

# The Health 2021 (green) Newsletter

Version: 14 August 2021

The area of **Nature and Health** in the New Humanity Branch of the Focolare Movement involves everything connected with our life. It concerns the whole spectrum of human life, including birth, illness, suffering and death.

So 'green' is about the health of a person and of the environment. When love refracts like light into 'green,' it shines on these parts of life: Food; Families and communities; Sport and fitness; Rest and recreation; The Environment; Personal health, including illness; and Healthcare.

For more information see website - <http://www.mdc-net.org/>

The **New Humanity Branch** includes people of all faiths and with no faith, as well as all social and racial or cultural backgrounds. We try to encourage reciprocity in work, projects, discussions, and ideas with others through God's love, which brings unity. This way of offering our ideas and activities renews relationships, environments, and structures, even influencing politicians and legislators.

For more information see website - <http://www.umanitanuova.org/en/>

The **Focolare Movement** is an international faith-based organisation working for unity and dialogue between people of different faiths and all people of goodwill. The Movement was founded by Chiara Lubich in Italy during 1943. One of its key points, 'to be first to love' motivates everyone to reach out to others and try to be a supportive community.

**The Focolare Movement's spirituality**, inspired by the Gospel, generates a way of life that responds to widespread questions on the meaning of life and on authenticity. Reciprocal love has revealed a 'paradigm of unity,' a 'practical way' for spiritual and social renewal.

For more information see website - <https://www.focolare.org/>

\*\*\*\*\*

## Stay Connected!

The Oceania Health Interest Group has set up a WhatsApp site for those working or interested in nature and health (physical, mental, or spiritual health). If you or others are interested in joining, please contact the Editors listed below with your telephone number and Email address.

Martin Van Lith      Contact: [mjvanlith74@gmail.com](mailto:mjvanlith74@gmail.com)      Tel.: +61 43 483 5030

Ann-Marie Diggins      Contact: [ann\\_marie\\_diggins@aapt.net.au](mailto:ann_marie_diggins@aapt.net.au)

Mario Merlo      Contact: [mario.merlo@focolare.org](mailto:mario.merlo@focolare.org)      Tel.: +64 22 622 0170

## Open Invitation

Your feedback and input are invited for including in future editions of this Newsletter. Any relevant experiences, important sources of information, things that work for you, particularly related to the COVID-19 pandemic or in integral ecology are welcome for sharing. Send to the Editors. **Looking forward to receiving your responses, input, and experiences.**

## Rather than Shutting Down, 'Live the Other'

*Here are some excerpts that Chiara Lubich gave on June 19, 2004 speech, "What future for a multicultural, multiethnic, multireligious society?" given at Westminster Central Hall in London before an interreligious audience. It was one of Lubich's last speeches, one that preceded a lengthy period of illness, prior to her death on March 14, 2008. With the charisma of unity given to her, Chiara addresses situations and ongoing developments that are now much more evident today than they were at that time and charts a fundamental course by which to respond.*



It is a matter of weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who rejoice. Making ourselves one: it is the attitude that guided the apostle Paul, who wrote that he made himself a Jew with the Jews, Greek with the Greeks, all things to all (see 1 Cor 9:19-22).

It is particularly important that we follow his example so that we can **establish a sincere, friendly dialogue with everyone.**

Yes, dialogue — a word especially suited to our times. Dialogue means that people meet together and even though they have different ideas, they speak with serenity and sincere love towards the other person in an effort to find some kind of agreement that can clarify misunderstandings, calm disputes, resolve conflicts, and even at times eliminate hatred.

This dialogue, especially among the faithful of different religions, today is more indispensable than ever if we want to avoid the great evils threatening our societies.

It is a matter of momentarily **putting aside** even the most beautiful and greatest things we have: our own faith, our own convictions, in order to be "nothing" in front of the other person, a "nothingness of love."

By doing so we put ourselves in an **attitude of learning**, and in reality, we always have something to learn.

If we are motivated by this kind of love, other people will be able to express themselves because they feel accepted. They can give themselves because they find someone who listens. So, then we become acquainted with their faith, their culture, their way of speaking. We enter their world, in some way we become enculturated in them and we are enriched.

