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# JPIC

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

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## Special Interest Articles:

- The Problem with Batteries – A Response – from Jeff Foale CP.
- Nickel in Batteries – the real content.
- Passionists International – What we're doing at the UN.

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## Torres Strait 8

The Torres Strait 8 are a group of claimants and traditional owners from Zenadh Kes (Torres Strait Island) who took the Australian Government to the Human Rights Committee of the UN for its inaction over climate change. The people of Zenadh Kes are on the front line of climate change with rising sea levels, increasing extreme weather events and coastal erosion affecting the 18 inhabited islands in the region and threatening many communities' way of life and culture.

They made international legal history this last September by winning their landmark case. The United Nations Human Rights Committee found that the Australian Government was in violation of its human rights obligations to Torres Strait Islanders by failing to act on climate change. The decision obliges our government to do whatever it takes to ensure the safe existence of the Torres

Strait Islands. It also sets a precedent for Indigenous Peoples all around the world.

Of course, this is just the beginning. The people of Torres Strait Island will need our support to ensure that the Australian Government takes the urgent action that is needed to protect their island home. Scientific modelling suggests that some of the low-lying islands could become uninhabitable within decades if global temperatures keep rising at the current rate. Not surprisingly, the Australian Government's response to the complaint was that the case should be rejected because it concerns future risks, rather than impacts being felt now. Australia's lawyers in the case also argued that because Australia is not the main or only contributor to global warming, climate change action is not its legal responsibility.

*J.R.Sanchez CP.*

## The Problem with Batteries – A Response

The article in my last newsletter entitled, 'The Problem with Batteries,' got a big response from readers. Most were pleased with a critical view of batteries and quick-fix solutions to Climate Change by unreservedly eliminating fossil fuel use and going green. I did receive, however, a well considered response from Jeff Foale CP challenging some of what I wrote. I thought I'd share with you this counter argument, below is Jeff's response:

"Thanks very much for the latest JPIC newsletter. Lots of useful information there, however I was a bit surprised at the rather negative tone of some of it. You start off saying, "There has been a growing public demand to switch to renewables, driven by extreme weather events, interpreted as the impact of climate change." The use of the word interpreted leaves open whether you think this is so or not. The recent UN reports have left no doubt on that front.

You say, "Green protests have tapped into people's fear to drive the call for change." This may be true, but it almost gives the impression that calls for change are irrational, based on fear. The need for change is made starkly clear by the UN IPCC 2022 climate report on climate change mitigation. It's 'now or never' to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. It warned that the world is set to reach the 1.5°C level within the next two





Decades and said that the most drastic cuts in carbon emissions from now would help prevent an environmental disaster. The report brings together the work of thousands for scientists in the most balanced, accurate and reliable way. This is not fear mongering, it is truth telling.

"..this is not a simple or easy thing to do." Correct, but when all the problems have been listed, it would make sense to have a follow-up discussion for the big question on what is needed for human and general ecological survival. You need to discuss that, consider what price must be paid for survival.



In particular, I was surprised by your treatment of batteries. Almost half of Tesla's cars, and 20% of global electric cars, already have LFP batteries that contain lithium, iron, and phosphate, and none of the problem metals – nickel, cadmium and cobalt. These batteries have huge advantages; more than double the life expectancy of traditional car batteries, they do not catch fire, are able to be charged to 100% routinely and are cheaper to make. LFP batteries are less energy dense, and hence are being used in cars with shorter range, but CATL in China, the world's largest battery maker and main supplier of LFP batteries, is already getting into production with a new version of greater range. All this is fresh news and sits alongside the prodigious effects being made by thousands of researchers to find the next breakthrough. This is an exciting time.

Battery prices have declined spectacularly over the past dozen years, while energy density has been increasing and other improvements added. There is no reason to assume that this trend has run its course. There is a whole smorgasborg of alternative technologies for far cheaper large scale stationary batteries, and it is inevitable that industry will soon pick a winner among them.



*"We are faced not with 2 separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental."  
(Laudato Si)*

Battery recycling is developing fast, with companies investing heavily. Battery recycling not only takes those noxious chemicals out of landfill, but recovers all the contents of the battery for re-use, leading long term to huge reductions in the need to mine new material. Worth a mention.

