



Laudato Si' Week 2025

Secondary



The Catholic agency
for international aid
and development

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Laudato Si' Week

Laudato Si' Week is a celebration held annually in May to mark the anniversary of Pope Francis's landmark encyclical on caring for creation. Sponsored by the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, this global celebration unites Catholics to listen and respond together to the cry of creation, rejoice in the progress we have made in bringing *Laudato Si'* to life, and intensify our efforts through the Laudato Si' Action Platform as well as other opportunities for education and action.

This year Laudato Si' Week is extra special as we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Laudato Si' in the Year of Jubilee. It is also a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude the incredible inspiration of Pope Francis in caring for our common home.

Our focus this year is debt, and the impact debt has on earth and each other.

Through the global campaign, *Turn Debt into Hope*, we invite you to stand with us during Laudato Si' Week.

Together, we can *Turn Debt into Hope* and build a more just world.

About this resource

Written in partnership between the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace and Caritas Australia, this resource aims to assist secondary schools to learn, reflect, take action and pray in regard to the issue of unjust debt during Laudato Si' Week and beyond.

Prayer

Loving God,
You created all people to be equal.
Yet, throughout the world many are struggling
to find even the most basic things they need:
food, water, safety and education.

Many poor countries owe enormous debts to wealthy countries and companies,
and millions of vulnerable people suffer as a result.

In this Year of Jubilee,
when we are called to be pilgrims of hope,
we pray for greater justice.

We pray that we might do our part
to challenge unjust situations that
cause harm to so many of your people around the world.

May we work to ensure that earth is truly a common home for everyone,
shared by all and enjoyed in security.

May we be instruments of your peace
and builders of the kingdom
of which Jesus spoke in your name.

Amen



**TURN
DEBT**
INTO
Hope



About Turn Debt into Hope

The *Turn Debt into Hope* campaign, spearheaded by Caritas, is a powerful response to one of the most pressing issues of our time: the devastating impact of unsustainable debt on developing nations. For millions of people, debt is not just a financial term—it's a daily reality that denies them access to basic necessities like healthcare, education, and clean water. When governments are forced to prioritise debt repayments over the well-being of their citizens, poverty deepens, inequality widens, and hope fades.

This campaign is rooted in the spirit of the Jubilee Year, a biblical tradition that calls for the forgiveness of debts and the restoration of justice. It's a reminder that economic systems should serve people, not exploit them. Caritas is urging world leaders and financial institutions to take bold steps toward debt relief and fairer financial practices, ensuring that vulnerable communities can thrive rather than merely survive.

But this isn't just a job for policymakers—it's a call to action for all of us. As Catholics and supporters of social and ecological justice, we have a moral responsibility to stand with those who are suffering. By supporting the *Turn Debt into Hope* campaign, you can help amplify the voices of the marginalised, advocate for systemic change, and contribute to a world where everyone has the opportunity to live a life worthy of their dignity.

During Laudato Si' Week and beyond, join us in as we strive to turn the burden of debt into a beacon of hope for a brighter, more just future.

Learn

1. **Watch** the video (right) that explains the connection between the Year of Jubilee, debt and how we can work for hope.
2. **Discuss:**
What is the relationship between debt and climate justice?

Jubilee year, debt and hope



Learn

3. **Watch** the video (right)

4. **Discuss:**

- a) What signs of Climate Change does Leba highlight?
- b) What is the focus of the 'Turn Debt into Hope' campaign?
- c) Why is it important for Australians to support this campaign?

Voices from the Pacific



Learn

5. **Watch** the video (right) that shared the experiences of Gladys and Abraham from the Solomon Islands.

OR

Read the case study on the following pages.

6. **Answer** the following question:

- a) How is climate change impacting vulnerable communities in Solomon Islands?

Voices from the Solomon Islands



Solomon Islands | Abraham and Gladys share their story



Photo: Tim Lam/Caritas Australia

The Solomon Islands is one of the countries on the frontlines of climate change. Situated in the Pacific "Ring of Fire," the archipelago is prone to frequent and significant tectonic and volcanic activity. In addition, it faces climate change-induced sea level rise at rates 2-3 times higher than the global average. This phenomenon has far-reaching consequences, particularly in a country where over 80% of the population resides in low-lying coastal areas (DFAT).

A growing concern in Pacific nations like the Solomon Islands is rising sovereign debt levels, compounded by the urgent need for increased funding for climate resilience efforts. While the Solomon Islands does not currently face an immediate risk of defaulting on its debt, a natural disaster could have devastating effects on its ability to meet its obligations. According to the Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA), the probability of a natural disaster striking the Solomon Islands each year is 12.5%, highlighting the potential for multiple disasters in the coming years.

