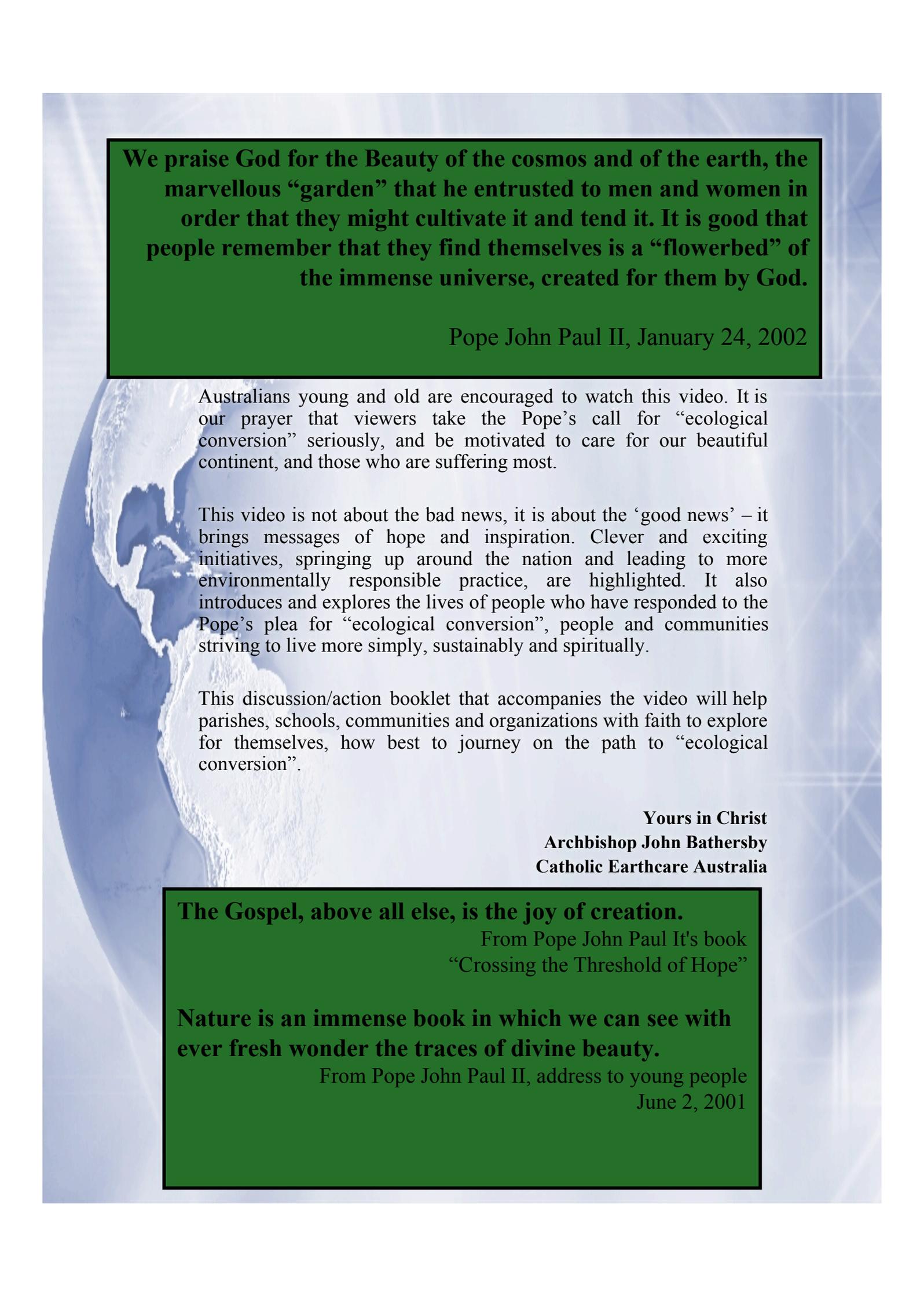


The Garden Planet



User Guide

Catholic Earthcare Australia



We praise God for the Beauty of the cosmos and of the earth, the marvellous “garden” that he entrusted to men and women in order that they might cultivate it and tend it. It is good that people remember that they find themselves is a “flowerbed” of the immense universe, created for them by God.

Pope John Paul II, January 24, 2002

Australians young and old are encouraged to watch this video. It is our prayer that viewers take the Pope’s call for “ecological conversion” seriously, and be motivated to care for our beautiful continent, and those who are suffering most.

This video is not about the bad news, it is about the ‘good news’ – it brings messages of hope and inspiration. Clever and exciting initiatives, springing up around the nation and leading to more environmentally responsible practice, are highlighted. It also introduces and explores the lives of people who have responded to the Pope’s plea for “ecological conversion”, people and communities striving to live more simply, sustainably and spiritually.

