



From +John...

Dear Friends

Last Friday night and Saturday the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council met for the first of the four meetings we will have during this year. As usual we had a full agenda including reflecting again on *LAUDATO SI*, the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis on Care for Our Common Home. This Letter was published on Pentecost Sunday almost two years ago. We went back to it because we wanted to make sure that the urgent message of the Holy Father is not being forgotten, that the challenge to “*care for*” the world’s natural resources is still being heard and that we are responding to his challenges. Part of our discussion was about what we might be able to do as individuals, and also what influence we might have over our schools, colleges, parishes and families in the Archdiocese to ensure that we “*come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us.*” (LS 244)

One of the interesting aspects of our discussion at the meeting was how a number of people said they had always known that there is an ecological crisis. They knew that we have a responsibility to care for the world which has been gifted to us, that parts of the world are in particular danger due to global warming, rising sea levels, de-forestation, lack of water and sanitation...BUT...they had never related these situations to their faith. That is the beauty and wonder of this Encyclical. Pope Francis makes it very clear that God is the Creator, the world and its resources are given to us to care for, not to plunder and abuse, we have a responsibility to make sure that there are enough natural resources for the coming generations. Using the words of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Pope reminds us: “*For human beings.....to destroy the biological diversity...by causing changes in its climate...; to contaminate the earth’s waters, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins.*” (LS 8) Then he says the appropriate response to this is what St John Paul II had already called for, “*a global ecological conversion.*” (LS 5)

Laudato Si is an urgent and important letter. Maybe this Penitential Season of Lent is the time for all of us (it is for me anyway) an opportunity to examine how I use resources, how I care for “our Common Home” and what I am doing about it practically.

How can you use this Lent to be more aware of the fragility of our planet and what you are doing to care for it?

Ngā mihi nui

+ John

NEWS . . .

- Please **pray** for Fr Pat McCullough who is seriously ill after open-heart surgery on Tuesday 7 March. Pat is in Wellington Hospital, but not well enough to receive visitors.
- Clergy are reminded of the **Retreat Day** at St Thomas More Church, Wilton, from 10am-4pm on Tuesday 11 April, the day of the North Island Chrism Mass. A registration form will be sent out in the next couple of weeks.

- This year we did not promote “The Door is Open”, the time of **reconciliation** in all parishes on the Wednesday evenings of Lent. Please ensure that there are ample opportunities for people to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation .

“The Sacrament of Reconciliation must regain its central place in the Christian life. This requires priests capable of putting their lives at the service of the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ (2 Cor 5:18), in such a way that, while no sincerely repentant sinner is prevented from drawing near to the love of the Father who awaits his return, everyone is afforded the opportunity of experiencing the liberating power of forgiveness.”

“Misericordia et Misera”

- After 5 years as Communications Officer for the Bishops Conference we say goodbye to Simone Olsen as she and her husband Shane embark on a journey into parenthood. Thank you Simone for your professionalism and for all you have done for so many.

He (Bartholomew) asks us to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing, an asceticism which entails learning to give, and not simply to give up. It is a way of loving, of moving gradually away from what I want to what God’s word needs. (LS 8)

“Go, you are sent”