

DIOCESE OF  SALFORD

Walk for Creation



A Guide to Parish Walks



The First Step

Following on from our annual diocesan Walk for Creation, a number of other parishes and deaneries have expressed an interest in organising a similar for their own communities.

This guide is some simple steps you might want to think about ahead of the walk and some suggested reflections for your stopping points. These stopping points can be a few metres apart on parish ground or a few miles apart at different churches on your route.

Your route and the distance you want to cover is down to your parish groups.

The important thing is to create an atmosphere that is welcoming to all different accessibility levels, even on a long walk this can be created by announcing the estimated times of your stopping points.

The reflections are designed to show how our faith can impact the way we look at the world and encourage those attending to pay more care to our own local surroundings. You may wish to change these reflections to better suit your own area.

We would love to hear about your walk and the feedback you get. Please let us know your plans at communications@dioceseofsalford.org.uk



Top tips

Before the Walk

Decide on the route, length of your walk and any stopping points.



Complete risk assessments for your walk (an example can be found at <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/services/health-and-safety/>).



Advertise and promote your walk in your parish. Ask parishioners if they would like to bring someone with them. This is a great way to reach out to members of your local community.



You may also like to extend the invite to other faith leaders in your area.



Identify who will open and lead the reflections (if it's not you).



Arrange for refreshment and comfort facilities to be available at your stopping and/or end points.

After the Walk

Make sure you get the names of anyone who doesn't attend the parish and you can thank them for attending.

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Suggested Intro

Introduction and Welcome

Words from Pope Francis:

As we begin our walk, let us allow these words from Pope Francis to raise our spirits in hope:

“I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning.

Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfilment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love...

Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile”.

Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.”

Psalm 104 (1-9):

Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honour and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the Earth

You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers,
fire and flame your ministers.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the Earth

You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.
You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
At your rebuke they flee;
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the Earth

They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys
to the place that you appointed for them.
You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the Earth



OPENING PRAYER

Lord our God,
Fill our hearts and our minds as we
walk this day.

Help us to see anew the beauty of the
world that you give us, the damage
that our actions and lifestyles have
done to it, the impact those actions
have had on the poorest of the world.

Renew in us the determination to
change our lives and strengthen in us
the will to make individual sacrifices
to bring about communal change.

We make our prayer through Jesus
Christ your son, whose sacrifice unites
us to you and gives us the example of
love to follow, in the unity of the Holy
Spirit.

Amen.



Reflection One

In this first reflection we focus on the cry of the earth remembering the gift that God has given us in the world around us, the beauty that is before us every day, if only we had the eyes to see.

Pope Francis helps us to see that what is at stake in the environmental crisis has to do with how we understand ourselves, God, and His creation. The response, therefore, has to be more than simply better technology and one off initiatives. As he teaches us in *Laudato Si'*:

“When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values.

Unless we struggle with these deeper issues, I do not believe that our concern for ecology will produce significant results.

But if these issues are courageously faced, we are led inexorably to ask other pointed questions: What is the purpose of our life in this world? Why are we here? What is the goal of our work and all our efforts? What need does the earth have of us? It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations.

We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us.

The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.”

(*Laudato Si'* 160)



Reflect:

How much time do I spend each day noticing beauty in the world around me?

In what ways is my life dominated by “what is most convenient” rather than “what is right”?



PSALM 104 (10-15)

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
They flow between the hills,
Giving drink to every wild animal;
The wild asses quench their thirst.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew
the face of the Earth

By the streams the birds of the air have their
habitation;
They sing among the branches.
From your lofty abode you water the
mountains;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of your
work.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew
the face of the Earth

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
And plants for people to use,
To bring forth food from the earth,
And wine to gladden the human heart,
Oil to make the face shine,
And bread to strengthen the human heart.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew
the face of the Earth

CLOSING 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 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

As we continue our journey, let us
open our eyes to the beauty around
and reflect on our own commitment to
the care of our Common Home.

