

Reflection from Sr Margaret Atkins

Out of the blue, most of the world was invited on retreat. We were forced to ponder our mortality, our vulnerability, our weakness, our ignorance. We were prompted to repent of the collective thoughtlessness of our modern way of life and its side-effects. We have had to slow down, to abandon our ordinary routines, to wean ourselves from the addictions of 'business as usual'. Our values have been overturned: care workers, fruit pickers, parcel packers and cleaners have become our new saints, while go-getters, celebrities and billionaires kick their feet in their own homes.

We have rediscovered our neighbours, and even our own families. We have shared our fears and anxieties; we have grieved together, even at a distance, for the wonderful individual human beings we have lost. We have publicly honoured courage, fidelity, and simple acts of kindness. We have learnt to value statesmanlike modesty, honesty and truthfulness over political bluster.

The religious among us have been praying more intensely, with more focus, than for decades, despite the disruption of our normal supports. And many many others, who do not normally pray, have begun to join us, without embarrassment. We know that we cannot do this by ourselves.

And we have all been in this together: rich and poor, famous and unknown, old and young, strong and weak, from every corner of the globe, together, we have shared fear, anxiety, sorrow, compassion and love.

In our own country, at least, we were blessed with a backdrop of a glorious springtime. It was filled with birdsong we could hear, flowers we had time to notice, birds and animals that grew in confidence when we withdrew.

"Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise?", wrote Pope Francis five years ago in *Laudato Si'*. Suddenly, the noise has stopped, and we have a chance to listen. Let us listen to the sounds of nature, let us listen to the tradition of our faith, and let us listen once again to the Holy Father's appeal. Rereading *Laudato Si'* would not be a bad place to start.

*God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.*

Praise be to you!

Amen.

Summary of Laudato Si' written by Sr Margaret

at: <http://www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk/newsletter/Laudato%20Si%27%20summary%20Sr%20Margaret%20Atkins.docx>

Laudato Si' can be

download at: https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/25373/182331/file/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf

By our actions, we can mitigate the effects of climate change stop the destruction of habitats and reverse the decline of species worldwide. The way we treat the earth today is already affecting the poorest and most vulnerable in the world and, in time, will affect us all.

I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet.

We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.

Pope Francis, Laudato' Si

Five years on Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, remains a profound invitation to everyone on the planet to care for our common home.

Laudato Si' Week is sponsored by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and facilitated by Global Catholic Climate Movement and Renova+ in collaboration with a cohort of Catholic partners. More information can be found at: LaudatoSiWeek.org.

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole 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 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 recognize 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.

Pope Francis (Laudato Si)

On-line Resources

Resources on Bishops Conference of England & Wales at:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/environment/>

Film resources for discussion groups -could be done on-line eg through zoom

<http://www.ourcommonhome.co.uk>

Resources from the Global Catholic Climate Movement at:

<https://catholicclimatemovement.global/laudatosi/>

<http://www.laudatosiweek.org>

Laudato Si Study Guides can be downloaded at:

CAFOD Laudato Si' study guide and prayers at: <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Laudato-Si-encyclical>

Columbans Laudato Si' study guide at: <http://www.columbans.co.uk/news/laudato-si-columban-study-and-action-guide/>

Actions can include CAFOD Climate Campaigns : <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate>

Or [becoming a livesimply community](https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Livesimply-award) : <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Livesimply-award>

Praying with the Gospels, stories from around the world and excerpts from Laudato Si' from Liverpool J&P and CAFOD at <http://jp.liverpool.org.uk/resources>