

Living Laudato Si, 'How would you like to see 'Laudato Si' fully operational in your parish?'

"The world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise. The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change."(Laudato Si para 12)

At a recent Laudato Si weekend, facilitated by Sister Margaret from Boarbank Hall, the energy and concern for our common home was palpable. There was an underlying optimism that people coming together, sharing ideas, following creative paths rooted in spiritual understanding and personal conversion could indeed bring about sustainable change.

We were challenged to be agents of change - to consider how parish communities, schools and wider ecumenical partners could all work together to develop on-going initiatives and begin new ones.

We were asked. 'How would you like to see 'Laudato Si' fully operational in your parish?'

Many of the responses highlighted the importance of collaboration, of starting small with stepping stones to bigger initiatives. Conversion takes time and is continuous and on-going.

A successful parish plan starts with developing a relationship with others who share a similar enthusiasm to plan possible action. Working through the CAFOD Live Simply award is a great starting point. It is an opportunity to respond to Pope Francis' invitation in the encyclical to 'work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us'. As it says on the CAFOD website, the award enables you to strengthen the bonds of community, nourish your spiritual life and care for the gift of God's creation. For many parishes, working through the award will affirm what you are doing already. It also inspires you to do more. It is awarded to communities who can demonstrate how they have been living simply; in solidarity with people in poverty and sustainably with creation. It can give young people an increasing role in the parish as they are so often at the forefront of environmental campaigns and activities.

Initiatives include encouraging people to walk or cycle to church, to consider installing solar panels, to carry out an audit on energy use and on recycling and single use plastic. Activities also include supporting Fairtrade stalls and making

collections for local food banks which have become part of parish life in some areas along with considering how land local to the church is used. Are there possibilities for planting more trees; creating a wildlife garden or even an allotment where vegetables can be grown and sold or delivered to those in need?

Could we consider a presentation on the ethics of what we buy and where the clothes we wear come from and how they are produced? Can we become involved in campaigns to close garment sweatshops and improve labour conditions and wages? Can we have regular articles in church newsletters concerning ethical consumer choices?

During the weekend we were inspired by stories of collaboration between parishes and primary schools where pupils learnt the delights of planting and watching growth. Other activities included the building of bird nesting boxes.

The past year of the pandemic has given us new insights into our global co-dependence - how we really are connected because of our globalised world and the way it works. It has also given many of us renewed appreciation of nature and the diversity of our planet.

This year particularly is so important - with the G7 meeting this June and COP 26 in Glasgow in November. We were encouraged to engage with our MPs in the run up to both these meetings. A good resource for this is 'Hope for the Future' - a climate charity which works to equip communities, groups and individuals across the country to communicate the urgency of climate change with their local politicians. Their present campaign is 'Make COP 26 Count'. Their vision is for communities and their elected representatives to come together to take decisive action on climate change. (www.hftf.org.uk)

Another exciting initiative comes from Salford Diocese who have set up the **Guardians of Creation project**, supported by the Bishops' conference, the strategic goal of which is to help the Catholic Community in the UK work towards carbon neutrality and a more sustainable future. There will be more details of this in future newsletters. There is much for us all to be involved in.

One quotation from the weekend stood out for me:

'Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up.'

Barbara Hungin.

RYEDALE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

THE CLIMATE CHANGE CRISIS

What on earth can we do?

SATURDAY 24th APRIL 2021

9.15am - 4.15pm

A Free Zoom Event

Bishop James Jones

Prof. Jon Lovett

Climate of Hope

The Green New Deal

Prof. Nick Cowern

Mr Neil Fuller

A Hostile Earth

Farming's Answer to Climate Change

Go To www.rccconf.org

to book a place & choose your

Workshops

Energy Efficiency. Looking after God's Planet. Food.

Ethical Investing. Direct and Indirect Action.

Extinction Rebellion. Christian Aid. Friends of the Earth. COP 26.

The Anthony Storey Memorial Lecture

Shining a light on the power and creativity of nonviolence. The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative five years on.

Speaker: Pat Gaffney
Former General Secretary of Pax Christi

Saturday May 8th
at 11.00am via ZOOM

This will be an opportunity to reflect on some of the current ways in which nonviolence is being expressed around the world and draw out some links between CNI's work and how we have linked in with Fratelli Tutti and the Vatican Covid Commission.

To register email: bhungin@yahoo.co.uk

'The Climate Crisis – What on Earth Can we Do?'

