GEORGE STACK

ARCHBISHOP OF CARDIFF

The year 2020 will be long remembered by us all. As we struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic, we have come to realise not just the fragility of the human condition but also the fine balance in ecology to keep life safe and creation cared for. Before the outbreak of Covid-19, the people of Wales had already suffered devastating flash flooding which damaged homes and property. Just as these have been repaired, torrential rain and flooding has hit us again.

The floods have devastated some communities within the Dioceses of Cardiff and Menevia. Our thoughts and prayers go to the people of Rhondda Cynon Taff and the city of Swansea at this time. Lives and livelihoods have been affected by the double tragedies of the virus and the flooding.

Five years ago, Pope Francis wrote an encyclical on the care of our common home. 'Laudato Si' was an appeal to all people to address the environmental issues face by our planet. He called on governments, businesses, churches and every individual to renew our stewardship of creation. Only such action will halt the unprecedented disasters we are experiencing throughout the world. He went on to say: *"The continued acceleration of changes affecting humanity and the planet is coupled today with a more intensified pace of life and work which might be called 'rapidication'"*. These last three months of lockdown have given us an opportunity to slow down and an invitation to reflect on our relationship with one another and with nature itself. In addition to the outstanding works of charity and care for others, nature too seems to have re-created itself. Pollution has been reduced and the birds and animals have taken their place in our peaceful streets and countryside.

I hope and pray we do not rush back to 'rapidifcation'. In that hope and prayer may we all

commit ourselves to care for and support those affected by Covid-19 and the flooding which has caused its own suffering.

+George Svack

19th June 2020 - Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus