



Art display created out of plastic bottle tops at St John Fisher Parish, Kearsley

Hearing the Cry: *Responding with Hope*

*Working together as one diocese united towards
creating transformative change and healing for our
common home*

Foreword

By Bishop John Arnold



As Bishop of Salford and as the Environment Lead for the Bishops Conference, I write and speak regularly about the ecological crisis and the need to take urgent action. Each time, I can list another example of the irreversible damage that climate change is having on our common home.

The devastation that we are witnessing is no longer in isolated occurrences but a constant reminder that we are now at a ‘vital moment’ or a ‘turning point’. We no longer have to look around our world to see severe droughts, floods, rising sea-levels, extreme record-breaking temperatures, species driven to extinction and communities displaced - the consequences of the ecological crisis are to be seen on our doorstep.

The impact of our actions and our way of life are inflicting damage across our common home, affecting millions of people, most often in the poorest countries of the world and for people who have done least to damage our environment.

We have long been saying that the time for action is now, but we are not

reacting quickly enough to repair the damage. Indeed, we are inflicting further harm.

In September 2021 we were pleased to share with you, “For the Beauty of the Earth”, which is our commitment to Environmental Action. The document is a guide to put our Christian faith into action protecting the environment. It built upon work already undertaken in our Diocese.

Now we are taking the next step. “Hearing the Cry: Responding with Hope” is our strategic response, providing more details of the commitment to be made in the Diocese. It has one main ask of all of us, that we work together as one Diocese, united towards creating transformative change and healing for our common home.



Bishop John speaks to schools at Guardian's of Creation Environment Summit, Laudato Si' Centre

It is only by creating a cultural change, where we listen to the cry of the earth and cry of the people, that we will advance in any way towards achieving the systemic change needed at all levels; home, parish and schools. We will also look to use our influence in the wider community as a Christian community leading by example and putting our faith into action.

We will be providing specific actions that we are asking all our parishes and schools to undertake, and we will share opportunities to learn from each other as we respond to one of the most serious and urgent challenges we are facing as a world today.

It is several years since the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, where we were all called to undertake an ecological conversion, learning to care for creation and to protect our common home for generations to come. In the Diocese we responded at an individual, parish, school and diocesan level. These actions were encouraged not only by *Laudato Si'* but by the Church's commitment to care

for creation, a responsibility that is grounded in many papal encyclicals and Catholic Social Teaching.

Now is the time to unite these actions and responsibilities and set ourselves a plan that is ambitious and understands the scale of change that is needed, and one that is grounded in Christian Hope. Our joint response brings us together, maximising its impact, guided by prayer and Church teaching.

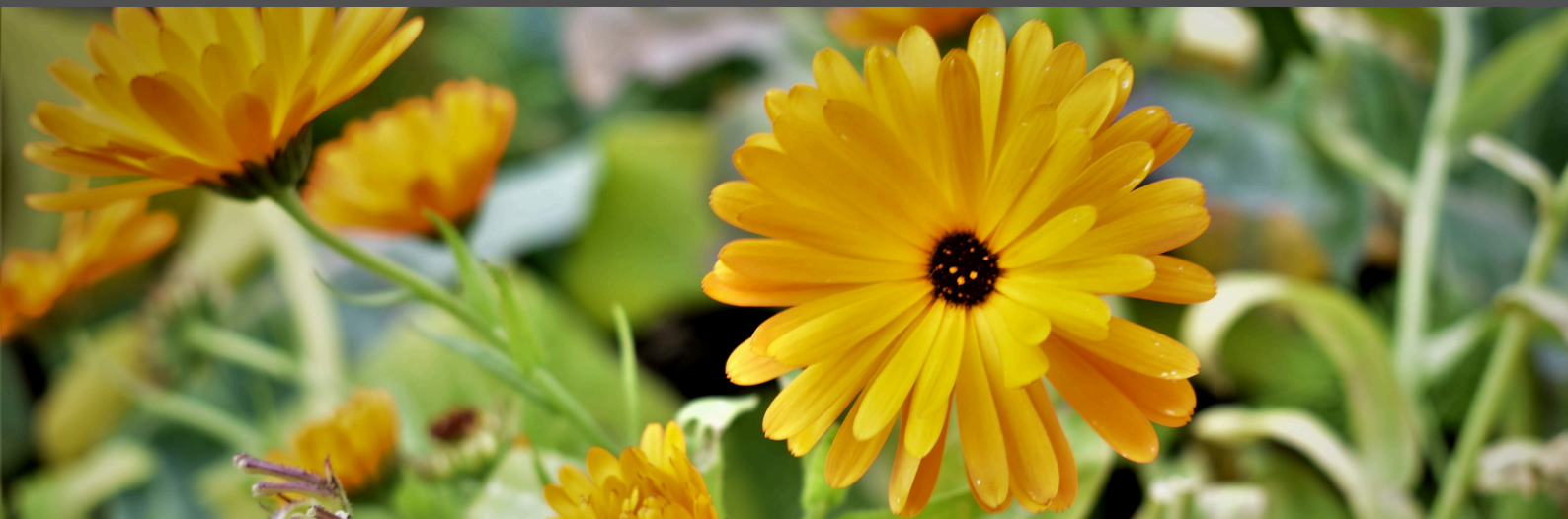
That is why this document is so important. Together, as the Diocese, we are united to hear and respond to the cry of our earth and all people. We will respond, not only out of necessity but with hope, that the voice of the church can unite us to work together to create a different legacy for the next generation. We ask that you join us on that journey of hope.