The massive amounts of concrete used in building windmills is rightly lamented. I have read of research which suggests that it might be time to move the cement making industry to a process that creates cement which absorbs carbon dioxide equal to 80% of that currently used in producing the cement in the first place burning coal. The cost of such a process is estimated as about the same as the current process, but the problem is it needs factories to be retooled at considerable cost. See: <https://www.fierceelectronics.com/electronics/researchers-find-a-way-to-cut-co2-emissions-fromconcrete#:~:text=Concrete%20naturally%20absorbs%20CO2%2C%20but,faster%20and%20in%20greater%20volumes.%E2%80%9D>. A possible step up. Both steel and cement can be made with electricity instead of coal.

Solar panels. You give some very interesting information, but incomplete. For instance, it might be worth mentioning that solar panels are often guaranteed for 25 years, and with a guarantee like that they might average better. This life span is a significant part of the picture. A quick google indicates that solar panels can be recycled and are being recycled, perhaps not yet on a huge scale – something that needs to be known and pushed for. The US EPA lays out factors involved in solar panel recycling. See <https://www.epa.gov/hw/solar-panel-recycling>. It seems that the heavy glass and metal parts are easily recycled, while the more exotic ingredients at the heart of the photovoltaic process are more challenging and for now full extraction and recycling of these elements may need to be subsidised before commercially viable means are developed.

Ray, I do appreciate the great effort you have put into this research and the good you are doing by raising awareness of the preciousness of the web of life of which we are all a part, and to encourage necessary action, but I do think that some of the above minor points might be worth considering alongside your work."

Jeff Foale CP .



## ACRATH 2023 Calendar

Every year ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) produces an informative calendar for members to distribute and sell Australia-wide. It has become an important educational tool for dozens of schools, parishes, workplaces and families. It also serves as a great fundraising tool for us to continue our work, but more significantly is an awareness raising tool. It explains who ACRATH is; what yearly projects and advocacy work ACRATH are working on; highlights some of the wonderful ACRATH people and programs; provides fundraising and donation links; important dates to observe; it educates on modern slavery in Australia and worldwide; and supports ACRATH's vision of a world free of human trafficking. It makes a good calendar too!

ACRATH spends time designing the calendar to illustrate meaningful images and illustrations depicting information relevant to the month's page. Our hope is the the 2023 edition continues to promote awareness of human trafficking issues; promotes the work of ACRATH; showcases some of the anti-trafficking work of a range of organisations worldwide and within Australia; provides some income for a

project in South East Asia supporting victims of human trafficking.

The majority of people use calendars to keep track of important dates and events, and because they are useful, they will be put on display, exposing the owner or visitors to ACRATH's vision. As such the calendars are meant to be shared. Displayed, they become a conversation piece, thus promoting awareness raising on human trafficking.

The cost of the Calendar is \$10.00 (GST free) and can be ordered by emailing: [calendar@acrath.org.au](mailto:calendar@acrath.org.au). Include your name, address, phone number, email address and the number of calendars you would like to order. You might consider ordering a number for display at your parish, sports club, school, Op shop, community or shopping strips, in the lead up to Christmas. Direct Debit details: Bank: Commonwealth Bank of Australia; Account Name: ACRATH Public Funds; BSB: 063 111; Account Number: 10802141. Or, if you'd prefer to write a cheque, it can be made out to ACRATH Public fund, and posted to 54 Beaconsfield Pde., Albert Park, VIC 3206.

*J.R.Sanchez CP.*

## Nickel in Batteries

In the next edition of the JPIC newsletter, I will respond more fully to Jeff Foale's commentary to the article I wrote in the last edition of the JPIC newsletter on batteries. Here I simply want to correct Jeff's comment above that "20% of global electric cars, already have LFP batteries that contain lithium, iron, and phosphate, and none of the problem metals – nickel, cadmium and cobalt." This is not true. About 50kg of nickel goes into each Tesla battery.

Nickel is a critical metal in batteries. In fact, there is a strong case that much more of it is needed than lithium, which many people know of because it is in the name of lithium batteries. But the lithium is actually 2% of the cell mass, and a fairly small amount of the cost, but it sounds like it's big because it's called a lithium-ion battery. But batteries should be called nickel-graphite, because it's mostly nickel-graphite. A report by the CSIRO shows about 5 times as much nickel (46,006 kilotonnes) will be needed to meet global demand by 2050 as lithium (8,990 kilotonnes). The problem the world now faces is finding enough nickel to make all the batteries needed.

