without expecting any personal accomplishments or judgements of success.

Visits to inland Australia and many other countries including several visits to Timor Leste were living *encounters with the God of our contemplation*. To see and hear of the suffering of many human beings under oppressive regimes helped bring the Gospel alive. It was an opportunity for me to *grow in solidarity with those who live in situations of deprivation and injustice*". It was through this lens that the seeds of social justice were watered by the tears of love and compassion.

I have found many Carmelite writers over the years who have offered encouragement and thrown light on to the fruits of living the contemplative life. Pope Francis also offers us a real challenge in his writings of **LAUDATO SI AND FRATELLI TUTTI** - they could be considered 'road signs' for us today who are journeying together with Jesus. Praying for Justice, peace and the integrity of creation forces me to face the disorders of the world and to ask myself: **what can I do?**

### Join us in Prayer ...

*O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, amen. (Richard Rohr ofm)*



Carmelites in Timor Leste are making masks for community members



## #endcovidforall campaign

**THE CARMELITES** recently added their name to a list of organisations and individuals in Australia supporting the #endcovidforall campaign. This campaign, initiated by Micah Australia, has been asking the Australian government to ensure we assist others who are struggling through this pandemic. As the campaign states: This COVID crisis is not going to end for anyone, until it ends for everyone.

Mayra Walsh, our Community Development Coordinator, said, "this year we have seen the economic impacts of the pandemic affecting local communities in Timor-Leste where we work. We support this campaign because it's important to us that our government reflects our commitment to ensuring that people everywhere are able to live with dignity". While Australia has one of the world's best healthcare systems, too many of our neighbours in this region and other vulnerable nations around the world are ill equipped to deal with a pandemic.

Recently the #endcovidforall campaign has celebrated the Australian government's commitment to fund \$500 million to assist communities in the Pacific and Southeast Asia access Covid-19 vaccine programs. This is in addition to the existing aid budget, so will not be funded by cutting other development programs. This has been an encouraging step towards ensuring that everyone, regardless of their economic situation, can find a way through this pandemic.

For more information about the campaign, visit: <https://www.endcovidforall.com/> or the Carmelite Facebook page.

### FOR YOUR CALENDAR – December

- 1 Dec – West Papua Flag Day 1961-1<sup>st</sup> Raising of Morning Star Flag, West Papua
- 2 Dec – UN Day for Abolition of Slavery
- 4 Dec – 2000 Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Report presented
- 10 Dec- UN Human Rights Day  
1992: Redfern Speech by Prime Minister Paul Keating
- 18 Dec- 1894 South Australian Parliament – 1<sup>st</sup> in Australia to give women a vote
- 21 Dec- 1993: Passage of Native Title Bill by the Australian Senate
- 23 Dec- 1996: Wik High Court decision



As we prepare for Christ, the Prince of Peace to enter our hearts and our lives once again, we encourage you to think about what you can still be grateful for in this year and to look forward to 2021 with hope in the goodness of humanity to overcome each crisis and to include the most vulnerable with us as we rebuild. We wish you a blessed Advent, a joyful Christmas season and a peaceful 2021.

**Carmelite JPIC Team**