

Newsletter
Volume 6
Aug 2021

JPIC INTERNATIONAL



Missionary Society of St. Columban

Table of Contents

INTRO	2
 Season of Creation	 7
<i>Preparing for the Season of Creation</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Celebrating the Season of Creation in the Philippines</i>	<i>10</i>
 PRAY	 13
<i>A Fool's Guide to Covid-19</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>A time for Grief. A time for Gratitude. A time for Compassion.</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>I Am</i>	<i>19</i>
 LEARN	 22
Biohuertos	22
International Youth Encounter & Climate Change	24
Haiti - Is there Life Before Death?	25
 ACT & ADVOCATE	 29
Caring for our Common Home Together	29
The Society of St. Columban is Accredited under the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity	32
Columbans Get Ready for COP26	33
 JPIC DIRECTORY	 37



"Marveled by these creatures"

by Amy Echeverria

This June in a good part of the Northeast and Midatlantic portion of the United States, we experienced the emergence of the 17 year Brood X cicadas. I remember the last time these mysterious creatures came was the year I returned to the United States from living in Chile. Millions of cicadas the size of an adult's thumb appeared in flight, on the ground, clinging to trees and leaves. The intense constant deep humming sound of their mating call could be heard at a distance, through windows, and around the clock. For many people, the cicadas are an unwelcomed sight despite the fact that they do no harm. I must admit, the first time I had the cicada experience, I leaned towards displeasure.

However, unlike my first encounter, this year I found myself marveled by these creatures. Their iridescent wings, charcoal colored bodies, and bold orange eyes are striking. The intensity

of their buzzing was like one massive extended Hallelujah to see the light of day and find their mate. Like them, over the last 17 years I have been undergoing a transformation shaped by my surroundings. I have been experiencing an ongoing ecological conversion towards deeper love and care for the whole of the earth in my lifestyle, my spirituality, and my vocation as a missionary. While not as radical as the world demands of me, there is intentional action towards deconstructing old patterns and putting in place new patterns that are hopefully more life-giving not only for myself but for all creation.

This issue we're spending time listening to Columbans around the Society share their stories, struggles and songs for all of Creation both our human sisters and brothers, and all living beings, ecosystems, and biomes. In an ever expanding circle and spiral of life, we discover, like the cicada, that even though our journey of transformation

isn't always visible or detectable, we are indeed experiencing the tender and loving hand of the Master Gardener.

Please join me in welcoming Diego Villalobos to our editorial team, bringing his creativity, voice and vision to our Society JPIC newsletter. Gracias y bienvenido Diego!

Wishing you all a blessed Season of Creation. May it be a time of communion with each other, God, and all of Creation.

Peace,
Amy



On the Other Side of Grief

by Wesley Coccozello

I come from a long line of fishermen. My great grandfather was born in 1914 and was part of the generation of fishermen who made the transition from handline fishing to rod-and-reel fishing and who popularized surfcasting as a sport.

He was the one that convinced his family and fishing club to leave the waters of New York harbor for the cleaner ones of Cape Cod Bay in Massachusetts, an area famous for the abundance of cod fish and the subsequent over-extraction of cod by European colonizers. In the 1780s, John Adams purportedly once compared cod in New England to tobacco in Virginia. By the 1990s, the Boston Globe was printing headlines like "Cod Crisis Worldwide" and the Maine Sunday Telegram was writing "Too Many Boats, Too Few Fish."

When I arrived on Cape Cod in the mid-2000s as a kind of "first mate in training" to my grandpa, we weren't even trying to catch cod. We were going after newer prey like fluke, flounder, blackfish, and bass. But even going after species with healthier populations didn't prevent old-timers like my grandpa from lamenting that "the fishing isn't what it used to be." I heard so many stories about how in the 1970s and 1980s you could fill up the entire bottom of a boat with fish - hundred and hundred of pounds of them. By the 2000s, we were lucky if we filled up the cooler.

It was a decade later, when I started

working on JPIC issues, that I realized how overfishing and climate change turned Cape Cod from a prosperous fishery into an underwater ghost town.

This is not to say my grandpa taught me to fish recklessly. Quite the opposite. Because of him, I learned how to identify if a fish was pregnant so I could release it. I learned how to take a fishing hook out of a fish's mouth as cleanly as possible, so that if it was too small to keep, we could throw it back into the water with the best chance of survival.

But now I look back on that time and reflect on the violence I committed against the environment, the ocean, and the individual animals I encountered. It's true that commercial operations have boats a hundred times bigger than my grandpa's and that they're [bottom trawling](#) the ocean into oblivion. It's also true that small fishermen - like small scale farmers and all human-scaled artisans - are being pushed out of their ancestral practices by these commercial goliaths.

Still, that doesn't fully absolve me of my own part in the system. Even if my family wasn't making an impact at the scale of commercial operations, we were still fishing with a colonialist mindset. We weren't fishing with the *ecosystem* in mind.

Beach weather and the upcoming Season of Creation have got me thinking about this era of my life again. I don't fish anymore, but that's more because of circumstance rather than a conscious

choice. Part of me would love to fish regularly again and another part of me feels intense shame at the very thought. In this emotional estuary lives my grief.

Grief for the loss of my family's heritage, because I know that I can never pass it down to those who come after me.

Grief for the loss of my youth, because I now see how my innocence hid from me my own capacity for violence.

Grief for Cape Cod Bay itself, whose waters no longer nurture life abundantly, and grief for my many brother and sister sea creatures, whose names I never learned and whose stories I never asked about.

So my prayer for this year's Season of Creation is that I can enter deeper into grief, and into the grief of the Earth itself. My hope is that on the other side of grief is new life.



"Wounded, bleeding but still alive"

by Diego Villalobos

Despertar y ver por tu ventana un espectáculo de colores cuando el Colibrí Maravilloso bate sus alas rápidamente y los destellos del azul metálico de su plumaje se va mezclando con el color del cielo. Sentir la lluvia y el sol al mismo tiempo tocando tu piel mientras te tomas un café en Lamas contemplando el inmenso verdor del horizonte. Admirarse y rendirse ante la arquitectura, ingeniería y belleza de la ciudadela Inca de Machu Pichu. Dejarse magnetizar por el Intihuatana para recargar energías, y vamos subiendo mientras contemplamos la cordillera de los andes, ahora el blanco de los nevados enfrían mis manos y al fondo sigue estando el Inti, amarillo y resplandeciente. Este mismo sol que calienta en el norte, donde las olas adornan las playas y la arena te hace una invitación sutil a disfrutar. Saboreo un buen ceviche de corvina mientras escucho de fondo Chiclayanita, marinera norteña que es parte de los diferentes géneros musicales que acompañaron mi niñez. También viene a mi mente la voz de Chabuca, entonando ...Jazmines en el pelo y rosas en la cara Airosa caminaba la flor de la canela, tan característico de mi pintoresca y natal Lima, ciudad de los Reyes. Crecí rodeado de colores y sabores, de paisajes infinitos que hacen mi Perú.

