

**National Office for Vocation**  
**COP-26 Assembly**  
**'Sowing the seeds of the future'**

**Begin with the Sign of the Cross**

**SLIDE 1:**

**Introduction to the Assembly**

This week our assembly will look at our own call to be stewards of the earth. God calls us to look after our planet and to care for all His creation. Our vocation as God's people is to protect our common home and the resources within it. In November this year the UK will host the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference of Parties in Glasgow, between the 31<sup>st</sup> October and the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021. It's one of the biggest global climate change events, with 197 members known as 'parties' to the treaty.

Other organisations will join the event, both inside and outside the conference centre such as charities and businesses. Pope Francis will also be involved with the talks, showing the significance of this event for Catholics around the world and within the UK. Many people from around the UK are planning on taking a pilgrimage to pray for the success of the talks and some will be campaigning outside the conference centre. The National Office for Vocation will be in attendance to run events throughout the city and to promote the call to each individual to become stewards of the earth and how they can live this out in their daily lives.

**SLIDE 2:**

Pope Francis has written a letter to **everyone** expressing the importance of the care for our common home, called Laudato Si. That is why it is everyone's responsibility and why we want to raise awareness of this call to protect our common home together. Pope Francis said in his letter:

*'I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all'.*

**SLIDE 3:**

Therefore, we receive a deep inner call from the Pope's message in Laudato Si, to be 'stewards of creation' and we need to all play our part. How can we sow the seeds for generations yet to come? We ourselves are all on a journey in life and it is our own daily actions which impact who we become in the future and what type of world we live in. Let's look at a piece of Scripture from Luke's Gospel and think about which soil we place ourselves in.

**SLIDE 4:**

**The Parable of the Sower Matthew 13 1-23 (NIV)**

*That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear."*

It is interesting... Jesus went out to sit by the lake, and as he looked out, the vision before him provoked this thought. He would have seen many people, all different heights, weights, ages... all different clothes, unique faces... he saw the wonder of creation before him, and it made him think of seeds!

What is a seed if not a miniscule pod of potential? From there grows a dream into reality... and sometimes circumstances make all the difference.

We can read the journey of the seed in our lives.

We are born, innocent into this world, full of potential. Dreams are often laid upon us, or "gifted" to us by our parents, teachers, or family. God our creator has a dream for us too... that dream is always full of love and the desire that we will become more wonderful than anybody can imagine. But we are not passive actors in this life-drama. We too have dreams, hopes, fears. We too have our part to play in forming our future. Sometimes we choose poorly and allow ourselves to be influenced by the weeds around us, or wilt under the sun beating down upon our shallow-laid roots. We have to nurture our own soil, watering it with the life-giving water of life that comes from Jesus, from the rich-sustaining Word of God, with the warmth of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus looked at those crowds, he saw a wonderful variety, that variety which our Heavenly Father planted, and the fruits of our own hard work in growing into the dream we create for ourselves.

So let us reflect on the seed today... what soil do you place yourself in?

**(Give students a minute to reflect)**

## **SLIDE 5**

We are called to be stewards of creation and that is an important call to everyone. Let's get this message across when the COP26 takes place in Glasgow. The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in their Pentecost message stated:

*The actions of parishes, families, schools, and individuals will have a significant impact on our efforts to restore our common home. There are now many resources, freely available, to advise us on our choice of food, saving of water and electricity, suggestions about travel, waste, and re-use. These are measures that everyone can*

*employ, in some degree, with minimal inconvenience and change. They are effective ways in which we can each reaffirm our personal vocation to be stewards of creation.*

## **SLIDE 6**

There are many ways suggested in this message to change our own habits and one way to get involved and take part is through creating a vocation garden.

The National Office for Vocation encourages schools to set up a group, or ask an established group in the school to manage the garden and take care of it.

It has to be a designated place of prayer and one that makes everyone think and pray about their own personal vocation and the call to look after the world around us. The aim of this is to see each plant grow, just like one's individual vocation in life, whilst also reflecting on the call to look after creation.

Each school that sets up a Vocation Garden will get two free packs of seeds (2m<sup>2</sup>) to start your garden off and then the rest is up to you to make that space flourish. This allows you to do something within your own schools, to mark the need for climate change awareness as the COP26 conference takes place, but also for the long term benefits to your own community and our world.

## **SLIDE 7**

For groups that are going on pilgrimage to Glasgow the National Office for Vocation will be there, running a number of events around the city for groups and individuals to get involved with, including:

Talks on Laudato Si &  
Care for our Common Home.  
Carlo Acutis Miracle Exhibition  
Mercy Bus (Reconciliation and Prayer space)  
Welcome Hub at the **Pauline Bookstore**  
Night Fever  
*\*Venues TBC*

Everyone is welcome at all events that are on offer the weekend of the Friday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November, to be with us and the many other organisations that will be present over the weekend.

*'God's voice deep inside us can be a small whisper like a seed. With pollution of other sounds, swamped with other concerns that "little voice" can be forgotten.*  
Fr Paul Annis MCCJ

Let us use that call from God and nurture it like a seed in order to become what God wants us to be. Let us go and enjoy God's creation and care for it, the parks and green spaces in the city, the fields and forests in the countryside, and the sand and seas on the coast. Go and find silence in these spaces to hear what God is calling us to and how he is using us as a voice to be stewards of creation.

## **SLIDE 8**

Let us end today in prayer as we think about ways we can be involved as a school and promote the call to become good stewards of our common home.

God our loving Father,  
you created and continue to give life to the world  
through Your Word, Jesus Christ, in the power of Your Holy Spirit

You called us all from the dust of the earth, to participate in your divine life,  
and have entrusted to us the care of this same earth for the good of all creation.

Give us today, the courage we need  
to stand up as witnesses and defenders of this great gift of our world.  
Give us the strength and conviction to change our individual ways, so that our  
choices may not cause unnecessary harm to our common home,  
and that where we cause harm, we resolve to compensate.

We pray that you will move the world to care for one another in a spirit of solidarity,  
and that the world may still have the resources to heal itself.

We ask this through Christ our Lord,  
Amen.

**End with the sign of the Cross.**