This attitude enables us to **contribute to making our multicultural societies become intercultural**, that is, made up of cultures open to one another and in a profound dialogue of love with one another.

Our complete openness and acceptance then predispose the other person to listen to us. We have noticed, in fact, that when people see someone dying to self in order to “make him or herself one” with others, they are struck by this and often ask for an explanation.

This leads us then to what the Pope calls “**respectful proclamation.**” “Respect” is the key word in every dialogue. Being true to God, to ourselves, and being sincere with our neighbour, we share what our faith affirms without imposing anything, without any trace of proselytism, but only **out of love.**

However, through the Holy Spirit who is always present when we love, our brothers or sisters are struck by something we say, something alive and spiritual which echoes within them. These are the “**seeds of the Word**” which the love of God has placed in every religion. Or while we are speaking, our brothers or sisters identify some aspect of those purely human values that the Lord, in creating us, planted in the core of every person and in every culture.

And on the basis of these “seeds” or values we can offer — always serving, however, always with gentle and boundless discretion — those aspects of truth we possess which can give greater fullness and completeness to what our neighbour already believes. First, he or she gave to us; now we do the same. And in an atmosphere of communion created by this exchange of gifts, the truth is gradually revealed, and we feel that it has brought us closer to one another.

Real, true, heart-felt fraternity is, in fact, the fruit of a love capable of making itself dialogue, relationship, that is, a love that, far from arrogantly closing itself within its own boundaries, opens itself toward others and works together with all people of goodwill in order to build together unity and peace in the world.

C. Lubich, *Essential Writings*, New City Press (Hyde Park, New York), pgs. 337-344.  
<https://www.newcitypress.com/>

\*\*\*\*\*

## Vaccination Hesitancy

Feedback received from several readers of the Health Newsletters and people in the general community is that they have concerns about vaccination and thus are hesitating or reluctant to be vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus. Some of this hesitancy comes as a result of being afraid, not being well informed, language or cultural barriers, available information not fully understood, difficulty in access due to physical or mental disability, suspicion or distrust of authority, as well as confusing messages from various and sometimes unreliable sources.

It is a suffering that we have to take on and find ways to “**establish a sincere, friendly dialogue with everyone**”.

All health departments in Australia and New Zealand are encouraging vaccine take-up once every eligible person has the opportunity to receive the vaccination.

The aim is for each of us to make an informed decision about vaccinating against the Covid-19 virus.

The following are various sound announcements from leaders to address some of the expressed concerns.

### **Augustine (Yob) Doronila, Co-delegate for the Focolare zone of Oceania**

Dear everyone, I take this opportunity to sincerely encourage everyone who can do so to get vaccinated to immunise us against the harmful and possibly fatal effects of the Covid-19 virus.

I for one immediately received my 1<sup>st</sup> dose when I could in May 2021. I will shortly receive the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose in two weeks' time. I wholeheartedly support the plea of Pope Francis and many religious and civic leaders to encourage everyone to be vaccinated for their well-being, for their loved ones and our wider communities. They have given their moral authority to this important scientific and medical effort to combat this pandemic.



I would like to draw your attention to an initiative that The Focolare Movement has committed to increasing awareness for the equitable distribution of the vaccine especially to the poorer countries.

<http://www.unitedworldproject.org/en/workshop/updates-about-the-a-vaccine-for-all-campaign/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vatican-un-idUKKBN2A51GM>

### **Religious leaders warn faithful against vaccine conspiracy theories**

The Moderator of the Uniting Church NSW/ACT Reverend Simon Hansford has also appealed to church leaders to do what they can to overcome COVID-19 misinformation and vaccine hesitancy.

“There is concern, especially in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, that many people are being misled, or misinformed, about vaccination and COVID-19. This, among other issues, is leading to their hesitancy about receiving vaccination,” he said.

Anglican Archbishop of Sydney Kanishka Raffel said the church recognised COVID-19 as a community and global public health challenge which vaccines could help restrain. While all citizens had freedom to choose whether they wanted to get vaccinated, he said, “Christians would be especially conscious of the command of Jesus to love their neighbour as themselves” and getting vaccinated would help protect others.

