



Parishes of Our Lady of the Assumption,  
Cheltenham and St Agnes, Highett  
**CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME GROUP**  
**PARISH UPDATE OCTOBER 2023**



## Our Amazing Pope Francis

How many popes can you remember? Two? Three? For some of us, rather more! In recent times, we have had three great popes, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and now Francis, each with their very distinctive gifts and approaches to the papacy. Pope Francis stands out as the pope looking forward to the third millennium. As he once said, “this is not an era of change, this is a change of era”.



After 10 years in office, Pope Francis continues to lead the world – *the world* – in three main areas –

- Rebuilding the Church, equipping it to be “salt” and “light” for our times, and for the future
- Urging the world’s leaders and people everywhere to take better care of the Earth and the world’s Poor, to act to reduce climate change, to reduce pollution and exhaustion of the earth’s resources
- Promoting the rights of migrants and refugees to move to other countries to find places for themselves and their families to live dignified lives.

We touch on each of these areas in this bulletin.

## Climate change and future generations

To conclude the Season of Creation 2023, Pope Francis will release a follow-up to his 2015 *Laudato Si’* – on *Care for our Common Home* encyclical on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, 4 October. The Pope will focus on recent weather catastrophes affecting people across the world, and the need to pass on to future generations a beautiful and liveable world. Look out for this after 4 October.



**Let Justice  
and Peace Flow**  
Season of Creation 2023

## Synod 2021 – 2024: For a synodal Church

In March 2020, Pope Francis called the world's bishops, religious and lay people to meet in Rome in October 2023 and October 2024 to consider the theme "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission". The first session of the Synod will be held in Rome from 4 – 29 October.



Cardinal Robert McElroy (USA) points to eight major marks that a synodal Church will show: journeying together, authentic listening, Eucharistic, humble and honest, inclusive, participative and co-responsible, missionary and discerning<sup>1</sup>.

Pope Francis is asking all Christians to join with him to pray for the success of the forthcoming Synod. Let's do that, as best we can.

### Francis' radical approach to migration

Francis continually tells world leaders that people have a *right* to migrate, to seek betterment for themselves and their families. He says we need to see migrants not as boring problems, but as brothers and sisters who have a right to live dignified lives, who can improve our communities. He asks the world's leaders to work to improve living standards in poor countries so that people can choose to live in their birth countries, and to create education and employment opportunities for new migrants. A very different message to those who wish to turn people back to sea, to return them to danger!



*The Guardian 30 May 2016*

### Reflection - Voice Referendum

As we approach the Referendum on 14 October, we hope that all Australians will vote in conscience to achieve a more just and equitable Australia, helping to tackle the causes of chronic disadvantage amongst our First Nations people.

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<sup>1</sup> *Discerning a pathway for the Church we love*, Cardinal Robert McElroy, Commonwealth magazine, March 2023