



Living Laudato Si' in the Diocese of Leeds

Progress Report at 14 April 2023, showing current actions and ongoing information-gathering across Diocesan Curia, Parishes, Schools and CMATs:

The diocese has had Flexible and Home Working Policies since 2018/19, an Environmental Policy since 2020 and divested from the few remaining Fossil Fuel investments in 2021/22. The current Environmental Leads are part of a Curia Laudato Si' Group founded in March 2021 comprising expertise in Property, Communications, Finance, Education and Social Responsibility, working with the Moderator of the Curia and the Diocesan Justice & Peace Commission's Climate Action Group. At the recent Guardians of Creation event in Salford on 8 March 2023, the Diocese was represented by both Environmental Leads, Head of Property and two parishioner members of the Diocesan Justice & Peace Commission's Climate Action Group. Working together, these Groups have been compiling a Job Description for an Environment/Sustainability leadership post. The Job Description is largely based on – and has been formulated with advice from – Salford Diocesan Head of Environment, Dr Emma Gardner.

Diocesan Property Office:

- Continuing with their priority work of decarbonising the building stock, reducing energy and water consumption and the impact of procurement and supporting and advising parishes and schools in making sustainable choices. Currently working with four parishes on cost saving environmental initiatives, including heat source pumps, PV (solar cells), and battery systems.
- Legislation on rented properties has changed and any older properties with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E now need to be upgraded to a B rating: the equivalent of a new build's EPC.
- Since 2022, the Diocesan Property Department has been in a collaboration with the Diocesan Pastoral and Conference Centre, Hinsley Hall, pursuing an ongoing programme of works which are continuously and dramatically

improving on sustainability with simple, low-cost solutions (e.g. boiler, heating and hot water). All lighting is being changed to LED.

- Assisting the Diocesan Centre at Hinsley Hall in working toward a Green Tourism Award and also a CAFOD Live Simply Award (2023).

Diocesan Communications:

- Has contributed Leeds' 'Laudato Si' News' to Diocesan Environmental Leads Group since March 2021. Created dedicated environment email address and website (2021/22). Collated responses to the Synodal Listening Processes concerning environmental matters (2022).
- Formulated a DRAFT diocesan Strategy for Communicating Laudato Si' and encouraging engagement with the environment (developed in consultation with colleagues at the [Laudato Si' Research Institute](#) and [Journey to 2030](#)). Took part in Guardians of Creation research into Behavioural Change (November 2022) and liaises with the Salford Diocesan Head of Environment.
- Continues to communicate the environment as integral to the diocesan journey, via online and printed publications, with a priority of encouraging behavioural change across the diocese by emphasising personal conversion of heart and the value of achievable actions both large and small (taking as models and advisors Dr Carmody Grey, Edward and John Paul de Quay, Dr Emma Gardner and Jakub Kowalewski as proponents of driving this change at grassroots level).
- Laudato Si' Animators, parish, school and environmental groups are encouraged to share their stories and photographs of positive initiatives and ideas. (Stories published on the diocesan website have been picked up and re-published as exemplars of good parish practice by the national Catholic Press).
- Continues to develop and lead Laudato Si' Pilgrimages. Those around the farm and woodland of Myddelton Grange Estate in Sacred Heart Parish, Ilkley have been taking place since 2018 and others, suitable for schools and for the Faith in Action Award's 'Procession and Pilgrimage' category have been promoted. The Diocese of Leeds Camino, St Wilfrid's Way, was also the inspiration and model for the former CSAN CEO's ['Hearts in Search of God' \(Pilgrim Ways\)](#) project initiating other similar 'green' walking pilgrimages across all Catholic Dioceses in England and Wales (2023).

Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission's Climate Action Group:

- Various members have relevant professional expertise in sustainability, theological qualifications, Laudato Si' advocacy, or long experience of offering

events and community engagement locally, regionally and nationally (e.g. the National Justice and Peace 2021 Conference 'Action for Life on Earth', Eucharistic Conference Liverpool 2018 parallel programme Environment: 'On the altar of the world' – Reconciliation and the Eucharist). Members have many years networking with those committed to Catholic Social Teaching on Care of Our Common Home.

- Group members continue to provide advocacy and information to the Curia, including very significant work developing the Job Description for the Head of Sustainability role (in association with Dr Emma Gardner, Salford, and Leeds' HR Advisor, Sarah Seastron).
- The group has proposed developing options for voluntary support towards the Diocesan plans, feeding into the appointment of the Head of Sustainability and being available for the Clergy Conference in May.
- The Group continues to work on creating resources about the Theology underpinning our environmental commitments. The Group advocates and supports parish strategic plans as well as encouraging 'quick wins' in parishes (e.g. 'Living Simply', allotments, wildlife and prayer gardens, Laudato Si' Groups and liturgies etc)
- The Group will work on creating routes to the development and support of 'green teams' or Laudato Si' groups in parishes and schools.

Diocesan Vicariate for Education:

- Continues working with all CMATs and schools to encourage and support school leaders in bringing about a culture of change and a whole-school approach to sustainability.
- The Twelve are to incorporate Laudato Si' into their two current priorities of Social Action and Communications and consulted on ways to promote forthcoming Environmental Surveys in their own schools and parishes.
- There are Laudato Si' Pilgrimage opportunities which may be pursued by those completing the 'Procession and Pilgrimage' category of our Faith in Action Awards.

Our Parishes and Schools 'Living Simply' with CAFOD:

We acknowledge and welcome individual Catholics who take action as members of environmental- and sustainability-related organisations and encourage parishes and schools to recognise and mandate such individuals as part of our communal efforts to live simply. Members of the Diocesan Justice & Peace Commission's Climate Action Group have volunteered to help parishes to begin their journey toward achieving the [CAFOD LiveSimply Award](#). In common with the Catholic Bishops of

England and Wales, the Group believes that 'LiveSimply' parishes and schools are examples to be replicated and are central to the future character and direction of the Diocese.

The parishes and schools which have reported already gaining CAFOD 'LiveSimply' Awards are:

St Benedict's Parish, Garforth

St Mary and St Michael Parish, Settle

Our Lady of Kirkstall Parish, Leeds

SS John Fisher & Thomas More Parish, Burley in Wharfedale

St Joseph's Primary School, Wetherby

Other parishes and schools which have reported engaging with similar activities, responding in practical ways to the 'Cry of the Earth and of the People' (Walk for Hunger, wildlife and prayer gardens etc), could be in the vanguard of 'living simply' with CAFOD and inspiring others in their deanery or catchment area to do likewise. These include:

St Joseph's Parish, Pontefract (Walk for Hunger)

Christ the King Primary School, Bramley (Wildlife & Prayer Garden, tree planting, outdoor classes)

Holy Family Primary, Armley (Wildlife & Prayer Garden)

St Joseph's Primary School, Hunslet (Wildlife & Prayer Garden)

St Joseph's Primary School, Barnoldswick (Wildlife & Prayer Garden)

St Patrick's Primary School, Leeds (Wildlife & Prayer Garden)

Please contact environment@dioceseofleeds.org.uk or communications@dioceseofleeds.org.uk with any news of Laudato Si', environmental or conservation initiatives in any of our diocese's parishes, schools, or charities – thank you!