

MERCY'S CLIMATE CALL: 'CHANGE THIS MIND-SET'

Imaging Mercy Today

“The Government has to change this mind-set,” reads one of the posters which Sister of Mercy Bridget Crisp took to the protest of peaceful civil disobedience outside Auckland’s Sky City Hotel on March 21. The other poster bears a quote from Pope Francis, “The same mind-set which stands in the way of making radical decisions to reverse the trend of global warming also stands in the way of achieving the goal of eliminating poverty.” (*Laudato Si’*, par 175)

Bridget was at the protest, organised by Greenpeace, with two other Sisters of Mercy. They went as Sisters of Mercy, as Catholics and Christians, with their candles, posters and rosary beads, praying a rosary adapted by the Global Catholic Climate Movement.

“We invited sisters in other centres around New Zealand to join us in solidarity, praying for our earth. Our purpose, if asked, was to remind the Government of its commitment, made at the COP21 meeting in Paris last December, to lower our country’s greenhouse gas carbon emissions,” said Bridget, who had attended the Paris meeting as part of a delegation of Sisters of Mercy.

“At the Sky City gathering, the New Zealand Government was opening more off-shore sites for oil and gas exploration. In our view, this action negated any pledges made in Paris in December 2015.

“Sisters of Mercy recognise that climate change is globally the most crucial issue facing humanity at this time. In our part of the world, we have close neighbours in the Pacific who have real concerns about the impact climate change will have on their islands, primarily through sea-level rise and the salinization of land and fresh water.

“Instead of keeping fossil fuels ‘locked in’ the ground so that they are never used, our Government is opening the door with little regard to the long-term cost of such action.

“We call on the Government to change this mind-set. As Pope Francis insists, ‘the mind-set which leaves no room for sincere concern for the environment is the same mind-set which lacks concern for the inclusion of the most vulnerable members of society.’”

‘The same mind-set which stands in the way of making radical decisions to reverse the trend of global warming also stands in the way of achieving the goal of eliminating poverty.’

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*



NZ Government

We have to change
this mind-set

*Bridget Crisp rsm with posters from her Sky City protest...
‘the still, small voice within.’*

For Bridget and her companions, the protest was a chance to raise the gentle voice of conscience, pointing to the inconsistency of those who would grasp with one hand what they would deny with the other. It was Gandhi who spoke of the moral power of conscience when he said “the only tyrant I accept is the still, small voice within.” His quote was drawn from the first Book of Kings, where the prophet Elijah hears the voice of God not in the storm, the earthquake or lightning, but in the whisper of a light breeze, or as the King James Bible has it, “a still, small voice.”

One of the spiritual works of mercy commended by Pope Francis is that of ‘instructing the ignorant’. While that kind of language may not seem quite politically correct today, it does highlight the need to uncover blind spots, to open closed minds and to gently point out illogical or false conclusions. Mercy does so when it extolls palliative care to the proponents of euthanasia or assisted suicide, or recommends tertiary education to girls whose families have never considered such an option. It does so, too, when it links care for the planet with care for the poorest and most vulnerable in the human family.

Taihoa, spare a moment.....

You’re invited to conclude this reflection by sharing the following questions when you next meet with your colleagues at the Mercy board or ministry in which you serve.

- *How does the Mercy ministry in which you are involved serve as a ‘still, small voice’ challenging one or more of the mind-sets commonly held in our society at present?*
- *Name the ways in which you nurture this ‘still, small voice’ and keep it strong.*
- *Find a quote from Pope Francis (preferably from Laudato Si’) that best sums up your reasons for identifying with Mercy and its works.*

- **Dennis Horton**

He Inoi: Prayer

A mind-set for our time

*E Te Atua, Kaihanga o te ao,
with the life of your breath
our world continues to unfold.
As we stand in your presence,
show us what we need to see,
that we may recognise your plan
and join in your great work.*

*We pray for Papatuanuku,
our fruitful mother Earth,
sustaining every living creature
but threatened today
from abuse of its fragile resources.
Let us renew our resolve
that our actions and decisions
will enhance the wholeness of life
for now and generations to come.*

*We honour the creative vision
and enduring witness of Catherine
McAuley.
Let us learn from her
to be ground-breakers and trend-setters,
with a mind-set to protect the
environment
and to work to eliminate poverty.
For the cry of the Earth and the poor
are one.
Amen.*