Stay with us Lord, on our Journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John" with a small cross symbol above the first letter.

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Living the Gospel

“The heavens proclaim the glory of God, and the firmament shows forth the work of his hands. Day unto day takes up the story and night unto night makes known the message”
(Psalm 18 vvi-3)

The people of God, living and forming the Church in the Diocese of Salford, has a single mission, which, in its simplest form, can be expressed in three words: “Proclaim the Gospel”. Everything we are - what we say, what we think and, most crucially, how we live our lives - is directed towards this single goal. To proclaim the Gospel with how we live our lives means to bear witness to the God who is love (1 John 4:16), to give praise to him, and to care for all of His creation: all of humanity, all creatures and the home we have been given to share. God created out of love and asks of us only a response of love (Matthew 22:36-40).

”
“God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31)

“
Our individual and collective response to the environmental crisis facing our world is squarely part of our overall mission to proclaim the Gospel. As Pope Francis teaches, “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.” (Laudato Si’, 217).

In recent years the world has been gradually waking up to the scale of the ecological crisis before us. It has been a particular theme of the pontificate of Pope Francis who, in his writings and teachings, is attempting to lead us on a path of conversion. Bishop John has reinforced the message locally and nationally.

It is important to recognise that Pope Francis is not the first Pope to raise concerns with our treatment of the environment. Over 50 years ago, Pope Saint Paul VI spoke of humanity’s “ill-considered exploitation of nature” that risked destroying it (Octogesima Adveniens, 1971), and in his 1991 encyclical Centesimus Annus, Pope Saint John Paul II wrote about nature as a gift from God and the need for humans to cooperate with God in promoting the flourishing of the environment (Centesimus Annus, 37).



Salford Cathedral Cloister Gardens

The same Pope called for an “ecological conversion” in 2001, and Pope Benedict XVI observed that “the external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast” (2005).

If there is a particular novelty of Pope Francis’ thought on the issue, it is his desire to highlight the connections that are so often missed. Time and again in his encyclicals, Pope Francis emphasises how “everything is connected” such that the cry of the earth and the cry of the people are heard as one voice.

Reflecting on the encyclical *Laudato Si’*, written in 2015, he explained that it should not be seen as a “green” encyclical but as a social encyclical (*Let us Dream*), since the fate of creation is tied to the fate of all humanity:

“*Laudato Si’* is not a green encyclical. It’s a social encyclical...[it] links the scientific consensus on the destruction of the environment with our self-forgetting, our rejection of who we are as creatures of a loving Creator, living inside His creation but at odds with it. It’s the sadness of a humanity rich in know-how but lacking the inner security of knowing ourselves as creatures of God’s love, a knowledge expressed in our simultaneous respect for God, for each other and for creation.” (*Let Us Dream*).

Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start... We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts."

