



The Right Honourable Rishi Sunak, The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Dear Prime Minister,

I am pleased to enclose a copy of *Laudate Deum*, the most recent Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Francis which addresses the global climate crisis and the response desired from political leaders, businesses, organisations, communities and individuals. This document serves as an update to the Holy Father's landmark 2015 papal encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, on the same topic.

As you may be aware, the Catholic community, which constitutes the United Kingdom's largest religious minority group, has long been a pioneer on environmental issues, including being the largest single consumer of green gas certificates based on annual volume. Our parishes, as well as our 2,200 Catholic schools in England and Wales, are promoting understanding about this global challenge while working hard to ensure we make efforts to reach Net Zero in our local communities. For example, our *Guardians of Creation* project, based at St. Mary's University, Twickenham, currently assists dioceses and parishes with decarbonisation efforts across the UK.

The new Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* notes that our care for each other as brothers and sisters is bound together with our care for creation, with ecological concerns being intimately connected to the dignity of human life, especially the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable people who are most affected by extreme weather. It begins by outlining the ways in which we in the industrialised world cannot necessarily rely upon the technocratic paradigm to address the climate crisis, given that resources for technological instruments are not themselves limitless. Pope Francis also points out that we have not yet developed the ethics, culture or spirituality capable of setting limits and teaching self-restraint in the use of technology. He calls on individuals, communities and governments to pursue personal and cultural as well as political changes, to address a crisis in which "every little bit helps".

The Exhortation however recognises that actions nobly taken by individuals, communities and individual governments are alone insufficient to achieve a sustained reduction in carbon emissions without coordinated action at the international level. Pope Francis therefore calls for reconfigured multilateralism, through which mechanisms we know the UK has been a successful vehicle of change in the past. Just as we as individuals all affect one another, in this global crisis no country is isolated from actions taken by other countries. We would therefore ask your Government,



through all possible channels, to take a real global leadership role in this area for the sake of future generations. We recognise that international tensions and conflicts at the current time make this difficult, but faced with, in the words of António Guterres, a 'climate catastrophe', it is important that everything is done to ensure that commitments made at COP meetings, and especially at the upcoming COP28 in Dubai, are kept.

The rich tradition of Catholic social thought recognises that securing the common good is the responsibility of all individuals and institutions in society, and that problems are too complex to be solved by central Government alone. I hope that, in addition to working towards reconfigured multilateralism, you will also consider approaches to the climate crisis which further champion and encourage action at the local and civil society group level, which the Catholic Church in England and Wales stands ready to support.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ John S. Arnold".

**The Right Reverend John Arnold**

Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford

Lead Bishop for Environmental Issues

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales