



# JPIC

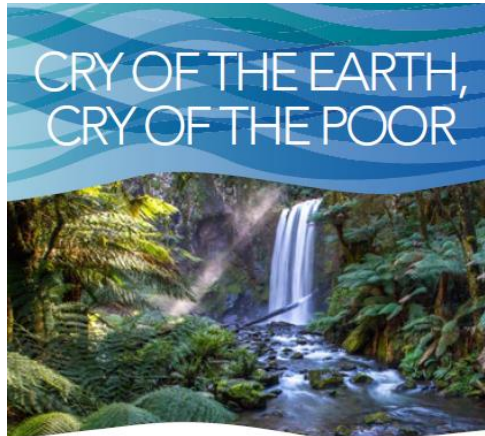
Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Commission

THE CARMELITES OF AUSTRALIA AND TIMOR LESTE

JPIC 109-SEPTEMBER 2021

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

Saudavel iha Maromak no grasa Spirtu Santo Nian [Regula Sto Alberto]



*By listening with an open heart to those who are most affected, we can begin, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to discern the signs of the times.*

Social Justice Statement 2021-22:  
Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor



The Reflection this month is offered by **Peter Clarke**, Parishioner of Kiama. Married to Mary for 50+ years, 3 gorgeous

daughters and 7 wonderful grandchildren. Trained in geology and engineering sciences. Worked 47 years as a scientist in materials science. Landed in Kiama 15 years ago...a Concerned Catholic and a Doubting Thomas. Concerned about Climate Change for 25 + years.

**TODAY IS SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY, 29<sup>th</sup> August, in the Australian Church.**

## A REFLECTION ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

***"The glory of the human has become the desolation of the Earth. ..A further statement that might be made is that the desolation of the Earth is becoming the destiny of the human"***

Thomas Berry

In August a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change presented the latest data on the state of the World's climate. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

In the same week, the Australian Catholic Bishops conference published the Social Justice Statement 2021-22 titled "*Cry of the earth: Cry of the Poor*" Archbishop Mark Coleridge states that the document '**..seeks to hear the true stories of peoples experience, to look at reality through the eyes of those most affected.**'

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2021/06/24/social-justice-statement-2021-22/>

In an editorial in Eureka Street 19<sup>th</sup> August 2021, Andrew Hamilton comments:

***"The documents warned their two constituencies of the danger of inactivity...They face an identical challenge. If governments are to respond adequately to climate change, they need to come under pressure from the people. That will not happen unless people see the issue as personal. It needs to enter their dreams, engage their imagination, stir them to change their way of life and make them active in demanding an appropriate response "***

<https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/>



We need to be aware of biased or false information about climate change. We need to be able to present information to family, friends and even strangers to do what we can to influence public opinion.

Without going into detail, the following can be stated from the IPCC report:

1. Without any doubt human influence has warmed the planet. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have resulted.
2. The unprecedented is the new normal. Changes happening now have not occurred in thousand of years. The past is not a guide to the present
3. Impacts are already being felt everywhere. Who would have anticipated our Black Summer or fires in Siberia?
4. What is happening now WILL get worse. Even if we stop emissions immediately, further and worse change is locked in
5. Abrupt and irreversible changes cannot be ruled out. For example, a sudden collapse of the Antarctic ice sheet leading to unanticipated sea rise. These are called tipping points.
6. Many different bad things can happen at the same time. For example, record breaking droughts followed almost immediately by flash floods.
7. So, we must get ready for our changing climate. We know that fire events will be more frequent and more intense We need control methods far beyond what was normal yesterday because the past is no predictor of the present and certainly not the future

<https://blogs.icrc.org/inspired/2021/08/17/the-physical-science-of-climate-change-seven-key-humanitarian-insights-from-the-2021-ipcc-report/>

The Bishops' document draws heavily on the teachings of *Laudato Si* and recognises that the Climate crisis will inevitably and disproportionately affect those least able to cope. It listens to and records the stories of those who will be affected, in particular our Aboriginal peoples. The document was launched by Aboriginal voices.

I am particularly concerned with the impact of sea level rise and so the following story from the document, told by Merineta from Tuvalu resonated: *"I love my country, I love my people and traditions, I love my culture and I don't want to lose them because of climate change. We all want to stay in our*

*own lands because it defines who we are. We don't want to migrate or relocate"*



The island of Tuvalu will become uninhabitable if sea level rises by between 20-40 cms in the next 100years. Sea level is predicted to rise by at least 100cms by 2100 and some modelling predicts even greater rise. The Howard government declared that Pacific Islanders forced to flee rising sea levels would be treated as "economic refugees" which would virtually mean no access to Australia. As far as I am aware this ruling remains policy.

Although the Bishops statement is beautiful and compassionate reading, drawing on Theology and Scripture, it is very weak on action. It is timid and avoids any confrontation or condemnation. It makes no political statement.

Australia ranks overall, in the latest survey of progress towards Sustainable development goals, 35 out of 175 countries. But in the specific area of policy directed at achieving the goal Australia ranks dead last. We are the world's largest per-capita emitter of greenhouse gases; we are in the top 3 countries for exported greenhouse emissions and among the top 10 per-capita fossil fuel users. Australia's Pledge to the Paris Agreement of 26-28% reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2030 is totally inadequate. The world requires emission reductions of 50% or greater by 2030 and net zero by 2040 if we are to have any hope of less than 2°C of warming. Australia is already warming faster than the rest of the world with an increase of 1.44°

On the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021 the Australian Parliament voted funding of over \$50million as a first step in the development of gas fracking fields in the Beetaloo Basin in the Northern Territory. This legislation was virtually snuck through Parliament with no discussion in a media fixated on COVID.

The legislation and the development is against the wishes of the Traditional Custodians of the land, these peoples who gave us the Uluru statement from the heart. A heart now broken by "the torment of powerlessness" This reckless piece of legislation, stupid and without ethics or morals in the light of the IPCC report is completely contrary to the Theology and the empathy expressed in the Bishops' Statement. It may be a first test for the Bishops. Will they condemn this legislation, or will they retreat into silence? An injustice ignored is an injustice condoned!

The Bishops' statement is titled "Cry of the earth; Cry of the Poor" It is a catchy title, and we all know what it is intended to mean. But as a geologist trained, I know that the Earth is indifferent. This ball of rock will continue to circle its parent sun for billions of years until it is finally consumed by the expansion of that sun. It is the Web of Life that inhabits this world that cries out, perhaps in its death throes.

We walk, we exist in the 6<sup>th</sup> great extinction event in the history of this planet since

complex life first appeared some 540 million years ago. With the possible exception of the K-T event that occurred 64million years ago, this event is progressing faster and appears as extensive as any previous event. The two great differences are that this time we are here. This is not history or palaeontology. We, and our children and grandchildren are affected, ours and their very existence is threatened. And the second great difference is that our species is contributing. Tim Flannery described us as The Weather Makers. Correctly, we are the Climate Changers.

Presently we are not co-creators, we are destroyers, a plague upon Creation. Unlike previous generations we now know. thanks to our combined intelligence and the work of thousands of dedicated scientists around the world. No Politician, no Policy maker, no human being with access to these reports can ever again deny the science or the impact we as a species are having on the Web of Life. We know our sin; we are given the grace of a few short years to change.



Lord, when we listen with your ears we hear:  
The bush grown more silent,  
The birdsong less vibrant,  
The stream's sluggish ripple.  
Have mercy and open our ears.

Lord, when we look with your eyes we see:  
The soil depleted,  
The sky smudged,  
The oceans rubbished and the great currents slowed.  
Have mercy and help us to see.

Lord, when we look with your eyes we see:  
The workers who struggle to get by,  
The women subjected to violence,  
The people who are excluded.  
Have mercy and help us to see.

Lord, when we listen with your ears we hear:  
The sound of hungry children,  
The distress of the mentally ill,  
The silent pain of homeless women and men.  
Have mercy and open our ears.

Send your Spirit upon us Lord to renew our sight,  
To restore our bearing,  
And to reclaim your reign of justice for all people and peace for creation.

As an introvert, perhaps an individualist, I despair of my ability to effect change. The issue is too large, and I have limited power. Like you, as an individual I can take action to change my carbon footprint. When released, the *Laudato Si Action Plan* among many other documents will provide numerous examples of actions we can all take.