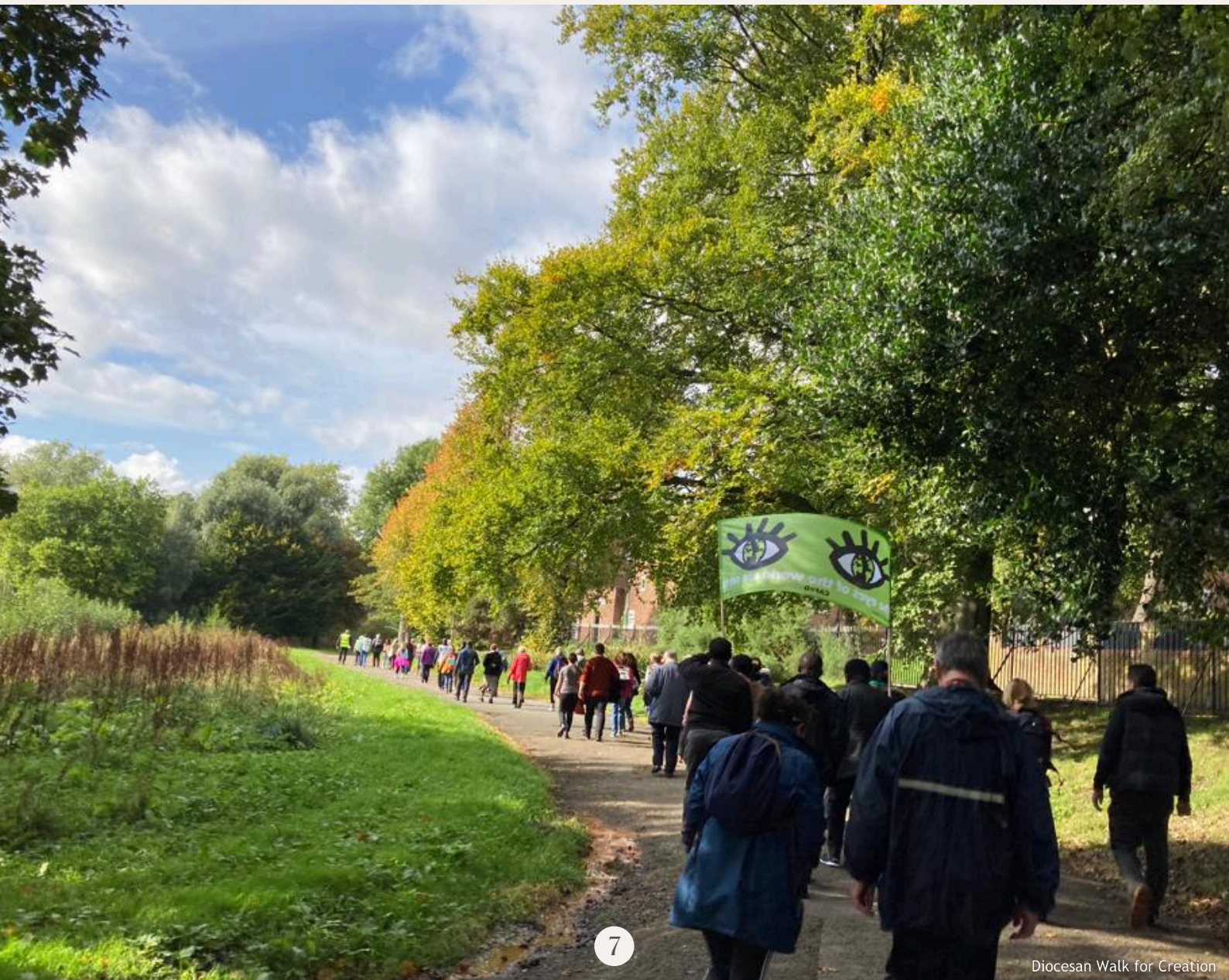
(Laudato Si’ 205)



As we hear the words of Pope Francis, Bishop John, and others, we recognise in them the truth and the need for a profound change in the way we live. It can be tempting either to despair or to try to fix things immediately by smarter, technology driven solutions; neither of these approaches is right. The interconnectedness of the issues means that there is no simple solution, no “silver bullet” that will fix things. Rather the necessary response lies deeper in the human heart. As Pope Francis puts it, “There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself.” (LS 118)

To hear the cry of the earth and as we say in the Diocese, the cry of the people is akin to the people hearing the cry of the prophets in the Old Testament. It begins an encounter with grace, which leads to conversion, to making better choices in the way that we live and a future of hope.

We have heard these calls, and this document sets out our response.



Celebrating God's Gift to Us

Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity. Laudato Si' 240



We are taught from a young age about God's gift to us in the earth and all its creatures. Its beauty and awe are something that we can often take for granted, rather than being filled with gratitude for the wonder that surround us.

It only takes a second to look around and see the beauty of creation. Such as that seen in the wonder of the changing seasons that alert us to the life, change, beauty and even death that surrounds us. In spring as leaves unfurl from the dark cold winter months they reach out to the sky for the light and their roots dig down into the ground for nutrients. As they grow they provide food, shelter and beauty among many other things that support and enrich all of creation. Each part of creation dependent on another, an interconnectedness that is all part of God's beautiful kingdom.

Reflecting on the role of the Eternal Word in creation, St Athanasius, writing in the 4th century, highlights the beauty and harmony of the interwoven tapestry of the created world, "Just as a musician, tuning his lyre and skillfully combining the bass and the sharp notes, the middle and the others, produces a single melody, so the wisdom of God, holding the universe like a lyre, draws together the things in the air with those on earth, and those in heaven with those in the air, and combines the whole with the

parts, linking them by his command and will, thus producing in beauty and harmony a single world and a single order within it". (St Athanasius, Against the Gentiles)

Our interconnectedness extends across all things, including the Church, cultures, communities, and the systems in which we live and interact, from the boundaries of earth's systems to our economic systems and how we do business - each having consequences to our natural world, to each other, and

to the wellbeing of the planet. All human behaviour is interconnected, including the way we exploit one another and our world, leading to poverty, hunger, economic migration, human trafficking, modern slavery, environmental degradation, and the decimation of nature among other things. The way that we currently live comes at a price for our planet and for the communities living with the consequences as resources are ripped from the earth to produce goods and pollution fills the sky, land and water.

