

# 'The Road to Assisi' — Roundtable Report —

Thursday 21st October



In an increasingly fractured world, the Global Foundation is more committed than ever to act on its motto: *'Together, we strive for the global common good'*. Underpinning this goal is the encouragement of *'cooperative globalisation'*. As global citizens we all have a responsibility to face the challenge of climate change and take action now in order to protect our earth for future generations. As we step out of the darkness of a pandemic, we look to a new year dawning and recognise that now is the time to act. The Foundation will be returning to face-to-face meetings in 2022 with the first international roundtables being held in Rome & Assisi in May. To ensure these meetings are highly impactful and reach the intended outcomes, the Foundation convened the *'Road to Assisi' Roundtable* on October 21st, in partnership with Newman College Rector Fr. Frank Brennan SJ AO.

With the Pope Francis encyclical *Laudato Si'* as a key supporting text to this discussion, speakers were asked to address the action required by our global village in order to achieve the requirements set out in the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change findings and discuss how this can be financially supported by mobilising the corporate sector and encouraging investments.

In addition to international speakers, members and guests, the Foundation enabled a cross section of youth to share their perspectives. Students at Newman College provided insight into their own climate projects and how our daily actions can indeed make a difference. The addition of this youthful perspective was inspiring to guests as it is clear this is the generation who will fight for change with climate at the forefront of their minds. Pope Francis recognises this, ***"Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded"*** (*Laudato Si'* #13).

Whilst there is momentum for change on a civilian and corporate level it can sometimes be disheartening for the youth of today to see little action from some political leaders. It was discussed in the roundtable that even our small daily actions are contributing to worldwide change and we must not lose heart that small, climate considerate actions will go a long way. As the 13th Century Persian Poet Rumi so eloquently expressed, ***'You are not a drop in the ocean; you are the ocean in a drop.'***

With the G20 meetings in Rome and COP26 in

Glasgow following on the back of the 'Road to Assisi' Roundtable, the importance of faith leaders was addressed by the participants. Pope Francis has called for an **'openness to interdependence and sharing'**, for leaders to recognise that we *'share a common home'* and encouraged a commitment to a life of integral ecology – very much in line with the Foundations' *'Cooperative Globalisation'* mission.

***"We are one humanity in a fragile world."***

It is clear that lack of financial mobilisation and current geo-political tensions continue to hamper efforts to solidify international commitments. Italy currently presides over G20 at a 'delicate moment'. Not only has the pandemic highlighted significant social and health inequalities across the world but as the developed world begins to move on having reached high vaccination levels, third world countries are being ravaged by COVID-19 with little access to vaccines. If the people, the planet and prosperity is not prioritised climate goals cannot be achieved. In a similar vein to the Global Health Roundtable held earlier this year, the speakers recognised the need for a Global Health Finance Board to ensure better management and infrastructure for future pandemics. The impact of the climate crisis and health equality are intrinsically linked.

***"We must proceed in lockstep or not at all. A truly multilateral approach is needed".***

From a local perspective, Australia's commitments are internationally recognised as sub-optimal, and it was agreed that a clear roadmap for the country needs to be designed and supported by citizens. This needs to financially support mining towns who will be impacted and mobilise cooperate financial investment. More substantial projects using renewable resources on small and large scale need to be developed and undertaken. ***"We need stronger pledges from government, Australia comes last out of 193 countries behind North Korea and Syria. We need stronger 2030 commitments."***

As we look ahead to the Rome & Assisi meetings in May 2022, it is the hope of the Global Foundation that the city of Assisi be officially recognised as the City of Ecology. Widely recognised as the birthplace of St. Francis, it is a global centre of peace however St. Francis is also the patron Saint of ecology and was himself a passionate naturalist. The Mayor of Assisi, who is closely affiliated with the Global Foundation, will be hosting the meetings in Assisi and fervently supports the call to action on environmental degradation and global warming. The 'Road to Assisi' discussions remind us that ***'it is the few who challenge, who change the whole over time'***. We are all big investors in resolving this issue and we must remain strong in our resolve to work together and start on this conversion journey.

### ***The seven goals of the Laudato Si' platform:***

- ***The Cry of Earth***
- ***The Cry of the Poor***
- ***Ecological Economics***
- ***Simple Lifestyles***
- ***Ecological Education***
- ***Ecological Spirituality***
- ***Community Involvement and Participation***

