



an  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLICY  
FOR OUR  
DIOCESE



"From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a continuing source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine"

Pope Francis quoting the  
Canadian Conference of  
Catholic Bishops



an INVITATION TO OUR  
DIOCESAN COMMUNITY TO  
PRAISE GOD FOR HIS GIFT OF  
OUR BEAUTIFUL PLANET AND  
TO SHARE THE CARE OF OUR  
COMMON HOME....





...and GOD saw every  
THING THAT HE HAD MADE,  
AND, BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY  
GOOD. AND THE EVENING  
AND THE MORNING WERE  
THE SIXTH DAY

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED  
THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH...





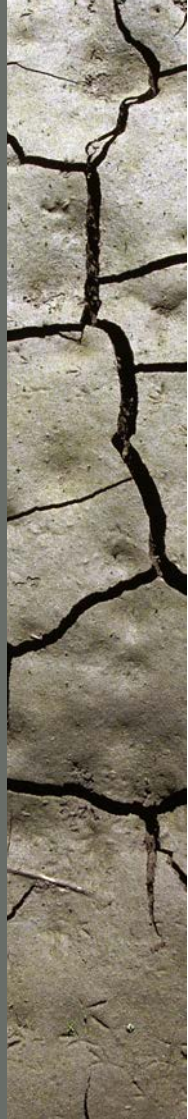
In 2015, Pope Francis issued the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, *On Care of Our Common Home*. This document, above all, makes the connection between loving our planet and loving our neighbour. It

challenges our “throwaway culture”, engendered by the never-ending growth of our industrialised, capitalist economies, fuelled by what were believed to be unlimited resources. He calls upon our world community to value and take care of our precious planet and its limited resources. There is no doubting the importance Pope Francis places on this. In September 2016, Pope Francis said that prayer and action to protect the environment should be added to the seven corporal works of mercy. He calls on us all to refigure our mindset and change our lifestyle in the light of global warming and the damage it is causing especially to the most vulnerable people on the planet.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, in correspondence to the Chair of the Middlesbrough Justice and Peace Commission, said,

“THE CHANGING OF ATTITUDES AND MINDS IS THE PRIORITY. MAKING THE ENCYCLICAL AND ITS TEACHING KNOWN AS BROADLY AS POSSIBLE IS THE KEY, BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH”

The question for our diocesan community is how do we do that?







Pope Francis calls us to “a change in lifestyle” and a “change in mindset” in view of the damage global warming is causing to the earth and to the most vulnerable people on it. Change is always difficult and this challenge will undoubtedly touch on areas that may not be popular.



It is hoped that this document will suggest ways in which we, the diocesan community, both clergy and laity, can cooperate to take on the challenge of caring for our wonderful planet, preserving it for us and future generations. Let us go

forward “in love and hope”. Let us take the opportunity of reflecting, praying and taking action for social and environmental justice, while giving thanks for the beauty of God's creation.

What can we do as a diocesan community?

- WE HAVE IN PLACE AN ETHICAL INVESTMENT POLICY
- WE ARE A LIVING WAGE EMPLOYER
- THE DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER CATHOLIC DIOCESES, PURCHASES “GREEN ENERGY” IN ALL ITS PARISHES





LET US JOYFULLY REFLECT ON THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S CREATION AND  
GIVE THANKS FOR GOD'S GIFT OF IT TO US THROUGH OUR PRAYERS AND  
LITURGY WHEREVER POSSIBLE

LET US understand the biblical basis for taking care of creation –  
see Laudato Si': Chapter 2.

LET US raise awareness and educate ourselves about the damage  
done to God's creation, particularly damage that results in  
injustice and violence, both through the exploitative practices of  
large companies, and through extreme weather conditions.

LET US help ourselves and others make the connections, as Pope  
Francis does, between careless use of plastic bottles or leaving  
lights on unnecessarily  
and the effects these  
have on the poorest and  
most vulnerable people  
in our world.

LET US disinvest from fossil  
fuels.

LET US take action as a  
diocese to be open to  
the plight of people  
affected by environmental  
damage and to engage  
with them.

LET US work with those  
sharing similar concerns.





LET US give particular support to CAFOD's campaigns for safeguarding the environment and supporting refugees.

LET US also encourage the growth of Live Simply parishes in the diocese as an appropriate response to Laudato Si'.

## WHAT CAN WE DO IN OUR PARISHES AND SCHOOLS? HOW CAN WE ENSURE THAT WE HAVE A COLLECTIVE LIFESTYLE THAT RESPECTS OTHERS AND GOD'S CREATION?

Schools are often to the fore in education on environmental matters. It could be helpful for parishes to learn from their expertise in this area.

START the process of becoming a Fair Trade parish and/or a Live Simply parish.

SEEK ways of making church gardens mini nature reserves. Grow vegetables for the church community.

ADOPT nearby gardens where possible.

ENCOURAGE recycling and composting.





INSTALL bird boxes and beehives. Where there is no garden space, pots can be planted. Compost food and garden waste.

USE environmentally-friendly cleaning products

USE washable china in our church halls. Avoid plastic and disposables.

UNDERTAKE an energy audit. Raise awareness of careful use of electricity.

EXPLORE the possibility of solar panels where appropriate, especially for church halls and priests' houses. Other aids to saving energy, such as battery storage, will be coming in the near future. These may be especially useful for churches that are generally open for a few hours in the week.

UNDERTAKE an environmental audit of the use of paper and water to encourage economical use.

PROVIDE bicycle racks. Encourage the use of public transport when practicable and of car sharing.

COLLECT and distribute food, clothing and other necessities for refugee projects and foodbanks.

SUPPORT local Credit Unions.









## WHAT CAN WE DO INDIVIDUALLY: LOOKING AT OUR LIFESTYLES?



**ENCOURAGE** and support the diocesan and parish initiatives.

**CONSIDER** consuming less energy and fuel and explore purchasing energy from green providers. Install solar panels where possible.

**TAKE** care in our use of water and paper at home. Avoid single-use plastic and look for alternatives in our life.

**BUY** what we genuinely need, purchasing Fairtrade and organically and ethically sourced items where possible.

**DISPOSE** responsibly of what we don't need, avoiding dumping by giving away to charities or recycling organisations.

**REDUCE** our consumption of meat when possible, which will help to reduce methane gas and make more land for grain crops.

**USE** cars less, maximize the use of public transport and give careful consideration to whether we really need to fly.

**ESTABLISH** and support alternatives to the "throwaway society". Explore the activities of groups such as "Make Do and Mend" and of thrift fairs.

**AVOID** the use of damaging pesticides in the garden. Plant flowers and bushes to encourage bees.









"To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in love and hope"

Pope Francis quoting the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, 2000



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AND PEACE NETWORK

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