**JAEI ENVIRONMENTAL CORNER**

**Upcoming COP21 in Paris**

Yes, It’s that time of the year again! From 30 November -11 December 2015 will see UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) hold COP 21 (Conference of the Parties) in Paris, France.

**COP - What’s it all about?**

The international political response to climate change began at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, where the ‘Rio Convention’ included the adoption of the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This convention set out a framework for action aimed at stabilising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) to avoid “dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.” The UNFCCC which entered into force on 21 March 1994, now has a near-universal membership of 195 parties.

The main objective of the annual Conference of Parties (COP) is to review the Convention’s implementation. The first COP took place in Berlin in 1995 and significant meetings since then have included COP3 where the Kyoto Protocol was adopted, COP11 where the Montreal Action Plan was produced, COP15 in Copenhagen where an agreement to success Kyoto Protocol was unfortunately not realised and COP17 in Durban where the Green Climate Fund was created.



*Shows the top 40 CO2 emitting countries and related in the world in 1990 and 2013, including per capita figures. The data is taken from the EU Edgar database.*

In 2015 **COP21, also known as the 2015 Paris Climate Conference,** will, for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, aim to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate from all the nations of the world, with the aim of keeping global warming below 2°C Leadership of the negotiations is yet to be determined.

France will play a leading international role in hosting this seminal conference, and COP21 will be one of the largest international conferences ever held in the country. The conference is expected to **attract close to 50,000 participants including 25,000 official delegates** from government, intergovernmental organisations, UN agencies, NGOs and civil society.

Pope Francis published an encyclical called *Laudato si'* intended, in part, to influence the conference. The encyclical calls for action against human-caused climate change. The International Trade Union Confederation has called for the goal to be "zero carbon, zero poverty", and the general secretary Sharan Burrow has repeated that there are "no jobs on a dead planet".

The overarching goal of the Convention is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase to 2 °C above pre-industrial levels. However, Christiana Figueres acknowledged in the closing briefing at the 2012 Doha conference "*the current pledges under the second commitment period of the Kyoto protocol are clearly not enough to guarantee that the temperature will stay below 2 °C and there is an ever increasing gap between the action of countries and what the science tells us.*"

During previous climate negotiations, countries agreed to outline actions they intend to take within a global agreement by March 2015. These commitments are known as Intended Nationally Determined Contributions or INDCs.

Without substantial action, our global community will lock itself into further warming that will threaten the integrity of economic, ecological, and societal systems, with particularly negative impacts for those who are marginalized.

International leaders must make bold, effective, and practical commitments at COP21 to keep the impacts of climate change within limits that human societies can manage.

International leaders must make fair commitments at COP21 towards an equitable distribution of the costs and consequences of climate change

**What was the outcome of COP20 in Lima?**

In 2014, C**OP20 held in Lima attracted over 15,000 official delegates**, and negotiators concluded talks with the ‘Lima Call for Climate Action’, a draft document that lays the foundations for a new global climate deal.

Alongside COP20, there were **more than 400 conferences** in which new research projects and initiatives were presented. The **Sustainable Innovation Forum 2014 was the largest commercially-focused event during COP20, attracting high profile speakers, celebrities and over 500 pre-approved delegates** representing private sector, government, NGO, UN agencies and civil society. During the two weeks of COP20, over 140 press conferences were held and more than 900 journalists from around the world covered the international event.

### ****How can we get involved with COP21?****

### **We are nowhere near Paris, but we can become ***REALLY*** involved! – ***WE*** can PRAY!!**

### In an unabashedly Church-meets-State moment, #Pray4COP21 is calling prayer warriors across the globe to do their part to sustain 2,000 hours of non-stop prayer. These global, united prayers seek God’s grace to ennoble the powers of the world that they may forge a strong, ambitious, and fair climate treaty at December’s 21st Conference of Parties Climate Summit.

### **We encourage all Parishes to include prayers for COP21 in all Services**

### *****Pray:*****

### **That peace, humility and fairness will prevail among the delegates of COP21**

* For world leaders to keep global average temperatures within 1.5 degrees Celsius of pre-industrial levels
* That God, who is love, grant the world leaders attending COP21 the ability to see the sufferings of the world and to be “far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach” in forging agreements that protect all life across the globe in every stage of development.
* That the world leaders at COP will have the wisdom to see fragility, dignity and goodness of all humanity and all creation, which is entrusted to us , as one family, to nurture, protect and love
* That all, like St Francis, will see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness
* For all people, especially the wealthy and those with the means to consume the goods of the world that we may find our true joy not in the consumption of the world, but in the love and fulfilment we find in God
* For those communities and regions that have suffered or are suffering from climate change impacts
* On Sunday, 1st November and Monday 1st December - ***Fast for the Climate***

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| **A prayer for our earth**  All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe  and in the smallest of your creatures.  You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.  Pour out upon us the power of your love,  that we may protect life and beauty.  Fill us with peace, that we may live  as brothers and sisters, harming no one.  O God of the poor,  help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  so precious in your eyes.  Bring healing to our lives,  that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.  Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain  at the expense of the poor and the earth.  Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  to be filled with awe and contemplation,  to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature  as we journey towards your infinite light.  We thank you for being with us each day.  Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.  *(Pope Francis: Laudato Si*) |