

# Reflections during Creation Time 2017

Praying with the Gospels,  
stories from our time and Laudato Si'



Archdiocese of Liverpool  
Justice & Peace Commission

**CAFOD**  
Just one world

# Introduction

This is the second resource for Creation Time from CAFOD and the Liverpool Archdiocese Justice and Peace Commission, giving parish and other groups the opportunity to reflect on the Gospel readings for Creation Time in the light of Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*.

In the letter Pope Francis urges us to review how we live in the face of the damage being done to our planet, now and in the future, through climate change. He connects our responses to each other and to the planet – “everything is connected”. He reminds us that the consequences of climate change will affect us all, but will be worst for those in the poorer parts of the world, who have done the least to cause the problem and benefited least from the changes which have caused it.

Like the previous resource, this five week programme consists of the gospel readings for the Sundays of Creation Time, excerpts from *Laudato Si'*, stories to illustrate some of the issues, prayers and some challenging questions for discussion. This resource has only one story rather than the two stories in previous versions. The second story has been replaced with suggestions for action so that we can ‘walk the walk’ as well as ‘talk the talk’.

It is hoped that the resource will help those who use it to know more – or be “a little less ill informed” – and to use that knowledge to work, as Pope Francis urges us to, in combating climate change, its causes and its consequences.

## Creation Time Follow Up Day

Following the previous Creation Time courses, participants from all over the Archdiocese were keen to come together to share their experience of the resource and how to use the insights and knowledge they had gained to inform their actions in the future. It was also a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas for the next resource for the following year.

This year there will again be a follow up meeting for everyone who has taken part in the course. This will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at St Anne's Church, Overbury Street, Liverpool L7 3HJ with a shared lunch at the end.

Everyone is welcome – come along to share your ideas and your food in a simple meal.

This will be a very important occasion, at which, informed by the insights from our prayerful reflections and conversations, we can discuss ways of helping each other and our communities to respond to Pope Francis' call.

## Leaders Notes

There are some notes for leaders on page 24 which we hope will help those leading sessions. Please do refer to them. It would help enormously too please if you could let us know briefly the name of your parish or group which is using the resource and how many have taken part. Please email Steve Atherton: [s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk) or Ged Edwards: [gedwards@cafod.org.uk](mailto:gedwards@cafod.org.uk) or ring 0151 522 1080. Thanks once again!

# Week 1

## Stumbling blocks?



### (1) Scripture: Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September Mt 16:21-27

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.'



### (2) Points for discussion:

- What strikes you in this reading?
- What does a follower of Jesus look like today?
- What does it mean "for what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life" in the context of creation?



### (3) Story: The never ending party

"There was once an important chieftain who lived in the splendour that great wealth makes possible. He looked around the enormous long house in which he lived and gloried in the rows and rows of highly decorated wooden columns that stretched off into the distance. He gazed at the tapestries that depicted triumphant episodes from



his life. As he looked up at intricately woven thatched roof he felt a rush of pride when he saw the coloured representations of stars that were woven into it. "Surely," he thought, "no other chief has ever lived in such magnificence. No other chieftain has lived the good life in all its glory. I will put on a feast and invite all my friends and even my enemies so that they can see the magnificence in which I live."

The invitations duly went out and everyone was eager to find out the truth of the stories they had heard about fabulous splendour. On the night of the feast all agreed that the stories were indeed true. There was pomp, ceremony,

splendour, music, entertainment and seemingly inexhaustible supplies of good things to eat and drink. An enormous fire blazed, tables groaned under the weight of food, and wine and beer flowed like rivers. A fabulous party was underway and the hall echoed with song and laughter.

After hours and hours of feasting, one of the servants approached the chieftain and whispered to him that the supplies of food were growing low. The chieftain ordered that they went to the stores and brought out whatever was there. By now more than a little drunk, he shouted out "Tomorrow will look after itself." A while later, another servant approached and whispered to the chieftain that wood for the fire would soon be exhausted. "Nothing will stop this party!" exclaimed the chieftain. "Cut down the pillars at the back of the hall and add them to the fire. We will party till the morning comes."

This went on until one of the guest looked up in wonderment at the stars in the ceiling. "They are amazing!" he said to his neighbour. "They look like fire." "They are fire!" screamed the other person and shouted to the servants that the stars in the thatch had started to burn. A cry of alarm went up but by the time anyone could do anything, the back of the hall was burning fiercely and the fire was racing and roaring towards the partygoers...



#### (4) Points for discussion:

- Is our highest calling to be an efficient consumer?
- How can we consume responsibly?
- Where can we waste less?



#### (5) Laudato Si':

*#222 We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that "less is more". A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment.*



#### (6) Points for discussion:

- Can you think of examples of 'less is more'?
- Can you look out for examples of 'less is more' during the week?



CAFOD staff, volunteers and supporters from across the North-West (and beyond) meet in Manchester for the launch of the "One Climate, One World" campaign.



**(7) Action:**

- Can you eat less meat this week? Catholics have traditionally abstained from meat on Fridays but there is a recent secular initiative for 'Meat free Mondays'.
- Can you practise an 'attitude of gratitude' for what you do have?



**(8) Closing prayer:**

God of love you call us  
to transform your world  
so that all might flourish –  
to act justly and with hope  
so that all might live in peace.  
**May we answer your call.**

Lord of hope, you call us  
to care for the earth and its people  
so that all might flourish –  
to love tenderly and generously  
so that all might have enough.  
**May we answer your call.**



*Meat Free Monday: an international campaign that encourages people to not eat meat on Mondays to improve their health and the health of the planet.*

The sun rises behind Fiddlers Ferry coal-fired power station in Warrington, Cheshire.



# Week 2

## See – Judge – Act



### (1) Scripture: Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September Mt 18:15-20

'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'



### (2) Points for discussion:

- What strikes you?
- To whom do we need to listen?
- How do we stay 'a little less ill-informed'? (*Archbishop Patrick Kelly*)



### (3) Story: The campaigner who wants to free the seeds!

Kapil Shah works for an organisation in Maharashtra, India called Jatan: Mission for Organic Farming. Kapil says that at the start farmers were happy with the introduction of Monsanto's GM cotton. Good weather conditions and a high global price for cotton made it profitable for farmers to grow. So, many farmers stopped growing vegetables and other crops to just focus on cotton. After almost 8 years of growing GM cotton, farmers started to experience serious problems.

He says pesticide use had increased to the same level, or even more, than before the introduction of Monsanto's cotton. Pests have become more aggressive than they were before, with some even becoming resistant to pesticides, meaning that farmers are buying even more. Crops are becoming susceptible to diseases that previously were not a problem. Soil quality has deteriorated because GM cotton drains soil of its nutrients. The switch to cotton farming has also meant that less food was grown locally, leading to food shortages.



Kapil says the adoption of Monsanto's cotton has contributed to farmer suicides as they often find themselves with unmanageable debt and ever increasing production costs. Many farmers are now moving back to non-GM

cotton. "There was a marriage with Monsanto but the honeymoon is over and now farmers are ready to get divorced."

Kapil is hopeful for the future, predicting that more people will switch to organic agriculture and move away from chemicals. Kapil says there is a global fight against multinationals and their intensive, unsustainable agriculture.  
(*Global Justice Now*)



*Women who lost their husbands to suicide after they became bankrupt and couldn't cope with making repayments to moneylenders. They had taken out loans to pay for seeds and chemical fertilisers.*



#### **(4) Points for discussion:**

- What strikes you?
- Do you know of any other examples where methods of production are harming society?
- Is the big business model always appropriate?
- Should we be supporting local producers?



