

## THE SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS 2021

### Day of Prayer in Preparation for the COP26 Meeting on Climate Change

#### Introduction

Bishop John has invited the family of the Diocese to mark the beginning of the COP26 Conference in Glasgow by a day of special prayer. The following resources are offered to help integrate this prayer with the celebration of Mass for the Solemnity of All Saints.

The liturgical texts of the Solemnity (i.e. Scripture Readings, Prayers and Preface) should be used. It would be good to use one of the prayers offered in the Bishop's recent Pastoral letter (reprinted below) during Mass – perhaps as a conclusion to the Intercessions or as a post-Communion meditation.

The link between the Solemnity and the prayer intention could be brought out in an introduction or in the homily, some ideas for which are provided below. Intercessions are suggested, but of course a Parish may wish to rewrite them to follow your usual pattern, or to include local intentions; at least one intention however should refer to the forthcoming Conference.

The Intercessions, Hymns and Homiletic thoughts given here could also be used in a Holy Hour or similar service this weekend: it would be suitable to use the Gospel of All Saints (Matthew 5:1-12a) at such a Service. Alternatively, a Taizé Prayer Service can be found at the following address:

[https://www.taize.fr/IMG/pdf/21.09.21\\_prayer\\_october\\_en.pdf](https://www.taize.fr/IMG/pdf/21.09.21_prayer_october_en.pdf)



the lost harmony of Paradise: those holy men and women who, by their own daily choices, struggles and sacrifices, sought to reclaim the initial holiness of God's Creation, living in harmony with the world and with our God.

Thus, to talk of Climate Change and Care for Creation in the context of holiness, on All Saint's Day, is not unsuitable. One of the Prefaces in the Missal talks about the saints offering us this example: *"In the saints who consecrated themselves to Christ for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, it is right to celebrate the wonders of your providence, by which you call human nature back to its original holiness."*\* In the biblical image of the Garden of Eden there was no need to talk about "carbon footprints" or "biodiversity collapse", because all things – humanity and creation – lived in holiness, in perfect harmony.

Can an ecologist be a saint? Must a saint be an ecologist? To be holy means to live in Divine Harmony, hearing the call to return to the "original holiness" of God's Creation, before human sin began to destroy it. So yes, while we live in this world, awaiting the gifts of the world to come, we must devote ourselves strenuously to the journey of true holiness, to recreating and dwelling in the "new Eden" which Christ has opened to us by his teaching (especially the Beatitudes), his death and resurrection. Our holiness lies in our choices, our actions, our attitudes: we must ask ourselves – are they building or destroying Paradise?

\* Preface of Holy Virgins and Religious, M. p642

#### Some Homiletic Thoughts

The problems highlighted by the Holy Father, and by scientists, specialists and concerned individuals and groups regarding Climate Change and Care for our Common Home, could all be summarised by one word: disharmony. The opposite can be found in the opening pages of the Bible, in the first account of Creation in Genesis 1, where all that God creates is good, and all things – heaven and earth, birds and beasts and women and men – all things live in perfect harmony with God. This is Paradise. This is holiness.

This "Original Holiness" is destroyed when sin – human greed, pride and complacency – creeps into the world. The harmony and the holiness are destroyed, and the balance preserving creation is lost. The breakdown in relations – even the blames and recriminations of the man, the woman, the serpent – can be seen as symbolic of the beginnings of this disharmony, the utilitarianism of selfishness and greed.

As we celebrate all the Saints, we are celebrating the idea of holiness itself, manifested to us throughout the ages by those who chose, in their daily lives, through prayer and charity and closeness to God, to recapture

#### Intercessions

**Priest:** As the United Nations climate conference, COP26, begins in Glasgow, let us bring our prayers to God, who created the earth and all within it.

**Reader:** Let us pray for all participants in the COP26 conference, that the call of Pope Francis for care for our common home may illuminate the hearts and minds of all world leaders and people of influence, and that God may grant them wisdom to make decisions which respect the earth and all that live in it. (pause for prayer) Lord, in your mercy...

Let us pray for the Church: may we follow the example of all the saints who have gone before us, seeking to embrace the original holiness of Eden by living in harmony with God and all Creation. (pause for prayer) Lord, in your mercy...

Let us pray for the world; the harmony of all living things; the beauty and flourishing of the planet plundered and misused for generations by human activity; may we all, through our actions, help repair the harm we have caused. (pause for prayer) Lord, in your mercy...

