



STATEMENT ON THE UKRAINE CRISIS

From +Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds

Over the past few days, we have heard distressing news about the war in Ukraine and seen the harrowing pictures of the destruction and the humanitarian crisis that the conflict is causing.

Over one million people have fled from danger. Families have been torn apart and for those remaining, their living conditions deteriorate by the hour.

Our first response as Catholics must be to pray earnestly for the suffering people of Ukraine and for those who have had to leave their homes to seek a safe refuge for themselves and their family. We must also pray for peace with all our hearts.

We can help by:

- Donating through CAFOD and the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Appeal <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Ukraine-Humanitarian-Appeal>
- Donating through Caritas Internationalis [Caritas - Ending poverty, promoting justice and restoring dignity](#)
- Donating to Catholic Care to support our ongoing local work www.catholic-care.org.uk
- Registering an interest as a Community Group to welcome a refugee family Email the Community Sponsorship Co-ordinator: sue.parsons@catholic-care.org.uk
- Supporting the work of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) <https://acnuk.org/>

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Peace, intercede with her Son, the Prince of Peace, for the sake of the peoples of Ukraine here in our country and in their beloved homeland.

UKRAINE: WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

By John Battle, Commission Chair

Ukraine is an independent country of 44.7 million people with an elected government and President taking its place in the United Nations. Yet, as a result of Russian military invasion and bombing attacks, nearly 2 million (mainly women and children) have had to leave their homes and flee the country as refugees seeking help from relatives abroad or seeking asylum. Notably, the Syrian crisis resulted in a million refugees some years ago yet already the numbers heading out of Ukraine suggest the greatest ever refugee crisis in the West. Poland alone has already taken in over one million. Those remaining behind are being forced to shelter underground to avoid being bombed and already thousands across the cities of Ukraine have been killed. Millions have been internally displaced. The world watches on and waits as millions now face more bombing destruction and city sieges starving people of food water and medical treatment until Ukraine surrenders.



Evidently Putin's campaign regards civilians as dispensable in his determination to get control of Ukraine. He claims that Ukrainians



do not exist as an independent people and therefore they are disposable. So far, the courageous Ukrainian people led by their President have clearly demonstrated their sense of independent identity and determination to resist violent takeover and suppression.

The head of Ukraine's Orthodox Church Metropolitan Onufriy Berezovsky has appealed directly to President Putin to stop the war reminding him that *"the Ukrainian and Russian people came out of the Dniepo baptismal font and war between these peoples is a repetition of Cain's sin. This war has no justification for either God or man"*. The Roman Catholic Bishop's Conference of Ukraine while pleading for peace says armed resistance to Russia is now necessary and called on all Ukrainian citizens to take up arms to *"defend the motherland"*. The leader of the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church said economic sanctions are a start, but the international community must do *"all in its power to stop the aggression immediately"*. The Catholic Bishops in Ukraine along with priests and religious sisters are staying with the people and doing their best to keep churches open to provide practical pastoral care.

Closer to home our Catholic Bishop's Conference have asked the UK Government to *"work for a swift resolution"* and *"to act to help refugees from the conflict"* noting that the Ukrainian people have *"suffered from Russia's illegal military actions since 2014 and now face a catastrophic escalation of violence. [...]As the crisis worsens it is essential we also provide humanitarian assistance and offer sanctuary to people who are forced to flee their homes"*.

Caritas Poland is now coordinating refugee relief efforts in Poland but say they need more help from the West; *"we need other countries to open their borders and their hearts to these poor desperate people"*. Here, CAFOD, a major partner in the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) set up in the UK now needs financial donations. CAFOD already has 25 welcome centres in the Ukraine providing food shelter and support. Watching the daily news reports of the progression of the Russian invasion can reduce us to a deep sense of powerlessness and inability to do anything but turn away in anger and shame in the face of the seemingly inevitable deaths and destruction. Watching the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 the Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert wrote: *"We stand on the border called reason and we look into the fire and admire death"*.

His pessimistic assessment of the reaction to the Hungarian uprising is not surprising and is now being repeated. We are called to assert life, however difficult that task, in the face of death.

