

Climate justice in CST and scripture

This extensive collection of extracts from scripture and Catholic Social Teaching are rich with wise, thought-provoking material. Select a few as stimulus for discussion or to help plan liturgies or prayer times. Some will need to be simplified for use with younger pupils.

SCRIPTURE

Creation

God saw all that he had made, and indeed it was very good.
(Genesis 1:31)

Look at the flowers of the field how they grow. They do not toil and spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his wealth was clothed like one of these.
(Matthew 6:28-29)

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.
(Revelation 4:11)

Stewardship

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."
(Genesis 1:28)

The Lord God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and take care of it.
(Genesis 2:15)

'A man... fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest... passed by... In the same way, a Levite... passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up to him and bandaged his wounds... lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him... Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the bandits' hands?' [The lawyer] replied, 'The one who showed pity towards him.' Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'
(Luke 10:29-37)

Covenant

God spoke as follows to Noah and his sons, "I am now establishing my covenant with you and with your descendants to come, and with every living creature that was with you; birds, cattle and every wild animal. "And this", God said, "is the sign of the covenant which I now make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all ages to come: I now set my bow in the clouds and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I shall recall the covenant between myself and you and every living creature, in a word all living things, and never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all living things. When the bow is in the clouds I shall see it and call to mind the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth, that is, all living things. "That", God told Noah, "is the sign of the covenant I have established between myself and all living things on earth."
(Genesis 9:12-15)

Sabbath: Time to rest

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath for the Lord your God. You shall do no work that day... For in six days the Lord made the heavens, earth and sea, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why the Lord has blessed the Sabbath day and made it sacred.
(Exodus 20:8-11)

For six years you will sow your land and gather its produce but in the seventh year you will let it lie fallow and forgo all produce from it, so that those of your people who are poor can take food from it and the wild animals eat what they have left. You will do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. For six days you will do your work, and on the seventh you will rest.
(Exodus 23:10-12)

Creation praises and reveals God

To the Lord belong the earth and all it contains,
The world and all who live there;
It is he who laid its foundations on the seas,
On the flowing waters fixed it firm.
(Psalm 24:1-2)

When I look at your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of
them, mortals that you care for them?
Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of
your hands;
you have put all things under their feet...
(Psalm 8)

It was the Lord who made the heavens;
In his presence are splendour and majesty,
In his sanctuary power and beauty.
Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad!
Let the sea thunder, and all it holds!
Let the countryside exult,
and all that is in it,
And all the trees of the forest cry out for joy,
At the Lord's approach, for he is coming,
Coming to judge the earth;
He will judge the world with saving justice,
And the nations with constancy.
(Psalm 96:5-6, 11-13)

Bless the Lord, my soul,
The Lord, my God, how great you are!
You fixed the earth on its foundations,
For ever and ever it shall not be shaken.
How countless are your works, Lord,
All of them made so wisely!
The earth is full of your creatures...
They all depend upon you,
To feed them when they need it...
Turn away your face and they panic;
Take back their breath and they die
And revert to dust.
Send out your breath and life begins;
You renew the face of the earth.
(Psalm 104, including verses 1, 5, 24, 27,
29-30)

But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
The birds of the air, and they will tell you;
Ask the plants of the earth,
and they will teach you;
And the fish of the sea will declare to you:
Who among all these does not know that
the hand of the Lord has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing,
and the breath of every human being.
(Job 12:7-10)

Alleluia!
Praise the Lord from the heavens,
Praise him in the heights.
Praise him, sun and moon,
Praise him, all shining stars,
Praise him, highest heavens,
Praise him, waters above the heavens.
(Psalm 148:1, 3-4)

For what can be known about God is plain to
them, because God has shown it to them. For his
invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and
divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever
since the creation of the world, in the things that
have been made.
(Romans 1:20)

Choose life

Do not defile the land where you live and where I
dwell.
(Numbers 35:34)

If, when attacking a town, you have to besiege it
for a long time before you capture it, you must not
destroy its trees by taking the axe to them: eat
their fruit but do not cut them down. Is the tree in
the fields human, that you should besiege it too?
(Deuteronomy 20:19-20)

Today, I am offering you life or death, blessing or
curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your
descendants may live...
(Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

