



Mercy Integral Ecology Fellowship Program

INSTITUTE OF
SISTERS of MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Background and Objectives

This fellowship program is for emerging leaders in Integral Ecology awareness and animation who have a desire to be part of the ongoing enhancement and development of reflective action for Gospel justice in response to the cries of Earth and of those rendered poor.

Inspired by Laudato Si' and ancient Indigenous wisdom, the program is intended to empower and equip leaders for a future which presents many unknown challenges in light of the climate crisis and other related existential threats.

The fellowship will be offered to a committed group of approx. 4 emerging leaders who will engage with a range of components of learning and experiences to better enable them and their communities to respond to these challenges.

In the words of Pope Francis, “the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion” (LS 152). Therefore, one of the essential components will be exploring the interconnections and rich inspiration of our faith traditions, our spirituality and integral ecology. Selected fellows will ideally already be exploring their own integral spirituality and are curious about how this might inspire communities toward living in greater harmony within Earth’s limits.

This is a fully-funded program sponsored by ISMAPNG, and supported by Catholic Religious Australia, and Catholic Earthcare. Fellows will be required to invest time and energy to actively engage in all components during and after the program, taking up opportunities to engage within a unique network and contribute to the Institute’s efforts, within the broader Church community, on Integral Ecology into the future.

“Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change” (LS 202).

The Program

There are 5 Components of the Program. Each of these are essential for the completion of the fellowship:

1. Experience

Three Engagements and Encounters in sites of regeneration, healing and active hope:

- Sydney and the Blue Mountains – visit Wivenhoe (the regeneration site of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan), French’s Forest parish Landcare site with local Aboriginal Elders, The Coal Loader (Waverton), Catholic Earthcare, Australian Catholic University, Blue Mountains Bushcare projects and a regenerative farm. Each day will have opportunities for prayer, ritual and contemplation. (3 days – 22-24 March 2022)
- Melbourne – Staying at Santa Casa, Queenscliff, visit sites such as Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, CERES,

St Joseph’s by the Sea, Mercy Hub, Flemington Community Gardens, Abbotsford Convent and a regeneration site by Indigenous Design. Each day will have opportunities for prayer, ritual and contemplation. (3 days – 3-5 May 2022)

- Cairns – Rainforest retreat at Mercy Seville Conference Centre, and Kuku Yalanji Daintree Rainforest Indigenous immersion experience, Turtles sanctuary (Fitzroy Island) (3 days – 16-18 August 2022, arriving evening of 15 August)

All three experiences are a compulsory part of the program. Candidates must commit to attending all three prior to being accepted into the fellowship.

2. Learn

Guided by the Laudato Si' Action Platform framework, we will engage in a multi-disciplinary course of learning designed to embrace the challenges of our time. This will include monthly webinars, reading modules and experiences to learn about Laudato Si', Indigenous wisdom, Integral Ecology, the Universe Story, Earth systems, eco-theology, designing regenerative cultures, leadership, advocacy, spirituality, facilitation, grant application writing and other topics. We will learn not only about our ecology but also ourselves and our community. Online participation will be essential.

3. Reflect

During the program, each fellow will be supported by a relevant mentor who will help guide them in aspects of their own personal reflection and insights into the program. Each of the three live-in experiences will develop a contemplative stance. The role of the mentor will also be to guide the development of the personal project (see below).

4. Act

Get involved in bio-regional community, joining a local community group working towards regeneration, e.g. keeping the local waterways clean, enabling access to local organic food, a climate action group or keeping the local remnant forest protected.

5. Create

Each Fellow, working closely with a mentor, will be required to choose a pertinent Integral Ecology issue related to the degradation/regeneration of Earth and /or the displacement of peoples. The fellow will undertake a personal project that educates, moves, informs and/or provides specific actions for justice in relation to this issue. This could include the creation of a retreat day, an educational presentation, a garden, a new policy, an artwork, or other forms of reflective expression based on research and experience. This will be shared to a public audience towards the end of the program, in November 2022.

Ongoing Commitment

Following graduation from the program, it is expected that fellows commit to being part of a network for the following 12 months, concluding at the end of 2023.

This will involve:

- Coming together to share experiences with fellows 4 times per year (via Zoom)
- Participating in the Integral Ecology animation work of ISMAPNG, Catholic Religious Australia and Catholic Earthcare in various ways as invited to do so
- Continued involvement with regeneration work locally within the fellow's bioregion (community group, parish, etc).

Application Process

- Letter of application and Resume – Due 11 December 2021 to sally.neaves@ismapng.org.au
- Tell us about yourself, how you meet the desired attributes of applicants and why you are interested in this fellowship's objectives
- Written Reference and 2 other referees to contact
- Interview with a small panel

Demonstrated attributes of applicants

- A growing love of and curiosity for the natural world and Indigenous wisdom
- Genuine passion for addressing some of the most urgent challenges of our time
- An interest in problem solving and design
- Optimistic and committed to see things through
- Community-minded leader
- Open to learning about self, community and integral ecology
- Open to spirituality/developing one's inner life

More Information

Please contact Integral Ecology Animator of ISMAPNG, Sally Neaves, for more information. Sally.neaves@ismapng.org.au