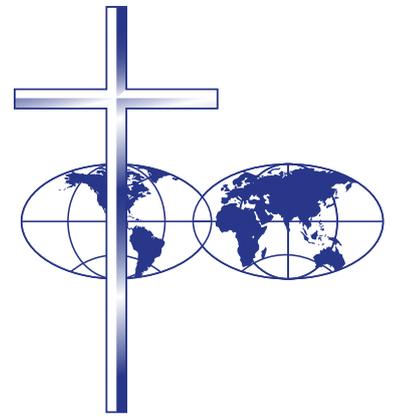


Vocation for Justice

Winter 2020 Volume 34 No 23



Columban Schools Media Competition 2021

Now open for entries
See page 8

**'Let's Create A World
Without Racism'**

columbancompetition.com

Build Back Better

"With the Covid Taskforce, Pope Francis has initiated a process of dialogue and sacred action to prepare a future that is just, nonviolent and respects the dignity of creation."

Amy Echeverria - the Central Columban JPIC Coordinator and a member of the Ecology Working Group of the Vatican's Coronavirus Commission.



COLUMBAN MISSION

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

I tumbled out of bed for an early morning webinar. It was early because most speakers were in the Pacific region, addressing the title, 'Just Transition for Asia Pacific and Oceania'. More than 250 people globally attended the Season of Creation event, organised by the Global Catholic Climate Movement. I marvel at the technology where such conversations can happen.

From Fiji, Archbishop Peter Loy Chong of Suva reported that Covid-19 is having a huge impact on Fiji's economy, causing the foreign debt to treble and raising vulnerability to corporate exploitation. He felt the Church must tackle debt, extractive industries and the climate crisis. He spoke of a coastal village where women harvest crabs, but a Chinese company has been extracting sand and disrupting the crab population. Also, of an open area of his compound becoming swampy, "perhaps due to sea level rise." He suggested that Covid-19 was offering an opportunity. It "has slowed down globalisation and given us space for change." Recalling the slogan, 'Another World is Possible,' he called for international advocacy to regulate financial markets, eliminate tax havens and end the privatisation of public services.

From India, Bishop Allwyn D'Silva of Bombay, who has a Climate Change responsibility for the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, also felt the pandemic is precipitating change. "The world has come to a pause," he said, and "interruptions have cut across all boundaries." He urged us to use the time to prepare for our collective future by reconnecting to our local surroundings, for "domestic space is a possible place for encounter the sacred", contemplating the natural world, rethinking priorities and eliminating inequalities. "We can live slower lives, closer to our families, our communities, to nature and to God," he reflected. We must "break out of destructive practices - we now know better, let's do better."

A Columban friend, Fr Edu Gariguez, who has worked on social justice for the Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, spoke of a "Just Transition" being pursued through Church initiatives despite severe recession. The Philippine bishops have called for "ecological

conversion," with many groups campaigning for the 'Rights of Nature' and for green jobs. It is vital to withdraw from coal and find a green route out of the pandemic.

Pope Francis wants us to seize the post-Covid comeback as, "the opportunity to move out from danger." Columbans are involved in the new Vatican Covid-19 Commission which is explained on page 10. And, in our centrespread, with groups working for a future marked by justice, peace and ecological sustainability.

But when Pope Francis said in his September video, 'Respect for the Planet's Resources,' that multinationals do in the global south what "they would never be allowed to do in their own countries" I could think of many destructive practices here in Britain. When I see rows of oak trees being uprooted for the HS2 rail project, and 'tree protectors' having to climb into trees to protect them, then I feel we are experiencing that loss of power so common to communities in the global south. In West London, a beautiful lake and activity centre enjoyed by thousands of children every year faces forced closure. "Billions of our money is being wasted on a vanity project filling the coffers of fat cats," said a recent tweet of #HS2Rebellion. More than £30 billion could be better spent.

On 1 September, at the start of the Season of Creation and the day parliament reconvened, thousands flooded Parliament Square demanding action by the government to tackle the climate emergency. Christian Climate Action was among them, joined by a Catholic bishop and several Anglican bishops. Women in Black hold a weekly silent vigil in Central London highlighting a gendered position on such issues as ending arms trading. They are part of a worldwide network of women committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and all forms of violence.

We lament with those who are grieving Covid-related losses at this time, and remember Columbans in Peru and other countries in the global south coping with the huge impact of the pandemic on the poor.



Ellen Teague

If the pandemic has taught us anything, the lesson is about what is actually important in life. We value family, friendships, health, a stable climate and a cleaner environment. Our heroes are in hospitals fighting to save lives, in schools teaching our children, in streets where neighbours care for the vulnerable, and in organisations supporting destitute refugees.

For too long we have left everything in the hands of the market. Not only trade, but also health, education and food. This crisis highlights the unjust ways in which we have organised society and the economy in Britain. In every diocese, poor and vulnerable people have been fed through an emergency relief operation not unlike those in the global south. Catholic charities have stepped up and put faith into action, especially now as so many workers are losing their jobs with the furlough scheme ending. We must join the clamour for justice.

We need a universal protection system that recognises key workers and grants them the importance the market never gave them. We must strive for a development model that takes care of our natural resources. We need a green economic recovery, and a more equitable society.

At this time of year, crops are being harvested in fields, and in the hedgerows wild creatures are enjoying a feast of berries and nuts. Nurturing the courgettes, tomatoes and apples growing in my garden has been a delight. I believe that God's intention is for peace, for "shalom". This includes values of wholeness, balance, and tranquillity: everyone connected in right relationships, reflecting back the love and beauty of God. Lets work towards this vision - at home and globally. ■

Ellen Teague

Creating a New Normal

Pope Francis

Speaking at his General Audience on 19 August, Pope Francis said healing the world after the pandemic is an opportunity to build back better.