#### **(5) Laudato Si':**

*#67 Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures.*

*#139 When we speak of the "environment", what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.*

*#142 If everything is related, then the health of a society's institutions has consequences for the environment and the quality of human life.*



#### **(6) Points for discussion:**

- What strikes you?



#### **(7) Action:**

- Identify and support local producers and share the information. LOAF – Local, Organic, Animal Friendly, Fairtrade – most important of these is local for most people.
- John Lewis sell Fair Trade Organic cotton bedding – very good and hardly more expensive than their other sheets etc. Only in white though!  
[www.johnlewis.com/john-lewis-fairtrade-organic-200-thread-count-cotton-bedding-white/p1998214](http://www.johnlewis.com/john-lewis-fairtrade-organic-200-thread-count-cotton-bedding-white/p1998214)





## (8) Closing prayer: Prayer of the struggling farmer

Lord,

Show me the pain of those who are most troubled  
so that I can learn about the suffering of my people.

Grant me the courage to serve others  
because in surrender there is eternal life.

Illuminate us with song and celebration  
and raise the Spirit amongst us.

May the Spirit flower and grow

and give us strength to continue our struggle.

May we remember those who have died from injustice  
because for us they have given their lives.

Amen.

*A prayer written by Salvadoran farmers working with CAFOD's partner, the Jesuit Development Service.*



*Burscough Community Farm, Lancashire:  
debris left behind after a flood put the field under 6 feet of water on Boxing Day 2015.*



Food grows  
where water flows.

# Week 3

## Right relationships



### (1) Scripture: Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September Mt 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times'.

'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So, the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt.

When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt.

So, my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'



### (2) Points for discussion:

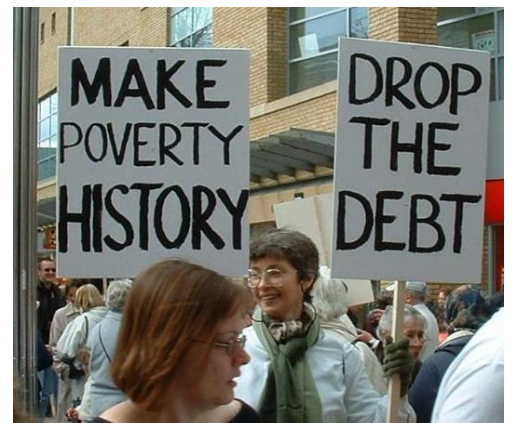
- What strikes you?
- Does our society need to seek forgiveness?
- What stops us passing on what we have been given?



### (3) Story: Drop the Debt

*(Please see the notes on page 14)*

The name for the successful Jubilee Debt Campaign which began in the mid-1990s had its origins in the *Book of Deuteronomy* in which there is an injunction that every 50<sup>th</sup> year there should be a Jubilee Year, during which any slaves should be freed and everyone would return to their land and family to live off what nature provided. An early response to the Campaign by the



International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, following extensive lobbying by pressure groups and charities, provided debt relief and low-interest loans to 37 countries with the highest levels of poverty and debt. Then, the late 1990s saw massive rallies at G8 meetings in Birmingham and Cologne, where a petition of 24 million signatures was handed to the G8 representatives. The G8 countries promised to write off \$100bn of debt at the Cologne summit in July 1999. One of the ensuing successes was Uganda, which was given \$1bn (£715m) worth of debt relief. The money gained from not having to pay off debts was used to double primary school enrolment. In Mozambique, a reduction in annual repayments from \$127m a year to \$52m allowed more to be spent on hospitals and housing.

The Jubilee Campaign was succeeded by the Make Poverty History Campaign which campaigned successfully at the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles. The undertakings made in Gleneagles have freed-up significant resources to be injected into health and education and other poverty-reducing programmes by developing countries. As a result of the debt-deal, Zambia was able to make healthcare free for everyone. Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia used debt cancellation to abolish fees for primary school. A survey of ten African countries that have had debts cancelled, recorded an increase of around 40% on education spending and 70% in healthcare.



