

Preparing for COP26

“As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life” (Earth Charter, June 2000)

When Laudato Si was published in 2015 it introduced the concept of ‘Integral Ecology’-a concept derived from the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world, which touches every aspect of human life, from political and economic to cultural, social and theological. Values and decisions based on these aspects have direct consequences on how humans live with each other and share the planet’s resources.



The Catholic Church had a significant input into COP15 in Paris, which resulted in the Paris Agreement. COP26 in Glasgow in November will be a review of what has been achieved since the Paris Agreement.

This year offers a chance to accelerate climate action.

At the moment there are plenty of good intentions but not enough decisive action by governments. There is too much short-termism from politicians. Indigenous peoples apparently take into account more than eight generations ahead when making decisions. We could learn a lot from them.

It can seem a daunting prospect – that the issues are so huge which can produce a feeling of helplessness.

However, there is much faith in small initiatives – the parable of the mustard seed is a good example of this!

Groups in our Diocese including many schools are involved in creative and exciting projects.

The Laudato Si Animators Group have asked us to raise awareness of organisations running campaigns to address COP26 and to point to petitions available to sign. The day before the 2015 Paris conference started a Faiths petition of nearly two million signatures was presented to the UN Executive Secretary on Climate Change with powerful effect.

There are over 200 countries who are Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention meeting this year in Glasgow.

The Parties have made various pledges:

- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- To respond to the impacts of climate change through way of adapting and through helping in climate catastrophes.
- For wealthier nations to provide finance and technology to help poor and vulnerable countries to take action.

What can we do?

Any action, however small, is important.

It is important to include prayers for COP26 within our Masses and Liturgies.

The Official UN COP26 site is <https://ukcop26.org/>

Below are details of organisations at the forefront of campaigning.

CAMPAIGNING ORGANISATIONS

The COP26 Coalition- <https://cop26coalition.org>

Make COP Count- <https://makecopcount.org>

Green Christian- <https://greenchristian.org.uk>

CAFOD and Christian Aid websites are also a focus for resources/campaigning.

PETITIONS

There are several COP26 petitions available to sign, which is an easy way to make your voice heard.

Climate coalition Petition-

<https://thetimeisnow.uk/declaration>

Global Justice Now-

<https://act.globaljustice.org.uk/sign-petition-stop-funding-fossil-fuels>

Working as a team to Make a Real Difference

Established in 2019, the **St. Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy Trust (SMCCAT)** placed Sustainability as one of its eight strategic pillars from its formation. This clear commitment demonstrates that our Trust is determined to ensure that, at every level, we operate in a sustainable and ethical way, from inspiring our students to act as stewards of their environment to our leaders, staff and governors 'living out' our challenging Sustainability Policy which includes the ambitious aim to decarbonise all our schools by 2030.



Pope Francis concern for the environment is an inspiration to us all. His strong leadership and guidance on environmental issues supports the way that we think, the work that we do, and the aspiration we have for our children, staff and governors. Our commitment to the environment is truly a team effort.

An example of this is our recent Earth Day celebration. All our schools engaged with this event with each planning their own practical eco action for the day. To support this, we brought in (virtually) to our classrooms, 13 expert (and exciting!) environmental speakers, all taking positive action to support the environment, to inspire our children and answer their tough questions!

Our schools ongoing practical eco action is varied and includes: litter picking; energy usage campaigns; supporting biodiversity such as making bird feeders/bug hotels, planting tree saplings, restoring neglected woodland, creating wild areas and simply 'getting outside' to reconnect with nature. Our children have also written to their parents about issues such as palm oil, and to companies and politicians about single use plastics – they are truly leading the way!

Our children write and edit their own Trust-wide newsletter, The Green Samaritan, which helps us to celebrate and share the work that we are doing across our 17 schools - made up of 3,800 children and 670 staff. This newsletter gives our children a voice on issues affecting the environment. We recognise that we are all global citizens and understand that together we can support each other and make a real difference.

With the support of our nominated school 'eco champions', our children have taken on challenges such as: the Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Schools



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Award and the Modeshift Sustainable Travel Award. They also learn about the UN's 17 SDG's and 'living out' Pope Francis' Laudato Si'. We have signed up with Ashden's national schools' campaign, 'LetsGoZero' to support and encourage all schools to decarbonise by 2030 and together with All Saints School at York, we are now working towards the internationally recognised Eco Schools Green Flag Award.

My role as the Trust's Sustainability Officer is to facilitate this work and support the Trust's top team to deeply embed sustainability throughout our organisation. Regular positive eco news is communicated throughout our Trust's 'Care for Our Common Home' bulletin - named after the Pope Francis' Laudato Si.



We strongly believe that it is through a deeper understanding and connection to the natural world that we can truly educate and inspire all our children to become global citizens actively working to 'Care for Our Common Home'.

For further information please visit our Trust's website - <https://www.smccat.org.uk/> .

We would very much like to work with business and organisations that support our Sustainability vision and can offer exciting opportunities for our children.

Margaret Land, Sustainability Officer,

St. Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy Trust.



Caritas Social Action Network has produced a new, easy-to-use resource for parishes, schools, groups, communities and individuals on Catholic Social Teaching (CST), .

The CSAN CST Cards enable people of all backgrounds to learn, reflect and take action together based upon its main values, the values of

Catholic Social Teaching:

- The Common Good, Dignity, Solidarity, Option for the poor**
- Participation, Rights and responsibilities, Subsidiarity, Stewardship, Care of Creation.**

They are explained simply and through quotes from Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching and from movies. We provide examples of the Church reading the *Signs of the Times* in history and responding to urgent social issues through CST. Finally, there are cards showing the values in action both in everyday scenarios and in the work of agencies in the Caritas network in our work in England and Wales, including through a member of Caritas Middlesbrough, **CAUSE**.