“Although COVID-19 reminds us of our mortality, we cannot say it is a specific judgment of God. Christians are not immune from disease but receive the benefits of healthcare and medical science with thanksgiving to God,” he said.

“In God’s kindness, a number of vaccines have been developed and those available in Australia are helping to restrain the spread and severity of the virus.”

Archbishop Raffel said the Church was relying on the NSW Health advice and encouraging people to speak to their doctors about getting vaccinated.

“This will not only protect them but also members of their own household, especially the vulnerable.”

Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher has advised parishioners that they would need a “really serious reason” not to get vaccinated. He said it was a pity that some people are “dead set against all vaccines” and that others feared the side-effects.

“If a vaccination makes us immune to COVID that will be good for each person vaccinated. If it stops us transmitting the virus, that will be good for those with whom we come in contact, and for the whole community. These vaccines will save lives, especially of elderly people,” he said.

*By Anna Petty, Sydney Morning Herald, 4 August 2021* More information: [Religious leaders warn faithful against vaccine conspiracy theories \(smh.com.au\)](#)

### **Pope Francis and the Pope emeritus Benedict XVI received Covid-19 vaccine**

Pope Francis and Pope emeritus Benedict XVI received their doses of the Covid-19 vaccine in the Vatican. The vaccination campaign against Covid-19 in the Vatican which began in January 2021 continues with both Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI being some of the earliest in having received their doses of the vaccine.

More information - [Pope Francis and the Pope emeritus receive Covid-19 vaccine - Vatican News](#)

### **Pope suggests people have moral obligation to take coronavirus vaccine**

Pope Francis suggested that people have a moral obligation to receive one of the new coronavirus vaccines as soon as possible.

"I believe that morally everyone must take the vaccine," the pontiff said in a Jan. 10 interview for Italy's TG5 news program. **"It is the moral choice because it is about your life but also the lives of others."**

More information - [Pope Francis gets first dose of Covid-19 vaccine - CNN](#)

### **Vatican CDF says use of anti-Covid vaccines “morally acceptable”**

A note from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), which was approved by Pope Francis, gives the green light during the pandemic to the use of vaccines produced with cell lines derived from two fetuses aborted in the 1960s.

Due to the situation of the ongoing pandemic, **“all vaccinations recognized as clinically safe and effective can be used in good conscience with the certain knowledge that the use of such vaccines does not constitute formal cooperation with the abortion from which the cells used in production of the vaccines derive.”**

21 December 2020

More information - [Vatican CDF says use of anti-Covid vaccines “morally acceptable” - Vatican News](#)

## **The Catholic Archbishop of Sydney on the ethics of the vaccine**

Archbishop Anthony Fisher moved to dispel in August 2020 some mainstream media claims that he and other faith leaders opposed a potential COVID-19 vaccine because it included cell lines from an aborted foetus.

"I have not, nor would I, call for Catholics to boycott the vaccine if it became available," Archbishop Fisher said on Facebook, after a furore that provoked a stream of angry posts.

Archbishop Fisher, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney Glenn Davies and Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Australia Makarios Griniezakis raised concerns after the federal government confirmed it had struck an agreement with British pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca to secure at least twenty-five million doses if Oxford University vaccine trials on humans prove successful and safe.

"What I did was join with other faith leaders to ask the Prime Minister to, in addition to the agreement made with AstraZeneca, pursue arrangements for other vaccines and not just limit themselves to one, which some in our community will find ethically concerning," Archbishop Fisher posted.

**"It is in all our interests that a vaccine is widely taken up, and so it is deeply disappointing that my words weren't reported accurately or fairly."**

More information: <https://catholicleader.com.au/news/australia/sydney-archbishop-corrects-misrepresentation-of-ethical-concerns-with-covid-19-vaccine-option/>

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP has welcomed the Vatican's 21 December 2020 statement that when alternative vaccines are not available, it is morally acceptable to receive COVID-19 vaccines developed or tested using cell lines originating from aborted fetuses

More information: <https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/archbishop-welcomes-cdf-statement-on-covid-vaccines/>

## **Vaccines should never be political**

An article on the covid vaccine by Professor Francis Collins, a winner of the Templeton prize who is one of the most important medical scientists of modern history thanks to his work on deciphering the human genome. He is a person of deep Christian faith and is the Director of the USA National Institutes of Health (NIH).

