



# DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

**Rt Rev Robert Byrne CO**  
**Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle**

Bishop's House, 26 West Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle, NE3 4ES  
Tel: 0191 228 0003 | Fax: 0191 274 0432 | Email: bishop.robert@rcdhn.org.uk | Web: www.rcdhn.org.uk

October 2021

## **Pastoral Letter to Primary Schools**

Dear Children of the Diocese

I know you will have heard about the meeting of world leaders in Glasgow early next month called COP26, which will discuss climate change and the environment. This is an urgent and important conference, and I am writing to you to ask that you pray for the success of the meeting.

I am sure you will have done lots of work in school looking at the environment and how important it is that we take care of our planet. You will have heard that our world is being damaged by the thoughtless actions of people. We believe it is our duty to care for creation and to behave responsibly. God created a world that is so beautiful, but people have taken it for granted and wasted its resources so that now it is suffering.

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis asked us to hear the cries of the earth. We can do that by speaking up and asking for changes to be made that will put right the damage done. Pope Francis also asked us to hear the cries of the poor. He reminded us that it is the world's poorest communities, who have done the least to cause the climate crisis, that are suffering the most because of global warming. Many of you will have taken part in CAFOD's *Eyes of the World* campaign which reminded us that the eyes of the world are on us while our country hosts world leaders for the COP26. Through that work you asked the Prime Minister to support the world's poorest communities affected by the climate crisis.

As the world leaders of the most powerful countries meet, they will try to make agreements and promises that will shape the future of our global family. They must think and act in the best interest of every person on the planet. Our political leaders must present realistic and achievable decisions which will stop global warming and protect the planet for years to come - for your children and grandchildren in the future.

I am writing to you today to ask you to pray daily during the COP26 meeting from 1-12 November, that world leaders may understand how important it is to make the right decisions now to give us a healthy environment in the future. The diocesan Department for Education has prepared some prayer resources for you to have a short prayer time in class each day during COP26.

cont/.....

...../2

A suggested prayer might be:

*Loving Father,  
We know that,  
either through ignorance or greed,  
the Earth, our common home, is damaged.  
That damage is felt most by people who have done little to cause it.  
The world's natural resources are being used up,  
endangering wildlife, causing climate change,  
and resulting in disasters and global warming.  
Father, forgive us, and guide us.  
Send your Spirit to encourage and strengthen  
our world leaders as they meet at COP26.  
Help them to recognise the way that we must now go,  
agreeing the changes and decisions necessary  
to begin to repair the damage done  
and to prepare a healthy and secure world for future generations.  
And we ask Mary, our Mother, to intercede for us, and with us, in our need. Amen*

Children of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, I invite and encourage us all to place our trust in the power of prayer. I am also asking you to talk about the problems of climate change with your friends and families. Try to make changes to your own lives that will help to look after our planet. I am sure you will have lots of ideas of how to do that and your teachers will help you.

Together we can build a better world and one which truly reflects the beauty of the creation that God has given us to look after.

With every good wish and blessing to you all.

*+ Robert Byrne CO.*

✠ Rt Rev Robert Byrne CO  
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

