



FOOD
and the Faith of life.

Sustainable September 2011 | Introduction

Foreword

I once heard the famous liturgist Louis Weil say “In a world where many want for food all bread is sacred”.

It is now increasingly clear that those warm relatively dry places on our planet which produce cereal crops are getting hotter and drier with climate change. I have seen this in Spain and in the south western corner of Western Australia we call our home. On a short drive to York or Beverley or Brookton you will see one hundred year old native trees stressed and dying. Climate Change brings political, social, economic and spiritual dimensions which in the quadruple bottom line are inexorably linked. I subscribe to the view that “Jesus announced, lived and inaugurated for history a new social order that is an actual alternative to our current exploitative social, political and economic systems ie “the powers that be”. He called it the reign or the Kingdom of God.¹ Central to his proclamation which draws heavily on “nature parables” is a radically welcoming, forgiving, redeeming, healing community which may bear some resemblance to the church.

Central to this new community were radically inclusive meals which signalled the largesse hospitality and compassion of God. The early church which organised these meals were not too bothered about strict food laws, who could come or who couldn't. They were places and spaces of open hospitality which acted as social levellers creating new social groupings and new communities.

I actually saw this once when a particularly imaginative parish I was in organised a Christmas lunch on Christmas Day for the homeless. It was the most authentic Eucharist I have ever experienced! It looked like, sounded like, tasted like and felt like Heaven.

As we take up and incorporate these resources into our Sustainable September Eucharists may they offer us glimpses of Heaven, the new economic, political, social and spiritual paradigms of the dawning reign of God.

The Right Reverend Tom Wilmot

Chair, Anglican EcoCare Commission

Introduction

For the first time the Anglican EcoCare Commission, together with Anglican Children and Youth Ministry and the Formation Program, are pleased to be producing a collaborative ‘all Anglican’ set of Sustainable September resources exploring the theme of food. The resource includes bible studies, worship materials and children's materials.

The resources are informed by the lectionary readings which overwhelmingly celebrate food. Food is a fundamental requirement for life. We celebrate significant milestones with meals. We identify people and culture through their cuisines. We are concerned to care for the land so that our food is healthy. At the head of the Christian tradition is a meal where the hospitality of God is extended to all who gather at the table.

‘Quadruple bottom line’ (QBL) is a holistic concept of sustainability where ‘environmental’, ‘social’, ‘fiscal’ and ‘cultural’ considerations are identified and considered concurrently in decision making. It is envisaged that quadruple bottom line development can lead to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems. We trust that these resources will be of use during Sustainable September, and in special services throughout the year.

Claire Barrett-Lennard

Project Officer, Anglican EcoCare Commission

¹ A paraphrase of Richard Rohr's statements on page 3 of “Jesus' Plan for a New World” The Sermon on the Mount.