The effects of climate change are already visible in communities across the Malaita province of the Solomon Islands.

Gladys, a schoolteacher from Malaita, shares how rising sea levels are endangering her community, particularly the safety of children who walk to school.

"The road that leads to the school - if the sea comes in, trucks won't be able to cross, because the sea covers the road," Gladys said. "We use the coconut trunk, put them in the mud and use them as our bridge. So, when our children go to school, they have to jump from a coconut trunk to another.

"The sea level also affects our soup-soup-garden near our house and also the sanitation of our toilets. The sea level will cover the toilets. Some of the water gets into our kitchen too.

The community's infrastructure, including roads that connect people to essential services like health clinics, markets, and neighboring villages, is also under threat from the encroaching tides.

Gladys also spoke of the need to protect the village's sanitation infrastructure. "The toilets need to be built up, because the sea level will cover them too," she said.

Abraham, another community member living in Malaita, recounts the change in sea levels over the years and the impact it has on his community's access to clean drinking water.

"Our great-grandparents dug this well a long time ago, and people from the village would come and fetch water, but this time it had salt in it. When high tide comes, the well is full of salt water," Abraham said.

"We were still using the well until the 1980's, and later in the 1900's and early 2000's, but now we no longer use it."

The graves of many of his ancestors are at risk of being completely flooded as a result of rising sea levels. "You see cracks on the graveyard because sea level rise has reached here and it covers every grave here," Abraham said. "It will eventually cover the entire graveyard."

"Now because of the sea rise level, we do not have enough land, and also because population has increased, it affects the plot of land where people have some conflict."

But even when climate change adaptations are possible, cost is always an issue and sources of funding are never guaranteed. Moreover, the loss of the community's land, and the potential loss of their ancestor's graves, represents a profound and incalculable loss of their cultural and ancestral heritage.

The need for revenue to repay debt (or to finance climate resilience) could be a factor in Pacific countries making unsustainable development choices. The Solomon Islands has lost over 7 per cent of its tree cover since the year 2000, and the Guardian estimated in 2021 that the forest cover in the Solomon Islands will be exhausted by 2036. The government has turned to mining exports as a potential revenue source to compensate for declining timber exports, but this could have further environmental consequences.

Gladys and Abraham's stories illustrate the urgent need for climate finance for adaptation as well as climate change mitigation through global greenhouse gas reductions to prevent further sea level rise.



Photos: Caritas Australia

REFLECT

1. **Read** the quotes (right)
2. **Discuss** in pairs the key message from each quote
3. **Answer** the following questions:
 - a) What is 'ecological debt'?
 - b) Why do you think Pope Francis was asking wealthy nations to cancel debt of poorer countries?
 - c) Why do you think Pope Francis was asking for a new financial framework to be developed?



Quotes

“For those of us in the Pacific, the connections between debt and climate disasters are important ones to consider. In many developing countries, and countries that are vulnerable to climate change, governments are paying more in interest and other debt servicing obligations than they are on health, education, or climate adaptation. Action must be taken to forgive debt and prevent it in the future.”

Cardinal Soane Mafi
Bishop of Tonga and Niue, and President of Caritas Oceania

“In the spirit of this Jubilee Year, I urge the international community to work towards forgiving foreign debt in recognition of the ecological debt existing between the North and the South of this world. This is an appeal for solidarity, but above all for justice.”

Pope Francis
World Day of Peace Message 2025

“In recognition of their ecological debt, the more prosperous countries ought to feel called to do everything possible to forgive the debts of those countries that are in no condition to repay the amount they owe... a new financial framework must be devised, leading to the creation of a global financial Charter based on solidarity and harmony between peoples.”

Pope Francis
World Day of Peace Message 2025

“The first to forgive debts is God, as we always ask Him when we pray the Lord’s Prayer, referring to our sins and committing ourselves to forgive in turn those who have offended us. And the Jubilee asks us to translate this forgiveness on a social level, so that no person, no family, no population is crushed by debts. I therefore encourage the rulers of countries with a Christian tradition to set a good example by cancelling or reducing as much as possible the debts of the poorest countries.”

Pope Francis
Message after the Angelus, 1 Jan 2025

REFLECT

4. **Identify** 3 Laudato Si' Goals you think are most relevant to cancelling and remedying unjust and unsustainable debts.

5. **Explain** how the 3 goals you chose relate to the *Turn Debt into Hope* campaign.



