

**Teams of Our Lady – Equipes Notre Dame GB**



# **Environmental Policy:**

## **Care For Our Common Home**

**February 2021**



## Environmental Policy: Care For Our Common Home

### INTRODUCTION

In 2015, Pope Francis issued the encyclical **Laudato si**; on care for our common home. This document, above all, makes the connection between loving our planet and loving our neighbour. He calls upon our world community to value and take care of our precious planet and its limited resources. There is no doubting the importance Pope Francis places on this. In September 2016, he said that prayer and action to protect the environment should be added to the seven corporal works of mercy. He calls on us all to re-configure our mindsets and change our lifestyles in the light of global warming and the damage it is causing to the earth and especially to the most vulnerable people on it.

In **‘Vocation and Mission’** (ERI July 2018) we again hear this challenge:

*‘... when competitiveness and consumerism hide a diminishing of ethics, and equally of God, we are entering into a culture of rejection... The culture of rejection is also a culture of waste, of the “useable and disposable”, which harms nature and the quality of life. God speaks to (people) through His visible creation, and through what we can hear; the cries of the abandoned, the cries of our sister Earth, mistreated as never before, calling out for a change of direction. God has put His Creation into the hands of the couple and we are therefore heirs to, and responsible for how we respond as a community to, this beauty and fullness of which He dreamed... if the Earth goes to waste and if the quality of life of our descendants continues to deteriorate, our message of love and marriage will fall on deaf ears; people will have different priorities.’*

We propose that we go forward in hope and love. Let us, as married couples and as the Teams movement take the opportunity of reflecting, praying and, most importantly, taking action for social and environmental justice, while giving thanks for the beauty of God’s creation of which we are part.

Teams GB and Teams members are challenged and encouraged to care for our common home, the earth, by following sustainable practice and taking into account global and local environmental considerations for present and future generations, in the conservation and use of resources in Teams events and at home, in helping to develop more sustainable lifestyles and in concerns for action on global environmental issues.

## **PRACTICAL ACTION**

Let us, as The Teams movement and as couples, endeavour to

- Joyfully reflect on the beauty of God's creation and give thanks for God's gift of it to us through our prayers and Liturgy wherever possible.
- Understand the basis in our faith for taking care of creation with special reference to Laudato Si.
- Raise awareness and educate ourselves about the damage done to God's creation, particularly damage that results in injustice, through the practices of individuals, companies and countries, and through extreme weather conditions.
- Help ourselves and others make the connections, as Pope Francis does, between our use of resources and the effects this has on the poorest and most vulnerable people in our world.
- Be open to take action as a movement in response to the plight of people, including Teams members affected by environmental damage
- Support each other to have a collective lifestyle that cares for others and the earth; our common home

**In doing so, we challenge and encourage each other to**

### **Prayer and Study**

- Mark special days relating to caring for God's earth, our common home (e.g. Peace Sunday, World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation etc.) in our newsletter.
- Include environmental issues in our prayer.
- Consider issues around care for our common home for Sit Downs, discussion and study topics.
- Include items relating to the theme of caring for our common home in our newsletters and website.

### **Use of Resources**

- Enquire about the environmental policies in place when choosing venues for gatherings.
- Use resources with consideration of the '3Rs': Reduce, Re-use, Recycle including the following
  - Reduce paper usage: For example, carefully consider whether hard copies of literature, documents, newsletters, publicity and training material etc are necessary or whether the material can be stored and distributed electronically. Consideration should be given to the intended audience, the number of copies needed and the time span before up-dates will be needed. When hard copies are needed, use recyclable materials, recycled paper and double-sided copying/printing.
  - Use re-usable cutlery, crockery etc as a first choice. If not possible, use disposables (e.g. paper cups and plates etc.) that are biodegradable and/or recyclable
  - Avoid single-use plastic
  - Use gas, electricity and water carefully
  - Dispose responsibly of what we don't need, by giving away to charities or recycling organisations.
- Use environmentally-friendly products, for example, for printing and cleaning

- Use Fairtrade, organically and ethically sourced items where possible.
- Use food that is locally grown/organic/Fairtrade/ethically sourced where possible
- Reduce our consumption of meat when possible, which will help to reduce greenhouse gases and make more land for grain crops. This includes providing vegetarian and /or vegan options for meals at catered Teams Gatherings
- Take steps to reduce food waste (e.g. through composting and minimising leftovers)

### **Transport**

- Use cars less, maximize the use of public transport and give careful consideration to whether we really need to fly.

For example

- Walk or cycle to Teams meetings if able to
- Use public transport when travelling to Teams meetings and events<sup>1</sup>
- Use car sharing when travelling to Teams meetings and events<sup>2</sup>
- Use virtual meetings as first options for business and planning meetings
- Consider use of venues for gatherings that have good public transport links
- Live-stream events to allow members to take part virtually as well as in person.

<sup>1,2</sup> January 2021: The present Covid19 pandemic reduces the ability of people to safely use public transport and car sharing. Teams members are encouraged consider the most environmentally friendly method of travel following Government guidance and legislation and to use public transport and car sharing when it is safe to do so.

***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 upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.  
Fill us with your peace, that we may live  
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognise 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'

**Communication of Policy**

To be placed on TeamsGB website

To be circulated (via website link) to all Regional and Sector Couples

**Review of Policy**

The policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every 3 years.

**Agreed**

This policy was agreed by the Trustees on ..... 2021

Signed: .....Chairperson    Date: .....

**References and Sources:**

Laudato si' On Care For Our Common Home; Pope Francis 2015

'Vocation and Mission'; ERI July 2018

Diocese of Middlesbrough Justice and Peace Commission: Diocese Environmental Policy

Ecochurch Survey V2 2018: [ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk)

Hope in God's Future; Joint Public Issues Team. (JPIT is made up of the Baptist Union, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, working together for peace and justice).