

Archdiocese of Brisbane

Living Laudato Si' Initiative



Annual Report of the Living Laudato Si' Steering Group

Introduction

After consultation and dialogue with Archbishop Coleridge and other leaders within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, a Laudato Si' Steering Group (LS Steering Group) was formed under the leadership of Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Howell to develop a Living Laudato Si' initiative across the whole of the Archdiocese.

The LS Steering Group was established by invitation from Bishop Ken seeking representatives from the parishes and clergy, religious, youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission, Brisbane Catholic Education, Centacare Brisbane, Archdiocesan Services and Evangelisation Brisbane.

Members of the group are:

Bishop Kenneth Howell, Kate Gilday, Netta Sheridan, Fr Denis Scanlan, Margaret Lee, Carole Danby, Donna Longland, Michael Parer, Mark Young, Ken Millar, Sr Sandra Lupi rsm, Anne-Maree Corbett, Jacqui Remond, Peter Arndt.

Framework for the Work of the LS Steering Group

The overarching vision which shaped the work of the LS Steering Group was:

An Archdiocese in which every parish, school and agency understands the call to ecological conversion enunciated in Laudato Si' and responds wholeheartedly to transform our personal and institutional operations and practices to develop an Integral Ecology¹.

The initial goals of the project:

- All clergy, staff and volunteers in parishes, schools and agencies are offered comprehensive formation on the teaching and challenges of *Laudato Si'*;

¹ Integral Ecology is a distinctive way of looking at things that requires a holistic way of thinking, being and living with corresponding policies, education programs, lifestyle, spirituality; a new paradigm in which no branch of sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out.

- Clergy, religious and lay people through ongoing formation become animators of *Laudato Si'* in their respective parish, school or agency;
- Within the Archdiocese, every parish, school and agency form a LS Steering Group and develop a Living *Laudato Si'* Plan by the end of 2020;
- Relevant bodies and authorities within the Archdiocese collaborate to establish policies and practices that shape Archdiocesan-wide directions in harmony with the teaching of *Laudato Si'* beginning with energy;
- After initial formation and planning, on-going formation and actions to take place at Archdiocesan, parish, school and agency level to continue deepening the commitment of the Archdiocese to ecological conversion and the development of Integral Ecology.

The tasks set for the LS Steering Group were to:

- Undergo ongoing formation to enable the group to experience ecological conversion and understand the breadth and depth of the teaching and challenges of *Laudato Si'*;
- Co-design formation programs for various sectors in the Archdiocese and develop a process, timeline and funding strategy for the program;
- Co-design resources and a process template for each entity to use to measure their ecological footprint and plan changes to be made to the operation and practices of the Archdiocese, their respective agencies, schools and parishes in response to the challenges of *Laudato Si'*;
- Co-create an evaluation process to enable each entity to identify and celebrate the initial progress they have made in embracing the call to ecological conversion and the subsequent phases on the journey to Living *Laudato Si'*;
- Co-create a reporting mechanism that enables individual entities to be supported over the course of their respective planning process and subsequent implementation of their LS Plan;
- Identify issues which may need to be addressed at the Archdiocesan level and develop a strategy for responding in collaboration with relevant bodies and authorities within the Archdiocese;
- Provide opportunities for shared ongoing reflection and learning across the Archdiocese after the initial formation, planning and implementation process, in order to identify ways forward for further deepening of our ecological conversion at all levels of the Archdiocese;
- Develop a strategy and plan, including a timeframe and timeline, programs and actions, identified outcomes and persons responsible, and an accompanying indicative budget, to enable the Archdiocesan LS Steering Group to achieve each of the tasks identified above.

Work Completed in 2018

The LS Steering Group first met in February 2018 and committed itself to deep and extensive formation on the teaching and challenges of Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si'*. This involved members of the LS Steering Group individually studying each of the six chapters of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* in turn and at monthly meetings engaging in contemplative dialogue with each other to deepen personal and communal understandings of Pope Francis' teaching and its implications for the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Following this formation process, the LS Steering Group shared a process of dialogical strategic planning to discern initial actions needed for the Archdiocese and its constitutive parts to respond holistically to the call of *Laudato Si'*.

On the basis of the dialogue, three actions were prioritised for implementation immediately and throughout the year of 2019.