Al trabajar la caratula de esta edición quise expresar una Tierra herida, sangrante pero que aún esta viva y en nuestras manos está conservarla sí

estamos dispuestos a hacer un cambio importante. Compartimos y generamos vida desde estas mismas manos que a veces se ensucian, pero no debemos olvidar que lo humano es también divino ya que estamos hechos a semejanza de Dios Padre, entonces, seamos luz y sembremos vida hermano y hermana. Es nuestro deber proteger y conservar la Casa Común.

Me presento, me llamo Diego Villalobos, soy comunicador de profesión y un apasionado de la vida, de lo bueno y de lo malo también porque considero que de todo se aprende. Proyecto mi creatividad desde todo lo que me rodea, me inspiró en los grande y magnifico, en las calles y sus personas transitando, en la luna y el sol, en la naturaleza... en la vida misma.

Agradezco la oportunidad de integrar este equipo y me comprometo a seguir aportando y sumando esfuerzos en los siguientes proyectos.

English translation by Amy Echeverria

Waking up and seeing through your window a spectacle of colors when the Marvellous Hummingbird flaps its wings rapidly and the flashes of the metallic blue of its plumage mixes with the color of the sky. To feel the rain and the sun at the same time touching your skin while having a coffee in Lamas contemplating the immense greenery of the horizon. To admire and surrender to the architecture, engineering and beauty of the Inca citadel of Machu Pichu. Let yourself be magnetized by

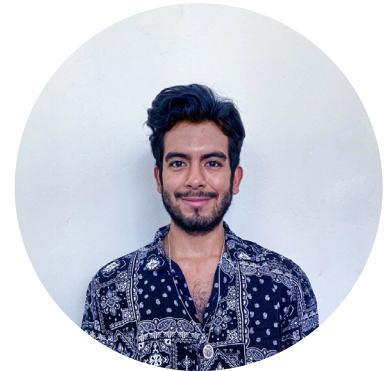
the Intihuatana to recharge energies, and we go up while contemplating the Andes mountain range, now the white of the snow-capped mountains cool my hands and in the background is still the Inti, yellow and resplendent. This same sun that warms in the north, where the waves adorn the beaches and the sand makes you a subtle invitation to enjoy. I savor a good sea bass ceviche while listening to Chiclayanita in the background, a northern marinera that is part of the different musical genres that accompanied my childhood. Also comes to my mind the voice of Chabuca, intoning ...Jazmines in the hair and roses in the face Airy walked the cinnamon flower, so characteristic of my picturesque and native Lima, city of the Kings. I grew up surrounded by colors and flavors, infinite landscapes that make my Peru.

When working on the cover of this edition I wanted to express a wounded, bleeding Earth, but still alive and in our hands is to preserve it if we are willing to make an important change. We share and generate life from these same hands that sometimes get dirty, but we must not forget that the human is also divine since we are made in the likeness of God the Father, so let us be light and sow life, brothers and sisters. It is our duty to protect and preserve the Common Home.

My name is Diego Villalobos, I am a communicator by profession and I am passionate about life, the good and the bad because I believe that we learn from everything. I project my creativity

from everything that surrounds me, I am inspired by the great and magnificent, in the streets and their people passing by, in the moon and the sun, in nature... in life itself.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this team and I commit myself to continue contributing and joining efforts in the following projects.



Society JPIC Working Groups

You are invited and welcome to attend any of the Society's JPIC Working Groups. Please contact Amy Echeverria at amywe@columban.org if you are interested.

Antiracism

Date	Time
September 9	9am US ET

Biodiversity

Date	Time
September 16	7am HKT
November 18	7am HKT

Migration

Date	Time
September	8pm HKT

Peace & Nonviolence

Date	Time
October 21	7pm HKT
December 14	7pm HKT

JPIC Quarterly

Date	Time
September 7	8pm HKT
October 12 (with IRD)	7pm HKT
December 7	7pm HKT

Upcoming Newsletters and Submission Deadlines

Please email your submissions to Amy Woolam Echeverria at amywe@columban.org.

Release Month	Theme	Deadline
December	Preparing for World Day of Prayer for Peace and Interfaith Harmony Week	November 12
February 2022	TBD	January, 2022



Season of Creation

Preparing for the Season of Creation

An Article by Ellen Teague (Britain)

It is July and I am watching birds pecking at the first signs of tiny fruit on a damson tree in my garden. I don't mind - there is plenty for sharing, and plenty of tasty ripe damsons will be harvested for us and our neighbours in the Autumn. It is wonderful that harvest services in our churches around October celebrate the fruitfulness of Earth, our common home, and the generosity of God, the Creator.

In Britain, planning has started for marking the Season of Creation in our parishes and schools. The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action, which starts 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.

United around this year's theme "A home for all?," Christians are planning to participate in initiatives of prayer,

sustainability, and advocacy to care for our common home. Churches are invited to hold a climate-focused service on any Sunday before COP26 this November, but most will be in September. The collective impact of local church commitments and action will be presented to the UK Government at the Climate Sunday Service in Glasgow on Sunday, September 5, 2021 to demonstrate that people of faith are calling on our government to lead the way in delivering a cleaner, greener, and fairer future.

This Season of Creation will also be a critical moment for Catholics to prepare to lift up the voices of the most vulnerable and advocate on their behalf ahead of two important summits, the UN Summit on Biodiversity (COP15) in China in October and the UN Climate Summit (COP26) in Glasgow in November.

The National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), CAFOD, and Columbans have prepared for the Season of Creation with

sample services and resources for the whole month of September and early October. Thank you Fr. Charles Rue for your [materials](#) from Australia. The annual NJPN Conference from July 23-25 (called "2021: Moment of Truth - Action for Life on Earth") was another great opportunity for Columbans to be involved in exciting creation-centred initiatives this year.

Nearly 100 parishes and schools have now achieved CAFOD's live simply award, where they have worked towards projects to live simply, sustainably, and in solidarity with the poor. Yet, the focus on Creation in the Autumn attempts to bring many more Catholics on board for caring for our common home. The Season of Creation offers the opportunity for a common witness from the churches. And the time to do it is now, as the planet continues to warm, causing terrible suffering for the poorest communities on Earth.



A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God

*An article by Caroline Vaitkunas, RMS
(Oceania)*

In his resource "Prayers of Hope in Times" of Turmoil: A Catholic Season of Creation Year B," Columban Fr Charles

Rue says: 'September has been designated by Christian churches as a time of special prayer called Season of Creation. The loving-kindness of God expressed in the outpouring of God's own self in creation

is its focus." It is a time that Christians worldwide celebrate the wonderful gift of creation and is also an opportunity to feel connected and empowered as communities of faith in caring for God's gifts.

The theme for Season of Creation 2021 is *A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God*. Oikos is the Greek word for home. This beautiful theme offers material for reflection and challenge as we ponder the inter-connections between all of life and the sufferings of many in these times of great global upheaval.

In a joint letter of invitation to Christians worldwide, Msgr. Bruno-Marie Duffé

from The Holy See and leaders of many Christian denominations and organizations encourage Christians to be the “champions to renew life, the servant leaders of all life in the Beloved Community, the oikos of God.”

Pope Francis, in his encyclical letter of 2020, *Fratelli Tutti*, offers us inspiration for the journey:

“It is my desire that, in this our time, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same Earth, which is our common home.’ #8 ‘We must not lose our ability to listen. Saint Francis heard the voice of God, he heard the voice of the poor, he heard the voice of the infirm, and he heard the voice of nature (par. #48).”

In our times, we are so aware that the voice of God’s creation is calling out for care. Columban missionaries listen to the cries of the poor and the Earth and see close up the consequences of global warming and the loss of the variety of lifeforms, particularly in more impoverished communities. Around the world, poor communities, women, children, Indigenous peoples, and migrants and refugees contribute least to global warming and are amongst those most affected.

Pope Francis encourages collaborative responses to the challenges we face and commends the Church and civic

leaders to ongoing participation. In May 2021, the Pope addressed leaders of the United Nations Environment Programme and welcomed their declaration of the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration:

“We are witnessing new engagement and commitment by local authorities, the private sector, civil society, youth...it calls for long-term vision; aimed at establishing harmony with ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures. As we welcome this United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, let us be compassionate, creative and courageous. May we take our proper place as a Restoration Generation.”

Many communities worldwide are taking up the call to be part of the restoration generation in wonderful, creative ways. As people of faith, our approach is grounded in our awareness of the sacredness of life, God’s presence in us and all around us.

During Season of Creation 2021, the Australian Columban Peace, Ecology, and Justice (PEJ) team will participate in a World Day of Prayer for Creation celebration on September 1st as members of the Laudato Si Animators Melbourne Group. Our neighbouring Diocese of Sale has also invited our PEJ team to lead four sessions on Pope Francis’ encyclical letter *Laudato Si’: On Care for our Common Home*, at their annual priests in-service, which will occur on September 21st and 22nd. We have also been invited to partner with Catholic Mission Archdiocese of Perth

in a “Prayer Plant” initiative for school communities to pray together each day during the Season of Creation and share their creative responses on social media to inspire others.

We are looking forward to these events as opportunities for us to engage, as Pope Francis says, as “fellow travellers,” as we deepen our commitments and grow in ecological conversion.

In the coming weeks, two important international events will bring world leaders together to set targets and strategies to limit global warming and protect creation for the future of all. These are the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP 15), happening from October 11-24th in Kunming, China and the Climate Change Conference (COP 26), happening from November 1-12th in Glasgow, Scotland. There is much to pray about, and direct our attention towards, during the 2021 Season of Creation.

Joanna Macy, a renowned international writer on issues of peace, justice and ecology, says this of hope-filled action: “Active hope is waking up to the beauty of life on whose behalf we can act. We belong to this world.”

Amen.



Celebrating the Season of Creation in the Philippines

An update from John Din (Philippines)

Since the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) launched their National *Laudato Si'* Program, many things have already changed. Before, the *Laudato Si'* Movement Pilipinas (formerly Global Catholic Climate Movement - Pilipinas) used to lobby to get the endorsement from the CBCP for *Laudato Si'* Week and the Season of Creation celebrations. Now, these two *Laudato Si'* related events are already endorsed by CBCP so that now most of the work we are presently doing is about providing a platform for coordination between the church and civil society organizations.

For *Laudato Si'* week, it was great to see an interfaith celebration opening the week-long activities. Religious leaders from different faiths, together with the indigenous people in the Philippines, were in unison decrying the Philippine government's decision to lift the mining ban.

Around the world, the Season of Creation is celebrated starting on September 1st and ending on October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. In the Philippines, the Season of Creation has been extended to the second Sunday of October, which is Indigenous People's Sunday. This is an affirmation of the role indigenous people's wisdom, traditions, and practices play in responding to the current crises of biodiversity loss and climate emergency. (Indigenous

peoples comprise 10-20% of the Philippine population.) Certainly, there is a similarity between St. Francis' worldview and indigenous peoples' worldview.

For the Season of Creation 2021, the Philippine church, under the leadership of the National *Laudato Si'* Program, will launch the roll out of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. Working committees for the seven sectors (families, parishes and dioceses, educational institutions, hospital and health care centers, economy, organizations and groups, religious orders) are organizing webinars to introduce and explore how each sector can engage in the journey towards living out the vision of *Laudato Si'*. According to Fr. Tony Labiao, executive secretary of CBCP Episcopal Commission on Social Action, Justice, and Peace and head of the National *Laudato Si'* Program, the CBCP will operationalize the different episcopal commissions to roll out the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform.

During the celebration of the Season of Creation, we will also intensify the promotion of the [Healthy Planet Healthy People Petition](#). Before the Paris Agreement in 2015, the Philippines gathered around 800,000 signatures of the more than 900,000 submitted to influence the participants of COP21.

This year we will again gather signatures to influence two major and interrelated meetings on biodiversity loss and climate change. We hope to gather more than one million online signatures.

The climate emergency is here. So too is biodiversity loss, the threats of natural disasters, the Covid-19 pandemic, human rights violation, red tagging, and corruption and incompetence of government leaders. These are not separate issues. They are interrelated and interconnected. They reinforce each other, making it an enormous task to shape a new and more just normal.



2021: It is a decisive year for our common home. Join Pope Francis and call on world leaders to urgently commit to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis!

Sign the petition now!

Scan this QR code



#HealthyPlanet #HealthyPeople
Thecatholicpetition.org





A Fool's Guide to Covid-19 or Is Covid-19 a Warning from God?

*A homily by Fr. Paul McCartin, SSC
(Japan)*

The news from July 26, 2021 included a report on floods in India. The news from the day before had a report on wildfires in the USA.

Last week there were many reports about 'once in a thousand years' floods in China. TV showed people in subway cars up to their chests in water. (More than a year's worth of rain, that is, twenty-five centimeters, fell in three days.)

Before that there were devastating floods in Germany and Belgium.

A few weeks ago we had more heavy rain and floods in various parts of Japan.

In South Africa there is a serious drought.

Then, there was also something I had never heard of before: heat domes. In

Canada, a heat dome in June caused temperatures to reach a record 49C.

Editor's note: the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the United States defines "heat domes" as "when the atmosphere traps hot ocean air like a lid of a cap." These are linked to climate change.

In short, we are getting much more extreme weather: stronger typhoons, heavier rain, floods, fires, droughts. The world is warming and the climate is changing.

This is caused by human activity: burning fossil fuels, coal, petrol, and natural gas, releases CO₂, which "thickens" the atmosphere causing it to trap more heat. Coal-fired power plants and cars, trucks, planes and ships that run on fossil fuel all release CO₂.

Scientists say that if we don't stop using fossil fuel very soon, the Earth will become much warmer and the climate will change catastrophically.

There is a massive world-wide movement to stop using fossil fuels. The UN and many environmental organizations are doing all they can but politicians and governments are dragging their feet.

Many governments are still subsidizing fossil fuels. Many governments are still building coal-fired power plants. Japan is one of them.

Most of us never think about this, but billions of animals are killed in these wildfires, heatwaves, and floods. An estimated 1 billion sea creatures on the coast of Vancouver died as a result of the heat earlier this month. Not to mention trees and other vegetation.

Despite the warnings from scientists and the efforts of the UN and environmental organizations (not to mention Pope Francis!), we have refused to stop using fossil fuels and to protect the environment.

Then along comes Covid 19.

I suspect that this virus has been sent by the Earth to force us to stop our destructive activity.

The Earth is trying to defend itself – from us. The virus is the result of environmental destruction.

Last week it was reported that Toyota

has suspended vehicle production at three of its manufacturing plants in Thailand. (Do they produce petrol or electric vehicles?) There are many fewer planes flying now. This also is good for the Earth.

Unfortunately, the government's first response to the pandemic was to protect the economy. But it's this economy that is destroying the environment.

To protect the Earth, to prevent the climate from warming even more, we have to change this economy. We need an economy that protects the environment and people, all people.

This is going to be a massive change. We need to change almost everything.

And the warming of the Earth is just one of many serious environmental problems. Other problems include biodiversity loss, the destruction of the tropical rain forests, the decrease in the number of bees, and so on.

Do you know that Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund is investing in companies that are involved in the destruction of the Amazon? That means that we in Japan are helping to destroy the Amazon and killing the indigenous people there.

As the young climate activist Greta

"To protect the Earth, to prevent the climate from warming even more, we have to change this economy. We need an economy that protects the environment and people, all people."

-Fr. Paul McCartin

Thunberg has said, the present economy is designed so that a few people can get fabulously rich.

They don't care what happens to the environment.

The message from today's Gospel is that there is more than enough for everyone – if we share. There is no need to hoard.

We Christians should be leading the way and yet I find that there is little interest in the environment among Catholics.



A time for Grief. A time for Gratitude. A time for Compassion.

*A homily by Charles Cardinal Bo, SDB
(Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar)*

Today we have gathered here to mourn many of our most dear ones; just a few days ago, they were with us, they shared in our joys and sorrows. They were our friends, our brothers, our sisters and sons and daughters, husband, wives, grandmothers and grandfathers.

Today the sadistic virus made them numbers. Today we have come to resist that final assault of the virus on us. We refuse to accept that they are just another block of number. We come to say : They are part of our life, part of our existence, part of our inalienable memory of gratefulness.

We have come here with the heart wrenching sorrow. The virus robbed us of the most sacred last moments from our dear ones; many of them died alone, with the sense of abandonment. Many of them gone away without a farewell. We have shed silent tears, when they were buried alone, without the last dirge of the words too deep to express. But our sorrow has not minimized. In our silent nights, it churns our heart with pain.

I think of my dearest Bishop John Hsane Hgyi of Patheingyi. A kind hearted shepherd, an erudite man, an ever-smiling pastor, suddenly was taken away. It was a shattering experience. I with all my heart I wished to personally bid him farewell. Security considerations prevented that. I hear the news about priests dying, their

anointed hands untouched in those lost moments, hear of the death of religious, their mission robbed off in the middle, hundreds of laity known to us gone away, leaving a hole in the hearts of the dear ones. Darkness seemed to have set in midday.

The virus has put us in a rollercoaster guilt. How did we allow those who lived with us for decades to go without a farewell? How did we allow ourselves to let them go without a human touch? What were their thoughts as their shattered sensibilities looked for us and their eyelids closed for the last time? These thoughts shatter us too. Because we loved them and they loved us, we grieve. Tears swell in our eyes.

We are gathered here not only for those who have gone away. We have gathered here to heal ourselves, redeem our humanity. We have gathered here to affirm, despite the cruelty of the virus, we still hold our dear departed in our hearts. We have gathered around this altar fortified by the strong faith that through communion of saints we are still united with them in spirit. The physical contact might be gone; emotionally, spiritually we are united more now than ever. Rather we have come closer.

We were used to sing the psalm of comfort, in other funerals in the normal times, calling the fellowship of the Good Shepherd.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and

Your staff, they comfort (Psalm 23:4).

Yes. We seek comfort in the Lord, comfort in these dark times: As our nation walks through 'the valley of death' we have come to console one another and thank for the gift of those whose memory will always linger in our hearts.

These are not only moments of sorrow; despair and despondent. This is a call to strengthen our human fellowship, our eucharist of common tragedies, our cup that overflows with sorrows. In a way all this suffering is the Eucharist: Body and tears broken on the altar of love and shared amidst immeasurable sorrow.

Those who have gone before us leave us great life lessons. The first lesson is **Gratefulness**. As we mourn our dear ones, the only vaccine that can cure our sorrow is gratitude. We are grateful to each one of those who went away. You made us.

To all them we owe a debt - a great debt of gratitude. Gratitude for their fellowship. For their love, for their accompaniment. The priests who died were blessed with grace to break the Word and break the Bread. The religious broke the bread in the streets. They brought consolation during these hard times. Our dear faithful died, facing so many challenges in this country. We weep for them, there will always be an emptiness in our hearts, in our houses. That many of them it will take ages to heal.

They have also left a grim lesson to each one of us: Life is short. It is not death



About the artwork: A collective painting organized by Khin Zaw Latt supporting Myanmar's Civil Disobedience Movement. "Art is not only a tool against the government, but also a record to reflect on the recent situation," Yangon artist-based artist Khin Zaw Latt said "It is a part of history."

friend Lazar's death. Tears are sacred. But we cannot make death arbiter of our destiny.

that matters, it is how we live during our short life. Death is the great teacher. As reflected in the timeless poem of the great poet John Donne:

*No man is an Island, entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the
Continent, a part of the main;
Any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in Mankind;
And therefore, never send to know
for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for you
and me.*

Yes, we feel death of every friend diminishes us. How to we maintain our humanity and grow out of these dark days? We need to cry at the loss. Since we have love, our hearts are broken. To shed tears is the ultimate sanctity of human relationships. Jesus wept at his

Because our God is not a God of death: he is God of life. "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive." (Luke 20:38). How consoling! To our God **All are alive**. We share in the Communion of Saints. All those who gone before us belong to God. One day we will join that communion of saints. We all will join the heavenly banquet and sing together "Free, Free, We are free at last!"

Till that time: **We celebrate life** : Today we come not to mourn and bury: we have come to praise and thank the Lord for the gift of each person who has gone away. Their physical absence has not taken away their great memory, their love. **Their love never ended** as the Song of Song comforts us: "love is stronger than death" (Song of Songs

8:6).

We continue to relate to them in our depth of our hearts; in perpetual thanksgiving of their life with us. Because **death and grave cannot take away a Christian's hope**. They are transition points in our journey towards destination. It is Christ who won over those dark valleys as St Paul extols:

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which give us the victory Through our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor 15:55).

We are waging an asymmetrical war with the invincible virus. But like other pandemics we will overcome. All will end, despite the suffocating sorrow we feel, the roller coaster anxiety that strangles our sensibilities, we shall overcome. Humanity has shown, aligning as one family of compassion, we shall overcome.

The death of dear ones, did not fragment our response, but fortified our response. See the volunteers in care centers, the great sacrifice of doctors and nurses and other health professionals, whom the Pope Francis calls as "the saints next door." See the generosity of the business community, see the contribution of the simple people and our own Christians - we know we can defeat this virus since God has put in our hearts a **fire of compassion**. The only plea our dear departed once would ask each one of us, still having the luxury of breathing freely and moving around, is not to give

up. Not to accept the power of death. We will make the pandemic part of history through love.

But now we journey in faith through the stormy seas. We cry out often: Lord are you not worried that we are perishing. Jesus is there. Jesus appeared to be sleeping. As our cries rise to heaven, Jesus says: Have Faith. I have won over death on the Cross.

That is the faith that should strengthen us brothers and sisters. As a church we are hope generating church. We remember all those who have gone away; their journey is over. But they have not fallen on the way side. They have reached the bosom of the eternal father. Their eyes have stopped crying, they are no more dead people. They have passed on to a place without pain. At the end of tunnel of life, there a glory awaits. Those who died in the Lord, will rise again in glory.

Let us take solace in those sobering thoughts. God has promised a new life to those who have gone away. That promise is :

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away (Rev 21:1-3).

That is the same promise make us to continue our earthly journey, making a heaven on earth, through our appreciation of the gift of life, the gift of dear ones, the gift of everything. Living

in love, with great gratitude, we shall all over come. All come to an end. This pandemic too will come to an end.

Once again thanks to the saints who have gone before us; for their faith, their witness and their love. Let us join them and explode in joy with St Paul. saying :

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but to all who crave His appearing (2 Tim 4:7-8).



I Am

A poem by Marjorie C. Engcoy (Fiji)

I blow into you in my coolness
I am the mystery you breathe in freshness
Gentle push to your sails to arrive at
your destination
Yes, I am wind, that provides the eagle
freedom.

I embrace you in my warmth
Igniting inspiration and passion into
your soul longing
Set your spirit ablaze to give you light in
the dark
Yes, I am fire, the spirit that only needs
a spark.

I cradle you in my bosom
My children grow to sustain you in your
lifetime
While you dance into your years above
the shaking grounds
Yes, I am earth, where you'll retire when
your song fades.

I am that bathe you life
Through my springs and rivers, oceans
and seas
Through your veins I flow to the depths
of your soul
Yes, I am water, stillness and gentleness
I, too, pour.

I am the spirit
Brought to life and given life
I dance the song of creatures far and
wide
I sing the song of the Voice, of the Great
I Am.



This piece is called "Interlaced" in acrylic. Its concept is inspired by Joey Ayala's hit song "Magkaugnay" under his album called 'Mga Awit ng Tanod Lupa' released in 1991.





WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 1, 2021
AT 6 PM HKT

JOIN ZOOM PRAYER SERVICE

<https://bit.ly/ColumbanPrayer>

Or scan this QR Code.



**COLUMBAN
PRAYER SERVICE FOR
SEASON OF CREATION**



Biohuertos

*An Interview with Mari Nieto Jauregui
(Peru)*

Mari Nieto Jauregui has been President of Bio-huertos de La lombriz Feliz in San Juan de Lurigancho since 1991.

The initiative was born from the need to promote citizenship and a culture of care for the environment through the integral management of urban solid waste with productive and environmental activities. In the association, our main axis is solid waste management, recovery, classification, processing and valuing so-called waste. In addition, we produce and market goods, such as compost, that generate income and help sustain the project.

We want to replicate this project in other parts of the country and in coordination with the Columban development committee, we seek to expand the horizon into the Northern zone of Lima. The Biohuertos project began

working with teachers and parents of the Manuel Duato school, as well as residents of some nearby communities. The first step was to train people on the implementation of urban gardens in their homes and at school using organic waste to make compost, which is a soil improver. Families have to learn to take advantage of organic waste that is normally discarded. It is known that in a natural cycle, a person eats vegetables, they produce waste that we can process and return again to the soil as nutrients to generate new vegetables.

The pandemic virus attacks more aggressively a weak organism, so for this reason, we are encouraged to strengthen our immune system by taking care of our diet and this project ensures that families can have food security. Actions such as producing your own food (vegetables) and avoiding going to the market contribute to reducing the risk of contagion and also lower the costs of the family basket.

What do we do with pests?

We teach the community how to do biological control of natural pests and also how to implement effective traps.

How did you handle this project in the midst of the pandemic? How difficult was this whole process?

At the beginning it was quite a challenge but using digital tools we were able to manage communication. So, we created WhatsApp groups to send the information and materials, we learned to use the Zoom platform with virtual trainings. In other words, we have reinvented ourselves to continue helping people.

The process to develop Biohuertos is quite economical, we use recyclable materials, we take advantage of resources and we use creativity for the rest. On the one hand, vegetables such as radish, take a month to grow and other vegetables 3 months.

Where do you find the motivation and inspiration to dedicate yourself to doing this project?

It has been a great adventure; It all started in times of the cholera epidemic, at that time we were looking for alternatives to reduce the amount of garbage and among them, we realized that feeding the worms with organic waste generated humus, which later served as fertilizer to prepare the poor soil for sowing. When we started, nobody believed in us, they called us

crazy and after 7 months we had the compost ready to fertilize the soil, then we proceeded to plant a flower display. It was very rewarding when it started to flourish, we transformed something that no one wanted anymore into something useful. Turning something negative into something good for the community was the response to our detractors and the necessary motivation to continue with this project that has been going on for more than two decades.

What work do you have planned for the future?

Currently, we are working on a systematized replication module embodied in a document, and this has already been sent to the Ministry of the Environment for approval. Thus, we will be able to replicate this project at the national level. In addition, we want to implement an agroecological system that includes the processing of waste, its recovery, generating our own energy and recycling the water in homes, all this through plants.

International Youth Encounter & Climate Change

*An update from Fr. Kurt Zion Pala, SSC
(Myanmar)*

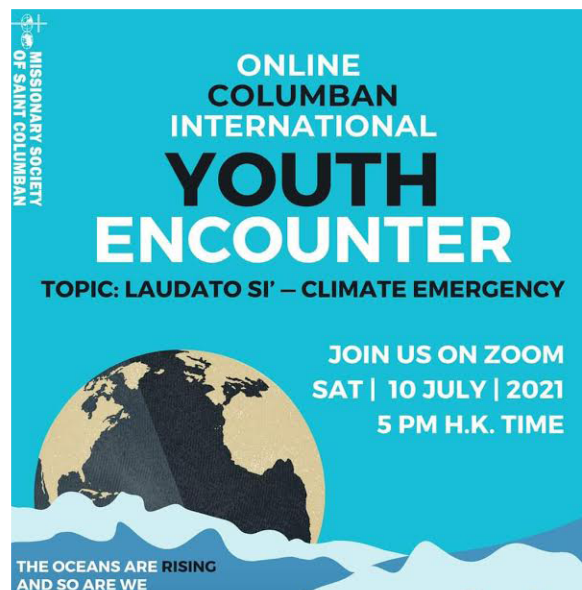
It started out as a platform to reach out to young people at a time when it was a challenge to do youth ministry because of the pandemic. Now the Columban International Youth Encounter has recently hosted its fifth encounter, with around thirty-three youths representing eleven countries participating.

