



PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION
TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 26TH AND 27TH SEPTEMBER 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the Pastoral Letter I sent during this season two years ago, I explained the venerable and rich tradition of care for creation contained in the teaching of the Catholic Church. In this special Jubilee Year of St Francis of Assisi, we once again, find ourselves in the Church's 'Season of Creation'ⁱ and a new opportunity is afforded to celebrate the harvest of good things which our earth gives to us through God's providence.

The Psalms remind us that the earth is full of God's riches, and these riches are a wonderful blessing which God desires to share with everyone. This Season of Creation takes place during the time of harvest, where we see and taste the fruits of our labours and of the long days of the growing season during spring and summer; there is a time and a season to our growing and our gathering, and we are invited to 'taste and see that the Lord is good.'

The teachings we find in recent papal documents such as *Laudato si'*ⁱⁱ, *Dilexi te*ⁱⁱⁱ, and *Magnifica Humanitas*^{iv}, call us to a deeper realisation of our vulnerability and our mutual need. In order to flourish and grow as human beings, we must listen to the 'cry of the poor' and the 'cry of the earth'. God reveals His love for us through the beauty of His creation and calls from us to demonstrate a loving response of responsible stewardship.

Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV has taken up the call made by his predecessor over the last decade, reminding us that our care for creation is not an optional part of our mission. We are urged to pray, act now, and not wait for others or until it is too late. In spite of challenges, we are seeing changes, both in attitudes and in the need and understanding for this call, with progress being made at many levels of our society.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has developed guidance for us in a teaching document on the environment, *The Call of Creation*. It says, "We are a people of hope who believe in redemption. We must study the signs of the times and take the action that is needed to repair our relationship with God's creation."^v

Two years ago, I encouraged all parishes and schools to work towards CAFOD's 'Live Simply Award'^{vi} as a way of "protecting this world which God has entrusted to us."^{vii} The Award enables Catholic communities to care for God's creation and stand in solidarity with our global family. I am pleased to inform you, that across the Dioceses of Leeds, Hallam and Middlesborough, there are now 11 parishes which have achieved the Live Simply Award, and several more starting the process.

I now urge every parish, working individually or together in a deanery, to form a small team to begin the Live Simply initiative. This has worked well in the parishes that have embraced the Award; there are now many good projects that can be shared to inspire others. We have found people of all ages wanting to engage with this work, giving their time and commitment, making a great deal of difference by a number of small actions in their personal lives. These are modern examples of the parable of the son who does the will of his father^{viii}, putting our faith into action in our parishes, homes and schools.

In the Diocese of Leeds, we have embedded sustainability into the strategy for all our charitable responsibilities and appointed a new trustee to lead this work. Our Diocesan Laudato Si' Sustainability Group provides help and assistance to parishes and schools. It has representatives from our parishes, our clergy and diocesan curial departments. New initiatives have been identified and are being actioned through its work. In Middlesbrough and Hallam too, endeavours are being developed to help us work collaboratively and sustainably as one family of faith in the service of God's people and the care of His creation.

May this Season of Creation be a time of worship and praise, when we thank God the Father, our Creator, for the fruits of His creation which serve as reminders of His goodness.

May this Season be a time of holiness and loving kindness, when we seek to grow closer to God the Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who calls us, as He called St Francis of Assisi in simplicity and humility of heart, to care for those of our brothers and sisters who are poor and marginalised.

May this Season be a time of peace and justice, when we confidently call upon God the Holy Spirit, our Helper and Comforter, who inspires us to live more simply and care for the earth, so that our life may embrace the goodness of all creation and care for the common home of all humanity.

Finally, may this Season lead us to that time when all peoples and nations will fully cherish and care for creation and, in union with Mary and all the Saints, will give praise to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity, living, eternal and true. Amen.

✠ Marcus
Bishop of Leeds
Apostolic Administrator of Middlesbrough
Apostolic Administrator of Hallam

Given at Leeds on the Feast of the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 8th September 2026, and appointed to be read at celebrations of Mass, and made available to be taken away from the churches and chapels of the Dioceses of Leeds, Middlesbrough and Hallam, on the Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Saturday 26th/Sunday 27th September 2026.

ⁱ The Season of Creation is an annual celebration uniting Christians in prayer and action for the protection of our common home. The season runs from 1st September to 4th October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi.

ⁱⁱ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html

^{iv} <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/encyclicals/documents/20260515-magnifica-humanitas.html>

^v <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/10/Call-of-Creation-2022b.pdf>

^{vi} <https://cafod.org.uk/campaign/livesimply-award>

^{vii} *Laudato Si*, §242

^{viii} Gospel reading for 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Matthew 21:28-32