I looked to the earth – it was a formless waste; to
the heavens, and their light had gone. I looked to
the mountains – they were quaking and all the
hills rocking to and fro. I looked – there was no
one at all, the very birds of heaven had all fled. I
looked – the fruitful land was a desert, all its towns
in ruins before the Lord, before his burning anger.
(Jeremiah 4:23-26)

Broken covenant

"The earth dries up and withers, the world
languishes and withers; the heavens languish
together with the earth. The earth lies polluted
under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed
laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting
covenant."
(Isaiah 24:4-5)

A new, redeemed, creation

For look, I am going to create new heavens and a new earth, and the past will not be remembered and will come no more to mind. Rather be joyful, be glad for ever at what I am creating, for look, I am creating Jerusalem to be 'Joy' and my people to be 'Gladness'... The wolf and the young lamb will feed together, the lion will eat hay like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. No hurt, no harm will be done on all my holy mountain, the Lord says.
(Isaiah 65:17-25)

I shall make a covenant of peace with them; I shall rid the country of wild animals. They will be able to live secure in the desert and go to sleep in the woods... And you, my sheep, are the flock of my human pasture, and I am your God – declares the Lord.
(Ezekiel 34:25-31)

...for the whole creation is waiting with eagerness for the children of God to be revealed... We are well aware that the whole creation, until this time, has been groaning in labour pains. And not only that: we too, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning inside ourselves, waiting with eagerness for our bodies to be set free.
(Romans 8:19-23)

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea."
(Revelation 21:1-7)

Jesus: the Word in creation

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.
(John 1:1-14)

He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers – all things were created through him and for him.
(Colossians 1:15-20)

CATECHISM

The Catechism is the teaching of the Catholic Church.

We fulfil God's commission with regard to creation when we care for the earth, with its biological laws, its variety of species, its natural beauty, and its dwindling resources, as a living space and preserve it, so that future generations also can live well on the earth.
(YouCat 436, CCC 2415)

ENCYCLICALS

Encyclicals are letters written by the Pope on important topics.

John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (The Social Concern of the Church), 1987, para. 34:

The dominion granted to [humanity] by the Creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to "use and misuse," or to dispose of things as one pleases. The limitation imposed from the beginning by the Creator... and expressed symbolically by the prohibition not to "eat of the fruit of the tree" (cf. Gen 2:16-17) shows clearly enough that, when it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity.

Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus (One hundred years), 1991, para. 40:

It is the task of the State to provide for the defence and preservation of common goods such as the natural and human environments, which cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces.

Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life), 1995, para. 42

As one called to till and look after the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15), [each person] has a specific responsibility towards the environment in which [he/she] lives, towards the creation which God has put at the service of [his/her] personal dignity, of [his/her] life, not only for the present but also for future generations.

**Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate
(Charity in truth), 2009, para. 48:**

The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. When nature, including the human being, is viewed as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism, our sense of responsibility wanes. In nature, the believer recognises the wonderful result of God's creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise, while respecting the intrinsic balance of creation. If this vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it. Neither attitude is consonant with the Christian vision of nature as the fruit of God's creation.

Para. 50:

On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must find the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself — God's gift to his children — and through hard work and creativity. At the same time we must recognise our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it... It is likewise incumbent upon the competent authorities to make every effort to ensure that the economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources are recognised with transparency and fully borne by those who incur them, not by other peoples or future generations: the protection of the environment, of resources and of the climate obliges all international leaders to act jointly and to show a readiness to work in good faith, respecting the law and promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the planet.

Para. 50:

The technologically advanced societies can and must lower their domestic energy consumption, either through an evolution in manufacturing methods or through greater ecological sensitivity among their citizens. It should be added that at present it is possible to achieve improved energy efficiency while at the same time encouraging research into alternative forms of energy. What is also needed, though, is a worldwide redistribution of energy resources, so that countries lacking those resources can have access to them.

**Pope Francis, Lumen Fidei (The Light of Faith),
2013, para. 55:**

Faith, on the other hand, by revealing the love of God the Creator, enables us to respect nature all the more, and to discern in it a grammar written by the hand of God and a dwelling place entrusted to our protection and care. Faith also helps us to devise models of development which are based not simply on utility and profit, but consider creation as a gift for which we are all indebted; it teaches us to create just forms of government, in the realisation that authority comes from God and is meant for the service of the common good.

LAUDATO SI'

***Laudato Si'* is an encyclical written by Pope Francis in 2015 on care for our common home. It is all relevant! Here are a few extracts.**

Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades... There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation.

Laudato Si', 25

Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. This debt can be paid partly by an increase in funding to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor. But water continues to be wasted, not only in the developed world but also in developing countries which possess it in abundance. This shows that the problem of water is partly an educational and cultural issue, since there is little awareness of the seriousness of such behaviour within a context of great inequality.

Laudato Si', 30

Today, however, we have to realise that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

Laudato Si', 49

In some countries, there are positive examples of environmental improvement... men and women are still capable of intervening positively. For all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity and care cannot but well up within us, since we were made for love.

Laudato Si', 58

Disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbour, for whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship with my own self, with others, with God and with the earth. When all these relationships are neglected, when justice no longer dwells in the land, the Bible tells us that life itself is endangered...

Laudato Si', 70

Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us.

Laudato Si', 84

We fail to see that some are mired in desperate and degrading poverty, with no way out, while others have not the faintest idea of what to do with their possessions, vainly showing off their supposed superiority and leaving behind them so much waste which, if it were the case everywhere, would destroy the planet. In practice, we continue to tolerate that some consider themselves more human than others, as if they had been born with greater rights.

Laudato Si', 90

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings... Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.

Laudato Si', 91

There is a great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world's peoples, using a modest amount of land and producing less waste, be it in small agricultural parcels, in orchards and gardens, hunting and wild harvesting or local fishing. Economies of scale, especially in the agricultural sector, end up forcing smallholders to sell their land or to abandon their traditional crops. Their attempts to move to other, more diversified, means of production prove fruitless because of the difficulty of linkage with regional and global markets, or because the infrastructure for sales and transport is geared to larger businesses... Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good.

Laudato Si', 129

It cannot be emphasised enough how everything is interconnected. Time and space are not independent of one another, and not even atoms or subatomic particles can be considered in isolation. Just as the different aspects of the planet – physical, chemical and biological – are interrelated, so too living species are part of a network which we will never fully explore and understand. A good part of our genetic code is shared by many living beings. It follows that the fragmentation of knowledge and the isolation of bits of information can actually become a form of ignorance, unless they are integrated into a broader vision of reality.

Laudato Si', 138

When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values. Unless we struggle with these deeper issues, I do not believe that our concern for ecology will produce significant results. But if these issues are courageously faced, we are led inexorably to ask other pointed questions: What is the purpose of our life in this world? ...what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.

Laudato Si', 160

Let us not only keep the poor of the future in mind, but also today's poor, whose life on this earth is brief and who cannot keep on waiting.
Laudato Si', 162

Beginning in the middle of the last century and overcoming many difficulties, there has been a growing conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home. An interdependent world not only makes us more conscious of the negative effects of certain lifestyles and models of production and consumption which affect us all; more importantly, it motivates us to ensure that solutions are proposed from a global perspective, and not simply to defend the interests of a few countries. Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan.

Laudato Si', 164

We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay... Although the post-industrial period may well be remembered as one of the most irresponsible in history, nonetheless there is reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave responsibilities.

Laudato Si', 165

In some places, cooperatives are being developed to exploit renewable sources of energy which ensure local self-sufficiency and even the sale of surplus energy. This simple example shows that, while the existing world order proves powerless to assume its responsibilities, local individuals and groups can make a real difference.

Laudato Si', 179

On the national and local levels, much still needs to be done, such as promoting ways of conserving energy... Political activity on the local level could also be directed to modifying consumption, developing an economy of waste disposal and recycling, protecting certain species and planning a diversified agriculture and the rotation of crops... Truly, much can be done!

Laudato Si', 180

Any technical solution which science claims to offer will be powerless to solve the serious problems of our world if humanity loses its compass, if we lose sight of the great motivations

which make it possible for us to live in harmony, to make sacrifices and to treat others well. Believers themselves must constantly feel challenged to live in a way consonant with their faith and not to contradict it by their actions.

Laudato Si', 200

Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start... No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours. No one has the right to take it from us.

Laudato Si', 204-205

Environmental education has broadened its goals... It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.

