

DIOCESE OF SALFORD

COP26 Resource Pack

Parishes

Environmental Emergency: What's the Story?

Our planet has reached a dangerous tipping point in its battle against climate change. The last 10 years have been recorded as the warmest decade on record, and devastating images of forest fires, floods, and heatwaves had repeatedly hit the headlines, revealing the catastrophic impact changes to our climate are having on people right around the world.

This year, UN scientists declared a "code red for humanity" in their IPCC report, confirming that human activity since the industrial revolution is to blame for putting the earth's natural balance out of kilter.

Time is running out - but it's not too late. Pope Francis reminds us of our Christian duty to care for both the planet and its people; urging us to act now to address the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

However, amid stark warnings of a planet on the brink, Pope Francis also offers us a ray of light. Writing in *Laudato Si'* - his letter to the world on caring for our common home - he said: "Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems."

What is COP26 and how will it affect us?

COP26 is the annual climate change conference for the United Nations - a global summit where leaders from every country around the world - as well as representatives from indigenous communities - come together to discuss the future of our planet.

This year, it is the UK's turn to host the conference, alongside Italy, with the main summit taking place in Glasgow between 31 October and the 12 November. With up to 30,000 delegates attending, COP26 is set to be the largest summit ever to take place on UK soil.



Top of the agenda is to see all countries pledge to reach net zero emissions by 2050, with concrete plans to significantly cut emissions by 2030, to keep global warming below the 1.5C threshold set out in the Paris Agreement - a target that will allow Planet Earth escape the very worst effects of climate change.

Rebuilding our world is not going to be easy; but it is possible. However, it needs more than just our leaders to step up. It needs each one of us to do our part, to answer Pope Francis' call to ecological and social conversion, and do what we can in our own lives to contribute to this global mission.

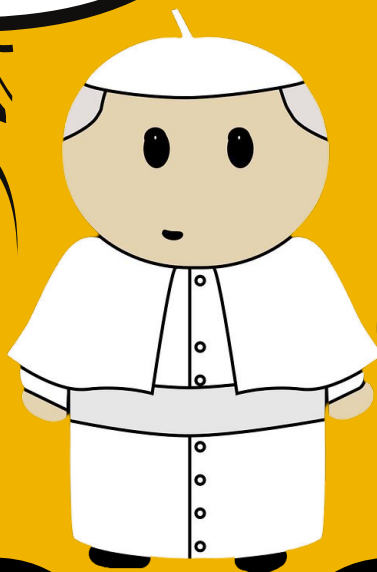
In each country's pledge to meet the 2050 target, some initiatives may be announced that will help us make adjustments to our everyday lives, such as a faster transfer to electric vehicles or the phasing out of gas boilers.

What is Pope Francis saying?

"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."

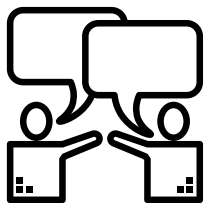
"The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all."

"Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."



"Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day."

How can we get involved?



Get talking

One of the biggest ways we can help our planet is by encouraging others to join us on our journey to climate justice. There are plenty of ways we can raise awareness and campaign for climate action. Keep an eye out for petitions from charities such as CAFOD, write to your MP on issues that concern you, share content on social media, and support your friends and family in changes they can make to positively impact our environment.



Make a pledge

If we truly want to build a better world for our planet and its people, we also need to make changes to our own lives. The changes we can make might seem small, but together they can make a huge impact. Whether it's walking or cycling to work one day a week, eating less meat, or switching to a greener energy supplier, your pledge can feed into a transformative cultural change.



Pray

In times of crisis, it's important never to forget the power of prayer. In his latest Pastoral Letter, Bishop John invites us to join him in praying for the success of the summit. He encourages us to remember all world leaders in our daily prayers in the lead up to COP26 and during the summit itself. You can find a copy of Bishop John's diocesan prayer for COP26 on the next page and a link to his Pastoral Letter on the final page.

DIOCESE OF SALFORD

Loving Father,

We acknowledge that, either through ignorance or greed, the Earth, our common home, is damaged.

That damage is felt most by people who have done little to cause it.

Industrialisation has exploited natural resources, endangering wildlife, causing climate change, and resulting in disasters and global warming.

Father, forgive us, and guide us in the right way.

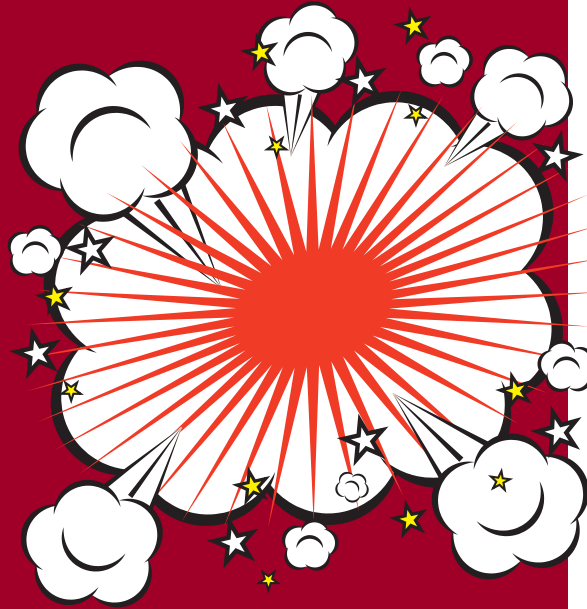
Send your Spirit to encourage and strengthen our world leaders as they meet at COP26.

Cause them to discern the way that we must now go, agreeing the changes and decisions necessary to begin to repair the damage done and to prepare a healthy and secure world for future generations.

And we ask Mary, our Mother, to intercede for us, and with us, in our need.

Amen.

Jargon buster



COP26

COP stands for the Conference of the Parties - a group of 197 parties (196 countries and the EU) who initially met to combat "dangerous human interference with the climate system". All nations signed the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) treaty in 1992, with it coming into force in 1994. The countries agreed to support ongoing research and meet annually to help the earth adapt to climate change. This year is the 26th time the parties have met, making it COP26.

Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement marks a significant turning point in the world's battle against climate change. For the first time ever, countries were tied into a binding agreement to make substantial changes to combat the environmental crisis, including key objectives such as keeping global temperature rise well below 2C, and preferably below 1.5C. It was agreed by all parties at COP21 in 2015 and came into force in 2016.

Why 1.5C?

The goal set out in the Paris Agreement was to limit global temperature rise to well below 2C and, if possible, below 1.5C from pre-industrial levels. This benchmark draws a line in the sand after which the impact of climate change becomes truly catastrophic. Currently, our planet has recorded a 1.2C rise, with scientists saying this could likely increase above the 1.5C mark.

Net Zero Emissions

Net zero emissions is a question of balance - it means taking as much, if not more, carbon dioxide out of our atmosphere as we are putting in. This can be achieved through reducing carbon emissions, using greener energy, protecting our rainforests, planting more trees, and more.

IPCC Report

IPCC stands for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It is the UN's body for assessing the science relating to climate change. In August this year, it released its latest report detailing its latest findings, the current impact on climate change, and future risks.

Other resources

A Rocha UK - Caring for God's Earth
<https://arocha.org.uk/>

Bishop's Conference of England and Wales
<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/environment/>

Bishop John's Pastoral Letter on COP26
<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Pastoral-Letter-22-for-COP26-.pdf>

CAFOD
<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/COP26-climate-summit>

Christian Aid
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

Climate Stewards
<https://www.climatestewards.org/>

Coalition of Churches
<https://www.climatesunday.org>

COP26
<https://ukcop26.org>

Fairtrade Foundation
<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources-library/current-campaigns/cop26-government-action/>

Interfaith Rainforest Initiative
<https://www.interfaithrainforest.org>

Journey to 2030
<https://journeyto2030.org/>

Laudato Si' Care for Our Common Home
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/document_s/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Laudato Si Movement
<https://laudatosimovement.org>

Tearfund
<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/reboot-campaign>



For the latest on environmental news across the diocese, why not follow our new Laudato Si' Centre on social media?



@laudatosicentre