Australia was once a world-leading producer of nickel. Such was its demand that it fetched as much as \$73,700 AUD per tonne in 2007. But just as prices were rising, the global financial crisis hit, sending the commodity spiralling

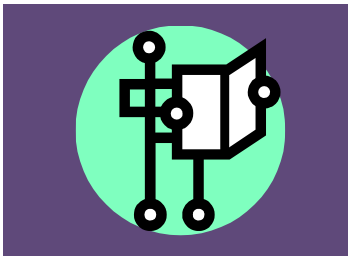
down to as low as about \$12,700 in October 2008. As a result, dozens of mines closed, including a brand new nickel mine opened by BHP in Ravensthorpe, in the south of Western Australia, which went under in January 2009 having operated for less than a year. Now BHP is ramping up its nickel production and is on the hunt for mines.

BHP has deals to sell its nickel to 3 major car makers, and BHP Nickel West's Jessica Farrel wants to increase its nickel reserves so it can fulfil orders from car manufacturers. "We have the second-largest nickel sulphide deposit globally in the Agnew-Wiluna belt, which is an incredible deposit," Ms Farrell said. "We're certainly not short of customers in terms of what we see in the demand trajectory."

The vast majority of nickel mined in the world does not go into batteries – it's used to make stainless steel. But certainly over time, expectations are that electric vehicles will become a much larger piece of the demand pie for nickel.

*(Information taken from the ABC business report, posted by business reporter Rachel Pupazzoni, Aug 18, 2022)*

*J.R.Sanchez, CP*



## El Niño/La Niña/Climate Change

La Niña is the cool weather pattern that is the main driver of the heavy rain and flooding that has devastated much of Australia's south-east in recent months. El Niño, which alternates with La Niña every few years, typically brings drier conditions to much of Australia. Together, the 2 phases are known as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation, which is the strongest and most consequential factor driving the Earth's weather.

In recent years there has been much scientific interest in how climate change will influence this global weather-making system. CSIRO research, released this week, found that climate change will clearly influence the El Niño-Southern Oscillation by 2030 – in just 8 years' time, which has big implications for how Australians prepare for extreme weather events.

During an El Niño phase, the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean warms significantly, while during a La Niña phase

waters in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean are cooler than average. But Climate change is also affecting ocean temperatures. The research found that the influence of climate change on El Niño and La Niña events, in the form of ocean surface temperature changes in the eastern Pacific, will be detectable by 2030, which is 4 decades earlier than previously thought.

What this means for Australia is stronger El Niño events, meaning more droughts and dry conditions in Australia. Strong El Niño events are often followed by strong and prolonged La Niñas, which will mean more heavy rain and flooding of the kind we have seen in recent months.

The implications are huge, affecting human health, food production, energy and water supply, and economies around the world. Australians, in particular, must prepare for more floods and droughts as climate change disrupts the natural weather patterns of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation.

J.R.Sanchez CP

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## Passionists International

Passionists International is now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year at the United Nations working to bring the needs of those most marginalized to the international arena. This is the one place where countries come together to make commitments and hold each other accountable to promoting peace, sustainable development, and the human rights and dignity of all people. It is a large, imperfect institution that often moves slowly as it struggles for consensus, yet it is also capable of establishing important rights and responsibilities as well as legally binding treaties.

Civil society also has an important role at the UN – of bringing the voices and lived realities of people who are struggling to survive in the midst of poverty, food insecurity, lack of health care, climate crisis, violation of land and human rights, gender-based violence, armed conflicts and multiple forms of discrimination to the table. As the UN calls for all individuals to have the right to a dignified life and livelihood, a sustainable future, and life free from violence and discrimination, Passionists International joins with other non-government and faith-based

organizations in keeping Member States alert to the issues that are harming people, and accountable to their commitments and beyond. In this, those of us representing religious organizations see our work at the UN as Gospel space, "Our Common Agenda"/ Sustainable Development Goals as a kind of secular blueprint for Shalom, and the UN's efforts to address the climate crisis very much in line with Pope Francis' vision for "Our Common Home." As Passionists, we feel it is a privilege and responsibility to be there, to have an opportunity to influence meaningful policy with and on behalf of the world's poorest and most discriminated against.

This year the world is at a critical juncture with multiple intersecting events of great concern. For more information about Passionists International and our work at the UN, you can contact Annemarie O'Connor, Exec. Director/NGO Representative to the UN at: [occonnam@aol.com](mailto:occonnam@aol.com) or [passionists.international@gmail.com](mailto:passionists.international@gmail.com). Our website: [passionistsinternational.org](http://passionistsinternational.org).

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*For International Justice  
issues,*

*See us at:*

***[www.passionistsinternational.org](http://www.passionistsinternational.org)***

