

Tuesday: Caring for Our Common Home

Keywords

**Dialogue Eco-actions Ecological Crisis Humanitarian Threat
Mindfulness Contemplation Spirituality Common Home
Gospel Values**

Laudato Si' is a worldwide wake-up call to all, to help humanity understand the destruction that humankind is rendering on the environment and our neighbours. Usually letters written by the Pope are addressed to the Bishops of the Church or the lay faithful. But this letter is addressed to 'all people.' It concerns us all. Pope Francis wants to enter into dialogue with everyone concerning our common home. The following video clip explains the message of *Laudato Si'*. Following the advice of Pope Francis, the questions will allow us enter into dialogue about our common home. Before you watch the video clip, distribute the questions that students will be asked to engage with.

Watch: <https://youtu.be/KOgF2Kgel6k>

Discussion Questions:

1. Reflect on the ways in which our common home has been 'hurt and mistreated'?
2. List some of the 'simple everyday eco actions' that show care for our common home.
3. What 'simple everyday eco actions' has your school taken on board to show care for common home?
4. Can you suggest further 'simple everyday eco actions' that are not mentioned in the video?

As Christians, we are called to be a witness to Christ in the world. We are being called upon to find a solution to the ecological crisis – to act as Jesus would act. In response to *Laudato Si'* in 2015, a group of humanitarians and artists prepared an artistic display on the wall of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, as a gift to Pope Francis. The display features images of the urgent threats facing our common home. The full display lasted for almost an hour. Here are some of the highlights!

Watch: <https://youtu.be/jUlXyV3egLo>

Discussion:

The hash tag at the end of the video clip changes seven times. 'Our Common' stays the same but the next word changes.





Task:

1. Explain the significance of these seven changes.
2. Create your own artistic display, either through art work, or by creating a collage that you think represents the urgent threats to our common home.

In order to understand what it is we are being called to respond to as Christians, we need to first be aware that God is at home in each and every one of us. If we undertake to find God in ourselves, we will discover how we can best help one another and then the planet. Mindfulness is on many people's lips today. Mindfulness is about waking up and living in harmony with oneself and with the world. It has to do with examining who we are, with questioning our view of the world and our place in it, and trying to appreciate the fullness of each moment we are alive. 'Mindfulness gives you a happy heart!'

Watch: <https://youtu.be/awo8jUxlm0c>

Questions:

1. What does PBS stand for?
2. Do you think this simple strategy could be useful in your life?
3. In the video, one of the students says: 'Mindfulness makes me a better friend and sister. Before I didn't notice if people were feeling sad or lonely but after I learned mindfulness, I noticed and I wanted to help.'
How do you think this could help us in caring for our common home? Identify ways in which mindfulness could be used in school to aid our caring for our common home.

So let us ask the question: How do you see the world?

Watch: <https://youtu.be/B9l3BjfyS9Q>

Some facts from the video ...

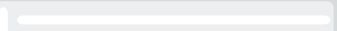
44% of people already live on less than 77p a day..



Martin: 'Everything was crushed. It looked like all our houses and roads had never been there.'



90% of people who die in natural disasters comes from the poorest countries.



Veronica: 'The river has been drying up which means uncertainty for food crops.'



In the earth heats up by 2-3° over the next 20 years, an extra 200 million people will be at risk of hunger.'



The President for the World Bank: 'If we don't confront climate change, we won't end poverty.'





Think – Pair – Share (Numeracy Task)

Read the following quote from the video.

