

RENEWING OUR CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Lent Resources



For Parishes



INTRO

This Lent, we are looking for ways to reconnect with the earth and its Creator and take better care of our common home through the themes of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Our Catholic community is a mine of fantastic resources to help you on your Lenten journey, and we've picked out one or two examples you might like to explore, in addition to some of our own stories and ideas.

For additional resources, don't forget to follow us on social media, and visit www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk

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KEY RESOURCES

To help you reflect this Lent

Climate justice is at the very heart of CAFOD's work, supporting communities worst affected by the impact of climate change; from deforestation in the Amazon, to droughts and temperature rise, and other climate-related natural disasters. From daily reflections sent straight to your inbox, to resources for home and school, and of course this year's Walk Against Hunger and Family Fast Day Fundraisers, CAFOD has plenty of resources to help you reevaluate your relationship with the earth and its Creator this Lent. Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/> to find out more.



Once again, our diocesan social action charity is running its traditional Lenten appeal this year - but with an added environmental twist. Take a look at p.13 to find out more, or visit <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/campaign/st-josephs-penny/>

Parishes, schools, and other prayer groups can access a wide range of resources to help them reflect this Lent. Independent Catholic News has compiled a helpful range of resources, from online retreats, reflections, webinars, and even an Ecological Way of the Cross to support people this Lent. Find out more at indcatholicnews.com



Journey to 2030 is an online resource to inspire ecological conversion, particularly within the Catholic Church. Among the wealth of resources available via their website is a helpful guide on making better use of outdoor spaces in your parish.

Take a look now for top tips by visiting www.journeyto2030.org/parish/outdoorspaces and read more about creating a prayer garden in this pack.



Sowing Hope for the Planet

2018 / 2022

An inspiring website encouraging practical action to care for our common home has a fantastic set of resources to support you on the road to a greener lifestyle. Collated by the Sisters of the International Union of Superiors General, there are plenty of environmental resources to inspire you this Lent. Head to www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org

Fasting

Going Back to Basics



Mute the noise: Rediscover the real meaning of Lent

By Bishop John Arnold



Social Media has become a significant part of our daily lives. As I travel around Manchester I see people with their heads buried in phones on buses, in coffee shops and restaurants, and even as they walk along the street.

Many of our younger people are living in a world defined by likes, shares and retweets. Unfortunately, recent studies have shown that those who spend a large proportion of time on social media are actually more likely to suffer from low esteem and anxiety.

There is nothing wrong with social media in moderation. Even the Pope tweets and if you are not following the Diocese of Salford please do! But we should be careful not miss out on real life and personal interactions because we are too busy looking at a screen.

Is it time we all took a step back from comparing our lives to those around us and concentrate on our own priorities and goals?

The Season of Lent provides us with an opportunity to do just that. Lent is a time for reflection when we deliberately try to re-focus on what we believe, and why. We remind ourselves about the faith and trust that we have in our God.

Our lives are busy and every day can be so full of chores, decisions, routines and, while we try always to be doing the right thing, sometimes we lack that sense of putting our Faith into action in what we do. We can simply be too busy to recognise opportunities and make the best decisions.

Lent invites us to stand back and to deliberately create a bit of time to remind ourselves what motivates us and how we make the decisions of everyday. We remember what God has done for us and how Jesus came to show us the way to live. For the forty days of Lent each year we try to give three things some extra importance: prayer, fasting and alms-giving. With less time listening to the noise of social media it is easier to find the time and space to concentrate on the real meaning of Lent.

Lent can be a helpful time to anyone who wants to step back from the rush of life and make time to consider what we want our lives to be about. Maybe if we step back from our phones we will make it easier to find what we want that to be.

Data Fast: Is your digital footprint as clean as you think?



Caring for our common home comes in many forms. Perhaps you're a recycling hero, maybe you've switched to an electric car, or maybe you're growing your own food or have moved to greener energy alternatives.

But have you ever stopped to think about how your data usage impacts the planet?

Whether it's scrolling through social media, shopping online, sending a selfie or an email, each of these small actions comes at a cost.

Due to the energy supply, wireless

networks, and data centres you access for your internet needs, this consumption has a surprising impact on our carbon footprint.

