

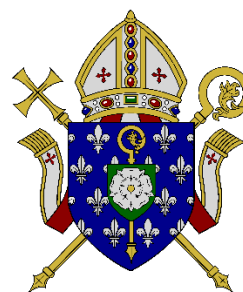


LIVING *LAUDATO SI* IN THE DIOCESE OF LEEDS

Caring More for our Common Home



A collection of J&P Newsletter articles highlighting what the Commission and some parishes in the Leeds Diocese have already done since the publication of *Laudato Si* in 2015



March 2024



INTRODUCTION

Pope Francis has made clear that tackling Climate Change is a priority for the Catholic Church. Even prior to the publication of *Laudato Si* the Commission has had Climate Change as one of its priority areas for reflection, discernment and action.

However, you don't often hear about Climate Change in the weekly sermon at mass. There are probably many parishes in the Leeds Diocese where there is no perception that Climate Change should be a priority for Church communities. The purpose of this booklet is to show what parishes and the Commission have been doing in the hope that it that this will provide a resource of ideas and a springboard for action

This booklet consists of articles published in the J&P Newsletter since the publication of *Laudato Si*.

Reading some of these articles you might think '*We could do that in our parish*' or you might think of ways in which a particular idea could be adapted for use in your parish or church community.

To adapt the words of St Oscar Romero – We can't do everything but we can all do something.

FOREWORD FROM THE BISHOP OF LEEDS, THE RIGHT REVD MARCUS STOCK



Fulfilling our duty to spread the Good News of the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ when so much of the world's news is far from good can be a challenge. In the ongoing climate emergency, the global scale of the issues and angry polarisations of debate could leave us feeling helpless and hopeless - yet we are far from either! The seeds of hope start small, but flourish if sown widely, nurtured and tended often. Our hope in the future of our Common Home is disseminated through our 'good news': our diocesan environmental policies and actions; our sustainability collaborations with Leeds Trinity University; our *Laudato Si* Pilgrimages; and our engagement with environmental initiatives large and small in the homes, schools and parishes which together

comprise our Diocesan Family.

We can spread this news locally by word-of-mouth, through encouragement and by example as active participants in our own parishes and communities; and when publicised via our diocesan communications platforms to our whole Diocese and to national and international Catholic and mainstream secular media, the 'good news' of all our local responses to the Cries of the Earth and of the Poor can be heard across the world. I thank the members of the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission for their dedication, and in our shared fidelity to the principles of *Laudato Si* I warmly commend this booklet to you. May its publication bring us help, hope and inspiration to aspire to ever greater love of God and care for all His creation!

**+Marcus
Bishop of Leeds**



JULY 2015 - CLIMATE CHANGE – LIVE SIMPLY WITH THE EARTH?



By John Battle, Chair of the Commission

(This article first appeared in the Universe in June 2015)

I can still remember my first electric shock and my father, who was an electrician by trade, insisting that you always need to “*make sure that things are earthed*” or disasters can happen and not just to the wiring. Failure to “earth” can lead to fires, burnouts and ultimate disconnections.

What comes across most strikingly in Pope Francis’s communications, whether in his sermons, brief “tweetings” or now in his Encyclical “*Laudato Si*” (“Praise Be” taken from the first words of St Francis’s famous “Canticle of the Sun”) is the strong earthy language he uses. He urged priests to be “*shepherds ... living with the smell of the sheep*”

. Now he warns that together climate change, ecological degradation and exploitative global inequality is turning our “*common home*” into “*a pile of filth*”. Addressing the environmental issues arising from climate change in this encyclical he reasserts traditional Catholic teaching that the earth is our common inheritance and home but he goes further in insisting that “*we have to realise that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the poor of the earth and the cry of the poor*”.

Some years ago working in parliament on international development I visited both northern Nigeria where the desert is sweeping in and burying the fields and wetlands of the farming and fishing communities and driving them away, and the Dhaka Delta in Bangladesh where the sea is encroaching rapidly inland and the salt water is drowning the rice fields.

Again it is the poor who are paying the highest price. Meanwhile the poor in megacities are reduced to living off the pickings of discarded waste in rubbish dumps and the resources of the developing world “*continue to fuel the lifestyle of richer countries at the cost of their own present and future*”.

Pope Francis challenges this “*cheerful recklessness*” and spells out that the rich must begin to pay their “*grave social debt*” to the poor and tackle the earth’s rising temperature. He pulls no punches in emphasizing “*the rich owe the poor*”. In his work “*Ethics and Community*” the theologian Enrique Dussel drawing of the writings and lives of the early Fathers of the Church such as St John Chrysostom who pointed out that extra stored food and clothing in a richer person’s cupboard was stolen from the poor, spelt out that “*the life of the poor is accumulated by the rich. The latter live the life of the rich in virtue of the death of the poor*”.

What characterises Pope Francis’s environmental encyclical “*Laudato Si*” is his deliberate fusing together tackling the environmental challenges and tackling poverty. “*Hearing the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor*” implies urgent and radical (as in ‘rooted’) action, a transformation of personal lives and international economic and political action; “*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 earthy sojourn*”.

Living more simply so that others can simply live?





***Laudato Si'*: Fresh Challenges; Fresh Methodologies**



Dr Ann Marie Mealey, Leeds Trinity University

Ann Marie is Senior Lecturer in Theology and religious Studies.

She is also a member of the Justice & Peace Commission, is a theological advisor to CAFOD and represents Leeds Trinity University at Leeds Citizens

Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* opens by acknowledging that the earth is much like the *poor: neglected, exploited and uncared for* (#2). In order to address some of the most pressing ecological questions of our time, the Pope wishes to address *'every person living on this planet'* (# 3). This is a bold and brave statement, especially given that when a similar phrase ('all persons of good will') was used in *Gaudium et Spes*, some felt that the then Pope was pandering to the demands of secularism. But such a charge cannot be made here, since part of the encyclical has as its main focus an attempt to bring the religious voice into dialogue with the world concerning care for the environment. Since the earth is shared, it makes sense to attempt a solution in dialogue and in communication with everyone.



The Pope draws upon rich theological resources and statements that have been made by his predecessors and stresses that we ought to *approach care for the environment with awe and wonder* (# 11). He states that *'[i]f we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs.'* (# 11)

In terms of its methodology what is perhaps very new in this encyclical is the stress on finding solutions to the cry of planet in the local, in the cultural, in the specific. As Pope Francis points out, *'[a]ll of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.'* (# 14) This sentiment is also repeated elsewhere in the encyclical several times. The challenge that this presents to the Church and the world is the stress on finding local solutions to universal problems. A hermeneutic of the specific, of the local and cultural is being espoused here, which might be adopted and used in other areas of Theology too.

A further challenge presented to us by this encyclical is the 'throw away' culture which the Pope is seeking to address. We see things as disposable or as having only market/economic value. We must refrain from treating things as 'rubbish' – either human or non-human. There is a call in the encyclical to adopt a new framework or a new horizon of interpretation that sees human life as sacred and that moves us away from a consumerist mentality towards one that reveres and respects nature and invites a kind of sincere simplicity in relations to the web of life. The encyclical challenges us to find a way of using resources and reusing them again, *moderating consumption of non-renewal resources and making their use efficient* (# 24). This kind of cycle of reusing resources presents a huge challenge to the current society which is, as the Pope points out, used to discarding certain things as rubbish.

Another key challenge presented to us by *Laudato Si'* is *the need to combat a kind of 'mental pollution' (#47) that is brought about by the media and the information overload which comes with much of our mechanisms of communication*. The Pope calls for the *'voices of the sages'* to be heard amidst the frenzy of modern technological communications. And he is right. *'Real relationships with one another, with all the challenges they entail, now*



tend to be replaced by a type of internet communication which enables us to choose or eliminate relationships at a whim...' (# 47) Although the Pope is not saying that the media is without virtue, he is stressing that the key to right relationships is not to be found in mechanisms that allow us to dismiss the other at our convenience. If we are to address the environmental crisis as a common world, right relationships are central. This presents the Church and the world with yet another challenge: how can we find ways of allowing the voices of wisdom to emerge amidst the busy and claustrophobic world in which we live? Parishes, governments and communities of all kinds will have to address this issue if we are to find sustainable ways of living together as part of a shared world, earth and community.

What is both challenging and compelling about this encyclical is that it stipulates that '*on many concrete questions, the Church has no reason to offer a definite opinion*' (# 61) and that '*honest debate amongst experts*' is required to address the ecological challenges which we face (# 61). The sense of humility shown here is quite a new methodological approach to questions of truth, understanding and human living in relation to each other and the earth, but it is also encouraging. There is a sense that the Pope is extending a genuine invitation to the people of world (and particularly those with expertise, power and influence) to dialogue concerning questions of climate change, pollution, water, human life, plant life, etc. '*[N]o branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out*' (#62), says Pope Francis, as all sources of wisdom must be considered in the face of the environmental crises. This is a huge challenge for humanity and for those engaged in the search for truth concerning the environment; however, it is also compelling and motivational that the Church is calling on 'everyone' (as seems to be the methodological approach of the document) to be a part of the solution and of the restoration of relationships needed to heal the earth, its habitats, its waters, and its preferential people: the poor.

"We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment." Pope Francis *Laudato Si*



NOVEMBER 2015 - CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE LEEDS DIOCESE

Justice & Peace Commission half-day conference and AGM – 7 November 2015

Our Conference and AGM was held at **St. Benedict's parish centre in Garforth**. They have a lovely parish centre and it is easily accessible by both car and public transport. We thank the parish for their warm welcome – and refreshments throughout the conference and soup & cake at lunchtime. The conference opened with the Chair, John Battle, spending just a few minutes explaining how the Commission has had to re-orientate itself in the last year and what it has been doing.



You can read more about this in the Annual Report which is also being sent to everyone on our contact database.

To lead us into thinking about 'Laudato Si' we had an initial reflection which was simply some of the most important quotes from 'Laudato Si' accompanied by images.



We then asked our speakers to introduce themselves and why they were passionate about Climate Change. After that we asked everyone to introduce themselves to their neighbours and say what had brought them along to the conference.

Our opening Speaker was **Ellen Teague, from the Columban JPIC team**. Ellen pointed out key issues in Laudato Si' - Climate Change, Biodiversity and Water- and the concept of integral ecology where Pope Francis says that we cannot

adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. Climate Change is a moral issue and we must hear "both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor". Indeed, "ecological conversion" is called for. This interconnectedness between Climate Change, facing up to problems of poverty and injustice must inform our actions as both individuals and members of society. This theme was also reflected in the inputs provided by our other two speakers.

Andy Challinor is Professor of Climate Impacts at the University of Leeds. When he was at school he thought he would like to work for CAFOD. However, he was good at physics and ended up following an academic science route towards his current position. Prior to being asked to speak at this conference Andy had not looked at 'Laudato Si' in any detail and he spoke with feeling about how what the Pope says ties in with so much of what he is doing in his professional life.

Andy is currently working on the UK Food Security Risk Assessment for the UK Government. In the UK we import 50% of our food. In assessing the security of the UK's food supply we need to take this into account. We are not untypical of the rich countries of the North and the



movement of food across international borders is common. This whole food production and trading system is a complex one. Poor wheat harvests from key producing countries such as Russia or Australia can have a big impact on price in a particular year. However, Climate Change impacts need to be considered across a longer timeframe. So the key question in Andy's work is what will produce greater resilience at a 'systemic' level. Are there key weaknesses in our food supply system where positive action could improve food security in the UK? Which are the most important weaknesses for us in the UK? And so on. –

In identifying these risks, politics inevitably comes into the equation. 'Positive action' implies implementing policies at a national level that will help to reduce the risks identified. However, the way in which the debate about Climate Change is framed has an important bearing on the policy options that are suggested. The predominant narrative is one where technology-driven agriculture is the principal means of mitigating the worst effects of Climate Change and ensuring that the world has enough to eat over the next 50 years. Andy stressed that technology, including GM crops, can be a powerful tool in adapting to climate change. However, they should be considered alongside the full range of options, rather than being promoted as a silver bullet solution. A lot of the debate is framed around assumptions about food requirements in the next generation. Andy suggested that there is an alternative narrative to be explored by varying the key assumptions. The majority of studies relating to this area assume that consumption patterns continue changing along current trends (e.g. if you can afford meat then you eat meat - as is occurring in China) – What if people wasted less food and materially changed their diet? (by, for instance, eating less meat) – This may provide a way of both mitigating some of the effects of Climate Change and improving public health at the same time. However, little work has been done to date on exploring the policies that might support these options. Yet these policy options are the ones that resonate most strongly with the messages expressed by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*.

