



Art display created out of plastic bottle tops at St John Fisher Parish, Kearsley

Hearing the Cry:

Responding with Hope

Summary

Working together as one diocese united towards creating transformative change and healing for our common home

Foreword

By Bishop John Arnold



As Bishop of Salford and as the Environment Lead for the Bishops Conference, I write and speak regularly about the ecological crisis and the need to take urgent action. Each time, I can list another example of the irreversible damage that climate change is having on our common home.

The devastation that we are witnessing is no longer in isolated occurrences but a constant reminder that we are now at a ‘vital moment’ or a ‘turning point’. We no longer have to look around our world to see severe droughts, floods, rising sea-levels, extreme record-breaking temperatures, species driven to extinction and communities displaced - the consequences of the ecological crisis are to be seen on our doorstep.

The impact of our actions and our way of life are inflicting damage across our common home, affecting millions of people, most often in the poorest countries of the world and for people who have done least to damage our environment.

We have long been saying that the time for action is now, but we are not

reacting quickly enough to repair the damage. Indeed, we are inflicting further harm.

In September 2021 we were pleased to share with you, “For the Beauty of the Earth”, which is our commitment to Environmental Action. The document is a guide to put our Christian faith into action protecting the environment. It built upon work already undertaken in our Diocese.

Now we are taking the next step. “Hearing the Cry: Responding with Hope” is our strategic response, providing more details of the commitment to be made in the Diocese. It has one main ask of all of us, that we work together as one Diocese, united towards creating transformative change and healing for our common home.



Bishop John speaks to schools at Guardian's of Creation Environment Summit, Laudato Si Centre

It is only by creating a cultural change, where we listen to the cry of the earth and cry of the people, that we will advance in any way towards achieving the systemic change needed at all levels; home, parish and schools. We will also look to use our influence in the wider community as a Christian community leading by example and putting our faith into action.

We will be providing specific actions that we are asking all our parishes and schools to undertake, and we will share opportunities to learn from each other as we respond to one of the most serious and urgent challenges we are facing as a world today.

It is several years since the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, where we were all called to undertake an ecological conversion, learning to care for creation and to protect our common home for generations to come. In the Diocese we responded at an individual, parish, school and diocesan level. These actions were encouraged not only by *Laudato Si'* but by the Church's commitment to care

for creation, a responsibility that is grounded in many papal encyclicals and Catholic Social Teaching.

Now is the time to unite these actions and responsibilities and set ourselves a plan that is ambitious and understands the scale of change that is needed, and one that is grounded in Christian Hope. Our joint response brings us together, maximising its impact, guided by prayer and Church teaching.

That is why this document is so important. Together, as the Diocese, we are united to hear and respond to the cry of our earth and all people. We will respond, not only out of necessity but with hope, that the voice of the church can unite us to work together to create a different legacy for the next generation. We ask that you join us on that journey of hope.

Stay with us Lord, on our Journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John" with a small cross above the letter 'j'.

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Living the Gospel

The people of God, living and forming the Church in the Diocese of Salford, has a single mission, which, in its simplest form, can be expressed in three words: “Proclaim the Gospel”. Everything we are - what we say, what we think and, most crucially, how we live our lives - is directed towards this single goal.

Our individual and collective response to the environmental crisis facing our world is squarely part of our overall mission to proclaim the Gospel. As Pope Francis teaches, “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (Laudato Si’, 217)

In recent years the world has been gradually waking up to the scale of the ecological crisis before us. It has been a particular theme of the pontificate of Pope Francis who, in his writings and teachings, is attempting to lead us on a path of conversion. Bishop John has reinforced the message locally and nationally.

It can be tempting either to despair or to try and fix things immediately by smarter, technology-driven solutions; neither of these approaches is right. Rather, the necessary response lies deeper in the human heart. It begins an encounter with grace, which leads to conversion, to making better choices in the way that we live and a future of hope.



Celebrating God's Gift to Us



We are taught from a young age about God's gift to us in the earth and all its creatures. Its beauty and awe are something that we can often take for granted, rather than being filled with gratitude for the wonder that surround us.

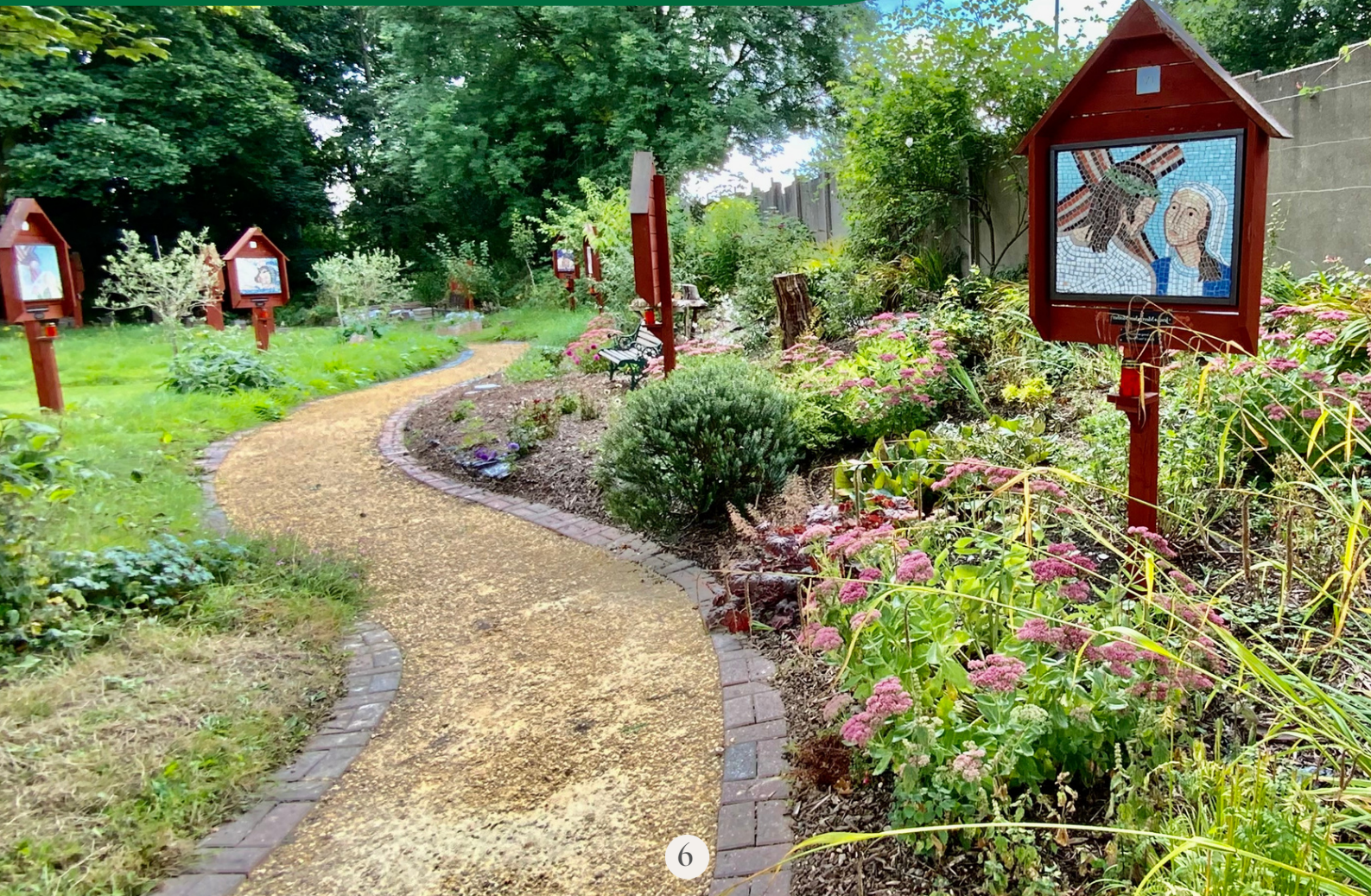
The way that we currently live comes at a price for our planet and for the communities living with the consequences as resources are ripped from the earth to produce goods and pollution fills the sky, land and water.

So often Pope Francis reminds us that we really do have a responsibility for our planet and each other. Every gesture of care for our environment and each other, however small, is of significance. The actions we take must reaffirm the responsibility we all have to make small changes within our own lives.

We can all - whatever our background - take the opportunity to step back, to reflect and to reconsider our practical and personal response to this urgent ecological crisis we find ourselves living in.

Following the example of St Therese of Lisieux, we are called to follow the little way of love, so our action help people and creation flourish.

Healing



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Pope Francis teaches us that each part of creation is dependent on another, all things are interconnected. However, our interconnectedness also brings a complexity, which can often leave us wondering what to do for the best. Understanding this complexity, alongside the actions we take, helps to provide healing for our world, communities, and ourselves as we journey together to care for creation.

The first step in the process of conversion is recognition that a change is needed. The preaching and writing of Pope Francis, and more locally through the guidance and leadership of Bishop John, has awakened the Church to the reality and urgency of the ecological crisis, and we have already begun to see the effects of this in the actions of our parishes and schools.

