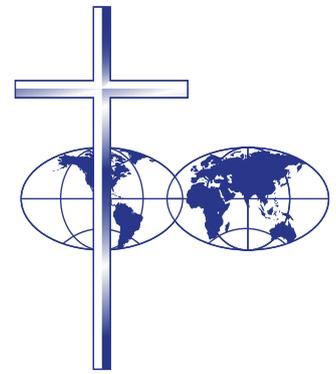


Vocation for Justice



Spring 2022 Volume 36 No 1

**'Anyone can make a difference:
21st Century Changemakers'
Columban Schools Competition
CLOSES 11 FEBRUARY
www.columbancompetition.com**

Listen for a Change



COLUMBAN MISSION

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

“The problem with climate activism is that it is all about doom and gloom.” Those who think this couldn’t be more wrong.

It’s not surprising that with images of ice sheets melting, drought devastating once fertile land, and flooded homes, some might want to avoid a trip into a disturbing future. However, eco-anxiety is not the centre of climate campaigning. We make space for the positive, for beauty in nature, for time to pray and to be creative. And, if you find apocalyptic language on climate frightening, consider that the reality will be far less palatable, especially for young people and future generations.

The Global Day of Action at Glasgow’s Conference of Parties (COP26) UN climate summit on 6 November was inspirational and even joyful. Columban JPIC in Britain marched alongside the COP26 Coalition, the Laudato Si Movement and many others to call for world leaders to tackle multiple crises of inequality, climate instability and the COVID-19 pandemic. We were in a faith bloc among around 125,000 people, undeterred by wind and rain, and blessed with the occasional rainbow. Our front-page photo was taken that day. It was a life-affirming experience of listening to multiple voices, including indigenous people, communities facing extreme weather, and young people.

So, this issue takes the theme, ‘Listen for a Change’, highlighting the importance of listening to prophetic voices and to recognise changes happening to build a sustainable future. Our Centrespread raises voices from COP26, both in the conference and in the exciting rallies and meetings around it. In an international show of solidarity, 100 demonstrations in the UK, including in London and Cardiff, were joined by events in another hundred countries across the world. Columbans were part of that lobby to ensure that the call for climate justice cannot be ignored over the coming months as the world builds up to November’s COP27 in Egypt, the first African country to host it.

COP26 was an historic moment of growth in power and solidarity for the climate justice movement. There was tremendous episcopal support in Glasgow. Bishop John Arnold of Salford, lead Bishop for the Environment in England and Wales, joined Jesuit Missions and CAFOD on the march, as well as participating in the Vatican delegation. Bishop William Nolan, Chair of Justice and Peace Scotland, received applause after his homily during a Mass at St Aloysius Jesuit parish in Glasgow, where he said, “we have heard the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, but we must put our beliefs into practice.” The natural world is shouting out at us and we must carry on listening.

St Aloysius Church also hosted the Columban Missionaries and friends ‘24-Hour Vigil for the Climate’. Partners included the Laudato Si Movement, Justice and Peace Scotland, Don Bosco Green Alliance, CAFOD, SCIAF and many more. Video material was presented from partners internationally and from the UK. Participants were invited to write messages for COP26 negotiators, urging them, “to agree to stop all fossil fuel extraction by 2040, protect and restore ecosystems, and financially support developing countries to adapt to climate change.” Every hour, a prayer experience themed around ecological spirituality and the story of a community impacted by

climate change was broadcast. Around 2,500 people joined in worldwide. See page 8.

And remember that there is another important UN conference coming up, which Columban JPIC internationally is engaging with. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) will take place in China 25 April – 8 May 2022. Last year, Columbans produced a ‘Jubilee for the Earth,’ on biodiversity and now there are six new episodes. Details on page 4. Biodiversity loss is another long-term systemic problem, so serious that Columban ecologist Sean McDonagh, has called for a *Requiem* to honour creatures facing extinction. He says, “the liturgy would encourage people of faith to take the destruction of biodiversity much more seriously.”

We remind readers that written and image entries for this year’s Columban Schools Competition, ‘Anyone can make a difference: 21st Century Changemakers’, must be in by 11 February. Young people 13-18 years are asked to consider: Who in the world today is doing something about inequality, injustice, exclusion and environmental degradation? What can they teach us? How can we draw on our own faith and personal experience to be changemakers?

See:
www.columbancompetition.com

Fr Peter Hughes

Critical Optimism and COP26

Fr Martin Poulson

Salesian Martin Poulson is a Senior Lecturer in Theology at the University of Roehampton and a Trustee and Board member of Operation Noah.

Was COP26 a success or a failure? To some extent, our answer will be connected to our general tendency to be optimistic or pessimistic about the state of things, our gut reaction to the world around us. It is important to pay attention to our gut, because otherwise our thinking and action can become rarefied, or can turn with the wind, becoming inconsistent over time. As a Christian with an optimistic disposition, my gut churned when I read the analysis of BBC environment correspondent Matt McGrath to the release of a report mid-COP by Climate Action Tracker. This said that, in spite of the pledges being made during the first week of the conference, the actual policies of governments were likely to lead to 2.7C degrees of warming by 2100. McGrath said that, “this Climate Action Tracker report has punctured the balloon of optimism that’s been swelling since the start of this conference.”

This makes optimism seem very vulnerable, which is why we need something deeper, more critical, more sustainable, for people with a disposition like mine. Since the Paris COP21 in 2015, Christiana Figueres has been proposing a kind of optimism that is relentless and stubborn, refusing to give up in the face of setbacks.

I would like to suggest a threefold interaction, drawing on Christian tradition, that weaves a critical optimism that can sustain hope in the struggles and joys to come. The first strand of this interaction is critical affirmation. As a Christian, this affirmation is based on my belief that God is the Creator of everything that exists. The world is not a neutral backdrop for human activity and we do not have *carte blanche* from God to treat the planet however we choose. God is not absent from the created world, leaving us to our own devices to succeed or fail on our own. As Pope Francis put it in paragraph 80 of *Laudato Si'*, written in the run-up to the Paris COP, “God is intimately present to each being, without

impinging on the autonomy of his creature, and this gives rise to the rightful autonomy of earthly affairs. Divine presence, which ensures the subsistence and growth of each being, ‘continues the work of creation’.”

In this affirmation of faith, autonomy is not independence, but is understood in a context of presence and relationship. Our dependence on God as creatures goes hand in hand with the responsibilities that are entrusted to us by God. Francis says, in paragraph 67 of *Laudato Si'*, that the task to “‘till and keep’ the garden of the world” that is entrusted to humanity “implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature.” And, “each community can take from the bounty of Earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect Earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations.”

This mention of what we need leads me to the second strand of the threefold interaction, critical negativity. Given the climate emergency, we must clearly distinguish between what we genuinely need, what we want and what we are often told we want by others. It is important to recognise the difference between pledges and policies, as the Climate Action Tracker report stressed, and for our words and our actions to cohere, rather than contradict each other.

In the run-up to COP26, the Make COP Count coalition, led by Faith for the Climate, focused on two climate justice asks, one of which was an end to all use of public money to support fossil fuels. The Glasgow Climate Pact, which was agreed at the end of the COP, contained a “much-contested clause to phase out coal and end fossil fuel subsidies” which was changed at the last minute to talk about phasing down coal instead. An agreed Pact is better than nothing, as many government negotiators have commented, but people of faith need to show this is not good enough.

One way that we can do this is through our investments, so that what we campaign for coheres with our practice. This was evidenced by my Christian tradition. Five days before the COP, another coalition, led by Operation Noah and the *Laudato Si'* Movement, made the largest ever faith divestment announcement, in which 72 faith institutions, 37 of which are UK-based, announced their divestment from fossil fuels. They joined the worldwide divestment movement of 1500 institutions, over a third of which are faith-based. The movement recognises that we can no longer afford to profit from the devastation that results from the use of fossil fuels, that divestment is an ethical and religious imperative.

However, prophetic action is not just about stopping things, and this is where the third strand of critical optimism comes in. Critical positivity is about speaking and acting in ways that pave the way for a better future for all. As Pope Francis said in paragraph 49 of *Laudato Si'*, “a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.*” Human solidarity and ecological solidarity must go hand in hand as we tend the fragile seedlings of hope.