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has not only “exposed the plight of the poor and the serious inequality that reigns in the world,” but even exacerbated them, Pope Francis said at his General Audience on 19 August.

He said our response to the pandemic must be twofold: “finding a cure for this small but terrible virus,” but also curing “a larger virus, that of social injustice, inequality of opportunity, marginalisation, and lack of protection for the weakest.” In meeting that challenge, he said, we must always keep in mind the “preferential option for the poor.” This is not a political, ideological, or partisan option, he said. Rather, “the preferential option for the poor is at the centre of the Gospel.”

Following the example of Jesus, the Pope said, Christians “are recognised by their closeness to the poor, the least, the sick and the imprisoned, the excluded and the forgotten, those without food and clothing.” This, he said, “is a key criterion of Christian authenticity.” And he emphasised that it is not the duty only of a few, but of every Christian; in fact, “it is the mission of the Church as a whole.”

The preference for the poor is rooted in the virtues of faith, hope and love. Going beyond the bare necessities, “it implies walking together, allowing ourselves be evangelised by the poor, who know the suffering Christ well, letting ourselves be ‘infected’ by their experience of salvation, their wisdom, and creativity.”

Pope Francis called for universal access to Covid-19 vaccines. Closeness to the poor, said Pope Francis, also implies working to overcome the “unhealthy social structures,” as we strive to return normality in the aftermath of the pandemic.

This “normality,” however, should not include returning to “social

injustices and the degradation of the environment” that marks contemporary society, the Pope said. He lamented an economy focused on profits over people, arguing that “the preferential option for the poor, this ethical-social need that comes from God’s love, inspires us to conceive of and design an economy where people, and especially the poorest, are at the centre.”

Similarly, as treatments for the coronavirus become more widely available, society should prioritise those who have the greatest need, rather than those who have the most money. “How sad it would be” he said, if, for the Covid-19 vaccine, priority were to be given to the richest.”

Pope Francis also warned against the “scandal” of directing economic

assistance during the pandemic primarily “to industries that do not contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, the promotion of the least, the common good, or the care of creation” - which he proposed as four criteria for determining which industries should be helped.

Pointing to the example of Jesus, Pope Francis said, “we must act now, to heal the epidemics caused by the small, invisible viruses, and to heal those caused by the serious and visible social injustices.”

Pope Francis proposed to accomplish this “by starting from the love of God, placing the peripheries at the centre and those who are least in first place.” He suggested that, “starting from this love, anchored in hope and founded in faith, a healthier world will be possible.”

The pope concluded by praying, “May the Lord help us and give us the strength to come out of it better, responding to the needs of today’s world.” ■

Solidarity with Refugees



Bishop Paul McAleenan, auxiliary in Westminster and lead bishop for Migrants and Refugees for the bishops in England and Wales, visited Dover on 15 September to meet organisations working with refugees. Among them was Seeking Sanctuary, founded by Southwark Archdiocese J&P activists Ben Bano and Phil Kerton to challenge intolerance and the scapegoating of migrants. He led prayers at the migrants' memorials to those who have lost their lives while making the crossing from France to the UK in order to seek sanctuary. These include 58 Chinese who perished in the back of a lorry arriving at Dover in 2000. The Bishop reminded all of the importance of each person's life.

Creation Care a Moral Issue

Sean McDonagh SSC

Since the publication of his book, 'The Death of Life' 16 years ago, Columban eco-theologian Sean McDonagh has drawn attention to "sinful" destruction of biodiversity.

It is important that we get an accurate understanding of how serious the destruction of biodiversity is for planet Earth. In fact, the level of destruction of the biosphere constitutes a change of a geological and biological order of magnitude. During the past few decades human devastation of nature has caused the end of the Cenozoic (new life period) which began 65 million years ago after a period that saw the extinction of the dinosaurs. We have now entered the Anthropocene or Human Epoch because of the massive changes humans have made on terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

We are living in the sixth major extinction of life since life began on Earth 3.8 billion years ago. As a species we need to educate ourselves about the impact of our wasteful, industrial societies and, most of all we need to urgently devise strategies and lifestyles which will allow us to live in a more sustainable way with the rest of creation. Every group in society, including politicians, economists, industrialists, farmers, people and religious people will need to be involved in shaping this sustainable lifestyle. It is a gigantic task, but essential if we are to leave a beautiful, vibrant and fruitful planet to future generations.

During 2019 and early 2020, bush fires, exacerbated by climate change, burnt approximately 1919,000 hectares for almost 80 days in Australia. The damage to wildlife was horrendous. Around three billion koalas, kangaroos and other animals were killed or displaced. Add to that, 2.4 billion reptiles, 180 million birds and 51 million frogs.

July this year, saw more than 6,000 fires in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest. Animals in the Amazon - such as sloths, lizards, anteaters and frogs have died in huge numbers. According to a new study by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, up to 57 per

cent of tree species are already facing extinction.

Globally, insects have been hit most of all by extinction. Over the past decade and a half, 41 percent of insect species have declined, compared with 22 percent of vertebrate species. Germany is planning to ban floodlights to fight its declining insect population. The use of weed killers and insecticides will be banned in national parks and within five to ten metres of major bodies of water.

Caring for creation is a new challenge for many religious people. In the Catholic Church there was no discussion on the environmental crisis during the Vatican Council in the early 1960s. Many of the bishops who attended subscribed to 'dominion theology,' which believed that the Earth was there to meet human needs. I am convinced that if half the bishops were women, they would have included care for creation as a central element of our Christian faith. Rachel Carson's influential book *Silent Spring*, which marked the beginning of the modern environmental movement, was published in April 1962, a few months before the Council began.

