



Diocese of Plymouth
From the Office of the Bishop

Pastoral Message to Young People in Primary Schools

Dear Young People,

Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down on the Apostles. Feeling afraid and uncertain, they had locked themselves away. Jesus had been their friend helping them and now He was no longer with them. Whilst praying, the Holy Spirit descended upon them sending them out onto the streets to proclaim Jesus' name to the whole of Creation.

So, an Apostle is someone sent out to share the message of Jesus with everyone. This is what the Apostles did - they went out spreading the Good News to everyone. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we must have the courage to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, too. We must stand up for what is right in our own community and in the global community.

Many of you will remember the letter Pope Francis wrote called *Laudato si'* asking all of us in the whole world to take care of the earth, our common home. Pope Francis asks us to do so, not just for ourselves and for future generations, but especially to care for the earth because it is the poor who suffer most.

I thank you for all that you are doing in your school community to show a care for God's creation, the earth, our common home. In a few weeks' time the G7 meeting will take place at Corbis Bay, in Cornwall, in our Diocese. Leaders from some of the most powerful countries in the world will meet to discuss global issues, such as climate change and recovery from the global pandemic. Their talks and decisions will affect all our brothers and sisters in our global family.

Our government is hosting this meeting: they represent us. We have the power to make a difference by speaking up and making sure that our voices are heard. Like the Apostles at Pentecost, we need to become Apostles, spreading the Good News of Jesus and building a better future and fairer world for all.

What can I do?

You can make a difference also through your choices as an individual in your home, school, parish, and local community. Recycling materials correctly, reducing food waste, not wasting water, switching the lights off and thinking about the way you travel to school – all these ways, and many others, can help all of us heal our planet,

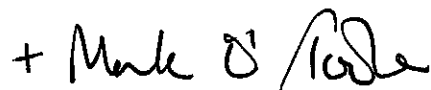
our common home. Young people are passionate about making these important changes. Not only are you probably already doing them, but through your actions you are also educating others around you!

We can make changes. To do so we need the presence of the Holy Spirit so we can repair the damage we have done and provide a healthy home for future generations. We can do so because Jesus Christ continues to breathe the Holy Spirit over us, as we, in our turn, continuously pray, "Come Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth."

As the G7 leaders visit us we hope that they will enjoy the beauty of staying in our Diocese. Having spent some days here, may they go on to work much harder for the care of our common home. For ourselves, let us ask for a deeper closeness to Jesus so that we care for our common home with greater love. Let us Praise the Lord in all that we see and experience in His beautiful world.

I ask you, too, to please pray for me.

Yours devotedly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Mark O'Toole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Rt Rev Mark O'Toole
Bishop of Plymouth