

# Australian Guide to **LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLANNING**



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# FOREWORD



The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* n161



*Laudato Si'*! The first words of Pope Francis's 2015 letter are words of praise to God for all creation. After Saint Francis of Assisi, they remind us of the wonder and beauty of life on Earth.

We know that our actions can change the planet, but not always for the better. Climates are warming and impacting already vulnerable communities, including First Peoples in our own country and region. With the homes, livelihoods and flourishing of some in our human family at stake, the need for us all to act differently is urgent.

As a global Catholic community, our own words of praise to God for creation are only made meaningful when our collective actions reflect that same sense of love and respect for our common home. Only when we act together for a more just and sustainable world will things change for the better.

The Australian Bishops are pleased to endorse Caritas Australia's leadership of our collective action towards justice. Its long-running Catholic Earthcare program provides specialist support and hosts communities for Catholic individuals, households, schools, parishes and organisations throughout Australia. This means that Catholic Earthcare is well-placed to accompany us as we each join the worldwide *Laudato Si'* Action Platform and develop and implement our various *Laudato Si'* Action Plans.

Friends, as you begin this *Laudato Si'* journey of transformation, I urge you to take time forming your heart, gathering with others in your Earthcare Community to support and learn from each other and then planning your concrete actions. For, as Pope Francis says, "we know that things can change..."<sup>1</sup>

**Most Reverend Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL**

Chair, Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service



# WELCOME TO THE EARTHCARE COMMUNITY!

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**Welcome to Caritas Australia's Catholic Earthcare Community! You have taken up the call to act with care for our common home. Making a Laudato Si' Action Plan is a great way to start.**

**The need is pressing. With the human-induced climate changes impacting already-vulnerable communities, "our decisive action, here and now" is critical, as Pope Francis says (*Laudato Si'*n161).**

## **We are here for you**

Caritas Australia is here to support you on your Laudato Si' journey of care for our common home.

Through our Catholic Earthcare initiative, we have been tasked with leading the response to the Australian Catholic Bishops' mandate for each Catholic parish, diocese, eparchy, educational institution and organisation to join the Laudato Si' Action Platform by 2024 and develop a Laudato Si' Action Plan.

## **What Earthcare offers**

As an Earthcarer, you are now part of a more than 20 year movement of spiritual renewal and ecological dialogue and action in and around the Australian Catholic community! Along with the support of Caritas Australia's Earthcare Specialists, Earthcare offers:

- *Australian Guide to Laudato Si' Action Planning* (this document)
- a suite of resources, called Earthcare Tools, designed to help you develop and implement your Laudato Si' Action Plan
- Australia-wide Earthcare Communities, tailored to Individuals and Households, Schools, Parishes and Organisations, to share ideas and experiences with.



# WHAT IS A LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLAN?

**A Laudato Si' Action Plan is your commitment to act towards achieving the Laudato Si' Goals.**

**Action at every level – local, regional, national and global – is essential in an integral ecology approach. Indeed, possibilities for justice are radically increased when we work together to address the urgent challenges facing us and our common home.**

## **One encyclical, seven goals**

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. The letter expresses praise to God and, recognising the beauty and wonder of creation, urges us to address the ecological crises facing the planet.

The concept of integral ecology is central to Pope Francis's letter, the themes of which have given rise to what the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development articulate on the Laudato Si' Action Platform as the Laudato Si' Goals.

## **An Australian approach**

The Australian Catholic Bishops urge all Australian Catholics to join the Laudato Si' Action Platform – “a shared space where the Church develops a bold and active response to the ecological crisis”.<sup>2</sup> They also urge Australian Catholics to develop and implement their own Laudato Si' Action Plan.

Outlining a 4-step cycle, Catholic Earthcare's *Australian Guide to Laudato Si' Action Planning* complements resources on the Laudato Si' Action Platform. It is offered with the support of Caritas Australia's Earthcare Specialists and Australia-wide Earthcare Communities.



**LAUDATO SI'**  
Action Platform

# GOALS



**RESPOND TO THE  
CRY OF THE EARTH**



**RESPOND TO THE  
CRY OF THE POOR**



**ECOLOGICAL  
ECONOMICS**



**ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE  
LIFESTYLES**



**ECOLOGICAL  
EDUCATION**



**ECOLOGICAL  
SPIRITUALITY**



**COMMUNITY RESILIENCE  
AND EMPOWERMENT**



# FOSTERING INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

**The concept of integral ecology reminds us that our treatment of the planet cannot be separated from social, cultural, economic, political and ethical concerns. Everything is connected.**

**Integral ecology depends on our collective change of heart about the health and wellbeing of all of creation, especially the Earth, our common home.**

## **Acting with urgency**

We know that “human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people. Vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected.”<sup>3</sup>

The Laudato Si’ Goals, developed from Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si’*, aim to achieve justice by promoting and sustaining integral ecology.



The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* n13



# LAUDATO SI'

Action Planning Cycle



## Getting started

### Spark the conversation

Change begins with the formation of the heart. It is sustainable when there is a climate for change and people are engaged and enabled to define, realise and track their shared vision.

### Form an Earthcare Working Group

Invite volunteers to help lead your Earthcare efforts. As well as initiating and inspiring ecological dialogue, this small Working Group can take responsibility for overseeing your Laudato Si' Action Planning process.

When assembling your Earthcare Working Group, you may wish to recruit representatives from different roles or interest areas. Whatever your approach, aim to include people with different skillsets and ways of thinking. Also, include people whose voices and perspectives are not always heard. They may have fresh insights and ideas to share!