Proposed Actions for 2019

Three Strategic *Laudato Si'* Action Areas for the LS Steering Group emerged from the dialogue:

1. A Parish Kit
2. An Audit of the Archdiocese
3. An Archdiocesan Event during the Season of Creation 2019

The purpose of each of these priorities, the process we would use and the actions we would undertake and the communication vehicles identified for each is detailed below:

Parish Kit

Purpose:

To engage Parish Council members and parishioners with *Laudato Si'*, to invite them to a mini-experience of ecological conversion and to inspire and motivate them to invite others in their parish to become engaged in a local response to *Laudato Si'*.

Process:

Select a short video resource and suggested dialogue activity that connects people with their imagination and asks: how can we respond to *Laudato Si'* in our unique local context?

Action:

Gather, compile and draft practical resources such as Homily Helps, Prayers of the Faithful, resources for catechists etc. to put in a Brisbane Laudato Si' Parish Kit.

Communication:

Develop bulletin notices; encourage the creation of parish Laudato Si' 'Suggestion Box' and invite parishioners to participate; encourage social media engagement with *Laudato Si'* at parish level.

Audit of the Archdiocese

Purpose:

To reduce the ecological footprint of the Archdiocese

Process:

Start in the Cathedral Precinct and grow the initiative after conducting an audit in various offices and reflecting on the process of using the audit tool.

Action:

Dialogue with heads of agencies and conduct first ecological audit to understand the process and gain a sense of the agencies' baseline in respect of six dimensions. Feedback on process and findings at subsequent LS Steering Group meetings.

Initially, the LS Audit process will be conducted in a couple of parishes, in Brisbane Catholic Educations' office and possibly in the tertiary chaplaincy.

Archdiocesan Event

Purpose:

To consciously engage the Archdiocese in dialogue about *Laudato Si'* and invite action that animates ecological conversion.

Process:

LS Steering Group will discuss ideas for holding an event in the Cathedral Precinct possibly on September 1, 2019. As plans develop, agencies, parishes and schools will be invited to engage through organising various aspects of the event. It is also envisaged that parishes,

schools and agencies will organise and participate in activities and events in their local area at the same time.

Action:

The LS Steering Group will develop an initial proposal and subsequently engage various parts of the Archdiocese in refinement and implementation of the plan for the event and associated activities in 2019.

Communication:

Work with the Catholic Communications Office to populate the Archdiocesan website and its other social media platforms about the three action areas above and strategically work with the Catholic Leader to promote and inspire ecological conversion and action in the Archdiocese.

A Formal Plan

In addition to these specific actions areas to be managed by the LS Steering Group, it is strongly recommended that the Archdiocese develops a formal LS Plan, making this initiative visible and strategically mapping the systematic engagement of every part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane in a journey of ecological conversion for the purpose of developing Integral Ecology.

It is suggested that a budget be developed and approved in order to enable an experienced consultant to continue working with the LS Steering Group and Archdiocesan leaders, and to develop the *Laudato Si'* Strategic Plan document which should be published to a professional standard.

If a *Laudato Si'* budget is agreed in the first quarter of 2019, the document could be prepared and the LS Strategic Plan launched on a significant date such as the LS Archdiocesan event that is being planned for 1st September 2019.

Conclusion

The members of the LS Steering Group are conscious of the importance of deep and extensive formation required for Catholics in the Archdiocese. Such formation is needed for them to understand the challenges and call of *Laudato Si'* to integrate a commitment to ecological conversion that demonstrates we are caring for our common home.

We further believe that the process of contemplative dialogue is a highly effective way to bridge the gap between knowing what needs to be done and doing the work that is motivated by our faith in Christ, compelling us to lovingly take up ecological action.

Members of the LS Steering Group have learned much together over the course of 2018. We are inspired by *Laudato Si'* and the potential to catalyse transformation together with the diverse communities of Catholics in South-East Queensland to further flourish relationships with our Creator God, Creation and our common home, Mother Earth.

We are deeply grateful to Archbishop Coleridge for giving us the opportunity and privilege to work together on this timely, relevant and good-news initiative for the Archdiocese. We look forward with great enthusiasm and hope to the second year of Living Laudato Si' in Brisbane Archdiocese in 2019.