As well as raising funds for humanitarian relief and welcoming refugees we need now to be pressing for safe zones from bombing and missile attacks and corridors for humanitarian civilian escape. Some years ago, the United Nations agreed on the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) policy which commits the international community to provide diplomatic, humanitarian and, if necessary, the military means to protect populations from genocide, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. That policy now needs international coordinating action.



In the meantime, now is the time to back CAFOD and pray both for Ukraine and the Spirit to spark a positive peaceful internationalist response.

When over 90,000 men women and children 'disappeared' from the face of the earth in Latin America in the late 1970's, as part of the work to find the missing, the Argentinian 'Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo' published their poems 'Songs of Life, Love and Freedom' to present the experiences of the relatives of missing ones.

'No One Will Take You From Me' concluded with the lines:

"Laugh my son. No one can rob me of the beauty, the moral richness that you left me the greatness of feeling and of soul a new world which you opened at my feet

Why did they punish you my son without even giving you a chance to defend yourself? But your purity, your joy and your nobility the wicked could not destroy."

A PRAYER FOR UKRAINE

Loving God,
We pray for the people of Ukraine,
for all those suffering or afraid,
that you will be close to them and protect them.
We pray for world leaders,
for compassion, strength and wisdom to guide their choices.
We pray for the world
that in this moment of crisis,
we may reach out in solidarity
to our brothers and sisters in need.
May we walk in your ways
so that peace and justice
become a reality for the people of Ukraine
and for all the world. Amen



Join us on
Friday 25 March 2022 @ 7pm for

Righting the Wrong

A film about the life, martyrdom and canonisation of St Oscar Romero

St Winefride's Church Hall on St Paul's avenue, Bradford, (BD6 1ST)



Clare Dixon, CAFOD's Regional Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean - and Trustee of the Oscar Romero Trust - will introduce the film and answer questions afterwards.

ALL WELCOME





LAUDATO SI FOR PARISHES AND HOMES

By Keith Pitcher, SS John Fisher & Thomas More, Burley in Wharfedale

Pope Francis' messages in Laudato Si¹ have been clear in the need for us to protect our beautiful but fragile world.

He calls on us, collectively and individually, to:

- consider the way we look at creation
- pray about this
- identify and stop practices that cause damage
- start new initiatives to improve our environment, and then
- reset our lifestyles

It can all seem a bit daunting but there are many ways for us to engage with Pope Francis' call. So how do we start?

One of the best ways is for a parish to form a Green Team; to start praying and talking about this and find out what is going on in our homes and in our parishes. It may be possible to do this within the framework provided by the on-going Synodal Process. We shouldn't forget other communities elsewhere in the world either, including the great work done by CAFOD² and many other charities.

A Green Team can be a great way to include people of all ages. As movements like Fridays for Future have shown, young people are extremely passionate about tackling the climate crisis. An inter-generational group provides a space for old and new ideas to bounce-off each other and broadens the

horizon of what any one age group would be able to achieve.

Working towards CAFOD's LiveSimply award³ can be a great way for students and children to get involved, especially with practical things.

The award first encourages us to group the types of issues the team would like to focus on. For example:

- how much gas & electricity do we use?
- what food do we eat & where does it come from?
- how do we get to work & school?
- what flora & fauna live here?
- which things are we reusing and recycling?

The next stage is to decide which one(s) to begin doing something about. Using the RRRR principle (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Renewable energy) helps to focus and identify benefits and savings.

Of course, these savings go beyond merely the financial. A Green Team can be a brilliant way for a parish to cut back on its carbon footprint too.

Building a sustainable parish includes more than just the environmental and economic aspects. There is also a social side too; a sustainable parish is a community.

Laudato Si has a strong focus on 'beauty' and 'waste'. But these ideas need not be taken as literally as they may seem in terms of sustainability. The social side of sustainability can be boosted through practicing mindfulness and reconnecting ourselves with what we take to be beautiful in the world around us. Especially in these tumultuous times, such an approach to life can help us to

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https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

² <https://cafod.org.uk>

³ <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/LiveSimply-award>



find clarity and strength in the face of crises such as the climate crisis.