Concerns about ecology were absent from the social encyclicals of the Catholic church. *Populorum Progressio* (On the Progress of People) taught that creation was there for humans to use for their own advantage (#23). It stated boldly: "The introduction of industry was necessary for economic growth and human progress: it is also a sign of development and contributes to it. By persistent work and the use of his intelligence man gradually wrests nature's secrets from her and finds a better application for her riches" (#25).

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* published in 2004 shows little understanding of the global ecological crisis. Chapter

10 is devoted to "Safeguarding the Environment" but has only 15 pages. In a book of 400 pages, there is only one paragraph on climate change (#470) and one paragraph on biodiversity (#466).

The publication of *Laudato Si'* in 2015 was both very welcome and surprising. In quoting from Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople in paragraph 9 of the encyclical, Pope Francis opens a new morality for humans. The Patriarch said: "For humans beings to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of Earth by causing change in its climate; by stripping Earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate Earth's waters, its land, its air and its life - these are sins."

Though I have heard confessions many times in 50 years as a priest, no one has confessed any of the above, so this is very much a new area of moral life for all Catholics. Later in the encyclical, Pope Francis makes it clear that other species have intrinsic value independent of their usefulness to us (#140).

Unfortunately, there is an enormous gap between the teaching found in *Laudato Si'* and the prayers that are used in our liturgy. There is an enormous need to develop competent liturgical texts and eucharist prayers based on this new vision rooted in *Laudato Si'*.

The 2020 Spring issue of the magazine, *Green Christian*, has an article entitled 'Requiem for Lost Species.' The author, Helen Burnett describes a new ritual for remembering species which are becoming extinct which might be celebrated in November. *Laudato Si'* tells us that "every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world (#77).

Other authors such as the Margie Abbott RSM, in her book *Cosmic Sparks*, has developed Earth liturgies that will reconnect us with our Earth. This would be a wonderful way to get young people interested in the new Catholic teaching on the Earth which is found in *Laudato Si'*; *On Care For Our Common Home*. ■

Blodiversity Podcasts

'Jubilee for the Earth' is a podcast mini-series about biodiversity, produced by the Missionary Society of St. Columban for the Season of Creation. Six episodes explore biodiversity and a related issue like economic justice, peace, migration, and other topics related to Catholic Social Teaching.

The third podcast features Irish Columban Liam O'Callaghan, JPIC national coordinator in southern Hyderabad Diocese, who has served in Pakistan for two decades. "I tried to highlight biodiversity and interfaith dialogue, noting that 40 percent of marine species have disappeared from the polluted sea off Karachi because of waste dumping and the discharge of untreated industrial sewage," he says. Fr O'Callaghan feels, "the call to wonder at the beauty of creation, and in doing so to give praise to God, is at the heart of most of the world's religions and spiritualities."

The fourth podcast 'Nonviolence for the Earth' features Ellen Teague, Fr Pat Cunningham and Scott Wright. Columbans believe that violence done to the Earth is linked to a global economy based on protecting fossil fuels and extractive industries that enrich global corporations at the expense of poor and indigenous communities. These practices destroy fragile ecosystems and the biodiversity and cultural diversity of peoples who depend on and take care of creation. As people of faith, we have a responsibility to practice nonviolence. We can do this by choosing to live simply and sustainably, preventing conflicts before they become violent, and advocating against the expansion of militarism around the world. We need this not only to save human life but to save all life on Earth.

www.columbancenter.org/jubileepodcast



Days of Nonviolence

Pat Cunningham SSC

Columban missionaries support the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, and promote peoples struggles for peace around the world. An Irish Columban missionary in Korea reports.



Fr Pat Cunningham, second from right, supports a protest against militarism at Jeju.

Recently, I had the opportunity with a number of Columban colleagues to join Fr Mun Jeong Hyen, an activist priest, and other peacemakers in participating in the early morning '100 bows for the life and peace of Gangjeong'. Fr Mun likes to refer to the daily bows as his 'morning prayer'. The 100 bows are basically a solemn vow and promise to engage in nonviolent resistance against the destruction of the environment and ongoing militarisation of the island of Jeju. While the 100 bows represent a challenge to my creaking bones I always feel refreshed and somewhat revitalised with the knowledge that all the participants are joined in declaring a resounding no to war preparations.

The UN Secretary General and Pope Francis have called for a de-escalation of military build-up during the Covid pandemic but apparently these calls have fallen on deaf ears. Jeju's Gangjeong village community have joined calls seeking a suspension of RIMPAC 2020 in Hawaii, the bi-annual war exercise. The Republic of Korea has taken a leading role this year in leading 10 countries amassing a huge toll on marine life while ratcheting up tensions in the region. Choi Sung-Hee writes in the latest issue of Gangjeong Village Story that the recent ROK-US military exercises, together with RIMPAC, are an integral part of "the US Indo-Pacific domination strategy targeting North Korea and China...." and are in violation of "inter Korea summit declarations and the DPRK-US summit in 2018." These war preparations have continued in violation of calls for a de-escalation given the Covid pandemic and global efforts to deal with the crisis.

Gangjeong has become a focal point of peace learning and nonviolent resistance for many peace activists and religious who seek to move beyond militarism and preparations for war and seek a sustainable future for all God's creation. We lament the monstrosity that is the naval base and the enormous waste of resources that ongoing war preparations represent. We celebrate the many years of struggle and power of nonviolence in promoting a culture of life and peace in Gangjeong. The destruction of the coastline and sacred gureombi rock and many years of state violence inflicted on villagers and peace activists continues to engender feelings of anger and pain. Let us celebrate the power and effectiveness of nonviolence and the futility of war preparations in bringing true human security. ■

<http://savejejunow.org/gangjeong-village-story-july-august-2020-issue/>

BUILDING PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

Globally, people and living creatures, along with the delicate artistry of the planet are experiencing a crisis of violence. The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative has run a three-year global conversation among church leaders, community organisers, activists, social scientists and theologians about how the Catholic Church might highlight its Gospel nonviolence roots and transform the world.

One outcome is new resource material for building peace.

Pax Christi England and Wales has been running a new five-session Study Programme on 'Making Active Nonviolence our way of life in the Church and the World.' The resource is now available for the programme to be run by local groups. Email info@paxchristi.org.uk. <https://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/nonviolence-in-action/educational-resources-for-nonviolence/>

Consider becoming members of Pax Christi England and Wales <https://paxchristi.org.uk/> or Pax Christi Scotland <https://paxchristiscotland.org/> and the Movement for the Abolition of War <http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/>



International members of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING

Organic farming now makes up 4 percent of all agricultural space in the UK but that won't significantly increase with consumer choice alone. More responsible politics and top-down legislation is needed.

The Soil Association, a charity which advocates for an organic approach to food and farming, feels the pandemic has helped us recognise the importance of food and the natural environment. The organic movement plays an important role in being at the leading edge of change and showing what is possible. Farmers are increasingly enthused about moving towards more sustainable methods. Policymakers are thinking more creatively about how to use public funds to nurture a natural environment that will be the bedrock of future food production, whilst tackling climate change and the biodiversity crash.

The climate crisis, the way we eat, and the depletion of nature are all interconnected issues, so we need more holistic solutions. <https://www.gaiafoundation.org/> <https://www.soilassociation.org/>



Harvest produce.

SUSTAINING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Our interconnectedness and our need for one another has never been clearer. Together for the Common Good is a charity rooted in Christian tradition which highlights the great community spirit which emerged during lockdown and that we don't want to lose. New people stepped up to solidarity work and found satisfaction in serving the marginalised. As the fallout of the pandemic continues to hit, we'll need to continue to work together to strengthen our neighbourhoods. A new free downloadable guide consists of four, 45-minute sessions framed around the principles of the Common Good and leads to a simple action plan.

<https://togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/news/t4cg-calls-for-stronger-local-relationships>

MONEY MAKES CHANGE

Money can be used to create a fairer world. We can support ethical banking and businesses that share our values. And what about sustainable and ethical options for pensions and investments. Fairtrade has mushroomed - 20 years ago the retail Fairtrade market in UK was worth £2.8million, now it is £1.6 billion.

Banks often sit behind some of the most controversial industries in the world – from nuclear weapons to exploration for new fossil fuels. Triodos Bank, is an alternative bank, supporting positive impact initiatives such as green energy, organic food and fair trade.

Money Makes Change resources and workshops can be found on the website of the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR): www.eccr.org.uk/learning-materials.

Operation Noah's *Bright Now* campaign calls on UK Churches to divest from fossil fuel companies. <https://brightnow.org.uk/> 'Switch It' is a website that helps you check if your bank is investing in fossil fuels <https://switchit.money/>

Good Money Week 24 – 30 October <https://goodmoneyweek.com/> <https://www.eccr.org.uk/news/restoring-hope-a-series-of-online-nts-24-30-october-2020-2/>

GIVING NATURE A CHANCE

Does a river have a right not to be poisoned by mine tailings? Does a species have a right not to be driven to extinction? Do ocean creatures have a right to a clean environment that is not treated as a rubbish dump? There is a growing movement to recognise that our ecosystems – including trees, rivers, oceans, animals, mountains – have rights. They are more than commodities and someone's properties. The Church is increasingly recognising Ecocide as sinful. Rights of Nature is about balancing what is good for human beings against what is good for other species and the planet as a whole. Rights of nature acknowledges that nature in all its life forms has the *right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles*. This understanding is a feature of indigenous cultures globally. In mid-September, the UN's 'Global Biodiversity Outlook Report' highlighted that the world set a 2020 deadline to save nature but not a single target was met. "The rate of biodiversity loss is unprecedented in human history and pressures are intensifying," it said, adding that "it is not too late to slow, halt and eventually reverse current trends in the decline of biodiversity." See Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/environment/> Greenpeace UK <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/challenges/> Friends of the Earth <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/issues>

LOVE KNOWS NO BORDERS

At a time when immigrant communities are under unprecedented attack from discrimination and racism across the UK, the Columbans join Migrants' Rights groups to say that 'love knows no borders'. Since 2000, the Missionary Society of St. Columban has committed itself in a special way to "continue accompanying and defending the rights of migrants," and to address the underlying causes of the migration of peoples. These include violence, climate change and industrial agriculture. In the U.S., families are forced to set up tents to live in at a public park in Juárez city, Mexico, while seeking asylum in the U.S. Columban missionaries and parishioners on both sides of the border help provide information, clothing, food and shelter to these thousands of families. Seeking Sanctuary <https://seekingsanctuary.weebly.com/> JRSUK <https://www.jrsuk.net/> Columban Mission Center, El Paso <https://columban.org/columban-mission-center-el-paso-texas>

GREEN NEW DEAL

The global economy faces multiple linked crises. It is a combination of accelerating climate breakdown driven by fossil fuel use, corrosive inequality, and debt-fuelled over consumption by a global minority pushing us beyond planetary ecological boundaries. A Green New Deal would be a major, government-wide mission to respond rapidly to the climate emergency through a programme of state-led investment in a new generation of good jobs in clean industry, business and infrastructure – in particular targeted at the people and places that most need a 'just transition' to a new economy.

The UK government is committed to delivering 'net zero' emissions by 2050, but Labour and the Green Party have already pledged to bring this date forward to 2030.

Green New Deal Group <https://greennewdealgroup.org/>

New Economics Foundation <https://neweconomics.org/>

Global Justice Now <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/>

CAFOD is highlighting the impact of debt crisis on the poorest countries of the world while they try and address the pandemic. Money should be kept in developing countries by cancelling debt payments now.

<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Latest-campaigns/Time-to-cancel-the-debt>

The London Mining Network supports communities harmed by London-based mining companies. <https://londonminingnetwork.org/>



Columban tree-planting project in Fiji.

CLEAN ENERGY

Nearly all the parishes in England & Wales, are using green energy, including green gas, inspired by *Laudato Si'* and the need to address the climate crisis.

In 2016, two Catholic buying groups combined: the northern energy buying group, run by the Catholic Mutual Interdiocesan Fuel Management, and the southern energy buying group, run by Churchmarketplace. The size of the group meant that the cost of green energy was slashed and the change was made. Energy comes from renewable sources including wind and solar power.

CAFOD says the most urgent change needed is to shift from polluting fossil fuels to more sustainable and efficient energy systems. This shift must also benefit the billions of people who currently do not have modern energy in the global south.

Sustainable Development Goal 7 on Energy recognises that, universal access to affordable, reliable and safe energy by 2030 is crucial to end poverty and for sustainable development.

<https://cafod.org.uk/About-us/Policy-and-research/Climate-change-and-energy>

Schools Media Competition

The Schools Media Competition is now in its 4th year and it has been exciting to see the growing number of entries as each year passes. Last year's theme on 'Tackling our throwaway culture' drew some insightful and challenging entries, including one from winner Kit Bell who explored the detrimental effects of fast fashion.

This year's theme, '**Let's Create A World Without Racism**' has grown out of the recent events which saw structural and systemic racism being confronted on a global stage. Responding to the death of George Floyd in the United States in June, Pope Francis said, "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life."

This is an opportunity to hear young people's voices on this important issue and a chance for them to engage with a theme that addresses equality, justice, inclusion and also draws on faith and personal experience. Article and images submissions are invited.

These values have been an important part of Columban mission around the world. For example, the work of the Columbans in Australia supporting Aboriginal rights and lobbying the Australian government to implement its Modern Anti-Slavery Act. The competition creates a space to draw out some individual experiences and perspectives that can help to contextualise what it really means to live out these values in today's world.

The deadline for the competition is **20 February 2021**. www.columbancompetition.com

Prepare the Future

A recent collaboration between the Columbans and Million Minutes saw young Catholics come together for a series of online formation sessions during lockdown. Special guests included Matthew Van Duyvenbode from The Trussell Trust, discussing foodbanks, and Katrina Alton CSJP on vocation, prayer and protest.

One participant, Anna Fraine, with the support of the Columbans, has gone on to write a new resource, 'Prepare the Future' for use by youth leaders and teachers in secondary schools. It helps young people reflect on their experience of Covid-19 through the eyes of the Gospel, answering Pope Francis's call for young people to 'prepare the future' now, and not passively 'prepare for the future' created by others. Anna says: "I hope this resource encourages young people not only to take action in their own lives but also shape for themselves a new way of being in the world, not shying away from spirituality."

Daisy Sriblin, Director of Million Minutes, hopes the resource, "will enable young people from around the country to process the trauma they have experienced, to explore the role of faith in that journey, and to build the sort of future they deserve."

Columban Justice and Peace Education Worker, James Trewby, notes that the initiative, "fits so well with the Columban commitment to justice, peace and care for creation - and supporting young people in putting their faith into action for the common good".

<https://millionminutes.org/future>



SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION

We are looking for students (aged 14-18 inclusive) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme:

'LET'S CREATE A WORLD WITHOUT RACISM'

The winning entries will be published in the *Far East* magazine and online on Columban websites in Ireland and Britain and shared on Columban social media. This is a chance to engage with an issue that addresses equality, justice, inclusion and also draws on faith and personal experience.

PRINT PRIZES | **IMAGE PRIZES**

1ST £300 | **1ST £300**
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THE COMPETITION IS BEING LAUNCHED ON MONDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2020

“We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.” POPE FRANCIS, June 2020

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: SATURDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2021

For more information on entry guidelines see: www.columbancompetition.com or email hello@columbancompetition.com

 COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

US Trade Deal “Dangerous”

Nick Dearden

Nick Is Director of Global Justice Now.

A part of Britain’s establishment has always looked to the United States for leadership. Some look at the US as a model economy in which the market rules, big business can behave as it sees fit, and rich individuals are free from irritating ‘burdens’ like public healthcare and redistributive taxes. We have many such figures in our government today, including the international trade secretary Liz Truss.

One important vehicle for pulling our economy closer to the US model is the controversial US trade deal currently being negotiated. The proposed deal is not so much about importing more American products. It’s about importing the American economic model. This is because trade deals today go well beyond tariffs. They interfere with how we regulate food production, how we provide public services, how we regulate big business, and how much we are charged for our medicines. Donald Trump has said, “when you’re dealing in trade everything is on the table.”

How does it work? You’ve probably heard of chlorine chickens. This method of washing poultry in pathogen reduction treatments such as chlorine dioxide is common in the US. The worry for consumers is less the chlorine than what the chlorine is hiding. The washes essentially remove bacteria which has accumulated over a tortured lifetime. Chickens can barely move, cluck or eat, never see sunlight, regularly suffer heart attacks because of their unnatural size, and are covered in sores. And workers’ rights in the US meat industry are often appalling.

Chlorine chicken is an issue because trade deals today focus largely on ridding the world economy of regulations that ‘interfere’ with trade. Negotiations are taken up with trying to level (or ‘harmonise’) regulatory standards, by saying two products which are as healthy, as efficient or as safe should be treated the same, even if they’re made differently. This might be fine if two goods really are equivalent, but all too often they’re not. US food

standards are radically different to Britain’s. US agriculture is dominated by massive corporations, farming on an industrial scale, with intensive use of antibiotics, hormones and steroids to promote rapid growth of animals and prevent illness in what are often extremely unpleasant and unhealthy conditions. Excessive chemicals and other stomach-churning things can end up in the food eaten.

To label this ‘equivalent’ in a trade deal will mean letting food produced to much lower standards onto our supermarket shelves, often without adequate labelling. This presents an immediate problem for food producers here. How can they compete with such food? The main option they have is to build pressure to lower standards here too. This is how modern trade deals set a ‘race to the bottom’ in motion in terms of regulations and standards. It explains why farmers are so worried about a US trade deal.

Trade deals can also give huge powers – or ‘rights’ - directly to multinational corporations and big financiers. That could be the right to bid for NHS contracts or rail franchises in perpetuity, making nationalisation of those services near impossible. It could be rights to challenge governments for regulations which big business regards as unnecessary – like stricter environmental standards. It could be rights of pharmaceutical corporations to charge the health service whatever they like for important medicines. Or the rights of Big Tech companies like Amazon and Google not to have to pay a digital services tax.

Perhaps most extraordinary, these rights are often directly enforceable, because overseas investors or big business can directly sue countries in special tribunals, not open to the rest of us. The basis for such cases has been expanded to an almost ludicrous degree by City law firms. A foreign investor today might claim pretty much any government action



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that damages their future profits is ‘unfair’. Putting cigarettes in plain packaging, forcing toxic mines to put better environmental standards in place, or controlling water prices might well damage corporate profits, but the idea that they have infringed some fundamental right

directly threatens a government’s ability to enact regulation. Yet these are all real cases, brought against governments under trade rules. We have reason to believe all of these elements will be part of a US trade deal.

Stopping this trade deal is imperative if we want to build a better Britain. The deal is a microcosm of all that is wrong with our global trading system, a system which has fostered an unsustainable economy, which has handed the major decisions over our lives to a super rich elite. The political crisis we are now living through is an inevitable product of this system.

It is possible to build something better. Trade does not have to be a problem – what matters is the rules that govern that trade. Trade can improve productivity and technological know-how. But these benefits will not be shared equally unless governments can control, tax and direct the resulting activity. Instead of slashing regulations, the goal should be regulating trade and investment to ensure a fairer and more sustainable economy.

Progressive leaders and campaigns must begin to create the foundations of a very different economy if we are to avoid a retreat into xenophobia and the collapse of international coordination. A return to 1990s-style globalisation is not an option. Only radical proposals have a hope of turning things around. ■

This article is based on Nick Dearden’s new book, ‘Trade Secrets: the truth about the US trade deal and how we stop it’.

<https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/>

Pope creates Coronavirus Commission to respond to the pandemic

The goal of the Vatican's new commission, which is led by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, is "to express the church's concern and love for the entire human family in the face of the of COVID-19 pandemic." The dicastery will work with other Vatican offices to coordinate the work, which includes "an analysis and a reflection on the socioeconomic and culture challenges of the future and proposed guidelines to address them."

The commission is divided into five working groups and Columbans are involved with several of them, particularly one focusing on ecology. It is already urging:

- Put nature and the climate at the centre of post-pandemic reconstruction;
- Make sure all countries adhere to international standards on the wildlife trade;
- Link increased agricultural production with ecosystem protection.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery, has called for the loosening of international sanctions, the reduction or forgiveness of the foreign debts of poor countries, and the end of conflict and arms trafficking. Instead, countries should use their wealth "to heal people and save lives." He said, "we have rediscovered our fragility" and "we are rediscovering the value of the things that matter and the worthlessness of so many things that we once considered important."

<http://www.humandevlopment.va/en/vatican-covid-19/ultime-notizie.html>

Webinars from the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM)

GCCM organised a series of webinars during the Season of Creation that attracted thousands of Christian environmentalists from around the world. More than 17,000 people from six continents attended the 1 September prayer service for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

All recordings at: <https://seasonofcreation.org/videos/>

Columban Message for the September 2020 World Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees:

It says: '2020 marks the fifth anniversary since Pope Francis made an urgent plea to religious orders and every parish to open their doors and welcome the millions of people on the move. Building on decades of Migrant Ministry around the world, during these past five years Columbans have:

- ◆ Opened and sustained houses of hospitality, providing welcome, safety and essential life services to dozens of individuals and families;
- ◆ Advocated for comprehensive immigration reform, labour protections, and sanctuary;
- ◆ Provided education, pastoral and legal services for vulnerable migrants;
- ◆ Offered liturgies and spiritual accompaniment in different languages in various countries;
- ◆ Organised and attended public rallies and vigils in support of migrant rights.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki - 75th Anniversary.

To mark the 75th anniversary of the first use of nuclear weapons in war, the Japanese and US Bishops called for abolition of nuclear weapons. Christian CND coordinated a statement calling on the UK government to scrap our nuclear weapons. It was signed by more than 170 Christian leaders from eight denominations. The Columbans also issued a statement: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/40160>

Columbans support justice in US/UK Trade

Catholic organisations - including Columbans - are amongst those who have signed a letter to the UK Secretary of State for International Trade and the US Trade Representative urging that the proposed new trade agreement between the UK and US must be based upon ambitious environmental and social aims. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39546>

Catholic Investment Webinars

Operation Noah has organised:

'Investment for a green recovery: Innovation in impact investing' Wednesday 21 October 2020, 4.00-5.30pm
Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/part-2-investment-for-a-green-recovery-innovation-in-impact-investing-registration-118552167725>

Church Action on Poverty

CAP's Challenge Poverty Week 12-18 October will highlight what is being done at community level to challenge and alleviate poverty. <https://challenge-poverty-week-briefing.eventbrite.co.uk/>

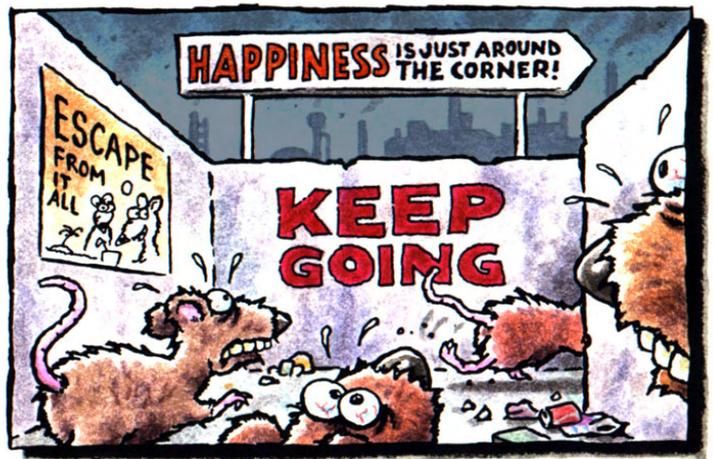
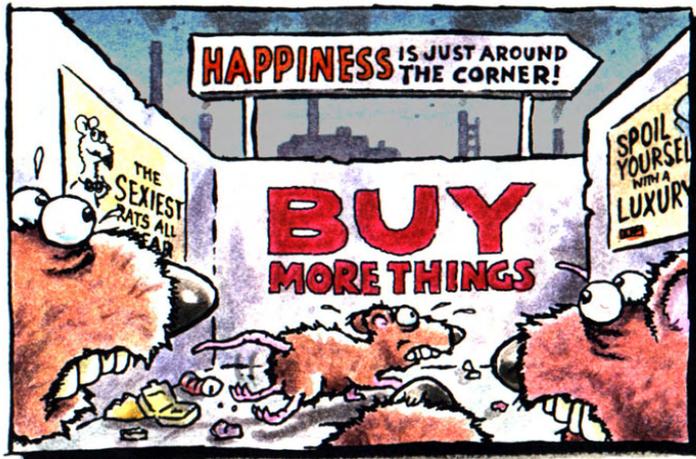
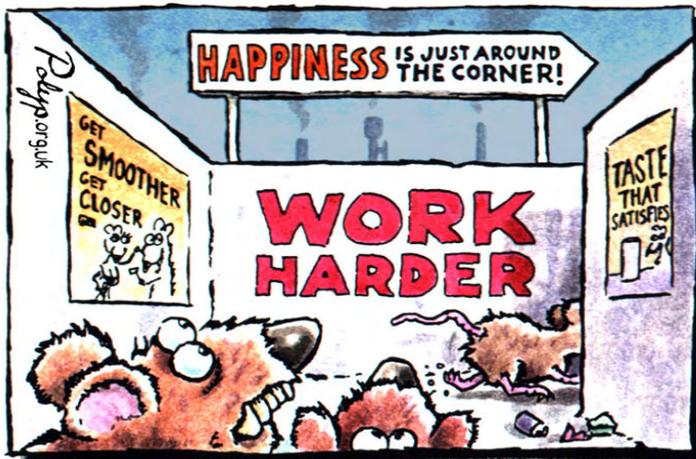
Valuing Vulnerable People

The long-held fears of many disabled people, that their lives were not considered as valuable as others during the pandemic, have been confirmed in a new report by Catholic journalist Bernadette Meaden. '**Illness, Disability, and Caring**' says the emergency legislation known as the Coronavirus Act removed important rights and protections from disabled people. Also, there were "unprecedented numbers of 'Do Not Resuscitate' orders for learning disabilities' patients". Another issue was the transfer of elderly hospital patients into residential care homes without testing for the virus, with the "predictable" surge of deaths. Bernadette looks to Gospel teachings to discern what justice and inclusion might look like. She urges a properly funded National Care Service, and an adequate Carers' Allowance for those who care for a family member. The report is part of the series 'How the Bible Can Help Us Understand,' produced by Darton, Longman and Todd.

New, practical booklet on Domestic Abuse

In order to raise awareness within the Catholic community of domestic abuse and the impact upon victims and their children, the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW) has released a booklet that offers pastoral care and guidance. Abuse has worsened during the pandemic. *Download at:* www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/08/NBCW-Domestic-Abuse-A4-Booklet.pdf

Action Ideas



Green Christian Events

Green Christian has launched a platform for Christians to develop mission and advocacy for a world post coronavirus, called '**Radical Presence**'. 'The pandemic has come at a critical time in the climate and ecological emergency, with the postponement of COP26, the United Nations climate summit which was due to take place in Glasgow this November. But it has also provoked unprecedented readiness for change: a recent YouGov poll found only 9% of the population want life to return to 'normal'. Over seven sessions, *Radical Presence* stimulates conversations which draw on the Bible, Christian faith, experience, science and analysis www.radicalpresence.org.uk

Green Christian's '**Re-imagining the Promised Land**' online Festival 23-25 October hopes to inspire reimagining a good future for ourselves and all Creation. This free festival includes discussions and workshops on a variety of topics, including politics, creativity and imagination, land use, activism, and spirituality, as well as opportunity to hear new Christian music and to join together in worship. Speakers include Sir Jonathon Porritt and Bishop James Jones. <https://greenchristianfestival2020.eventbrite.co.uk>

The latest excellent magazine is '**A time to mourn, a time to mend**'. See <https://greenchristian.org.uk/resources/green-christian/>

Reflect:

*Does this cartoon have relevance for you?
How have coronavirus restrictions prompted reflection on your lifestyle?
What changes are you considering during this transitional period?*

Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

Amidst concerns that a second wave of COVID-19 is rolling in, the far bigger waves of the climate and ecological crisis are looming large. An alliance of campaigners, legal experts, leading scientists, MPs and academics propose a new bill to tackle the climate emergency. The 'Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill' would significantly expand the remit and scope of the Climate Change Act 2008, assigning new duties to government, parliament and the advisory Committee on Climate Change to enact a strategy that meets more ambitious targets for both climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as stronger criteria of justice, responsibility and safety. www.cee-bill.uk/ and <https://extinctionrebellion.uk/go-beyond-politics/cee-bill/>

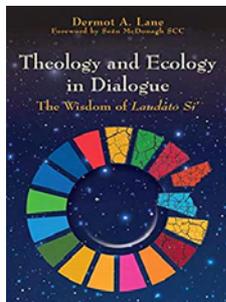
LOOK OUT FOR:

- A late Autumn CAFOD Campaign supporting environmental activists globally facing violence.
- Peace materials for Remembrance Sunday (8 November) www.paxchristi.org.uk and www.ppu.org.uk

Resources

Theology and Ecology in Dialogue: The Wisdom of *Laudato Si'* by Dermot A. Lane

Builds bridges between theology and ecology. Climate change is not just one more problem to be addressed; it is the key challenge facing humanity in the 21st century. ISBN-10: 1788121945



CAFOD Advent Calendar

A calendar of daily reflection and prayer, themed around coronavirus and its impact on refugees. See: cafod.org.uk/adventcalendar

Pax Christi Advent and Christmastide Reflections

Building up to Peace Sunday on 17 January. Written by members and available on the Pax Christi website www.paxchristi.org.uk

COVID-19: Environment, Justice, and the Future

Ruth Valerio, Martin Hodson, Margot Hodson, Timothy Howles

Covers the environmental impacts of the lockdowns, and how to build back in a just and sustainable way.

Christian Discipleship in the Environmental Crisis: An exploration of fullness as an environmental ethic

Margot Hodson

The biblical concept of fullness gives us a vision, not only of what once was, but also provides a pathway to enable a restorative response.

Both from the John Ray Initiative at <https://www.jri.org.uk>

The World Rebooted Tearfund

Covid-19 has shown how unequal our world is and how human society is destroying the natural world. This

video and document explore questions around 'rebooting' our world and how Churches might play a part in reshaping society. https://www.tearfund.org/en/about_you/action/the_world_rebooted

Bridging the Gap: Economic Inequality and Church Responses in the UK

Simon Perfect, Theos ThinkTank

Addresses the theological case against economic inequality, the response of UK Churches and what more Churches must do post-COVID.

<https://bit.ly/37hKbNx>

Banks, Pensions and Nuclear Weapons - Investing in Change UK Nuclear Weapons Financing Research Group

This report - produced by nine Faith groups and organisations, including Pax Christi - looks at the policies, practices and investments of well-known financial institutions in the UK. Salaries and pension funds can be linked to investment in nuclear weapons. <https://moneyleftofnukes.wordpress.com/read-the-report/>

How philanthropy benefits the super-rich

Paul Valley

The super-rich are silently and secretly shaping our world. In this groundbreaking exploration of historical and contemporary philanthropy, Paul Valley reveals how this far-reaching change came about. Many of the new generation of big givers come out of a highly entrepreneurial business world and are disinclined to back groups that challenge how capitalism operates. They tend not to fund initiatives to change tax and fiscal policies that are tilted in favour of the wealthy, or to strengthen regulatory oversight of the financial industry.

Bloomsbury, ISBN: 9781472920140

Look out for: <https://www.climateassembly.uk/>

Climate Assembly UK published its final report on 10 September,

following months of learning, discussion and voting.

The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis Tom Rivett-Carnac and Christiana Figueres

A handbook for climate action and optimism. And see the video on the internet: *Tom Rivett-Carnac: How to shift your mindset and choose your future* <https://go.ted.com/6Kj4>

Progressio Legacy

Progressio, previously known as the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), closed in 2017. In its later years, it promoted agro-ecology and highlighted threats arising from the increasingly aggressive promotion of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), particularly 'Terminator technology'. CIIR/Progressio played a significant role in supporting communities to be empowered to take control of their destinies and change the unjust economic, social and political structures which kept them in poverty. It was a journey from charity to justice.

A Record of Change in a Changing World tells the story of the organisation's 76-year life. <https://www.progressio.org.uk/what/legacy-publication-organisations-life-and-work>

Invisible Hand

A new documentary, 'Invisible Hand', looks at the Rights of Nature Movement. It weaves together struggles for the natural world, the international fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota, and the adoption of Rights of Nature into Ecuador's national constitution. It shows how to fight the forces that put profit above all else while addressing the root causes of a flawed system. The documentary suggests that people in the US have been duped into believing that they have the best environmental laws in the world, when those laws are really legalising pollution by issuing permits that protect the very industries doing the harm.

VOCATION FOR JUSTICE

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