

District of the Pacific Update



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2022

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

Big, Small and Creative Changes to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint by Br Chris

Kate Hall (aka Ethically Kate) has adopted a minimalist lifestyle reducing her environmental footprint as much as she can. A New Zealander, she was inspired by the documentary video <https://watchdocumentaries.com/the-true-cost/> about the fashion industry's practices.



Lowering our carbon footprints has become more critical than ever, but the idea of climate-friendly living can be overwhelming. I don't know about you, but 'change fatigue' can paralyse me if too much happens at once.

Your carbon footprint summarises the total greenhouse gas emissions (usually measured by tonnes of carbon dioxide, CO₂) caused by your daily activities. Just like in golf, a low score is what we should all be aiming for.

Instead of attempting to drop your carbon footprint overnight, make changes slowly so climate-friendly habits will stick around forever. If we all make big, small, and creative changes over time, we can reduce our carbon footprints together, for the health of people and the planet. One of the cheapest and easiest ways to reduce our carbon footprint is cutting our food waste. In New Zealand, the greatest waste item, surprisingly enough, is bread! Feeding pets, the birds, or composting for the garden are possible solutions.

ONE BIG THING: Eat seasonal fruit and vegetables

It's not unusual to see strawberries and melons in supermarkets all year round, right? But the carbon emissions of getting out-of-season fruit to another country may make you think twice before you next throw them into your shopping trolley. The CO₂ emitted during the production, freight, and handling of international produce is a big contributor to everyone's carbon footprint. If the produce label doesn't say 'Product of (your country)', walk past it. Read labels or stickers carefully to discover their origin, and ensure your fruits and vegetables are produced as locally as possible. I realise lowering your 'food-print' is a big deal when it means you have to miss out on making your favourite meals all year round. I promise: as time goes on, you'll begin to enjoy cooking with locally grown produce, develop fresh recipes, and you'll forget about the time you dined on strawberries in June.

ONE SMALL THING: Wash your clothes at 30 degrees Celsius or less

Up to 90 per cent of the energy used in a wash cycle goes towards heating the water. Even though this trick is as simple as pressing an extra button or two on your washing machine, your carbon footprint will plummet.

I've washed my clothes on a cold cycle for several years; the lower temperature has never compromised cleanliness. Most clothes do not need to be washed in water higher than 30C. However, if you have items that require a hot wash for sanitisation, add a planet friendly laundry soaker, or make your hot washes occasional ones.

ONE CREATIVE THING: Re-purpose unusable clothes

Carbon emissions are produced every time something new is created, because energy and resources are used to make everything. That's why it's best to re-purpose what already exists, rather than buy new. A year ago, I made a dog bed for my new pup. After sewing a square cover from a second hand sheet, I stuffed the bed with clothes that were unable to be reused. Imagine items like underwear, holey t-shirts, pants that had been repaired too many times, and worn-out socks. Thinking creatively reduced the carbon emissions of a brand new dog bed, and saved my clothes from ending up in landfill. Don't have a cushion or dog bed to stuff? Cut up your unwanted textiles into strips, and use them to tie up plants, such as tomatoes, in your garden, or as handy rags for the garage.

Our climate is changing for the worse, but if we change for the better, we can help.



General Conference in Rome by Br Peter

We have a further full week here before we leave. The programme here has been quite busy, six days a week. The retreat day was appreciated. I'm very conscious that we've done a huge amount of work. As you can imagine, we're very conscious of the massive tragedy in Ukraine, and in the other hot-spots in different parts of the world. On the day before I arrived, the Brothers and staff held an outdoor prayer service on the theme of peace.

A full day at the Conference was devoted to matters associated with Child Safeguarding. These conversations were wide-ranging, practical and very insightful. The Provincials and District Leaders had many experiences to share. Facilitators

included several members of the Marist General Council, along with Father Tim Brennan MSC, an Australian, who is the General Delegate for Safeguarding in the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

One fellow-New Zealander was here last week, namely John Larsen SM, the Marist Fathers' Superior General. Here in Rome, the days are getting longer and it is wonderful to observe the advancing signs of Spring. The weather is especially pleasant in the evenings. But the mornings are still predictably sharp and cool. Walking around the city, on the few occasions when I have gone there, and when I've visited a few churches, of course, things are relatively quiet and tourist-free. Mask-wearing is enforced strictly on the buses and the metro. Out in



the streets, the wearing of masks is erratic. Some families are very compliant, and they'll even have their little children masked up, looking very cute.

The Conference activities have been published at champagnat.org.

Br Hipólito Pérez (Central America) *To meet again as Brothers, has been a very deep, significant, and emotional time. We have sat around the tables to dialogue, share, encourage each other, listen, and discern. The General Conference invites us to “look beyond”, almost 200 years later, in the same way that Marcellin Champagnat and the first community of Brothers contemplated from the mountains the valley bathed by the Gier, and they intuited the living space where they would build L’Hermitage. Br. Ernesto Sánchez, S.G. in his opening words challenged us to live this event by developing a sensitive, prophetic, global, integrating, and hopeful outlook. That is, to intuit and generate, in tune with the breath of the Spirit and in response to our world, the best possible future for Marist life and mission at this moment in our history.*

This American legend expresses in a symbolic way what we yearn for as Marist leaders, looking beyond... It is about an Indian tribe camped from time immemorial at the foot of a great mountain. Their chief, seriously ill, calling his three sons, tells them: «Go up to the holy mountain. Whoever brings me the most beautiful gift will succeed me as chief». One of the sons brought him a rare and beautiful flower. The next handed him a beautiful multicolored stone. The third tells the father: “I didn’t bring anything. From the top of the mountain, I could see wonderful meadows and a crystal-clear lake on the other side. I was so impressed that I couldn’t bring anything; but I am obsessed with this new possibility for our tribe.” And the old chief replied: “You will be the chief because you have brought me as a gift the vision of a better future for our tribe.”

Br Allan de Castro (East Asia) *I felt excited and inspired to listen to and reflect on the topics presented. . . (and) on the current reality of the Institute covering the journey as Administrative Units, as Regions, as Global Family looking towards the future. These topics led us to many occasions of dialogue with our fellow Marist leaders; thus learning from one another. In the midst of all that has been accomplished so far at this General Conference, I could not help but reflect on the three important points that Br. Ernesto highlighted in his message when he welcomed the new Provincials during the first week. He said, “When I was a young Provincial, the then Superior General, Br. Sean Sammon, encouraged us to lead our respective provinces by always having a vision, telling the truth and working as a team.”*

Br Vincent Abadom (Nigeria) *It is good to understand the context we are working in, because it is where we meet children and young people. The program was carefully designed to give enough room for personal prayer, reflections and relaxation. . . All the presentations by the Superior General and the Councillors were touching and inspiring. . . We were divided into small table members in the conference hall where we most often shared our experiences and thoughts, which gave room for everybody to have the opportunity of participating actively. . . It offered us the opportunity to have closer relationships with one another as we made time to listen and share with one another.*

I thank you, Brothers, for the many ways in which you have generously accommodated my being away for most of March.