"We don't need to be polarized about a virus that's killing people," Dr. Francis Collins said.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/08/08/nih-collins-vaccines-politics-502772>  
<https://www.webmd.com/coronavirus-in-context/video/francis-collins>

\*\*\*\*\*



## Prayer for those affected by the Covid-19 Virus

Let us pray for those infected by, or who have departed for heaven because of, the Covid-19 virus, for those who are caring for them and for our communities, that they will be testimonies of faith and hope at this moment.

Let us pray also for the components of the worldwide scientific community who have been engaged in researching the various anti-covid vaccines. And let us pray that governments throughout the world work and commit themselves so that the entire human population will be vaccinated as soon as possible, in the vision of the World comprehended as One.

## Churches Together in Prayer

The team at the [National Day of Prayer & Fasting](#), in consultation with many church leaders (including Archbishop Mark Coleridge) and prayer networks, including Bishop Philip Huggins and the [National Council of Churches](#), is calling Australia to united prayer in the light of the current COVID-19 crisis.

We are drawn to pray together across the land, given the current level of need and distress. Our theme is found in this beautiful liturgical prayer: **“Lord have mercy — Jesus have mercy”**. Inspiration for this prayer is found in the story of the blind beggar in Luke 18:35 and his cry to Jesus for healing.

This simple prayer for mercy is found throughout the scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments.

**“Our eyes look to the Lord our God till He shows us His mercy.”** — Ps. 123:2

Participants are of course encouraged to add to this prayer, and also to fast as they feel led.

We encourage you to pray in your own church and in your own way at this time. To facilitate a national prayer focus, the team at the National Day of Prayer & Fasting are providing the following prayer resources and opportunities.

1. Every day from **Monday 16 – Sunday 22 August 2021**, a **Daily Devotion** will be sent out to those who register. Each Daily Devotion will include a prayer from a different Church leader. Register Below.
2. Every night from **8PM AEST, Monday 16 – Sunday 22 August 2021**, a nightly **Prayer Call** will take place with input from a different church leader each night. Register Below.
3. On **Sunday 22 August 2021 from 9AM – 9PM**, the National Day of Prayer & Fasting team will host a **Zoom Prayer call** featuring Church leaders and Indigenous Christian Leaders. Come for a short while or come for a long while. Let us join in prayer for our nation. Register Below.

More information: [REGISTER FOR AUSTRALIA PRAYS BELOW – National Day of Prayer & Fasting](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

## COVID-19 emergency

### A communion of goods that bears witness to fraternity

The coronavirus crisis challenges us as people to review our lifestyles and increase the witness we give to fraternity.

For more information on how to donate for COVID-19 emergency follow the link below:  
<https://www.focolare.org/en/covid/>

## Shared Experiences

### Responses to Covid Pandemic from the Pacific

Throughout May and June this year the Focolare Movement in Oceania joined together for moments of prayer for peace and for an end to the pandemic. The moments of prayer allowed communities from throughout Oceania to join via Zoom to pray in response to a call made by Margaret Karam, the Focolare Movement's president.

Each week a community in a city or area lead the prayer. One of these sessions was prepared by the communities of the Pacific Islands. Below we share initiatives carried out by people in two of these communities during Covid.



This photo shows Eroni Ratuwalesi from the Fijian Focolare community. Eroni responded in a very practical way helping families needing support with basic food supplies. Together with "Fiji Youth Legends Network" a group he founded in 2017, Eroni collected donations and distributed food packs to families in need. Donations were received from the Focolare community of Castelli Romani in Rome and from people in the Fijian diaspora around the globe. At the time of writing, more than 50 families have been helped, and further funds are to be sent from the Focolare community in Wallis Island.