This idea of an alternative narrative was taken up by **Alex Scrivener**, from [Global Justice Now](#). He was very pessimistic about the outcomes from the upcoming Paris Climate Change conference. Too many vested interests from the rich countries and from multinational corporations will ensure that any agreements do not deliver the radical changes that are needed, he thought. However, rather than getting totally depressed about this situation, Alex was surprisingly upbeat!



He found encouragement in conferences like this. Campaigning actions are needed but the focus needs to be different from hoping that the Paris conference will solve everything. The Pope's analysis in '*Laudato Si*' he thought was very helpful in this regard. Once again the pope's phrase about 'ecological conversion' was mentioned. However, as Alex pointed out, Francis does not stop at saying that we should all change our *own* way of living but insists that we need to **act together** to overcome Climate Change issues.

After these thought-provoking inputs we wanted to give everyone a chance to say something so we split into smaller groups for discussion and to think about the commitments that each of us could make about Climate Change. We asked everyone to think of one things they could do at a '*personal*' level (like use public transport more or eat less meat) and one thing they could



commit to at a '*public*' level (like writing to their MP or joining in with other people on some action related to Climate Change).

The small group discussions were followed by a Panel Discussion with our speakers.

Alex and Ellen were critical of the role of multinational corporations in their initial inputs and this was something that was questioned in the panel discussion. Some people argued that they exist and are not going away so we must lobby them to change the way they operate. However, Alex disagreed. Some multinationals (oil companies, some large agri-businesses and



multinational mining companies for instance), he maintained, were not interested in changing and he likened the situation to the late eighteenth century when discussions about the slave trade were ongoing. "I'm sure some people had similar feelings then: the slave traders are not going to go away so perhaps we can get them to be a bit more humane – give people double rations, or something similar", he remarked. "In 100 years' time there are a number of corporations that should just no longer exist".

Like Andy, Alex had not really looked at 'Laudato Si' until he was preparing for this conference. He was both surprised and delighted to find that the Pope's messages aligned closely with what Global Justice Now was trying to achieve and the way in which the Pope linked theology to social activism.

In total, over 200 actions were logged on the conference 'Action Board (which can just be seen behind the speakers in the picture above). The 'public' actions can broadly be split into lobbying of one sort or another and educational / awareness raising work within parishes across the diocese. More details about this will be appearing on our website in the next week or so. The conference may have raised more questions than it answered for many people – but there was a palpable desire from many attendees to explore the questions in more depth and to take more action.



Alex Scrivener, Andy Challinor and Ellen Teague pose with John Battle in St. Benedict's garden – which the parish is using to grow flowers and vegetables as part of their journey towards becoming a 'LiveSimply' parish. If you have some spare land in your parish it is something that you could explore.



CLIMATE CHANGE 'DROP-IN' AT HALIFAX MINSTER

Should main local Churches now have regular "Climate change Drop In sessions"?

One was arranged at Halifax Minster on Saturday 5th December, during the recent international Paris talks. The morning opened in a large side chapel with a period of prayer and reflection centred around sentences from Pope Francis' "Laudato Si" encyclical's call to personal "**ecological conversion**". We then gathered round in the main Church as Halifax MP Holly Lynch (who has served on the Environmental Select Committee) called in before her advice surgeries to introduce parliamentary view of current climate change legislation and budgets, challenging drastic cuts to renewables and the Carbon Transfer scheme moving our country away from helping develop a "carbon free" future.

She was followed by the first of a series of detailed briefings from Anthony Rae of Calderdale Friends of the Earth who marked out the international steps: Rio 1992, Kyoto 1997, Copenhagen 2009, and now Paris 2015.

Brief, clear, explanations of the reality of climate change, the 'global carbon budget' and 'carbon heroes and villains' ("who's eating the carbon budget") interspersed with questions and comment sessions , as people came and went through the morning gave a solid injection of the science that was accessible to all. Calderdale councillors the called in to spell out their efforts to "green the council" in the context of harsh government cutbacks, , recycling more waste and promoting the "Calderdale new cycle superhighway". Located in the Pennines, Calderdale has experienced major floods in recent years, and there is an irony to a recent local paper headline "*Flooded Walsden says 'No to windfarms'*"!!!

A brief and fascinating description of the role of the disappearing blanket peat bog on the moors, "Calderdale's rain forest", spell out the short sightedness of destroying natural local sinks that prevent both flooding and climate damage. A speaker from "Global Justice Now" insisted on the need to continually link the local and the global, poverty and environmental damage particularly by transnational corporations. "Community Energy" suggested ideas such as 'owning your own wind farm'.

John Battle introduced Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si: On the Care for Our Common Home" as an "encouraging counterweight" to Naomi Klein's international campaigning work. Joe from the local Churches then described his 'long march to the climate talks' as an observer in Copenhagen and more recently in Paris and gave an update on the Paris talks. We left to view Naomi Klein's film "This changes everything" in the Ring O'Bells pub next door.

JANUARY 2016 PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE



David & Mollie Somerville, from St.Cuthbert's and First Martyrs Parish, Bradford both went to Paris.

Here David gives a short account of his impressions.



It was an exciting weekend with a lot of support from people around us in and on the way to Paris - and before we went! Mollie spoke at all the parish weekend masses so that fellow-parishioners would know in advance what we were doing. Our Parish Justice and Peace group had decided to give this issue



priority for the next year or so. The whole weekend was well organised with Friends of the Earth and ATTAC very much to the fore, but we had enrolled through **Global Justice Now** (formerly the World Development Movement) and our tickets on Eurostar and accommodation in Paris were bought by UK **Friends of the Earth**.

Due to the security situation in Paris all outdoor demonstrations had to be organised at the last minute and the police asked to tolerate them, even though they were forbidden under the state of emergency. On Saturday morning we were between the Arc de Triomphe and the Porte Maillot (where the UEFA Draw was taking place) with at least 4 red lines down the middle of the Avenue de la Grande Armee. We then moved on to the Champs de Mars behind the Eiffel Tower where after a bag search we were permitted to form a gathering and afterwards listen to music and speakers who reported on the final agreement of the 195 countries represented at the COP 21 in Paris.

The devil will be in the detail of the implementation of the summit agreement but at least 195 governments recognize that climate change at 1,5 degrees has to be minimised and that they and us are responsible for the concrete measures to be taken.

We were able to hear **Naomi Klein** give a speech. Her book *"This Changes Everything"* is well worth reading, but start with the conclusions first!

We are now trying to get Bradford Councillors who are responsible for West Yorkshire Pension Fund Management to divest from fossil fuels i.e. coal, oil and gas, and put money in renewables. *Perhaps other Justice and Peace members could follow that up?* DS

SEPTEMBER 2016 - LEEDS DIOCESE PART OF CHURCH CONSORTIUM SWITCH TO GREEN ENERGY

Along with 15 other dioceses in England and Wales, the Leeds diocese is moving to a 'green energy' supplier.

The new alliance between Interdiocesan Fuel Management Ltd (IFM) and Churchmarketplace (CMP) means that more than 3,200 parishes will be buying electricity from 'green' suppliers of renewable sources - and seeing their bills lowered.



IFM is a fuel procurement company which was set up by a number of Catholic dioceses in 1994. Eight dioceses have been procuring energy from Churchmarketplace, a

collaborative buying group serving the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

The new alliance was formed some six months after the exemption from Climate Change levy was withdrawn from renewable electricity bills, a development which meant that all dioceses were facing an increase in their electricity costs. There was also a premium cost attached to purchasing renewable electricity which meant that the dioceses previously outside of IFM could face significant costs in moving to renewable energy.

CAFOD has commented:

"The switch is important because using the fossil fuels traditionally relied upon to provide energy contributes to climate change, which has a big impact on CAFOD's work and the people we serve.



CAFOD has been campaigning for action to tackle climate change, including a shift away from fossil fuels, because our partners tell us that the impact of the changing climate is making life harder for the world's poorest communities."

Combining their purchasing power, it is estimated the dioceses will save £180,000 collectively on their energy bill. The remaining dioceses are expected to join the scheme when they are able.

By combining the buying power of all 16 dioceses together, significant savings were achieved that offset the impact of the Climate Change levy as well as making renewable energy available to all at a manageable price. The premium for purchasing renewable energy through IFM is about £5 per meter per year compared to about £49 per meter per year outside of the contract, a total saving of more than £180,000 for all dioceses.

The 16 dioceses served by the agreement are Arundel and Brighton, Birmingham, Cardiff, Clifton, East Anglia, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Menevia, Middlesbrough,

Northampton, Nottingham, Plymouth, Salford, Shrewsbury and Westminster. Both partners in the alliance hope that the remaining five dioceses will soon join the buying group so they too might enjoy the same benefits gained from obtaining their energy on a 100 per cent renewable tariff.

The remaining dioceses are expected to join the scheme when they are able.

In addition to the work being carried out among the parishes, CMP and IFM are now exploring how their new partnership can replicate the successful collaboration the parishes are enjoying for Catholic schools, academies and universities. By pooling together the huge volumes of energy, CMP/IFM's intentions are to make renewable energy an affordable option for all Catholic organisations in England and Wales.

The main part of this article first appeared in Independent Catholic News on 18 July

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=30533>

NOVEMBER 2016 - GARFORTH PARISH GAINS 'GREENEST IN LEEDS' AWARD

St Benedict's in Garforth recently celebrated gaining the Live Simply award and much of the following is courtesy of Katie Binns of the Leeds CAFOD office.

The prestigious award, achieved by only 20 other parishes in England and Wales, was awarded to the parish in June with the official award ceremony at St Benedict's on October 9th.

The "Live Simply" Award, set up by CAFOD, encourages parishes across England and Wales to be greener and act more sustainably. It is awarded to communities who can show how they have been living simply, in solidarity with people in poverty and sustainably with creation.

Trish Sandbach (pictured along with Fr Gerard Kearney and David Jackson) commented



"The Live Simply award has given us the opportunity to try and live out our Motto: 'St Benedict's-a place to grow'. Over the two years we have been working towards it we have grown as a parish community, working together, and the allotment has grown too!"

It is hard to summarise it but essentially it is about caring for the Earth as Pope Francis has powerfully reiterated in his Encyclical Laudato Si: we are called to

be protectors of God's handiwork: to protect and appreciate, express our gratitude for the beauty of the Earth. It is not optional or secondary to our Christian experience, it is a fundamental part of the process of undergoing an "ecological conversion", a

change of heart. Pope Francis has added the Care of the Earth as the 8th Corporal Work of Mercy."

St. Benedict's Church, rebuilt 20 years ago this year, features used wood and metal from the previous building throughout. Their installations of the cross are made with pieces of the old church to emphasise not only Jesus' renewal through the passion, but also the renewal of their Parish. Their vegetable garden too has been made in the same way, decked with water tanks, timber, plastic tubing and wooden crates that have all been donated from different individuals in the community. The parish's recycling bin inside the church is a small reminder of this ethos.



Parishioner David Jackson frequently tends to the church's vegetable garden. He said: "

"Everything we grow here in the garden we also pass on to parishioners at the end of Mass. There are those in our community who can't afford locally grown produce so being able to lend a helping hand is the greatest reward. We grow

everything from beetroot to rhubarb and use our own flowers and poppies for displays at Mass throughout the year."

Parish priest Fr. Gerard Kearney said: "Our parishioners were encouraged by the Pope's Encyclical to make eco-activities more part of our DNA; both as a parish and as individuals. That's when we began to think about recycling and reusing our waste as much as possible. One thing we do liturgically every Sunday is drip feeding small encouragements in the bidding prayers and the homily, to inspire parishioners to go greener at home and to take part in all our eco-activities."

St. Benedict's parish took two years to develop their parish activities to be better aligned with the fundamental principles of the award. However, many parishes will find that they are already doing many things (like being a Fairtrade parish) that are in line with what is needed to achieve it. That is why the first step in the process is to undertake an audit of what is already going on in the parish.



Working towards the award presents a wonderful opportunity to both celebrate what is already going on in your parish and to pull more people into active involvement in the additional activities that will count towards the achievement of it.

