

Season of Creation week three A universal family

Passages from Laudato Si

9 As Christians, we are called “to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with God and our neighbours on a global scale.”

52 We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalisation of indifference.

92 Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.

232 Around community actions, relationships develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges. Thus, a community can break out of the indifference induced by consumerism. These actions cultivate a shared identity, with a story which can be remembered and handed on. In this way, the world, and the quality of life of the poorest, are cared for, with a sense of solidarity which is at the same time aware that we live in a common home which God has entrusted to us. These community actions, when they express self-giving love, can also become intense spiritual experiences.

Witness: Travelling the livesimply journey

Brenda Underwood is livesimply co-ordinator at the Brentwood Cathedral parish of St Mary and St Helen’s. The parish was the first Cathedral to win this national award for living simply, sustainably, and in solidarity with people in poverty. Brenda tells us her story: To be honest, the idea of becoming a livesimply parish was a little daunting at first. But nevertheless we took up the challenge and started to ponder about where this journey might take us. Engaging the parish community has to be the foundation of livesimply. Recognising this, we used the parish newsletter to inform everyone about the exciting possibility of becoming a livesimply parish. We invited parishioners to share their ideas. Lots has happened since then. We now hold an annual ‘livesimply week’ where we take up a different challenge each day. This year included a walk, Mass and picnic, a prayer vigil, and a food bank collection. The challenges people set themselves range from walking to church, to just making someone smile! We also did an environmental audit of the parish buildings and changed hundreds of light bulbs to low energy alternatives. We are applying to become a Fairtrade parish. Livesimply provides a real opportunity to pause for thought and to consider the impact of our actions and inactions. We were delighted to be told that after months of hard work we had won the award! However, we know that the award is but a step along the way. They say that travel broadens the mind – certainly the livesimply journey has opened our eyes to the endless opportunities available for us all to make a difference.

Reflection: When we look around us today, we see more and more how people are becoming indifferent to each other’s needs. It is not fair that some should have everything, and others should have nothing. Pope Francis calls us to break down the walls of indifference, and renew our understanding of the bonds that unite us. The livesimply programme is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when communities come together to care for creation. As Father Martin Boland, Dean of St Mary and St Helen’s parish, says, “By making choices to live sustainably and simply, we shift attitudes, make change possible and act as responsible stewards of creation. In this way, the smallest action releases a ripple of hope whose energy can be harnessed for the common good.”

- Pope Francis says, “We are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage” #92. What do you think this means?
- What inspires you about the livesimply parish described here? In what ways is your parish like this one, and in what ways is it different?
- What do you think it means to flourish in relationship with God, our neighbour, ourselves and the earth?

Pray: Living God, have mercy on us, for the times we forget that we belong to each other. You call us to be still, to hear the whisper of our Sister Wind, to feel the radiance of our Brother Sun, to be nourished by our Mother Earth. Renew us in your healing love. Inspire us to water the earth, and nurture one another, so all may flourish. Together, as one family, may we always sing your praise. Through Christ our Lord, Amen. Amen

Rachel McCarthy/CAFOD P

Act: • Watch the film: Who is my neighbour? On the DVD or visit: cafod.org.uk/climatereflections

- Make a commitment to care for the world’s poorest people and the earth by making simple daily gestures. Read our tips: cafod.org.uk/playyourpart
- Find out more about being a livesimply parish: cafod.org.uk/livesimply

Full Guide at

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