

With the Season of Creation now underway, Pope Francis has encouraged Catholics to make simple changes to their lives so that God's creation is treated with respect. He has also called on all of us "make an effort to change and adopt more simple and respectful lifestyles".

Almost 100 students from Catholic secondary colleges from six diocese took up that call during a Catholic Earthcare summit event last week at Santa Sabina College in Strathfield.

The summit – cas3 (Catholic Earthcare Australia Student Sustainability Summit) brought together student leaders and changemakers from across the Archdiocese of Sydney, Parramatta, Broken Bay, Maitland-Newcastle and Illawarra Diocese, as well as the independent schools community.

The Bathurst Diocese even supported student attendance from Orange. The demonstration event- designed, led and delivered by students, for students - aims to model how individual diocese can run their own event next year and compliments the Catholic Earthcare approach of animating and training the next generation of the Catholic faith.

Catholic Earthcare Director Bernard Holland said it was an inspirational day with students hearing from a range of guest speakers and taking part in workshops to promote a more sustainable way of living in line with Laudato Si.

"Students have many of the answers and made more than 100 commitments for change and acts of leadership around Care of our Common Home. They are an important voice during this time where we are in a climate emergency.

"Many students spoke powerfully of their passion for the issue, voicing their values and opinions and calling for leadership at a political level for action on climate change.

"Particularly for remote students in regional areas with a high population of climate deniers, and schools where attending the school strike isn't allowed."

Bishop of Parramatta Vincent Long Van Nguyen opened the event, which also featured a smoking ceremony led by Indigenous leaders.

"Now the next stage is for students to take up leadership on the issue at a local level, wherever they live or study. Using the Catholic Earthcare Steps to Ecological Dialogue students are being encouraged to engage with college leadership and start their own student led environment committees within the mission focus of the college", Mr. Holland said.

Students will be offered the support services of Catholic Earthcare, and encouraged to share their progress using the #cas3 on social media.

In 2020, Catholic Earthcare is planning a Convocation in Melbourne for Sept 4th and 5th with a Youth stream though it.

Find out more at www.catholicearthcare.org.au