Laudato Si', 209-210

We must not think that these efforts are not going to change the world. They benefit society, often unbeknown to us, for they call forth a goodness which, albeit unseen, inevitably tends to spread.

Laudato Si' 212-213

Many people today sense a profound imbalance which drives them to frenetic activity and makes them feel busy, in a constant hurry which in turn leads them to ride rough-shod over everything around them. This too affects how they treat the environment.

Laudato Si', 225

We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good... Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practise the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms.

Laudato Si', 229-230

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

Lumen Gentium

The faithful, therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and the value of all creation, as well as its role in the harmonious praise of God. They must assist each other to live holier lives even in their daily occupations... let them vigorously contribute their effort, so that created goods may be perfected by human labour, technical skill and civic culture for the benefit of all [humankind] according to the design of the Creator and the light of His Word. May the goods of this world be more equitably distributed among all [humankind], and may they in their own way be conducive to universal progress in human and Christian freedom. In this manner, through the members of the Church, will Christ progressively illumine the whole of human society with His saving light. (Para. 36)

Gaudium et Spes

When [humankind] develops the earth by the work of [their] hands or with the aid of technology, in order that it might bear fruit and become a dwelling worthy of the whole human family and when [they] consciously takes part in the life of social groups, [they carry] out the design of God manifested at the beginning of time, that [they] should subdue the earth, perfect creation and develop [themselves]. At the same time [they obey] the commandment of Christ that [they] place [themselves] at the service of [others]. (Para. 57)

OTHER CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Teaching from other sources, such as saints and statements made by bishops or popes.

Earth at its beginning was for all in common, it was meant for rich and poor alike; what right have you to monopolise the soil? Nature knows nothing of the rich; all are poor when she brings them forth. (St Ambrose)

If we learn to love Earth, we will find labyrinths, gardens, fountains, and precious jewels! A whole new world will open itself to us. We will discover what it means to be truly alive. (St Teresa of Avila)

The whole universe together participates in divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better, than any single creature whatever. (St Thomas Aquinas)

Praised be you, my Lord, for our sister, mother earth, who sustains and governs us and brings forth many fruits with grass and flowers bright. (St Francis of Assisi)

Care for the environment represents a challenge for all of humanity. It is a matter of a common and universal duty, that of respecting a common good... Responsibility for the environment, the common heritage of humankind, extends not only to present needs but also to those of the future... The goods of the earth were created by God to be used wisely by all. They must be shared equitably, in accordance with justice and charity. (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 465-481)

Our generation must energetically accept the challenge... to prepare a hospitable earth for future generations... Want, it has rightly been said, is the worst of all pollutions. (Pope Paul VI, Address to the conference on human environment, 1972)

The existence of extreme poverty and environmental destruction in our world are not natural forces, nor acts of God, but result from human behaviour. (New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, 2006)

It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few should continue to accumulate excess goods, squandering available resources, while masses of people are living in conditions of misery at the very lowest level of subsistence. (Pope John Paul II)

Our natural resources, our water, our forests and minerals are not just to be used as commodities, to be exploited for the enrichment of a few. No, they are first of all public goods and ecological goods, that is to say they are to be used to improve the well being of all peoples, now and for the well being of future generations. (Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez, Honduras)

We must globalise human solidarity so as to include sharing the riches of the earth for the common good, with fairness and equity; with respectful options for the poor and self-determination for communities.

(Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez, Honduras)

We cannot continue to be indifferent and blind to the death and destruction of our natural resources to the benefit of a handful of people.

(Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez, Honduras)

We often use the word progress to describe what has taken place... but can we say this is real progress? Who has benefitted most and who has borne the real costs? The poor are as disadvantaged as ever and the natural world has been grievously wounded.

(Catholic Bishops' Conference, Philippines, 1988)

Working for the common good requires us to promote the flourishing of all human life and all of God's creation. In a special way, the common good requires solidarity with the poor who are often without the resources to face many problems, including the potential impacts of climate change. Each of us should carefully consider our choices and lifestyles. We live in a culture that prizes the consumption of material goods. While the poor often have too little, many of us can be easily caught up in a frenzy of wanting more and more—a bigger home, a larger car, etc. Even though energy resources literally fuel our economy and provide a good quality of life, we need to ask about ways we can conserve energy, prevent pollution, and live more simply.