In Wallis Island during their lockdown the Focolare community like everyone else was forced to stay at home. This meant their Ecological project (which was featured in the June Health Newsletter) was put on hold. However, with a proactive and very positive approach, the community members decided to use this time to tend their plots of land to grow vegetables and beautiful flowers and shrubs.



The gardens featured on the Wallis and Futuna TV news as a celebration of staying healthy and positive during lockdown. The amazing results of their hard work can be seen on this link on youtube: <https://youtu.be/fsGQy0qXehg>

Somehow the community in Wallis also found ways to raise money and generously collected for the Focolare communities doing it tough during Covid in India. As mentioned above they have also raised funds to support Eroni's project in Fiji.

*Written by Pacific Focolare*

\*\*\*\*\*



## Family Praying Together during the Covid Pandemic



The plan was for Luiza to go to Melbourne in February 2020 ahead of Giordano, her husband to take up a Volunteer role in managing Saint Paul's Retreat and Mariapolis Centre in Wantirna South for the Focolare Movement.

A month later Covid happened. The beginning of the Covid travel restrictions between NZ and Australia prevented Giordano from joining Luiza at the centre and they were separated for seven months. However, after a number of challenging flight schedules and managed isolation both Luiza and Giordano are now managing the centre in Melbourne.

The beginning of the rosary prayer group started when Luiza's youngest brother and his wife in Johannesburg, South Africa phoned her in April 2020 to wish her a happy birthday. They were being shown the centre on Whatsapp when in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament they decided to say the rosary together. At that moment Giordano's cousin in Cape Town, South Africa also phoned to give her birthday wishes and Luiza invited her to join the rosary. And so, the group grew as more members were invited to join.

Everyone was in strict lockdown. Giordano in Wellington, Luiza in Melbourne, Giordano's sister, Luiza's three brothers and sister-in-law and her cousin all in Johannesburg and Giordano's two cousins in Cape Town all joined to pray the rosary every day during this Covid reality they were all experiencing. At times the Focolarine at Wantirna joined in.

Every day since April 2020 until today there are always between 2 and 8 family members who meet on WhatsApp to pray the rosary together each giving their special prayer intentions.

Why do we continue to pray and what does this time mean to those who are praying?

Sharing our individual trials, frustrations and joys with each other and living these moments together helps keep us connected. There is great comfort in feeling our closeness and unity. We feel we are being carried through the trials and frustrations of the new reality of the Covid landscape. All the emotions and anxieties are shared in prayer time. The most beautiful gift of this time is the gratitude and calmness everyone feels when it is time to sign off and face the day.

Some of the trials shared amongst the group were job losses, loneliness, serious illness, isolation and anxiety in caring for elderly parents because of the constant fear of them getting the virus. Despite all precautions taken Giordano's mother, Ines who is 92 years old and is living with Giordano's sister and her husband in Johannesburg contracted Covid and became seriously ill. Through a combination of having had her first vaccine dose, the care of both her daughter and son who is a doctor and prayer led to her full recovery without hospitalization. Both her family carers had been vaccinated and did not contract the virus even though they were in close contact with Ines during the difficult period. We thank God for prayers answered and especially that she has fully recovered.

These are some of the comments given by the rosary family group when asked what the prayer time meant for each one:

*“I look forward to being together with everyone. It helps me calm down and feel less anxious.”*

*“Keeping connected and understanding what each one is living and experiences through the many days of uncertainty helps me face my day with more gratitude and confidence. “*

*“I feel closer to the family and am pleased that in a small way I can support them despite the distance.”*

*“It is good to be able to vent when things are so frustrating and I am feeling alone and angry.”*

*“We had fun in sharing recipes, showing each other things we were doing, the garden, crocheting for the children’s hospital, making masks for charities, our pets who joined us for the prayer time.”*

*“Seeing each other visibly in a prayerful situation gives us a sense of community, positivity and hope. “*

Did this happen before COVID? NO.....why?

Because Covid changed our lives and made us come to a full stop where we had time to connect with each other no matter whether we are living two streets away from each other or whether we are on opposite sides of the world. Distance no longer had the power to separate us and Covid helped bring us together.

We thank you Jesus and Mother Mary for comforting us and granting many prayers.

All our love and unity  
Luiza and Giordano Rigutto  
Melbourne, August 2021

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Services offered for those affected during the ongoing pandemic**

**From Dr Norm Rose -**

I offer myself via telephone and/or Skype or Zoom as a support for individuals or groups associated with the Focolare community within our Oceania zone who are affected by the effects of the pandemic.

What I can offer to people associated with the Focolare Movement in our zone is my psychological (mental) therapeutic and tele-psychiatry experience together with my experience in counselling disaster victims, free of charge. Above all, I know how to listen.

Contact details – Telephone: 0409352834

Email: [579nrose@gmail.com](mailto:579nrose@gmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Your government's website for the current rules and requirements during the ongoing pandemic (some have information in different languages)

- [NSW Government: What you can and can't do under the rules](#)
- [Queensland Government: Roadmap to easing restrictions](#)
- [ACT Government: COVID-19 - What you can and can't do](#)
- [Victorian Government: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) restrictions](#)
- [SA Government: COVID-19 Restrictions and Responsibilities](#)
- [WA Government: Coronavirus COVID-19 - What you can and can't do](#)
- [Tasmanian Government: Coronavirus COVID-19 - Current restrictions](#)
- [NT Government: Coronavirus COVID-19](#)
- [Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)
- [Ministry of Health NZ](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Looking after your mental health in the COVID-19 crisis

The following is an extract from the recent IDEAS website in Australia. IDEAS stands for Information on Disability, Education and Awareness Services. *Written by Hillary Wilde, 10 August 2021.*

<https://www.ideas.org.au/>

We know the constant changes and rising case numbers are confusing and overwhelming. Just know that even if you are in isolation, you are not alone. Here's some valuable info on [looking after your mental health in the COVID-19 crisis](#).

We are living in tough and trying times. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has had a profound impact on our day to day lives, and we are all experiencing heightened anxiety, confusion and isolation. It is okay not to be okay.

This is an unprecedented situation. Never before have our civil rights been so restricted, even if it is for the common good. Never before, in our lifetimes, have we faced such a global and widespread threat, on the heels of the most devastating bushfire season in Australian history. People with disabilities, their families and communities, are all hurting right now.

It is important to take care of yourself during this period of uncertainty and isolation from friends, family and community.

### Stay connected

Stay connected with friends and family. Try Zoom or another video calling platform so that you can see and hear your friends and family. It is important to catch up, to talk and to listen to each other. If you would normally meet up with a few friends for a drink or a coffee, try to stick to that routine and make it a virtual catch up instead. Make a time to call someone on the phone, write a letter or send something through the mail.

Read their blog on [Staying Connected in Isolation](#) for more information.

## Find things to do

If you are bored and alone, now is a great time to pick up that paintbrush or pen... read a book, find joy in baking or do a puzzle. Some helpful tips and activities to help you through your "Stay-cation" or self-isolation period. [TAFE NSW has free short courses](#) available, so why not try something new? Learning and improving your skills for re-entry to the workforce when all this subsides is a wonderful way to use your time. The Victorian Government has made "[Victoria Together](#)" bringing together many online things to do. [Podcasts](#) are another way to pass the time, there is no limit of themes to explore.

Read the blog on [Tips to get you through a Stay-cation or isolation](#) for more information.

## Take it easy

Be kind to yourself. If you are trying to work from home, facilitate your child's online learning as well as their emotional and physical wellbeing, all while trying to take care of other vulnerable people like older parents or grandparents who are self-isolating... know that you are doing the best you can and that you cannot do everything for everyone. Take some deep breaths, run yourself a hot bath or use an aromatherapy diffuser and some soft music to create a sense of calm. Mindfulness and relaxation can also be helpful at times like these. Take some time away from the news or social media.

Read more: [Self-care in the time of COVID-19](#)

## Still go outside

Exercise is still possible, even in lockdown areas people can still get out and go for a walk as long as you [follow the rules](#). Breathe the fresh air, see the sky. Exercise and physical activity are an important part of maintaining your mental health. Just 20 to 30 minutes a day... even if it is just around the block. Just be sure to stay at least two big steps away from other people and wear a mask if you can or are required.

