



BISHOPS' SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

Every year, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference produce a social justice for distribution on Social Justice Sunday, 29 August. This year, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* draws from *Laudato Si'* and other documents to present a timely and accessible resource. The title comes from *Laudato Si'* 49. Six years ago, Pope Francis wrote prophetically in *Laudato Si'* 61,

There are regions now at high risk and, aside from all doomsday predictions, the present world system is certainly unsustainable from a number of points of view, for we have stopped thinking about the goals of human activity. If we scan the regions of our planet, we immediately see that humanity has disappointed God's expectations.

FOREWORD FROM ARCHBISHOP MARK COLERIDGE

Pope Francis reminds us that encounter, dialogue, and listening with an open heart enable God's transforming love to move more powerfully in the world. (*Fratelli tutti* 6) Yet when faced with complex interrelated crises – the pandemic, the ecological crisis, the economic crisis, hunger, threats to peace and security – we can find ourselves overwhelmed by information or bogged down in disagreements about details.

In the annual Social Justice Statements, we seek to discern the signs of the times and, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to recognise how God is calling us to respond. As bishops our task is to bring the light of the Gospel to bear as we seek to respond to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth.

With Pope Francis, we avoid getting "mired in theoretical discussions" and instead seek to "hear the true stories" of people's experience, look at reality through the eyes of those most affected, and "listen with an open heart to the stories that they tell". (*Fratelli tutti* 261) Our task is to listen to people, to the earth, and to all of God's creation, since every created thing is interconnected, speaks of the wellbeing of each part and of the whole, and reveals something of the Creator. (*Laudato Si'* 221)

This Statement draws from Scripture, from the theological tradition, from Catholic social justice teachings and from the wisdom of the world, including insights of the First Nations peoples. All these are placed in dialogue with human experience. This year we offer some theological foundations for a genuinely Christian response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor: creation in and through the Trinity; the sacramentality of all created things; the wonder and beauty available to the contemplative eye; and the need for conversion and change of life.

Our hope is that these will ground and inspire comprehensive and effective responses not only from the Catholic community but from all who want to care for our common home in this time of great need.



Archbishop Mark Coleridge
President, Australian Catholic
Bishops Conference

INTRODUCTION

CRY OF THE EARTH, CRY OF THE POOR

The millennium drought, the 2019-2020 bushfire season, COVID-19, and the 2021 floods have raised questions for many Australians about our common home. In response to these events, Catholic agencies developed better ways of coordinating emergency help. However, planning at the national level for mitigation and adaptation to the changing frequency and intensity of severe weather events, and a just transition to a low carbon economy is also needed. We know that the safety, health, and livelihoods of those who are the poorest and most vulnerable in our communities are usually the most severely impacted. That is why Pope Francis often speaks of responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Social, economic, and ecological issues can only be effectively addressed in an integral way.

In this Social Justice Statement, we offer some theological foundations for our response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. They emerge from Scripture, the theological tradition, our Catholic social justice teachings, and the wisdom of the world - including insights of the First Nations peoples - placed in dialogue with experience. These foundations are: creation in and through the Trinity; sacramentality within all created things; wonder and beauty; and conversion. We hope that these will ground and inspire faithful and effective responses by the whole Catholic community.

BE PART OF A SHARED READING AND REFLECTION GROUP

Zoom Groups will be offered on:

Tuesdays from 10.30 to 12pm
31 August; 7, 14 and 21 September

Thursdays from 8 to 9.30pm
2, 9, 16 and 23 September

Register with Gail at gail.gill@bbcatholic.org.au

A zoom link will be provided by return email

ACCESS A PDF COPY OF
CRY OF THE EARTH, CRY OF THE POOR
at

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

Hard copies will be available in the parish later in August. At the above website, as well as a PDF of the Bishops' Statement, you will find a range of supporting resources which include a narrated version of the Statement in a podcast format.

CRY OF THE EARTH CRY OF THE POOR

A CALL TO ACTION

"We are being called to a new way of thinking, feeling, understanding, and living." Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, Social Justice Statement 2021-22.

1. Listen to First Peoples

Identify and implement ways you, your family, and your community will listen to the First Peoples.

"When it comes to human knowledge of the lands and waters now known as Australia, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are our first teachers." *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*

2. Reflect on Theological Foundations

Consider how *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* will shape your action to care for creation.

"This year we offer some theological foundations for a genuinely Christian response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor: creation in and through the Trinity; the sacramentality of all created things; wonder and beauty... and the need for conversion and change of life." Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Introduction to *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*

3. Use the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform

www.laudatosiiactionplatform.org

Plan your next steps on the 7-year journey towards the *Laudato Si'* Goals.

"As we set out on our seven-year journey, we hope that Catholic families, schools, and organisations will join us." *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*