



THE LETTER

A MESSAGE FOR OUR EARTH

► **Participants' Resource**

 VERITAS

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► Introduction

In 2015 Pope Francis wrote an open letter, called *Laudato Si'*, to the people of the world. The words *laudato si'* mean 'Praise be to you' and they were the first words of the great prayer 'The Canticle of Creation' composed by St Francis of Assisi. In his letter the Pope discusses the damage being caused to planet Earth by humans and our responsibility to make urgent changes to our lifestyles in order to protect the planet.

In 2022 a documentary film, *The Letter – A Message for Our Earth*, was made, which follows the story of Pope Francis continuing the dialogue he started in *Laudato Si'* with five frontline leaders from various parts of the world that were suffering badly from the effects of climate change. Pope Francis chose these leaders to represent voices that were not being heard, but that needed to be heard: the voice of the poor, the voice of youth, the voice of indigenous peoples, and the voice of nature/wildlife. Each of these inspiring local leaders received a letter from Pope Francis inviting them to Rome to share with him and others their experiences and concerns about the impact of climate change.

In the documentary film, we hear the leaders talk about their backgrounds, their worries and concerns

for the environment and the planet, and their hopes for the future. The footage is accompanied by research findings and scientific data on the current condition of our planet and its inhabitants.

Ecological Education

In 2020, the Laudato Si' Action Platform was established to act as a shared online space where the members of the Church could discuss how best to devise a bold and active response to the crisis that threatens our planet.

In this six-week programme, we are going to ask ourselves how we are answering the Pope's call to care for the earth, which he calls 'our common home'. We will look at and discuss *The Letter* over the six weeks, as well as engage in other relevant activities. It is hoped that you will come away with the knowledge, skills and confidence to begin the task of taking up the invitation of Pope Francis to '*discover what each of us can do*' as we build a better future together (*Laudato Si'* [LS], 19).

Responding to the call of *Laudato Si'* means embracing new ways of living, as our growing awareness of the connections between all things is translated to concrete action.

▶ **Session 1** ***Introduction to The Letter***

Opening Prayer

Prayer for Meetings

Beloved Father, God of Light,
send Your Holy Breath to ignite our hearts
and enlighten our minds.

God of guidance,
protect us and grant us clear and deep thoughts,
an open heart and attentive ears.

Help us feel each other's hearts
in the richness of this meeting
and in the generosity of every exchange.

Gathered here in Your name
we entrust to You our frailties and weaknesses.
We ask, in return, for You to reveal to us
the gift and the hope
of being brothers and sisters
of peace, love and justice. Amen.

Check it out at home ...

- The following organisations are working to raise awareness of the climate crisis and to encourage action to create a more just world.
- Choose one of these organisations and, over the



coming week, look up their website to find out about the good work that they do.

- » The Columban Missionaries and JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation): <https://columbans.ie/mission-outreach/jpic/>
- » The Society of African Missions (SMA): <https://sma.ie/>

A Prayer Poem

Companion of the Companionless (Abridged)

Companion of the Companionless,
let my day not go by without remembering
the 70 million people forced from homelands
due to poverty, crime, and political conflict.

Home of the Homeless,
gather the shawl of your compassion around
those who have nowhere to abide,
nowhere to call home,
nowhere to work.

Nurturer of the Impoverished,
turn the attention of political leaders
toward systems that cause oppression;
urge them to open their doors to refugees. ...

Justice Bringer,
bother us.
Keep after us.
Open our eyes.
Widen our hearts.
Change our judgements.
Urge us.
Chase us.
Badger us,
until we act on behalf of the 70 million people
whose tears fall on foreign soil.
Amen.

Over the coming week ...

- The documentary film *The Letter – A Message for Our Earth* grew out of *Laudato Si'*. Try and spend some time over the coming week reading the introduction and Chapter One of *Laudato*

Si'. In Chapter One Pope Francis talks about what is happening to our planet, which he calls 'our common home'. You can download it free of charge from this link: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

- *Laudato Si'* is both a message of hope and a call to action. You might like to make notes for yourself or record your thoughts as you read through it. You will have an opportunity to share your thoughts about what you have read at the start of the next session, if you wish to do so.

Closing Prayer

Pope Francis included this prayer at the end of *Laudato Si'*.

A Prayer for Our Earth

All powerful God,
you are present in the universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with your peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle,
for justice, love and peace.
Amen.

