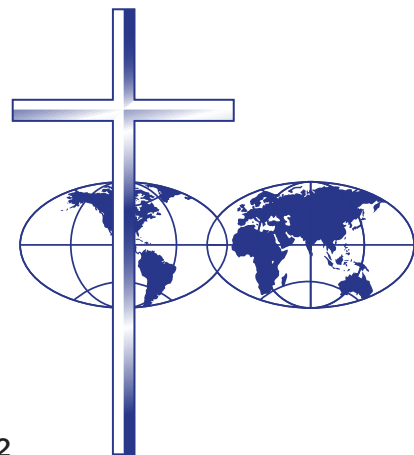


# Vocation for Justice

Summer 2019 Volume 33 No 2



## The World We Want



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### COLUMBAN MISSION

Collaborating with the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales  
& Justice and Peace Scotland

The central theme of this newsletter is the link between climate justice and economic justice – two Columban JPIC priorities. ‘System Change, not Climate Change’ has appeared on many banners during youth climate protests.

We have been addressing the crisis of Climate Change for many years now in *Vocation for Justice*, and raising awareness. Pope Francis has urged us to listen to scientific experts in this area. And it is to be welcomed that on 1 May MPs passed a motion making the UK parliament the first in the world to declare an “environment and climate emergency”.

But what does the world we want look like? I have been inspired very much by the interest and action of our young people in the area of climate change and sustainability, especially recently.

The future belongs to them and it is indeed encouraging to see their motivation and action in making their voices heard. It is also inspiring to see the support of their parents and grandparents. “What our kids are telling us is what science has been telling us for many years – there is no time left,” a mother in India said. She added: “We now owe it to them to act. Climate change will make my kids’ lives much harder than my life has been in many ways. This is incredibly unfair, especially as scientists have been warning us about this for decades and we have preferred to bury heads in the sand.”

The youth strikes for climate began with a solo protest by Greta Thunberg in Sweden in August 2018. “We live in a strange world, where children must sacrifice their education in order to protest against the destruction of their future,” says Greta, “so why aren’t we acting urgently?” She adds: “It’s unfortunate that children have to sacrifice days of learning in school to demand that adults do the right thing. However, they know the consequences of the current shameful inaction both for themselves and future generations. This should be a moment for stark self-reflection by our political class.”

The climate movement has snowballed with schoolchildren globally taking part. This movement has been enthusiastically received by some British young people. It is disruptive but nonviolent and they give advance warning of where they will be protesting. Is it inconvenient? Of course it is, but are we willing to pay the price of the inconvenience now for a better future? Tim Habraken, a father of two from Rotterdam in the Netherlands, sums it up very well when he says: “For ages, parents grew up with the idea that their children would have a better life than theirs. Currently, we are seeing a world that not only will very likely be worse for our children, but potentially be uninhabitable. We should ask: when our children hold us accountable in the future, and ask us what we did, can we live with ourselves?”

Let us heed these words from the prophet Jeremiah: “And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when you entered you defiled my land and made my inheritance an abomination.” *Jeremiah 2: 1–7*.

You will notice that this edition of *Vocation for Justice* is coming to you dressed in new clothes! Previously it was wrapped in plastic. We are very conscious of the effects of plastic on our world – clogging up our oceans and contributing to the gradual destruction of our planet. We do not want to be accomplices in this. Our new wrapping is made of potato starch and is 100% compostable, containing no Genetically Modified Organisms. Guidance on how the wrap can be composted is provided on the carrier sheet, so please pay extra attention to that. This edition also comes to you folded – this will save on postage costs and divert more of the annual contribution we receive to the work of Columban JPIC in Britain. We wish to thank you for the contributions we received in the February annual appeal. ■

**Peter Hughes SSC**

## Risk-taking and Visioning

**Ellen Teague**

I learnt a new word recently – **Financialisation**. This is the phenomenon by which finance and its way of thinking have come to dominate every corner of business, and inflict damage on the entire economic system and the world’s natural life systems.

The world we want will be marked by Equity, Inclusion, Liberation, Justice, Solidarity, and Interdependency. Earth’s natural gifts will be used sustainably. We play different roles in pursuit of these ideals.

Some of us are **frontline responders** who quickly transition into rapid-response mode and organise communications.

Some are **healers** who tend to the intergenerational trauma of capitalism, patriarchy, and the breakdown of ecosystems.

Some are **storytellers** and **artists**, binding the past and the present, channeling the histories and experiences of our ancestors to shed light on what is possible today.

Some are **bridge builders** who can work across divisions with patience and compassion.

Some are **disruptors** who speak up and take action even when it is uncomfortable and risky.

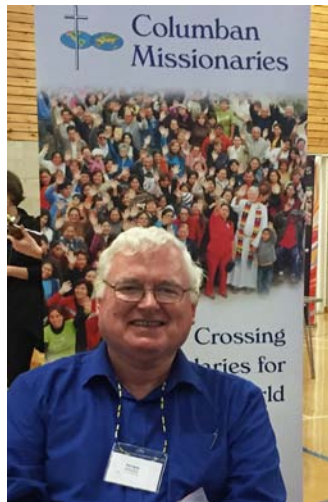
Some are **visionaries**, with the ability to articulate, and reconnect us to our values and visions

Let us consider:

What are the injustices that outrage us, and push us to act?

Where can we take bolder risks, especially if we hold different forms of privilege?

Columban missionaries build bridges between Christians and people of other faiths to tackle climate change, take action to protect the Amazon rainforest, and support refugees. And we highlight visionaries – some are environmental martyrs – who say the world needs ‘System Change’ not climate change. ■



*Peter Hughes*

## Amazon: “The right to be listened to”

**Peter Hughes SSC**

**Columban Peter Hughes (Peru) works with REPAM, the Pan-Amazonia Ecclesial Network, and is helping the network prepare for the Synod on Amazonia in October.**

The Amazon is of increasing importance both in itself, a geographical region which occupies almost half the South American subcontinent, and also a biosphere under pressure regarding universal planetary issues. These include climate equilibrium and future availability of basics such as water and air.