"I believe that St Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically....He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace."

Laudato Si', 10

So often Pope Francis reminds us that we really do have a responsibility for each other. Every gesture of care for our environment and each other, however small, is of significance. The actions we take must reaffirm the responsibility we all have to make

small changes within our own lives.

We can all - whatever our background - take the opportunity to step back, to reflect and to reconsider our practical and personal response to this urgent ecological crisis we find ourselves living in.



Bee enjoys the flowers at Holy Trinity, Walkden

Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practise the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile, or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation, and selfishness."

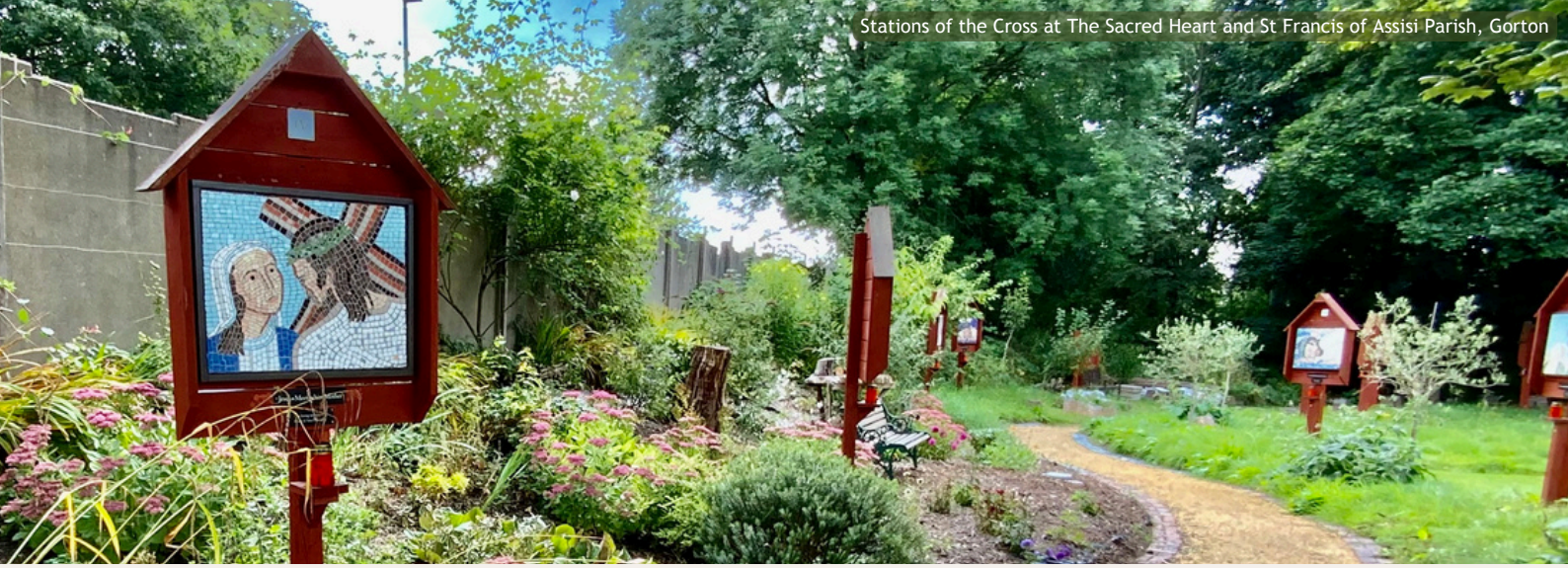
“ *Laudato Si': 230*

Let us follow a way of love, so our actions help people and creation flourish.



Healing





“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. God has promised us His strength. He will never give you a trial you are unable to handle.” Isaiah 41:10



Our interconnectedness brings complexity which can often leave us wondering what to do for the best. Understanding this complexity alongside the actions we take helps to provide healing for our world, communities, and ourselves as we journey together to care for creation.

Pope Francis calls for an ecological conversion, an ongoing process, a transformation of heart and mind leading to authentic changes in the way we live and behave to address the ecological crisis. It is a summons to a profound interior conversion that helps to build community and collective action.

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” (Pope Saint Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi, 41

The first step in the process of conversion is recognition that a change is needed. The preaching and writing of Pope Francis and more locally through the guidance and leadership of Bishop John has awakened the Church to the reality and urgency of the ecological crisis, and we have already begun to see the effects of this in the actions of our parishes and schools.