This discussion/action booklet that accompanies the video will help parishes, schools, communities and organizations with faith to explore for themselves, how best to journey on the path to “ecological conversion”.

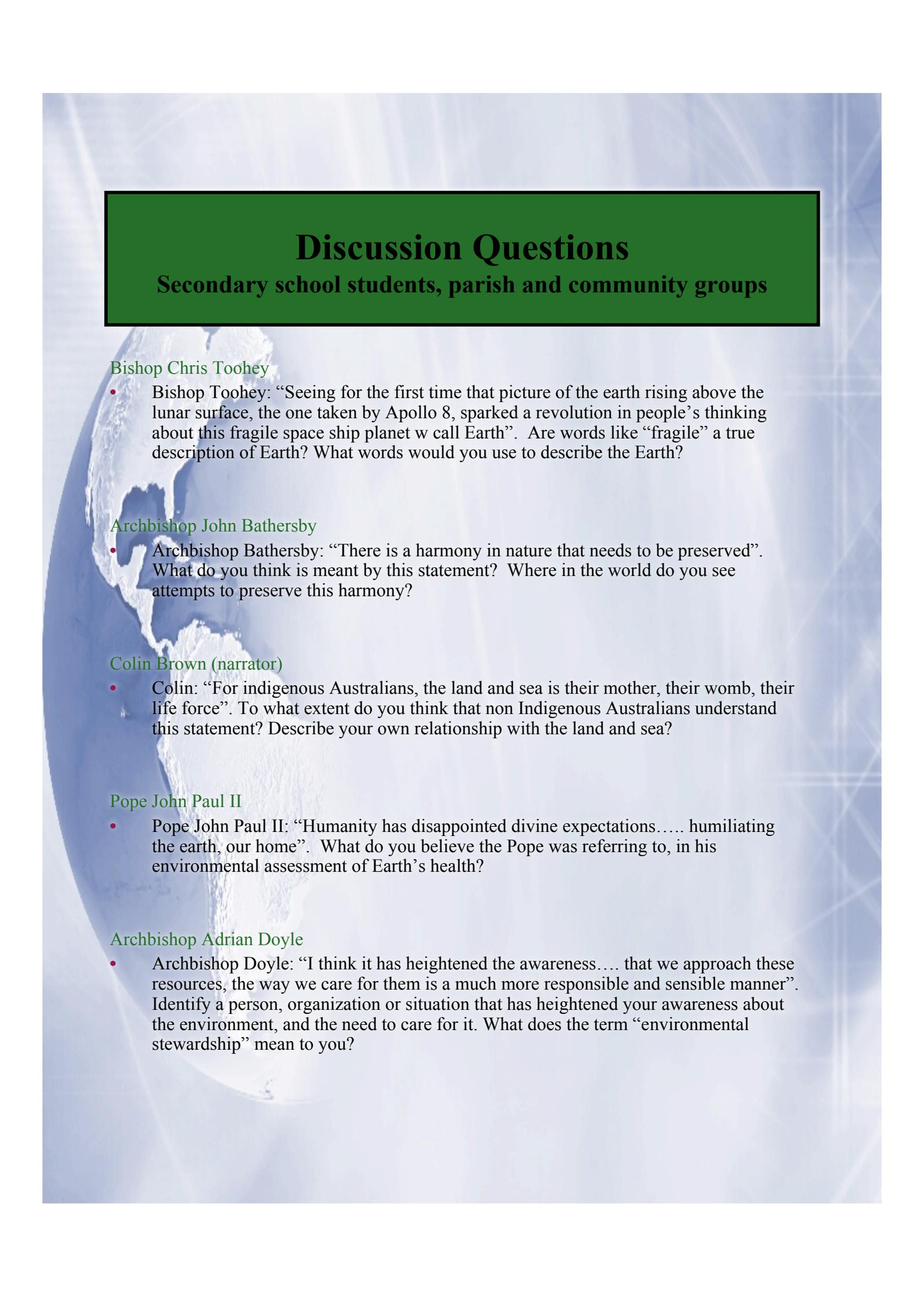
Yours in Christ
Archbishop John Bathersby
Catholic Earthcare Australia

The Gospel, above all else, is the joy of creation.

From Pope John Paul II's book
“Crossing the Threshold of Hope”

Nature is an immense book in which we can see with ever fresh wonder the traces of divine beauty.

From Pope John Paul II, address to young people
June 2, 2001



Discussion Questions

Secondary school students, parish and community groups

Bishop Chris Toohey

- Bishop Toohey: “Seeing for the first time that picture of the earth rising above the lunar surface, the one taken by Apollo 8, sparked a revolution in people’s thinking about this fragile space ship planet w call Earth”. Are words like “fragile” a true description of Earth? What words would you use to describe the Earth?

