

TAU FEBRUARY 2020

The Province of the Pacific, Third Order Society of St Francis



St Clare of Assisi

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Tau will be published four times a year in November, February, May and August.

Please send any articles that would interest us about your area events or other Franciscan happenings in time for the next issue to janicegthorne@gmail.com or

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From the Minister General...

Over the last few weeks in our Sunday gospel reading we have heard Jesus teaching us in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus invites us, with his band of new disciples, to stand on a hill overlooking our broken world and to imagine what God longs for this world. As they looked, he bid them to aspire to be: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. He invites us in the beatitudes to imagine a world based on these aspirations. This, he says, is what God has always longed for. It is at the heart of the law and the prophets and all that Jesus says and does.

He goes on to invite his hearers to be perfect – which means, rather than being without fault, being complete or mature, living in the world as imagined above. Jesus also invites us to be righteous - living as we were intended to live, as bearers of the image of God and all God longs for this world.

It strikes me as people called to follow Jesus in the footsteps of Francis and Clare that we are invited to live out the character of God as Jesus lived out the character of God. We are perfect when we live out our righteousness. We are righteous when we live God's compassion, generosity, justice, love and mercy.

Several years ago I suggested the three big questions for both the church and the order are: who are we (or who is this God we seek to follow); who are we (in light of the character of this God); and what is ours to do? In the Sermon on the Mount the answers are – God is love; compassionate, generous, just, merciful beyond measure, and we were created to be the image of God's character in this world and in our community. To be righteous, perfect, is to enflesh God's compassion, generosity, justice and aroha. This is incarnational living.

In the next few weeks we will begin Lent. Lent is traditionally a time of prayer, fasting and alms giving. It is a time of being in the wilderness, like so many in the Bible before us. The wilderness is a good place. It is the place

where Jesus went to know who he was and what it meant to be called “Son of God.” The wilderness of Lent is a time for us to remember that we bear the image of God. It is a time to embrace who we are, who we are and what is ours to do.

It is also a time to notice those ideas and habits that divert us from this. It is a time to take account of our ways of seeing the world that places us at the centre and God and everyone else on the edge; ways of seeing the world and responding that we need to give up or let go of that distract us from being image bearers.

It is also a time to try new ways of living and seeing the world that help grow as image bearers, that help us respond and live with compassion, generosity, justice, love and mercy.

As the consequences of climate change become more visible day by day, maybe Lent is a time for us to take stock of how we see the world and how we might more deliberately live in a way that sustains life and lowers our carbon footprint.

May this Lent be a time of letting go and taking up, a time of growing in knowing who we are, who we are and what is ours to do.

John Hebert TSSF.

Prayer is sitting in the silence until it silences us, choosing gratitude until we are grateful, and praising God until we ourselves are an act of praise.

Mature prayer always breaks into gratitude.

Richard Rohr

From the Minister Provincial...

Poverty and self denial.

"I have been pondering poverty a lot recently, motivated by working with leprosy patients, reports from United Nations health committees and the sense of crisis there is throughout the world.

Reminders seem to be everywhere, however I have been again challenged by the question of "what/ where is my response?"

After much contemplation the challenge for me has been to acknowledge that self denial is the way forward to living the "poverty" that Francis and Clare talk of. A conscious choice of putting others first in all the days actions or events. It has surprised me how hard I have to work to see this happen, but, I have come to a place of discovering what it is to be emptier of myself, allowing more space (maybe growth?) for God's love to show.

A question for us all this Lent, from Ilia Delio

"Do we accept the "poverty" of our existence? Do we acknowledge our creatureliness and utter dependence on God?"

May you all enjoy and be blessed through the challenge of Lent and the glory of Eastertide.

Peace Blair

Christ has something in common with all creatures. With the stone he shares existence, with the plants he shares life, with the animals he shares sensation, and with the angels he shares intelligence. Thus, all things are transformed in Christ since in the fullness of his nature he embraces some part of every creature. —Bonaventure

Waikato Report

The Waikato Area's first meeting of the year was certainly an eventful one.

We had planned to meet in Coromandel, but the venue had to change due to the host being hit by a car - we hold Claire Stewart in our prayers as she recovers. Instead, we met in Morrinsville.