The world's largest tropical rainforest has traditionally been regarded as largely unexplored: home to scattered and isolated ethnic groups of little importance, a backwater for production of raw materials, timber and a rubber boom at the turn of the twentieth century. Today, the region is the target for huge capital investment in the exploration, production and exportation of commodities, energy resources of oil and natural gas, electricity through construction of mega hydroelectric dams; mining and precious metals; the expansion of vast areas of land for agribusiness by burning the rainforest for production of sugar, soya and palm oil. The Amazon has been transformed, negotiated by nation states giving concession rights to global corporations for exploitation of its natural resources with little or no regard for ecological environmental preservation and the rights of its original inhabitants.

The Amazon is now a first link in the production chain for the massive, expanding consumer culture that defines the malaise of our civilisation. The cost of this transformation – too often named progress or development – is the death of the rainforest, ethnic groups forced to flee their lands, and the diminishment of biodiversity.

The Pan Amazon region is the richest geological and most complex biosphere on the planet, containing a third of the world's biodiversity as well as half the species that have so far been discovered. The territory covers 7.8 million square kilometres,

and the river Amazon itself is nearly 7,000 kms long – the world's largest navigable river. The area is shared by nine countries, from Brazil (67%) to the tiny Guianas (0.1%). It is home to nearly three million indigenous people from 390 ethnic groups who speak 240 languages.

The destruction of peoples in the region is of communities intimately related and integrated to a territory, a composite which is one integrated reality. Their cosmic worldview does not admit separation between humans, the environment and other lifeforms. All life is part of the created, seamless natural order. The ancestral wisdom constructed over generations concerning the creation of a respectful and life-giving relationship with a most difficult and hostile environment is now in danger.

When people's lands are confiscated, rivers contaminated, fish dying because of mercury and lead in the waters, they feel the plunder is taking their lives away, and there is no place to flee to. A way of life composed of different communal dimensions, cultivating the soil, fishing, hunting, rituals of ancestry, feasting and celebration, is now destined to extinction. Life has been overshadowed by gloom, darkness, illness. The rhythms and cycles of seasons, of death and regeneration, are now overtaken by hopelessness. Beauty has been replaced by ugliness. The aesthetic or artistic expression are no longer relevant. A sense of death of the spirit is pervasive. Unfortunately, the recently installed new regime in Brazil does not augur well for the future.

The demand for commodities in the burgeoning Asian markets has welded economic policies to welcoming foreign investment. Extractive corporations are guaranteed a lush dividend while the locals are doomed to accept meagre pickings. Corruption of public officials in relation to

contracts is rampant. Former presidents and high officials are imprisoned or have fled, accused of taking huge bribes from a single Brazilian company, Odebrecht, the major constructor of inter-oceanic highways. The destruction in the Amazon puts in jeopardy the future of the world's drinking water as well as the amount of oxygen in the atmosphere. It also affects directly the chaotic effects of climate change, increases in flooding and droughts throughout the planet.

### Hopes for the Synod

In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis insists on a recurrent theme, that “everything is interconnected” (LS #138). This profound insight, held in common with the great religious and cultural traditions, is the spiritual bedrock of the encyclical. This perspective of interconnectedness of creation has, to a great extent, become a victim of scientific discovery and technological progress of the industrial revolution through to the modern period. From a previous more balanced relationship of equilibrium and respect for nature, we have unwittingly launched on a course that nature must be conquered and made subservient to human demands.

Pope Francis calls for a profound change of direction – we must forsake an aggressive stance towards nature and replace it with respect, equilibrium and harmony. Francis makes a plea to abandon our habit of seeing two separate crises – the social economic and the ecological environmental – in favour of “one complex crisis which is both social and environmental”. He says, “strategies for a solution demands an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” (LS #139).

The Synod is an important moment for the voice of the Amazon and its peoples to be heard. Their cry, absent until now, arrives on the agenda of society at large and the Church. The words of Dom Erwin Kreidler, bishop of Xingú, Brazil are clear:

“The people have the right to speak, to be listened to and the Church must act seriously”. ■

## Signs of Hope: Youth-led climate strikes

James Trewby



James Trewby, the Columban Justice and Peace Education Worker, with young people in Birmingham and their 'Dare 2 Care' banner.

I've attended quite a number of climate change marches and protests, but it feels like there's something different in the air at the moment – hope! The broad environmental movement has been re-energised by new actors: Extinction Rebellion - using non-violent direct action to draw attention to extinction and climate change - and the youth-led climate strikes. These climate strikes were started by Swedish teen-activist Greta Thunberg, and have been quickly gathering pace around the world. She has met with political and faith leaders – including the Pope, who encouraged her to keep going!

I'm particularly interested in the youth-led strikes. As an educator with the Columbans, my role involves working with young people, and, more and more, with educators. These strikes are, potentially, putting these groups into opposition. I asked the head of a Catholic secondary school whether any of his students had been striking. He responded proudly that he didn't think they'd even heard of it. This felt sad to me – in our post-*Laudato Si'* Church I'd hope Catholic schools were busy raising awareness of the cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor and encouraging students to find ways to put faith into action.

I therefore looked for a way to show Columban solidarity with the strikes and support a group of young people to attend. Working with the wonderful teachers of Bishop Ullathorne School in Coventry this became possible. During retreat days for Year 10 students we facilitated an interview with Jane Mellett in Dublin, hearing about her experience of taking part in the Climate Pilgrimage, attending UN climate talks and supporting the climate strikes in Ireland. A small group of students then chose to go deeper. Catherine Bridgwood (this year's wonderful Columban Faith in Action Volunteer) and I led a day for them, including attending the climate strike in Birmingham and a powerful (online) conversation with an activist in the Philippines.

In the spirit of youth-empowerment, here's their write up of our day together:

*"Following our Year 10 retreat days at the end of February we formed a group who aimed to raise awareness and fight climate change before it's too late. On Friday 15 March, 11 of us went to Birmingham to really see the effect that climate change is having on our world. This day was led by James of the Columbans. We spoke to Joanna Sustento, a Filipina Climate activist, who in 2012 was*

*greatly affected by climate change when a typhoon killed five of her family members, the youngest being her three-year-old nephew. We then took part in the Climate Strike, with three of our students making very persuasive and motivational speeches in front of all the young people there. It was a very inspiring and eye-opening day for all of the students involved and they can't wait to help shape and change our planet for future generations. During the retreat day I learnt about the effects of climate change and we did several activities which really emphasised the tragic changes our actions are having. We also learnt that we could make a difference and have a positive influence in our school, wider community and the world."* – Caitlin

*"When we interviewed Joanna Sustento on our trip to Birmingham it made the effects of climate change seem so real - it is happening now and we must act. Joanna's story, her bravery, her drive is so powerful that out of something so tragic she is able to fight for change."* – Aoife

*"Attending the climate change protest in Birmingham motivated me to want to make a change and made me realise that actually, even though we are young, we can make a change that will influence generations to come."* – Vittoria

So what's next? The next international climate strikes are planned for the 24 May. I'd encourage readers to support young people to attend. That day I'll be leading a *Laudato Si'*-themed retreat day with teachers – I'm seeking a way for this to include a show of solidarity with the young people – without getting the teachers into trouble!

The Climate Coalition is organising a mass lobby of MPs on 26 June. I'll be there with the winners of the Columban Journalism Competition and young people from Coventry. May we support young people to put faith into action. Pope Francis says, "Young friends, don't wait until tomorrow to contribute your energy, your audacity and your creativity to changing our world. Your youth is not an "in-between time". You are the now of God, and he wants you to bear fruit." (*Christ is Alive!*, 178). ■

# Our Common Home

**Samantha Aldoo**

## A CAFOD campaigner outlines CAFOD's new Climate Change campaign.

"When I was 16, my father took me out for a walk through our village, telling me stories of his childhood and of the memories each place held," says Joe (pictured below, a climate activist from Samoa).

"We walked towards the coast and he showed me where he went to school. Before we had even arrived, we were in the sea. There, where his school once stood, was the ocean. "We stayed a while, both our feet underwater, thinking of his school which now rested beneath the waves in front of us." This is what climate change looks like. It's not politicians sitting around a table, it's not a news headline, or a passing concern about what the future holds for our children. For people like Joe, climate change is personal - and it's happening right now.

The Pacific Islands are being slammed by extreme weather. For every travel brochure image of sparkling lagoons, coral reefs and endless beaches, there's media footage of ruined churches, fallen electricity lines and devastated communities. In 2018, Cyclone Gita left Samoa's capital Apia seriously flooded. By the time it reached Tonga, it had completely flattened many parts of the country. "Rising sea levels are eroding our coastlines and homes," says Joe. "Extreme weather keeps destroying our roads and infrastructure. Acid levels in the ocean are ruining our coral and fish stocks, salination of the soil makes it harder to grow crops... I could go on."

### Our faith calls us to act

Joe is a Pacific Climate Warrior. He's part of a network of young activists from across the Pacific who are fighting back against climate change. "Developed nations need



to take moral responsibility for the harm that has been caused," says Joe. "They need to join with vulnerable nations in a meaningful solidarity that seeks our collective good and the protection of our common home." Climate change is a global crisis, but we can play our part in the response. We can all make changes as

individuals. Limiting our carbon, reducing meat consumption and choosing greener modes of transport is a great start, but the problem is so urgent, we need to think big. That's why we're calling on the UK Government to go further and faster with emission cuts.

### The urgent cry of the earth calls us to act

CAFOD's new campaign, **Our Common Home**, brings us together, to not only celebrate the beauty and generosity of creation, but to play a part in responding to this climate crisis - a crisis we all face. We know that we need strong and ambitious political action, so we are petitioning the Prime Minister to commit to a target of net zero emissions by 2045 in UK law. If the UK can reach net zero, it means we are no longer contributing to climate change.

To tackle this crisis, we also need profound lifestyle change, so the campaign supports you in hosting Creation Celebrations. This is an

event to bring your community together at a creation-themed Mass, shared food and guided conversation on climate change.

Visit [cafod.org.uk/climate](https://cafod.org.uk/climate) to sign our petition today and to find out more about holding a Creation Celebration.

You may have seen schools leading the response to climate change by taking to the streets. We're asking them to go a step further by becoming a Zero Hero and asking their local MP to do the same. A school or group can show their commitment to net zero emissions by creating a display and talking to their MP about the importance of climate change.

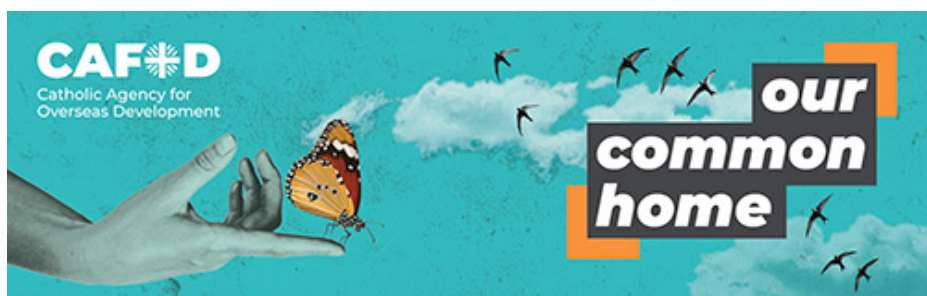
Visit [cafod.org.uk/schools](https://cafod.org.uk/schools) for more information.