If you have a mobility-related disability, this can be challenging or impossible. Find creative ways to connect and engage with nature. If you have a garden, take a few turns around it. Sit on your veranda in the sun for ten minutes... if you cannot get outside, bring outside in... open a window, bring a potted plant inside and care for it.

Here are some [Top Tips To Get Up, Get Moving And Get Healthy](#).

## Resources

Council for Intellectual Disabilities (CID) has made a great Easy English guide called Look after your mental health during Coronavirus. You can read or listen to it here: [Look after your mental health during Coronavirus \(Easy English\)](#)

There are also these [Self Guided Booklets](#) developed to support people with mild to moderate learning/intellectual disabilities during the COVID-19 outbreak. Produced by 3 Universities in Scotland, they have plenty of useful information no matter where you live.

Head to Health by the Australian Department of Health has a dedicated section on [COVID-19 Support](#), which contains information and links to accessing digital mental health services from home.

## **Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service**

A new 24/7 support service specifically designed to help people through the COVID-19 pandemic is now available free of charge to all Australians.

The **Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service** has been developed by Beyond Blue to address the growing mental health impact of the pandemic, including fear about the virus, financial stress, family stress, anxiety and loneliness.

The service offers easy access to a broad range of practical supports from online wellbeing tips, self-help tools to phone counselling from trained mental health professionals and peer to peer support.

### **Get help**

If you are not coping, it is important to get help. If life is in danger, call 000. Here's info on **How to get a Mental Health Care Plan**.

#### **Beyond Blue**

**Phone: 1800 512 348**

**Web: coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au**

#### **Lifeline**

**Phone: 13 11 14**

**Web: www.lifeline.org.au**

**Text: 0477 13 11 14**

#### **MindSpot - Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

MindSpot is a free digital mental health service. It provides online and telephone assessment and treatment for Australian adults with symptoms of anxiety and depression.

**Phone: 1800 614 434**

**Web: mindspot.org.au/coronavirus**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **'Hope In the Midst of Life' - JCMA Conference 2021**

**Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia**

**Updated Program - Move to Free Zoom only Presentation.**

**Dates: Sunday 25th July & Sunday 22nd August** Times: 2pm-5.30pm Venue: On Zoom.

Registration: <https://jcmahopeinmidstoflifev2.eventbrite.com.au>

For information: Contact Lorraine by email: [secretary@jcma.org.au](mailto:secretary@jcma.org.au) or call: 0419 687 593.

As people of Faith, we are learning to live with uncertainty in all areas of our lives. Given the current lockdown in Melbourne it was decided to move to a Zoom only format and hold it a free event. This conference invites participants to think about the numerous ways in which our faiths understand hope. Together we will explore hope through our stories, scriptures, and teachings, and through people who have inspired us. How can we and our communities maintain the strong foundations that sustain and give us 'Hope in the Midst of Life'? The keynote speaker - Cath Connelly, is author of 'Handbook of Hope, Emerging Stories Beyond a Disintegrating World.'

\*\*\*\*\*

## Integral Ecology



### Finding Golden Opportunities

*In the forests of Negros Occidental in the Philippines, farmers were burning cinnamon trees to be used as charcoal, pangatong or uling. It was a keen backyard gardener that rediscovered the golden tree and began collaborating with the local farmers in securing the remaining trees.*

In 2017, November Canieso-Yeo, founder of Plantsville Health counted fifty remaining cinnamon trees. Through local government funding they were able to plant 14,133 seedlings in 2019.

In the Philippines there are around nineteen endemic species of cinnamon. "Magellan and his men found a tree in Mindanao who the locals called as *caiu mana*, *caiu* meaning wood and *mana* meaning sweet."

Melbourne based botanist Dr Augustine Doronila adds "*history tells us that Spain also became interested in the Philippines because of cinnamon. In the early days cinnamon's value was equivalent to the price of gold.*"

During the Spanish period finding cinnamon was like finding an oil field, known as the *gold dust of Europe*, says social entrepreneur November Canieso-Yeo.