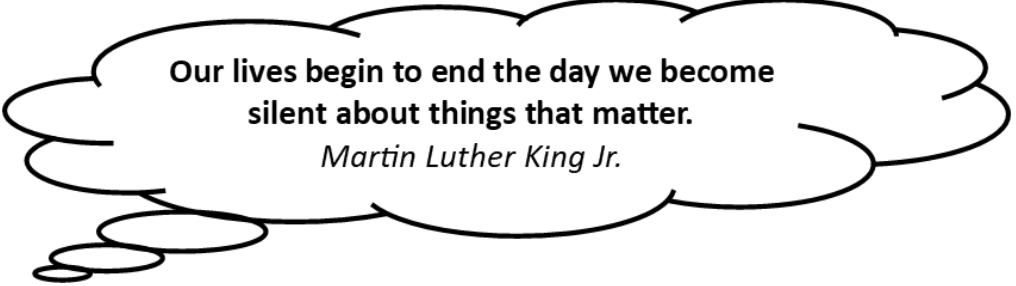
During our meeting, Br. Andrew McKean received news of his father-in-law, Don's death; and, so, he left to be with his family. We hold Andrew, Christine, her mother Thelma and their wider family in our prayers, too.

We concluded our study of Leonardo Boff's *Francis of Rome and Francis of Assisi* and have decided to follow the lead of other Areas in studying JPIC material from A Rocha in future. The meeting was also blessed by the presence of a new enquirer.

Another quirky aspect to the day saw Eucharistic preparations interrupted by somebody, a well-known Morrinsville local, carrying a dead cat, requesting the church to bury it. She was directed to a local vet's clinic by Janice's granddaughter, Shantal.

There was certainly something for everybody.

Peace Peter Bargh



**Our lives begin to end the day we become
silent about things that matter.**

Martin Luther King Jr.

Formation Director Report (For Tau – Feb 2020)

Tēna koutou katoa.

Congratulations to those who have taken profession vows in the past two months: Jan Brodie (Canterbury with Otago), Maryan Dawson (Auckland), Maranú Gasgoigne (NIC), Soojin Morris (Auckland). These newly professed members will continue to complete the Initial Formation Studies and report to their Novice Counsellor every three months for the first year post-profession.

We also welcome into membership of the Third Order, Society of St Francis several new Novices: Peter Frey, Rebecca Frey (NIC).

There are a number of new Postulants and Enquirers, which is very exciting. Please pray for all of these individuals as they continue the journey of discernment regarding becoming members of our Order.

When does someone become a member?

There has been a little confusion about at which stage someone becomes a member of the Order, and therefore is added to the Membership and Intercession Lists. The answer is to be found in the Statutes – which are in section K of your manual.

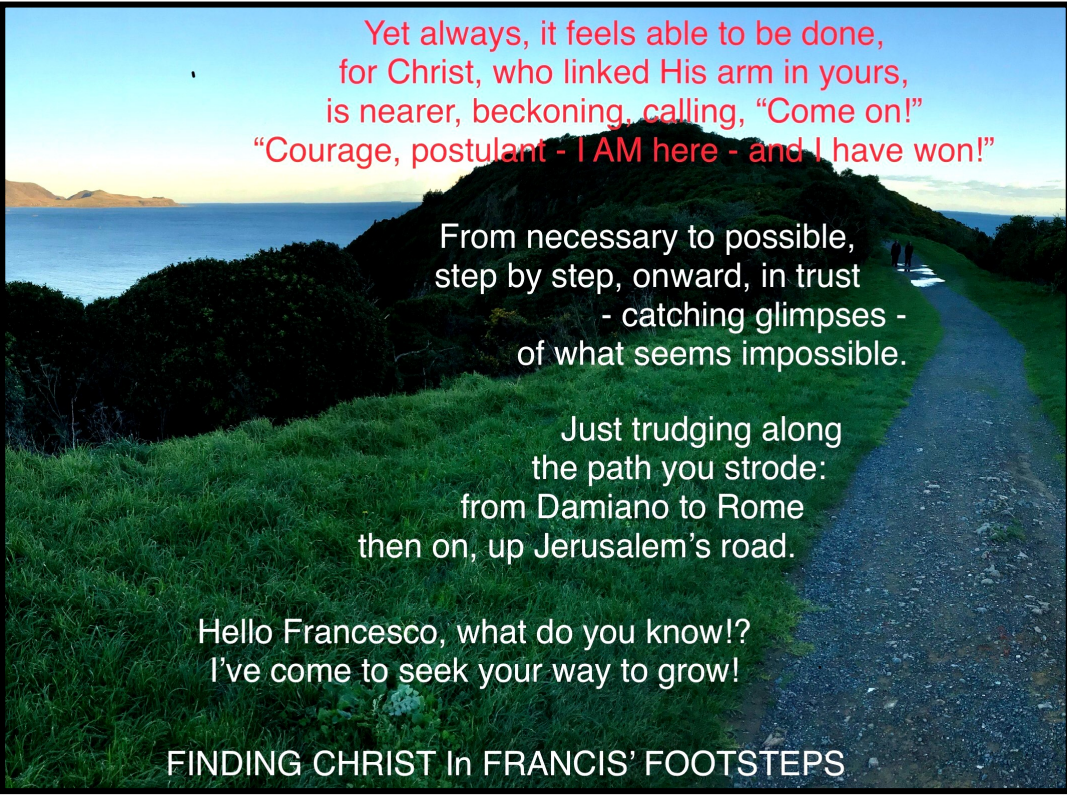
In our Province we have two stages before membership: Enquirer and Postulant. Up until a Rule is signed, a person is referred to as an Enquirer. When the Rule is signed, they enter the Postulancy and a Novice Counsellor is appointed. Postulancy is a time to continue discerning whether joining the Order is what they believe God is calling them to and lasts for at least six months.

