

Online Resource - Lenten Reflections

The Grace of Urban Places

GOD REVEALING, GOD INSPIRING, GOD CHALLENGING

"Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us." St Francis of Assisi

5th Sunday of Lent

But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Jn: 8: 1-11

God Revealing.....

Australia, like the rest of the world, is increasingly urbanised. 89% of its population live in cities of over 100,000. goo.gl/lj70go

Under the current scenario, Australia's population is projected to grow to 36 million by 2050. The growth rate of the largest cities is projected to accelerate eg Sydney is estimated to be 72% of the population of NSW by 2030 (The Suburbanisation of Coastal Australia, goo.gl/0Uo10k)

There are many reasons why people like to live in cities: access to employment, education, health facilities, shopping, cultural experiences. As roads and buildings increase, so does loss of diversity of flora and fauna as trees are cut down and land cleared. Some birds adapt such as magpies and ibis, while small birds are disappearing. Pope Francis in Laudato Si' described many cities as huge, inefficient structures, excessively wasteful of energy and water. #153

Urban places generate the heat island effect which can be seen from space. Average temperatures within Melbourne's CBD are up to 4°C higher than the surrounding suburbs. Over half of city surfaces are heat absorbing materials, such as darker coloured roofs, car parks, roadways and footpaths.

Cities are major contributors to global warming and therefore need to play a major role in efforts to reduce greenhouse gases.

State of the Environment Report 2016. www.environment.gov.au/science/soe
Cities as COP21 Climate Solution. goo.gl/rbaqkH

God Inspiring.....

Jesus attended the temple in the city as a faithful Jew. The parables he told his followers often featured the natural world. Fr Eugene Stockton reflects: "Jesus' familiarity with nature and society was not simply the fruit of passive observation, but surely came out of a sense of alertness, curiosity, interest and empathy with his surrounds". Today in urban places the earth is buried under concrete structures and it is increasingly difficult to connect with nature. How do we cultivate that sense of alertness, curiosity, interest and empathy with our surrounds? Eugene Stockton, *Wonder a Way to God*



Image: goo.gl/GBgVhT

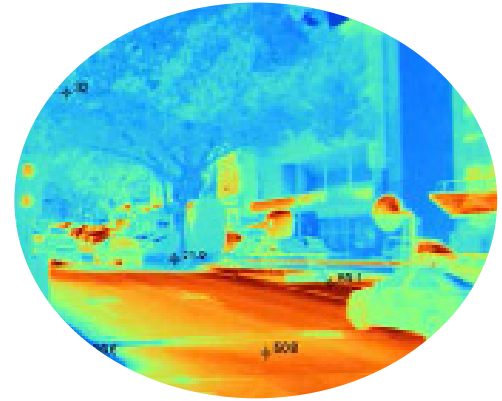
Pope Francis in Laudato Si' says "there is a need to protect those common areas, visual landmarks and urban landscapes which increase our sense of belonging, of rootedness, of "feeling at home" within a city which includes us and brings us together". #151

Get to know the place where you live. Imagine what it was like before it was built on. Who were the Aboriginal people who lived there? Find a quiet place to reflect on the words of Teilhard de Chardin, "there is a communion with God, and a communion with earth, and a communion with God through earth".

"Today, kids are aware of the global threats to the environment - but their physical contact, their intimacy with nature, is fading."

Richard Louv

God Challenging.....



Heat island effect. Image: goo.gl/wT26Yh

The City of Melbourne's Urban Forest Strategy aims to mitigate the heat island effect by regenerating its trees. goo.gl/So22C
How can you protect existing trees and plant new local species in a place near you? Look at aerial photos of your suburb to connect the "green" corridors.

View "The Story of Stuff" video: storyofstuff.org/. Discuss how you can reduce consumption.

Help keep children connected with nature by creating an outdoor prayer place at your church. Join a Family Nature Club which exist in cities around Australia. Keep a balance between learning new information and encouraging wonder and joy. goo.gl/6brjES



Image: Denel/ Shutterstock.com



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY
www.columban.org.au

St Columban Mission Society
PO Box 752 Niddrie VIC 3042
Ph: (03) 9375 9475
email: info@columban.org.au

©2016 St Columban Mission Society and its licensors. All rights reserved.

To make a donation email: info@columban.org.au or phone 03 9375 9475

