

## **Season of Creation week two The climate is a common good**

### **Passages from Laudato Si**

# 2 This sister [the earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor.

# 23 The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.

# 25 Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.

# 138 Ecology studies the relationship between living organisms and the environment in which they develop. It cannot be emphasised enough how everything is interconnected.

# 158 In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.

**Witness:** The Lord gave me the strength to swim

In November 2013, one of the most powerful cyclones ever to make landfall hit the Philippines. During Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda, the wind gusted up to 235km an hour, whipping up the sea and tearing over a million houses apart.

Edzil was out at sea in a fishing boat when the typhoon struck. "There were big waves," remembers the young fisherman. "The boat rocked and went over. I held onto anything I could. I swam for three hours. The water felt freezing. My mind was confused. I thought I would die that day. I did not know how I could keep swimming. The Lord gave me the strength to swim."

Edzil didn't know it then, but over 6,000 people lost their lives in the storm and 14 million were affected. "There were many people on our boat," he says, "and all the others died. I was worried about my parents because I love them." Back on land, a 12-foot-high wall of fast-moving water obliterated everything in its path – including Edzil's home. Luckily, his parents took refuge in a stronger house: "Thank God the house had a second floor" he says. "They were safe. There were many people there - tight like sardines."

Following his extraordinary survival, Edzil has new plans: "I have a mission now – to look after my parents. I want to go back to school and become an engineer. I have a good brain, like Albert Einstein!" He puts on a cheerful face, but his relationship with the sea has changed forever. "I don't want to be a fisherman," he says. "Our sea is not clean, it is dirty. There are dead people in it. When I look at the sea I can't forget my memories of Typhoon Yolanda."

**Reflection:** Edzil will never forget what happened to him in the typhoon: it has scarred him for life. Climate change is making disasters more frequent and more intense. It is the most vulnerable communities who are hit hardest.

The Catholic Bishops of the Philippines released a document in 1988 entitled What is happening to our beautiful land? In this they ask, "We often use the word progress to describe what has taken place over the past few decades. But can we say that there is real progress? The poor are as disadvantaged as ever and the natural world has been grievously wounded."

The hand of greed has plundered the earth's resources for profit, having forgotten that God is the Lord of all. Many of our global neighbours who are living in poverty bear witness to this injustice on a daily basis. We recognise the times we have turned away from protecting creation. We are called to change our lives, and to lead all creatures back to reflect God's glory.

Reflect on ways you may have turned away from loving God, our neighbour and the earth.

- How do my actions show that I love my neighbour, especially those who are living in poverty?
- Do I strive to cherish and protect creation, remembering that God is the creator of all? In what ways do I do this?
- What are my dreams and ambitions? How do these reflect the Christian conviction that "less is more"?

**Pray:** 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 earth and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Extract from 'A prayer for our earth', Laudato Si'

**Act:** Watch the film The common good on the DVD or at: [cafod.org.uk/climatereflections](http://cafod.org.uk/climatereflections)

**Full Guide at**

<https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/26268/190849/version/9/Laudato%20Si%20study%20guide-%20final.pdf>