After six months, if the Postulant is continuing in the Order, they can become a Novice. Once the Vows as a Novice have been taken they are Members of the Order. Their name goes on the membership and intercession lists; they are given a manual and access to the Members' section of the website.

To avoid confusion, the Formation Director is the only person who advises the Membership Secretary of the names of new novices, or that a Novice has become a Professed Member.

Aroha me te Rangimarie,

Marion Fairbrass,
Formation Director



Yet always, it feels able to be done,
for Christ, who linked His arm in yours,
is nearer, beckoning, calling, "Come on!"
"Courage, postulant - I AM here - and I have won!"

From necessary to possible,
step by step, onward, in trust
- catching glimpses -
of what seems impossible.

Just trudging along
the path you strode:
from Damiano to Rome
then on, up Jerusalem's road.

Hello Francesco, what do you know!?
I've come to seek your way to grow!

FINDING CHRIST In FRANCIS' FOOTSTEPS

The poem - commissioned by Richard - to be about 'the postulant experience' and the photo is of the track in Miramar which leads to the Atatürk (Reconciling) Memorial overlooking a Bay, on Cook Strait, which looks extraordinarily like Anzac Cove in Gallipoli.

Finding Christ in Francis' Footsteps
Was written by Christopher Diggle (a Postulant)

Report on 30th Anniversary Celebration of Franciscans International at the U.N.

Submitted by Janet Fedders Minister Provincial for the Americas.

November 9, 2019. San Damiano Hall connected with St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City.

I sat at the “SSF table”, along with Clark Berge, Bros Thomas and Damien Joseph and our own TSSF brother Charlie McCarron. We listened to Marcus Heinze, OFM, Executive Director of FI and Joe Radansky, OFM, President of the International Board of Directors (IBD). Also presenting was a member of the Ecuadorian Embassy. The IBD was introduced.

Heinze noted that UNICEF had given FI an award in recognition of the Best Use of the UN System, in the context of FI’s work with the “witch” children of Benin.

President Radansky recounted a successful 20-minute meeting with the Secretary General of the U.N. in recent weeks.

He also noted that there are three main initiatives within FI’s focus. They are contained within what FI is calling its Toolbox. The components:

- ** Highlighting how violations of human rights can harm or hinder the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and make people more vulnerable to climate change;

- ** Connecting the dots between human rights, sustainable development and climate change at the national and international levels to better inform the various review mechanisms; From their Annual Report: “Franciscans International believes that sustainable development, the preservation of the environment, and respect and promotion for human rights are inextricably linked – international human rights standards should therefore be at the heart of all political processes. As a common theme throughout our 2018 global advocacy, we emphasized the need for more policy coherence in

compliance with human rights, including in relation to State commitments at the UN in Geneva and New York.”

** Helping people make full use of existing mechanisms and promote an integrated approach that respects and protects human rights. This is their Handbook on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

In 2018, FI published a Spanish version of the Toolbox, which formed the basis of a workshop in El Salvador, where around 30 participants were trained how to use different mechanisms of the United Nations to strengthen the link between State and international policies and the realization of human rights. The Toolbox is available on the FI website.

FI has also created a forum on indigenous issues.

One of the older members of FI gave a run-down on those members who have been essential in creating and sustaining FI over these last 30 years.

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!

Place your soul in the brilliance of glory!

Place your heart in the figure of the divine
substance!

And transform your whole being
into the image of the Godhead itself through
contemplation!

So that you too may feel what His friends feel
as they taste the hidden sweetness
which God Himself has reserved from the beginning
for those who love Him.

Taken from Clare's 3rd letter to Agnes

North Island Central reports...

Report for TSSF retreat gathering at Sarah and Rick Hart's farm out of Taupo.
Friday 24 January 2020.

North Island Central celebrated a new year gathering where seventeen of us gathered at the Harts property out of Taupo from Friday 24th to Sunday 26th January 2020. We came from Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Taupo and Turangi. We were also joined by Bill and Virginia Atkins from Wellington. It was a magnificent setting and Sarah and Rick were wonderful hosts to us all.

Friday night after an abundant shared feast we gathered and area Chaplain, Rev Dorothy Brooker gently bound us together by inviting us to share and pray for one another.

Saturday after breakfast, we met for Morning Prayer and a study on Principle of the day using a Lectio Divina exercise around the readings and reflected on Richard Rohr's daily meditation called "The Field of Love.

Later we re-assembled ourselves under shady beech trees for Eucharist and took the opportunity to Profess Maranu Gascoigne, and Peter and Rebecca Frey as Novices.

It was good to welcome 4 new postulants from across the region. Peter and Rebecca Frey blessed us with heavenly music which added to our joy.

After a sumptuous lunch to celebrate some toured the farm, while others rested or swam at the lake.

Evening prayer and then we watched the film, "The Two Popes" before retiring.

Sunday morning saw us worshipping with locals at St Matthews, Oruanui. A beautifully restored community church, and enjoyed a very special service, followed by a cup of tea and fellowship at the Oruanui Marae.

We get our soul's well fed as well as our bodies when we gather this way. It offers opportunities to encourage and welcome one another as brothers and sisters of Christ who all seek to follow Jesus in the way of St Francis and Clare. It was a taste of heaven on earth and we came away blessed with full emotional and spiritual tanks! Thanks be to God!

Submitted by Bryan Carey



Left: Eucharist under the trees

Below: Profession and Novice admission



Gathering at Sarah and Ricks farm

St Matthew's Church,
Oruanui Tikanga
Maori



Obituary

Jayne Tite

When we heard that Jayne had died we felt two different things; sadness that she would no longer live on earth with us and admiration for the brave courageous woman she was.

Jayne was a Franciscan, a member of the third order of the Society of St Francis having joined the Order in 2006 and being elected to profession in 2010.

When I first met Jayne it was by corresponding with her when she first expressed an interest in the Franciscan way of living. At the time she was working as a farm hand in Gore, responsible for milking and caring for a herd of cows, caring for the calves and with several dogs and cats that she had rescued. These animals were often old, unwanted, and one was blind. She loved each one of them. In her emails she often referred to sister cat or dog, and sister mouse too, for that matter.

Jayne was highly intelligent, with a desire to not only care for animals but also to hold discussions over the internet with groups of other people who were also part of the world wide Franciscan family. Her letters to me were often long and deeply thought out as she outlined her ideas on various matters.

A few years ago Jayne had a serious brush with cancer and the treatment and her diabetes left her with disabilities leading to her leaving the farm and moving into care in Winton and she no longer had her computer to reach out to others. However this did not deter her and she continued to read widely and review books for others.

Every year or two Alys and I would drive down to catch up with fellow Franciscans between Christchurch and Invercargill, sometimes gathering together for a quiet retreat day or stopping off on the way to spend time with folk and that always included seeing Jayne and Susan.

When I chatted with Alys she shared some of her memories and asked me to pass them on. Alys often phoned Jayne and was a great support person for her. With a family member living nearby in Invercargill, Alys made a point of visiting her when she was in the area. She reminded me of the care Jayne took of the pot plants, the garden and the birds in an aviary at the Rest Home where she lived in Winton, of how she would sleep for much of the day and listen and take part in talk back radio discussions at night.

Alys always remembered Jayne on her birthday and at Christmas and sent her a gift. The question was always the same, “would you like chocolates or the other.” The answer was always the same, “the other”, and that was some money towards cigarettes. After Christmas Alys received a card from Jayne thanking her for remembering her in this way, a card that Alys has kept and treasures.

So, Jayne has died, passed into the loving care of her Lord who she served faithfully at the churches which she loved, and in her daily life. The legacies she leaves us are her examples of compassion for all creation, the knowledge and wisdom that she freely shared, and in the courage and bravery of living her life in the way she knew was right for her. Saint Francis once said, “I have done what was mine to do, May Christ show you what is yours”. Jayne lived that command.

In a conversation I had with Jayne after her illness she said, “God is always with me”.

We have been enriched by having known and loved Jayne and for this and for her life we give thanks to God. May she Rest now In Peace in God’s loving care.

Pam Barrett

NEWS FROM TSSF WELLINGTON

Like 12 disciples, those apart from the assembled not quite on the lakeshore, but in the seaside town of Waikanae for our first meeting of the year on Saturday, February 1st. Carol Hunter hosted us in her new home. Sunshine and Franciscan peace and goodness set the scene for our final study session from the A Rocha book on Climate Change. It engendered some lively discussion and a suggestion to work closely with our TSSF JPIC committee, and to consider practical ways to support local efforts beyond the personal to effectively counter climate change (e.g, *Forest and Bird* campaigns).

MEETING STUDY SESSIONS 2020: We will be led in a JPIC study *from* March, and then *later in the year* take up study and reflection collectively as mutual support on our own Franciscan spiritual journey from the booklet *Reflections on the Journey*.

We decided that at each meeting, after study session, and before lunch and Eucharist, that we would each share something of recent impact on our life of some aspect of our TSSF Principles.

We have two members of the OEF (Order of Evangelical Franciscans) regularly at our meetings, both contributing valuably. We have a new Postulant, and an Enquirer.

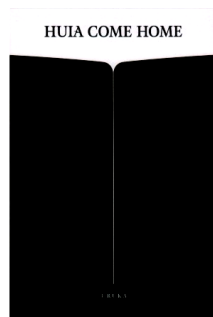
Pax et bonum. Richard Roberts (Scribe)

P.S. Just as an aside, and relevant to the “issue” of Climate Change, for Lenten reading I bought a book entitled *Saying YES to Life* by Ruth Valerio, and the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lenten Book 2020. Briefly, it draws imaginatively on Genesis 1 as she draws creatively on themes of light, water, land, seasons, other creatures, human kind, Sabbath rest to resurrection hope to matters of environmental, ethical and social concern. It’s most readable!

Book Review

I have just finished reading a great book called “Huia Come Home” by Jay Ruka, published in 2017.

This book written by an indigenous Maori Christian is both provocative and challenging. Provocative because it is honest and factual and challenging because it provides material that we the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand need to apply so that the story of Christianity in New Zealand can be told from an indigenous, honest viewpoint not solely from colonial or Western traditions that encompass a warped worldview of church.



We have a rich history of Christ in New Zealand from the first sermon in 1814 through the Treaty of Waitangi forward until today. Ruka challenges our thinking as to why our churches are not full of Maori people and offers ideas of how this can be addressed.

Ruka starts with a whakatoki (proverb) “Huia e huia, tangata Kotahi” Huia, your destiny is to bring everyone together.

Ruka quotes from a variety of sources including the Anglican Church past and present and also Richard Rohr. It is this connection I found interesting, as the knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Jesus Christ and the guardianship of planet earth is very closely aligned to the thoughts and teachings of St Francis.

I would challenge each region of TSSF (NZ) to read and study this small (140 pages) book, both to understand who we are, where we have come from and how we can engage with our Maori brothers and sisters in Christ. The result could be to develop a richer understanding and knowledge but also a way of encouraging Maori to become Franciscans.

Huia, Come Home is published by Oati, ISBN: 9781877487996, \$29.00 and I purchased my copy at Manna Books under the Church History section.

Peace and enjoy. Bryan Carey (NIC)

A Letter from Clare - *From Little Portion Issue 16*

Ann Leigh, from the Torbay Local Group in the Devon Area, was privileged to spend two terms at the International Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury in 2008. She studied the four Letters that Clare wrote to Agnes of Prague, and here imagines her writing to Ann [and any Tertiary] in 2020.