Although these singular actions only have a small imprint, collectively it creates a considerable impact on our carbon emissions, contributing to around 3.7% of global gas emissions, according to think tank The Shift Project.*

So, this Lent, why not embark on a different kind of fast and rethink how we are using the internet and what small changes to our online life can we make to help our common home.

*Find out more at https://theshiftproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Lean-ICT-Report_The-Shift-Project_2019.pdf

Meat Free Fridays

For centuries, Catholics around the world have honoured the age-old observance of abstaining from eating meat during certain times of the year.

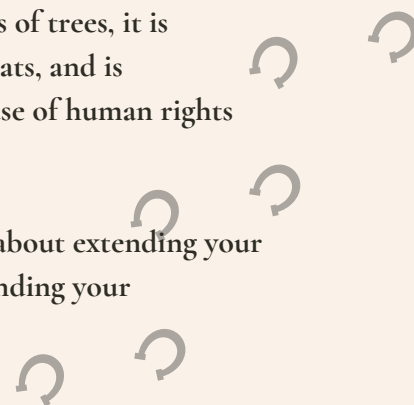
Ash Wednesday and Good Fridays are dedicated as days of fasting, while it is tradition for Catholics to refrain from eating meat on all Fridays during Lent, in honour of Christ, who sacrificed His own flesh for us on Good Friday.

Abstinence is first and foremost a form of penance and an act of self denial, helping us to answer our Christian call to live more simply. But did you know that reducing our meat intake can also have a positive impact on the environment?

According to Greenpeace, over a quarter of the world's landmass is used to graze animals or grow food for farm animals - food that could be eaten by humans in the first place.

Accommodating this has led to mass deforestation, pushing the Amazon in particular to tipping point. As well as contributing significantly to global warming through emissions and loss of trees, it is destroying countless habitats, and is responsible for a huge abuse of human rights and landgrabbing.

This Lent, why not think about extending your meat-free Fridays, or extending your abstinence past Lent?



PRAYER GARDEN



This Lent, parishes, schools and families might like to start planning, designing and creating a Prayer Garden.

Many communities across the diocese have already created a Prayer Garden and have experienced several spiritual and wellbeing benefits from these spaces. Such projects help raise awareness of our need to care for our Common Home, help strengthen links between Home, School and Parish, and create a place to encounter God in His creation.

Continue reading for helpful advice on creating your own Prayer Garden.



Suggested Steps:

1. Identify a lead or team for this project and invite representatives from the parish and school for a time of prayer and planning. Where possible, there should be a range of ages, backgrounds and experience in the group. Safeguarding guidance should be followed at all times with under 18s accompanied by school staff or parents/carers. A risk assessment for this project should be completed following Health and Safety guidance. For more information and support with this, please email formation@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

2. Decide on the scale of the project. Choose a site and discuss timescales, budget and existing resources. It is important to bear in mind the current terrain of your site - for some this will be softscape, for others this will be hardscape, both can provide beautiful spaces.

3. Create a detailed Action Plan with the necessary steps. This may include drawing a ground plan marking out different areas, choosing and sourcing vegetation and materials, and calling on volunteers or contractors to carry out the work. Remember to prioritise plants for pollinators and other wildlife, and think about reusing or repurposing materials, instead of just buying new items.

4. A first step for the implementation stage of the project may be marking out the site/various areas according to the plan.

5. Next, you will need to prepare the groundwork of the space, and prepare the ground to plant any vegetation.

6. If you are using any raised beds, these will need to be built. These can be built using Eco-Bricks (recycled milk cartoons, filled with single use plastics) and secured using 2,1" wood and covered in material. Take a look at our Helpful Resources box for more information.

7. You may wish to add in prayer stations, statues, crosses or displays with prayers and information about caring for our Common Home.

8. Once everything is finished and the site is safe for visitors, you may like to arrange an opening of the Prayer Garden, inviting members parishioners, pupils, staff and families. Take a look at the next page for a suggested blessing.

9. Finally, don't forget to share photos of your finished gardens with the diocese on social media. Take a look at the contents page for our details.

Helpful Resources

<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/safeguarding/>

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

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/plants-for-wildlife/>

<https://www.ecobricks.org/>

www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/diocese/environment/around-the-diocese/

<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/gardening-for-wildlife/>

<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/parish-garden-project-inspires-a-future-of-sustainability/>

<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/holy-trinity-garden-project/>

<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/community-garden/>

Blessing for a PRAYER GARDEN

The following is provided as a suggestion and may be adapted. Please discuss this blessing with your parish priest.

