

Laudato Si' Week

Celebration of Creation

Sunday June 12th 2016.

On Sunday the Parish of Woolhampton, in Berkshire, UK held a celebration of creation in support of Laudato Si' week and as part of their ongoing activities around Laudato Si'.

The parish consists of three Churches, St. Mary's Woolhampton, St. Luke's Theale and St. Bernadette's Pangbourne where the celebration was held. The parish priests are from the Benedictine community at Douai Abbey (<http://www.douaiabbey.org.uk/>).

The events on Sunday started with a special Laudato Si' Mass that included:

- The choir being joined by children playing instruments
- A special hymn composed by our choir master, based on the Laudato Si' refrain (traditional Italian) incorporating verses taken from the opening lines of 'A Prayer for our Earth' from the CAFOD web site. We also used this music with the words of bidding prayers written by Catherine Gorman of CAFOD for the communion song.
- Readings geared to Laudato Si' themes including Deuteronomy 8, 7-18 and Corinthians 9, 8-11
- The "prayers of the faithful" being mainly focussed on care for creation after which we read "A Prayer for our Earth" from Laudato Si'.
- Father Peter's sermon being built around some of the key messages of Laudato Si' and in particular explored the cosmic nature of the Eucharist.
- The offertory hymn was "For the Beauty of the Earth" and the children carried a globe to the altar. We also lit a specially decorated "candle for creation", that will continue to be lit over the coming months.
- We finished the Mass with the children singing "The Wonders I See" and the recessional hymn was "O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder"

After mass we continued with a community picnic to enjoy, and start practically caring for, the Lord's creation. This was a joyous time that included:

- Planting of a new tree in commemoration of the anniversary of Laudato Si'. This was accompanied by prayers and music
- The initiation of a new "children's garden" where the young of the parish planted flowering plants, herbs and vegetables.
- A "Sunflower growing" competition
- A special stall, with bees in a glass fronted hive, where the experts were on hand to explain the life of bees and answer questions from everyone in the community
- As the UK was celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday that weekend, we also sang some very British songs and finished with a strong rendition of "God Save the Queen".

The celebration will be remembered by all in the Parish as we continue on our journey with Laudato Si' and move into action, with others to care for our common home.

May the Lord Bless us, as we continue on this journey.

Graham Hodge Laudato Si' Lead, Woolhampton Parish.