Because the cause is at root spiritual, with the ecological crisis an expression of a deeper crisis that lies within, the response must be spiritual too, grounded in prayer and within our communities. We must draw from within, from the eternal source that is God, we must pray for the growth in charity needed to love our neighbour more generously (especially those we can’t see), care for our common home more effectively and make the sacrifices required to do both, and finally we must pray for healing, healing to restore our relationships with each other, creation and God.

An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.”

(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, #183

Let us draw from within, from the eternal source that is God so our actions help to heal our past mistakes.

Hearing the Cry: Putting our Faith in Action

Working together as one diocese united towards creating transformative change and healing for our common home. The Diocese of Salford's vision to Care for Creation.

We recognise the scale of challenge; we are living in an ecological crisis created by humanity with the responsibility to respond to the crisis in our hands. We gladly accept this challenge, and in doing so we will be guided by four interconnected self-supporting themes that we have developed through engaging with our diocesan community and building on work already underway. These themes guide our actions detailed in tables 1 and 2.



Figure 1: Hearing the Cry interconnected strategic themes

We, the Diocese of Salford, commit to transformational change and will take restorative regenerative actions to tackle the ecological crisis.

We will do this by:

Getting our own house in order

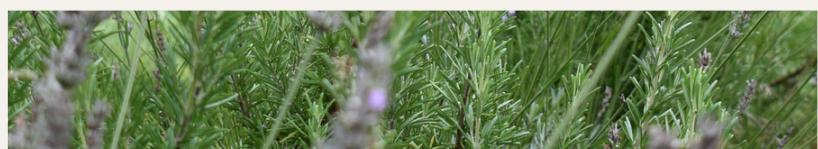
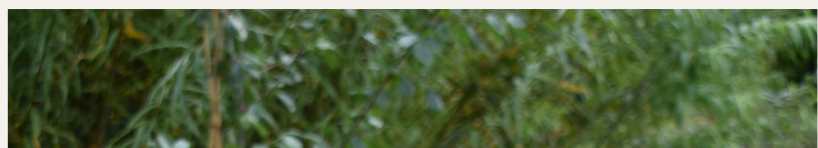
Providing guidance, tools, and sharing best practice

Working with others

Measuring and reporting

Our timescales for this work are 2023-2026. We will build on the great work already happening across schools and parishes, and on work the Diocese has led on (Table 1); activities we have committed to are listed in Table 2.

This is a living, working document, which we anticipate will evolve during this time, with updates, reflections and changes made to support our work to care for creation.



School visit at the Laudato Si' Centre

Getting our own house in order

We recognise our interconnectedness, our responsibility to enable and steer change to better care for creation and we recognise the impact of our activities - both positive and negative. We also understand that we are witness to our belief by our actions and we must lead by example.

We will design policies that will put our approach in action, supporting our communities to make transformational change. The policies listed below will help us get our own house in order.

Complete

- Modern slavery and Human Trafficking Statement
- Investment Policy Statement
- Health and wellbeing

In development

- Care for Creation
- Property
- Nature care
- Decarbonisation
- Responsible purchasing
- Food
- Natural resources
- Travel and transport

Each policy as it is finalised will be made available to parishes and schools and will be on our website.



We will lead from the centre to support transformational change across our parishes and schools.

Providing guidance, tools, and sharing best practice

We will provide guidance, tools, and share best practice to create engaged and enabled communities, including programmes and activities delivered at our flagship Laudato Si' Centre. We will support a change in mindset, as modelled below (Figure 2), so that ecologically sound behaviours are the norm rather than the exception through a culture of care where everyone is engaged and acting. This starts with parishes and schools committing to the Care for Creation Promise, which is presented below (Figure 3).

We invite parishes and schools to sign the Diocese's Care for Creation Promise and we will support them through:

