


Session 1:

How do we see our
relationship with
the Earth?



Guardians of Creation



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London



Laudato Si' Centre

DIOCESE OF  SALFORD



Today's prayer

Dear God,

Together, we pray for your guidance as we explore our relationship with your amazing creation, the Earth.

We pray that we may grow with you as stewards of your beautiful creation, caring for our common home together in our school and community.

Praise be to you!

Amen

Activity: What happened when we all stopped



- Watch "What happened when we all stopped" together

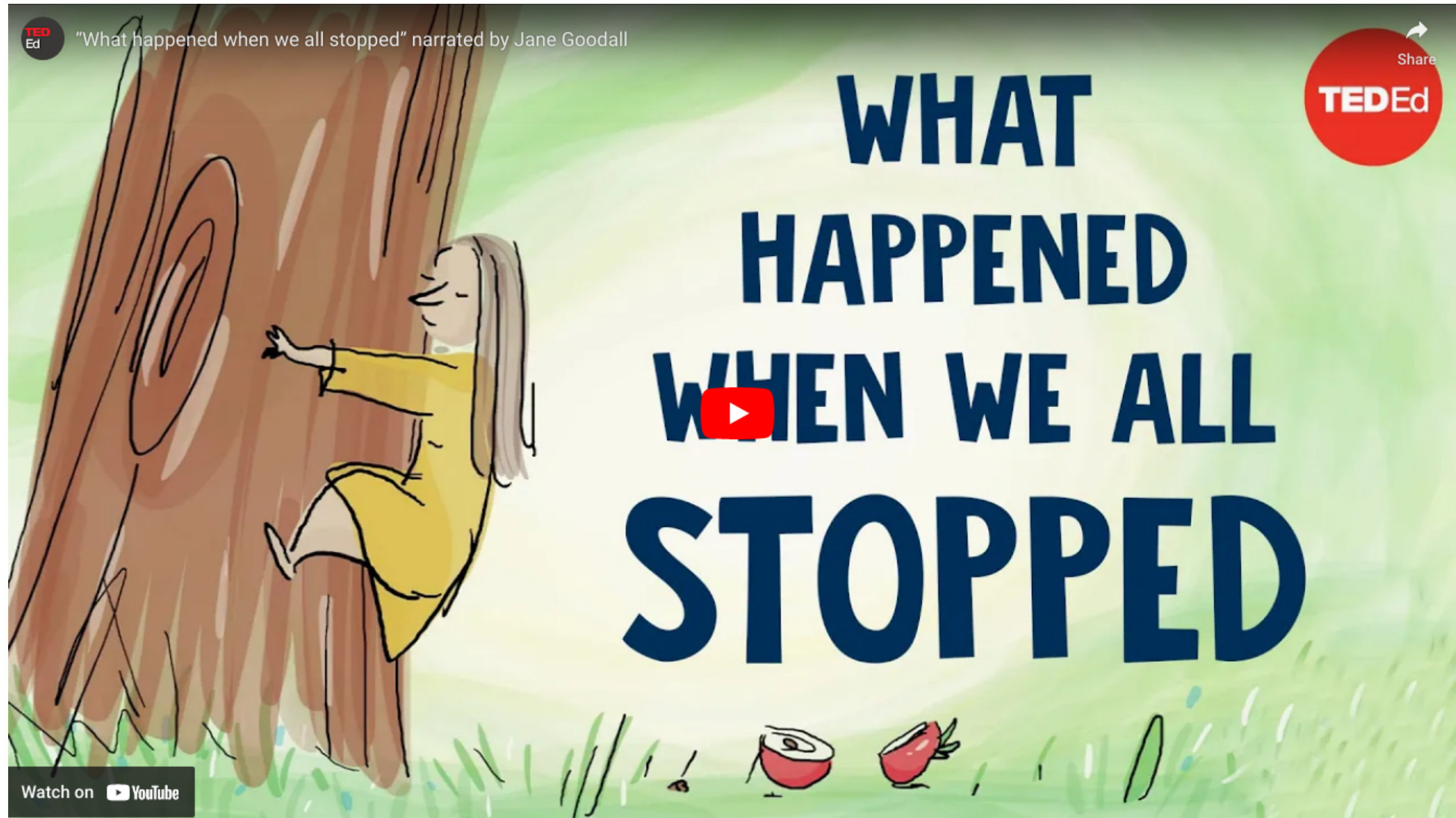
- Write down your thoughts to the following questions:

- What is the poem about?
- Are there any images that stick out to you?
- What is the mood of the poem? Does it stay the same throughout?
- What makes the voice move from a 'whisper' into a 'thunder'?