*Map showing location
of countries referred
to in The Letter*



Hawaii

The Amazon
Rainforest

Senegal

India

▶ Session 2 The Voice of the Poor

Opening Prayer

We Cry Out to You

Come, O Holy Breath of God,
Caring God,
the earth and we cry out to You

Along with the earth,
we ask You to free us from greed,
selfishness and indifference

Along with the air, the water,
the land and the wind,
we ask You to help us get rid of all the pollution.

Along with the forest, birds and animals,
give us the strength not to destroy ourselves
and the delicate webs that connect our
ecosystems
and all life together

Along with those on the edges of society,
the unheard, the powerless,
the struggling and the suffering,
we ask You for the strength to be just,
merciful and compassionate

Along with those in power and positions of
authority,
we ask for wisdom to be good stewards of our
common home

And finally, along with the whole of creation and
peoples,
we give You thanks
for all the efforts to restore our sister mother
earth.

Amen.

Check it out at home ...

- The following organisations are working in different ways to help refugees access services and begin new lives in Ireland.
- Choose one of these organisations and, over the coming week, look up their website to find out about the good work that they do.
- Are there any ways in which your parish already does/or could support such work?
- In our session next week, you will have an opportunity to share with your group any insights or interesting information you gained from this research.
 - » Spirasi: Supporting survivors of torture to rebuild their lives in Ireland. <https://spirasi.ie/>



- » Ruhama: Fighting sexual exploitation, prostitution and human trafficking. <https://www.ruhama.ie/>
- » JRS Ireland (Jesuit Refugee Service): Supporting individuals, families and children seeking asylum <https://jrs.net/en/country/ireland/>
- » Irish Red Cross: Dedicated to serving people in need <https://www.redcross.ie/>
- » Columban Missionaries: Helping migrants access their rights. <https://columbans.ie/mission-outreach/migrants-rights/>

Reflective Exercise: Poem

Home (Abridged)

'no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well

your neighbours running faster than you
breath bloody in their throats
the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay ...

i want to go home,
but home is the mouth of a shark
home is the barrel of the gun
and no one would leave home
unless home chased you to the shore
unless home told you
to quicken your legs
leave your clothes behind
crawl through the desert
wade through the oceans
drown
save
be hunger
beg
forget pride
your survival is more important

no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice
in your ear
saying —
leave,

run away from me now
i don't know what i've become
but i know that anywhere
is safer than here.'

A Call to Action

- Reflect on this statement:

**'Hope doesn't come from words.
Hope only comes from actions.'**

– Greta Thunberg

- For our meeting next week, think of one achievable action that you, or a group of parishioners working together, could do to help refugees who have come to live in our community. We will share our suggestions next week and see if we can put some of them into action.

Over the coming week ...

- Try and spend some time over the coming week reading Chapter Two of *Laudato Si'*, in which Pope Francis focuses on the intimate connection that exists among all creatures on Earth and the tremendous responsibility of humankind to care for and protect creation.
- Reflect, in particular, on these words of Pope Francis:

*'We are not God. The earth was here
before us and it has been given to us ...'*
(LS, 67)

*'Everything is related, and we human
beings are united as brothers and sisters
on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven
together by the love God has for each of
his creatures and which also unites us
in fond affection with brother sun, sister
moon, brother rivers and mother earth.'*
(LS, 92)

- If you haven't already done so, you can download *Laudato Si'* free of charge from this link: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Closing Prayer

Prayer for migrants and refugees

Have mercy on me, God most high.
In my fear and loneliness,
be my refuge.
Far from my homeland,
I feel lost.
My heart is stirred by thoughts
of the family I left behind.

O God,
hear their cries
and come to their help!

Calm the storms of anxiety and doubt
within me.

Go before me
and guide my steps
among a people I do not know.
May their kindness and compassion
assure me that You are there
to welcome me.

Amen.

▶ **Session 3** **The Voice of Indigenous People**

Opening Prayer

God of Life

God of Life,
You love the universe into being,
Let us give praise.

You embrace the world without distinction,
Let us give thanks.

You call humanity to make flesh Your tenderness,
Let us live accordingly.

You endow all creation with Your divine beauty
and wisdom,
Let us acknowledge.

You forgive all trespasses.
Let us learn Your ways.

You grace us unconditionally,
Let us receive humbly.

You are our hope,
Let us remember.
Amen.



Group 'Read and Reflect' Activity

- The following are the statements that you will be asked to read and discuss with your group.