There is still work to be done. In the world's poorest countries, people are dying in situations which would not cause loss of life in more wealthy countries, because of failures in food supplies, health care and education. Make Poverty History ([www.makepovertyhistory.org](http://www.makepovertyhistory.org)) argue that:

- Rich countries and the institutions they control must act to cancel all the unpayable debt of the poorest countries [...]
- We need a fair and transparent international process to make sure that human need takes priority over debt repayments [...]
- Poor countries should no longer have to privatise basic services or liberalise their economies as a condition for getting the debt relief they so desperately need.



#### **(4) Points for discussion:**

- What strikes you?
- How should we campaign today?
- Is it enough to sign online petitions?
- Do we always need to pay our debts?



### (5) Laudato Si':

#123 *The culture of relativism is the same disorder which drives one person to take advantage of another, to treat others as mere objects, imposing forced labour on them or enslaving them to pay their debts. The same kind of thinking leads to the sexual exploitation of children and abandonment of the elderly who no longer serve our interests. It is also the mindset of those who say: Let us allow the invisible forces of the market to regulate the economy, and consider their impact on society and nature as collateral damage. In the absence of objective truths or sound principles other than the satisfaction of our own desires and immediate needs, what limits can be placed on human trafficking, organized crime, the drug trade, commerce in blood diamonds and the fur of endangered species?*



### (6) Points for discussion:

- What strikes you?
- Should government debt be treated the same as private debt?
- Does it matter how debt is incurred?



### (7) Action:

Make Poverty History is still active: [www.makepovertyhistory.org](http://www.makepovertyhistory.org)

Also the Jubilee Debt Campaign: [www.jubileedebt.org.uk](http://www.jubileedebt.org.uk)

- Can we take part in the actions they suggest?
- Support CAFOD campaigns and projects:  
[www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Power-to-be/Energy-campaign](http://www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Power-to-be/Energy-campaign)



### (8) Closing prayer:

Father, you are an ocean of peace

and you grant us this gift through your Son Jesus Christ  
and the action of the Holy Spirit.

You sow it in our hearts through conversion and reconciliation.

You entrust us with peace,

making it our responsibility,  
converting us into builders of peace,

so that we build it with "passion, patience, experience and determination".

Walk with us as we act upon our responsibilities

in our social, political, economic, cultural and church lives.

Help us to spread respect for life, people and creation;

may we live in solidarity,

may we be brotherly and sisterly, and just,

and may we work for the common good.

Amen.

*Adapted from Colombian Bishops' Conference prayer by CAFOD.*





### Notes for Week 3

- The G8 refers to the world's eight richest countries, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The early response to the Jubilee Debt Campaign by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund was known as the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative.
- The outcome of the Gleneagles Summit was known as the MDRI (Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative).
- The figures quoted from the survey of ten African countries are estimates for all countries which have received debt relief under the HIPC Initiative and not only from the MDRI. (Source: Jubilee Campaign 2008: 'Unfinished business: Ten years of dropping the Debt'.)



*The eyes of the world were on Scotland in 2005. Over 225,000 protesters came to Edinburgh to promote the 'Make Poverty History' (MPH) campaign's demands. Organised by the various churches, aid charities and NGO's it aimed to put pressure on Gordon Brown and the G8 Finance Ministers to write off billions of uncollectable Third World debt.*

Drop the debt: make poverty history.

A demonstration at Edinburgh in 2005, was attended by more than 225,000 people and the undertakings made by the G8 countries at Gleneagles later that week provide an example of what can be achieved by an effective demonstration.



# Week 4

## A fairer world



### (1) Scripture: Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September Mt 20:1-16a

'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So, they went.

When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard."

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'



### (2) Story: Vineyard labourers

Some years ago, this story was at the heart of CAFOD's Monthly Prayers at CAFOD, Salford. We were told that in Jesus' time a denarius was a daily wage. So, the Vineyard owner was ensuring that those who worked for him and their families had enough to live on that day, as well as ensuring that his grapes were picked and the vineyard looked after.



Then, when we'd read the story, we asked each other a question: if people got the same pay whether they worked all day or just for one hour, who would turn up to look after the vineyard early the following morning?



That is not the point Jesus is making in the parable but it is something his audience would be considering, and so should we. If someone is being generous, fair and looking after their community, how would the community respond?

Both the community AND the vineyard owner need their common home. They are both bound to it. It keeps all of them alive and it is the responsibility of all of them to care for it. It would be the backdrop for every moment of their lives, their successes, failures, from cradle to grave, bringing them together and sustaining their lives and their family and community, body and soul. For the owner, he would know that importance of the vineyard and how people (including himself) depended upon it. A great responsibility. Without it, they would all have to move on, or perish.



Market Place for Workers  
Arequipa, Peru 2016



### (3) Points for discussion:

- What strikes you?
- What parallels can we see with our world today?
- Does this suggest the new relationship with the earth and with creation that Pope Francis talks about?



### (4) Laudato Si':

*#124 Any approach to an integral ecology, which by definition does not exclude human beings, needs to take account of the value of labour, as Saint John Paul II wisely noted in his Encyclical Laborem Exercens. According to the biblical account of creation, God placed man and woman in the garden he had created (cf. Gen 2:15) not only to preserve it ("keep") but also to make it fruitful ("till"). Labourers and craftsmen thus "maintain the fabric of the world" (Sir 38:34). Developing the created world in a prudent way is the best way of caring for it, as this means that we ourselves become the instrument used by God to bring out the potential which he himself inscribed in things: "The Lord created medicines out of the earth, and a sensible man will not despise them" (Sir 38:4).*



### (5) Points for discussion:

- What strikes you in the Pope's words?



### (6) Action

- The labourer is worth his hire (Lk 10:7) – are we prepared to pay more for better working conditions for producers?
- How can we use our power as consumers for good?
- Should we ask in shops about how their goods are produced?
- Should we boycott bad employers? Can we live without Amazon for example? [www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/dec/11/amazon-accused-of-intolerable-conditions-at-scottish-warehouse](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/dec/11/amazon-accused-of-intolerable-conditions-at-scottish-warehouse)
- Have a look at [www.frankfield.co.uk/upload/docs/Wild%20West%20Workplace.pdf](http://www.frankfield.co.uk/upload/docs/Wild%20West%20Workplace.pdf)



### **(7) Closing 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.

*(Laudato Si')*



# Week 5

## Call to action



### (1) Scripture: Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October Mt 21: 28-32

‘What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.’”



### (2) Points for discussion:

- What strikes you?
- Will our good intentions save the world?
- What does this mean in relation to how we are responding to the needs of Creation?



### (3) Story: Pollution by plastic

At present an estimated 8 million tonnes of plastic – everything from plastic bottles and plastic bags to microbeads – ends up in the sea every year. Experts estimate that plastic is eaten by 31 species of marine mammals and more than 100 species of sea birds. The plastic may choke them, deform them or fill them up so they don't feel hungry, don't eat their normal food and then starve.

**Plastic bottles:** In the UK, an average household uses 480 plastic bottles a year and only 270 are recycled. Over the country 16 million are unrecycled every day and end up in landfill, on beaches and in the sea. The carbon footprint of a 500ml bottle of water is on average 1000 times greater than a pint of tap water (160g CO<sub>2</sub> compared to 0.16g CO<sub>2</sub>). According to Greenpeace, five of the six leading soft drinks companies make a total of two million tonnes of plastic bottle every year – and Coca Cola, the largest of all, would not tell Greenpeace how many they made. Only 6.6% of these bottles are made from recycled plastic.



