

LOVE IN ACTION



CARE OF CREATION



“The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.” Pope Francis, *On the Care of our Common Home*, 84



“The earth and all it contains has been created by God. It is a gift, given to all for the good of all. And in the gift we experience something of the Giver – of the love of God. So there are two main aspects in considering the call to care for creation. First we must respect the resources the earth contains as gifts for all people of today, to be preserved for future generations. We are also called to care for creation simply because in creation we experience the generosity of God. We see the earth as “a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by a love which calls us together into universal communion.”

Pope Francis, *On the Care of our Common Home*, 76



SEE

“We must look after these beautiful things God has given us; creation is ours so that we may benefit from it, not to exploit it but to protect it, because God always forgives, we human beings forgive sometimes, but creation never forgives and if you do not protect it, it will destroy you.”

Pope Francis, *On the Care of our Common Home*, 84



When do we see God in creation?

How we have treated and continue to treat the earth has profound impacts on people now and in the future. Too often we have destroyed elements of the earth for a quick gain. In his encyclical, *Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis comments on how the earth “is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth” (21). He also comments on how people’s attitudes can lead us to deny the need for action, or simply to a resignation that we can’t make a difference. The Pope calls for “a new and universal solidarity” (14).

- Where do we see a lack of care for creation?
- How does this make us feel?
- Do we share any attitudes that might prevent us from being committed to caring for the earth?

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“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”

Genesis 1

Our Catholic social teaching makes clear that as stewards, or custodians, of creation we have a special role to play. How we care for the earth is another sign of how we are Christians, how we show God's love in the world, how we live out love in action. We are called to renew our commitment to the planet, how we treat it as individuals, and how we hold to account how governments and industries treat the world whilst producing our energy and the goods we consume.

Do we see caring for creation as part of how we live our faith?

Care for the earth, and social justice are inseparable. Actions that have helped to damage the environment, mostly actions of developed nations, have the most profound impact on the world's poorest people. Pope Francis says: "All of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect." And so "every ecological approach needs to incorporate a social perspective which takes into account the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged" (Care of our Common Home, 89, 93).

Do we understand how our actions in caring for creation can express our love for our brothers and sisters throughout the world?

For more background information visit : catholicsocialteaching.org.uk

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Two quotes from Pope Francis and St Romero help us consider our own individual response to this principle of Catholic social teaching, and also how we work for long term change.

Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices.

Pope Francis, *On the Care of our Common Home*, 211

How can we as individuals care for creation in our daily life?

How beautiful would our society be if people were not attached to this ideal of enriching themselves, having more of the earth's goods!"

St Oscar Romero, 1978

How can we work together to encourage a 'culture of care'?

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