Archbishop John Bathersby

- Archbishop Bathersby: “There is a harmony in nature that needs to be preserved”. What do you think is meant by this statement? Where in the world do you see attempts to preserve this harmony?

Colin Brown (narrator)

- Colin: “For indigenous Australians, the land and sea is their mother, their womb, their life force”. To what extent do you think that non Indigenous Australians understand this statement? Describe your own relationship with the land and sea?

Pope John Paul II

- Pope John Paul II: “Humanity has disappointed divine expectations..... humiliating the earth, our home”. What do you believe the Pope was referring to, in his environmental assessment of Earth’s health?

Archbishop Adrian Doyle

- Archbishop Doyle: “I think it has heightened the awareness.... that we approach these resources, the way we care for them is a much more responsible and sensible manner”. Identify a person, organization or situation that has heightened your awareness about the environment, and the need to care for it. What does the term “environmental stewardship” mean to you?

Paul Lucas

- Paul: “It is no good talking about the theory and the world’s problems, if we can’t solve it in little ways ourselves”. Name an environmental problem you have been drawn to solve. Would you be able to do this alone, or would you need the support and encouragement of others?

Olive Rodwell

- Olive: “I think I’m a slow starter. I’d like to be able to fight for people who are having problems, environmental problems”. What skills could you bring to a group of friends wanting to initiate an environmental improvement project, or help others who may be disadvantaged by pollution problems?”

Colin Brown

- Colin: “The ‘Garden Planet’ is a video about the environment... but it is also an invitation... for a change of heart, for ecological conversation”. What does the Pope’s call for ecological conversion mean to you? Consider your response in the contexts of one’s lifestyle choices, workplace practices, relationships with others and your participation in parish liturgy and worship.

A great cultural movement has been started to protect and rediscover the natural environment. Young people especially must be sensitised to this need. The respectful enjoyment of nature should be considered an important part of their educational development.

Pope John Paul II address in the Dolomites, 1991

On the basis of the covenant with the creator... each one is invited to a deep personal conversion in his or her relationship with others and with nature.

Pope John Paul II address to the seminar on “Science for Survival and Sustainable Development”, March 12, 1999

Discussion Questions

Primary school students

- What impressed you about the Marian school?
- The Marian school is taking environmental responsibility seriously. What changes would you make to your school or home to make them more environmentally friendly?
- Food scraps at the Marian school went either into a compost bin or fed the neighbour's ducks. How could your school recycle food scraps?
- Frog ponds are an important way of caring for and preserving a particular species. Create various projects in your school that raise awareness about and preserve various creatures and plants. Projects could include a frog pond, growing a native garden that attracts native birds, bird watching surveys.
- Raise money and sponsor an endangered species, partake in testing the water quality in a waterway near your school, regenerate waterways or bushland that run through your school.
- St Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of ecology. Find out more about the life of St Francis and the relationship he had with animals and the bush around Assisi.
- In the video the children from the Marian school visit the Gumburu retreat centre. At Gumburu the children think and pray about the relationship with God and creation. Write a prayer or create a short liturgy that helps you think about this relationship.
- Read the two creation stories in the book of Genesis and how God expected humans to relate with creation. Find creation stories from other religions or indigenous people that show their relationship with creation.
- Psalm 104 describes God in so many wondrous ways. Make a collage of the Psalm by dividing the class into groups and having each group take lines from the Psalm and illustrate it.
- (For teachers) In the video the children at the Marian school are referred to as being ecoliterate before they reach high school. In what ways could you assist your students in becoming ecoliterate?



Actions to consider: *ECO-awareness audit*

ECO-awareness audits help improve the health of the environment, and can also save you money.

An eco-awareness audit involves a close examination of the way your domestic, community, parish and work practices affect the environment. Your investigation will help you discover ways you can make your home or community more eco friendly. This is a fact finding exercise. Getting things changed will take time. You will need to work very closely and cooperatively with people such as family members, work colleagues, administration, ground and maintenance staff, tuckshop managers and those responsible for policy. Below is a list of questions to give you an idea on the sort of things you could investigate:

- Do you have a Vision and Mission statement that includes ecological awareness, concern and respect for the earth?
- Do you know how much water you use? What is it used on? Can you see evidence of waste? Are conservation methods put into practice, such as low water use native gardens or water tanks?
- Has your energy use increased in the last five years? Do you know the reason?

To participate in an extensive ECO-audit, visit the Catholic Earthcare website

www.catholicearthcareoz.net