## The Time is Now - Mass Lobby



**And thousands of us will be coming together to attend a mass climate lobby - 'The Time is Now' - outside Westminster on Wednesday, 26 June.**

We will connect the poor to the powerful by sharing our concerns on climate change and the environment with political leaders. Politicians will only increase their ambition if they see that we care. They will act if their constituents tell them that they want change. So why not join us and thousands of others to restore our common home. **For more information, visit [cafod.org.uk/climatelobby](https://cafod.org.uk/climatelobby)** ■

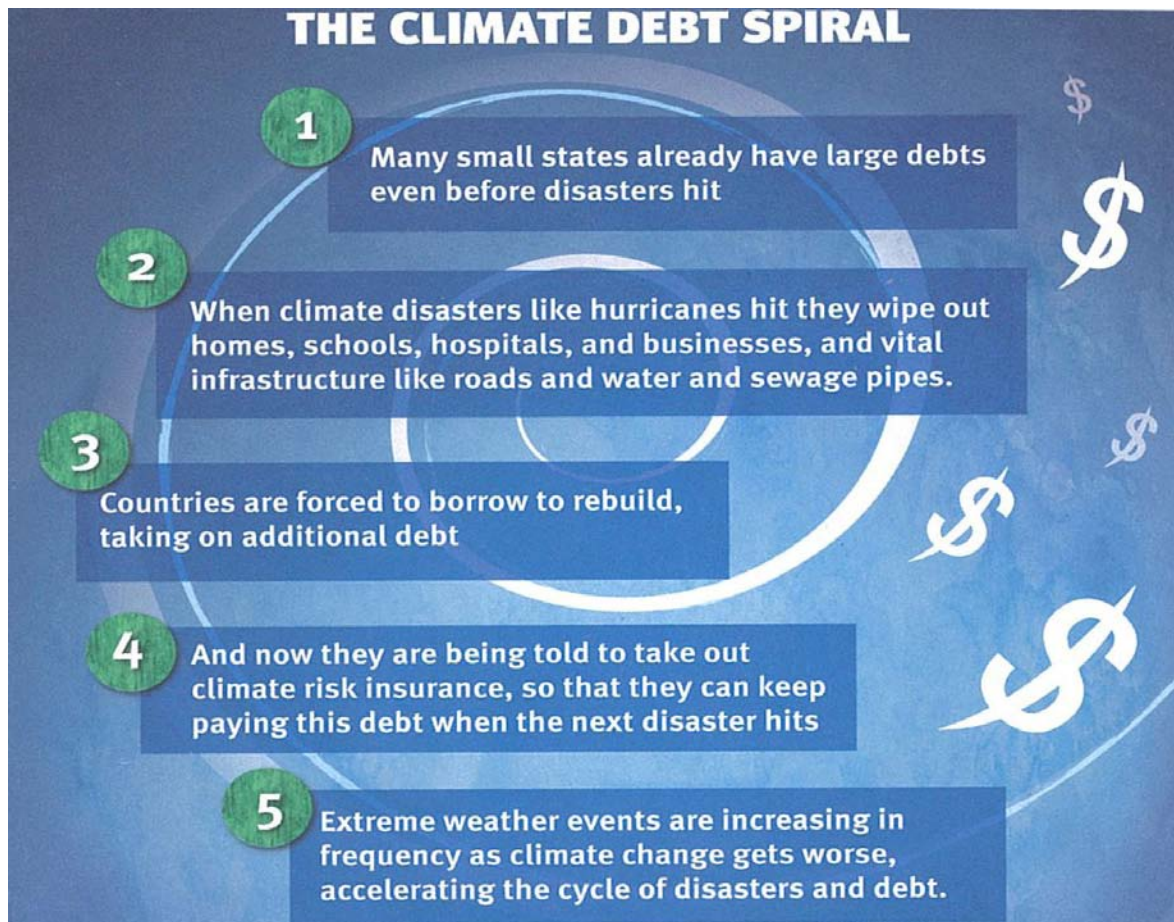


# SYSTEM CHANGE...

## Global Justice Now reports:

The UK government's international development strategy has been "pushing aid money into financial markets regardless of the consequences". The CDC, a wholly-owned company of the Department for International Development (DFID), is used by DFID to finance private companies and markets with the aim of stimulating jobs and growth in developing countries. The government sees private sector development as one of the cornerstones of international development. CDC is still putting high financial returns ahead of real development impacts. Global Justice Now says: "What's good for big business and rich investors is not necessarily good for the globally impoverished... **We need an urgent, radical shake-up of Britain's aid strategy.**"

Many countries in the global south continue to face a debt crisis, where debt is leading to human and environmental rights being denied. **The Climate Debt Spiral has led the Columbans to join those calling for a permanent debt relief process in response to climate change disasters.**



*From: Drop it! Climate Change, Debt and Disasters - Jubilee Debt Campaign*

**Columbans in Pakistan and Fiji report worsening climate disasters in the context of heavy indebtedness and Climate Change. Pakistan today continues to have a large external debt, inequality is entrenched, and the country has failed to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals. Fiji was devastated by Cyclone Winston in 2016, at a time when nearly half of GDP went towards servicing its debt. The photo shows a Columban compound completely flooded.**



# ... NOT CLIMATE CHANGE

## Jubilee Debt Campaign says:

- Many countries are still caught in the debt trap
- Debt remains a tool of exploitation.
- Debt justice means tackling irresponsible lending and corrupt borrowing, and cancelling unjust debts.
- Urgently relieve debt when a climate disaster strikes.
- With climate change, devastating disasters are only likely to get worse.

