

What can we do individually: looking at our lifestyles?

In the Home:

- ◆ Avoid wasting food
- ◆ Consume less energy and fuel and explore purchasing energy from green providers. Install solar panels where possible.
- ◆ Take care in our use of water at home. Avoid single-use plastic and look for alternatives in our life.
- ◆ Buy what we genuinely need, purchasing Fairtrade and organically sourced and locally produced 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 available for grain crops.
- ◆ Use cars less, car share where possible, 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 St Vincent de Paul.

In the Garden:

- ◆ Plant bee and butterfly friendly flowers and shrubs.
- ◆ Avoid all pesticides.
- ◆ Use only environmentally-friendly methods of weed control.

"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

'A healthy planet is a prerequisite for a healthy humanity.' Dermot Lane

Draft document for the Diocese of Clogher Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group.

Co-ordinator: mcveigh620@btinternet.com

CJPIC group is affiliated to the Council for Justice and Peace, Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Columba Centre, Maynooth

Published 17 March 2021

PRINTED ON 100% RECYCLED PAPER

An Environment Policy For Clogher 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

**Clogher Justice, Peace and
Integrity of Creation Group**



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

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth... And God saw all he had made, and, indeed, it was very good. Evening came and morning came: the sixth day." Genesis 1,31

In 2015, Pope Francis issued the encyclical, *Laudato Si'; On Care for 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 undertake an ecological conversion 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.

Pope Francis urges us to change attitudes towards our Common Home. We in the Diocese of Clogher must make Pope Francis' teaching in *Laudato Si* known everywhere in our diocese.

In his book *Let us Dream* (2020) Pope Francis tells of his own conversion:

"For a long time we carried on thinking we could be healthy in a world that was sick. But the crisis has brought home how important it is to work for a healthy world.

The world is God's gift to us...If someone who loves you gives you a beautiful and valuable gift how do you handle it? To treat it with contempt is to treat the giver with contempt. If you value it, you admire it, look after it; you do not disdain it; you respect it and are grateful. The damage to our planet stems from the loss of this awareness of gratitude. We have grown used to owning but too little to thanking...My own awareness of this truth began to take root during a meeting of the bishops of Latin America at the shrine of Aparecida, Brazil, in May 2007." Pope Francis, Let us Dream p30

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.

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 beautiful planet, preserving it for ourselves and for 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?

(Some of these aspirations may yet have to be implemented.)

- ◆ Each year let us celebrate the significant occasions like Earth Day (April 22nd), *Laudato Si* anniversary (June), World Biodiversity day, Season of Creation (Sept-Oct) etc. Let us incorporate these special occasions into the Liturgy involving as many young people as possible.
- ◆ The Diocese of Clogher, along with many other Catholic dioceses, invests in "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.
- ◆ Let us understand the Biblical basis for taking care of creation – see *Laudato Si'*: Chapter 2, The Gospel of Creation.
- ◆ Let us raise awareness and educate ourselves about the damage done to God's creation, both through the exploitative practices of large companies, and through extreme weather conditions caused by human activity.
- ◆ 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 divest from fossil fuels.
- ◆ Let us, as a diocese, be open to the plight of people affected by environmental disasters.
- ◆ Let us work with all those who share similar concerns.
- ◆ Let us give particular support to Trocaire's campaigns for safeguarding the environment and supporting refugees.
- ◆ Let us encourage the growth of 'Live Simply' parishes in the Clogher diocese as an appropriate response to *Laudato Si'*.
- ◆ Let us encourage alternatives to wooden coffins, embalming, the use of imported flowers for weddings etc.
- ◆ Let us discover the richness of biodiversity and eco-systems within old churchyards and graveyards.
- ◆ Let us plant more native trees.
- ◆ Let us visit and protect Holy wells.

What can we do in our parishes and schools?

- ◆ 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 transforming church gardens into mini nature reserves. Grow vegetables for the church community.
- ◆ Encourage recycling and reusing.
- ◆ Install bird boxes, beehives and bug hotels.
- ◆ Where there is no garden space, pots can be planted.
- ◆ Compost food.
- ◆ Use environmentally-friendly cleaning products.
- ◆ Avoid plastic and disposables / use biodegradable products instead.
- ◆ Undertake an energy audit.
- ◆ Raise awareness of careful use of electricity.
- ◆ Explore the possibilities of installing solar panels on churches, presbyteries, schools and all church buildings.
- ◆ Explore alternative heating methods such as geothermal sources.
- ◆ Undertake an environmental audit of the use of paper and water to encourage economical use.
- ◆ Encourage the use of public transport and car sharing.
- ◆ Collect and distribute food, clothing and other necessities for food banks.

"Biodiversity, which life has evolved over billions of years, underpins the processes that make life possible: if we were to lose the insects then everything is going to collapse: without biodiversity there is no future for life on earth as we know it.

The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the sunlight that sustains us and all beings, all ultimately rely on biodiversity. Without plants: no oxygen, without bees, no pollination, no fruit or nuts."

(Sr Nellie McLaughlin)