

Season of Creation 2025

Peace with Creation



A Reflection from the Pacific Islands

by Sr. Annette Arnold, Talitha Kum Oceania Coordinator

Just imagine the peace and wonder of sitting on the soft sand under a palm tree like this and swimming in the crystal-clear blue water. This year, the main idea behind the **Season of Creation** campaign is "**Creation will find peace when Justice is restored.**" Looking at this image you would not think that justice needs to be restored. It looks absolutely idyllic!

The great south Pacific Ocean is home to some 30,000 Pacific Islands and **one of the most biologically diverse marine environments** on the planet. The people are very strong and rich in cultural diversity, languages, and traditions, with communities working hard to retain and enhance their identity into the future.

Yet, some Pacific Island Nations are threatened by climate change more than others with **rising sea levels and extreme weather events**. Pacific island leaders have made it very clear in a declaration in 2018 that climate change is "the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific". They face more frequent and intense storms, cyclones, droughts and king tides, causing damage to infrastructure, homes, and agricultural land. Rising sea levels are causing inundation of coastal areas, eroding shorelines, and contaminating freshwater sources with saltwater, **threatening food security, homes, infrastructure and agricultural lands**. These impacts also undermine traditional practices and ecosystems, impacting cultural identity and cohesion and biodiversity.



**During this Season of Creation, we seek to find peace
— and we know this happens when justice is restored.**

The people of the Pacific Nations contribute less than 0.03% of global greenhouse gas emissions, despite being **among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change**. This Season of Creation calls us to reflect on such injustices and their human cost.

Climate-related disasters make thousands vulnerable, and vulnerability exposes people to possible exploitation. Many are forced to seek refuge –sometimes within their island, sometimes in neighbouring countries like Australia, New Zealand, or the United States. In some cases, communities are being relocated with government and international support. It is a complex situation, as moving to another country can provide better economic opportunities, but brings **high risks**: family separation, cultural loss, and the drain on the skilled workers in their own country, especially in healthcare and education.



The networks of **Talitha Kum in Oceania** are collaborating to both support and ensure justice for Pacific Island people who are forced to seek work in Australia and New Zealand. Many come as **Seasonal Workers** in the agricultural, construction, viticulture, fisheries, tourism and meat industries. While there is always room for improvement, there is legislation and regulation in place to **prevent exploitation and protect migrant workers**.

Unfortunately, there are some unscrupulous immigration agents and employers who prey on the vulnerability of these people. This exploitation can range from stolen and unjust wages, inadequate working and living conditions. Some employers promise non-existent jobs and conditions and charge exorbitant amounts for visas and airfares. The area of **forced labour and exploitation** is of great concern for all Talitha Kum members in Oceania.

As many of the workers are people of faith, local parish communities are forming circles of support and care around these people. This very act can **reduce vulnerability** and creates trustworthy, mutual relationships. It is an opportunity for those in the host country to have **their minds and hearts stretched** to learn about the Pacific Countries and especially the horrific and life changing effects of climate change. It is one little step in **journeying together to bring justice** – helping to move creation towards finding peace – this would be a great gift for Pacific Island nation, peoples.

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