The theme for the fifth encounter was "Laudato Si' - Climate Emergency." Following the See-Judge-Act methodology, representatives from the different countries presented the impacts of climate change from their own experiences. From extreme weather changes like frequent and destructive storms to loss of water resources to diseases, climate change impacts everyone no matter where you live, whether on a Pacific island, in mountain villages or towns, or in huge cities.

A report by the German Watch group entitled "The Global Climate Risk Index 2021" showed that for the period from 2000 to 2019, the ten countries most affected by climate change included Myanmar, the Philippines and Pakistan.

Many of the young people shared how climate change is impacting food insecurity, water scarcity, severe weather conditions including heat waves and bushfires, and the spread of viral diseases including malaria and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Climate change has also led to internal displacement of peoples, who are forced to flee their homes due to natural disasters, droughts, and other weather events. These people are sometimes called "climate refugees."



And while these are just impacts to the human population, climate change also impacts the ecosystem as a whole and contributes to biodiversity loss. All creatures have a right to life, and biodiversity provides food and other services to the human population too.

The Youth Encounter also highlighted how some countries like Korea are one of the major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. While actions are being taken in these countries to reduce their carbon footprints, the impacts of climate change are more intense in countries who do not contribute a lot to greenhouse gas emissions. These countries, like Myanmar, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Fiji, are disproportionately suffering from climate change compared to wealthier countries. In

these countries, the impacts of climate change exacerbate poverty and the political situation of these countries.

After sharing with the full group, we divided into smaller groups to discuss the next stage of the process. Participants were asked the following questions:

1. How do you feel about climate change?
2. What does your faith teach you about caring for creation?
3. What actions do you see in your country responding to the cry of the Earth?
4. What do you do to care for creation?

The Columban International Youth Encounter (CIYE) was created to allow young people to meet and encounter each other. In Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti* he mentioned that "each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless and no one is expendable" (no. 215). The Pope encourages us to reach out to people to build bridges and not walls.



Haiti - Is there Life Before Death?

*An article by Fr. Bobby Gilmore, SSC
(Ireland)*

Author's Note: This article was originally written on December 10, 2016. On July 7, 2021, news of Haitian President Jovenel Moise's assassination was reported in all the newspapers. No doubt the People of Montpelier will not be surprised to see the Jamaican military arrive to refurbish the old barracks awaiting the arrival of Haitian refugees following the latest unrest in Haiti. Pray for the people of Haiti.

"A runaway slave was, in fact a thief since he stolen his master's property - himself." -The Known World by Edward P. Jones

Near the town of Montpelier on the plateau above Montego Bay in Jamaica sits an old military camp dating back to British rule built during slave times. Over time it has been decommissioned and recommissioned. Since Haitian Independence in 1804, inhabitants of Montpelier have become used to the intermittent arrival of military personnel to re-open the camp, clean it up, and make it habitable. Each time they see the military arrive they assume that Haiti is in trouble again either from a coup, hurricane, or earthquake. Soon Haitian refugees will be arriving.

Haiti, like many other islands in the Caribbean, is vulnerable both to history and geography. Both, according to a new word in the Caribbean dictionary, have brought about haitianisation - endless

underdevelopment and destitution for the people of Haiti.

Other islands in the Caribbean experience hurricanes and occasionally earthquakes. But they do not experience the devastation of Haiti. At least a quarter of its population is destitute. Haphazard attempts at infrastructural development, homes constructed from the aftermath of the last disaster, and hand-to-mouth subsistence helps the devastation from hurricanes become disasters with a high human cost.

The country's leadership has failed the people repeatedly. Over time Haiti has experienced 37 coups.

At this moment amid a crisis [December 10, 2016] there is no legitimate government due to election postponements.

The Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. Why is the Dominican Republic a progressive stable democracy and Haiti a wasteland?

Haiti won independence from France in 1804 after a bitter revolution. After the slave revolution the first black republic in the Americas was created. Haitians liberated themselves from the tyranny of French rule and the shackles of slavery.

France had benefited enormously from its rule in Haiti. It was the pearl in the crown of French colonialism. One would have expected that after self-rule Haiti would have prospered from the ownership of its resources.

However, institutional slavery did not allow for liberation. Slaves and the system of slavery were structured in such a way that a slave was the property of the slave-owner. The notion of liberation

or freedom meant theft of property. In other words, a slave freeing himself/herself was stealing his master's property.

A good example of this kind of paradigm was when during the abolition of slavery in Jamaica, the British government remunerated the slaver-owner for the loss of property but abandoned the slave, the actually

producer of wealth. It was akin to a prisoner having to pay the prison for releasing him having served his sentence.

In line with the policy of the free slave being judged as a thief for having freed himself, France extended this paradigm to the new nation of Haiti. In liberating itself from France, Haiti was stealing from France and therefore was

"When we think of global poverty we readily think of hunger, disease, homelessness, illiteracy, dirty water, and a lack of education, but very few of us immediately think about the global poor's chronic vulnerability to violence. ... if you are not restraining the bullies in the community from violence and theft then we are going to find the outcome of our efforts quite disappointing."

-Fr. Bobby Gilmore

bound to make restitution to France. In that light, France imposed a fine of 90 million francs to be paid in gold. These repayments to France consumed more than 80% of Haiti's national budget until the debt was paid off in 1947. In modern estimates the 90 million in gold francs would be the equivalent of 20 billion US\$. So, Haitianisation has a long shadow.

For a long time, Haiti has been the recipient of international aid. If aid was the solution to Haiti's problems, Haiti should be a shining democracy. But too frequently, and not just in Haiti, aid has maintained corrupt cartels in power that are in connivance with subsidised farm lobbies in developed donor nations. The primary aim of aid, except in times of disaster, should be the development of indigenous potential, particularly in the area of food production, infrastructure, education, health, sanitation, policing, law and order, and the administration of justice. In modern times aid is used by some off-shore elites as a haven of respectability. They seek recognition for themselves, making the poor objects of their need rather than subjects of their own liberation.

Also, there is the case for reparations to France. France, as is also the case for other European colonisers, benefitted from slavery in their development. It is painful to listen to modern populist nationalists claiming recognition for their country's abolition of slavery. If they wish to claim recognition for anything it should be for reparations for slavery. Reparation is an obligation in justice. Haiti needs justice

from France and needs it now, but there is little hope of that. In modern times as in slave times, corporate power holds sway: the government bailed out the banks against the wishes of the public.

When we think of global poverty we readily think of hunger, disease, homelessness, illiteracy, dirty water, and a lack of education, but very few of us immediately think about the global poor's chronic vulnerability to violence. It turns out that you can provide all manner of goods and services to the poor, as good people have been doing for decades, but if you are not restraining the bullies in the community from violence and theft then we are going to find the outcome of our efforts quite disappointing.



JUBILEE -FOR THE- EARTH

SEASON 2 - COMING SEPTEMBER 27

Episode Themes

Episode 7 - Young People

Episode 8 - Indigenous Peoples

Episode 9 - Food Insecurity/GMOs

Episode 10 - Climate Change

Episode 11 - Grassroots Action

Episode 12 - Spirituality of Biodiversity



Missionary Society
of St. Columban



Caring for our Common Home Together

*An article by Fr. Liam O'Callaghan, SSC
(Pakistan)*

"We cannot pretend to be healthy in a world that is sick...The wounds inflicted on our mother earth are wounds that also bleed in us." -Pope Francis (given on United Nations on World Environment Day and the opening of the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration)

Since 1974, June 5 has been celebrated as World Environment Day (WED). WED is a platform to raise awareness of the problems facing our environment and helps to drive change in national and international environmental policy.

The theme for WED 2021 is "Ecosystem Restoration," which launches the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#). Ecosystem restoration means assisting in the recovery of ecosystems that have been degraded or destroyed, as well as

conserving the ecosystems that are still intact. Every WED is hosted by a different country, in which official celebrations take place, and 2021's host is Pakistan.

Pakistan extends some 1,700 km north from the Arabian Sea coast and the mouth of the Indus River to the Himalayan mountains in the north. Pakistan has a coastline of about 1,046 km. The country contains three of the world's eight bio-geographic realms (Indo-Malayan, Palearctic, and Afro-Tropical) with their distinct biotas, and spans four of Earth's ten biomes (desert, temperate grassland, tropical seasonal forest and mountain). Roughly two-thirds of the country is mountainous. Pakistan possesses a variety of ecological regions due to its immense latitudinal and altitudinal variations. These regions include the coastal mangrove forests of the Arabian Sea as well as some of the highest mountains in the world, where the western Himalayas, Hindu-Kush, and Karakoram ranges meet.

Pakistan has always been rich in biodiversity across those diverse ecological regions. However, that has been changing. About 90 species of mammals, reptiles, and birds are approaching the critical stage of extinction in Pakistan, largely due to overexploitation and loss of natural habitat. Rapid human population growth is increasing pressure on the country's natural resource base. Increased poverty has forced rural people to exploit biodiversity at unsustainable rates. Factors like deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, salinity, waterlogging, desertification, and chemical pollution are posing major threats to the



Balochistan juniper forests

remaining biodiversity of the country. The continuing loss of forest habitat, with its associated fauna and flora, will have serious implications for the nation's other natural and agricultural ecosystems.

The critical endangerment of many species is caused primarily by the degradation and loss of a number of ecosystems of special value for their species-richness and/or unique communities of flora and fauna.

Pakistan has one of the lowest rates of forest cover in the world at only 1.9%. In the Indus plains there is widespread conversion of the tropical thorn forests into agricultural land.

The Balochistan juniper forests and subtropical forests and temperate Himalayan are under threat from fuelwood cutting and overgrazing.

The Indus river and wetlands, vital for migratory birds, dolphins, and other species, are now under threat because of pollution and water diversion for agriculture.

The Indus delta and mangroves forests are under threat from a lack of freshwater and from the cutting of mangroves. Insert photos of desert river, mangroves etc.

The Chagai desert is under threat from mining and hunting parties from the Gulf.

All these crucial ecosystems need to be protected and restored urgently or else so many species will be lost forever. Pakistan urgently needs to integrate its national priorities with its obligations

under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which will be discussed at COP15 in Kunming, China in October 2021.

Combined with biodiversity and ecosystem loss, Pakistan faces huge challenges from the adverse effects of climate change. According to Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index 2020, Pakistan was the fifth most vulnerable country in the world to climate change from 1999 to 2018. Pakistan experienced 152 extreme weather events during that period - including floods, heatwaves, and air pollution - which lead directly to the deaths of 9,989 people and billions of dollars' worth of economic loss.

Through our JPIC work, we are responding to this environmental crisis in Pakistan. Across the diocese of Hyderabad, we have held many seminars and workshops in schools and community groups. We have emphasized celebrating the Season of Creation across the diocese, by producing liturgical resources and practical suggestions for parish action. Each year we train environmental activists in three schools and two community groups; we have named them Mahool Dost (Friends of the Earth).

The idea is to work in more depth with fewer people, so that they will in turn become active in their communities and become agents of change in their families and the wider community. Each year for the entire year, we journey with fifty students and three teachers in each

school, with training sessions on current environmental issues. Together we create practical events such as community seminars, tree plantations, celebrations of international environmental days.

We work from an interfaith perspective as well. We translated the Islamic statement on climate change in 2015. Many school programs and community events are interfaith, bringing together Muslims, Hindus, and Christians. While interfaith work is not easy in Pakistan, working together to protect our common home brings people together and helps break down misunderstandings.

Let us hope that Pakistan's hosting WED can help bring greater urgency to the task before us.



**The Society of St. Columban
is Accredited under the UN's
Convention on Biological Diversity**
An Update by Cynthia Gonzalez (USA)

The Society of St. Columban is now an accredited organization by the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)! CBD is the United Nations' decision body dedicated to ensuring the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components, of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resource. The confirmation was received from the CBD office on August 5, 2021.

The accreditation status allows the Society to become an active collaborator in CBD's decision-making processes by having the opportunity to attend meetings, participate as speakers in those meetings, and submit documents with statements, policy recommendations, and other relevant evidence and testimonials collected by Columban.

The Columban Biodiversity working group saw the need to engage with CBD as a way to ensure that Columban priorities were integrated into UN strategic plans that are set to define the future of our planet's biodiversity for the next decade. Columban have a long history as powerful advocates for the conservation of the planet's biodiversity through our work with marginalized communities in different parts of the world. With this accreditation, Columbans will be able to advocate at

the highest level of inter-governmental decision-making.

Columbans are confirmed to attend two very important CBD meetings. Columbans will participate in COP 15, the UN Biodiversity Conference scheduled to start in October 2021 and to extend until 2022. According to their website "COP15 will review the achievement and delivery of the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is also anticipated that the final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be taken, together with decisions on related topics including capacity building and resource mobilization."

In preparation for COP 15, Columbans will also be able to attend, submit policy recommendations, and speak at the third open-ended working group meeting. This meeting is scheduled to take place from August 23 to 3 September 3, 2021 and is responsible for developing the framework for negotiations for COP15. The Columbans have appointed Amy Echeverria, John Din, Fr. Liam O'Callaghan, Sr. Caroline Vaitkunas, Cynthia Gonzalez, and Wesley Cocozello as our representatives to this meeting.



Columbans Get Ready for COP26

An Overview by Amy Echeverria with contributions from Ellen Teague (UK) and Fr. Peter O'Neill, SSC (Australia)

The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October – 12 November 2021. COP26 is a critical opportunity to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Pope Francis will be traveling to Glasgow to attend the summit, the first time a pope will do so. According to Catholic News Agency, “at a press conference on June 17, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Holy See’s Secretary for Relations with States, said it was ‘highly likely’ that the pope would participate in the October meeting given his commitment to the issue of climate change.”

For many years now, Columbans have educated our communities about the importance of the COP process as well as advocated to delegates for ambitious climate action. This year is no different.

