



Food For Thought.... "Our Common Home"

A World Meteorological Organisations report published last Thursday said the July heatwave was "accompanied by dramatic ice melt in Greenland, in the Arctic and on European glaciers". Another report, recently issued states that every heatwave in Europe since 2003 was found to have been made "much more likely and more intense due to human-induced climate change"

Below are two different quotes- one from Scripture and one from *Laudato Si'* –Pope Francis' letter on the environment: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" Genesis 1:31 "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." Pope Francis.



In Genesis, we are shown the wonders of God's creation, that nothing was created without a purpose. Unfortunately, as Pope Francis tells us in *Laudato Si'*, we have plundered and damaged the earth unthinkingly. We have forgotten that creation is God's gift to us to treat with respect. We have a Climate Emergency - unless we act now to change our behaviour our children and grandchildren will not be able to save the planet. We were told by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) last year that to keep the rise in global temperature below 1.5C this century, emissions of carbon dioxide would have to be cut by 45% by 2030. Today we are told by Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, founder of the Potsdam Climate institute that, "While the world can't be healed within the next few years it may be fatally wounded by negligence until 2020." Prince Charles at a recent Commonwealth reception said that the next 18 months would decide our ability to keep climate change to survivable levels.

The recent heatwave set a record of 38°C in Cambridge recently. This week we have had flash flooding causing collapse of a bridge in Yorkshire and a dam in Derbyshire. However, we notice global warming changing our weather, what is happening here is magnified in Africa and other parts of the world. The local people In the Rift Valley in Kenya, nomadic tribes with their animals who subsist on the land, have moved south due to desertification of the land and are encroaching on other settled communities causing civil unrest. The Masai tribe have problems - their cattle have died. The Arctic ice is melting causing problems for both the human and animal

population. If current climate trends continue, by 2030 demand for water will have increased by 30%. Shrinking glaciers will reduce flow in crucial rivers; for example, the Ganges, Yellow, Indus, and Mekong rivers all depend on the Himalayas. Rising sea level will make fresh water salty while floods will contaminate clean water.

We do however have some good news. The Africans are building a Green Wall across the continent from Senegal to Sudan. Twenty countries are involved in bringing life back to degraded landscapes in building this structure 4,750 miles long and 9 miles wide. It is more than just growing trees and plants The Green Wall is transforming lives of the local people by giving them food, employment and protecting them against famine and drought. A wall to keep famine and drought out is so much better than a wall to keep out the people who are suffering from famine and drought. When complete, 100 million hectares of land will be restored from desertification, and the trees will absorb 250 million tons of carbon dioxide from the air. Our faith is one of hope and calls us to action. It calls us to refresh our relationships with God, creation and one another.

We can also find hope in the fact we are making progress. The UK Government passed the Climate Change Act 2008 which commits us to cut emissions. In 2015, world leaders signed the Paris Agreement a global Climate treaty. On the other hand, the Amazon Rain Forest is being destroyed at an alarming rate. Individuals are changing their lives by eating no or less meat, switching to clean energy suppliers,

recycling, and using less plastic. For example - Daily Bread on the Bedford Road will refill liquid soap, washing up liquid, shampoo, conditioner, toilet cleaner and floor cleaner from their containers to your own bottles. We can begin that change today.

Please sign a petition to the Prime Minister. In it, we are asking the UK government to move further, faster on climate action. We know that to avoid the worst effects of climate change we need to reach zero emissions as soon as possible. This means making sure that the emissions we put into the atmosphere are no greater than the ones we remove. The UK should put an end to their contribution to Climate Change.

For details about how to sign the Petition or for more information on how CAFOD is engaged with this campaign please visit: cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate/Our-Common-Home

Alternatively, pick up one of the “Global Healing: How our faith helps us care for our common home” information and summary packs produced by CaFE Productions and sponsored by the Bishops’ Conference. There is also a DVD film available to view – see Fr James to borrow!

