

## **Answering the Earth's Cry: Catholic Mission Aligns with Laudato Si Action Platform in Anticipation of Laudate Deum**

On October 4, as we celebrate both the feast day of St Francis of Assisi and the conclusion of the Season of Creation, Pope Francis is scheduled to release a new apostolic exhortation on the environment titled "Laudate Deum", a follow-up to his 2015 encyclical letter, "Laudato Si", on Care for Our Common Home." As the world speculates on its content, the overarching query looms: Has the global community truly adopted the 'integral ecology' vision that Pope Francis advocates? Current events suggest a long road ahead.

"Spring marks the Season of Creation, a time celebrated by many faiths for its renewal and the beauty of nature, from morning birdsong to budding flora. However, this period of rejuvenation is overshadowed by pressing environmental crises, including escalating climate change effects like wildfires, heatwaves, and significant biodiversity loss, emphasising the urgent need for global action," highlights Liesje Barratt, Mission Formation Coordinator at Catholic Mission. "This leads us to wonder about where do we source hope and the drive to champion ecological and societal justice? What can spark a monumental shift in our collective mindset and actions?"

Answering the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor, Catholic Mission ratified an Ecological Action Plan in December 2022. This plan aligns with the 7 goals of the Laudato Si Action Platform and has involved reviewing our internal policies and practices and our societal collaboration with partners to support our commitment to sustainable social and ecological practices. Here in Australia, the sourcing of our providers with Catholic Care and supporting ventures like House of Welcome Catering reflects our unwavering dedication to sustainability goals.

Overseas, a testament to this commitment is the St Victor's Seminary Integrated Agriculture Project in Northern Ghana. This project, similar to other key community projects supported in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America, underscores our commitment to promoting integral ecology. By training seminarians in farming techniques, the project aims to enhance food security, nutrition, and local revenue, curbing urban migration while providing accessible and sustainable resources for the local communities.

Another milestone is the Interfaith Encounters Program, which helps secondary students from diverse faith communities to celebrate difference along with building a greater awareness of their interconnectedness and interdependence, a common bond of wonder for creation and concern as young people in a world in crisis.

"All these programs and projects are a step towards the integral ecology vision of Pope Francis. It's our local and global collective action that will get us there," says Liesje.

Along with opportunities for prayerful reflection and strengthening an ecological spirituality and consciousness, Catholic Mission is on a journey of hope and action, as we revisit Laudato Si' this Season of Creation, in preparation and anticipation for what is to come.

ENDS

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### **About Catholic Mission**

Catholic Mission is the Australian agency of the Pontifical Mission Societies – the Catholic Church’s global organisation dedicated to continuing Jesus Christ’s mission in the world: that all may have life to the full. Catholic Mission contributes funding and project support to critical church-run initiatives in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. These include spiritual formation, pastoral care, education, health, sanitation, and agricultural programs. Here in Australia, we form people to go out and be missionary in their professional and personal lives; to pray, advocate and act for those on the margins. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses.