

DIOCESE OF SALFORD

COP26 Resource Pack

Schools

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.

In August this year, UN scientists declared a "code red for humanity" in their IPCC report, confirming that human activity since the industrial revolution is largely 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 why is it so important?

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.

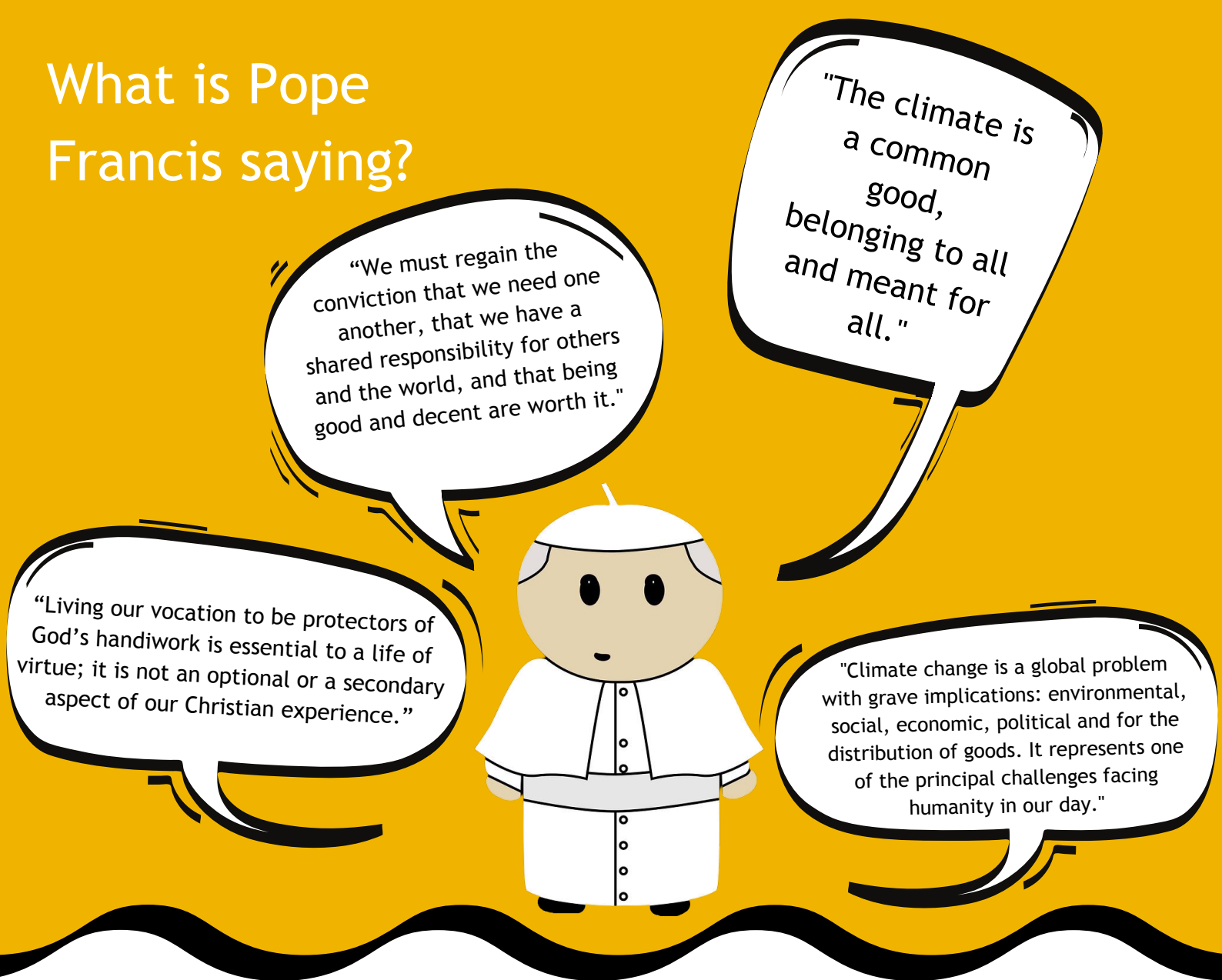
How will it affect us?

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.

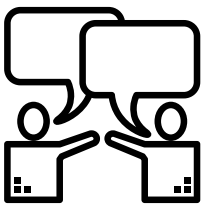
In each country's pledge to meet the 2050 target, some initiatives may be announced that will help us make adjustments to our everyday lives, such as a faster transfer to electric vehicles or the phasing out of gas boilers.



What is Pope Francis saying?



How can we get involved?



Get talking

Hold a model COP or panel event to discuss key issues relating to climate change and what outcomes your school would like to see from the summit. Perhaps you could share your thoughts with the rest of your school or community with a special assembly? Don't forget to share on social media using the hashtag #COP26 and tag in the Diocese of Salford and your MP!



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 to school one day a week, turning out more lights, or going litter picking, your pledge can have a transformative effect on the world around us.



Pray

In times of crisis, it's important never to forget the power of prayer. In his latest Pastoral Letter, Bishop John encourages us to remember all world leaders in our daily prayers during the lead up to COP26 and during the summit. To help you, we've included the bishop's diocesan prayer on the next page. As well as daily prayers, perhaps your school would also like to hold a vigil service or Mass?

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.

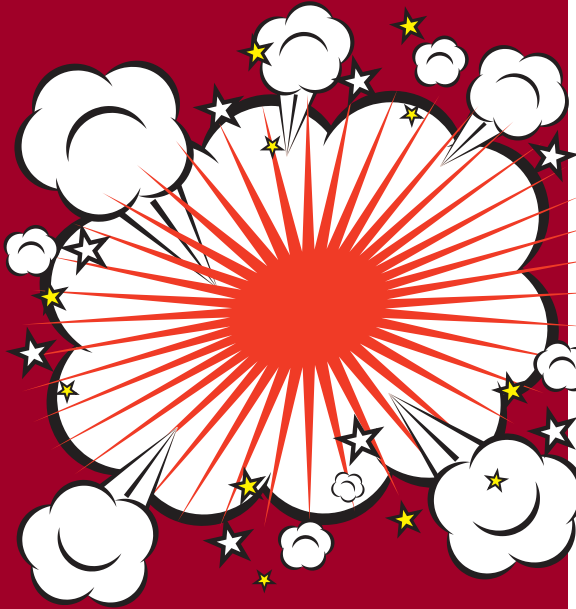
Send your Spirit to encourage and strengthen our world leaders as they meet at COP26.

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/>

BBC COP26 Teaching Resources
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/un-climate-change-conference-teaching-resources/zrcg3j6>

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>

COP26 Schools Pack
<https://together-for-our-planet.ukcop26.org/schools-pack-resources/>

Fairtrade Foundation
<https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/teaching-resources/cop26-schools-action-pack-together-for-our-planet/>

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

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

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