

2024 Mercy Integral Ecology Emerging Leaders

The Mercy Integral Ecology Emerging Leaders Fellowship, now in its third year, has begun for 2024.

The following people are the 2024 Fellows:

Liesje Barratt



Liesje Barratt lives in Glenbrook in the Blue Mountains National Park. She is the Mission Formation Coordinator at Catholic Mission and is working with others to lead the organisation in its commitment to an Ecological Action plan. Liesje is passionate about helping to connect people with the wonders of our more-than-human world and creative practices that offer active hope for planetary wellbeing. By joining this Fellowship, Liesje hopes to be able to grow in her own integral spirituality, knowledge, and skills to better lead and inspire others in her workplace and beyond.

Lucy Eaton



Lucy is a member of Young Mercy Links who moved from Adelaide to Melbourne in January 2023 after graduating with a Bachelor of Environmental Policy and Management. She has recently undertaken an internship with Victorian Climate Resilient Councils. This involved producing a report evaluating and analysing climate adaptation literature for local government in Victoria. By joining this fellowship, Lucy hopes to learn more about climate justice, and develop the skills that will support her in the future as she strives towards a meaningful career in the sustainability and social justice sphere.

Amanda Jones



Amanda comes from Ayr in North Queensland and is currently the Principal at St Francis Catholic School. Her interests include walking on the beach and reading. By joining this Fellowship, Amanda hopes to gain a deeper understanding of the connection between ecology, Catholic teachings and spirituality.

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Grant Power



Grant is the Curriculum Leader for Religion at All Hallows' School in Brisbane. In his spare time he is undertaking field research on spirituality in Northern Rivers for his PhD studies. In the Fellowship, he hopes to gain skills and experience in connecting eco-spirituality and environmental action.

Sayra Samudio



Sayra is from Paraguay, but is currently living in Mulwala NSW, near Yarrawonga. She has recently completed a Master's degree in Agricultural Science with an emphasis on sustainable food production at the University of Melbourne. She has worked on regenerative agriculture and holistic rangeland management projects. Sayra applied for the Fellowship because of her fervent passion for nature and her desire to contribute to building more sustainable food production systems.

Angela Wilczek



Angela hails from the Central Queensland coastal town of Yeppoon. She is currently the Caritas Diocesan Director for the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton, as well as the Parish Secretary for the Capricorn Coast Catholic Parish. Her interests include connecting to God through the beauty and wonder of creation, and she is passionate about preserving the gift of creation for future generations. By joining this Fellowship, Angela hopes to deepen her understanding of Integral Ecology and her connection to God.

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Yemersrach Assefa



Yemesrach is a 27-year-old woman from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. She currently works as a Youth Ministry Coordinator at the Catholic Bishops Conference of Ethiopia - General Secretariat. She is passionate about community engagement and social responsibility agendas, with a particular focus on spirituality. Yemesrach is also passionate about empowering young people and promoting their engagement in various activities, especially integral ecology.

Catherine Holmes



Catherine is from Melbourne where she is currently the Sustainability Leader and Head of Humanities – Curriculum and Assessment at Xavier College in Kew. She is very passionate about teaching students about the environment and human impact on the environment and supporting schools in transitioning to a future with a sustainability and environmental mindset. She also loves bushwalking and getting into nature as much as possible. By joining this fellowship, Catherine hopes to work with likeminded people and continue her journey in connecting ecology with spirituality.

Antonina Fieni



Antonina is a teacher working in various schools and at the Georges River Environmental Education Centre in Sydney, teaching sustainability and empowering young people to minimise their ecological footprint for a better world. She loves the outdoors, mostly spending time in the bush or paddling up creeks and rivers. Antonina is passionate about sustainable practices, inclusiveness and Aboriginal spirituality. She is excited to be a part of the Mercy Integral Ecology Emerging Leaders Fellowship, to have the opportunity to enrich her knowledge and understanding of integral ecology and work towards collaborating with others in the wider community to make changes for a better future.

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Chadley Peerman



For the past 16 years, Chadley has worked as a Social Worker in educational settings, working with young people and their families. Having spent most of her life in the Geelong region, Chadley now resides in Camperdown where she is involved with Mercy Regional College. Chadley has a keen interest in the wellbeing of humanity and all life that surrounds and supports our experience. To this end, she has volunteered in various ways with several organisations and local community projects.

Caroline Vaitkunas RSM

Caroline hails from Melbourne. She is interested in working together to care for the wonders of creation. By joining the fellowship, Caroline hopes to be further inspired for the journey.

Emily Webster



Emily is a teacher at Xavier Catholic College, Ballina and has worked within the Diocese of Lismore for the past 8 years. She applied for this fellowship to learn more about initiatives she could integrate into her school but also for the opportunity to further understand ecology through the lens of her own spiritual life and how we as Catholics can be responsible environmental stewards. As educator and as a parent, Emily believes it is crucial that we empower our young people for a future which is unknown by drawing on the rich history and knowledge of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to hear the cries of our Earth and truly listen to her needs.

Therese Welsh



Therese is an educator, farmer and labyrinth facilitator from Eugowra, NSW. She brings a wealth of skills from leadership to education, collaboration, documentation, and creativity. Therese has a passion to care for Earth and is deeply committed to her personal faith, ever deepening her connection to the natural world and the universe. Therese applied for this Fellowship to develop her skills and provide a strong framework to continue to support her community and bioregion. She hopes to continue the work of regeneration, learning to lead and support a variety of groups, whilst developing her own inner life.