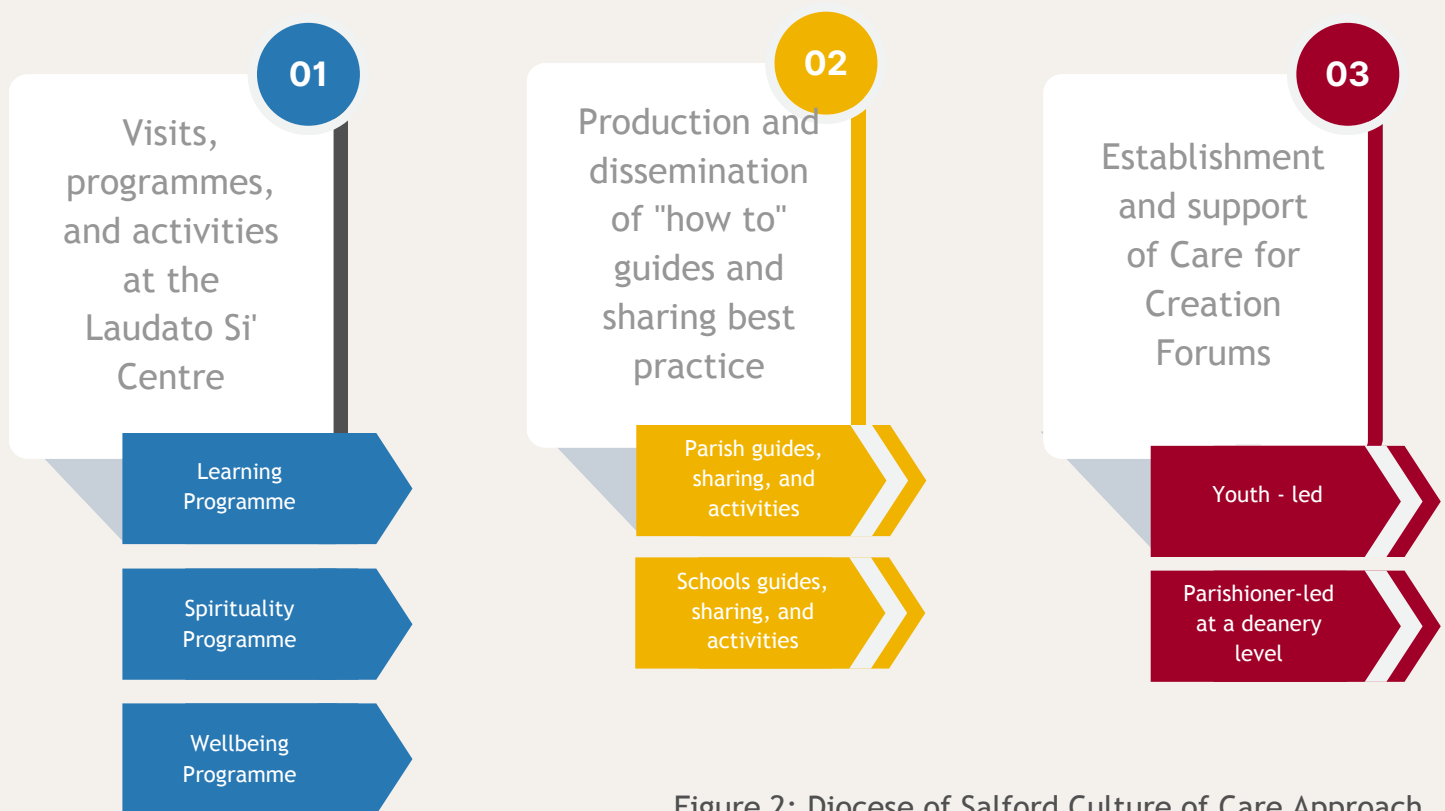


Figure 2: Diocese of Salford Culture of Care Approach

To Christians, the future does have a name, and its name is Hope. A single individual is enough for hope to exist, and that individual can be you. And then there will be another 'you,' and 'another' and it turns into an 'us'.

Sr Judith Russi





Care for Creation Promise

A statement of hope - rooted in the belief that we can make a difference.

Guided by our Catholic faith and a desire to protect God's creation for future generations, we make this promise to care for creation and our brothers and sisters around the world:

We have heard and will respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the people;

We recognise the need for urgent action to address the ecological crisis and the damage it is doing to our brothers and sisters;

We will set an example by making positive change and standing up to this injustice.

By signing this Promise, we commit to making better choices and to develop an action plan for change within our community.

Signed

Print name

May God guide us as we strive to live out His call to be responsible and compassionate stewards of the earth.

St Francis of Assisi, pray for us.

Stay with us Lord on our journey





The Laudato Si' Centre

The Laudato Si' Centre was announced by Bishop John in Lent 2019 in response to the ecological crisis and Pope Francis's call for us all to care for creation. The vision for the Laudato Si' Centre is to develop and operate an education and outreach mission that generates environmental hope, rooted in the belief that we can all make a difference through the actions we take. The mission will aim to provide the tools and learning needed to enable all to hear and respond in hope to the cry of the earth and cry of the people.

The Laudato Si' Centre is for all faiths and none, all are welcome.

The Laudato Si' Centre will:

Demonstrate ways of living that better care for our common home and all creation, that are practical, and can be replicated across parishes, homes, schools, and communities

Educate through a variety of experiences

Provide a space to heal and flourish to support human and spiritual renewal

Provide immersive experiences in the outdoors for school pupils and adults, seminars and events for parishes, schools and communities, and activities relating to a variety of technologies and behaviours

We will support a change in mindset so that ecologically sound behaviours are the norm.



