



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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Pastoral Letter to Secondary Schools

Dear Young People of the Diocese

We are all aware that there is to be a meeting of world leaders in Glasgow early next month. COP26, as it is called, has been convened to discuss the environmental crisis. This is an urgent and important meeting and I am writing to you to ask that you support this initiative in witness to our Catholic faith and for the sake of the future of the human family. We know of the damage that the human race is doing to the world by the way we live. Scientists are now able to predict changing weather conditions and environmental events, but many are concerned that things are getting worse more quickly than we thought.

Care for the environment and for creation is deeply rooted in our Christian Faith. We are the guardians of creation and responsible for its well-being. We have probably ignored or taken it for granted for too long. By accident, we have exploited all that our planet has to offer us in abundance. We all have our own part to play in making our voice heard and to call for changes to be made that will put right the wrong we have done. It is the duty of all Christians and those of other faiths to care for creation.

As the world leaders of powerful countries meet, they will try to make agreements and pledges. They must think and act in the best interest of every person on the planet. Our political leaders must try and help by making realistic and achievable decisions which will stop global warming and protect the planet for your children and grandchildren in years to come.

I am writing to you today to ask you to pray daily and especially during the COP26 meeting 1-12 November, that world leaders may understand the urgency of making radical decisions which are needed now to give us a healthy environment.

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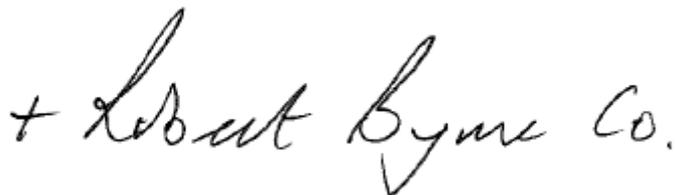
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A suggested prayer might be:

*Loving Father,
We acknowledge 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. Industrialisation has
exploited natural resources,
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.
Cause them to discern 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*

Young people 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 make known this crisis to your friends and families and to make appropriate efforts to make changes to your own lives that will have a positive impact in helping to rescue this serious situation. Together we can build a better world and one which truly reflects the beauty of the creation that God has given us on trust.

With every good wish and blessing to you all.



✠ Rt Rev Robert Byrne CO
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