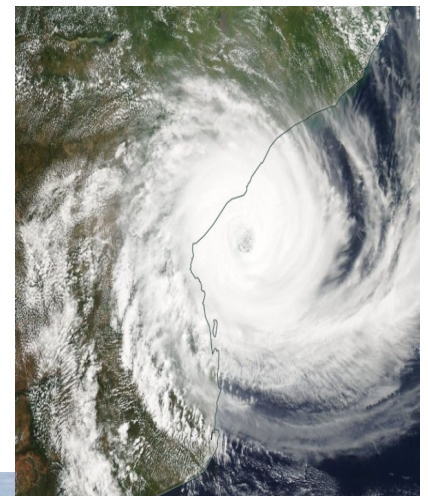
In November 2018, Jubilee Debt Campaign released the report 'Don't owe, shouldn't pay: The impact of climate change on debt in vulnerable countries'. The report found that of the most damaging disasters since 2000, 80% of them have been tropical storms. And government debt was higher in 90% of cases two years after the disaster, if debt relief was not given in the aftermath.

Several countries in the Caribbean were devastated by hurricanes during 2017. Some of those countries were already heavily indebted, partly because of loans taken out to help with rebuilding efforts following previous disasters. In the event of environmental disaster, Jubilee Debt Campaign calls on all creditors, including the IMF and World Bank, to suspend debt payments. Debts must be reduced to a sustainable level, and assistance to rebuild must be provided as grants, not loans.

### CASE STUDY: MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique faced financial crisis from 2016 after the government owned up to \$1.4bn of previously undisclosed loans for a maritime-security and tuna-fishing project. Mozambique has been in default since 2017 and has sought to restructure the debt. A US indictment of some of the bankers and government officials involved has led to fresh allegations that the loans were illegal and shouldn't be repaid.

In March this year, the country was devastated by Cyclone Idai. A month before this Graca Machel, widow of Mozambique's first leader, Samora Machel and Nelson Mandela's widow, was one of the signatories to a letter demanding that Mozambique shouldn't repay any of the loans it got from Credit Suisse AG as part of a \$2bn sovereign debt scandal that's seen three former employees and an ex-finance minister arrested. "We demand that Credit Suisse publicly declare that the Mozambican people should not pay a single cent on those debts" the group said in a letter to the bank; "Recovery of any money should come from the companies and individuals who, instead, have benefited from this chaos."



### Tim Jones, Head of Policy at Jubilee Debt Campaign, comments:

*Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique in March.*

*"The Mozambique economy has already been hit by a debt crisis triggered by \$2 billion of secret loans from London banks. The loans were not agreed by the Mozambique parliament, at least \$700 million is missing, and a US investigation has alleged that at least \$200 million of the loans was spent on bribes and kickbacks to bankers and politicians involved in the deal. The people of Mozambique had no say over and no benefit from these loans. The devastation from Cyclone Idai is one more reason why the Mozambican people should not have to pay one cent on the debts."*

*"It is a damning indictment of the international community in general, and the UK government in particular, that three years after the secret loans were revealed, the unjust debt situation in Mozambique has not been resolved. There has been no sign of the UK authorities properly investigating the London banks for their role in the crisis. The failure to resolve Mozambique's debt crisis in the last three years may now hamper efforts to rebuild following Cyclone Idai. "All money for disaster relief and reconstruction must come as grants rather than loans, and Mozambique may need further debt relief as well as not paying any of the \$2 billion of secret debts."*

Thanks to  
Global Justice Now  
[https://  
www.globaljustice.org.uk/](https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/)  
and  
Jubilee Debt Campaign  
[https://  
jubileedebt.org.uk/](https://jubileedebt.org.uk/)

## Climate Monsters

**Jessy Oreoluwa Sodimu**

**Fifteen-year-old Jessy, from Cardinal Newman Catholic High School in Warrington, came second in the recent Columban Young Journalists' Competition (print) for his article on Climate Change.**

We have all been gifted with some things in life - some more than others. But one undeniable gift we have all received is "Our Sister, Mother Earth" (Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*). As stated in 1 Peter 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms".

So, the question is; why have we exploited the gift of Our Sister and Mother for selfish desires? Why have we not been faithful stewards of God's magnificent creation? Why do we keep harming her and polluting her and causing climate change, even though all she wants is to keep us safe and wrapped in her gentle and comforting arms?

Climate Change has been consistently observed by scientists, and it is the changes in global weather patterns, which can be worsened by global warming. The key cause is the emission of greenhouse gases through human activity. As greenhouse gases such as CO<sub>2</sub> absorb the heat energy from the sun's infra-red radiation (as it attempts to leave Earth's atmosphere), they cause an increase in the average global temperatures - in fact - a greenhouse effect.

According to researchers at the Global Carbon Project and National Geographic website, worldwide we have recently dumped 41.5 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, and we even dare to eradicate swaths of trees half the size of England on an annual basis, therefore not only worsening the problem but inevitably devastating nature's equilibrium and "we have no such right" (Pope Francis).

The recklessness of our actions have led on to bigger and more aggravating effects on the environment, wildlife and even our own health, but the problem is that we are too blind to even acknowledge any of it.



Jessy Oreoluwa Sodimu

Researchers have found a strong correlation between climate change, depression, anxiety, stress and suicide, which have greatly damaged the UK. The Worldwide Fund for Nature agrees that climate change has greatly impacted places such as the Amazon, Arctic, coastal East Africa, and Eastern Himalayas, meaning that we are responsible for damaging some of the world's most beautiful natural landscapes.

