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.

**Less finger-pointing, more listening** – Jim McAloon

The fifth anniversary of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* on the care of our common home comes as the Covid-19 pandemic has ripped across the world. Writing in the *Guardian* newspaper on 25 March, the journalist George Monbiot suggested that the pandemic has exposed the hollowness of modern civilisation’s conceit that it is insulated from the environmental fundamentals. The comparisons with climate change, with pollution, with the piling up of waste, are obvious. In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis writes that addressing the environmental crisis means that ‘no form of wisdom can be left out’. That means including the perspectives of indigenous peoples, farmers, artists, scientists, and people of faith, among others.

Dialogue is not easy. It means less finger-pointing and more listening, and might mean setting aside or modifying one’s own cherished ideas. Dealing with the environmental crisis, making the sorts of social and economic transitions that we need to make, will mean working together. Perhaps the need is less to convince by argument than to share perspectives that lead us to similar conclusions. *Laudato Si’* calls on us to question the imperatives of endless consumption, to live more simply, and to rejoice in the beauty of creation. Among my friends, and among many scholars whose work I read, are some who share these priorities, are examples to me, and whose commitments are not shaped by church communities. Perhaps one contribution of *Laudato Si’*, then, is to remind Christians that these values are an integral part of our tradition, too.

Another thing that has struck me, though, is that as so much activity has been brought to a halt by the pandemic, some have drawn parallels with the long-term changes that environmental sustainability will require. To take one example, carbon emissions from aircraft have fallen dramatically. But many people in aviation have lost their jobs. In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis is well aware that a transition to a more sustainable order will be needed, and at the same time people’s right to work must be preserved. There is no time to lose, but *‘In any discussion about a proposed venture, a number of questions need to be asked in order to discern whether or not it will contribute to genuine integral development. What will it accomplish? Why? Where? When? How? For whom? What are the risks? What are the costs? Who will pay those costs and how? In this discernment, some questions must have higher priority’* (para 185). Environmental justice and economic justice must go together.