(US Bishops, Global Climate Change, 2001)

From the patristic period to the present, the church has affirmed that misuse of the world's resources or appropriation of them by a minority of the world's population betrays the gift of creation since "whatever belongs to God belongs to all".

US Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All, 34

A way of life that disregards and damages God's creation, forces the poor into greater poverty, and threatens the right of future generations to a healthy environment and to their fair share of the earth's wealth and resources, is contrary to the vision of the Gospel.

(The Call of Creation, Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, 2002)

People in countries such as Bangladesh are totally dependent on the weather. Our agriculture, and hence our whole culture, is based on water from the rains and rivers. Changed rainfall patterns, harsher storms and longer droughts are already costing lives and livelihoods.

(Bishop Theotonius Gomes, Caritas Bangladesh)

...the earth is ultimately a common heritage, the fruits of which are for the benefit of all... It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few should continue to accumulate excess goods, squandering available resources, while masses of people are living in conditions of misery at the very lowest level of subsistence.

(Pope John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message 1990, 8)

...we can no longer simply do what we like or what seems useful and promising at the time with this earth of ours, with the reality entrusted to us. On the contrary, we must respect the inner laws of creation, of this earth, we must learn these laws and obey these laws if we wish to survive. Consequently, this obedience to the voice of the earth, of being, is more important for our future happiness than the voices of the moment, the desires of the moment. In short, this is a first criterion to learn: that being itself, our earth, speaks to us and we must listen if we want to survive and to decipher this message of the earth. And if we must be obedient to the voice of the earth, this is even truer for the voice of human life.

(Pope Benedict XVI)

There is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of due respect for nature, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life. The sense of precariousness and insecurity that such a situation engenders is a seedbed for collective selfishness, disregard for others and dishonesty. Faced with the widespread destruction of the environment, people everywhere are coming to understand that we cannot continue to use the goods of the earth as we have in the past.

(Pope John Paul II, 1 Jan 1990)

Humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology, which in turn demands a social ecology. Experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human co-existence and vice versa. It becomes more and more evident that there is an inseparable relation between peace with creation and peace among [humankind]. Both of these presuppose peace with God.

(Pope Benedict XVI, 1 Jan 2007)

Men and women are called to regard the environment as a marvel to be pondered and respected rather than a commodity for mere consumption.

(Pope Benedict XVI)

Care of creation is not just something God spoke of at the dawn of history: he entrusts it to each of us as part of his plan.

(Pope Francis, World Environment Day, 2013)

We are called not only to respect the natural environment, but also to show respect for, and solidarity with, all the members of our human family. These two dimensions are closely related; today we are suffering from a crisis which is not only about the just management of economic resources, but also about concern for human resources, for the needs of our brothers and sisters living in extreme poverty.

(Pope Francis, World Environment Day, 2013)

The concern for the earth must go in tandem – side-by-side – with concern for human life itself... Both of them are interrelated. We cannot show concern for the earth and not show concern for human life. Neither can we show concern for human life and not show concern for the environment or the earth.

(Cardinal Turkson, World Youth Day, 2013)

An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. 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.

(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 183, 2014)

With due respect for the autonomy and culture of every nation, we must never forget that the planet belongs to all [humankind] and is meant for all [humankind].

(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel), para. 190, 2014)

We human beings are not only the beneficiaries but also the stewards of other creatures. Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement. Let us not leave in our wake a swath of destruction and death which will affect our own lives and those of future generations.

(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel), para. 215, 2014)

PRAYER

Give us each day our daily bread.
(Luke 11:3)

Help us to harness the wind, the water, the sun, and all the ready and renewable sources of power.

Teach us to conserve, preserve, use wisely the blessed treasures of our wealth-stored earth.

Help us to share your bounty, not to waste it, or pervert it into peril for our children or our neighbours in other nations.

You who are life and energy and blessing, teach us to revere and respect your tender world.
Amen.

(Caritas Social Justice Week resources, Caritas Aotearoa, New Zealand)

The Canticle of the Sun (St Francis of Assisi)

WHAT NEXT?

Explore our other creation resources.

For secondary schools:
cafod.org.uk/education/secondary/climate

Primary resources:
cafod.org.uk/education/primary/climate

Get involved with our climate campaign:
cafod.org.uk/campaign