Also, the IPCC says that a 1.5°C average temperature rise may put 20-30% of species at risk of extinction, and such may include Tigers, Asian Rhinos, African Elephants, Polar Bears and Adélie Penguins. So would it take household pets, being at risk of extinction for people to start caring about the topic and take action?

In January 2014, when I was 10 years old, as Italy was facing recession, my parents decided that moving back to our home country, Nigeria in Africa, for about three years rather than staying in Italy would be a great idea for me and my siblings.

On arrival there, it wasn't long till I noticed the stark differences between climates and the effects of climate change on Nigeria. Due to its climatic conditions, Nigeria suffers from long seasons of drought, Harmattan or dust storms, heatwaves and flash floods.

As there were several periods of drought, such meant that water in the houses often ran out, and as a result, people were often compelled to go and get their water supply from external sources, as global warming was evaporating lots of our water supplies and putting Nigeria under water stress. Which meant that people were forced to carry massive buckets of water, which could weigh up to 30 pounds which often lead to unbearable amounts of pain through the entire body. We were forced to travel unbelievable distances, in the most horrendous of circumstances for the sole reason that nearby water sources weren't taxed, and were shut down by government officials.

Regardless, in those situations, I could have still called myself lucky, as my parents were able to afford better-living conditions than the average Nigerian child, who in most cases would be unable to get the indispensable access to water, food and electricity.

Still, I remember getting so upset about the situation that I had to question why the situations in Nigeria and Italy were complete contrasts to each other and why such a topic was rarely discussed.

Luckily, I had a teacher who felt sorry for me and told me that climate change and global warming had serious and devastating impacts on the water cycle and told me that everybody, including myself, were at fault for this issue, as everybody had forgotten Pope Francis' words "We must never forget that the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone".

After those three years of stay in Nigeria, and the financial recession in Italy coming to a halt, my family and I decided to go back to Italy for the winter season. On the way back all I was able to think about were the

days back when I was 7-years-old and winter was my favourite season. I would think about, all the snow-angels, snowmen and even snow-fights I had with my brothers on that sparkling, massive white blanket of fairy dust.

As I arrived and days went by without any sign of snow, I reassured myself that the white snow fairy would come late this year - but it never did. At that realisation, my heart sunk beneath the ground and tears rolled out of my eyes as I couldn't believe that climate change had won this battle. It felt almost as if all the magic and wonder from childhood fairy tales were torn to shreds and burned to ashes. That was the first time I saw climate change in its truest form.

In those moments, with the Pope's words echoing inside my mind, I told myself that the monster we know as climate change, must and will be stopped.

We must use our collective gifts and talents to help climate believers worldwide and pressure the government to put laws against greenhouse emissions and most importantly pressure ourselves to use renewable energy, recycling and gardening to treat and respect Our Beloved Sister and Mother Earth, the way she should be treated. ■



Anna Joy Marshall

## Facing up to Climate Change

**Anna Joy Marshall**

***This winning article is being printed in full in the May 'Far East' magazine. Here is an extract. Anna Joy Marshall (15) is a pupil at St. Mary's Catholic High School, Chesterfield.***

One of the real issues with climate change is how much it deepens the scar between rich and poor. Low income countries carry 13 per cent of the global exposure to tropical storms but 81 percent of the risk of people being killed by one. Climate change highlights the issues of injustice just as much as it destroys natural habitats and wildlife - maybe even more so. Climate change cannot be a separate issue to social justice because it is both a cause and result of social injustice. People are affected all around the world. So often, the people it affects are the marginalised and the poorest. A term that often comes up is a climate refugee. By 2050, there could be up to 200 million people displaced by rising global temperature according to the International Organisation on Migration. People have to leave behind homes, jobs and sometimes families to escape flooding, extreme weather and drought.

Why is there flooding, extreme weather and drought? Because of climate change. Why is the climate changing? Because so many of us are trapped in an indulgent, consumerist lifestyle. Many of us are complacent even when people all around the world are suffering. Critical thinking is a key that can help us challenge ourselves and others. It could be the first step to us resolving the issue of climate change. It is more important than ever in the world today.

Yet combating climate change is not something we have to face alone. I believe action and spirituality sit together. I was in a workshop by a Columban Missionary and he said, "Prayer and action work together." Spirituality is like the roots of a tree and action is the leaves inspired by God.

To put our beliefs into action, last year in November my sister and I held a Social Action day for young people. Two of the workshops were about climate change and care for creation. One young person on the day commented, "It's made me aware of how in need our world is for our respect." This reflects the teachings of the Old Testament. We have a responsibility to care for creation. We have been given stewardship. However, so often this stewardship is forgotten in our world, according to the papal encyclical *Laudato Si* (2015), "amid the noise and distractions of an information overload." Looking inwards instead of outwards makes us think that all we are responsible for is ourselves, even when the world is so big around us. We lose the awe and wonder we all used to have for the world when we were little. In Mathew 14, Jesus says, "For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Maybe this awe and wonder, hand in hand with respect, is a window into God's Kingdom, and maybe when it comes to all issues today, including climate change, we need to open our eyes to the dignity of our beautiful world and every single person in it.

Religious people have the foundations of protecting the environment written into their very history. Along with religious people, climate change has also inspired millions of non-religious people to action. In a way, the issue of climate change is unifying people into looking after our world. In 1 John 4:16, it says, "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." Love is working. There is something special in the solidarity found in caring together for our common home, something I would describe as holy in the way Pope Francis described holiness in *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018): "We are called to be contemplatives even in the midst of action, and to grow in holiness by responsibly and generously carrying out our proper mission."