Bishop John's CAFOD visit to COP26 in Glasgow Credit: CAFOD/Thom Flint

Working with others

Working with others across the Catholic church and beyond to engage with policymakers in a unified manner.

Bishop John is chair of Caritas Salford and is the environment lead for Catholic Bishops across England and Wales. Bishop John also chairs an environment advisory group that includes representatives from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW), CAFOD, Financial Secretaries, charities and a member of the House of Lords. He regularly writes and speaks on environmental matters through his Pastoral letters, in the catholic press and wider. We will use the platforms given to Bishop John to amplify the voice of the Diocese and faith groups in the movements that are working towards positive environmental and social change. This, where appropriate, will include media opportunities, lobbying and working across other faiths.

Through the Guardians of Creation Project, which is an interdisciplinary, multi-institutional research programme, we will share the first systematic framework for decarbonising the Catholic Church in the UK and accompanying guidance. This project is an example of how working together and learning from others we can provide research-based solutions, while also enabling us to engage with issues relating to the social and theological aspects of sustainability in the Catholic Church.

We will continue to share learning and will proactively engage with others across the Catholic church and beyond and will engage with policymakers to help create the change we need to see.

Measuring and Reporting

Measuring and reporting our performance and the impact of our activities

The work outlined in this document will be overseen by the Trustees and led by Bishop John who entrusts responsibility to the Chief Operating Officer and Head of Environment to direct activities and interventions. A Diocesan Trustee has been allocated responsibility for all matters relating to the Environment and caring for creation and chairs the Environment Committee. Figure 4 illustrates our Governance supporting ecological change.