Statement 1, for the first part of the exercise:

- » *'The Living Planet Report 2022 reveals an average decline of 69% in species populations since 1970 due to human activity.'*

<https://livingplanet.panda.org/en-GB/>

As a result, many scientists warn that humans could be causing the 'sixth mass extinction' on earth.

Statement 2, for the second part of the exercise (statement from the Irish Bishops):

- » In response to the impending loss of nature to our world, the bishops are asking parishes, through their parish pastoral councils and diocesan trusts, as a first step, to identify and care for 30% of parish grounds as a haven for pollinators and biodiversity, in order that it can be enjoyed in perpetuity by the whole community.

Bishops said, 'In embracing this initiative we encourage parishes to expand their circles of solidarity, to protect and care for biodiversity and recommend that, by 2030, 30% of church grounds be returned to nature.

The first goal of *Laudato Si'* asks us to respond to the 'Cry of the Earth'. In *Laudato Si'* we read that this diversity of species has an '*intrinsic value independent of their usefulness. Each organism, as a creature of God, is good and admirable in itself*' (LS, 140). Humanity is called to care for the earth and all of its creatures, in other words to '*live out our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork*' (LS, 217).

Reflective Exercise: Poem

Trees

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

– Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918)

Over the coming week ...

- Try and spend some time over the coming week reading Chapter Three of *Laudato Si'*, where Pope Francis examines the human roots of the ecological crisis.
- Pope Francis says that while technological advances have been a great gift, *'a certain way of understanding human life and activity has*

gone awry to the serious detriment of the world around us.'

A Call to Action

- Try and spend some time in nature over the coming week. If possible, you might take a walk in a forest park or mountain area and pay attention to all the animal and plant life there. As you do so, remember to praise and thank God for the beauty and life that exists in our world.
- In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis says: '*To contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a paradoxical and silent voice*' (LS, 84). The following 'Linger, Listen and Love' approach might help you to contemplate while you spend time in the natural world. This can be done inside or outside.

'Linger, Listen and Love' – An Approach to Engaging Meaningfully with Nature

Linger:

- Walk or look around you slowly. Notice if some element of creation attracts your attention, such as a cloud, a tree, an indoor or outdoor plant, a bird, insect or other creature.
- Allow yourself to linger or pause at whatever attracts your attention and to be fully present with it.

- Use your senses to take in the wonder of this element of creation: the colours, shapes, smells, textures, sounds.

Listen:

- What might this element of creation or this creature be trying to tell you? What might God be saying to you through it?
- Consider entering into dialogue with this element of creation, calling to mind St Francis talking to the birds and to 'Brother Sun' and 'Sister Moon'. You might ask a question. Then listen. Just be open to what might arise.

Love:

- When you are ready to leave, find a way to offer love, by saying thanks, offering a prayer to God for this encounter, wishing your new friend well.
- Find a way to acknowledge the gift you have received and make a commitment to give something in return. For instance, you might commit to giving more attention and care to the plants in your home or outdoor area; or making sure there is fresh water each day for the birds that visit your outdoor space; or allowing some weeds/wild flowers to grow rather than cutting them.
- If there is time, you might try this process of 'Linger, Listen and Love' with another element in creation.

Closing Prayer

Our Beloved Amazon

Praised be You, God of beauty,
for the constancy of that light rain
that falls barely perceptible to our eyes.
Drops that progressively generate
the small threads of water that together
with many more will see the birth of rivers,
which are a source of life in abundance for all.

Praised be You, Lord,
for the delicate strokes of Your creation
in which the beautiful connection
of each and every one of the created things
on the face of the earth is expressed.

With the peoples of this Amazon, O Lord of life,
may we know how to recognise and discern Your
truth
in the diversity of each culture,
living in harmonious relationship with the earth,
with others, and with Your divine power.

May we recognise You
risen and rising in the daily hopes and struggles
of their lives,
in their wisdom,
and in their longing for the Kingdom through
Jesus.

Laudato Si'!

Amen.

▶ Session 4 The Voice of Youth

Opening Prayer

Prayer for the Laudato Si' Generation: Life, Movement and Being!

Holy Father,
Creator of all things,
in You alone 'we have life, movement and being'
(Acts 17:28).

In Your infinite love
You created humanity in Your own image and
likeness,
and placed humans at the heart of creation.
You gave us the holy responsibility
to guard creation in respect and harmony.

We beg You to look at this world
which has lost its original beauty
and which You redeemed
through Your Son who died and rose again.
Have mercy on this world
which is more and more prey to natural
cataclysms,
caused by the violent and subtle outbursts of
humanity.

Teach us the young generations
to recreate a true civilisation of love,
and advocate for true harmony
born of a pure heart
and not of the blind and selfish quest for profit,
so that the fragrance of the new creation
that Your Son came to earth to install may be
felt.

May we, the young generation,
united in the spirit of the Laudato Si' Movement,
learn to praise You eternally
by caring for the earth that You have given us,
You who reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

Check it out at home ...

- Check out the website of the Fridays for Future movement at <https://fridaysforfuture.org>. This is an international climate movement active in most countries. The website provides information on who they are and what people can do to play their part in the fight against climate change.
- You might also like to check out any School Strike for Climate events that have taken place in Ireland. If you put 'school strikes for climate Ireland' into your 'Search' engine, it will bring you to several examples.



- In our session next week, you will have an opportunity to share with your group any insights or interesting information you gained from this research, and whether or not you think such youth movements are valuable.

Over the coming week ...

- Try and spend some time over the coming week reading Chapter Four of *Laudato Si'*, in which Pope Francis talks about an 'integral ecology'. By this he means that since everything in our world is closely interrelated and interdependent – both the world of nature and the world of human beings – and since we are a part of nature and depend upon it, we must adopt a broader vision that seeks to care for and protect all of its dimensions. *'An integral ecology is*

inseparable from the notion of the common good' (LS, 156). *'The environment is ... on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next. An integral ecology is marked by this broader vision'* (LS, 159).

- We might sometimes wonder how our tiny actions could have any sort of impact in either causing or combatting climate change. We might feel powerless and small. But we can be inspired by young activists like Greta Thunberg or Ridhima Pandey, who, despite being children, took on big challenges and are leading the fight for change.

Closing Prayer

Prayer before actions and protests

Heavenly Father,
creator of life and peace,
may our brothers, sisters, plants,
animals and future generations
experience the grace of climate justice and
equality
throughout all hemispheres of the Earth.

Open our hearts to listen to the cries of the earth,
the cries of the poor and future generations.

Grant us the wisdom to inspire others
to respond to the ecological crises.

Give us the courage to join arms
to take sustainable climate actions
for the better care of our common home.

May we work in peaceful dialogue
and respect the human dignity of others
regardless of age, race, religion, language or
culture.

May all those whom we encounter
through our prayer, work and actions
experience the grace of ecological conversion
with compassion, care, unity, healing and
forgiveness.

May both our individual and collective actions
blossom peacefully to bring fuller life to all of
God's creatures.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord
and intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary.
Amen.

▶ **Session 5** **The Voice of Nature/Wildlife**

Opening Prayer

Creator,
we are embarking on a journey
towards greater love for You,
our brothers and sisters,
and Your creation.

Holy Spirit,
we humbly ask
that You guide us on our journey,
that You bring us Your illuminating
and warming fire as we seek
to discern and respond to Your will.

Redeemer,
we thank You for the new hope
that unites us with all those
who are healing their relationships with God,
creation, and the human family.

We pray for commitment and unity
as we live out an integral ecology
to protect all life on earth.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.



Check it out at home ...

- If you would like to do some further research of your own into what is being done to address the threat to our oceans as a result of climate change, the following links will get you started.
- In our final session next week, you will have an opportunity to share with your group any insights or interesting information you gained from this research.
 - » UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15):
<https://www.unep.org/un-biodiversity-conference-cop-15>
 - » BBC News report 'Ocean Treaty: Historic agreement reached after decade of talks':
<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-64815782>

Over the coming week ...

- Try and spend some time over the coming week reading Chapter Five of *Laudato Si'*. In this chapter, Pope Francis outlines what we can and must do to protect the environment and prevent any further changes to the climate.
- Reflect and pray about Pope Francis' words and ask God's Holy Spirit to guide you in your response.

Closing Prayer

God of Life

God of Life,
You love the universe into being,
Let us give praise.
You embrace the world without distinction,
Let us give thanks.
You call humanity to make flesh Your tenderness,
Let us live accordingly.
You endow all creation with Your divine beauty
and wisdom,
Let us acknowledge.
You forgive all trespasses.
Let us learn Your ways.
You grace us unconditionally,
Let us receive humbly.
You are our hope,
Let us remember.
Amen.

▶ Session 6 Behind the Scenes – Moving Forward with Hope

Opening Prayer

A prayer for when we want to give up

God of hope,
You have placed us on this earth in a moment of
ecological crisis.
We face a crisis of such proportions and urgency,
at times it feels like it could crush us.
At times we rebel.
We did not ask to be born into this moment,
yet being alive now, we face the fate of humanity
and the planet.
It places a weight on our shoulders,
and we feel called forth to heal Your world.

At times we struggle.
Sometimes, we wish it were not like this,
that we could just go about our business.
We are tempted to turn our heads away.
Sometimes we feel that the fight is futile –
the science can seem to say that hope is lost.
We feel we do not have the strength to go on.
We feel burnt out.

When we feel like this,
may we take time out and turn our gaze to You.

May we draw close to You, dear Lord,
and realise that You have been here too.
You know what it means to feel defeated,
hopeless, and crushed.
You share our tears and weep with us
for the future of our children and all Your
creatures.

On the cross You too cried out in abandonment:
'my God, my God, why have You forsaken me?'
In Your cry, the whole of creation cried out.
You held all our tears until they overflowed,
transforming them into infinite dew drops.

When all seems lost,
may we experience Your divine mercy.
May we be gentle on ourselves and merciful to
others.
May we find strength for the road ahead.
Amen.

Prayer Activity

- Read and reflect on the following two prayers in your own time. The 'Canticle of Creation' was composed by St Francis of Assisi in 1224. 'The Breastplate of St Patrick', also known as 'The Deer's Cry', is an eighth-century prayer attributed to St Patrick.
- Consider what the two prayers have in common.

- In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis calls us to a huge cultural change, one that involves a genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation. Let us allow St Francis and St Patrick to inspire us to begin working together to protect our common home.

The Canticle of Creation (Abridged)

All praise be yours,
 [Laudato Si'] my Lord,
 through all that you
 have made,

And first my Lord Brother
 Sun,

Who brings the day: and
 light You give to us
 through him.

How beautiful is he,
 how radiant in all his
 splendour!

Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise is Yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon
 and Stars;

In the heavens You have made them, bright and
 precious and fair.

All praise is Yours, my Lord, through Brothers
 Wind and Air,

And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods,



By which You cherish all that You have made.
All praise be Yours, my Lord, through Sister
 Water,
So useful, lowly, precious, and pure.
All praise be Yours, my Lord, through Brother
 Fire,
Through whom You brighten up the night.
How beautiful he is, how gay! Full of power and
 strength.
All praise be Yours, my Lord, through Sister
 Earth, my mother
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

The Breastplate of St Patrick (Abridged)

I arise today, through the
 strength of heaven;
light of sun, radiance of
 moon,
splendour of fire, speed of
 lightning,
swiftness of wind, depth of
 the sea,
stability of earth, firmness
 of rock.



I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me;
God's eye to look before me, God's wisdom to
 guide me,

God's way to lie before me, God's shield to
protect me,
from all who shall wish me ill, afar and a-near
alone and in a multitude.

Against every cruel merciless power
that may oppose my body and soul ...

Over the coming week ...

- Try and spend some time over the coming week reading Chapter Six of *Laudato Si'*. In this chapter, Pope Francis invites us to '*change direction*' by taking on the task and responsibility of '*caring for our common home*'.
- Reflect and pray about Pope Francis' words and ask God's Holy Spirit to guide you in your response.

A Call to Action

- Ridhima Pandey, representing the voice of youth in *The Letter* documentary film, said: 'Try to be the change you want to see in the world.'
- Now that you have engaged with this resource, it is time for you to decide: Where will I go from here? Would you like to learn more, or to join with others to see what you can do to 'care for our common home' and help bring about change for the better?
- Read over the following notes and see if you can act on some of the suggestions that are offered.

Suggestions for learning more about the climate crisis and caring for our planet

LSM and Trócaire also run *Laudato Si'* Courses for parish groups – this would be a good next step after completing the present course.

Online courses: <https://www.laudatosirevolution.org/online-courses/>

Check out the Season of Creation Brochure Digital.pdf (catholicbishops.ie): <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Season-of-Creation-Brochure-Digital.pdf>

Check out the following resources provided by Trócaire:

- On *Laudato Si'*: <https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/working-in-ireland/parishes/laudato-si/>
- 100 Ways to Implement *Laudato Si'* in Your Parish: <https://www.trocaire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/100-ways-to-implement-laudato-si.pdf?type=parish>. Suggestions provided in this include: Join the global *Laudato Si'* Movement; Begin your own parish JPIC or *Laudato Si'* group; Link in with other regional or national groups.
- Together we make one day happen: <https://www.trocaire.org/>

- Climate Justice at Cop26 - The world must act: <https://www.trocaire.org/documents/climate-justice-at-cop26-the-world-must-act/>

Sign up to the Laudato Si' Action Platform: www.laudatosiactionplatform.org.