Let us pray for families and children, that the example of all the saints may inspire them to embrace holiness in daily living. (pause for prayer) Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish and our local community: that through the grace of God we may examine our environmental impact and make choices for the common good. (pause for prayer) Lord, in your mercy...

Priest: Loving Father, send your Spirit to encourage and strengthen our world leaders as they meet at COP26. Cause them to discern the way that we must now go, agreeing the changes and decisions necessary to begin to repair the damage done and to prepare a healthy and secure world for future generations. We ask all this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## Some Quotes from Pope Francis

"We usually think of the works of mercy individually and in relation to a specific initiative: hospitals for the sick, soup kitchens for the hungry, shelters for the homeless, schools for those to be educated, the confessional and spiritual direction for those needing counsel and forgiveness... But if we look at the works of mercy as a whole, we see that the object of mercy is human life itself and everything it embraces." **Pope Francis 2016 Jubilee for Priests**

"Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances? Many people today sense a profound imbalance which drives them to frenetic activity and makes them feel busy, in a constant hurry which in turn leads them to ride rough-shod over everything around them. This too affects how they treat the environment. An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us." **Laudato Si 225**

"To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves." **Gaudete et Exsultate 14**

In reference to the beatitudes: "Although Jesus' words may strike us as poetic, they clearly run counter to the way things are usually done in our world. Even if we find Jesus' message attractive, the world pushes us towards another way of living. The Beatitudes are in no way trite or undemanding, quite the opposite. We can only practise them if the Holy Spirit fills us with his power and frees us from our weakness, our selfishness, our complacency and our pride." **GE65**

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## Hymns and Music

A Hymn that combines the ideas celebrated today is "For the Fruits of All Creation"

Hymns suitable to the Solemnity include: "For All the Saints", "Be not Afraid", "Be Still For the Presence of the Lord", "How Great Thou Art", "By All Your Saints Still Striving", "Jerusalem the Golden", "Blest Are the Pure in Heart", "Christ be Our Light", "Happy Are Those Who Are Invited" (Stephen Dean), "City of God (Awake From Your Slumber)", "Lord of Creation to you Be All Praise", "O When The Saints Go Marching In",

Hymns suitable for the theme of Care for Creation include: "All Creatures of our God and King", "Laudato Sii, O mi Signore", "All Things Bright and Beautiful", "O Worship the King, All Glorious Above", "God in his Love for Us Lent us This Planet", "Glory and Praise to our God", "Fill Your Hearts with Joy and Gladness", "Morning Has Broken", "For the Healing of the Nations"

If not yet singing in Church, consider recordings any of the above hymns, or of "For The Beauty of the Earth" (Rutter), "How Shall I sing That Majesty" (Robert Prizeman), "Justorum Animae" (C. V. Stanford, Byrd, Lassus), "O Quam Gloriosum" (Victoria), "Beati Mundo Corde" (Byrd), "Exultate Justi in Domino" (Viadana/Michael Joncas), "Mayenziwe/Your Will Be Done", "La Paz de la Tierra" (Marty Haugen), "Canticle of the Creatures" (E. Louis Canter) Recordings of all these can be found on YouTube.

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## COP26 Prayers

BISHOP JOHN'S PRAYER: "Loving Father, we acknowledge that, either through ignorance or greed, the Earth, our common home, is damaged. That damage is felt most by people who have done little to cause it. Industrialisation has exploited natural resources, endangering wildlife, causing climate change, and resulting in disasters and global warming. Father, forgive us, and guide us in the right way. Send your Spirit to encourage and strengthen our world leaders as they meet at COP26. Cause them to discern the way that we must now go, agreeing the changes and decisions necessary to begin to repair the damage done and to prepare a healthy and secure world for future generations. And we ask Mary, our Mother, to intercede for us, and with us, in our need. Amen."

A PRAYER FROM CAFOD: "Loving God, we praise your name with all you have created. You are present in the whole universe, and in the smallest of creatures. We acknowledge the responsibilities you have placed upon us as stewards of your creation. May the Holy Spirit inspire all political leaders at COP26 as they seek to embrace the changes needed to foster a more sustainable society. Instil in them the courage and gentleness to implement fairer solutions for the poorest and most vulnerable, and commit their nations to the care of Our Common Home. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son. Amen."