The work that a Green Team does can be shared with the wider parish community. Keep the rest of the community included in the conversation about what's happening through posters or leaflets.

You don't have to know all the answers at this stage, they can be different for each group. The works Green Teams do for parish buildings can, of course, also help to highlight work that individuals and families can do to help make their own homes more sustainable too.

Energy

- Contact your energy supplier to see how much gas & electricity you are using, what it costs and how much CO₂ is being emitted. Install a smart meter if you don't have one, they are free for households. Using an app on your phone or computer you will then be able to see how much energy is being used every hour & day.
- Get examples of how to save energy, the Energy Saving Trust¹ gives details of costs & benefits including fitting insulation, draught proofing, replacing old lights with LEDs, replacing old windows, control heating better.
- Get costs & savings from installing solar panels². Look at replacing a gas or oil boiler with a heat pump³.

¹ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk>

² <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/solar-panels/>

³ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/heating-your-home/heat-pumps/>

Flora & Fauna

- Do a survey to see what trees, flowers & shrubs you have. Find out if they are bee (and insect) friendly, the RHS has lots of useful information¹.
- Put together ideas for growing more bee friendly plants. Help children to grow these from seeds.
- Build a bug hotel and a hedgehog hotel using recycled materials. Put up a bird feeder and bird box.
- Build raised beds to grow vegetables and flowers.
- Make a composter for grass cuttings & clippings, raw fruit & veg waste and flowers. Use the compost to mulch flower beds.

¹ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

Share Your Story!

Once you get started share what you have done on your parish website and newsletter. Let the Laudato Si' teams have details of your stories. Celebrate your successes!

We would also be delighted to publish any details on parish actions. Send your story to:

jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

and to:

communications@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

to be considered for publication on the diocesan website by the communications officer, Rowan Morton-Gledhill.



CURRENT COMMISSION CLIMATE WORK

By Trish Sandbach, Commission Vice-Chair

Climate change has been a Commission priority area even before the publication of *Laudato Si* (LSI) in 2015. Projects in this arena have been workshops about *Laudato Si* as well as workshops and active support for CAFOD's Live Simply award scheme. In 2020 several people in the diocese 'graduated' as *Laudato Si* Animators, linked to a UK national group, and the Commission works closely with them and a group of LSI supporters. The Commission has been instrumental in developing a Diocesan Environmental Policy which was ratified by the Diocesan Trustees in 2020.

We have established a Climate Change Action group to provide advice and help take forward the work of decarbonising the Diocese. The group is comprised of members from different parishes with expertise and experience in their various fields of work and interest. They have been involved in working towards raising awareness and taking action by a variety of means, including as professionals in their places of work, their homes and their parishes i.e. from individual to institutional action.

The group's work with the diocese, before and during Covid, included meetings with Bishop Marcus and the then Chief Operating Officer who was also the Environmental lead for the diocese. During Covid we were part of planning reflective liturgies focusing on Creation, working with the Justice and Peace Spirituality group.

Zoom conversations and, more recently, meetings in person have taken place,

focusing on decarbonisation and other related issues. It is fantastic to be able to report that the Diocese has now divested from fossil fuels. The news of this welcome move needs to be widely publicised in parishes and celebrated.

In a parish context this has often involved working with a team to draw up plans, with the support of the parish and the parish priest. to follow the Live Simply Award path by living simply, sustainability and in solidarity with the poor which is the backbone of the award. The group is very willing to share its experience and what it has learned from being part of the Live Simply process with other parishes and schools. The Live Simply Award Scheme is managed by CAFOD – so you can be assured of high-quality support from them as well.

livesimplyaward@googlegroups.com)

Our vision is to work together with the Diocesan Curia *Laudato Si* Environmental group to coordinate support, share knowledge and help parishes across the diocese to care for our common home – a challenge which includes hearing the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. We have met on zoom and recently in person with some members of the curia and the Bishop to see how we might take this partnership further. We are working to intensify this partnership further with the new chief operating officer Jack McGrory and the Curia Team. Providing resources will be key to make things happen: finding out what are our current environmental & financial impacts; planning how we will improve our environmental performance; and deliver savings both in money and carbon terms. We are in the midst of a deepening climate emergency and need to work together to mitigate it as far as we can and to encourage all communities to do the same.



