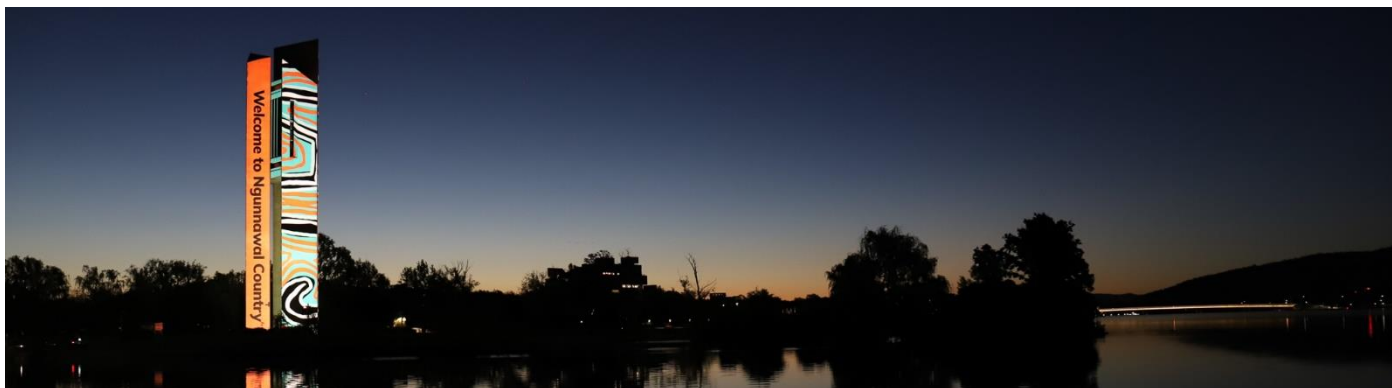




Holy Spirit Parish. Gungahlin AUSTRALIA



Acknowledgement of Country

Holy Spirit Parish acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land where we worship and live, the land of the Ngunnawal people, and pay our respects to their Elders past present and emerging. We acknowledge the memories of their ancestors and celebrate their continuing culture. We acknowledge the deep, spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.



We live in a world that has reached a turning point in history. Climate change, pollution, poverty, rising sea levels, conflict, economic growth, greed, and the desire for comfort, convenience and personal choice have all contributed to a world that is groaning for our attention.



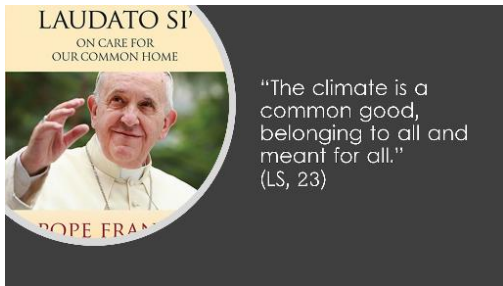
The environmental movement has inspired action but is limited in its ability to create change without spiritual awareness, reflection and action. If we are to discover a truly Christian environmental ethic we must rediscover a sense of the sacred universe which draws on the beauty of God's wisdom and cares for all of creation. *Laudato Si'* lights the way.



Over the past few decades, our local and global Catholic communities have become more aware of God's invitation to recognise the intimate way we are all connected to the sacredness of the land and all creation. The earth is vulnerable, and we are called to protect it. It has become one of 'the poor'.



We are challenged to ask whether our comfort is attained at the cost of another, particularly those living in poorer countries. Are the goods of this earth distributed justly, or does greed and squandering of resources contribute to the poverty of others?



In 2015, Pope Francis, addressed the church, expanding on this sacred connection with creation in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. "On the Care for Our Common Home".

To stop for a moment, in wonder and awe at God's creation, is an invitation to protect what we have for future generations.

"The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all." (LS, 23)



Shared common resources – global oceans, polar regions, the atmosphere, and outer space are all elements of God's creation and WE are responsible for them. The pollution we cause, the resources we use, all impact on the health of the planet and affect its viability.

"The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." (LS, 21)

When we say: "I'm going to throw out the garbage" – where is "out"? Your backyard? Someone else's backyard? From the point of view of our planet – there is no "out". Throwing the garbage into the bin and out of our sight does not relieve us of the problem. It just becomes someone else's problem

What does our faith tell us?



The ecological action embedded in our faith is new to many of us, but as old as Genesis: "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...God said..."Let there be light", and there was light. ...God said, "Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear". (Gen 1:1-2:2)

This beautiful symbolic language documents God's involvement in life and creation. To be a Christian and a Catholic, each of us, and all of us, are responsible for the Earth and its future.

“This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations.” (LS, 67).



What will be left for future generations?

Are the goods of the earth justly distributed? Who has suffered exploitation and slavery to produce the goods – which we then discard?

Climate change affects entire populations – human, animal and plant.



Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. It is not until these species are gone that we fully understand the impact of their loss. The interconnectedness of all creation is something to fill us with awe.



Those with the least power are most affected when we fail to care for the earth. Their land is cleared for development, rising sea levels leave them without a home, water shortages – without food, our waste becomes their problem. All these outcomes can, and do, lead to conflict.

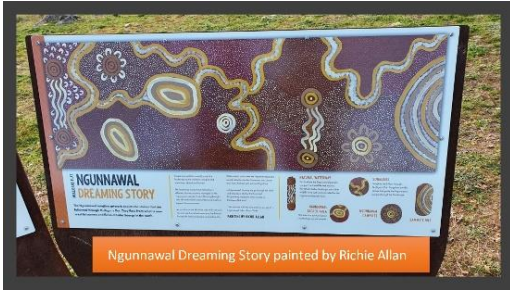
“Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely connected themes, which cannot be separated or treated individually.” (LS, 92)

What does all this mean for our parish community?

Let faith motivate our actions. We need to encourage one another to be always open to God's grace and to draw constantly from our deepest convictions about love, justice and peace. Let us pray for the understanding and ecological conversion to care for our common home.



It is especially important that we put the knowledge and spirituality of our indigenous sisters and brothers at the very centre of our work. To listen to their stories of culture and land, family, tradition and governance. Their advice and experience is crucial to an authentic response to the cry from the Earth.



For First Nations People,
“land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values.
 (LS, 146)



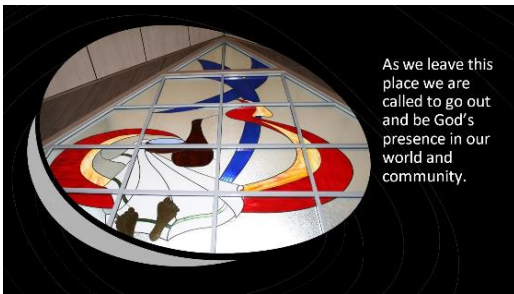
Our parish Social Justice Group has studied Laudato Si', searching for discernment of the way forward in prayer and action.

The parish has formed a **“Care for Creation Team”** to promote and act on ideas to make our community more environmentally conscious and theologically aware.



Can we find ways within our parish and in our own homes to be an example to others?

Pope Francis has lit the way for us and reminded us that we are all interconnected. Our strength is in working together as the Body of Christ.



The earth is sacred – it is God's gift to us!