*Peanut: the turtle who got trapped in a six-pack ring at a young age, couldn't get out of it, and her body continued to grow around it.*

**Plastic bags:** These are also eaten by sea creatures. Bags damage sea life and take a long time to decompose – estimates range from 20-1000 years! In addition, once an animal that has ingested a plastic bag dies, it decays at a much faster rate than the bag, so the bag is released back into the environment for something else to eat it. The incredibly slow rate of decay of plastic bags also means that each bag we use compounds the problem, because the bags simply accumulate.

However, there is some good news. In England, the use of plastic bags has dropped by 83% – 9 billion bags – since the introduction of the 5p charge in October 2015. In addition, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Gove, has announced recently (21<sup>st</sup> July 2017) that he will bring forward legislation later this year to ban the use of microbeads – tiny plastic beads present in many products such as toothpaste – which end up in the sea where they are eaten by sea creatures.



**(4) Points for discussion:**

- What strikes you?
- What is your use of plastic?
- Could you use less plastic?



**(5) Laudato Si':**

*#21 Account must also be taken of the pollution produced by residue, including dangerous waste present in different areas. Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive, from homes and businesses, from construction and demolition sites, from clinical, electronic and industrial sources. The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish. Industrial waste and chemical products utilized in cities and agricultural areas can lead to bioaccumulation in the organisms of the local population, even when levels of toxins in those places are low. Frequently no measures are taken until after people's health has been irreversibly affected.*

#229 *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. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment.*



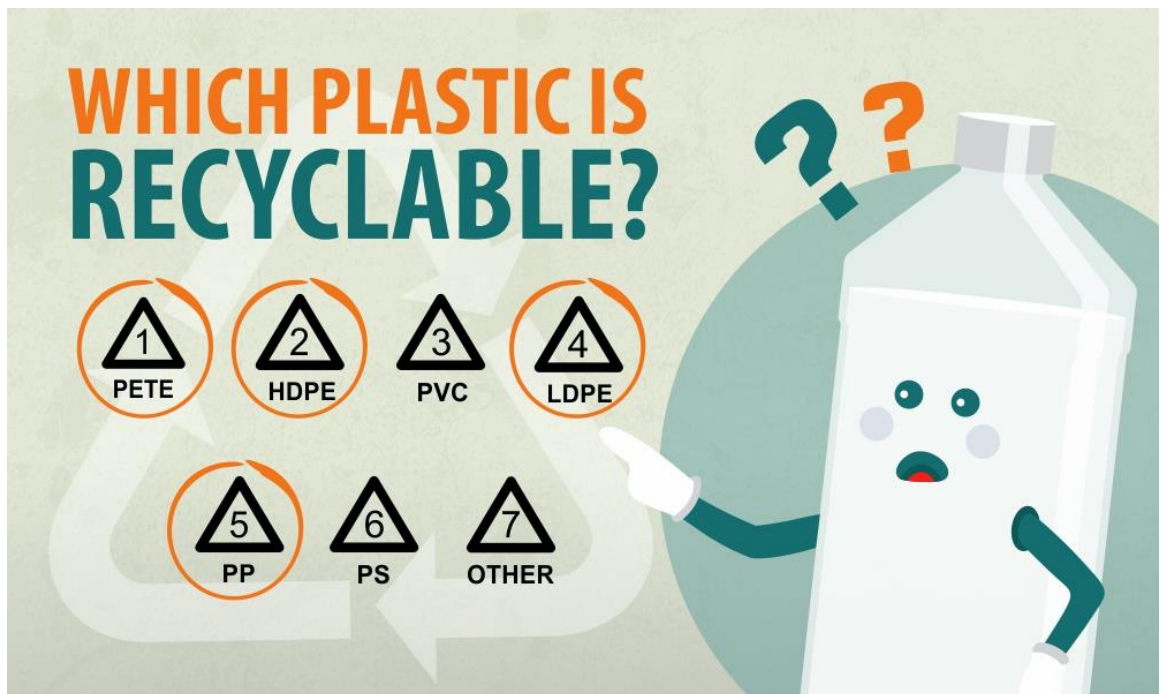
### (6) Points for discussion:

- What strikes you?
- Does this ring true to you?
- Does anyone else speak out so strongly?
- Are there parts of the world where this applies more than others?