Register now to secure a place at Ryedale Christian Council's zoomed day Conference on Saturday April 24th. The Conference, aiming both to inform and to inspire to action, has attracted an impressive array of speakers and workshop leaders. The many related topics to be aired include ethical investment, energy efficiency, organic baking, Quaker activism, Christian climate activism, climate justice, looking after God's planet, and COP 26 Glasgow.

This promises to be a conference with a difference, enjoyable and informative, interactive and reflective. We hope for attendance for the whole day but recognise that some will wish to attend for only part.

The programme can be accessed via the Ryedale Christian Council website – use the Conference tab – or directly via <https://rccconf.org/>

This quarter we continue with examples of how groups have found ways to reach out safely through lockdowns and restrictions and bring love and hope to those in need during this pandemic. On the back page there is the first of seven reflections on Catholic Social Thought looking at the Value of Human Dignity. So much is being done in our Diocese giving witness to our belief that God created each one of us out of love and dwells in each one of our brothers and sisters. We are one global family and our hearts and prayers go out to all who are experiencing great loss in this pandemic and particularly to those in many countries struggling with further waves.

St Vincent de Paul Society in the Middlesbrough Diocese.

St Gabriel's Wave and Community Cupboard

During the pandemic we continue to support one another spiritually but we changed our practices to keep ourselves and our beneficiaries safe. Visiting became telephone befriending and doorstep visits are now the norm. Practical help such as supported shopping moved online and lifts had to stop. Delivering parish newsletters and sending emails has been a way to keep parishioners in touch. Many parishioners are supporting us with their donations as they see the work we are doing on their behalf.

Running a school during the pandemic has given all Head Teachers many new and different situations to think about but it has also allowed us to reach further into our communities and help those who have needed it. I believe it has also highlighted how central a school can be to a community and that a school of Faith can lead by example and strengthen the partnership with our Parish.

Before lockdown began, St Gabriel's had run its community cupboard in the entrance to school and it was a really important addition for me. We always stated that it was there to be used by anyone and everyone, from those who hadn't managed to get to a shop that day, to those who need the support to feed their families. During the pandemic we were able to support people well beyond our school and each week we have a number of visitors who come and take items or bring them to support our cause. I know I am incredibly lucky to have had the support of my staff and the parish to keep this going with regular donations dropped off and picked up. We have also established a partnership with Fareshare which allows us to have a selection of fresh foods as well as store cupboard and long life items.

Social Media has always been a way to spread our message and in the lockdowns it has been even more important. Canon John Lumley has live streamed his Mass and evening prayers daily. Using our Facebook platform we have been able to share his stream and create watch parties with those who follow us. During these, messages of hope and support have come through in the chat and kept our school community together.

During the last lockdown St Gabriel's launched a new project called the 'St Gabriel's Wave'. The children had to follow four simple steps. Firstly they drew around their hand and decorated it. Next they placed the wave in the window so others could see. The children and parents then posted their waves on social media and finally challenged someone to wave back. This simple idea



spread around the country and then the globe. Schools across the UK sent waves back and then passed it on. Family and friends around the world also joined in from Australia, Thailand and The Democratic Republic of the Congo. The idea was also picked up by BBC Newsround with the children creating their own news item for the show.

The pandemic has been a time of loss and sadness for many but, as we head in the right direction it has made me incredibly proud to be called the Head Teacher of St Gabriel's.

Mrs Lindsay Phelps, Head Teacher of St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School Middlesbrough



Our diocese received over £13,000 from the **National SVP emergency covid fund**, providing a speedy response to need such as food poverty and emergency support for asylum seekers and the homeless.

The Society serves those in need regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or political opinion.

Asylum seekers at Welcome house in Hull with stationery provided by the SVP covid fund

Here is an email from a newly qualified nurse, awaiting permission to start a job in Hull, supported by the conferences and the Covid fund showing what such help means to the beneficiary.

"Every person who has blessed me, I am extremely grateful. Financially it was a trying six months of unemployed for me. I searched the internet, made calls, asked around to see how I would survive. My God! There were times I cried, I prayed, I fasted. Mighty God!! Tears flow down my face when I think of how God has used you all to bless me. My God, thank you all. I pray that as you have given to me, it will be returned to you in a greater portion. I thank you for meeting me, believing me, walking to my house each time to provide the assistance I needed. Please continue to CARE. Shalom to you all. God Bless."

Our youth SVP members have helped with food bags and St Francis Xavier made a video for use in work with other young people. **Mini Vinnies** across the diocese made Christmas, Valentines and Easter cards which delighted our beneficiaries. Through the Twinnage scheme we have continued to support our sisters and brothers in India, Sudan and South Sudan who are suffering more than ever due to the pandemic.

They turn to the SVP and their local SVP members are supported by their opposite numbers here in England & Wales. The annual appeal for the people of Sudan can be found on our national website www.svp.org.uk under Overseas aid. The pandemic has hit this appeal hard, parishes being unable to organise their usual fundraising activities.

After Covid: To enable us to continue to serve the lonely and housebound and the marginalised in our communities, some conferences where members have served for many years and many are in their 70's and above need new members and some parishes may wish to start a conference. We need volunteers who are, above all, caring and compassionate people who are good listeners, able to keep confidences, and who are respectful and non-judgmental of others. The wonderful thing about belonging to an SVP Conference is that the diversity of SVP activities requires a diversity of talents so each member can use their own unique skills and abilities. If full membership of the SVP feels like too much of a time commitment at the moment then perhaps you could consider becoming a Temporary Auxiliary Member, a new form of membership specifically designed for these times. This would allow you to do the knock and drop type activities undertaken on an ad hoc basis as directed by your local Conference group, when they need extra hands.

Our website [St Vincent de Paul Society England and Wales \(svp.org.uk\)](http://St Vincent de Paul Society England and Wales (svp.org.uk)) has a contact form if you need support or if you wish to make contact with a local conference or email presidentc13@svp.org.uk. There are also links to donate either nationally, to overseas appeals or to particular conferences.

Frances Gilchrist, Middlesbrough CC President SVP

6 Middleton Court, Middleton Street, Hull HU3 1NG

Within this edition of the newsletter we are sharing news of a project from Hull - Welcome House, which provides a holistic service for seekers of sanctuary and refugees living across the city.

Based in the centre of the city, Welcome House also provides a focus for people living in Hull and the East Riding to meet and offer support, building bridges and awareness on all sides.

The Royal Hotel

The Home Office have used the Royal Hotel in Hull to house over 100 asylum seekers, newly arrived in the UK. Initially this was seen as a temporary measure before dispersal to longer term accommodation. In practice, however, while there is some movement many asylum seekers have spent 3 months or more in the hotel, with board provided but nothing else: no facilities; no occupation; no emotional or social support; and no, or a very little, money. Many have the clothes they arrived with and nothing else. This group, all individuals who have fled their own countries through fear and persecution, is completely isolated, with minimal contacts with anyone.

Welcome House, working alongside other agencies, has a holistic programme to try to provide hospitality and encouragement to those who have been placed there.

This includes social and emotional support; physical exercise – sports and walking, cooking and organized food events with hot meals from different cultures; the provision of clothes, shoes and toiletries with the support of the SVP and Hull Help for Refugees; Arts and crafts activities, support for health appointments; study support and much more.

The wider refugee population in Hull and the East Riding

There are at least another 600, probably more, refugees and families dispersed across Hull, living mainly in housing provided through HO agencies, and provided with £40 a week to live on, while their asylum claims are processed. This can take anything from 3 months to 3 years. They have access to some public services, but cannot work.

In addition, there is another group of refugees living in Hull whose asylum applications have been refused and who are denied, therefore, all access to public funds and services. Liable to summary deportation, these refugees are not allowed to work, cannot claim benefits and are dependent on charitable support to survive. We have supported these individuals as they seek to appeal the decisions.

Again, the needs have been significant – befriending; clothing and food parcels, IT equipment, personal advice and travel grants for interviews and appointments.

It is encouraging that so many groups work together – i.e. Hull Help for Refugees, SVP, East Riding Islamic and Cultural Society and the City Council's Multi Agency Forum. There is also help from local businesses.

Premises

We recently secured a city centre building for use for our own activities with refugees and asylum seekers: as a social centre, a drop in, for meals and cultural events; an education and IT Centre; and also, as a hub for other agencies working with asylum seekers and refugees to use.

Social Media and Publicity

We have started to establish our website and to develop a social media presence, on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/WelcomeHouseHull/>

A great thank you to all of you - individuals and organisations – who have generously given their time, support and money to make all this possible.

We have made a good start; but there is so much more that can be done!

Bashir Siraj, General Manager.

CAFOD calls for debt payments to be cancelled for all countries that need it until the end of 2021

Why does CAFOD want to cancel the debt?

In 2018, low- and middle-income countries owed a total of \$7.8 trillion in debt to other countries and institutions like the World Bank, as well as private banks and hedge funds.

