24 May is the Fifth anniversary of the publication of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’.* Members of the Archdiocesan Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission’s Integral Ecology Committee offer reflections on how the encyclical inspires change and action in their lives.

**How much do we value our water?** – Estelle Henrys

*“We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”* Pope Francis, *Laudato Siʹ* (paragraph 2)

Water is featured in the Gospel story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well. Jesus shifts the conversation from physical water to living water - cleansing and healing water, given to us in Baptism. Māori spirituality helps us to understand that we are in relationship with all of creation, including water.

Wellington’s water comes from three sources: Hutt River/Te Awakairangi; the combined flow of the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo rivers and the Waiwhetu Aquifer. When the water in the rivers gets low, typically during summer, Wellington Water supplements the supply with water stored in Macaskill Lakes at Te Marua.

Every day, a single person in the Wellington metropolitan region uses about 220 litres of

residential water. By comparison, Melbourne residents use around 150 litres. Wellington Water network strategy and planning group manager, Mark Kinvig, said last year that, “Every drop saved was a win for the environment. Small actions would keep water in rivers and aquifers and reduce carbon emissions.” (Dominion Post, December 14, 2019)

## *What can we do? Some recommended actions*

* Enjoy time near streams, rivers and the beautiful beaches and ocean
* Become involved in a group that cares for areas around streams and/or rivers locally
* Turn the tap off while brushing your teeth, take shorter showers
* Use full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher
* Install low-flow shower heads and garden irrigation systems
* Use watering cans instead of hoses in the garden
* Water the garden in the morning (6am-8am) or evening (7pm-9pm) on alternate days
* Get leaks fixed
* Wash cars on the lawn/grass so that runoff is absorbed