Download the *Laudato Sí Prayerbook* and use it in your daily prayer: <https://mail.laudatosimovement.org/landing/prayerbook>

Tell others about the documentary film *The Letter*. Arrange for another screening of it in your parish.

Check out *The Parish as Oasis*, a new book by Dr Kevin Hargaden and Dr Ciara Murphy of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice. This offers accessible, challenging and practical ways to care for the environment. It reimagines the Church as an oasis and includes twenty simple yet effective examples of how we can work together to make a difference and protect our natural environment and biodiversity.

- *The Parish as Oasis* – An Introduction to Practical Environmental Care: <https://www.messenger.ie/product/the-parish-as-oasis/>
- The Parish as Oasis – Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice in Ireland (JCFI): <https://www.jcfj.ie/what-we-do/environmental-justice/the-parish-as-oasis/>

- Environmental Justice – Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice in Ireland (JCFI): (<https://www.jcfj.ie/what-we-do/environmental-justice/>)

Think of two ways in which you can switch to more sustainable/renewable energy sources.

Check out the research grants for reducing your energy needs – SEAI or EST (NI)

- SEAI Grants: Home improvements, Business, EV and more: <https://www.seai.ie/grants/>
- Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/programme/nisep/>
- Energy saving grants in your area – nidirect: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/energy-saving-grants-your-area>

Conduct an energy audit of your parish buildings/ your house.

Sign up to www.ecocongregationireland.com and look into how your parish could achieve an Eco Award.

‘Laudato Si’ – Where to begin as a parish’ - Brentwood Diocese:

- <https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/laudatosi/parish/>

- 'Laudato Si' – Diocesan Commitments and Actions' – Brentwood Diocese: <https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/laudatosi/diocesancommitment/>

ClimateHero Carbon Calculator: <https://climate-calculator.climatehero.me/>

Reduce your air travel.

Use more public transport or contact your local politician regarding public transport provision in your area.

Consider carefully before going shopping for new items, clothes, furniture, household provisions.

Upcycle furniture rather than buying new.

Start a wildflower garden/nature reserve in your local area.

Pay attention to the News and keep yourself informed on updates, research and developments in relation to climate change. The BBC News website, for example, always has stories and interesting articles under its 'Climate' tab.

Closing Prayer

For a just, habitable and sustainable common home

Merciful God and Creator of all,
We praise You for the gift of the earth,
home to so many forms of life,
the common home of peoples, cultures, and
species.

We have made it an unjust place
where some consume and pollute more than
others,
and the poorest face the greatest impacts of
climate change.

Therefore, we ask You to help us
achieve climate and ecological justice
so that no one takes for themselves what belongs
to all,
that we may share the world's goods equitably,
and live simply
so that we may bear witness
that the earth is the sister and mother of all.

Help us to respect its rhythms of regeneration,
so that it may sustain all living beings
both in the present and for future generations.
Amen.

In the documentary film *The Letter*, people from very different backgrounds, with very different stories, come together, at the invitation of Pope Francis, to share their hopes and dreams for a better world. This resource explores their stories.

‘The cries of the earth and the cries of the poor cannot go on. ... We all need each other. ... We can only build the future by everyone standing together.’

Pope Francis

In *The Letter*, we hear the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor ...

‘Today, because of global warming, people from my country are now being displaced from their homes, and they migrate to big cities. ... My presence [here in Rome] is to find a solution to fight against this injustice, to fight the problems that are ruining our planet.’

Arouna Kandé, representing the voice of the poor

‘The forest means a lot to me. For me, the forest is like my home. ... For the Amazon to stay green, we all need to take care of it. ... The pain of one is the pain of all.’

Chief Dadá Borarí, representing the voice of indigenous people

‘Today I am here in front of you to represent the voices of the youth, because our future is in danger. We are not getting the life that we deserved. The older generation inherited this world ... it was beautiful, it was liveable, a world that I wanted, but they have destroyed it for their profit.’

Ridhima Pandey, representing the voice of youth

‘As scientists, we realise that science can’t solve the biodiversity crisis or the climate crisis alone. Science is a toolkit, but we need much more than tools.’

Dr Robin Martin, ecologist, representing the voice of nature/wildlife