These countries often have to spend more on paying back their debts than on healthcare, education or welfare. And at the start of 2020, 34 countries were in debt default (not being able to pay off their debts) or at high risk of being so.



How is debt impacting lower-income countries?

Attention is often paid to the needs of the 77 poorest nations. CAFOD believes that debt relief needs to go further to include all low- and middle-income countries that are struggling with debt payments so that they can meet the urgent needs of their citizens.

For example, Ghana - with a population of 29 million people - was in deep debt distress even before Covid-19 hit. Ghana was due to spend \$3.8bn on external debt payments in 2020. It is currently spending almost four times more on servicing its external debt than it is on public healthcare for its people. Likewise, in Central African Republic - where there are only three ventilators in a country of almost five million people - the country was due to spend \$25 million on external debt payments in 2020.

What is CAFOD asking for?

We are calling for debt payments to be cancelled immediately for all countries that need it until the end of 2021. This must include all low- and middle-income countries in such need, going beyond the 77 poorest nations already identified by the G20 as being eligible for debt relief. Debt cancellation should not be seen as a question of mercy or forgiveness, but as a question of justice and survival.

Coronavirus is having terrible economic consequences across the world - our own country is no stranger to this. But many countries have been plunged into a new debt crisis as they respond to the threat of the virus whilst also being under pressure to pay back spiralling debts.

Deciding whether to spend money on vital healthcare or paying back debt during the coronavirus emergency shouldn't have to be a choice for these governments.

How should the UK Government respond?

The role of private creditors should be addressed. Private creditors must also cancel debt payments due in 2020 and 2021. If this doesn't happen, the money which is freed up by the cancellation of some debts risks simply being used to pay off private banks and hedge funds.

The UK must pass new legislation, like it did in 2010, to prevent poor countries from being sued by private lenders for defaulting on debt in the UK.

What can you do to help with this campaign?

Sign and share our online petition calling on big banks to #CancelTheDebt

<https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/77395/action/1>



Write to your MP and ask them to urge the Prime Minister to raise the issue when the UK government hosts the G7 summit in June.

Carol Cross

CAFOD in Middlesbrough

"It cannot be expected that the debts which have been contracted should be paid at the price of unbearable sacrifices. In such cases it is necessary to find...ways to lighten, defer or even cancel the debt." Pope Francis.

St Augustine's Serving the Lord in Gladness

St Augustine's is a family with a strong sense of belonging both within the school and the wider community. As a family, we work together to live out and promote our school motto to *Serve the Lord in Gladness*.

At St Augustine's, we have a strong, passionate pupil voice led by our Pupil Parliament. Pupil Parliament includes our Student Council, Rights and Respecting Team, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, and Mini Vinnies and Chaplaincy Representatives. These important groups organise, plan and promote projects to support our school, the parish, local communities and the wider world. They are committed to follow in the footsteps of Christ, to recognise that we are all neighbours, all brothers and sisters, and at times we may all need a helping hand.

Our Mini Vinnies and Chaplaincy children lead on our called to serve projects; they are dedicated to promoting Catholic Life, highlighting communities who need support and are committed to making a difference. For many years, St Augustine's have been actively involved in our local

community from cause hamper collections, visiting care homes to supporting international campaigns. This year, our children wanted to continue all this hard work and find new ways to serve through local and global projects, which run throughout the year.

During Lent, as part of our local community project, we collected non-perishable foods for refugees and their families in Middlesbrough. To support those in our parish, we made craft packs for local families to enjoy over the Easter holidays. In addition, children across school made Easter Cards to send to housebound members of the parish and to those most vulnerable in our local area. For our wider world support, we all completed the Walk for Water Challenge. Every class contributed to our steps per day to raise money for CAFOD's work around the world. Both at home and in school, we walked over 600,000 steps and raised just over £220. The children also made a special Hug for Heroes message, which we have sent to staff at our local hospitals to say thank you for their hard work.

Looking forward, we have so many ideas and projects planned: we will be working with Dementia Friends; supporting further projects in our parish; promoting Cafod Eyes of the World campaign; building our partnership with a school in Bangladesh through the British Council and starting a community campaign with children from other schools to improve our local area.

We could not do this without the support of all our wonderful St Augustine's family - we would like to thank everyone who makes this possible and for all our children and school staff who work so hard to help those who need it most.

Mrs J Nicholson RE Coordinator and Chaplaincy, St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Coulby Newham



New Chief Executive for CSAN

There has been a change in personnel at CSAN. After over 5 years in the post of Chief Executive - Phil McCarthy has retired.