Her interest in organic farming led her into exploring cinnamon based products.

### Cinnamon tree as the *Tree of life*



Sustainability. [Plantsville Health](#)'s November Canieso-Yeo, Tina to many wanted to help local farmers create a sustainable livelihood while breaking the cycle of harming the environment.

"Maraming reforestation projects in the Philippines but what I noticed was it wasn't sustainable. As I collaborated with the local farmers, I realised what they have, they will use so they can support their livelihood."



It was her interest in *Kaningag*, Philippine cinnamon that led her to do more research, she adds "they didn't know that Philippine *Kaningag* is cinnamon, they only way they could earn was to burn it to make charcoal. I looked at products that can make use of cinnamon, we started with the bark."

Like the coconut tree, the cinnamon tree has many by products like the Philippine cinnamon coco sugar, Philippine cinnamon bark chip which is generally boiled for tea and drank as a natural remedy for several ailments like indigestion.

"We have found ways to use the bark, but not the leaves *sayang naman* (what a waste)." Ever determined, she started her research and discovered that the leaves can be distilled. "We sold the cinnamon oil as an essential oil; it was a hit!" says Tina. However, Tina adds "The hydrosol or aromatic water wasn't as popular back then."

She had to dispose of her supply, or all her efforts will go to waste. She had the aromatic water evaluated and found that it killed 83% of germs but when she sold them as sanitizers, people were looking for sanitizers that killed 99% of germs.

It was during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 that led Tina to an opportunity to work with Melbourne-based scientist Dr Augustine Doronila asking for his assistance in formulating a cinnamon based hand sanitizer.

### **Another opportunity for growth**

January of 2020, Tina joined a group of social entrepreneurs, in an "Impact Boost Camp" as part of the Innovation for Social Impact Partnership (ISIP) project, which is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Philippines and the Philippine Development Foundation (PhilDev) and funded by the Australian Government.

This gave her the opportunity to increase the production of her cinnamon based hand sanitizers through funding from the Australian Embassy in the Philippines, she was able to purchase a bigger distiller.



Ninfa Benitua and family. Ninfa leads 350 strong Farmers Federation in Don Salvador Benedicto town, province of Negros Occidental.

N Canieso-Yeo  
At present, Tina is planning to expand her market abroad. Everything is still in the exploration and research phase.

"I would really like the Filipinos to know that we have cinnamon here in the Philippines and eventually bring back the cinnamon industry."

In growing her business, she says, local farmers who once burned cinnamon trees for charcoal are able to witness how many products can be produced from the tree itself.

"This will encourage them to plant more trees." The support of Dr Augustine Doronila, Plantsville Health's Scientific adviser is far reaching says Tina.

"The more products we develop, the more the farmers are encouraged. After the lockdown I was able to go up to the mountains and show them the products. They were so amazed. *Madami pa lang pwedeng gawin sa dahon na iyon.*"

by Maridel Martinez <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/audio/rediscovering-cinnamon-in-the-philippines>

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Catholic Earthcare Australia**

Catholic Earthcare Australia is an ecological agency recently established by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. Its mission is to help promote understanding among people that creation is sacred and endangered. It must be protected and preserved for present and future generations yet unborn.

<https://catholicearthcare.org.au/>

Download the guide to ecological dialogue - [https://catholicearthcare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Trifold\\_2019.pdf](https://catholicearthcare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Trifold_2019.pdf)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**

IPCC is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. The IPCC provides regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation. The sixth Assessment Report was published on 9 August 2021 and is available on [Sixth Assessment Report \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch/sixth-assessment-report/)

The Summary for Policymakers (SPM) provides a high-level summary of the understanding of the current state of the climate, including how it is changing and the role of human influence, and the state of knowledge about possible climate futures, climate information relevant to regions and sectors, and limiting human-induced climate change.

[IPCC AR6 WGI SPM.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report/worksheet-draft-20210809/)

Headline statements from the summary of the report are available on [AR6 WGI Summary for Policymakers Headline Statements \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report/worksheet-draft-20210809/)

More information: [About — IPCC](https://www.ipcc.ch/about/)

\*\*\*\*\*