

KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATIONS – SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2021-22: “THE CRY OF THE EARTH, THE CRY OF THE POOR”

This took place over 2 Sundays in September 19th and 26th via Zoom

Participants: Paula Beaton, Pam Bell, Madeleine Grist, Louise Henderson, Sarah Johnston, Annabelle O’Connell, Anthony O’Connell, Steve Scroope, Linda Swadling, Christine Trezise, Helen Van Wanrooy, Michael Van Wanrooy

The recommendations for action, which emerged from discussion, are presented below. The KTC would like to recommend these actions to Fr Peter, the Parish Finance Committee and the Parish Pastoral Council to begin our engagement with the Laudato Si Action Plan.

⇒ **Listening to First Peoples and our Youth**

The members of the KTC recommend that:

- The Ngunnawal people and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the Yass Valley are invited to have a “voice at the table” in the Parish of St Augustine. This will involve working with the elders of the Ngunnawal nation to ensure that they feel welcomed in the parish and connected to what is happening, especially for events such as Sacramental Programs, changes in Mass times, special events.
- The connection between the Aboriginal people and the Catholic community in the Yass Valley be celebrated and reflected in our parish demographics, the culture of our Church environments and our Liturgy.
- We build bridges to our youth and draw on their wisdom in creating a sustainable parish. This includes an effort to reach out to Aboriginal youth in our region. Part of the process of reaching out to youth involves a sustained engagement with Mt Carmel School in working towards the Laudato Si Goals. It also involves reaching out to the parents of families who attend Mass to listen to them and to find out what we can do to best support them, to make attending Mass as family-friendly and spiritually enriching as possible.

⇒ **The Noah Effect- animating personal and parish ecological conversion**

This is a very hopeful moment for us as individuals and as a parish. It begins with personal ecological conversion in our homes and then taking that experience out to others so that the trickle of change becomes a flood. We can do this personally by reaching out to others e.g. by inviting a friend for a walk or a cup of tea to talk about responding to climate change or doing a Run for Rubbish.

The members of the KTC recommend that:

- The parish set targets for moving towards a carbon neutral parish. This is an urgent need that begins with educating ourselves about “What does carbon neutral look like for our parish and how soon is it achievable?” It also involves an energy and sustainability audit of the parish. This would be facilitated through becoming a part of the Earthcare Parish Program run by Catholic Earthcare. [Earthcare Parishes - Catholic Earthcare Australia](#)
- All purchases made by the parish begin with a consideration of “Is this sustainable from an environmental perspective?” Also, “What is the evidence to support it as environmental best practice?”

- We make our commitment to sustainability visually present in the parish. For example, we start a Creation Corner in the Parish Bulletin that draws of the wisdom of our elders, our First Peoples and our youth with ideas for such things as: tried and true home remedies, recycling tips, repurposing ideas and gardening advice
- We make our commitment to sustainability evident through elements of our liturgy, such as our music, by choosing one hymn per week that includes environmental themes of praise and thanksgiving for the glory of creation.

⇒ **A prayerful response and responding to the cry of the poor**

The members of the KTC recommend that:

- As a parish, we rewrite our Parish Vision statement as a Mission Statement that articulates our commitment to sustainability and to heeding the cry of the poor.
- We start the conversation about recognising where parishioners need support and how we can provide practical assistance. How do we build a parish culture that ensures the poor and vulnerable feel welcomed and valued in our parish?
- Major decisions that are made in the parish are made through an ethical framework that affirms our commitment to the “Cry of the Poor”.
- We draw on the talents and resources of those willing to run a monthly ecumenical prayer service focused on Laudato Si (members of the KTC group and others)

NATSICC Virtual Retreat.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Commission is delivering its annual retreat via Zoom this year and Sally Fitzgerald says everyone is welcome. The link is below:
[2021 Retreat \(natsicc.org.au\)](https://natsicc.org.au)

I will make sure it is in the Bulletin and work with Michael VW and Pam to ensure the Aboriginal community is informed and have access to the event.