He has been succeeded by Raymond Friel - who has spent his professional life in teaching within the Catholic Schools System, including being a head teacher,

General Secretary of the Catholic Independent Schools Conference for two years and latterly CEO of Plymouth CAST, a multi-academy trust.

He is a published poet and author and looks forward to contributing to CSAN's important mission, even more vital as the country recovers from the Covid -19 pandemic.

Please pass on your ideas for future Newsletters and share what is happening in your community.

We also welcome letters, requests for more information and comments.

To subscribe to this newsletter, or to send submissions and suggestions for future Newsletters please email:

bhungin@yahoo.co.uk or teresa.lyth@outlook.com

Or write to -Barbara Hungin at 4, Butts Lane, Egglecliffe, Stockton on Tees. TS16 9BT

Moving Dementia friendly Churches



Music for the Mind sessions, an hour of music and fun for people living with or without Dementia, friends, family and carers are recommencing virtually via Youtube on the

second Monday of each month starting Monday 12th April led by Trish McLean from the cathedral at 2pm. Access details via Middlesbrough Diocese website: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrHHOTIoR8TPdwQEC8IIPVw>

Chris Tinkler and Dot Fellowes are willing to deliver virtual Dementia Awareness sessions via Zoom to any groups or individuals in the diocese. The sessions hopefully will raise people's awareness, when we are safe to do so, to ensure people living with Dementia and their family carers and friends are made welcome and at ease to come to church and other activities/functions. Please contact Dot or Chris. dorothy.fellowes@hotmail.co.uk christine.tinkler@gmail.com

Caritas in Practice -Putting Catholic Social Teaching into Practice

What is Catholic Social Teaching (CST)?

CST is a set of writings rooted in scripture on ethical values put forward by the Church. It is not just a body of teaching but a call to action. It is widely regarded as a moral compass for practical action. CST offers a way to articulate our thoughts about what matters and the reasons for our actions in response to injustice. It is also flexible in that organisations can refer to many of the values described in the formal documents published by the Church or focus on a few.

The 7 Key CST Values for Social Action

Caritas organisations focus on seven values that are believed to be especially important in serving the marginalised in our societies:

1. Dignity;
2. Family and community;
3. Solidarity and the common good;
4. Rights and responsibilities;
5. Priority for the poor;
6. Dignity of work; and
7. Caring for all creation.

Each quarter you are invited to reflect on one of these values, engage with the thinking behind them and be open to the possibility that you may find a way to put these into practice. You can work with a friend or group in this process.

We start with a description of the first of these seven values, followed by points and questions for reflection and discussion.

CST Value 1: Human Dignity

The Catholic Church teaches and witnesses to the belief that God has freely chosen to create every human being. God is love and created human beings out of love and for love. God dwells in each one of us. When we see one another, we are called to recognise the dignity and beauty of the person. This basic human dignity comes not from our race, gender or social status, but from God. CST calls us to recognise that all human beings are our brothers and sisters designed to be one race - the human race - and one family - the human family.

The challenge set down by the social teaching of the Church is to ensure that in all our relationships and dealings with one another, be it at a local, national or global level, we never lose sight of the dignity and value of the human person and of life itself. The Church defines respect for human life as respect at every stage of the human person's development from conception to death. When people are reduced to any form of poverty, marginalisation or discrimination, it is a violation of their dignity. Such situations of injustice are the focus of CST.

Points for Reflection and Discussion:

Dignity of the Human Person

Spend some time reflecting on one or two of the writings below and where possible discuss them in your group.

Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where humans are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practise them than those who suffer from the injury *Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World, 1965) no. 27*

Love of neighbour is an absolute demand for justice because charity must manifest itself in actions and structures which respect human dignity, protect human rights, and facilitate human development. To promote justice is to transform structures which block love. *Justice in the World (World Synod of Catholic Bishops, 1971)*

Human persons are willed by God; they are imprinted with God's image. Their dignity does not come from the work they do, but from the persons they are. *Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year, 1991) no. 11*

Respect for the dignity of every person is typically the first value in CST because without it none of the other values - or any type of social action - can be meaningful or effective.

- A. What do you agree with?
- B. Is there anything that challenges or inspires you?
- C. How might these quotations affect the way you carry out your role?

Extract from *Caritas in Practice: Putting Catholic Social Teaching into Practice* Dr Philip McCarthy, CEO of CSAN and Sr Judith Russi, Director of EducareM