My Dearest Sister,

As you begin this new decade by following the Lord Jesus Christ and inspired by the example of our Father Francis, I assure you of my blessing and prayers.

You ask me how you can reflect the love of Christ in your daily life (*Principles*, Day 20). Firstly, I suggest you look in a mirror. What do you see? Yourself, of course, but what a 'self'! Whatever you look like, however wrinkled or scarred you are, you are a child of God, made in his likeness and loved by him. Rejoice in that.

In yourself see the Lord and give him thanks. Then see yourself as a mirror of his love and care for others.

How is that possible? I ask you to turn to one of the scriptures that I love dearly, the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs. Let us consider a few of the verses:

She is a hard worker, always busy and looking after her family's needs [v. 27]

To be able to work is a grace, a gift from God, while idleness is an enemy of the soul. I would wash the beds of my sick sisters, and care for them when they were ill. Although in my final illness I was almost completely dependent on others, I still tried to work with my hands. I would ask my sisters to raise me up a little so that I could continue spinning, and the yarn I produced they made into altar linen for local churches. You can show the love of Christ by the way you serve others.

She speaks with a gentle wisdom [v. 26]

I always tried to write, and speak, words of comfort and encouragement. You must be warm, gentle, full of love for everyone

whose life you touch. Encourage others by your cheerfulness, the light in your eyes, the smile on your lips. Even if you are suffering yourself let others see your joy. Remember them in your prayers and know that when you pray you are never alone. It is you and God together entering into the very depths of the person for whom you are praying.

She is generous to the poor and needy [v. 20]

Even before I met Francis, I tried to follow the example of the woman in Proverbs, insisting that some of the food served to me should be given to the poor. Then I sold my inheritance and gave away the proceeds, despite the opposition of my family. I always taught my sisters that poverty must be very dear to us, since the Lord Jesus Christ preferred it before all else. Francis led me to embrace Lady Poverty, as he had done himself. Remember that everything you have comes from God, to be shared with others.

She honours the Lord [v. 30]

Francis taught me always to observe the Holy Gospel, to meditate continually on the humanity of my Lord Jesus Christ: his humble birth, his wondrous life, his death and his glorious resurrection.

As I contemplated more and more on the cross, I identified with Christ. I have learned that Jesus fills, Jesus satisfies, Jesus meets all my needs. Look at him, and then show him to everyone you meet.

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My dearest sister, I would like to share so much more with you. Much has changed in the world and in the Church over the past 800 years, but followers of our Father Francis are still called to reflect the image of Christ in their lives. That was my calling, and it is now yours.

Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me,

Clare

## **Questions**

**In what ways are you trying to be an example to others?**

**What can stop you reflecting Christ in your life?**



Above: San Damiano Church in Assisi  
Below: The Cloister in San Damiano Church



**We invite you to host a [Living the Change](#) Supper or a conversation in your faith community.**

***Living the Change* focuses on making a change in our own lives as a vital part of the path to a sustainable future. We need to transform our own lives and learn how to “live the change” day to day.**

**We’re bringing together friends and neighbours of diverse faiths and spiritualities for climate-friendly events around the world during the second annual Time for Living the Change.**

These gatherings let us reflect, share, and make a real difference together. We invite you to organize an event in your faith community today.

We’ve developed a great toolkit to help you organize your own *Living the Change* Supper or guided conversation, which has everything you’ll need to create a really special event — discussion guides, social media tools, even some delicious plant-based recipes. By downloading this helpful toolkit, you will:

- Learn which actions matter most for the climate crisis (hint: diet, transportation and home energy use are key)
- Share your feelings and concerns about the challenges of making a change in your own life and in your local community
- Have an opportunity to make a personal resolution — a commitment to walk more gently on the Earth.

We will also provide support through our trainings, our community engagement, and broader opportunities for reflection and action.

**You’re invited to become part of our transformative climate movement!**

**[Will you join us?](#)**

We are answering the climate challenge by reconnecting with our deepest values and making changes ourselves. This personal commitment will enable us to go much farther than ever before. By changing our own lives, we can change the world. Will you join us on this journey?

**We are *Living the Change*. [We invite you to join us.](#)**