Opening Hymn

·He's got the whole world in his hands
·All things bright and beautiful

Sign of the Cross and Greeting
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
R/ Amen.

The Lord be with you.
R/ *And with your spirit.*

Opening words and reflection

Scripture

·Genesis 1-2:2
·Daniel 3:50-90

Blessing (with Holy Water)

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.

We ask you now to bless this garden, ✠ in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, may all who come here, experience your love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord,
Amen

The priest moves around the garden, sprinkling it with Holy Water.

The Our Father

Let us say together the words our Saviour taught us. Our Father...

Final Blessing

The Lord be with you.
R/ *And with your spirit.*

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
R/ Amen.

Go in peace
R/ *Thanks be to God.*

Closing Hymn

·How Great Thou Art





Planting the seeds of hope for a post-pandemic parish

Out of the darkness of the pandemic emerged a triumphant symbol of hope; a community parish garden project that cares for both community and common home.

"When you're here, you could be anywhere in the world. We're less than a mile from the motorway junction but it's just so peaceful."

High on the hill overlooking spectacular vistas of the valley below, parish volunteer and dedicated member of The Hope Garden team, Stephen Bromley, speaks so fondly of the beautiful grounds of the parish of St John Fisher in Kearsley.

Home to England's only Schoenstatt Shrine, this parish is truly unique, and not just because of the iconic Bavarian-style chapel.

In a bid to make better use of the parish grounds for the many people from across the world who travel and stay at Schoenstatt, in addition to strengthening ties with the local community, work began on making a space where people could come and spend some time outdoors.

Work began cutting back the overgrown trees next to the on-site cottage, making way for an colourful expanse of space which families, individuals, or parish groups could come and enjoy.

Thanks to a tireless team of volunteers, a talented artist, and incredible support from local tradesmen and suppliers who donated time, materials, and expertise at no cost, the grounds of St John Fisher's were transformed with vibrant planters, beautiful borders, and exquisite artwork.

The grounds offer a number of distinct areas, such as the Peace Garden - a stunning area for quiet reflection overlooking views of the valley with an extraordinary eight-sided mosaic structure at its heart, to the Hope Garden - a kaleidoscope of colour where families can meet, children can play, and people can contribute to the care of the garden.

Next to the wheelchair-accessible planter that also combines as a seating area, is the spectacular plastic bottle top mosaic.

Made up of 2,000 - 3,000 plastic bottle tops, this stunning display captures the very essence of the creation story: the earth itself, governed by day and night. With a nod to the Schoenstatt Shrine on the left, and a lighthouse on the right, the message of hope rings right through this incredible work of art, with the peace and hope of God's rainbow at its heart.

Stephen commented: "We started making it in the pandemic and it just happened that the rainbow became a real symbol of lockdown. We asked parishioners to bring in all of their bottle tops and we collected thousands.

"The UK uses 7.7 billion plastic water bottles each year, so by trying to use the bottle tops, we hoped this would be visually pleasing but that it would also send an important message."

From exploring ways to reduce waste and reliance on single-use plastics at events, in addition to investing in a water tank to collect rainwater to water plants in the summer, volunteers at St John Fisher's have plenty of ideas to inspire more care for our common home within the community.

Stephen said: "We don't want the garden to be ornamental. We want to encourage people to have a go, and if they go home and do a little bit at home, that's great.

"I remember Bishop John saying that it's the little things that can make a big difference, like turning the tap off while you're brushing your teeth.



"It might not seem like a big thing but the aggregate effect of that can be really effective."

"All told, it's been a fantastic project", Stephen said. "The only wrinkle was the pandemic. We had hoped to have the garden open for Easter 2020, but it gave us a little bit of time to think things through and not rush into anything."

The work was completed in Summer 2021, and was celebrated with a opening service presided over by Bishop John in October.

Stephen said: "It was great - and lovely to see some faces of people who don't usually come to church. And that's what it's about - it's there for everybody. If people can come and get a little bit of enjoyment, peace, or conversation, then job done."

Celia Eccleston, another volunteer who was instrumental in securing vital funding for the project, is eager to encourage more families to enjoy the space, in addition to offering support to people who may have become disengaged with the Church.