- Discuss your answers with the people sat next to you

"What happened when we all stopped"

by Tom Rivett-Carnac and Bee Rivett-Carnac

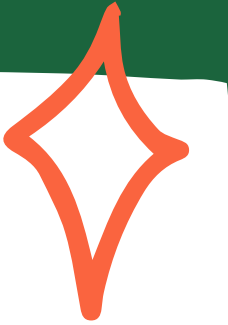


Link not working? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gX0HOy8Pi54>

Questions *for discussion*



- What is the poem about?
- Are there any images that stick out to you?
- What is the mood of the poem? Does it stay the same throughout?
- How does the poem move from a 'whisper' into a 'thunder'?

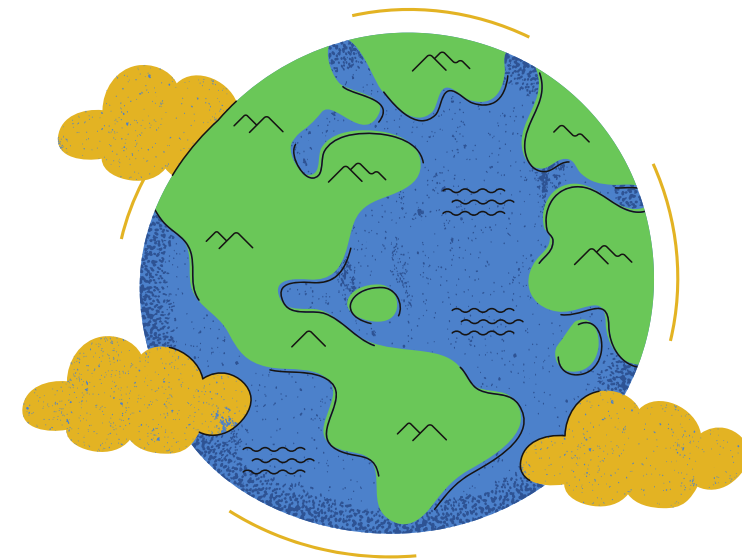


What happened when we stopped?

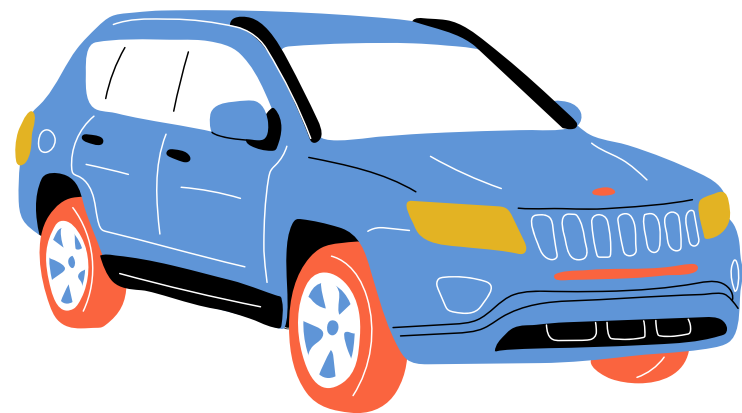
Let's explore what happened to our home during the COVID-19 lockdowns



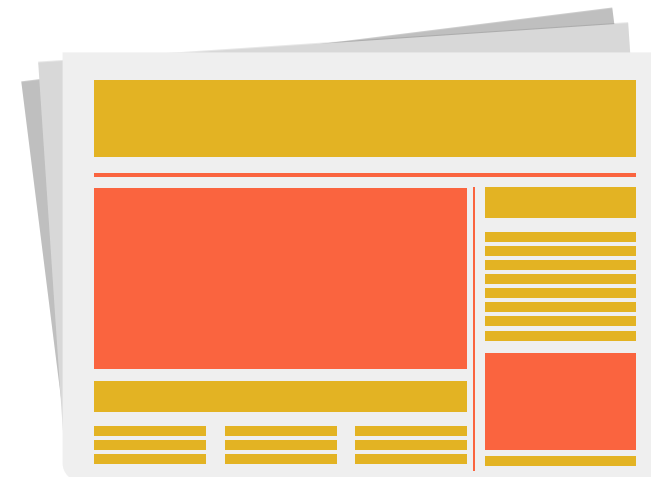
36% of people in the UK were spending more time outdoors
(ONS, 2021)



Daily global emissions fell by 17% in April 2020
(Le Quéré et al., 2020)



Air pollution dropped by up to 48% in the UK due to the reduced road travel
(University of York, 2020)



Reports of nature returning to urban areas, from goats to dolphins, spread worldwide

Tipping Points

These are points of no return for our planet, where the damage done is permanent.

Climate scientists warn that if the Earth's temperature increases by 1.5°C, we might reach these tipping points, including...