Finally, there is a hunger in young people for doing good things. I believe it is hunger in all people, and some might even say it is the work of the Holy Spirit. ■

Link: <https://columbans.co.uk/climate-change-competition-2019-and-the-winners-are>

## Austrian Bishops' Conference divests from fossil fuels

In March, the Austrian Bishops' Conference, announced that it would sign the Global Catholic Climate Movement's divestment commitment. It will divest from all businesses that extract or produce fossil fuels - coal, oil, and natural gas. This decision includes all financial investments of the bishops' conference, all Austrian dioceses, and all other institutions within their sphere. Cardinal Schönborn said the "financial means of the Church must not exert a destructive influence on our planet's climate". Austria is the third bishops' conference to announce its divestment from fossil fuels, following Belgium and Ireland. They join nearly 120 other Catholic institutions that have divested, including the Columban Missionary Society.

## Archbishop joins climate protests

Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, joined environmental protests in London on 14 April. Sitting on the ground amid protesters of all faiths who held flags and banners, he said: "We confess that we have polluted our own atmosphere, causing global warming and climate change that have increased poverty in many parts of our planet." The protest was part of Extinction Rebellion, which is now active in 26 countries and is urging governments to declare a climate emergency.

## Church of Scotland urges net zero carbon emissions

Scottish legislators have been urged to commit to delivering a net zero carbon emissions economy by 2050. The challenge was issued in February by Rt Rev Susan Brown, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who said the nation must be at the forefront of the ethical and political fight to tackle climate change. She said, "since the Climate Change Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in May 2018, there has been a growing awareness that we are no longer just facing climate change but are facing a climate emergency." She would be calling for rapid decarbonisation and work closely with Eco-Congregation Scotland and its 450 registered churches around the country.



Columban representatives Scott Wright (left), Peter Hughes (right) and Amy Echeverria (centre) at the Pre-Synod Conference on the Amazon at Georgetown University with Archbishop Bernardito Auza and Luis Cardinal Tagle, from Manila.

## Amazonia Synod - Church commits to indigenous people

Representatives of the Pan Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM) met with senior Church leaders at a US university 19-21 March, ahead of October's Synod of Bishops on Amazonia. Participants were drawn from around the world with a strong presence of cardinals and bishops from the Global South. Topics discussed included: 'A world in Socio-Environmental Crisis', 'Testimonies: The Cry of the People, the Cry of the Earth', and 'Integral Ecology and the Church's mission'. Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York, noted that Pope Francis in his encyclical 'Laudato Si', urges all to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions, not merely out of defense for their rights but in recognition of how much indigenous peoples have to teach the world about the inter-relationship between environment and sustainable development.

## Green Christian Way of Life 15 June, Shrewsbury

Including sessions on: The Green Christian Way of Life, focusing on Prayer, Living Gently on the Earth, Public Witness and Encouragement. There will be an opportunity to discover new resources and share experiences. The 'Joy in Enough' programme offers a vision for a society dedicated to human flourishing and the common good rather than

the constant pursuit of more. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/green-christian-on-the-road-together-in-shrewsbury-tickets-59946398291>

A similar "Green Christian - On the Road Together" regional day will be held on 14 Sept in Manchester.

## Refugee Week 16-22 June Thursday 20 June - Symbolic Action on the White Cliffs of Dover!

People Not Walls will hold events on the beach at Calais and on the Dover coast to demonstrate solidarity between charities working on both sides of the Channel for humanitarian treatment of migrants.

## World Mission and Climate Change

Ellen Teague of Columban JPIC is keynote speaker at a World Mission Conference on Saturday 28 September in Bury St Edmunds, focusing on climate change. Contact Christians Aware on 0116 254 0770.



Greta Thunberg and Tomas Insua of the Global Catholic Climate Movement met Pope Francis in April.

# Action Ideas

## Columban "Creation Covenant"

The Columban Advocacy and Outreach Office in Washington has produced a guide to help "each of us to reconnect with the natural world and reexamine how our lifestyles impact its wellbeing". It is broken into four parts: Prayer & Spirituality, Continuing Education, Daily Commitment for a "Greener" Lifestyle, Advocate for Creation. You're invited to think of one practical and specific commitment for each category. These can be discrete tasks that you do once (for example, "Read Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*" for Prayer & Spirituality), or, on-going lifestyle readjustments (for example, "Fast from meat at <http://columbancenter.org/content/creation-covenant> at least twice a week" for daily commitments for a "Greener" Lifestyle). See resources at: <http://columbancenter.org/content/creation-covenant>

## Celebrating Young People Awards

The awards honour the achievements of young people across the country who make our communities and the world a better place. There are six award categories, which take their inspiration from Catholic social teaching and recognise the enormous, often unseen, social action of young people. Parishes, schools and individuals are invited to nominate young people aged 11-25, and winners will all be invited to a ceremony in London's West End in July. Cardinal Vincent Nichols will be the guest of honour and will present the Pope Francis Award, the overall youth award. There is also a category for inspiring youth leader. Nominations close soon at [www.millionminutes.org/awards](http://www.millionminutes.org/awards).

## Support Brazil's Indigenous People

Since taking office, President Jair Bolsonaro has:

- Taken the government's indigenous affairs department, FUNAI, away from the Ministry of Justice and placed it under the control of Minister Damara Alves, an evangelical preacher whose NGO is under investigation for inciting racial hatred against indigenous peoples.

## SEASON OF CREATION

**From September 1 to October 4**, Christians around the world unite to pray and care for creation. The Season of Creation begins on September 1, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and ends on October 4, the feast day of St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology in many traditions.

In 2016, Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew I released their special messages for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, kicking off the month-long Season of Creation celebrations. Both leaders used strong language to stress the urgency of the ecological crisis and the need to take action on climate change. The Season of Creation is facilitated by the World Council of Churches, the Global Catholic Climate Movement, ACT Alliance, the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and the Anglican Communion Environmental Network.

