

Climate Change, The Paris Agreement and Laudato Si'.

This is an attempt to update the previous position paper, prepared by Brian. The situation he described has, if anything, become worse and action needed is ever more urgent.

Pope Francis published his Encyclical "Laudato Si'", (Praised be to you, O my Lord), in June 2015 and addressed it to all people on earth. In it he brings together two major problems, poverty or the growing inequalities we are experiencing, and the environment, and tells us that we are faced with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. (L.S. 139). He calls us all to an ecological conversion.

The timing of Laudato Si' was clearly to influence the Paris Climate talks, COP 21, in December 2015. The talks were a success and 195 countries agreed to

- take actions to limit global warming to below 2°C and aiming for 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;
- to provide finance, \$100 billion per year to assist the poorer nations to develop and to cope with the effects of climate change;
- to have a regular stock take of the NDCs (nationally determined contributions) to check that each country is on target, and is doing what they promised, every five years beginning in 2018, and thence to ratchet up their targets as technology and experience helps to raise ambitions;
- and to involve and include other players – cities, companies, industries, NGOs.

Following on from COP21 IN 2015, there have been two more meetings, COP22 and COP23 (COP stands for Conference of the Parties, i.e. all countries in the United Nations). You can find out what happened at COP23 HERE: <https://cop23.unfccc.int/>.

U.N. sponsored talks since Paris have included the talks in Kigali, Ruanda, where 170 countries have agreed to phase out HFCs, (hydrofluorocarbons) which are used mainly in air conditioning units and refrigeration, although the time scales perhaps need to be reduced. HFCs are thousands of times more damaging to the environment than CO₂.

The successes of these two Conferences could pave the way forward for a world where everyone sees that we all have responsibility for our lifestyles and its effect on the climate. President Trump, of the U.S.A. , is clearly a danger to the progress achieved in recent years. He has said that the U.S. will pull out of the Paris Agreement. No-one else has followed his lead yet, and indeed Syria and Nicaragua have signed the agreement. The obvious area where this withdrawal will have an effect is in climate finance. The U.S., being the richest country and one of the main polluters, would have been expected to donate a large amount to the fund.

President Macron, of France, convened a Climate Conference to mark the second anniversary of the PARIS Agreement. This was to discuss the issue of Climate Finance, and clearly is ignoring the stance of the U.S. The results of this conference can

be seen here: <https://cop23.unfccc.int/news/one-planet-summit-finance-commitments-fire-up-higher-momentum-for-paris-climate-change-agreement>

This seems to be very positive, and indeed should be welcomed.

Next year, 2018, will see the first of the global stock takes. This is hugely important. If this proves to be a success then that should provide impetus for even more stringent targets for reducing emissions. The current targets indicate that warming will peak at around 3.2°C, so clearly a lot more needs to be done if we are to achieve a target of below 2°.

When I read about the effects of rising sea levels, melting ice caps, increasing severity of weather events, droughts, storms, floods, and so on, I can become overwhelmed and feel helpless. So what can I do? First of all pray. Pray that I may have the courage to look at myself, examine my lifestyles, and pray for a change in my attitudes.

Read the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and study it. Follow Pope Francis' suggestions "avoid the use of plastic and paper, reduce water consumption, separate refuse, cook only what can be consumed, show care for other living beings, use public transport or car-share, plant trees, turn off unnecessary lights and appliances.

The damage that plastic is doing, especially in the seas and oceans, has recently been highlighted in the media. We can all make an effort not to use plastic, especially when we are buying food, and in all aspects of our lives.

Finally, I appeal to everyone to consider CAFOD's Live Simply Parish scheme. This is an excellent way to involve fellow parishioners and to begin that eco-conversion that Pope Francis calls for.

P.M.