

The climate crisis, Pope Francis' call for change, and the COP26 Conference.

Pope Francis, in his great encyclical *Laudato Si'*, tells us to listen to “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”. The planet, and especially poor and vulnerable people, are already suffering badly from global warming and the climate crisis; and if we carry on then much worse is to come.

The planet and the poor are calling out to us that the world as a whole can't just carry on in the way we are doing just now. We need to change.

Pope Francis calls for three kinds of conversion. One is *spiritual conversion* - to see the world and all creation as God's gift. To slow down and take time to appreciate its wonders. To remember that all creation is connected through “the web of life”; that the fruits of the earth are for everybody, not just a wealthy few; and they are for future generations, not just ours. The situation is very serious, but it is not too late to make big changes and turn things around.

A second kind of conversion is *lifestyle conversion*. Each of us needs to think about how we use the world's resources, how we can change to ways that are sustainable for everybody, do our bit not to over-consume, have care for the needs of others. The Carbon Fast is one way of doing this.

Lifestyle conversion is necessary and important, but it is not enough to deal with the crisis. And so we also need a third kind of conversion, *social conversion* - working together with others for a society that is just and that respects the planet. As Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si'* (Section 219): “*Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply the sum of individual good deeds... The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.*” We need policies that are good for the planet and good for justice; and as individuals, as a Parish and as a Church we need to work with others to make sure that governments and businesses adopt these.

As I'm sure you will have heard, the big annual climate conference COP26 is happening in Glasgow in early November. COP is shorthand for Conference of the Parties, i.e. a conference of governments of nearly 200 member states of the United Nations who have signed up to a Framework for dealing with Climate Change. This is the 26th annual meeting (and so is called COP26) and it is a particularly important one because the planet is in a worse state than expected and current plans to deal with that are not nearly strong enough.

That's where all of us have a part to play, to take stock and act, in our individual lives (lifestyle conversion) and in pushing governments and businesses to adopt much better policies (social conversion). For now, and in the weeks ahead, we will try to link up one area of policy change with one area of lifestyle change, as examples of what can be done. The ideas for lifestyle change are from the Carbon Fast, something we often highlight during Lent. The policy ideas are from a recent booklet “21 for 21: The Climate Change Actions that Scotland Needs” by the Common Weal ‘think tank’. You can get it for free on <https://commonweal.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/21-For-21.pdf> - it's a list of 21 things that could be improved in Scotland this year, with existing powers of devolution.

We will try to work out some way that you can give us feedback and let us know if you're interested in following up any of these ideas - so that, as Pope Francis says, we can do this together, as a community. Meantime, this week, we're looking at (i) not wasting heat; and (ii) keeping it local.

Fintan Hurley

This is a letter put out to parishioners in Musselburgh as part of creation time.

Fintan serves on the board of Eco Congregation Scotland and is actively involved in Friends of the Earth. He is a member of the J&P/Eco Group in Our Lady of Loretto Musselburgh.



The Caritas, Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh invites you to join this mini-colloquium.

During the Season of Creation and in advance of COP26, the Commission for Caritas, Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh will consider the human face of the climate emergency during this mini-colloquium.

The event will focus on:

- * the disruptions in the climate that are driving people to become refugees
- * hearing from people for whom this is the present reality
- * the current refugee situation in Scotland
- * how we can respond

The event will be led by commission members Agatha Kai Kai and Mike Mineter.

Agatha Kai Kai is a Trustee of the Refugee Survival Trust (RST) whose mission is to minimise destitution among refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. She is a member of the St Columba's Justice and Peace group and represents the parish in the Newington Churches Together Committee.

Mike Mineter has been active in Justice and Peace groups for years, now mainly focusing on groups seeking ecological justice, working for a just future for all in Palestine/Israel and campaigning for morally responsible investment. He is a member of the Iona Community and works as the computing expert in a climate research group at the University of Edinburgh.

 **3-5pm | Sunday 12 September | Zoom**

 **Details and registration: bit.ly/ACallToAction2021**