She explained: "There are people who don't feel worthy to come to Mass, but they can come here, visit the Shrine, make their peace with God, and in their own time, think about confession, or Mass.



"And that's so important, particularly now as we go into Lent.

"We pray The Rosary in the garden, and that is very well supported."

Stephen added: "Sometimes, people who aren't religious feel uncomfortable coming to church, but they don't feel uncomfortable sitting outside in the garden.

"We get a lot of people coming here of all religions and none. Even if you're not religious, there's a lot of spirituality about the place, and that's because of the peacefulness."

As the world reels from the news of war of in Europe - a world already wounded after emerging from a deadly pandemic - peace is a blessing not too easy to come by, and one Celia believes we need to pray for more than ever.

She said: "The world has changed since Covid, and now we have the news from Ukraine.

"When I heard the news, all I wanted to do was go to Church - and others were the same."

"The Hope Garden is so symbolic now. That's what we have to do now: hope and pray. Prayer is our only option."



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.

Fight poverty with Caritas this Lent



This Lent, our diocesan social action charity Caritas Salford is calling on people across Greater Manchester and Lancashire to help fight poverty.

Parishes and Schools across the diocese are already stepping up to the challenge by committing to this year's St Joseph's Penny Appeal.



Dating back to 1904, the St Joseph Penny Appeal is an easy and popular way to fundraise, because it encourages young people to collect loose change or earn it in exchange for chores that help others.

Patrick O'Dowd, director of Caritas Salford, said:

"Children in communities across our diocese are growing up in households with insufficient income to meet basic needs.

"Your donations this Lent - no matter how small - will provide immediate practical relief, as well as the longer term support to help people out of poverty"

5 eco-friendly ways to fight poverty this Lent

- Try a plant-based recipe or diet; go meat free and donate the money you would spend on meat, to charity.
- Switch off from digital; Cut out TV/Video games etc, monitor what money you'd spend on energy and donate
- Buy less or second hand; and donate what you could have spent
- Cut the car (bon); by walking, cycling, or using public transport to work or school
- Collect for appeal by making a reusable container

Envirolent

The season of Lent is all about taking a step back from the world, from the busy demands of everyday life, and reevaluating how we live our lives. Through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, Christians use this powerful combination to refresh our active lives as Christians, contemplate our relationship with God, and how we live out our faith in our day-to-day lives.

This, too, is a powerful way to rethink our relationship with the earth, so let's take a look at the four simple steps below to reignite our spark for environmental justice.



One of the most helpful steps we can take to care for our common home is to educate ourselves and others. By learning more about how our actions are impacting our environment, and identifying changes we can make to help the world around us, collectively we can begin to make a real difference.



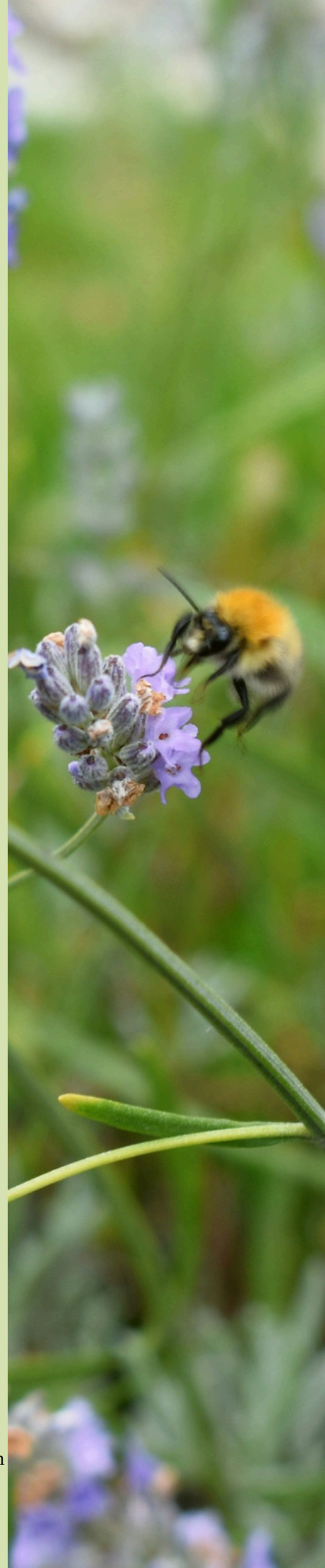
There can be no doubt that significant changes must take place soon if we want to protect our planet and its people from the worst effects of climate change. But to generate significant change, we need to inspire others to care and act in the same way. So, speak out: talk to friends and family, campaign on social media, and write to your MP to kickstart a wave of action.



Practice what you preach and take concrete action to care for the world around you. Whether it's swapping the car for public transport, making your garden a haven for wildlife, or campaigning or volunteering with key organisations, nurturing nature through positive action is key.



We believe that all creation is a gift from God - so let's start professing it! Let us take a moment each day to wonder at the beauty of creation and give thanks to God, and pray that this will help us cherish nature even more dearly.



Back by popular demand!

You may remember our EnviroLent resources from previous years but this year, we're reviving this classic favourite by popular demand! Don't forget to get in touch to share your stories and updates!

ENVIROLENT: REDUCE

This Lent many of us will be giving something up. In our first theme, Reduce, consider whether as an individual or parish community you can weave this thinking into a year-round approach which will help us all to care for our common home.



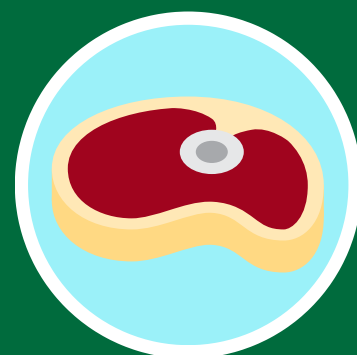
REDUCE ELECTRICITY

Curb your emissions by switching off lights and not leaving electricals on standby. Could your parish install solar panels to help fuel your church?



REDUCE TRAVEL

How about holding a 'Walk to Church Sunday'? For those in your parish who aren't able to walk the distance, why not offer to pick up a friend or fellow parishioner to build your community while reducing emissions.



REDUCE MEAT

Reduce the amount of meat in your diet. It's okay if you don't want to give up completely but it's always good to try new things and see what you can replace with a tasty vegetarian alternative.



REDUCE CONSUMPTION

Do you ever find yourself thoughtlessly buying new things or eager for the newest technology? Take a moment to step back and consider the journey your purchase has been on before reaching the shop floor. Consider alternatives like buying secondhand.

PARISH FOCUS

From garden projects to prayer vigils, there has been a great level of action from parishes with communities using their creativity to try and live a more simple and sustainable lifestyle.

Could you make changes within your own parish life or community to help protect our planet?

ACT

Why not create a Laudato Si' group in your parish? Start by gathering a few passionate parishioners and encouraging small change within your community. Change begins when we work together, and our individual actions quickly add up.



ENVIROLENT: REUSE

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis talks about what he calls a 'throwaway culture' which is leaving our earth looking as if it is "an immense pile of filth". Let us take Pope Francis's words to heart and try to reduce and begin to reuse the things we do have.



REUSE: REPAIR

Could you host a repair café in your parish? Or could your parish craft group help by donating an afternoon to repairing clothes for a charity donation?



REUSE: SHARE

Instead of throwing something away, think could I share my belongings, tools, books or clothes with others in my community?



REUSE: SWAP

Grab your clothes and host a swap shop in your parish. That way, you're getting the joy of something new without overwhelming yourself with new belongings and increasing your carbon footprint.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? MAKE SOME ECOBRICKS

An ecobrick is a building block made entirely from unrecyclable plastic. It's created by filling a plastic bottle with clean, dry plastic until it's packed tightly and can be used as a building block.

The plastic in an ecobrick is very durable and will never break down, making it an ideal building material.

Parishioners from St Mary's, Brownedge, have created more than 500 ecobricks which they have donated to the *Laudato Si'* Centre at Wardley Hall. There, they have been transformed into raised beds.



HOW?

At St Mary's and St Gerard's they distribute empty 2L milk bottles at the end of Mass and when they are full of compressed single-use plastic the parishioners return them. The bricks are filled with crisp bags, cling film, food wrappers - anything that would have otherwise gone into a landfill. The aim should be for each brick to weigh roughly 15oz.

ENVIROLENT: RECYCLE

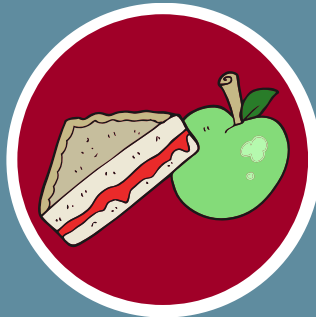
After taking a look at how we can reduce and reuse more things, we move our focus to recycling. Recycling is a symptom of a problem, so while it's important to do, we must make every effort to reduce our need to recycle.



RECYCLE: LEARN

Each local authority differs in the things it can recycle meaning that some things that look as if they can be recycled can't always be.

Get to know what you can and can't recycle and make a special effort to ensure you minimise the things you can't, and recycle the things you can.



RECYCLE: PREPARE

Think about how much waste your lunch produces and try to be more eco-friendly. Tin foil and cling film all go to waste. Could you carry your food in a sustainable lunch box? Equally, save money by making your own lunch, ditching the plastic packing we so often see in shops.



RECYCLE: DONATE

It's easy to become attached to the things we own. When we go to replace things, how about considering donating our old belongings to charity shop and helping others in need? Alternatively, see if your local homeless shelter requires any donations.



COULD YOU BECOME A FAIRTRADE PARISH?

- The Fairtrade system currently works with over 2 million farmers and workers.
- There are over 6000 Fairtrade products available to buy in shops in the UK
- One in three bananas bought are Fairtrade

Fairtrade protects farmers, workers and the environment. Next time you do your local shop, take a second to decide whether you can buy Fairtrade.

FAIRTRADE FOCUS

“HAPPINESS MEANS KNOWING HOW TO LIMIT SOME NEEDS WHICH ONLY DIMINISH US, AND BEING OPEN TO THE MANY DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES WHICH LIFE CAN OFFER

POPE FRANCIS

”

ENVIROLENT: REWILD

We're lucky in our diocese to not be too far from green and nature at any one time. Rewilding is about being able to reconnect with nature, about wildlife returning and habitats expanding. Rewilding our local area and restoring nature can help to decarbonise the UK.



COMPOST YOUR WASTE

It's good for your garden and for the environment, helping to feed microorganisms and save water. You can compost all sorts of things to stop them going to landfill.



GROW IN YOUR PARISH

How about trying to grow your own fruit and vegetables? If you don't have much space, you could use a window box. Help your parish become more greenfingereed and create a gardening group to help local biodiversity.



SPOT LOCAL WILDLIFE

Simply count the amount of birds, butterflies or bugs you see from the comfort of your back garden and help researchers to gain an amazing insight into Britain's natural world by taking part in an online nature survey.



A WILDFLOWER HAVEN

ST JOHN FISHER, DENTON

At St Mary and St John Fisher, Denton, the Global Healing group were inspired to act after hearing the message of *Laudato Si*. After using their monthly Friday Holy Hour to reflect and pray on the encyclical and the issue of climate change, their journey to sustainability continued as more people in the parish began to get involved.

As part of their parish actions they have converted a lawn into a wildflower garden, and taken part in Denton Carnival with banners about protecting our common home. Many of the parish's Hope in the Future teams have been getting involved. As they progress on their journey, parishioners are hoping their eco-endeavors become ingrained in the heart of their community.

ACT

Try to reconnect with nature, whether it's by going for a walk, doing some gardening or simply opening the windows for some fresh air.

ENVIROLENT: RECLAIM

The final R is to reclaim. To reclaim our future, to stand up for our planet and to protect our children and grandchildren by making a change and rooting all of our efforts in prayer.



RECLAIM YOUR VOICE

Campaigning doesn't mean you have to be stood at the picket line. You could write to your MP or sign a petition. As well as this, start a conversation with a friend or neighbour about how together, we can tackle climate change.



RECLAIM TIME FOR PRAYER

As Catholics, we have a moral obligation to tackle climate change. Our actions should all be rooted in prayer, to offer us a hopeful and empowering outlook which can inspire others to follow our lead.



RECLAIM YOUR GREEN SPACES

Find somewhere nice to sit and appreciate the things that are around us. Maybe you could walk to work, walk to Church or spend your lunchtime getting back in touch with nature and the beauty we have all around us.

**“BECAUSE ALL CREATURES ARE CONNECTED, EACH MUST BE
CHERISHED WITH LOVE AND RESPECT, FOR ALL OF US AS
LIVING CREATURES ARE DEPENDENT ON ONE ANOTHER”**

POPE FRANCIS