However, because this call to action comes from the heart of our faith, our response to this call must be spiritual, grounded in prayer and within our communities. And so we are called to pray: for a growth in charity to allow us to love our neighbour more generously (especially those we can't see) and to care for our common home more effectively; and to pray for healing to restore our relationships with each other, God, and his creation.

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Joy, Hope, and Renewal

“Hope opens new horizons, making us capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable.”

Pope Francis

Pope Francis' words remind us of the power of hope to inspire and enable communities to make effective change.

Our work - Hearing the Cry: Responding with Hope - strives to harness the hope described by Pope Francis to inspire a culture of joy and renewal within our communities.

Our actions have permanently altered the planet and brought suffering but there is still time to act and to renew our world as we give glory to God by our desire and action to put right what has gone wrong.

We know we face challenges, but we are facing these together and know that ‘nothing is impossible with God’ [Luke 1:37].

The path of renewal is open before us. Let us walk that path together.

Stay with us Lord on our journey

Stations of the Cross at The Sacred Heart and St Francis of Assisi Parish, Gorton

Five suggestions to start your journey

1 - Consider if you could introduce a Laudato Si' group in your parish, deanery, or school and begin recruiting volunteers. Don't forget to share this environmental strategy and supporting resources with them.

2 - Pray. Take time to reflect on the beauty of creation and our responsibility as stewards of the earth. Ask God to guide and inspire you as you seek to live out that mission. We have included a prayer for our common home on the next page.

3 - Look at any quick wins in your day-to-day life that could make a significant impact on our planet. Could you eat less meat, rely on the car less, find alternative ways around your parish or house to use less plastic and fewer chemicals?

4 - Consider creating space in your home, parish, or school grounds for local wildlife. You could also turn this into a quiet space for prayer and reflection and to spend time with Creator God. We have provided guidance on creating spaces for wildlife and guidance to help you create a prayer garden.

5 - Research and support charities that are helping our brothers and sisters around the world who are bearing the brunt of our ecological crisis. Charities such as Caritas and CAFOD use the faith-based principles of Laudato Si' to offer practical, life-changing support to families on the front line of climate change.



How we can help

Resources

The journey to building a better future can be a daunting process, especially if you're not sure where to begin. It's important to remember that every parish or school will have their own path and way of responding to this call, but we've put together a few helpful resources to help you on your way - whether you are only just beginning your journey, or whether you are already on your way. Don't forget to sign and keep your copy of our Care for Creation Promise, outlining our joint commitment to caring for our common home!

Click [here](#) to access further resources.

Contact us

Our environment team is always on hand to help you discover how you can best respond to the call for action. You can contact our team today by emailing laudatosicentre@dioceseofsalford.org.uk or visit <https://laudatosicentre.org.uk/>

Laudato Si' Centre

The Laudato Si' Centre was announced by Bishop John in Lent 2019 in response to the ecological crisis and Pope Francis's call for us all to care for creation. The vision for the Laudato Si' Centre is to develop and operate an education and outreach mission that generates environmental hope, rooted in the belief that we can all make a difference through the actions we take. The mission will aim to provide the tools and learning needed to enable all to hear and respond in hope to the cry of the earth and cry of the people. Why not get in touch via the email above or arrange a visit to the centre and meet with the team?

DIOCESAN PRAYER FOR OUR COMMON HOME

All powerful God,
you created all things,
and you are present throughout the universe
and in every creature,
You embrace with your tender love all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
so that we may have the strength and courage
to protect all life and the beauty of our world,
preserving it from pollution and destruction.

Fill us with your peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one,
And caring for the Earth, our common home.

Teach us to discover the worth of every creature on
this earth,
Let us protect those at risk and in danger,
Encourage us as we seek justice, love and peace.
Stay with us each day, with the power of your grace.

Through Christ our Lord
Amen



Care for Creation Promise

A statement of hope - rooted in the belief that we can make a difference.

Guided by our Catholic faith and a desire to protect God's creation for future generations, we make this promise to care for creation and our brothers and sisters around the world:

We have heard and will respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the people;

We recognise the need for urgent action to address the ecological crisis and the damage it is doing to our brothers and sisters;

We will set an example by making positive change and standing up to this injustice.

By signing this Promise, we commit to making better choices and to develop an action plan for change within our community.

Signed

Print name

May God guide us as we strive to live out His call to be responsible and compassionate stewards of the earth.

St Francis of Assisi, pray for us.

Stay with us Lord on our journey



Hearing the Cry

Responding with Hope



What will you do?