Governance supporting ecological change

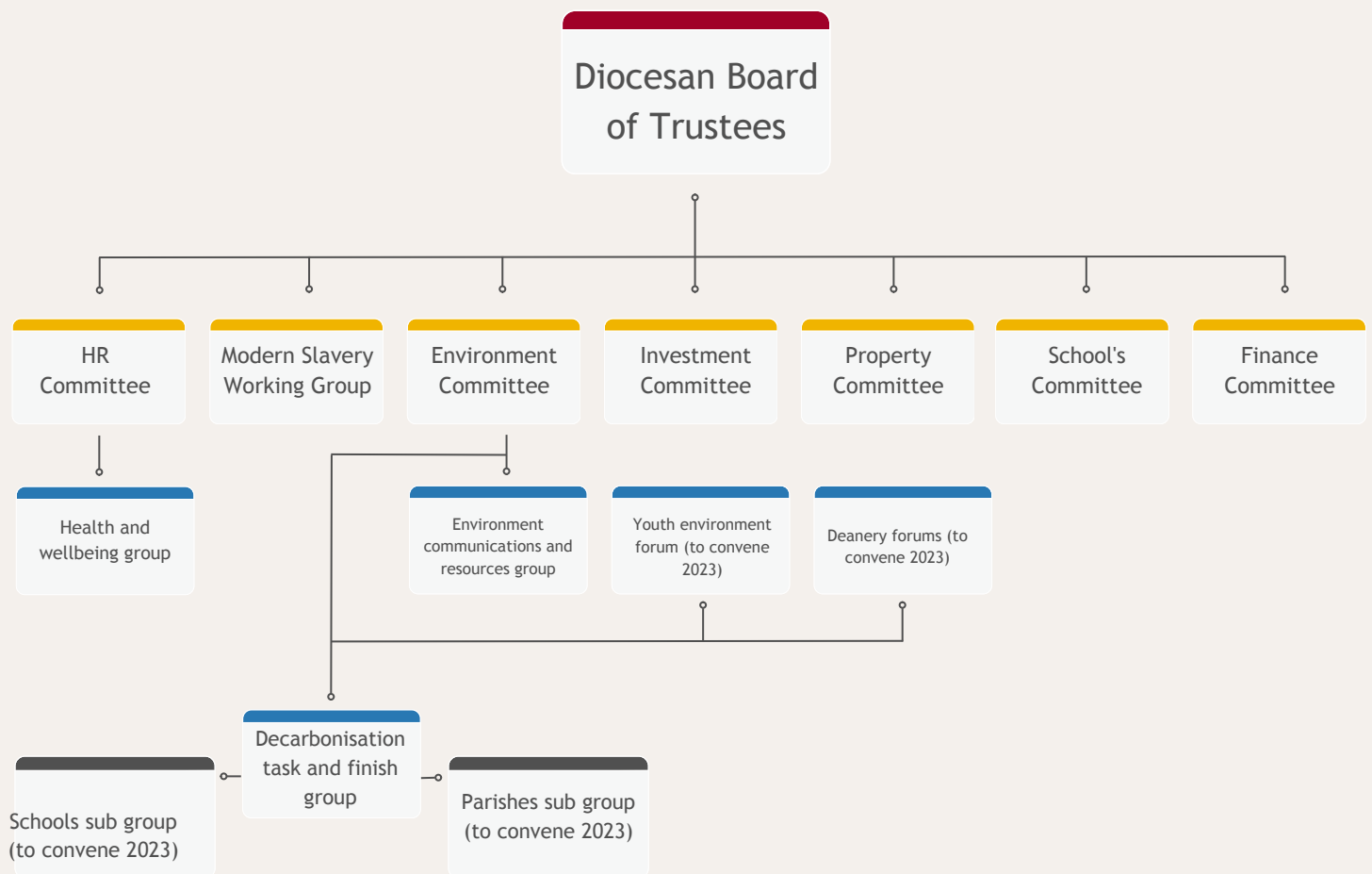


Figure 4: Diocesan governance to support ecological change

Progress will be reported to the Trustees via the Environment Committee and annually in the Diocesan Annual Report. The Chief Operating Officer, Head of Environment and Environment Team will work closely with Diocesan departments, parishes, schools and communities to support transformational change and restorative regenerative actions.

The Diocese is committed to this work, with funding allocated to support activities as well as grants targeted to progress specific activities such as our decarbonisation work, the Guardians of Creation Project and delivery of Laudato Si' Centre programmes for example. However, it is important to recognise that there will be limits to what we can achieve without the support of our people, parishes and schools. The Diocesan departments are committed to activities, interventions and engagement, but it is everyone's responsibility to care for creation with the need for people, parishes and schools to commit to transformational change and restorative regenerative actions.

We will report on progress and the impact of our activities in a transparent manner, learning and sharing lessons and will seek continual improvement.



Hearing the Cry:

Putting our Faith in Action

Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are.”

Augustine of Hippo



Joy, Hope, and Renewal

"Do everything in love"

1 Corinthians 16:14



Pope Francis talks of hope, hope in doing. 'Hearing the cry: Responding with Hope' presents hope and action to empower and enable our communities. This work is in keeping with *Laudato Si'* 'Praise be to you' which invites us to sing praise to God, then honour and respect ourselves within creation. In the end, the message written through all of creation is one that leads us to joy. Joy that we are blessed by the wonder, the harmony, the beauty, the goodness that God recognised when He completed His work of creation (Genesis 1:31) and made us His co-workers to care for it (Genesis 1:28).

Our actions have permanently altered the planet and brought suffering but there is still time to act and to renew our world as we give glory to God by our desire and action to put right what has gone wrong.

We know we face challenges, but we are facing these together and know that 'nothing is impossible with God' (Luke 1:37).

Further reading

Thank you to our Environment Writing Group for consolidating this document to help us begin our journey of hope. For more information and resources on how you can join us on that journey, click the button below:

[Parish and school resources](#)

"Hope opens new horizons, making us capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable."

Pope Francis

The path of renewal is open before us. Let us walk that path together.

Stay with us Lord on our journey

Stations of the Cross at The Sacred Heart and St Francis of Assisi Parish, Gorton

Five suggestions to start your journey

1 - Consider if you could introduce a Laudato Si' group in your parish, deanery, or school and begin recruiting volunteers. Don't forget to share this environmental strategy and supporting resources with them.

2 - Pray. Take time to reflect on the beauty of creation and our responsibility as stewards of the earth. Ask God to guide and inspire you as you seek to live out that mission. We have included a prayer for our common home on the next page.

3 - Look at any quick wins in your day-to-day life that could make a significant impact on our planet. Could you eat less meat, rely on the car less, find alternative ways around your parish or house to use less plastic and fewer chemicals?

4 - Consider creating space in your home, parish, or school grounds for local wildlife. You could also turn this into a quiet space for prayer and reflection and to spend time with Creator God. We have provided guidance on creating spaces for wildlife and guidance to help you create a prayer garden.

5 - Research and support charities that are helping our brothers and sisters around the world who are bearing the brunt of our ecological crisis. Charities such as Caritas and CAFOD use the faith-based principles of Laudato Si' to offer practical, life-changing support to families on the front line of climate change.

Please take a look at p.31 for more resources and ideas for parishes and schools.

DIOCESAN PRAYER FOR OUR COMMON HOME

All powerful God,
you created all things,
and you are present throughout the universe
and in every creature,
You embrace with your tender love all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
so that we may have the strength and courage
to protect all life and the beauty of our world,
preserving it from pollution and destruction.

Fill us with your peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one,
And caring for the Earth, our common home.

Teach us to discover the worth of every creature on
this earth,
Let us protect those at risk and in danger,
Encourage us as we seek justice, love and peace.
Stay with us each day, with the power of your grace.

Through Christ our Lord
Amen

Hearing the Cry

Responding with Hope



What will you do?