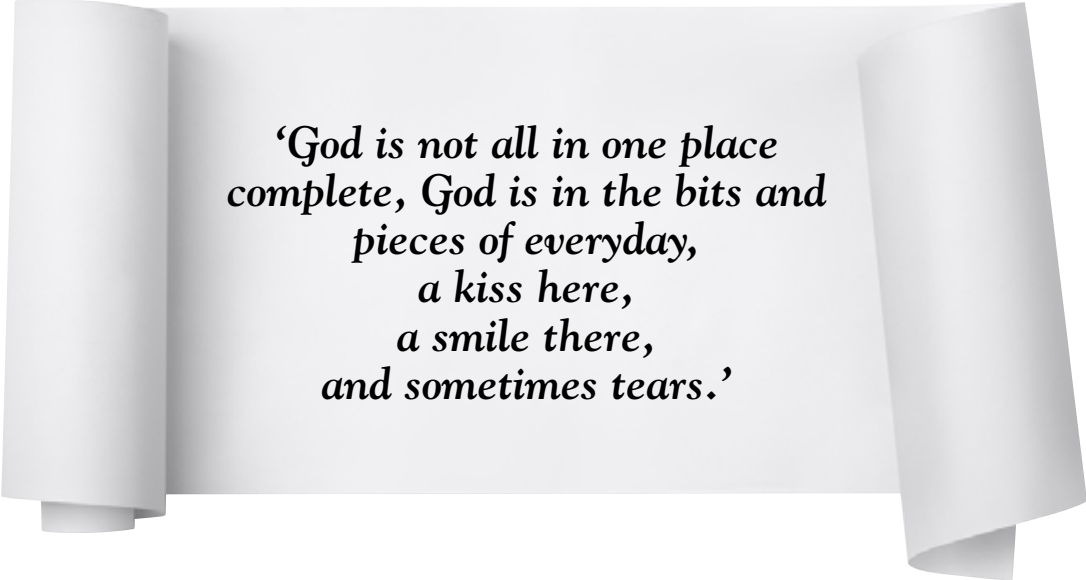
It's all about love. Not a flowers and chocolates love. It's a love that puts it's life on the line for its mates. It's a love that never walks by looking the other way. A love that dares to respect God, people and creation.'

1. Re-read the first underlined statement. Now read John 15:11–17. Find a line from this gospel passage that is similar. Record your answer in your copy.
2. Re-read the second underlined statement. Now read Luke 10:25–37. Explain the connection between the underlined statement and the gospel story.
3. In both of these statements, of what gospel values are we reminded?

Reflective Exercise

Based on the facts from the video, write a letter to either a person who survives on less than 77p a day, Martin, a poor community devastated by natural disasters, Veronica, a person that may be at risk of hunger in 2035 or the President of the World Bank. In the letter explain what you understand by the term 'Our Common Home' and the 'simply everyday eco-actions' that your family, your school, and you as an individual are going to take on board in order to help their living reality.

When asked 'How do you see the world?' and 'Where do we see God in the world?' we might turn to the poet Patrick Kavanagh to help us respond.



*'God is not all in one place
complete, God is in the bits and
pieces of everyday,
a kiss here,
a smile there,
and sometimes tears.'*

Reflective Exercise:

Having explored a little about mindfulness and thought about what the world means to me, take time to notice God in the 'bits and pieces of everyday'. Let us be mindful of God present in our lives.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls upon us to respond to God's work deep in our heart. To do this we must awaken our spiritual selves, so that we can be more reverent to the life around us. This is a very challenging task. The lives of the Irish Saints are a good way of looking for examples of how to live a good Christian life by show care for our common home. The lives of the early Irish saints have much to teach us about:

- The ecological survival of the planet
- The need to reach out and include the marginalised in our society
- The importance of women's leadership
- The need for contemplation
- The need for an awareness of the presence of God in all creation.

St Brigid, who's Feast Day is tomorrow, is a very good example of a saint that can teach us a lot. She is one of the strongest influences in Celtic Spirituality and some scholars would say a leading figure in the spread of early Irish Monasticism.

Task:

Research the life of St Brigid. Design a presentation either digitally or on paper. Include details about her concern for the survival of the planet, the need to reach out and include the marginalised, the importance of women's leadership, the need for prayer and contemplation and her awareness of the presence of God in creation. Alternatively, you could do the same research on any Irish Saint of your choice.

