



The Angels greeting to the Shepherds was of course, 'Peace to all people of good will.' That's the greeting the Congregational Eco-Spirituality Team wish for all at this blessed time of Christmas.

Recently commenting on Pope Francis's 2019 visit to three African countries, Tablet journalist Christopher Lamb summed up Pope Francis's core priorities as 'a seamless garment' in defence of the poorest and most vulnerable that embraces the protection of the planet.' (*Tui Motu InterIslands* October 2019)

That's the constant refrain of our Team – the interconnectedness of life. As our report to the recent Josephite Chapter noted, '*We recognise the growing awareness we are called to is lived in our every day attentiveness and presence to the ordinary - grounded in the now, this garden, these trees, this small bird...This Universe.*'

In late November our Pope's determination to further do what he can for the peace of Earth, its peoples and all life came to the attention of the world-wide media. On his visit to Japan focusing on the intertwined terrible destruction of people/ Earth /waters/animals /every form of life, by the 1945 atomic bombs, Francis chose to visit the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. No surprise that the *Hibakusha* - women and men nuclear survivors of the bomb attacks - the modern day 'lowly' shepherds - were a focus of his love and attention.

On November 25th he met with the 21st century victims of the earthquake-tsunami-nuclear power plant explosion disaster of Fukushima. With both his loving presence and with his strong words for a nuclear weapons free world, Pope Francis made a faith filled cry for peace.

Fitting indeed that one of the greeting banners in Francis's Asian journey was a jubilant cry: 'You really know how to pope!'

And while it's very safe to say that none of us have the same impact on world opinion, it is our prayerful wish as Christians, again awaiting the birth of the Child of Peace, that we grow in strength and determination on another connected level into what we can do for peace and our beloved Earth's survival. This connectedness - '*this sense of wonder*' as we reflected to Chapter, '*is drawing us, with all our unique giftedness, into action.*' In the words of Ilia Delio,

*'We humans are evolution made conscious;
hence, our choices for and in the world
shape the future of the world.'*

Happy Christmas from the Congregation Eco-Spirituality Team!