# 1 Self-assess

Self-assess your understanding and practice of integral ecology, of how everything is connected. Examine your current practices. Consider the interconnectedness of humanity and nature. How is this relationship shaping your common life?

Key questions: What are your current approaches to people, place and practice? How are they helping you achieve the Laudato Si' Goals?



**Our EARTH CARE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL is designed with an Australian context in mind and is one way to undertake your self-assessment. It provides you with a framework for assessing how your current approaches to people, place and practice relate to the 7 Laudato Si' Goals.**

Now that you are a member of the Earthcare Community, our **EARTH CARE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL IS ON ITS WAY!**





Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* n159



Once you've completed your SELF-ASSESSMENT, let us know and we'll send the **EARTHCARE REFLECTION TOOL!**

## 2 Reflect

Once you've submitted your Self-assessment, it's time to reflect on where you are now, particularly on your community's location and current activities, including in relation to First Nations Peoples and other local communities and ecosystems. Consider how your values and unique strengths relate to the Laudato Si' Goals. Spend time discerning your vision for being a Laudato Si' community.

Key questions: What have you done before? What does this moment in time and place call for? What does it look like when your community is living *Laudato Si'*?



**Our EARTHCARE REFLECTION TOOL** aims to help you prayerfully contemplate how your approaches to people, place and practice reflect your vision for being a Laudato Si' community.



Once you've completed your REFLECTION, let us know and we'll send **YOUR EARTHCARE ACTION PLANNING TOOL!**

# 3 Plan

You've self-assessed and reflected on where you are and where you want to be in your Laudato Si' journey. Now it's time to plan your "concrete actions to protect our common home".<sup>4</sup> This step is about developing your Laudato Si' Action Plan. Planning achievable, measurable actions towards each of the Laudato Si' Goals is the best way to realise your vision.

Key questions: What actions will you take towards each of the 7 Laudato Si' Goals? Who will participate in each action? When will each action be achieved?



**Our EARTHCARE ACTION PLANNER TOOL is one way to plan and organise your actions towards the Laudato Si' Goals.**





# 4 Act

Once you complete your Laudato Si' Action Plan, share it with others on the global Laudato Si' Action Platform. Let us know too so we can celebrate your progress with you! Then, get busy, putting your plan into action.

To ensure success, stay connected with your Earthcare Community and make the most of our wide range of ecological, justice-focused parish resources.



**Make the most of YOUR EARTHCARE COMMUNITY!** When you do, not only do you gain access to the special Earthcare Tools mentioned in this guide. You also receive the support of Caritas Australia's Earthcare Specialists and join a host of other Earthcarers committing themselves to living Laudato Si'!

Once you've completed your ACTION PLAN, let us know so that we can **CELEBRATE YOUR PROGRESS!**

# LET US SUPPORT YOU!

## Your Earthcare Community

We are glad you've made this commitment to integral ecology and are here to support you. Your Earthcare Community is full of Earthcarers: like-minded Catholic individuals and groups committed to caring for our common home.

Whichever of our Earthcare Households, Schools, Parishes or Organisations Communities you are a member of, we will keep you up to date with latest events, ideas and approaches to integral ecology and achieving social and ecological justice.

## Explore our resources

Visit Caritas Australia's Catholic Earthcare webpage to explore our range of resources: prayer services, films and animations, discussion guides, reflections and more to inspire and support you as you develop and implement your Laudato Si' Action Plan.

## Advocate with us

Add your voice to the conversation! [Advocate with us](#) as we call on the Australian Government to take action on climate change.



**Earthcarers from all around Australia gather to inspire and learn from each other. Get involved today!**

# CONTACT US

Explore our website and contact our team of Earthcare Specialists to:

- gain expert advice at each stage of the Laudato Si' Action Planning process
- learn more about your Earthcare Community and related events
- share your ideas and progress towards living *Laudato Si'*!



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[www.caritas.org.au/catholic-earthcare](http://www.caritas.org.au/catholic-earthcare)



# NOTES

## Endnotes

1 Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* n13

2 Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, *Laudato Si' Action Platform*, "About" <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/about/>

3 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2023, "[Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers](#)", p. 5.

4 *Laudato Si' Action Platform*, <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>

## Image Credits

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pp. 2, 3, 12 Earthcarers help to revegetate local sand dunes. Photos: Maree Mayer

p. 5 Through the Caritas Australia-supported Integrated Community Development Program in the Philippines, community members learn bookkeeping and ecological conservation skills and now work together to manage Disaster Risk Reduction. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

p. 7 With the support of Caritas Australia and its partner Caritas Hwange, Thandolwayo's community in Zimbabwe installed two solar-powered pumps and two 10,000 water tanks, which allowed Thandolwayo to concentrate on her studies instead of spending hours collecting water. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

p. 10 Janice is a proud Wagilak woman and traditional dancer and arts worker at Djilpin Arts on Jawoyn Country in the Northern Territory, Australia. Supported by Caritas Australia, Janice and the Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation support the community to generate income and employment, while keeping culture strong. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

p. 11 Shaniella (second from left) takes part in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) training at her rural training centre near the capital Honiara in the Solomon Islands. Photo: Neil Nuia

p. 14 Earthcarers contemplate *Laudato Si'* at Catholic Earthcare's 20 year anniversary celebration in the Diocese of Sandhurst, Victoria, Australia. Photo: Catholic Education Sandhurst

p. 15 Clouds over an Australian countryside. Photo: Jirka Parik/Shutterstock



End poverty  
Promote justice  
Uphold dignity

## The Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development

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