But we don't deal with this crisis as individuals. What you do I may never have thought of! What I do is unknown to you. We complement one another; we work as community. And in the world, Australia must act as a good citizen and do its share. Which it clearly is not! We, as citizens, must force Australia to change. But, as humans, we are part of another community, the Web of Life. And as members of that community, currently we are the "Neighbour from Hell" It is past time to change. It is past time we took our place as protector not destroyer.

Let Thomas Berry have the last word "***The one thing necessary is to appreciate that the Earth itself and all its living and nonliving components is a community, that the human is a member of this integral community and finds its proper role in advancing the well-being of this community.... This principal of a total Earth community, along with the imaginative and emotional qualities associated with the functioning of the principle can be dimly perceived, perhaps, as a suppressed aspect of Western cultural traditions, possibly a carry-over of pagan attitudes that were never assimilated into the tradition but were kept in the realm of the unconscious and permitted only vague and inadequate expression.***"





## EMBRACING THE WORLD WITH PRAYER, LOVE, JUSTICE, AND PEACE

**For the PLIGHT OF AFGHANISTAN** - The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Afghanistan requires urgent and immediate action from the Australian Government. We pray especially for the women and girls of Afghanistan, that their dignity, rights and aspirations will not be denied again, but that they may have the access to education and to the rights and freedoms that they have been promised both by those in power and by the international community."



### World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel - 18 - 25 September 2021

During this week which includes the **International Day of Prayer for Peace on 21 September**, church organizations, congregations, and people of faith are encouraged to bear a common witness with prayer and acts of support in favour of peace and justice for Israelis and Palestinians.

**COVID19 In Third World Countries** All over the world nations are struggling, trying to bring the Delta variant under control. We especially hold close to our heart our friends in the Pacific Islands, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea; and those in countries where they are also coping at the same time with conflict and oppression, Palestine, Lebanon, and Afghanistan



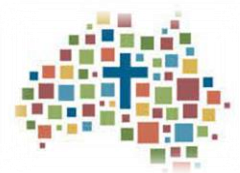
### Plenary Council ...

We pray that like a good shepherd we will strive to be a humble, healing, and merciful community as we immerse ourselves in the journey of the Plenary Council.

*Plenary Council Document Reflection .... Instrumentum Laboris*  
(<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/fanthe flame/>)

**186.** The Church hears the cries of the poor and the groans of the earth. It seeks to stand in solidarity with the poor and the marginalised, and to exercise good stewardship of the fragile ecosystems that support life on earth. Every day more Christians are becoming aware of their responsibilities as people of faith towards God's Creation.

**179.** Many Catholics realise that the integrity of both Church and society in Australia is intimately connected to the wellbeing and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There is a great need for listening and dialogue between Aboriginal cultures and the various churches and religions in this country. We are challenged to ... recognise the wisdom of Aboriginal people is needed for the health of our nation, that we can learn so much from Indigenous culture and knowledge.



**YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN ZOOM CARMELITE CONVERSATION** – Provincial Paul Cahill OCarm *Looking to the Plenary Council: A Carmelite Response...* next Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September at 10.30 am -12 noon.

<https://www.thecarmelitecentremelbourne.org/events/carmelite-conversation-looking-to-the-plenary-council-a-carmelite-response-paul-cahill-ocarm-september-1st/>

**Towards Plenary:** A new song from Fr John Crothers : "Listen to the People" [https://youtu.be/WOYhogr\\_h10](https://youtu.be/WOYhogr_h10)



### Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September World Day of Prayer for Creation followed by one month of prayer and reflections in the Season of Creation

**YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN** members of the Carmelite Family on **ZOOM on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> September at 2 pm SYDNEY time** when three Lay Carmelites will present their love of creation through the work they do. Mary from Rockhampton will focus on the need to LISTEN to our Indigenous Australians, Marcelle from Wiseman's Ferry her active involvement in creation as a beekeeper and Toto from Perth in her research on Sustainable Agriculture.

LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5847203845?pwd=K2lMVVZtcFFzM1RhZ1dsbFZTeDE3QT09>

**A LINK and INVITATION From Peter Clarke's reflection: IPCC REPORT**, For anyone who wants a more detailed coverage of the IPCC report, 350.org is holding a **free workshop**. You can register here [Workshop 2 - Saturday September 11, 1:00-2:30pm \(AEST\)](#)