



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### Catholic Church urges action to care for the earth, the poor

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has made an historic commitment to work towards a more sustainable Church in its annual statement promoting social justice.

In the Social Justice Statement 2021-22 launched today, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, the bishops commit to a seven-year journey towards seven Laudato Si' Goals.

“We are facing an ecological crisis and Pope Francis wants the whole Church globally to act with a greater sense of urgency,” said Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service.

“In Australia, passionate individuals, religious institutes, schools and organisations have been working on ecological issues for a long time. I want to affirm and thank them all, and to urge the whole Catholic community to join them.”

Bishop Long pointed out that “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been caring for country from time immemorial. The rest of us need to listen, and to learn how we can walk together to care for the whole of creation – including one another.”

The statement explains that the Laudato Si' Goals “aim to put Pope Francis’ [2015] encyclical into practice, making communities around the world sustainable in the spirit of the integral ecology of *Laudato Si'*”.

The bishops invite Catholics to “uncover the sacramentality of creation” in recognising the divine presence in the world, and to respond with wonder and awe. They call for a “profound conversion expressed in a new way of living, both personally and collectively”.

“We are being called to a new way of thinking, feeling, understanding and living,” the statement says.

Speaking during the online launch of the statement, Bishop Long said: “My hope is that *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* will encourage ever deeper and more effective Christian responses to the urgent cries of the earth and of the poor.”

The statement urges families, schools, parishes, dioceses and organisations to join the bishops in signing up to the Laudato Si' Action Platform.

The platform, an initiative of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, will gather ideas for action from around the globe to help participants in their journeys. The Bishops Conference’s Office for Social Justice has been involved in developing the platform.

At the statement’s launch, Bishop Long also announced a new name for that agency – now known as the Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace – affirming “social justice, ecology and peace are inseparable”.

*Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* and associated resources can be downloaded at [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)