



# DIOCESE OF SALFORD

## *Pastoral Letter of the Right Reverend John Arnold Bishop of Salford*

*To be read in all Schools in the week leading up to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019,  
Ash Wednesday*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With Lent just around the corner, it is time to think about our relationship with God and ways to live out our faith. Lent is a time where we pray more, fast and give to others.

This year, we have a very special job for you. We need you to help save our common home: the earth. This is our special home that God made for us and he asks us all to look after it.

People are talking about the need for us to care for the world better and to find ways to help the world to heal from the pollution caused by the way we live and the way we use the world's resources. This is called 'Climate Change'. We have already seen the effects of this with floods and very high temperatures which mean that people and animals starve because essential foods cannot grow. Sea levels are rising which leads to loss of homes for people and animals.

It doesn't have to be like this. We can still work together to build, repair and heal our common home.

And we really do need to work together. We cannot leave it to others. Pope Francis asks us all to make changes to our lives and to do it now because we still have time to heal the world. But we must do it now and not leave it until it's too late.

God created the world. God created us. Creation is God's gift to us and God asked us to look after his creation. God wants us to choose to do what is right. God offers us the understanding and the strength needed to make brave and vital changes in our lives.

Small acts of great love can make a really big difference. So what can we do? We can walk and use our cars less; wear jumpers and turn the heating down; turn off lights in empty rooms; hang out the washing instead of using the tumble dryer; turn off our computers and games consoles; make less waste and recycle more. This may not sound like very much, but it all makes a big difference. So let's put love for God, love for our home and love for each other into action today. We can also remind our families and friends to join in so that everyone understands how and why they need to help.

I would like your parish and school to make this a part of their mission. I would like you all to watch "Global Healing" to help us to think about things we can do to make a difference. Let us respond to Pope Francis' call to work together all around the world to heal our planet. Let's make our diocesan community a great place for putting into action ways to heal our planet and our local communities too. For my part, we are beginning a really important environmental project here at Wardley Hall too. I hope that, when it is set up, many of you will have a chance to visit our Laudato Si Centre with your school.

As your bishop, I want to give you this message as one of hope. Through the great work in science, we now know the reasons for Climate Change, we know how we can make it better and we still have time to do it. We can save lives and make sure there is enough food for everyone.

We need to act today and every day to protect our tomorrows.

We are not alone. God is with us. The gift of the Holy Spirit will give us the strength we need to do what is right. We need to work together to heal the damage, to mend our planet and to 'care for our common home' for our children and our children's children.

"Stay with us Lord on our journey."

Yours devotedly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+John". The plus sign is small and positioned to the left of the name.

+John Arnold

Bishop of Salford