

# LOVE IN ACTION



## CARE OF CREATION



“ The ecological crisis shows the urgency of a solidarity which embraces time and space ... A greater sense of intergenerational solidarity is urgently needed. Future generations cannot be saddled with the cost of our use of common environmental resources.”

Pope Benedict XVI, World Peace Day 2010



The earth and all it contains has been created by God. It is a gift, given to all for the good of all. The resources of the earth are not infinite. They have been given to us and to future generations. 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. As Pope Francis says, "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth."

At a General Audience in May 2014, Pope Francis described our destruction of creation as "like saying to God, 'I don't like it', and this is not good, it is a sin. Care for creation is care for God's gift to us, and it means saying to God, 'thank you, I am the custodian of creation, but to enable it to progress, never to destroy your gift'".

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. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis gives a beautiful image of how connected we are to the earth.

“ The creation accounts in the book of Genesis contain, in their own symbolic and narrative language, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality. They suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin.

Pope Francis, *On the Care for our Common Home*, 66

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 goods we consume. It is another way in which we show our love in action, in the way we care for creation.

The Bishops of England and Wales remind us of the link between human dignity and care for the earth in their document, *The Call of Creation*: "The full human development of every human person both now and in future generations cannot be separated from the fate of the earth." It is not simply a matter of treating the earth properly, but part of our treatment of our sisters and brothers across the globe. Indeed it is those living in the poorest communities around the world who already feel the devastating effects of, and will be less able to adapt to, a changing climate.

It is an issue which can feel overwhelming, but as we're reminded:



Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, *The Call of Creation*

Individual actions may seem insignificant but together the small steps of many people can have an astonishing impact."

This phrase is important to hold onto as we come to the end of the six week focus on how we can be a Caritas people, and as we commit ourselves to ways in which we will concretely put our love into action, inspired by our faith. Each of our actions, especially when joined to the loving actions of others, can have "an astonishing impact".

### Symbols to add to the focal point

- A plant and some soil
- Something recycled out of rubbish
- A statue or icon of St Francis

## HYMNS

All creatures of our God and King - Francis of Assisi

Here I am, Lord – Dan Schutte

O worship the King all glorious above - Robert Grant

Fill your hearts with joy and gladness

- Timothy Dudley-Smith



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

Genesis 1:1-4



## HOMILY NOTES

- 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
- At the beginning of the Bible we hear how God created the world. It is God's gift to us, and we have been made stewards of it.
- It is not an infinite resource. With 7 billion people on the planet, we need to care for it, and share the resources it contains so that all our sisters and brothers have the ability to live life to the full.
- The actions we take have an impact on the planet. How we travel. What we consume. What we waste.
- How much do we really know about how things are made? Many of us have lost the connection with the earth. Jesus uses lots of stories based on farming images because at the time they would have been familiar to people.
- For us today, it's harder to relate. It means it's also easier not to think about the consequences of what we buy, because we don't know what goes into raising the cow, the grass it eats, the water needed, to be turned into a burger for us to eat.
- How might we regain our connection to the earth, God's gift to us?
- What practical actions can we take to ensure the gift of the earth is around for future generations to enjoy and flourish?
- As we come to the end of this six week introduction to how we can be a Caritas people, a people putting love into action, we have the chance to commit ourselves to new ways of sharing that love with others and our planet. What concrete actions of love will you commit to today?

## PRAYER

For the Church; that Bishops, priests and people may courageously proclaim that creation is a gift from God, and lovingly care for the earth.

- For those in authority around the world; that they will look to the protection of the planet for future generations over immediate profit.
- For people suffering the effects of a changing climate; that through support and guidance they will be better prepared for increased disasters such as flooding and droughts.
- For our local community; that we will renew our connection with the Earth.



Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, 183

We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses.

The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters.



If this is the end of your Love in Action parish programme, consider commissioning all those involved in social justice in your parish. You could use the following after Communion at your Sunday Mass.



We bless you, O God, as we praise your name. In your merciful love you sent your Son into the world to preach the Gospel of Love and to teach us to seek your Kingdom of Truth, Justice and Peace.

Lord, look kindly on all here present who wish to continue this work of yours today in our parish. Guide their steps and strengthen their spirit so that they may not falter.

Make their word the echo of Christ's voice so that those who hear them may be drawn more closely to your Gospel.

Fill their hearts so that becoming servants of others they may show the face of Christ to all in need.

We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen.