



Edmund Rice Centre
AWARENESS ■ ADVOCACY ■ ACTION

Edmund Rice Centre

for Justice & Community Education

Awareness ♦ Advocacy ♦ Action

PCP Patrons: +John Cardinal Ribat MSC

Dr Richard A O'Brien; Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann



Sydney, Friday, 18th September 2020

RELEASE: Pacific climate voice in Vatican - ERC applauds Australian Embassy

Human rights organisation, the Edmund Rice Centre, has applauded statements made by Australia's new Ambassador to the Vatican, Chiara Porro, who is supporting calls from Catholic leaders in Oceania for a Synod for the Pacific region.

"It's encouraging to hear Australia's representative to the Holy See raising the calls and concerns of Pacific leaders outside of our region", said Corinne Fagueret, Coordinator of the Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP), an initiative of the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice & Community Education.

This past week Ambassador Chiara Porro met with Pope Francis to present her credentials as Australia's representative to the Holy See. In an interview with Vatican media Rome Reports afterwards, Ms Porro has stated: "One idea that I've been discussing with a few people is potentially pushing for a Synod on the Pacific down the track - something along those lines - because of the climate change issue, the anniversary of Laudato Si' and also the fact it is one of the frontier regions that Pope Francis is so focussed on." <https://youtu.be/dhx6rmQB8Ws>

Ms Fagueret explained, "In October last year, while visiting Rome during the Synod of the Amazonia, Archbishop Peter Loy Chong, the Archbishop of Suva, Fiji called for a Synod for Oceania that could include a focus on the wellbeing of the oceans that so many people of his region depend upon for their life."

"In those statements, Archbishop Chong emphasised that the ocean covers 70 per cent of the earth's surface and he called for the ocean not to be forgotten in the Amazonia Synod", Ms Fagueret said. "Archbishop Chong also expressed his hope that Pope Francis will one day call for an Oceania Synod, given the importance of the ocean to the web of life, calling for greater effort to protect the ocean from the crime of destroying the ocean and killing maritime creatures."

"Archbishop Chong is President of the Oceania Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences and in that capacity has spoken out repeatedly - like Pope Francis - in calls for greater ambition and urgency in global action on the climate emergency", she added. "In September 2019 he was invited to Australia by Archbishop Colledge, President of the Australian Conference of Catholic Bishops, to launch the Brisbane Archdiocese's climate justice program, Living Laudato Si'."

Edmund Rice Centre director, Phil Glendenning added his support: "I applaud Ambassador Porro for giving voice to these Pacific climate concerns in the name of our nation," he said. "This helps to amplify on the world stage the calls of Pacific leaders for genuine responses to our global climate emergency. It is precisely for this purpose that the Edmund Rice Centre has worked with others over the past fifteen years - especially through churches in Australia - to resource the Pacific Calling Partnership initiative."

Mr Glendenning explained further: "In Nov 2001 Pope Saint John-Paul in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Oceania*, underlined the existential threat of climate change, emphasising that the peoples of Oceania 'are facing a very uncertain future, not only because of large-scale emigration but also because of rising sea levels caused by global warming. For them, climate change is very much more than a question of economics'."

For interview or comment:-

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