Increased flooding and rising sea levels



More frequent and intense heatwaves



Increased extinction, especially of polar and marine wildlife



Introducing: *Laudato Si'*



Letter
published by
Pope Francis
in 2015

"On Care for
our Common
Home"



"I would like to
enter into
dialogue with all
people about our
common home."
(LS, 3)

"Young people
demand
change."
(LS, 13)

What is happening to *our common home?*

"The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." (LS, 21)

Water
scarcity

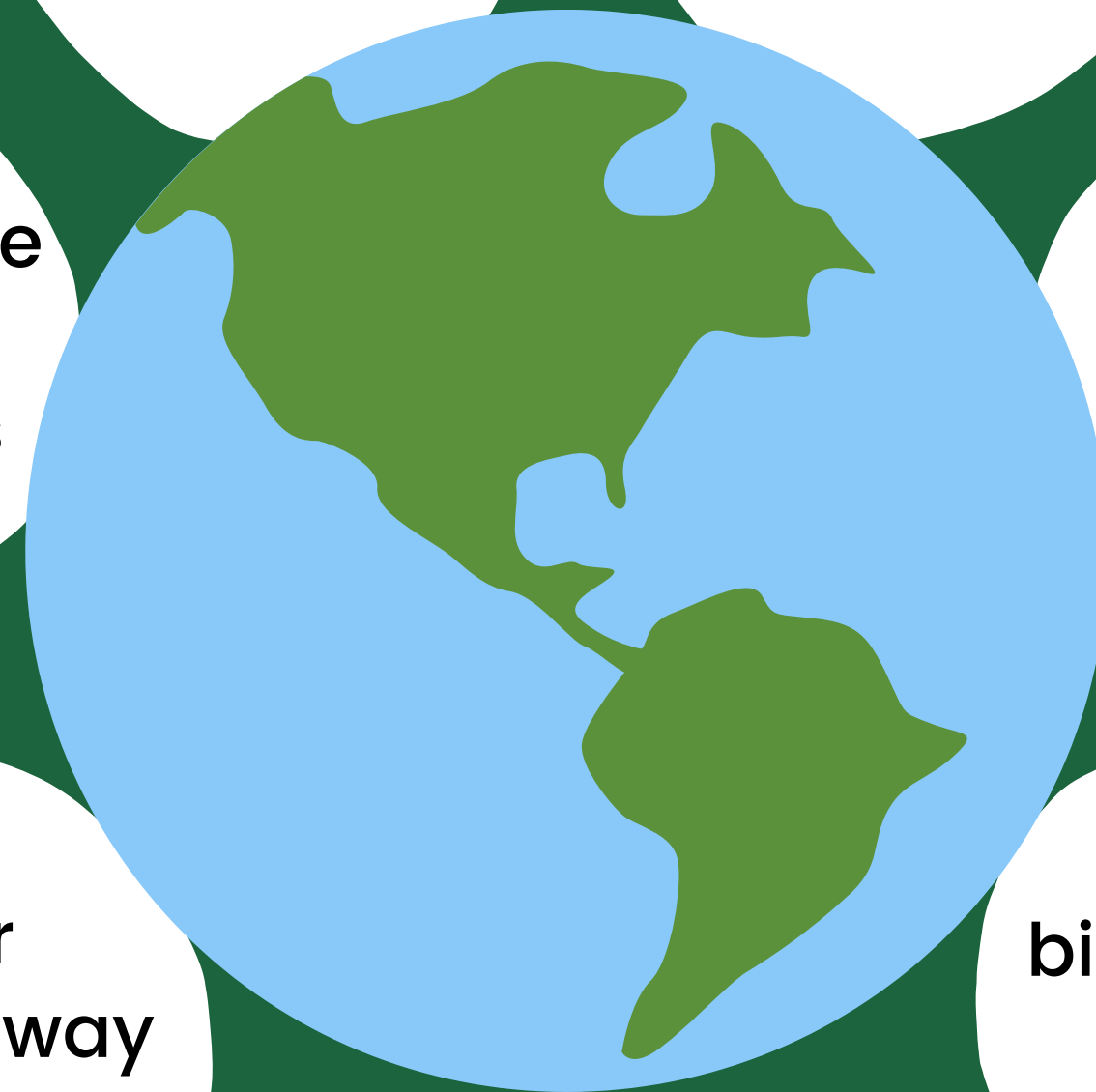
Poverty

Greenhouse
gas
emissions

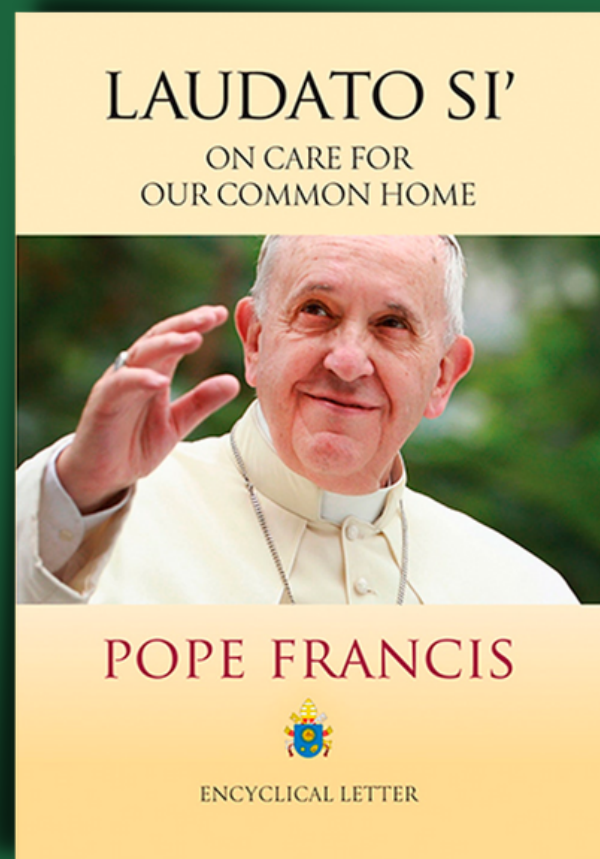
Pollution

Our
throwaway
culture

Loss of
biodiversity
and
extinction



Pope Francis: *Dominion and Stewardship*



"We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us [...] on the basis of the Genesis account which grants man "dominion" over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28), has encouraged the unbridled exploitation of nature

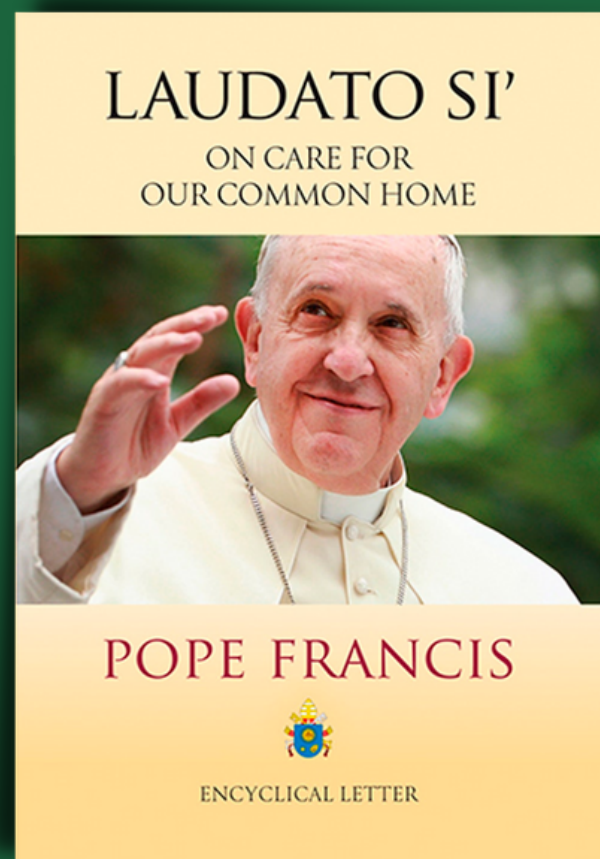
[...]

"We must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures."

"Our 'dominion' over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship."

(LS, 67; 117)

Pope Francis: *Dominion and Stewardship*



What is Pope Francis saying here?

- In the past, Christians understood the creation account in Genesis as meaning humans had control over the Earth. We call this view 'dominion'.
- In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis sees how this view of creation has led to climate change. Humans have used more than their fair share of the Earth's resources.
- Instead, he argues, we need to view the Earth as a gift from God that we need to look after. We call this view 'stewardship'.

God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion [...] over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

Dominion

"to take sovereignty or control"

from Latin 'dominium', meaning 'lord, master'.

Stewardship

"the job of supervising or taking care of something"

from Old English 'steward', meaning 'house guardian'



Activity: Dominion or Stewardship?



- Read the statements about different attitudes towards the Earth
- Write whether you think this fits with dominion or stewardship
- Think about the effect of those statements. Write the impact they would have on our planet. What would happen if everyone acted like that?

Reflection: Your last encounter with nature



- Write a few sentences about your last encounter with nature

- Reflect on how you responded to nature in this encounter

- Did you act with stewardship or dominion?
- How did your actions impact the Earth?

- Would you act differently next time?