Discussing what drives us can be of lasting value in forming and enriching individuals and groups. Using the CSAN CST means we can identify and discuss from our own experience these values, the founding principles of good human organisation, so they are something we can all relate to.

The Cards come with a Guidance document and a PowerPoint explanation on how to use and get the best out of them, encouraging us to see how they are lived out in our parish, school, local area and our own lives, and what could be done together in the future.

The cards are closely modelled on the resource produced by CAFOD for schools which contains material from an international perspective. The two resources therefore complement each other and, together, reflect the work of Caritas, both at home and overseas, as the Church reaches out to its sisters and brothers both locally and across the world.

The CSAN CST Cards sit alongside CSAN's recent publication *Caritas in Practice*, also available from the CSAN website as an induction resource for teams of volunteers and staff.

Both resources are available on the publications page of the CSAN website, free to download, although they would welcome donations to support this work.

Ged Edwards- Network Development Officer CSAN

We are currently in the season of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit has definitely been hard at work. As I

write this article, the G7 meeting of world leaders is taking place in Cornwall. Last evening I watched the interfaith vigil streamed live from Truro Cathedral where prayers and hopes were shared by representatives from the major faith traditions, Christians, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh, Catholics, indigenous peoples from Roraima in the Brazilian Amazon, as well as a Pagan! What has brought them together is a shared sense of the urgent need for the world leaders to use their influence and privileged positions to make bold decisions and the commitment and political will to implement them, for the good of all people and for the earth. To listen and respond to 'the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we have to be aware so many others are still experiencing the relentless infection rate rises and loss of lives without the benefit of any vaccination programmes. This urgent disaster requires the unified and concerted actions of wealthier nations because no-one is safe until we are all safe. Our leaders know this. Let's hope they rise to the challenge!

Over the summer months we are working to raise momentum and awareness of the COP26 which the UK government is hosting in November. Through our Parliament in Your Parish initiative, we are asking parishes to organise a virtual meeting with their MP to raise their concerns about how we can ensure a just and green recovery from the pandemic and address the issue of climate change and the growing levels of poverty.

If you would like to take part but don't know where to start you can give me a call on 07779 804253 or email ccross@cafod.org.uk. There's an online petition and more details and resources available on our website: <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Campaign-with-us/Parliament-in-your-parish>

Carol Cross

Prayer for CAFOD during its 60th Year and for the Women who began us: The Catholic Women's League, The Union of Catholic Mothers and the National Board of Catholic Women

Loving God,
You created and formed each one of us.
You have drawn us with un-failing kindness and lavished us with love.
We give you thanks and praise.

For our sisters who act for justice, stand in solidarity, speak the truth to power and reach out with a loving hand,
We give you thanks and praise.

For our sisters, the women at the heart of our beginnings and our work,
We give you thanks and praise.

Loving God, source of hope, we ask you to lift the women who face hardship, violence, rejection, and isolation.

For the women who respond to the need for care and compassion both near and far,
We give you thanks and praise.

Send out your spirit on all women this year.
May we remember the wonderful things that they have done, continue to do, and will do from this time forward through your grace.
Amen.

Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland

Working together to tackle poverty and inequality through social action

Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland (TM&C) is a faith-based social action organisation, with a Trustee Board from a range of Christian traditions. TM&C works with around 80 churches, other faith groups, and community organisations across South Tees; providing support, advice, and helping them to source funding, to enable them to ensure all our communities thrive. TM&C also works directly with partners, delivering projects that support the reduction of homelessness and isolation; improve community engagement; and tackle issues of deprivation such as food poverty.

In 2020, like most charities, TM&C was faced with a huge increase in demand, and a difficult funding position. The Feast of Fun programme worked with 30+ local churches and organisations to co-ordinate the supply of healthy food, and activities to keep children entertained, during the school holidays to families in need. During the pandemic, the scheme saw more than 6 times the need of the previous year, with this continuing to escalate into 2021. Over **£82,000** was raised in 2020 to deliver **87,000** meals, and activity packs; compared to **13,500** meals in the whole of 2019. To date in 2021, **63,000** meals and activity packs have already been delivered. New plans include work to reduce food insecurity with a move to sustainable options, including the development of more Eco Shops.



John Hinman, Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland Trustee and representing the diocese of Middlesbrough on the Board adds, "The last fourteen months under Kate's direction has been transformational in the affairs of the charity. We are reaching more vulnerable communities and groups, and a team of staff and volunteers have made a huge impact across Middlesbrough and Cleveland. Many of the volunteers are both Anglicans and Catholics, a truly ecumenical response to great need in our area. The

Food & Friendship and Warm Welcome Network programmes are part of Ageing Better Middlesbrough, working with over 50's to connect them to others, increase health and wellbeing, and reduce social isolation. Individuals have access to welcoming places, with like-minded people, and activities such as cooking and guided walks. There are also opportunities for intergenerational work, matching care home residents to local schools. To tackle homelessness, TM&C works with Depaul UK, to provide services to those facing homelessness. During the pandemic, work continued on all these programmes, with services moving to telephone, and online, and supporting hundreds of local people to cope with the crisis.



TM&C's Community Engagement work brings together groups representing diverse local communities UK Minority Ethnic (UKME) led organisations from all faiths and cultures. The monthly Multicultural Forum provides a platform for networking, raising awareness, and creating change. New projects funded through the Community Engagement work include an all-women Muslim fitness programme; a film-making project for young refugees documenting their journey and contribution to the community; African Hair Heritage self-esteem sessions; a Parenting in the UK course for newly arrived families; a community kitchen garden; awareness raising webinars ; a community growing project and a craft wellbeing project with Bowes Museum.

Kate Jeffels Chief Officer TM&C

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