In 2018, the **season** was celebrated with 650+ events in 68 countries on 6 continents. Christians are coming together as never before to care for the Earth, our common home.

**In 2019, the Season of Creation will be focused on biodiversity.**

<https://seasonofcreation.org/>  
<https://seasonofcreation.com/worship-resources/liturgies/series-c-the-wisdom-series/>  
<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/climate-change/time-for-creation>

- Taken the responsibility to map out indigenous territories away from FUNAI and given it to the Agriculture Ministry, which is run by anti-indigenous politicians of the agribusiness lobby

- Drafted decrees to make it harder to protect indigenous territories, and to "monitor" indigenous peoples' allies

But across the country, indigenous peoples are challenging. They need their land and rainforest in order to survive.

**Survival is organising international solidarity to protect the indigenous people.**  
<https://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes>

## GLIMPSES OF ADVOCACY...



Calling for a ban of fracking / Challenging Barclays Bank support for the fossil fuel industry / Lobbying the Anglo-American Mining Company at its London AGM on 30 April.

# Resources

## Global Healing

Global Healing is a film-based programme for parishes and groups. It informs and equips people to engage with Pope Francis' challenges in *Laudato Si'*. Film clips, posters, leader's guide etc. available as free downloads.  
<https://www.ourcommonhome.co.uk/>

## Achieving Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the UK Christian Aid

Produced in December 2018, after the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change urged the global economy to go net zero by 2050 to limit warming to 1.5C, Christian Aid's report urges, "a renewed relationship with nature, and restoring ecosystems, especially peatlands and native forests".  
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/about-us/time-climate-justice>

## Green New Deal

### New Economics Foundation

The UK needs a new economy that works for everyone. Also, bold, ambitious plans for a rapid response to climate change. Developed a decade ago by a group of UK-based economists, the **Green New Deal** is now back on the agenda. It addresses economic, social and environmental crises together. Download at: <https://neweconomics.org/2019/04/a-green-new-deal>

Also:

### We need system change by Frank Dixon

<https://www.greenecconomycoalition.org/news-analysis/csr-isnt-enough-we-need-system-change>

The UK think-tank **E3G** has posted an article by **George Triggs** and **Helena Wright** on

### Green Finance:

**The story so far.** See <https://www.e3g.org/library/green-finance-the-story-so-far>

In **New Political Economy** journal there is a paper by **Jason Hickel**

and **Giorgos Kallis**, asking **Is Green Growth Possible?** See <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2019.1598964>

## Beyond Extractivism Gaia Foundation

New UN research has revealed that resource extraction is responsible for 80% of biodiversity loss and 50% of the world's carbon emissions. Grabbing and destroying ecosystems on a vast scale in order to exploit minerals, metals and fossil fuels, the extractive industries are driving climate change and toxifying water and land for generations to come. Backed by state governments, extractive companies are often associated with human and ecological rights abuses, including killings of environmentalists who oppose destructive projects. Going beyond extractivism requires us to transcend today's dominant anthropocentric worldview that regards nature as an inert 'resource' to be exploited and commodified relentlessly.  
<https://www.gaiafoundation.org/what-we-do/beyond-extractivism/>

## Gaia Foundation also has: Water is life toolkit

<http://www.waterislifetoolkit.org>  
And campaigns on '**Sacred Lands and Wilderness**' and '**Seed Sovereignty**'.

## The World in a Grain: The Story of Sand and How It Shaped Civilisation.

### Vince Beiser

Story of the hugely important and diminishing natural resource that

grows more essential every day, and of the people who mine it, sell it, build with it – and sometimes, even kill for it. It's also a provocative examination of the serious human and environmental costs incurred by our dependence on sand.  
**ISBN-10:** 9780399576423

## JRI Briefings

### Paper 39 - 'Religious and Secular Concern for the Environment' by Rev Jonathan Clatworthy.

It considers whether Christian concerns for the environment differ from secular ones.

All briefings at:

<https://www.jri.org.uk/briefings/>

## Sustainable Preaching

For Christians the principle of sustainability is an old idea - its roots are anchored in the Bible but in many cases forgotten in daily life. The internet platform 'Sustainable Preaching' reminds of these roots – and the responsibility connected to them.

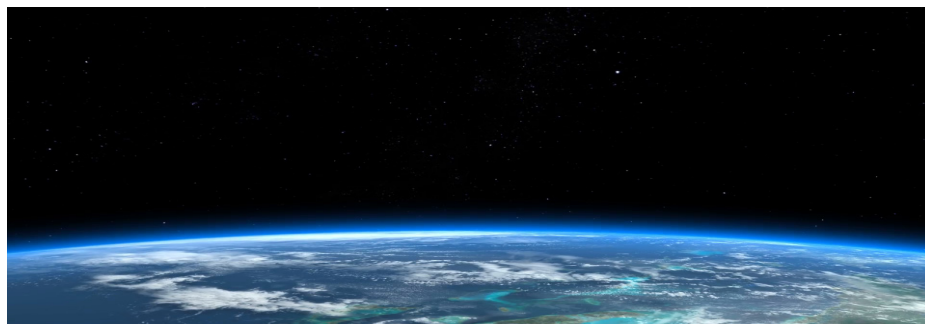
<http://www.sustainable-preaching.org/>

## Militarism and Climate Change - The Elephant in the Living Room

### Student Energy

Worldwide militarism is responsible for enormous greenhouse emissions and waste of energy. How much harm is done to our natural environment can only be estimated, but there are voices that regard militarism as the largest polluter on the planet.

<https://www.studentenergy.org/blog/428-militarism-and-climate-change-the-elephant-in-the-living-room>



## VOCATION FOR JUSTICE

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