CAFOD provides lots of support for parishes working towards the award – and now we have an example that we can call on in our own diocese.

NOVEMBER 2016 – STANBROOK ABBEY – REDEFINING MISSION FOR THE AGE OF LAUDATO SI

There is still much need for reflection about the message of *Laudato Si*. The Live Simply Award is one way of embedding these ideas in parish life. Some parishes will not be at a stage where they can consider such an undertaking. Apart from talks, another key way to raise awareness about our approach and attitudes to creation is to have a parish Day of Reflection or Retreat that focuses on these aspects of our faith. If you think such an idea might be workable in your parish then a great location to consider is Stanbrook Abbey in the village of Wass, not far from Ampleforth and Sutton Bank. For most people in the Leeds Diocese this is near enough to get there with shared cars but far enough away from the everyday to provide the right environment for deeper reflection.

Stanbrook Abbey is a new build Benedictine convent. It has been a project long in the making. The community were previously based in Worcester and when they decided that they needed to move they were already clear that they wanted buildings that not only reflected their values but which was also a sustainable build. This was in 2003 – long before *Laudato Si* was even thought about.

They moved to their present location in Wass in 2009 but the development of the convent buildings is still ongoing. It was only in 2015 that they dedicated their new chapel. They still have plans to complete a proper guest house. But in the meantime they have good modern meeting facilities for groups of up to about 30 people and visitors are welcome to join in the prayer services in the chapel, should they so wish. They cannot provide lunch but there is a kitchen available for groups to make hot drinks.

The buildings and surrounding area provide a thought-provoking environment for considering how we should care for creation in our own lives and communities.



The Chapel at Stanbrook Abbey





The roof is a 'sedum' roof - a layer of vegetation (living plants) deliberately put on top of a



conventional roof surface and bringing a whole host of benefits to the building and the environment. They use a wood chip boiler and use thermal solar panels to boost hot water, as well as using materials with high thermal insulation properties. They harvest rainwater in a large tank and this is used in the buildings' toilets.

They use a passive main drainage system to filter wastewater through reed beds on their site. Through all sorts of other little ways they seek to live more sustainably within their environment.

When they purchased the site of Crief Farm in 2007 they had no planning permission for their new convent – and remember that the land is within the North Yorkshire Moors National Park and so planning regulations are much stricter. The measure of their success is not only that they were eventually granted planning permission but that in April 2016 the building won the Yorkshire Building of the Year at a RIBA award ceremony. On November 3rd it was also announced that the newly-built chapel had won the 2016 Presidents' Award for new church buildings at the Church Architecture Awards.

The RIBA judges commented:

Having a blank canvas sometimes presents more problems than a tight, hemmed-in site but to execute it in such a beautiful organic form suggests divine intervention. It sits majestically within the woodland, rising out of the ground to form the crescendo to the plateau. The experience of walking into the chapel is truly uplifting."

Within their grounds they also have 9 Scandinavian-style lodges that are available for hire throughout the year. So, for smaller groups, it would be possible to consider a weekend event. For more information see:

Stanbrook Abbey website <http://www.stanbrookabbey.org.uk/>

Crief Lodges website <http://www.cottageguide.co.uk/crieflodges/>

JANUARY 2018 - CREATING A BUZZ IN LEEDS

by Michael Emly, Our Lady of Kirkstall parish, Leeds

What will help the "average parishioner" engage with the Church's social teaching? What will build unity in a parish formed by the merger of 3 formerly independent church communities? How can we make Pope Francis' teaching in 'Laudato Si' better known? These were three of the aspirations that led the parish of Our Lady of Kirkstall in northwest Leeds to decide to work towards certification by CAFOD as a "Live Simply" parish.



CAFOD's website

(<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/How-to-campaign/Livesimply-award>) sets out very clearly



what is involved in the Live Simply award. A parish (or school) commits to living SIMPLY, SUSTAINABLY with creation, and IN SOLIDARITY with people in poverty. At the beginning of the process, an action plan is drawn up of how the parish will put these principles into practice. The plan should include not only activities already in place but also new developments or projects around each of these themes. Once the parish feels that it has made sufficient progress and can demonstrate this fact, then it invites CAFOD to visit and hopefully validate the award.

In Our Lady of Kirkstall, the parish CAFOD Group began the process in Summer 2016 by discussing the Live Simply scheme with our parish priest, Fr. Pat Smythe, and then taking a paper to our Parish Council. Everybody could see the opportunities for parish renewal and growth and a decision was taken to embark on the Live Simply journey. In March 2017, members of the parish council spoke at all 6 Masses in the parish and a questionnaire was handed out to everyone at Mass in order to establish where members of the parish already stood on a number of matters, including recycling, involvement in “green” issues and how they travelled to Mass. Two open meetings in the early summer provided an opportunity for anybody who wished to feed into the process of drawing up an action plan, and the parish formally registered with CAFOD in September 2017.

Our Lady of Kirkstall could already demonstrate its monocultures and the use of pesticides. In contrast, urban parks and gardens already provide many plants rich in pollen. Urban Buzz works with schools and community groups to develop these and other spaces with this in mind. Planting native plant species such as primroses, bluebells, ox-eye daisies and campions is particularly encouraged.



What this means in practice can be illustrated through the plans for just one of our churches, which has a plot approx. 20m x 5m down one side of the land between the church and the road. Currently, this is under grass and one end is shaded by a number of established

deciduous trees. We would like to make this a more attractive feature for the community while providing a better habitat for insects. And for the changes to be sustainable, the maintenance requirements need to be low. After discussion with the project officer from Urban Buzz, our provisional plan includes:

- Planting bulbs (snowdrops, crocus and English bluebells) under the trees.
- Clearing an area of grass in the more open part to sow a small wildflower meadow.
- Stopping mowing close to the boundary wall and allowing ferns, etc. to grow to provide cover for insects. Perhaps add some hellebores.
- Putting up “bug hotels” to provide shelter for invertebrates.
- Building compost bins to allow garden waste to be recycled.

An appeal for volunteers identified several individuals who would be interested in helping with this project. Discussions with the parish uniformed organisations (scouts, guides and their younger equivalents) are also proving fruitful and we plan to identify specific projects or activities



which each group can undertake as part of their work for their badges. And our two parish primary schools are both keen to become involved.

substantial commitment to the theme of *living in solidarity*. As well as supporting CAFOD and the SVP, our parish community provides the base for 2 registered charities, one engaged in healthcare in South India (the Sylvia Wright Trust) and one providing wide-ranging support for development in East Timor (the Peter Trust). However, many in the parish had been very moved by the plight of refugees from Syria and we decided that we wanted to build an ongoing commitment to welcoming and supporting refugees. Building on our current practice of organising collections for various charities active locally, we hope also to provide encouragement and opportunities for people to engage at a more personal level.



For the theme of *living simply*, we decided to produce a special monthly bulletin which would promote three “practical challenges” for that month and give a couple of short quotations from *Laudato Si’*. This bulletin also provides an opportunity to communicate the wider vision and involve parishioners in the various projects.

It is however on the theme of *living sustainably* that our plan is starting to become really exciting and showing potential for bringing the parish together in all sorts of new ways. Our plan always envisaged developing the use of the land around our 3 churches in order to bring people closer to creation. As we started to draw up firm plans, we discovered that Leeds is one of 8 cities involved in a national project called *Urban Buzz* which aims to increase the number of urban habitats for pollinating insects (<https://www.buglife.org.uk/urban-buzz>). Such insects are essential to the life-cycle of many crops and garden plants, but the countryside no longer offers such a hospitable environment because of agricultural practices. The “gardening project” is already demonstrating its potential for bringing together parishioners, schools and uniformed organisations with a common vision.



Hopefully, it will increase our awareness of the beauty and complexity of God’s creation and of our own responsibility to support and maintain the natural world. Pope Francis writes: “Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous.” (*Laudato Si’*, 84) Similarly, the 3 strands of the wider *Live Simply* programme are making us more aware of the interconnectedness of Catholic social teaching and helping us to understand what a gift

we have received in the teaching of the current pope. “Everything is connected. Concern for the environment needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.” (*Laudato Si’*, 91)



For Our Lady of Kirkstall, this is still an early stage on our journey. Whether we will realise all our ambitions remains to be seen. But we hope and pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire and teach us along the way.

DECEMBER 2018 - LIVE SIMPLY UPDATES

CAFOD's Live Simply Award scheme is starting to take off across the country and, slowly but surely, across the Leeds Diocese as well.

Here are some brief updates on parishes in the Leeds Diocese who are working towards the award. *What is stopping your parish from taking up the challenge to Live Simply?*

Good Shepherd church community, Mytholmroyd Janet Almond reports:



The Good Shepherd RC Church in Mytholmroyd is yet to submit our finalised and formal plans but none the less have made a good start. Our children and youth are leading by example. At the end of November they helped with a Fair-trade Tombola stall at the Mytholmroyd Christmas Fair and the following week held their home Christmas Fair. Over £450 was raised, enough for 1 cow, 3 pigs and a mosquito net, purchased through CAFOD's World Gifts. In addition, the children are making 'Live Simply' pledges, and encouraging family and parishioners to do likewise. Weekly

suggestions are published in the bulletin.

Our Lady of Kirkstall parish, Leeds Michael Emly reports:

The Live Simply Project is continuing very well in its second year:

- the "year 2 relaunch" at all Masses on October 6/7th made a real impact;
- the Live Simply Day of Recollection in October was attended by 20 people and was very well received;
- the parish collected toiletries again this December; these will be distributed to refugees by the St. Vincent Centre;
- the monthly Live Simply bulletins continue to maintain a high standard, with a number of different people contributing content;
- the ongoing monthly gardening sessions have made it much easier to keep the church grounds tidy;
- interest and engagement continue to be shown by various groups and individuals across the parish.



We are now starting to think in detail about how we might invite assessment for the Live Simply award in the Spring of 2019.



St John Mary Vianney parish, Leeds

St. John Mary Vianney Leeds
Living Simply

Parish Cafod Group Advent 2018

Will St. John Vianney be a Live Simply award community?

Living:

- simply
- sustainably
- in solidarity with the poor

We're up for the challenge!

We know that some of the biggest issues we face - rich and poor alike - arise from the impact of Climate Change and the effects of environmental damage.

We're already experiencing some of the effects - and the young will be affected even more as they grow up. But the people suffering most of all are the poor.

The 423 million people most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are already living in extreme poverty.

WE HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Our faith encourages us to take action. The Cafod Live Simply challenge is an opportunity for Catholic communities to respond to Pope Francis' invitation in Laudato Si' to "work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us".

The Live Simply challenge is a valuable opportunity to build on existing commitment and to try something new.

Parishes, schools, chaplaincies and religious communities all over the country are invited to work towards the Cafod Live Simply Award. To take significant steps together to respond to the call to live simply, that others may simply live.

It's about living more sustainably in solidarity with the poor. Finding out first of all and celebrating the various things parishioners are already doing and then setting goals, some simple, some a little more ambitious, for us to achieve together as a community.

* Information taken from the Cafod website.

Children's Letters to Pope Francis

Three years ago Pope Francis wrote a letter to the world about caring for our common home - otherwise known as the encyclical Laudato Si'.

Earlier this year schoolchildren from England and Wales wrote back to him thanking him for Laudato Si' and telling him about the things they themselves are doing to care for the planet.

In July Cafod's Head of Education, Monica Conmee, delivered the letters to the Pope at the Vatican.

Monica said afterwards:

"The Pope looked thrilled to receive the letters and it seemed he couldn't wait to look through the album"

Dear Pope Francis, I hope people listens to you...cause this is getting out of hand. Kind regards, Charlie Year 4

The Parish Action Group (formerly the Women's Group) has taken on board the Live Simply initiative under Julie Brownrigg's direction. Open parish Live Simply meetings have taken place involving mainly members of the PAG and members of the CAFOD Group and its wider group of Supporters.

They have launched the scheme to the whole parish for Advent with the leaflet shown being given to all parishioners at the two churches of the parish. An adapted version of the Live Simply prayer is being said before masses during Advent and they have had positive feedback about this.

They are in the process of meeting with sacramental groups at both churches and asking them to get involved with the challenge. They intend to use a Calendar of Major events for 2019 to find ways of incorporating the themes of Live Simply into these events.

Julie Brownrigg added, *"We hope to develop our actions in the New Year. Our next focus will be Fairtrade and during Lent we intend to hold several meetings on Laudato Si and presentations on what is climate change and how it is affecting the poorest in the world."*

MARCH 2019 - CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ALL GENERATIONS

Over 50 students from St Mary's Menston High School, Menston, took part in an event organised by the Leeds Diocesan Justice & Peace Commission on Thursday 7th March. It was an 'Inter-generational conversation about Climate Change'. Facilitated by the Commission Chair, John Battle, the panel consisted of two students from the school (Hannah Jenkins from Year 9 and Tom Allan from year 12) along with Kay Pierce from the Good Shepherd church community in Mytholmroyd and Andy Challinor (Professor of Climate Change Impacts at the University of Leeds) who attends Our Lady of Kirkstall parish in Leeds.

John Battle commented "Climate Change issues are often presented in the media as older generations vs younger generations. We wanted to explore whether this was the case and whether having a panel of people made up of different generations is a useful way of exploring this key issue".



The first question to the panel was to ask them whether they thought action by individuals was more important than taking political action. They were all in agreement that individual action was important – no matter how small an action it might seem – but that Climate Change needed political action as well. In relation to guidance from the Church about Climate Change, members of the panel felt that whilst Pope Francis has spoken out clearly, Climate Change was not something that came up in local churches very often. When John asked the audience how many had heard of “Laudato Si” only about half raised their hands.



Prof Andy Challinor of the University of Leeds talking about the urgency of taking action on Climate Change

As the discussion progressed it moved more and more from the panel itself to student audience members offering their own views about topics.

This was especially the case when there was a question about the student strikes for Climate Change. Interestingly, there was a definite split between those students who thought they were necessary and those who thought it was not the right thing to do. The older members of the panel all thought they were a good idea!

After thanking Darren Beardsley, headteacher, and Julia Findlay, Lay Chaplain, John commented that “It was fantastic to have such engagement from so many of you today. Climate Change is an issue that affects all of us now. Andy Challinor reminded us that we have a short period of time to take more action globally before the consequences become much more serious. For that to happen we will need all generations to work together to ensure our politicians are held accountable for the actions that we must take at a national and international level.”



MAY 2019 - TWO LIVE SIMPLY AWARDS IN THE LEEDS DIOCESE IN ONE MONTH!

A second parish in the Diocese has obtained the CAFOD Live Simply award. On top of this one of our schools has also achieved the award. Here are the details:

OUR LADY OF KIRKSTALL PARISH LEEDS



The Leeds parish of Our Lady of Kiskr stall, encompassing the church communities at St Mary's Horsforth, Holy Name in Cookrdge and the Assumption church in West Park have been working towards this award for over two years.

The idea came from the CAFOD group in the parish but was readily taken up by the parish council and the core principles of Live Simply (illustrated in the photo above taken at Holy Name church) were even built into the guidelines that the parish

council uses.

Earlier this month two Live Simply assessors visited the parish to examine what the parish had done.

Maggie McSherry, leading the assessment, said *"This large parish has achieved so much in less than 2 years. I could highlight the inspirational monthly LiveSimply newsletter, the gardening club, the Lampedusa Cross pilgrimage, the Lenten prayer stations in the park, the new compost bins and recycling. The list goes on, but the overall effect on the parish has been so much more than the individual parts. It has*

touched so many people's hearts, and that is what is most important. Fr Pat has enabled the parish to work together and reflect on the concerns of today"

Paul Kelly, co-assessor, added *"For me what was so effective was the way this very large parish, that had been created from three separate and quite distinctive churches, has from the outset seen LiveSimply as a strategic development which has united the parish and forged a new experience of community. Living simply has simply become a part of what they do, and this means it will continue into the future as part of their Christian mission to live out the Gospel."*

Pauls' comments were echoed by parish priest, Fr Pat Smythe, "The Parish Council agreed that the programme had real value in its own right but also felt it would be a significant agent in furthering the desirable integration of the three churches (former parishes) which now comprised the new pastoral entity of the Parish of Our Lady of Kirkstall. This has proved to be the case in practice. The LS programme has brought parishioners closer together through their participation in a range of activities - which were more than simply social and had positive benefits within the family of the church and for the wider community."

One of the first activities they undertook as part of their journey towards this award was to do a survey within the parish to find out what people were already doing and what they already knew about climate change. Over 400 parishioners



Members of the Live Simply Group in Our Lady of Kirkstall Parish

responded and earlier this year the Live Simply Group repeated the exercise to find out if anything had changed (and, again, over 400 parishioners responded). Michael Emly, one of the members of the parish Live Simply Group, commented that *“Over 40% of people responding agreed that the Live Simply programme had had an impact on their lifestyle with over 70% saying that they regularly read the Live Simply bulletin monthly insert. This, for me, was a fantastic endorsement of the work that so many people in the parish have been doing over the last two, and more, years. We are delighted to have received this award and are looking forward to celebrating this in different ways in June & July”*.

JUNE 2019- Live Simply Award at St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, Wetherby

By Louise Milivojevic (Head Teacher)

Last month we featured a brief update about St Joseph’s Primary School in Wetherby gaining the Live Simply Award from CAFOD. Below is a more detailed story from the Head Teacher, Louise Milivojevic. Not only is St Joseph’s the first school in the Diocese to gain the Live Simply Award it is *one of only 6 schools in the entire country* to have obtained this award. Well done to all the staff and pupils! – there are some great ideas that could easily be replicated elsewhere. Louise writes:

Over the past year, the community of St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School in Wetherby have worked together to live more simply! Along the way, we have explored sustainable ways to be less wasteful, to promote respect for God’s world and to live in solidarity with those who are less fortunate than we are. It has been fantastic to see the whole community getting on board with the programme.

We began our journey by making a whole school banner using only reused and recycled materials to remind us of our Live Simply mission across school and this approach to respect, reduce, repair, reuse and recycle is now well embedded in all that we do across school. At St Joseph’s, Wetherby, we have many different groups of children: Planet Protectors, Mini Vinnies and a Mini Religious Development Team who work tirelessly to support and deliver different initiatives for our Live Simply mission across school and beyond.



Mini-vinnies & Planet Protectors with the head teacher doing litter picking and showing off their award plaque



Mini vinnies and Planet Protectors re-using waste water and showing off their re-usable plastic bottles

As part of our mission to live more sustainably, we have been committed to using significantly less energy and reducing waste by being proactive and turning off switches, lights and computer monitors when not in use. We reuse our water where we can and we have exciting plans to significantly reduce the use of plastic in school and beyond. All of these initiatives have been launched by our Planet Protectors, but

have been embraced by all. We now choose to back some of our learning walls in used newspaper – it's kinder to the environment and looks great too! The children have been committed to sharing these messages outside of school and are keen to really make a difference in school and at home. Simple changes like turning the tap off when brushing their teeth or suggesting that they use a bowl of water to wash pots rather than the dishwasher, and we encourage our families to walk, scoot and cycle wherever they can.

Our pupils have learnt a lot this year about the people they have been helping, and during refugee week, some of the children's work was displayed in St Anne's Cathedral in Leeds. Over the year, our Mini Vinnies and our year 2 pupils have enjoyed spending time in our local community at the friendship club and a local residential home, sharing games and stories and spending time with



them, keeping them company. The children collected used books to take to the residents to reuse. This experience has brought a smile to us all.



We are committed to living in solidarity with the poor and this year our Mini Vinnies have collected and sent over six different collections far and wide. We hold regular collections for the local food banks and have sent Christmas hampers to families in need across Leeds. We have sent back packs filled with essential items to the charity Mary's Meals to provide those in Africa and Asia with basic essentials. We have also donated bags full of warm coats and winter clothes for orphans across Europe as part of the Syria and Iraq 'Keep a Child Warm Appeal'.

It was wonderful to share our journey of living more simply, and we are extremely proud to have been presented with the CAFOD, Live Simply Award – and to be the first school in the diocese to do so. Our Live

Simply journey so far has been simply fantastic. We continue to strive to make a difference in our community and beyond. We are very much looking forward to continuing on our Live Simply Journey and have some exciting plans ahead.

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There is a growing sensitivity to the environment and the need to protect nature, along with a growing concern, both genuine and distressing, for what is happening to our planet... Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it. (Laudato Si #19)



SEP 2019 - GETTING A LIVE SIMPLY AWARD IS THE START OF SOMETHING – NOT THE END

By Trish Sandbach, Commission Member & parishioner at St.Benedict's Garforth



The 'Celebrating Creation' Liturgy held in the St.Benedict's allotment

We have been a Live Simply parish for over two years and the award is something that continues to inspire action in our parish. Most of the activities we undertook in order to achieve the award have continued because they were part of the sustainable structure we developed, albeit in a different form. The one-off events may have changed but support for CAFOD, the work of the Refugee Group - which is Garforth based - not just St Benedict's, the Allotment Team, the outreach of the UCM and the Lourdes' group continues.

We have formed an umbrella group, encompassing the groups within the parish who are concerned with social justice and the environment. An advantage of this development is that communication between groups is better and we can support each

other by sharing ideas and activities for raising awareness of issues and campaigns. In Lent we held Ecumenical services in each other's churches on the theme of togetherness. We focused our liturgy on The Stations of the Forest, a powerful reminder of the destruction of rainforests, their dwellers, flora and fauna. We invited participants to make pledges for change. We met and shared lunch each Wednesday and shared the reflection, prayers and activities from the previous evening's service. We also had ideas for actions towards sustainability in the bulletin each week. Bulletin notes also brought special days such as Environment Day, Earth Day to people's attention.

The Fair-Trade stall at the back of church provides the opportunity to support



producers and farmers from developing countries.

The allotment continues to flourish thanks to a team of very dedicated men, especially at this time of the year when everything is burgeoning. Various beans, rhubarb, onions, beetroot, flowers are available at the back of the church after the weekend masses and also taken up to Neighbourhood Elders Team and to the SVP centre; all organically grown and the donations are used for keeping it all going. During the summer months the allotment flowers are used in church thus saving air miles, pollution and money!

We continue to be active in raising awareness about the plight of asylum seekers and refugees in our area. June 20th saw a group of walkers setting off on a Walk of Solidarity from Garforth to the Home Office on Kirkstall Road, Leeds with stops at St Theresa's, Cross Gates and St Vincent's Centre, with plans developing for the autumn. We also had a speaker from the Medaille Trust on trafficking which is much closer to home than many of us realised.

The UCM invited a speaker from Mary's Meals resulting in a collection and support for the backpack appeal. They continue to support other charities over the year. The SVP box collects tins and dried food as well as clothing.

Bacon butties after Sunday Mass continue to be popular among parishioners, both raising funds for the Lourdes group and for CAFOD as well as being a social opportunity to build community.

The highlight of a CAFOD coffee morning on Celebrating Creation was a liturgy on that theme which was held in the allotment under

a blue sky and surrounded by flourishing greenery, naming also the need for change in our lifestyles. The celebration continued with home-made Fair-Trade cakes. We were very pleased to welcome Bronagh Daly, CAFOD Community Participation Coordinator for the Leeds Diocese to this event.

At the Summer School Fair, in addition to the usual games and bouncy castles, we had a Fair-Trade stall with foodstuffs & ecologically friendly products such as recycled foil, unbleached baking parchment and sandwich bags. We handed out leaflets with tips for "caring for our common home". The Live Simply school link person had taken great care to ensure that no plastic or polystyrene plates, cups or cutlery were used. Instead, bamboo and cardboard were used in the catering areas. Huge thanks are due! St Benedict's was privileged to host the Faith and Light Mass as we have done for a number of years, as ever we were blessed by their presence and had a very joyful liturgy.

In the autumn we will review and plan, conscious of the urgency of climate change and our responsibility to change our lifestyles. We will focus on Creation Time from September to October as an opportunity to celebrate God's Creation and show our gratitude by finding more ways of changing and developing the virtue of "Enough-ness".

"We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental." (Laudato Si#139)



NOVEMBER 2019 - 'CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME'

*How one parish - **ST TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS, SHIPLEY / BAILDON** - used a CAFOD Campaign to further empower its community to act for climate justice and the protection of God's creation*

By David Jackson, Laudato Si Animator and parishioner of St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

In June our parish CAFOD contact person suggested at a meeting of the Pastoral Council that we take up the campaign 'Care for our Common Home'. A Group was set up to plan. It was asked to ensure that the voices of young people be heard. One meeting and a flurry of emails later, together with visits to Schools to encourage them to get involved - and a week of events began to emerge. We launched on the first Sunday of September, the Season of Creation, with an enthusiastic speaker from CAFOD and an attractive programme flyer, designed by a Sixth Form student and distributed to all.



Quotes from Laudato Si came through September; leaflets were distributed locally to ecumenical partners and to deanery parishes; parishioners were encouraged to sign up for events in the week ending with the feast of St Francis, October 4th; 70 folk signed the CAFOD petition to the Prime

Minister; a pledge board for suggestions for change of lifestyle filled with post-its.

The Youth Creation Mass on September 29th found a packed church. Our schools and all the parish youth groups rose to the occasion. – an art-work banner produced by Youth for Christ adorned the sanctuary; children sang their own songs of creation as they processed in; young people read readings and bidding prayers. Mass closed with an a cappella group of sixth formers singing of the need to love all creation and seek climate justice. This was composed by a gifted parent who also choreographed the whole mass. The atmosphere was of a joyful eucharist and communion of thanksgiving and hope for change. It led into the week's varied events:

Tuesday: a guided tour round our local conservation area; in the evening thirty parishioners celebrated Creation with poetry, wine and nibbles;

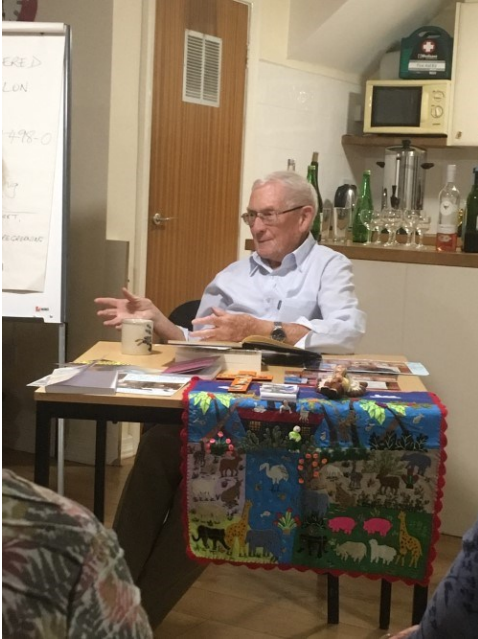


A dozen brave parishioners were conducted round our Northcliffe conservation area by Brian Gresswell. Cold, wet and very enjoyable

on **Wednesday** Fr Gerry Hanlon of the parish told his stories, entertaining but sobering, of his over 50 years experiences in Peru, many



of them spent observing the growing destruction of the forests by commercial interests (logging, cattle and oil);



Fr Gerry Hanlon gave an entertaining if sobering account of the impact of climate change on the Amazon rain forest observed in his over 50 years spent as part of the Diocesan Mission to Peru in Iquitos.

Thursday, Paul Rogers, formerly of the Bradford University School of Peace Studies kept an audience of over 40 absorbed in his description of why politicians and world governments have been so slow to address the threats of climate change; our week concluded with a final creation mass to celebrate the feast of St Francis and an excellent Italian meal.

What was achieved? The voices of the young (literally!) have begun to be heard; young people working with 'wise elders' together. The process empowers our community to heed Jesus's command to 'seek first the Kingdom of God' by linking that search directly to the call for climate justice. The idea is slowly dawning that they are not different. Folk took small steps to walk together as companions.

Talking must lead to further action. Parishioners are making suggestions. A small campaign group aims to take these forwards into proposals. One World Week in October and then Advent gives us opportunities to invite parishioners to view the bishops' two films: 'Global Healing' and 'Global Caring'. The Year of Scripture will provide opportunities to read the Scriptures with new eyes as the source of 'seeking first the kingdom'. We do not know whether our parish will move to reduce its climate footprint, or create a vegetable area, or cut single use plastic, or find ways to reduce its use of fossil fuels in its plans for new heating and lighting?

But it might!

If we approach nature and the environment without...openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously. (Laudato Si #11)



MARCH 2020 - ST MARY AND ST MICHAEL PARISH, SETTLE, OBTAIN CAFOD LIVESIMPLY AWARD

By Paul Kelly

Two years ago, it took just a couple of parishioners to introduce LiveSimply at a parish meeting and then speak about it at Mass to get the parish started. From the talks at Mass a group of 12 people volunteered interest and started by reflecting on all the things the parish were already doing. And with great support from Fr Frank Smith developed a future plan under the headings of Living Simply, Living Sustainably, and Living in Solidarity with the poor.

Repairs and renovations to the church hall were already underway and the unexpected receipt of a bequest meant we could plan to add in many environmentally friendly measures such as superb insulation, better heating controls, automated low-energy lighting, and solar panels. A new porch was built to conserve heat and the church was completely insulated too, also with modern lighting and controls. The other large project was to start Community Sponsorship to resettle a Syrian refugee family in Settle. The parish is too small for such a substantial undertaking alone, but it has been a wonderful opportunity to involve the rest of the town and form a diverse group of volunteers.

The group asked Catholic Care Leeds to be our lead sponsor and are delighted we have now been delivering practical day to day support to a family for the last 6 months. The benefits of working together with so many new friends of different faiths and none has been at least as great as the undoubted benefits for the family themselves.

The parish LiveSimply plan was launched eighteen months ago at a special weekend near the Feast of St Francis during the Season of Creation with special prayers, a leaflet encouraging personal pledges to change, refreshments to encourage chatting and displays to browse about past and future ideas. Since then, parishioners have come forward creating ecumenical liturgies for Lent and Advent focussing on Laudato Si, Refugees, and peace. Others have built nest and bug boxes given away after Masses. Yet others have arranged for dementia friendly signage, supported the Diocesan Gianna project, Tools for Africa, or provided talks on Laudato Si. And a rota has formed preparing a LiveSimply tip or thought every week for the parish bulletin. Fr Frank has instituted an annual day of Blessing of Animals.



BEFORE



AFTER



Michael Emly presents the Live Simply Award plaque to some of the organisers of the work

One of the assessors for their award was Michael Emly from our Lady of Kirkstall parish (who received their Live Simply award last year). He commented *"We were particularly impressed by the way such a small parish has initiated and embraced the Community Sponsorship project, with a massive impact on the whole local community. The refurbishment of hall and church has also been a major achievement with ongoing benefits for the environment. Congratulations! But we also want to highlight the small changes to daily living that have been promoted each week through the bulletin. This is so much in line with the approach of Pope Francis – the little things matter (Gaudete et Exsultate #169)! Or as Fr. Frank put it, "keep plugging away until it's*

natural". Add up all the small changes made by each member of the congregation and you really make a difference.

So, what of future plans now the parish has gained the award? Paul Kelly was one of the parishioners who raised the possibility of LiveSimply two years ago. He said "Everyone is delighted we have been given the award but we are all so aware this is really a beginning, not the end. The Gospel call to eco-conversion, the care of all life and the environment that sustains it, is central to my faith but it is a massive change, almost too overwhelming. For me it is essential to have the support of other people with the same challenges and that is what has been special about doing LiveSimply. We all agreed getting the award is not what's important, but it has been a real help to focus us."

The parish now have plans to plant a wildflower area around the church to attract wildlife and to develop a resource centre about Christian care of the environment. Paul added: "Most of the things newly started will continue with services and bulletin items regularly refreshing ideas for Living Simply. We are not going to change the world, but we can make a difference to our bit of it in our own lives. Pope Francis did say it's not optional. Wouldn't it be amazing if everyone was doing something for their own bit of the world?"

NOVEMBER 2021 - COP26 EVENTS AROUND THE DIOCESE

Together for the Planet @ St Benedict's Garforth

By Trish Sandbach, Commission Member & Parishioner at St. Benedict's Garforth

A couple of months ago the Faith and Justice Action Group from St. Benedict's in Garforth were discussing



how to start bringing people together after the separation and isolation of lockdown and restrictions while continuing to observe Covid safety - as the pandemic is far from over. We needed a celebration. The idea that developed was of an event that would bring many of the local green groups together, as well as raise the profile of both COP26 and what is happening at a local level.



It took place on October 30th. A local Councillor welcomed everyone and said he was glad to see so many green organisations getting together and sharing information, experience and more importantly their vision. He went on to say that he recognised the huge challenge facing COP26



but if politics was the art of the possible then COP seemed to be impossible but he hoped there would be real change. He found hope in the change in the wider population who are concerned about the reality of climate change: not just the activists. He pointed out that Leeds City Council were doing a great deal on many fronts with regard to the Climate Emergency especially improving

houses by installing insulation and solar panels under the Better Homes Scheme. Over the years he has been in the Council he noted the growth in Garforth of formal green groups, ranging over more issues and the increased support from local schools. He encouraged us to lobby our local councillors and MP to make the necessary changes that we want to achieve a more sustainable world.

The stalls covered different aspects of sustainability. Incredible Edible is a national organization whose vision is to create a kind, confident and connected community through the power of food. In Garforth, they have volunteers who grow vegetables, herbs, and fruit in boxes in public places for the community to use. People are just encouraged to take anything they fancy from the raised beds that are scattered throughout the community. Garforth Hedgehogs fosters and rescues hedgehogs which are in dramatic decline in recent years.

Eco-Friendly Garforth is a lottery-funded project under the umbrella of Climate Action Leeds (which is, itself a multi-partnership organization that includes Leeds City Council). It is in the process of developing a climate action plan for Garforth. It is one of 4 'climate action hubs' that have been provided funding to employ workers on a part-time basis to help develop and implement these plans.

Labelled comment boxes were available and it was great to see children confidently writing on issues such as transport, waste, energy, placing them in the boxes. They will be taken to COP26 by bicycle, ridden by Walt, a member of Eco-Friendly Garforth. Some of the displays made earlier by a local school were carried to Glasgow by another member. Adults' comments were also welcome! It was great to have a CAFOD stall with information about the effect of climate change on communities in the global South as well as examples of alternatives to plastic in everyday life. It witnessed to the Catholic Church's concern about and action on climate change.

Sustrans and Active Leeds both had stalls. These are two organisations looking at ways to increase walking and cycling opportunities across the area. Free maps of traffic paths and cycle tracks were gratefully received by people. A local cycle shop offered health checks to any bicycles that people had brought to the event, offering advice on how to maintain and repair them.

Children were particularly intrigued by the Barrowby Hall farm stall which had 8 feet sunflowers (dead ones) tied to the sides of their gazebo, Joe, the farmer, explained that the sunflower seeds



and the equally tall maize plants with corncobs attached were actually food for birds and other wildlife. It was very heartening talking to him about the efforts farmers in the area are making to be more sustainable such as clover and grass lays which capture carbon and the clover – which is a nitrogen fixer which increases the fertility of the soil. He too had challenging quizzes about modern sustainable agricultural practice which were very enlightening.

One of the highlights was David from St. Benedict's allotment carrying around, actually cuddling, one of the hens they keep. It certainly broke the ice and promoted conversation with a number of people.

We did not attract crowds (the weather was poor to start with) but the people who came were interested and enjoyed it., There was a great atmosphere of hospitality, sharing concerns close to our hearts and learning from each other. Our thanks go particularly to all the stall holders and especially to the small team who planned it so meticulously. Thanks to everyone who made this event possible. We look forward to the next one!

Other COP26 parish actions

St Benedict's also held a prayer vigil on the eve of the start of the conference. Other parish communities have also joined in praying for the success of the conference.



A Holy Hour was held in Holy Name Church, part of **Our Lady of Kirkstall** parish. **St John Vianney** parish in Leeds also held a vigil. In addition, they promoted to their parish joining with the local Churches Together group (who have all signed a Climate Pledge) for the demonstration held in Leeds on 06 November.

The parish of **St Mary & St Michael** in Settle had special bidding Prayers during COP26 and also had an open -air Mass for Creation and a blessing of animals in October. **St John Fisher & St Thomas More** have a dedicated 'Tree of Life' group fostering action based on Laudato Si. They garnered 10 Top Tips from parishioners and are forming 3 groups to see how to put them into practice at individual, family and parish levels. Other church communities included the CAFOD COP26 prayer in their bulletins.

Attendees at COP26



Tim Devereux, from **St Joseph's parish in Pudsey**, was able to attend in his role as Chair of the Movement for the Abolition of War. His Trike says 'Climate not Trident'!

David & Mollie Somerville from **St Cuthbert & First Martyrs parish**, and Bradford's Global Justice now group, attended. CAFOD sponsored Chuks Nwachukwu, from **Mary Mother of God parish** in Bradford to attend.



MARCH – 2022 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?

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/>

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?

¹ 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>



- 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 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.

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!

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>

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.



MARCH 2022 - 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.

September 2022 - ST JOHN FISHER & ST THOMAS MORE CHURCH, BURLEY IN WHARFEDALE

CAFOD LIVESIMPLY AWARD

By Keith Pitcher



In June 2022 the Parish Family of SS John Fisher and Thomas More, Burley-in-Wharfedale was the delighted recipient of CAFOD’s LiveSimply award. This is given to Parish Families and schools who have worked together, prayed about, and put in

place actions to **live simply, live sustainably with creation and live in solidarity with the poor.** In our Parish Family this is called our ‘Tree of Life’ project.

The idea began after the Leeds Justice & Peace group held their AGM in our parish hall in March 2019 and, following Canon Michael Mahady’s homily about Pope Francis’ messages in Laudato Si, many of us felt challenged to accept and strengthen, with prayer and commitment, our responsibility for the care of creation. Pope Francis asks for God to grant us the courage to do this without waiting for someone else to begin, or until it is too late.

A new page on our parish website <https://www.ssfishermore.co.uk/tree-of-life/> gives details of what we have done, a summary is below.

In Autumn 2019 as a Parish Family and as part of weekend Masses congregations we collected nearly 400 ideas of how we could respond to Pope Francis’ call. We know we are facing climate and ecological crises and we felt it essential to put into practice measures that could start to tackle these issues. The ideas were written on paper leaf labels and hung from branches of a home-made tree – our ‘Tree of Life’. The suggestions were put into 3 categories:

1. Working with Nature,
2. Reduce, Re-use, Recycle and Renew, and
3. Petition and Education.

We have permanently established the Tree of Life in the church porch for our Parish Family to suggest new ideas for the future – ways in which to live simply, care for creation and help others. Some 40 parishioners including many children have led and contributed to turning these



into reality. We found this approach works best, forming groups to discuss and take forward initiatives.

Actions to live sustainably with creation

The Covid-19 Pandemic delayed initial progress, but the Working with Nature group's outside activities started as soon as we were able to meet. These include:

- flower beds at the front of the church were dug out and a raised bed was built to plant insect friendly flowers & shrubs.
- our parish children built bird and bat boxes to put up in their gardens and in the parish grounds. An aerial photograph has been taken and displayed to map out the location of each bird or bat box in the grounds for all to look out for activity within them.
- a bug house was designed and built using recycled fence panels, a disused milk crate, a pallet and surrounded by plants to create a garden effect.
- a hedgehog hotel, composter and herb bed were built and placed in the church back garden. The composter composts grass cuttings, shrub clippings, raw fruit & veg waste and church flowers. The material will be used as a mulch for the church flower beds.
- a water butt was installed and attached to the drainpipe at the side of the church hall. This provides rainwater to water plants in the garden.
- our parish children took sunflower seedlings to grow in their gardens.
- St Francis' feast day celebration included children learning and working in the parish grounds as part of their liturgy programme.

Actions to live simply

This group's main focus is on reducing waste & energy usage and installing renewables. Examples of projects include:

- the church hall's single glazed windows are being replaced with double glazing.
- old inefficient gas heaters in Sacristy, Lady Chapel and hall have been replaced with electric heaters, thermostats and time control panels.
- lighting in the church, hall and presbytery is being replaced with LEDs.
- a renewable energy programme has been introduced, with a parishioner providing details on how to plan installations for homes. 6 parishioner families have installed solar panels and one has replaced their gas boiler with a heat pump.
- we are re-examining electricity & gas usage and costs of the church, hall and presbytery to provide proposals for installing solar panels and heat pumps.
- we have made collection points for items that are currently not recycled by local councils. These include blister packs, batteries, contact lens packaging, pens and pencils. We work with our village to share information about where difficult to recycle products can be collected.

Actions to live in solidarity with the poor

We have provided practical and fundraising support for poorer members of our local communities and well as national and international charities. Examples include:

- BURLEY-TERELI FRIENDSHIP TRUST – we connect with people of Tereli in Mali, West Africa for fundraising, friendship, and prayer. The charity raises funds for vital healthcare,



educational and environmental projects. 3 of our parishioners are Tereli trustees and several members are active fund-raisers e.g. half marathon runners.

- CAFOD fundraising. Parishioners have run in the Great North Run, Leeds half marathon and Ilkley half marathon to support CAFOD's Connect 2 work and also local charities. We have set up a book exchange in the church foyer. Two parishioners did a sponsored Walk for Water during Lent 2021.
- PAFRAS - we have organised collections of clothes, toiletries and non-perishable food. During Covid and times of church closure we not only re-modelled but have grown. We now have a central village collection point to which all village church and non-church goers contribute non-perishable foodstuffs, hygiene products, laundry products and other basic commodities. These are taken each month by parishioners to PAFRAS in Leeds.
- St. Anne's Shelter – we collect warm clothing for this charity to give to homeless people.
- Catholic Care Christmas presents for children – each year we take gift labels with the age of a child and attach it to a small gift for the child. We had donations to go towards buying stocking filler gifts for the children's home whom Catholic Care visit and support.
- Mary's Meals –one of our parishioners took part in the Great North Run and raised over £1,000 for Mary's Meals from parish and online donations. £205 was also raised in a cake bake sale (the cakes were amazing!). Backpacks for children in Malawi and Liberia were collected and filled with teaspoons, hand towels, shoes, toothpaste and brushes and sent to the children in these countries. The total number of backpacks sent so far is over 850.
- FAIRTRADE – we are a FAIRTRADE parish and fundraise for this also via our Menston and Burley link. We have a monthly FAIRTRADE stall after Masses and use FAIRTRADE tea and coffee and washing up liquid in our hall kitchen.



In autumn 2021 the Season of Creation was celebrated by our parish family. The 4 weeks focused on prayer and activities in response to Pope Francis' appeal to us all on BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day [see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-59075041>] in the lead up to the COP26 environmental discussions. The different focus areas for each week were: our gardens; saving carbon/energy at home; things we buy & how the purchases affect our planet. The final week finished on the feast day of St Francis and was linked to a personal choice based on sharing all the ideas as a parish family.

We held a barbecue in July 2022 to celebrate our LiveSimply award, and also to celebrate our children receiving sacraments, Fr Michael's golden jubilee and to welcome all who have joined our Parish Family over the last few years. Looking forward, our future work will build on existing activities to start new initiatives, including feedback received from Trish and Paul as CAFOD's LiveSimply assessors. Essential parts of this will include:

- use new Care of Creation themes and materials in our liturgies
- save carbon/energy in our parish buildings and homes



- write to and petition our leaders to make sustainable lifestyles and support for the poor high priorities. We will ask them, as Pope Francis says, to do this without waiting for someone else to begin, or until it is too late.

(Photos: Our Tree of Life cake and Celebrations on the day)

Feedback received from Trish Sandbach and Paul Kelly as CAFOD LiveSimply assessors



“We were greatly impressed with the depth, breadth and range of actions undertaken, which have involved substantial numbers of the parish across the age spectrum.

There is a strong sense of commitment.

The creativity of the different elements, especially those involving the children were a blessing and a delight.

We commended particularly The Tree of Life concept as an excellent and visible way to create ‘pegs’ on which to hang individual and collective action. The idea to re-invigorate pledges as the parish emerges from the restrictions of the pandemic means there will be a plan and actions into the future.

The depth and breadth of the actions so far have involved substantial numbers of the parish across the age spectrum.

With reference to future plans, we would encourage further spiritual formation for adult parishioners that is independent of the excellent work taking place via children’s liturgy and sacramental preparation, and increased opportunities for reflective adult liturgy, especially linked with the Season of Creation but also other opportunities that arise from the liturgical. Developing the habit of praying for an aspect of Creation at Sunday Mass e.g. in the Bidding Prayers would be beneficial.

We shared conversations about Living Simply entailing a reduction by us in the use of the world’s resources which enables a more just distribution of resources.

We suggested that making the connections more explicit and coherent between some of the issues e.g. exploring encyclicals such as Laudato Si linking the cry of the Earth, cry of the poor, which will build a strong foundation of spirituality that is deeper than activism on its own. There is a wealth of Catholic Social Teaching, which underpins actions for social and climate justice, to be discovered. Understanding the theology of WHY it is important to work for climate change as Catholics/Christians is part of this formation.

We also mentioned the need to move on to political activity as governments i.e. the journey from charity to justice. Structural change needs the corporate world to be involved in action for change as well as us.



We have every confidence that the future plans will be caring, compassionate and thought-through with actions to care for our common home as we know that their hearts are in it as well as heads and hands.”

DECEMBER 2022 - CLIMATE PRAYER VIGIL AT THE BISHOP’S CONFERENCE

By Matty Maslen, Newsletter Editor



Vigil attendees outside Hinsley Hall

On the 14th of November, several Catholic climate activists – held a five-hour prayer vigil outside Hinsley Hall during the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) Autumn Plenary Meeting.

The meeting took place at Hinsley Hall, Leeds. The Animators held their vigil from 12noon until 5pm. The group consisted of activists from Dioceses across England and Wales. Among them were members of the Justice and Peace Commission’s Climate Action Group, Laudato Si Animators, Christian Climate Action, Green Christian, CAFOD, and ACTA.

In the lead up to the conference the activists had sent each of the Bishops a letter, signed by around 50 Laudato Si Animators and Christian Climate Action members. In the letter they asked that the Bishops speak out to the UK Government about compensation and reparation owed to those countries who are already suffering at the hands of the climate crisis, a crisis that we, not they, are not responsible for. They appealed to the Conference to ask the UK Prime Minister to sign up to the ‘Damage and Loss’ proposals at COP27

The activists displayed a banner reading “Loss and Damage is a Pro-Life Issue”, referencing the catastrophic effects that the climate crisis is already beginning to cause. As the impacts of the



climate crisis will not be equally felt across the world, the group prayed for vital global financial assistance for MAPA – the most affected people and areas. The group also displayed a banner of Mary Mother of Mercy, painted by Helen Elwes which depicts Mary sheltering people and animals from a burning rainforest.

Their letter to the Bishops also asked that the Bishops raise awareness of the intersectionality between the 'cries of the earth' and the 'cries of the poor' through releasing a pastoral letter and encouraging screenings of the film 'The Letter'. 'The Letter' is a film released recently by the Laudato Si Movement and The Vatican Dicasteries of Communications of Integral Human Development.

As the Bishops walked to the bus that took them to Mass for Cardinal Roche at the Cathedral at 5pm, they walked past the activists and their banners. The group was joined in prayer by several Bishops at the Conference – including Bp John of Salford, spokesperson for the environment for the CBCEW. It is thought that our own Bishop, Bishop Marcus, travelled to the mass by car and so did not walk past group or have the opportunity to join.

The statement following the CBCEW meeting encourages Catholics to take up Friday abstinence from meat, Diocesan carbon reduction monitoring, and encourages parishes and schools to adopt the CAFOD LIVESIMPLY scheme. One of the activists, David Jackson, said: "Not quite what the letter sent to each Bishop asked for – but steps in the right direction".

This story was published in ICAN, where you can find more statements attendees:

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45904>

MAY 2023 - ENCOUNTER, CONVERSION, HOPE!

By Joe Burns, Commission Member

The urgency of the Climate Emergency can sometimes feel overwhelming. There are so many calls for action. The changes required to ameliorate the worst effects are huge – and require international political action. In these circumstances it is easy for people to lose hope.

This was the backdrop that led the Spirituality of Justice group within the Commission to organise this Day of Reflection. We wanted to give people the opportunity to stand back a little from the action and reflect on the motivations behind what each of us do. By chance, we found that the CAFOD group in Our Lady of Kirkstall parish were thinking about organising a similar event. We agreed to join forces and Michael Emly joined the organising group.

Originally, Linda Jones (Head of Theology Programmes at CAFOD) was going to lead us in our reflections. However, due to family circumstances she was unable to do this. However, in her place, two members of her team, Stewart and Caroline, joined us.

The day was split into 3 parts:

- encountering each other at the start of the day and encountering Christ in the readings of the Mass
- through our reflection on these, to renew our conversion to the need to care better for our 'Common Home'
- Lastly, to find the signs of hope that enable us to go back to our communities with renewed motivation to continue and extend the work of taking better care of our planet.



The day was held at Norwood Methodist Retreat Centre in the Washburn Valley. There were over 30 of us and we were at the limit of the capacity of the venue. However, its location on a hillside overlooking Lindleywood reservoir made

the slightly cramped conditions more than worthwhile.



The View from our retreat centre -a bit rainy in the afternoon but ok most of the day!

The day included mass at which Fr Peter Rosser presided, a longtime Commission member. The old doorway into the Chapel has been converted into a lovely picture window looking on the valley below. We arranged our seating so that, whilst the altar table was the focus, we could always see the view outside the window and keep in mind the wonder of God's creation.

Rather than 'slot in' the mass at some point during the day we used the structure of the mass to structure our time so that the mass itself extended over most of the day. Our Eucharistic celebration was immediately

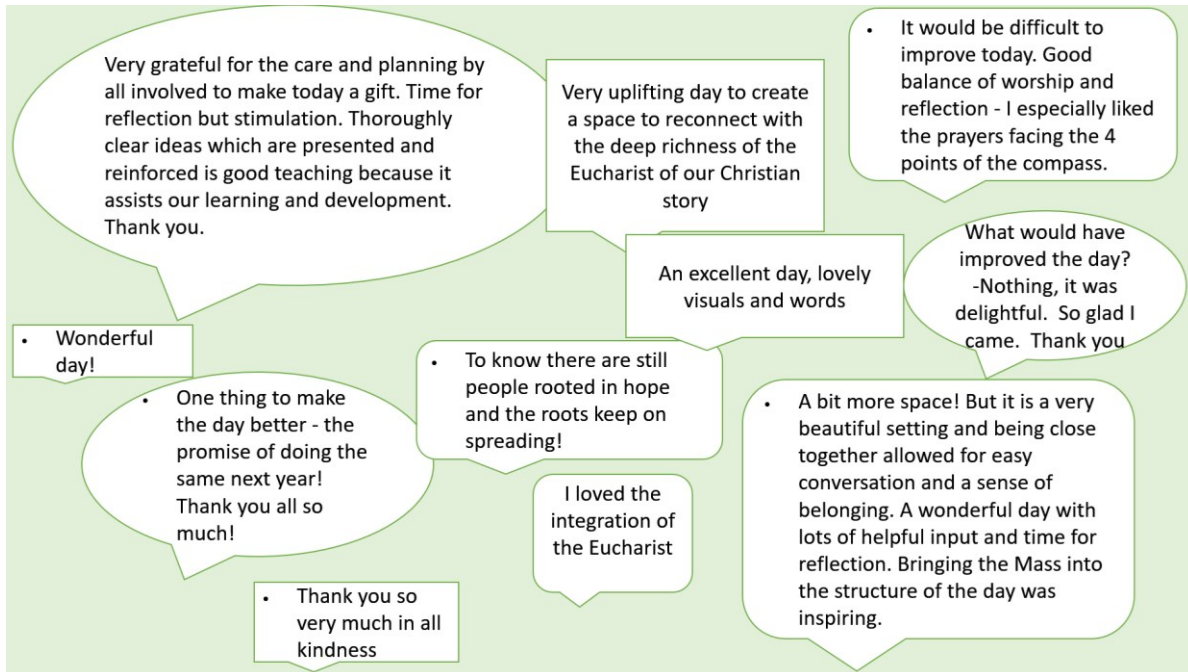
followed by having our shared lunch. This was followed by a post-communion reflection from Francis & Caroline with some extended time for individual reflection and the opportunity to walk in the surrounding countryside (which several people did even though it was just starting to drizzle a little).

We ended our day with the final blessing of the mass and a rousing hymn on which to depart.

It was clearly a day that people were very thankful for, and this was confirmed in the



evaluation comments that we received and which are shown below.



A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products. They prove successful in changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production... This shows us the great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers. "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act." Today, in a word, "the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle".

(Laudato Si #206)



JULY 2023 - PROGRESS ON THE JOURNEY TO 2030

By Joe Burns, Commission Member



As indicated last month, the Commission hosted a meeting of the **Northern Dioceses' Environment Group** on 08 June, at Wheeler Hall in Leeds. This is an open group of interested people from each of the Northern Dioceses, and they meet about 4 times a year.

Five out of the seven dioceses in the North were represented, along with several people from our own diocese.

The meeting opened with a reflection led by Paul Kelly, from St Mary & St Michael parish in Settle. He included a great short video. It's well worth taking a look – here is the link to it on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/vph2oLKb1qM>

'Let us Dream'

The major portion of the morning session was taken up with a workshop given by John Paul de Quay. John Paul works as a project manager for the Ecological Conversion Group. This charity was started after the pope published *Laudato Si* and is dedicated to inspiring action on care of creation (See their website for more details:

<https://theecg.org/>

2030 is the year by which we should be reaching net zero emissions. John Paul explained that the work of the Ecological Conversion Group is about working alongside people to answer two basic questions:

With limited time he asked everyone to focus

1. What will our communities look like once we have achieved net zero emissions?
2. How do we get to that position – what are the things that we need to do

on the first question – in the style of Pope Francis's exhortation to '*Let us dream*'. So, in groups of 4 or 5, we were asked to come up with a drawing that would communicate the key aspects of our local community once net zero emissions were achieved. Some participants were a bit shy about drawing, but everyone had a go and became more enthusiastic as the workshop progressed.

At the end of the workshop, each group explained the different elements of their drawing, just in case it wasn't totally obvious (the tables I drew ended up looking more like jellyfish to me!).



One group talking about their picture and what it meant.



One of the pictures from the workshop.

What is happening in the Leeds area?

We started the afternoon with an input from Helen Hayden, Leeds J&P Commission member and Executive member of Leeds City Council with responsibility for the council's response to the Climate Emergency. Helen spoke with passion about the interconnectedness of Climate Change with other issues that people living in poverty experience. For example, how retrofitting some properties has enabled tenants to have their heating on more regularly. In one case the ambient temperature in a property prior to retrofitting was measured at 12C whereas after the work had been completed it was 18C. As one mother put it, this allowed her children to have a quiet space in their bedroom where they could comfortably sit and do their homework. So, not only did this work reduce carbon emissions, it also directly reduced energy bills for the people involved. Longer term, being able to do homework in a suitable space means that educational outcomes will be improved for the children living in those properties.

The challenge with this is that the council had funds from central government to retrofit relatively few properties – and even then, the funds were provided in competition with other local authorities. To retrofit all the properties in Leeds that need it will require £6billion of funding. In terms of both action on Climate Change and the Government's 'levelling up' agenda this should be given much more priority.

Helen's input really brought to life the interconnectedness of action for Climate Change and action on poverty.

Where do we go from here?

During the final part of the afternoon session everyone reflected on the rest of the day to see if any ideas for action were emerging. There were several suggestions – some of them quite surprising.

One was to take benches out of churches! Not quite such a bonkers idea as it might sound. Pews create a very inflexible space – as anyone who has twisted round during Stations of the Cross or the Easter Vigil can testify. With chairs (and possibly some tables) liturgy can be more creatively imagined. More than that, with suitable screening for the sanctuary, the space can be used for non-liturgical purposes. We have some marvellous physical spaces but most of them are really constrained in what we can do with them because of the way that they are ordered. As a consequence, they are used for only a few hours each week. We need to work with some imaginative architects so that most churches can be made into fully flexible spaces for both liturgical and community use.

It was noted that the last Bishop's Conference meeting at Hinsley Hall (November 2022) had discussed Climate Action, and everyone was looking forward to



the publication of their deliberations about this. Looking ahead, 2025 will be the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si*. The idea of holding a joint event with the Bishops from the Northern Dioceses was mooted. This could both celebrate the work done to date and review what the next steps were for all the northern dioceses to achieve net zero by 2030. Many suggested that this would be a great way to demonstrate synodality in action within the northern dioceses.

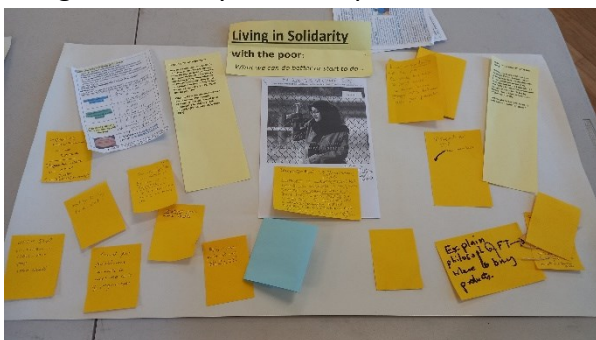
JULY 2023 - LiveSimply COMES TO JOHN MARY VIANNEY PARISH, LEEDS

By Tony O'Brian

About 25 members of the parish of St John Vianney in north Leeds met on 20 June 2023 to take forward our action planning for our *LiveSimply* parish award application.

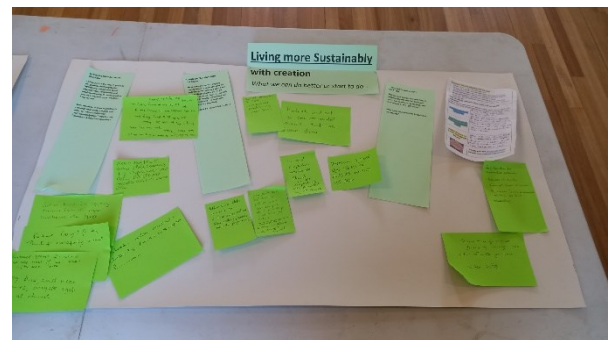
Information leaflets on *LiveSimply* and *Laudato si'* had been distributed at Sunday masses each week during Lent and followed up by two further weekly leaflets in June, so that the purpose of the award, the message of Pope Francis and the three *Live Simply* ambitions could become widely known and understood across the parish.

Using many of CAFOD's suggestions, parishioners were asked to think about actions they could take to support living simply, living sustainably with creation, and living in solidarity with the poor.



Those present at the meeting on 20 June gathered successively around three tables, to discuss each of the three themes and to pool thoughts about actions that could be taken

by the parish, including its two churches, three schools and various parish groups. Actions that "we are doing now" were noted on post-its, along with actions that "we can do better or start to do". Including several suggestions put forward in advance and submitted via the offertory collection on the previous Sunday, a total of 67 positive actions were put forward and the group then began to prioritise those which can form the basis of our *LiveSimply* Action Plan. The next step is for the parish's *LiveSimply* steering group to draft a plan for future actions which can be endorsed by the parish.



The intention is to finalise and submit the Action Plan to CAFOD by this September and be in a position to apply for the award in late summer/early autumn 2024.

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JULY 2023 - CLIMATE ACTION AND SCHOOLS

By Joe Burns, Commission member

Over the last few weeks there are two organisations who mainly work with schools that have come to our attention.

One is called RAFT. It's nothing to do with rising sea levels! It stands for Retrofit Action for Tomorrow.

One of their team, Debbie Adler, came along to the recent NDEG meeting at Wheeler Hall.

RAFT

She writes:

RAFT is a social enterprise committed to providing education & deep retrofit advice to communities and schools on the path to zero



carbon. We are architects with over a decade of deep retrofit experience, based across London, Leeds and Birmingham. We work with individual churches, schools, and other community organisations. RAFT take a whole school approach to retrofit. We combine practical experience and technical expertise with thermal performance and energy modelling, to inform options and provide a detailed retrofit plan. A RAFT retrofit plan can be used for Heat Decarbonisation plans and funding applications.

RAFT

RETROFIT ACTION FOR TOMORROW

We help organisations to decarbonise their buildings and make them more comfortable, and we carry out engagement workshops to spread education, awareness and action on the climate crisis and climate resilience. Our engagement audience has so far ranged from primary and secondary school pupils up to building premises managers and those managing wider estates.

A common finding across all our projects is organisation's feeling like they want to act but don't know where to start without support. Some of our work is building specific, such as work with individual schools and churches, while some is more strategic or research based, such work we do with the Department for Education or the Church of England.

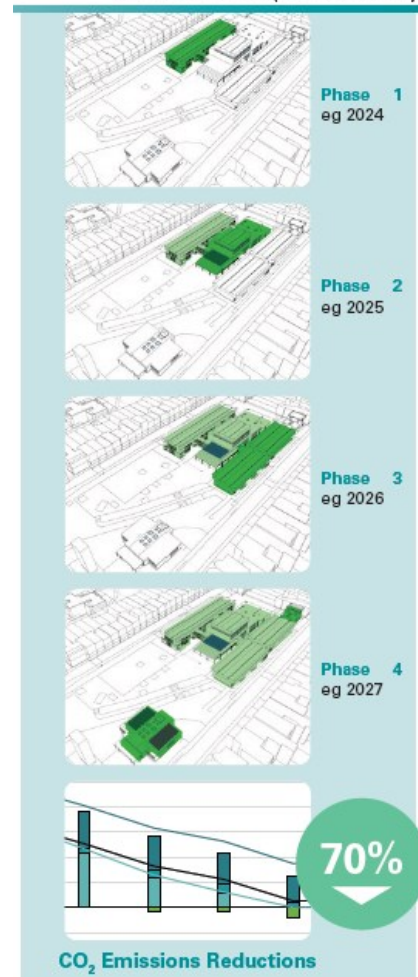
RAFT take a whole school approach to retrofit. We combine practical experience and technical expertise with thermal performance and energy modelling, to inform options and provide a detailed retrofit plan. A RAFT retrofit plan can be used for

Heat Decarbonisation plans and funding applications.



Reducing heat loss from a baked potato!

Retrofit Plan (Illustration only)



We also do workshops in schools. For example, to explore with students how heat loss in buildings occur and what changes can be made that will reduce the heat loss.



To find out more about RAFT head over to their website:

<https://www.retrofitaction.org.uk/>

SAMHE

This is another acronym-based organisation!

This one stands for Schools Air Quality Monitoring for Health and Education.

This project brings together scientists, pupils and teachers. SAMHE (they pronounce it Sammy) is establishing a network of air quality monitors in schools across the UK, to generate an dataset which will help researchers better understand schools indoor air quality.

Schools get a free high spec air quality monitor that measures carbon dioxide (CO₂), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) particulate matter (PM), temperature and relative humidity. Teachers and pupils can access their data through a specially designed interactive Web App, seeing how air quality changes over the course of hours, days or weeks and months. There are also a number of curriculum resources available for schools to use as well.



The air quality monitor

The SAMHE organisation gets the air quality data from the school automatically via the school's WiFi connections- enabling the

JULY 2023 - A CELEBRATION OF GOD'S CREATION

academic institutions to build a large dataset about air quality in schools. Spread the word!

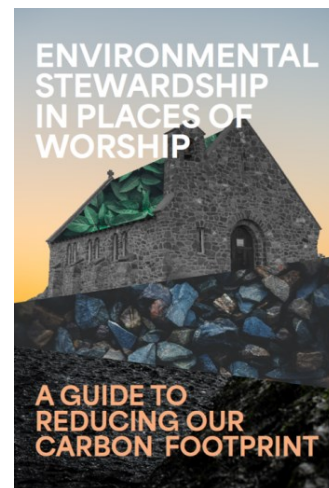
For more information, head over to their website:

<https://samhe.org.uk/>

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ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Salford Diocese has partnered with Manchester University and the Tyndall centre for Climate Change Research to produce a new guide entitled "Environmental Stewardship in Places of Worship."



This booklet covers ideas over 4 areas:-

- Reducing Heating use
- Changing heating supply
- Generating electricity on site
- Travel to places of worship

The booklet can be downloaded from the website of the [Laudato Si Centre](https://laudatosicentre.org.uk/) in Salford Diocese.

Use this link to download the guide:

<https://laudatosicentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Decarbonisation-Guide-Electronic-Hi-Res-002.pdf>



By Michael Emly, Our Lady of Kirkstall parish

Nearly 200 parishioners of Our Lady of Kirkstall, Leeds, came together on June 25th for an afternoon that celebrated God's creation. Inspired by Pope Francis' teaching in *Laudato Si'* and organised by our parish Live Simply group, the event was intended to bring people from the parish together for a fun afternoon inspired by the beauty of the world around us.



Parishioners were asked to contribute an item illustrating their love of nature – a photo, a poem, a painting, an artefact – that we could organise into a display. Over 50 contributions were received, and the variety and creativity displayed was amazing: including needlework, ceramics, dried flowers and objects crafted from wood. There was even a poem in the form of a Japanese haiku! The display formed one of the focal points of the afternoon. One of our more senior parishioners told us: *"I was sceptical when I first heard about it, but it's really been an outstanding success!"* People were also invited to try out various creative activities, all of them linked to the theme of nature – such as making bees and flowers from paper, painting pebbles or sowing salad seeds. The children, in particular, threw themselves into this, and several told us that the afternoon had been *"Great fun!"*. Meanwhile those more advanced in years were able to sit down and chat while they enjoyed a cornucopia of cakes, scones and strawberries.

Perhaps the highlight of the afternoon was a visit by 'Wise Owl' birds of prey. The keepers brought five beautiful owls, varying in size and species, as well as a Harris hawk. Each was displayed in turn, while something of its rescue history was told. The children - and indeed the adults too - were rapt. Those who wished were able to don a leather glove and hold one of the birds. One grown-up told us: *"I'd always wanted to handle a bird of prey and it was such a pleasure to hold little Gizmo"* [the name of one of the owls].

Throughout the afternoon, there was a real party atmosphere and a feeling that parishioners were not just 'visiting' an event but were owning it by their enthusiastic participation in all that was happening.



With all ages represented from across our 3 church communities, the celebration bore witness to a real sense of unity across the parish. Truly a gift and a blessing!



SEP 2023 - LAUDATO SI IN ACTION – VISITING THE SALFORD DIOCESE CLIMATE CHANGE GARDEN AND CENTRE

By Sean Morris, Good Shepherd Church Community, Mytholmroyd & Commission member

The Church, like so many parts of society, is acutely aware of the damage humans have made to our planet, and the real risks climate change has for all of us. It is important to encourage the Leeds Diocese to follow in the footsteps of other dioceses in tackling these issues.



Parish members of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Mytholmroyd have set up a 'Laudato Si' group and held a fact-finding tour of the Salford Diocese's climate change garden and centre, based at Wardley Hall. The parish has been engaged on Laudato Si since it was launched by the Pope, with house groups and education events.

Members of the group had attended a Zoom meeting of the

Commission with Bishop John Arnold, who leads on climate change matters for the Bishops Conference. Bishop John highlighted in his talk the positive work the Salford Diocese had taken to tackle climate change, including the Laudato Si garden at Wardley Hall. The Greater Manchester 'Our Faith, Our Planet' partnership recently met Pope Francis to discuss its work and direct future action -

<https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/news/delegation-off-to-the-vatican-to-tell-pope-this-is-how-we-are-tackling-climate-change-in-manchester/>



Keen to learn more, our group met the Diocese's Head of Environment, Dr Emma Gardner, who explained the importance of the Salford Laudato Si Centre and its wider work in developing a climate change plan for the Diocese. The Diocese seeks to be zero carbon by 2038.





The Laudato Si Centre includes educational and wellbeing spaces in the walled gardens, greenhouses, an orchard, an outdoor classroom and more recently connections to adjoining woodland. As well as a partnership to create a memorial woodland, it has a bee colony living across the hives in the walled garden producing award winning honey. It also includes thriving polytunnels and greenhouses. The outdoor classroom is made up of eco-bricks in the walls which has been made by parishioners, and it is surrounded by an accessible surface to provide equal access for all.

The visit inspired our group to look at developing our own smaller Laudato Si garden, start drafting a local climate change plan and promote this work through the Commission. We want to connect with our local councils to understand more about wider sustainability projects. We were pleased to hear the Leeds Diocese is moving in the same direction and will be appointing its own Environment Officer shortly. We encourage other parishes to visit Wardley Hall and be equally inspired to work on the values of Laudato Si in saving our planet for our future generations.

To arrange a visit to the Laudato Si Centre:

Email an enquiry to: laudatosi@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

They will respond to you with the necessary form to fill out to make your visit possible!

FEBRUARY 2024 : LIVESIMPLY PARISHES ACROSS LEEDS MEET TOGETHER

By Trish Sandbach, Commission member



On Jan 20th about 25 Parishioners from 4 Parishes (Our Lady of Kirkstall, St John Fisher & St Thomas More, St John Vianney, and St Benedict's) gathered at St Benedict's, Garforth. All the parishes either have the Live Simply Award, some for many years, or have started on the journey towards it. The purpose was to meet and share ideas for action, not merely in terms of achieving or keeping the award, but because one of the demands of our Christian lives is to care for God's Creation, the Earth, our common home.

Pope Francis has spelt out so clearly that doing this is not an optional extra but a constituent part of being a Catholic Christian – and we recall that Vatican II made a similar declaration with respect to working for justice.

The day began with a brief resume from each of the parishes, giving us all some ideas about what had already been achieved and what the hopes for the future are. A range of very practical activities emerged such as putting solar panels on churches and houses, insulating churches, LED lights and timers for energy and water usage. Most of the parishes were involving children in growing vegetables or flowers that attract pollinators or in making insect homes, bird boxes or even a hedgehog hotel. Cafod campaigns, appeals and Fast Days are also well supported, as is the SVP with food and other essentials. Supporting refugees and asylum seekers also formed a common theme across the parishes. For some, the passage of



time and Covid restrictions meant that a need for renewal was evident in order to actively re-engage with parishioners.

Laudato Si' makes it very clear that we all need to undergo an ecological conversion. If our patterns of consumption continue as they are and there is no change in our lifestyles and mindset, the planet's poor will grow poorer, eco-systems will be further disrupted, weather extremes will worsen and much hardship will ensue. Lent offers an opportunity, both spiritually and in practical terms, to focus on a change of heart, a conversion that will open our minds and hearts to the "cry of the poor and the cry of creation".

In mixed parish groups, participants then addressed three questions.

- What are you planning to do for this Lent?
- How do we raise awareness about justice issues with regard to the elections?
- How do you approach tackling climate justice and global and local Poverty?

Discussion was lively and generated a wide variety of ideas. However, a few key themes emerged. The first was the need for formation and reflection so that theology, spirituality and liturgy become foundational to our actions. In living simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor, in fighting for the planet and against poverty, we should not simply be activists but followers of Christ. A few sessions on Catholic social teaching might be one of the activities that we can offer our parishioners during Lent. It is after all one of the foundation stones of our work for justice.

Secondly, we must be courageous in speaking truth to power. We should try to build a relationship with our MP so that we can meet and respectfully challenge current policy and practice in order to repair the brokenness of our planetary system. Most CO2 is emitted and most environmental damage inflicted not by us directly, but on our behalf and largely outside of our individual control. As churches and other faith organisations, we need to find ways to respond to this.

If we care about creation, then we need to believe as Pope Francis says that human beings can change. He obviously believes in the power of the Holy Spirit, and so should we! We recognise that the global South suffers far more from the effects of climate change, than we do, but they are least responsible for it. Therein lies a massive injustice that we have to address. At the same time in the UK poverty is growing as the cost of living is rising. People who just about managed before can no longer do so and are forced to use food banks and often cannot avoid going into debt. Organisations such as Citizens and Church Action Against Poverty are working to raise awareness and seek structural change as well as addressing urgent needs.

The meeting offered encouragement and people felt energised by this coming together. We think it will not be a one-off event and we will try to meet again, maybe 3 times a year and in different parishes, to walk in solidarity and support each other on the journey.

All is not lost. Human beings... are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start... and [embarking] on new paths to authentic freedom. (Laudato Si #205)



Diocese of Leeds: Justice & Peace Commission

For the Common Good in our Common Home



What do you want to do about our Climate Emergency?

We hope this booklet has given some ideas of what you can do as part of your church community. It also shows that you are not alone in wanting to do this – several parishes have already taken action!

If you need any help to develop your ideas or want to contact others, then get in touch with the Commission by emailing us and we will try to help you in any way that we can.

jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk



***Aged 18 – 30 and want to do something?
Get in touch with our SPARK Social Justice project to discuss your ideas.***

info@sparksocialjustice.org.uk

Sign up to our mailing list for regular updates about J&P action and reflection in the Leeds Diocese and beyond. Simply use the online form on our website

www.leedsjp.org.uk

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