There is a pressing need in the diocese to share knowledge, improve communications and coordination between the Centre, parishes and other like-minded people and groups. It is vital that we provide support for parish clergy through their on-going formation programme and for adults working with the Vicariate for Education. We are actively linked to some of the national initiatives e.g. Salford, Arundel, National Justice and Peace Network, Laudato Si Animators-UK

We all have a part to play as Laudato Si encourages us to do. Our Church can and must play a crucial role as more and more people are asking the basic question: How can we live in ways which sustain humanity and its future? Our Church has a unique faith perspective with which to answer this question – our task is to grasp that perspective and then share it with all those working to protect our common home. Lent provides a great opportunity to pray for Creation, for ecological conversion of ourselves and community, supported by fasting from damaging the Earth and the poor by our excessive consumption and taking action for justice.

We are rooted in prayer and Scripture, however we must be rooted in action too. We remain open to the power of the Holy Spirit. We stand on the brink of 'seizing the day' and bringing hope to these turbulent and challenging climate emergency times.

If you'd like to get involved in the Climate Action Group, or just find out more, simply email:

jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

NEVER TOO YOUNG TO HELP

As we said in the last newsletter, CAFOD's campaign this Lent is the 'Walk Against Hunger' to walk 5km every day for 40 days to stand against hunger and in solidarity with all those suffering from it around the globe.

We spoke to Cody, a 12-year-old CAFOD supporter who will be taking part with his Mum, Dad and dog Jay. He also plans on getting some of his friends to join for some of the walks too. Cody said, *"I leave for school every day just before 7.30 and get back at 4.30 so I'll have to work hard to fit it in but I will."*







When we asked Cody why he's decided to make such an effort for the campaign he told us: *"It makes me sad that in 2022 there are people around the world that often go days without food. I want to do the walk to raise as much money as I can to buy food for those that can't afford it and need help either receiving food or being given the tools to grow their own."*

"I know that as a Catholic I'm called by God to take action and support those that need help. During lockdown, because people weren't able to physically attend mass, raising money wasn't easy and I want to help. I saw the way the charity helped Abdallah and his family last year and I know how much they needed it."



EVENTS

 Sat 19 Mar	Decolonise Vaccines Speaker Tour <i>University of Leeds, 4pm-6pm</i> The global response to Covid-19 has been so unequal that some global south activists have called it 'vaccine apartheid'. While those of us in the UK have been offered third and even fourth doses of the vaccine, across the whole of Africa only 11% are double jabbed. This Global Justice Now event will explore this issue in more detail. Register here: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/decolonise-vaccines-leeds-tickets-270904762437
 Fri 25 Mar	Film Presentation: righting the wrong <i>St Windefride's Church Hall, 7pm-9pm</i> https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/film-presentation-righting-the-wrong-tickets-269528114847
 Sat 23 Apr	CAFOD Young Adult Event: Renew <i>CAFOD HQ, Romero House in London</i> The day will be a gathering for 18–30-year-olds based in England and Wales, interested in CAFOD's advocacy, policy, and campaigning work. Through SPARK Social Justice, there is funding available to pay the travel expenses of a limited number of people to attend this event. Simply email spark.jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk for more details. More event details can be found by using this link: https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events/RENEW
 Fri 22 Jul	NJPN Conference – Hope is a Verb with it's Sleeves Rolled Up <i>Hayes Conference Centre, Fri 22nd Mar 6pm – Sun 24th Mar 2pm</i> This is the 44th National Justice & Peace Network Annual Conference – which is held in the lovely surroundings of the Hayes Christian Conference Centre at Swanwick in Derbyshire. Join 300 or so other social justice activists for a memorable weekend. Booking Form: https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NJPN-Conference-Booking-Form-2022.pdf

Please forward this email E-News onto anyone else who you think might be interested. Even better, get them to send us their email address so we can add them to our contact database.

See our website for details of these and other events which may be of interest.