Fr Sean McDonagh, Ellen Teague, and James Trewby have arranged to

represent the Columbans at COP26 in Glasgow from 1-12 November. November 5 and 6 will be “Days of Action” and November 7 through 9 will be an alternative summit.

Columbans in the UK have also partnered with the ecumenical Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN), who is currently undertaking a 1,000-mile relay pilgrimage from Cornwall to the Glasgow COP26 climate summit in November. The first group left the G7 meeting in Cornwall on 13 June. So far the young climate activists have visited Falmouth and Plymouth, Cardiff, London, and Oxford and will reach Glasgow at the end of October.

The walkers want to see systematic change on a global and a local scale, and also raise awareness of “both our responsibility as

Christians and our passion to engage in creation care theology, individually and corporately”. Among their demands is fair climate finance and a call for the UK government to reinstate the foreign aid budget to pre-COVID levels.

Molly Clark:

“It was wonderful to meet all the local people who came to support us,



either through joining and guiding the walk or just through wishing us well and sending us off." She said the hospitality of churches along the way was much appreciated."

Rachel Mander:

"There was a beautiful send-out service from Truro Cathedral, offers to meet a mayor, accommodation with views of a sunset over the harbour, rope swings over rivers, and a WhatsApp group with people praying for the journey. A boat is accompanying us on our journey, with sails made from material from around the world. It's part of our acknowledgement that, 'we are in the same storm, but not the same boat' - just like we have seen with the Covid-19 pandemic. As young Christians organising this Relay, we know that the story of our adult lives will be witnessing the effects of climate change, which will hit our neighbours around the world first and foremost.

Many churches around the world have been calling for climate action for decades. A 2004 World Council of Churches statement calls, "on our sisters and brothers in Christ throughout the world to act in solidarity with us to reduce the

causes of human-induced climate change... and to pay for the costs of adaptation to anticipated impacts". I personally was just seven years old when this call was issued. In faith, we ask churches in the UK to respond by joining us in this Relay to COP26.

We have over 100 days of walking ahead of us, and events in 10 major cities across the UK. We would love you to join us: walk with us, host us in church halls, hold Climate Sunday services as we pass through, campaign with us to ask the UK government to act to ensure no country gets pushed into debt because of climate change."

"God's creation is a gift, one that we have been tasked with the stewarding of. I believe that it is not enough just to recognise that climate change is a threat to God's creation. We must accept and acknowledge that we are to blame for this, and it is our responsibility to fix the problem."

-Sophie Mithcell

Sophie Mitchell:

"In February 2020, just

before the coronavirus pandemic, I addressed the General Synod of the Church of England, urging them to act big and act fast in relation to climate action. What was required was not more documentation but clear plans, clear actions, clear deadlines. At that meeting, the Synod voted to adopt a 2030 net-zero carbon emissions target and are on their way to achieving that target. I know that legislative boards of other Church denominations have set similar targets.

God's creation is a gift, one that we have been tasked with the stewarding of. I believe that it is not enough just to recognise that climate change is a threat to God's creation. We must accept and acknowledge that we are to blame for this, and it is our responsibility to fix the problem. The climate crisis is a reflection, and a cause, of deep injustice in the world. This crisis arises from our abuse of God's creation, and our broken relationship with our neighbours worldwide who suffer most from its consequences."

The witness of young people, who will bare the heaviest burdens from the effects of climate change, inspire all of us with hope that COP26 will be a watershed moment.

Over in Australia, Columbians are part of the [Inter-congregational Voice on Climate Change](#). On July 22, the coalition sent a letter to the Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison urging him to act on climate risk.

The letter is printed below:

Dear Prime Minister

Pacific Climate Watch is a group of representatives of 22 religious congregations whose personnel work in the Asia Pacific or have had a historical relationship with the peoples in the region. Our primary concern is the impact of climate change in Oceania. Our brief is to 'give voice' to

our drowning neighbours and to alert all who will listen to the tragedy which is already on their doorsteps.

Pacific Islanders are now telling the world stories of cultures wiped out, of villages washed away, of social infrastructure demolished, of salination of gardens and destruction of fishing sites, of overcrowded towns, of peoples fearing for their future. All because of the irrefutable fact of climate change.

These people, our neighbours, insist that they are NOT climate change refugees.

These people, our friends, have plans for their future. Alternative, viable plans.

These people, our colleagues, have a wisdom developed over millennia. They know their country, their 'story'. They are people who deeply understand our universe.

These people, our sisters and brothers, want us to listen to them.

Mr Morrison: before leaving for the G7 meeting, you suggested that the world listen to local voices such as the Asian Development Bank. Well, the ADB is speaking! On 14 June 2020 Relief Web published reports, based on ADB data, on two neighbouring countries now experiencing grave danger: [Kiribati](#) and [Tuvalu](#).

Pacific Islanders, our neighbours, are being realistic. They know, as we know, that life is changing for all. They are ready to adapt to changing circumstances -

with our help.

They have ideas for preserving some of their islands. They need mitigation experts from countries like Australia who can advise them on viable alternatives.

They need agencies like the ADB, Green Bank etc to help finance reconstruction plans.

They know that some of their citizens, especially the better educated, will seek new lives in other countries where they (and we) will benefit from their skillsets. Migration pathways will be essential for them as they plan a future.

Put simply, their needs cover the areas of mitigation, adaptation, migration and climate finance.

Mr Morrison: please be ready to listen and to learn from our Pacific Island neighbours at the forthcoming Pacific Island Forum mid August 2021! Let's do this together!

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Claude Mostowik, MSC
Chair



Central Administration

[Fr. Brian Vale](#), *Vicar General*

[Fr. Sean McDonagh](#), *Society JPIC Researcher*

[Amy Woolam Echeverria](#), *International JPIC*

Coorindator

[Cata Son](#) (CLM), *CLMCLT*

Britian

[Fr. Peter Hughes](#)

[Ellen Teague](#)

[James Trewby](#)

China

[Fr. Dan Troy](#)

Ireland

[Claire Carey](#)

[Michael O'Sullivan](#)

[Ger Clarke](#)

Japan

[Fr. Paul McCartin](#)

Korea

[Fr. Pat Cunningham](#)

Mynamar

[Fr. Kurt Pala](#) (JPIC and IRD)

Oceania Region

[Fr. Peter O'Neill](#), *Australia*

[Fr. Kevin O'Neill](#), *Australia*

[Sr. Caroline Vaitkunas, RSM](#), *Australia*

[Tevita Naikasowalu](#), *Fiji*

[Fr. Tom Rouse](#), *New Zealand*

Pakistan

[Fr. Liam O'Callaghan](#) (JPIC and IRD)

Philippines

[John Din](#) (CLM)

South America Region

[Adriana Curaqueo](#), *Chile*

[Lisandro Castillo](#), *Chile*

[Mariella Martínez Rengifo](#), *Peru*

[Diego Villalobos](#), *Peru*

[Alicio Domiguez](#), *Peru*

Taiwan

[Fr. Taaremon Matauea](#)

United States

[Scott Wright](#)

[Wesley Cocozello](#)

[Cynthia Gonzalez](#)