

# JPIC

Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Commission  
Comisaun ba Justisa, Paz no Integridade ba Criasaun



The Carmelites  
Australia and Timor-Leste  
community • prayer • action

*CARMELITES reflect on SEASONS OF CREATION  
Week 3 - 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020*

Be praised, my Lord, for our Brothers  
Wind and Air and every kind of weather by  
which you, Lord, uphold life in all your  
creatures... *Saint Francis of Assisi*

**Season of Creation 2020 - Jubilee for the Earth**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09ojKLEKD68&t=13s>

[Ctrl + click to follow the link]



**Today, Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2020, the nation  
of Papua New Guinea and its people will be  
celebrating their**

**45th anniversary of Independence from Australia.**

Coming from Manus Island, the smallest province of Papua New Guinea, Fr Paul Sireh, O.Carm, a member of the JPIC Team, is proud to share with you some of the environmental problems this land is facing.



Papua New Guinea occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea as well as numerous offshore islands. With a land area of 462,840 square kilometres and a population of over 8.1 million, Papua New Guinea is the largest country in the Pacific region both by geography and population.

It has an abundance of natural resources, with mineral deposits like copper, gold and oil accounting for nearly two-thirds of Papua New Guinea's export revenues. Still, 85 per cent of the population relies on subsistence agriculture. The natural environment throughout PNG is extremely fragile and highly vulnerable to both natural and human impacts.

During the last 50 years or so, increasing pressures on the resources are intensifying the country's exposure to extreme events such as natural hazards like cyclones, droughts, earthquakes and

tsunamis. In addition to these threats and pressures to the environments of PNG are the expected changes that may arise from climate change and climate variability, which will likely further exacerbate these impacts and deplete the resources that are most essential for basic life support systems.

The natural environments of the country have developed a capacity over the years to adjust to human activity and changes to the climate. However, in the past few decades, the rapidly changing climate patterns, increasing population growth and intensity and levels of uses of natural ecosystems may affect the ability of these systems to respond to such change.

The country has already been buffeted by extreme weather and climate events such as those brought about by the El Nino in 1997/98 with further changes in temperatures and sea level rise

predicted over the next 100 years. These events will lead to inundation of low lying inland and coastal areas, including the atoll islands, bleaching and loss of coastal defences. Loss of wetlands, changes to the fisheries, forestry and agriculture sectors, alteration to water resources and land use practices and impacts on health, particularly vector borne diseases such as Malaria.

As an island surrounded by the vast Pacific Ocean and the adjacent large land masses of Australia and Asia, the climate and weather pattern of PNG is heavily influenced by excess heating due to its proximity to the equator. Likewise, according to the experts, the biannual east–west circulation of warm air masses, weather patterns of Australia and the variable topography of the country with high mountain ranges also has an influence. In recent times, surface temperatures have increased by about half a degree Celsius since the mid 70s, while rainfall has reduced in some areas by as much as 15%. Nevertheless, there is still a relatively clear regional pattern of distribution. Sea level changes of up to 30 mm per year have been directly related to El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO).

When I visit home after 25 years in Australia, my heart is saddened. The deteriorating effect of the



climate is obvious. The climate changes have destroyed many of the beautiful beaches and sea shore where we walk, play and fish. The same spot had been covered by water and sand has been washed onto the reef, destroying the corals, fish and other sea living creatures.

For the past 20 years the government of PNG has brought to the attention of the world that climate change is real. It is believed that the misuse of the environment because pollution and destruction of the land through mining, and other industries by developed countries which has contributed to this destruction.

In Manus and many parts of the New Guinea Islands, the atolls and coastlands have been so damage that people and villages have relocated which means shortage of food and drink. The traditional social lifestyle has been lost.

### Some effects of climate change in Papua New Guinea



## CONTEMPLATING SCRIPTURE ECOLOGICALLY

(Isaiah 55:6-9, Ps 145; Philippians 1:20-24, 27; Mt 20:1-16)

### The scriptures of the Third Sunday

God's ways are not our ways; they invite us to contemplate some of God's Jubilee ways of living on Earth, giving birth to the New Creation.

The parable in the gospel in which the owner of the vineyard gives a full day's wage to all, regardless of how long they worked often stirs complaints about fairness. This parable shows us a compensation system based on the agreed upon value of certain work and care to meet the basic needs of all workers. It is not based upon comparative, competitive, unlimited accumulation. It shows a God whose mercy and compassion far surpasses any of our limited notions of fairness and justice.

## TO PONDER: Why have a JUBILEE?

- The biblical vision of Jubilee was chosen as the theme for this year's celebration of the Season of Creation.
- Jubilee is a time to renounce overconsumption and economic systems based on constant economic growth at the cost of the Earth and those who are poor.
- **Prayerful video reflection from Planet Hope :**  
Season of Creation EN 2020–  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUD9Yixh6KU>

## PRAYERFUL MEDITATION THROUGH MUSIC

(song contributed by Antonietta Skelton  
Lay Carmelite from Perth)

### “All The ends of the Earth”

by Bob Dufford

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BINRq2p\\_eDE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BINRq2p_eDE)

*A sense of deep commitment with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings...*

Pope Francis LAUDATO SI #91

## WHAT ACTION CAN WE TAKE/WHAT CAN WE DO?

How can we and our communities embrace God's ways of Jubilee here, now?

- ✓ In our lifestyles? Through social outreach, social media?
- ✓ By studying the needs of our localities, regions, ecosystems:
- ✓ Through political advocacy locally, nationally, globally?
- ✓ In our families? Businesses? In our schools, in our health care systems and organisations?

**BLESSING** [Based upon “A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation” by Pope Francis from *Laudato Si.*]

We believe that all creatures come forth from the all-powerful hand of the Creator, evolving through time and space, filled with God's presence and tender love.

May God awaken our praise and thankfulness for every creature and bless us with the grace of feeling profoundly joined to everything that is. **Amen.**

Through Christ all things were made. Formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, Christ Jesus became part of this Earth, gazing upon this world with human eyes.

May Christ bless us with eyes to see him alive in every creature in his risen glory. **Amen.**

The Holy Spirit guides this world toward the Creator's love and accompanies creation as it groans in travail.

May this Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts and inspire us to do what is good, to care wisely and with love for Earth, our common home. **Amen.**

And may our Triune God, wondrous community of infinite love, bless us all with justice, peace, love and beauty, Creator, Word and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**