

“To be a strong and faith-filled Catholic fraternity committed to serving our Church throughout Australia.”

Theme: The Landscape – our Heritage, Home and Future

One of the topics that has also been mentioned to me is the subject of our ecology. At the time of putting this programme together there is a current drought and a terrible bushfire emergency and other natural disasters are to be expected. A few short years ago the Formation Programme was presented by Archbishop Hickey and concentrated on the Holy Father’s Encyclical Letter ‘Laudato Si’ which was precisely on this subject. Very significantly the Holy Father taught us that we needed an ‘integrated’ approach that embraces all the elements that influence our common home and that we need to bring all the elements that influence life here on this planet together in responsible dialogue and social harmony. It is one Creation and humans have been given direct responsibility for it. That is a huge and daunting task but one that we have an obligation to embrace.

Step 1: Opening prayer: from the Order’s Prayers

Step 2: READINGS ON THE THEME

“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded”.
(*Laudato Si* Paragraph 13)

“True wisdom, as the fruit of self-examination, dialogue and generous encounter between persons, is not acquired by a mere accumulation of data which eventually leads to overload and confusion, a sort of mental pollution. Real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail, now tend to be replaced by a type of internet communication which enables us to choose or eliminate relationships at whim, thus giving rise to a new type of contrived emotion which has more to do with devices and displays than with other people and with nature. Today’s media do enable us to communicate and to share our knowledge and affections. Yet at times they also shield us from direct contact with the pain, the fears and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences. For this reason, we should be concerned that, alongside the exciting possibilities offered by these media, a deep and melancholic dissatisfaction with interpersonal relations, or a harmful sense of isolation, can also arise.” (*Laudato Si*, Paragraph 47).

“The creation accounts in the book of Genesis contain, in their own symbolic and narrative language, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality. They suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin. The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations. This in turn distorted our mandate to “have dominion” over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28), to “till it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). As a result, the originally harmonious relationship between human beings and nature became conflictual (cf. Gen 3:17-19).” (*Laudato Si* Paragraph 66)

Step 3: *Allow a few moments reflective silence.*

Step 4: SCRIPTURE READING

“God blessed them, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that move on earth. God also said, ‘Look, to you I give

all the seed-bearing plants every-where on the surface of the earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this will be your food.' " (Genesis 1: 28 – 29)

"He (*Christ*) is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers – all things were created through him and for him. He exists before all things and in him all things hold together, and he is the Head of the Body, that is, the Church." (Colossians 1: 15 – 18)

Step 5: REFLECTION (5 Mins)

Step 6: SHARING (10 Mins)

Knights have a very strong history of engagement in the defence and encouragement of Christian values in Australian society. 'Putting Christ back into Christmas', Aged Care, encouragement for 'Right to Life' are only three of many examples.

Do I see this as an essential contribution to the Church and to the ecology?

There have been a lot of demonstrations that have attracted media attention regarding matters like "climate change".

Do I react?

What is my reaction?

As a member of a 'faith-filled Catholic fraternity' what should be my reaction?

Step 7: CONCLUSION

We pray together;

**O gracious God, giver of all that is good,
we bless you for having given us life to share with so many other creatures.
Through them and with them we praise you and ask that you continue
to pour out your Spirit upon the universe, and in it to show forth your glory.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Step 8: *The meeting proceeds*

Step 9: CLOSING PRAYERS – FROM THE ORDER'S PRAYERS