A decorative circular frame composed of a gold arc at the top and bottom, with two branches of purple flowers extending from the left and right sides. The text is centered within the circle.

Reflection Two

In this second reflection, we focus on the cry of the poor remembering and praying for our brothers and sisters who are struggling to find food and shelter.

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Pope Francis reminds us that the poor are not people “outside” our communities, but brothers and sisters whose sufferings we should share, in an effort to alleviate their difficulties and marginalization, restore their lost dignity and ensure their necessary social inclusion.

In everything, Jesus teaches that poverty is not the result of fate, but a concrete sign pointing to his presence among us. We do not find him when and where we want, but see him in the lives of the poor, in their sufferings and needs, in the often inhuman conditions in which they are forced to live.

As I never tire of repeating, the poor are true evangelizers, for they were the first to be evangelized and called to share in the Lord's joy and his kingdom (cf. Mt 5:3).

The poor, always and everywhere, evangelize us, because they enable us to discover in new ways the true face of the Father.

“They have much to teach us.


REFLECT

How do my choices affect the lives of other people?

Am I concerned about the poor who live nearby? The poor who live far away?

What am I willing to change in my life to make a difference to the lives of others?





PSALM 104 (16 - 23)

The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly,
The cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
In them the birds build their nests;
The stork has its home in the fir trees.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the
face of the Earth

The high mountains are for the wild goats;
The rocks are a refuge for the coney.
You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
The sun knows its time for setting.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the
face of the Earth

You make darkness, and it is night,
When all the animals of the forest come
creeping out.
The young lions roar for their prey,
Seeking their food from God.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the
face of the Earth

When the sun rises, they withdraw
And lie down in their dens.
People go out to their work
And to their labour until the evening.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the
face of the Earth

CLOSING PRAYER

Pope Francis – Common Prayer for Earth and Humanity

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein
contained.

Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult
times, especially the poorest and most
vulnerable.

Help us to show creative solidarity
as we confront the consequences of the
global pandemic.

Make us courageous in embracing the changes
required to seek the common good.

Now more than ever, may we all feel
interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and
responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry
of the poor.

May their current sufferings become the birth-
pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable
world.

We pray through Christ our Lord,
under the loving gaze of Mary
Help of Christians,
Amen.

As we continue on our journey, we pray for those people whose home is on the streets and who do not know where they will sleep tonight, whether due to poverty, family break-down, mental health, addiction problems or other complex reasons.

A stylized black line drawing of a plant with three flowers and a red L-shaped border. The plant has a central stem that branches out to three flowers. The flowers are simple, with five petals each. The red L-shaped border is located in the bottom-left corner of the page, framing the text area.

Reflection Three

In this third reflection we focus on the need to respond to the various crises in our world in a way that is coherent and integrated. How we respond both to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor must be inspired by our encounter with Jesus Christ who comes to save us.

REFLECTION

As Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si'*:
"The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast".

For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion.

It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent.

So what they all need is an "ecological conversion", whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.

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."

Reflect:

Do I live an integrated life as a Christian?

In what areas of my life do I most need conversion?



PSALM 104 (24 - 35)

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
The earth is full of your creatures.
Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
Creeping things innumerable are there,
Living things both small and great.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew
the face of the Earth

There go the ships, and Leviathan that you
formed to sport in it.
These all look to you to give them their
food in due season;
When you give to them, they gather it up;
When you open your hand, they are filled
with good things.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew
the face of the Earth

When you hide your face, they are
dismayed;
When you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are
created; and you renew the face of the
ground.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and
renew the face of the Earth

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—
who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they
smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have
being.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and
renew the face of the Earth

May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the Lord.

Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Praise the Lord!

Response: Send forth your Spirit and
renew the face of the Earth



CLOSING PRAYER

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do
good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses
all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

– St. Teresa of Ávila





Closing Prayer

And Blessing



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



Thanks and closing remarks

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Final Blessing