### (7) Action

- Reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Write to Michael Gove to thank him for bringing forward legislation later this year to ban the use of microbeads and encourage him to continue and to your own MP to ask him/her to support the ban.
- Campaign e.g. with Greenpeace against plastic pollution [www.greenpeace.org.uk/what-we-do/oceans/plastics/](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/what-we-do/oceans/plastics/)
- Find out which of the seven varieties of plastic your local authority can recycle.
- Are there any points of action you feel moved to explore further now? Please share your ideas with the group who may be able to offer support too.



*Plastic products are marked with a number inside a triangle. This is a general guide to what plastic can be recycled (circled).*



## (8) Closing prayer: Laudato Si' 245

Triune Lord,  
wondrous community of infinite love,  
teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe,  
for all things speak of you.  
Awaken our praise and thankfulness  
for every being that you have made.  
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

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.



Environmental pollution  
washing ashore on the beach  
next to the Panama Canal.



# Leader's Notes

## Things to think about before the course

How will you let people know it is on?

Have you gathered a team to help to run the course?

Have you read through all the materials beforehand?

Access to room: key holder, heating, toilet.

Advertising: poster, newsletter insert, word of mouth; other parishes, ecumenical group.

How many booklets will you need and where will you get them?

Hospitality: tea & coffee, biscuits.

Layout of the room: circle of chairs or round tables?

Signage if any newcomers are expected.

## Things to think about during the course

Welcome.

Don't run out of time: We have found that 15 minutes each section is workable.

Will you collect booklets in or rely on participants bringing them back?

## Hints on gathering a group

Give enough notice.

Encouragement from the pulpit.

Use the poster.

Use the newsletter.

Word of mouth is best.

Do you have a target group?

Are there groups who could be invited? E.g. UCM, SVP.

## Hints on running a group

Relax, smile & make people feel welcome.

The basis of adult education is that people talk to each other.

Adults need time to reflect on their life experience.

Attitudinal change comes from talking as much as from listening.

## Hints on encouraging conversation

Ask people for their opinion.

Notice who has not said anything and try to involve them.

Try not to let anyone hog the conversation.

Disagree carefully! Don't tell people they're wrong.

## Hints on involving group members

Ask people to read various sections.

Use different people to read the gospels, stories, quotations, etc.

Suggest that people change their conversation partner from time to time.



## Suggested wording for parish newsletters

*Reflections During Creation Time is a new resource from CAFOD and the Justice & Peace Commission that uses Sunday Gospels and excerpts from 'Laudato Si' to reflect on our world. There is a session for each week of Creation Time. Each session last one hour. They will be held in \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. Please add your name to the list at the back of church or speak to \_\_\_\_\_. Everybody is welcome.*

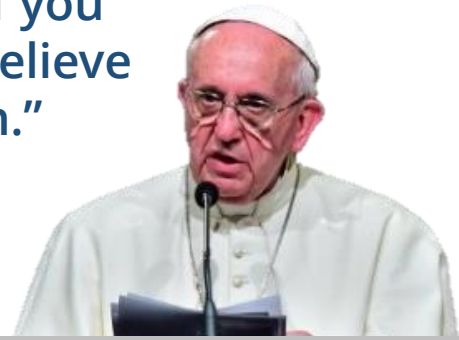
Thanks for organising the sessions!

The main thing is to get people discussing these issues and involved in 'being the change'.

Let us know how it goes at [gedwards@cafod.org.uk](mailto:gedwards@cafod.org.uk) or [s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk).

“God always forgives, we men forgive sometimes, but nature never forgives. If you give her a slap, she will give you one. I believe that we have exploited nature too much.”

Press conference, flight from Sri Lanka to the Philippines,  
January 15, 2015



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