

IN LOVE WE ARE CALLED TO CARRY THE CROSS,  
COMBAT POVERTY & CARE FOR CREATION  
23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time Year C, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**BEGINNING PRAYER**

In solidarity we begin by praying for those affected by the current bushfires in Queensland and NSW.

[Pause & Pray]

**CONNECTED TO EACH OTHER & CREATION**

We are connected to each other and to creation.  
We are all in relationship within society and creation.  
Let us begin today with a quotation from Pope Francis in [\*Laudato Si' – On Care for Our Common Home\*](#) paragraph 139.

*'When we speak of the "environment", what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it.*

*Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live.*

*We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.*

*Recognizing the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behaviour patterns, and the ways it grasps reality. Given the scale of change, it is no longer possible to find a specific, discrete answer for each part of the problem. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems.*

*We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.*

*Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.'*

**JESUS INVITATION**

As we know, Jesus invites us to love God and to love our neighbour.  
We begin by God creating and loving us.  
Hopefully we want to respond to God,

to love God and to love all God has created.  
With a loving relationship with God,  
we naturally want to say thanks,  
to express our gratitude, to seek God's blessing,  
to ask God for help for others and for ourselves,  
to care for God's creation, to enter into mystery.

## THE CROSS. HUMAN POVERTY & CREATION

We hear in today's Gospel text:

***'Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.'***

## THREE REFLECTIONS ON THE CROSS & LAUDATO SI'

We are called to carry the cross.

We also reflect on the Cross in our understanding of creation and poverty.

Let us ponder THREE reflections below on the cross and Laudato Si'.

### 1. COLUMBAN REFLECTION ON THE CROSS & LAUDATO SI'

Fr. Charles Rue SS has a Stations of the Cross resource, using Laudato Si'.

['SOLIDARITY WITH BROTHERS AND SISTERS](#)

[SOLIDARITY WITH EARTH AS OUR MOTHER AND ALL SHE HOLDS AS OUR KIN'](#)

Fr. Charles says:

*'Pope Francis invited all believers and people of good will:  
to **SEE** the disruption of the support systems of planet Earth  
which underpin human and all species that call it home;  
to **JUDGE** that human self-absorbed lifestyles  
and the dictatorship of economic greed combine  
to cause the cries of pain rising up from the Earth and the poor;  
and to **ACT**-pray-listen leading us to change our minds and ways of living,  
to love every part of creation with passion.'*

### 2. IRISH REFLECTION ON THE CROSS & LAUDATO SI'

The Irish Church agency [Trocaire](#) also has a Way of the Cross  
or Stations of the Cross reflection, using Laudato Si'.

['LAUDATO SI' REFLECTIONS Study Guide and Stations of the Cross'](#)

It says:

*'The Way of the Cross itself is a pilgrimage;  
a journey that follows Christ's path of suffering and death.  
Pope Francis encourages us to set out on a pilgrimage of conversion  
to become kinder, more generous people.  
This Way of the Cross focuses on the suffering caused by climate change.  
Humanity, along with all of creation,  
is on a critical journey as we are challenged by climate change.  
Will we set out on a path of mercy,  
adjusting our patterns of consumption to lessen our carbon footprint  
and give Mother Earth a chance to heal?'*

*Will this journey become a pilgrimage towards sustainability, and ultimately resurrection?’*

### 3. REFLECTION BY RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS ON THE CROSS & LAUDATO SI’

Major Superiors of Religious Congregations through their [JPIC \(Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation\) Commission USG-UISG](#) on Palm Sunday in 2016 sponsored:

#### ‘STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN THE LIGHT OF LAUDATO SI’

The Way of the Cross on Care of Our Common Home.

Its message reminded us:

*‘The commemoration of Christ’s Passion is our opportunity each year to take stock of the many ways we have broken covenant with God and have acted selfishly, seeking to secure our own power and material advantage at the expense of the well-being, not just of our fellow humans, but of the whole of creation. It is our opportunity to own that we have neglected our responsibility as stewards, lovers, and nurturers of God’s creation...*

*While commemorating Christ’s journey to crucifixion, through Pope Francis’ reflections taken from Laudato Si, each station will acknowledge a significant breaking of our covenant with the entire family of God’s creation. Enable the trees, the plants, the rocks, the soil, the water, the birds, and the wind to teach us about these broken relationships. Each station offers prayer for the healing of the dreadful rifts in our covenant with God and all that God has made. May we find the courage and the power to become agents of healing and care of our common home.’*

#### PLANNING | CALLED TO BE PREPARED

We are called to be prepared, as Jesus illustrates in language the listeners of 2,000 years ago could understand.

The Gospel text continues:

***‘For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.”***

***Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand?***

*If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away,  
he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace.'*

We don't settle for drifting in and out of people's lives.  
We build upon the foundation of Jesus,  
And Jesus accompanies us in the act of building, of being committed.

#### ANNUAL CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

This weekend is our annual planning weekend to resource many of the ministries in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

We call it the Annual Catholic Campaign.

Online at <https://catholicfoundation.org.au/how-we-help/annual-catholic-campaign/>

And on the rows of seats where you are seated.

#### WE ARE CALLED

We are called to recognise and respect the sacred in each other's lives.  
Just as Saint Paul in today's letter to Philemon  
gets involved in advocacy and shared wisdom,  
we too carry each other's cross... as companions.

Whether in Bracken Ridge, or Blackall and Tambo, or South Sudan.  
or from the many nationalities that make up our wider parish family.

Whether through our local St Vincent de Paul Conference,  
or through educational ministries,  
or by faith development in the catechumenate,  
or through the people we meet in our daily lives.

We are called to place God first. Lovingly.  
We are called to be committed to Jesus Christ,  
to carry our cross and follow Him.

This Gospel text concludes with Jesus saying:

*'So therefore, none of you can become my disciple  
if you do not give up all your possessions.'*

How do we live simply today, in an age of rampant consumerism?  
Pope Francis points a way ahead in his social teaching.  
You are invited to read [Laudato Si' – On Care for Our Common Home](#) for yourself.

We go back to today's Gospel again as Jesus says:

*"Anyone who does not carry his cross  
and come after me cannot be my disciple".*

We ponder how people we know, carry the cross,  
and how they follow Jesus as a disciple.  
Our more recent parish families share how they have carried their cross.

## THE GOSPEL CHALLENGE

The Gospel challenges us to be committed.

Called to love creation.

Called to love our neighbour.

Called to love God and to express our love.

Called in love to express thanksgiving and gratitude to God  
in our Masses and in all we do.

Called to be loved and to love.

Called to a loving relationship with God.

Called to carry the cross.

Called to combat poverty.

Called to care for our common home.

Called to wherever the Holy Spirit leads us.

Called to thank God for so, so much in our lives.

Let us carry the cross together and pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/090819.cfm>]