RESPOND TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH



RESPOND TO THE CRY OF THE POOR



ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS



ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES



ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION



ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

ACT

1. **Write** a message to world leaders
2. **Raise awareness.** Share what you have learnt about debt and its impact on people and planet
3. **Keep learning.** Visit www.caritas.org.au/debt

Additional resources for secondary students

- [About Advocacy](#)
- [Advocacy Toolkit](#)

For more Laudato Si' Week Activities and resources visit: laudatosiweek.org

Teachers - please send students' letters to Caritas Australia to use for the campaign and pass on to Australia's Foreign Minister.



Send to:
Advocacy Team
Caritas Australia
GPO Box 9830
Sydney NSW 2001

Turn Debt into Hope



Write a message to world leaders about cancelling unfair debt and making debt laws fair. Some prompts are included below to help get you started.

Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To the Minister for Foreign Affairs,

I have been learning

Something that surprised me was...

I believe....

I ask you to

Name

Pray

Pray that in this Year of Jubilee, the international community forgives debt in solidarity and promotion of justice

Pope Francis Prayer for Debt Relief

Forgive us our trespasses, Lord,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
In this cycle of forgiveness, grant us your peace,
the peace that you alone can give
to those who let themselves be disarmed in heart,
to those who choose in hope to forgive the debts of
their brothers and sisters,
to those who are unafraid to confess their debt to you,
and to those who do not close their ears to the cry of
the poor.

[World Day of Peace 2025](#)



**TURN
DEBT**
INTO
Hope

Resources

Available ideas and resources are available at:

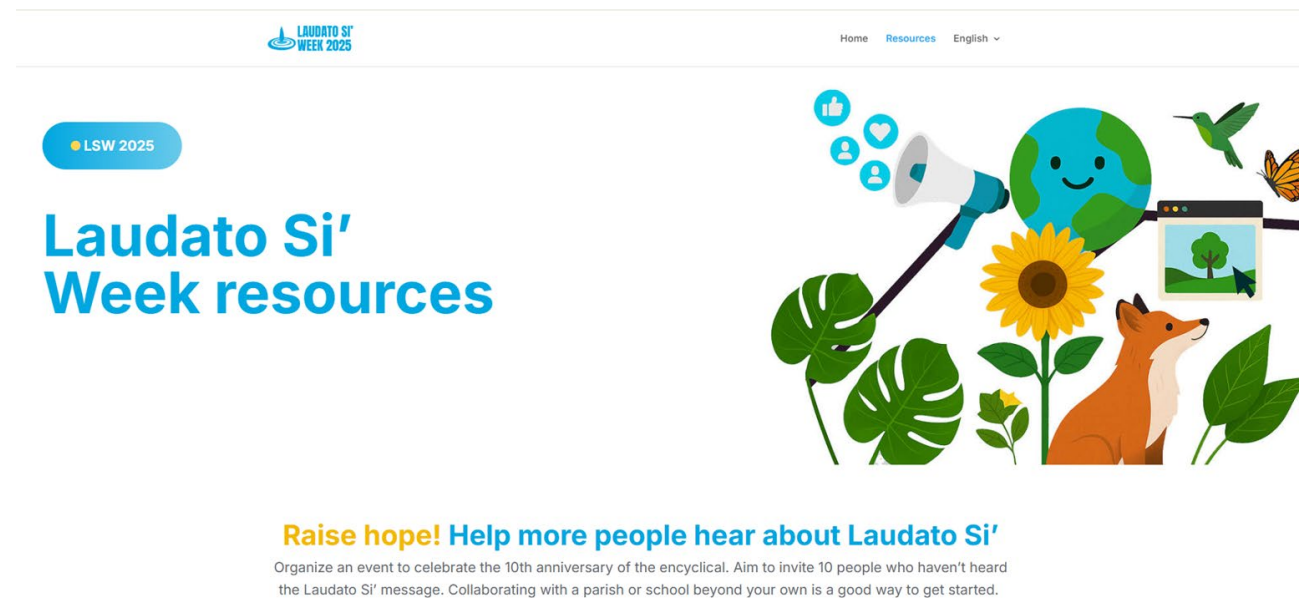
www.laudatosiweek.org

- Prayer resources
- Laudato Si' birthday party
- The Letter film
- Laudato Si' book club

If holding an event, please consider how you will ensure it is sustainable. Use the [7 Questions to Guide Reflection on Integral Ecology](#) resource.

Laudato Si' Week Resources

Additional resources to support the 10-year anniversary of *Laudato Si'* can be found at www.laudatosiweek.org



Raise hope! Help more people hear about Laudato Si'

Organize an event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the encyclical. Aim to invite 10 people who haven't heard the Laudato Si' message. Collaborating with a parish or school beyond your own is a good way to get started.