The second climate justice ask of the Make COP Count coalition complimented the first by calling for funding for climate-related loss and damage for the poorest nations and peoples. They have contributed the least to the climate emergency, but are suffering most from its effects. ‘Loss and damage’ was also blocked at the COP, but as *The Conversation’s* Jack Marley observed, “the summit showed that this issue is becoming unavoidable.” Christians, alongside other people of faith, are called to engage in prophetic witness here, too. This involves making strategic decisions about what we do with our money. Impact investing – especially climate-related impact investing – is crucial if we are to move beyond our current lifestyles, ways of generating energy and relating to each other into a future that is truly for the good of all God’s creatures. ■

This article, reprinted with permission, was first published on the LSE Religion and Global Society blog.

The Wailing of God's Creatures

Ellen Teague

Our editor gives a background for the Conference of Parties (COP) 15 meeting on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, China 25 April-8 May 2022.

Fourteen years ago I visited an experimental "permaculture" farm near Manila, run by the Columban Fathers. There were multi shades of green, lush vegetation and all kinds of fruit trees – mangoes, bananas, coconuts. I marvelled at rows of food crops and worm composting turning kitchen and garden waste into nutrient-rich compost. The soil, vegetation, trees and air were all full of life, buzzing and moist.

Yet, the Philippines is just one of the world's biodiversity hotspots where its destruction is having enormous negative impacts both on the environment and on human wellbeing. Modern destruction of the natural world by extractive industries and others has been called "sinful" by the bishops of the Philippines.

Convention on Biodiversity

The word 'biodiversity' was coined in the 1980s, when human society was becoming more aware of the plight of rare mammals and threats to tropical forests and coral reefs. It encompasses the full variety of genes, species and ecosystems on the planet. It includes the crops we eat and the insects that pollinate them; the bacteria that help create the soil that sustains farming; the microscopic plankton at the base of food chains and ecosystems such as forests that regulate water supplies and climate.

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity legally binds nation signatories to conserve biological resources, use them sustainably, and share the benefits arising from their use fairly. But it is poorly implemented. The Convention opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and entered into force in 1993. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal country participation. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a supplementary agreement to the Convention. Entering into force in 2003, this Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks

posed by the modified organisms produced by modern biotechnology. To date, 173 parties have ratified it.

Wailing of God's Creatures

An excellent briefing on Biodiversity and Ecological Conversion called 'The Wailing of God's Creatures - Catholic Social Teaching, Human Activity, and the Collapse of Biological Diversity' has been published by the Laudato Si Research Institute. The report - commissioned by CIDSE, CAFOD, and the Global Catholic Climate Movement - calls for immediate action from scientists, policy makers, and the Catholic Church. It offers insight into the socio-ecological crisis of biodiversity loss and recommends how to advocate for the protection of the biosphere in light of Catholic Social Teaching.

The report says, "the anthropogenic decline of biodiversity has reached such a dramatic level that biologists consider it the beginning of a sixth mass extinction, in the course of which the planet could lose the majority of its wildlife, making it impossible for the system to adapt any further." It suggests that global consumption is unbalanced, with the wealthiest 20% using up 80% of global resources. This "unequal consumption is a key driver of biodiversity decline". It calls for "a radical ecological conversion, on both individual and societal level, to address the socio-ecological biodiversity crisis".

According to the report, "every driver of extinction has a social and ecological dimension, and it is impossible to address one without the other". Tackling problems - such as land use change, species overexploitation, or pollution - also requires addressing the economic challenges associated with them.

Engaging with COP15

Pope Francis makes it clear in *Laudato Si'* that other species have intrinsic value independent of their usefulness to humanity. We need to educate ourselves about the impact of our wasteful, industrial societies

and devise strategies and lifestyles which will lead us to live in a more sustainable way. People of faith should be involved in protecting biodiversity for future generations.

Most missionary groups acknowledge that the context of mission has changed, and it must incorporate care of God's creation, which is already an element of Catholic Social Teaching. Eco-theologian Sean McDonagh laments that, "the Christian Churches have been slow to recognise the attack on life which is so relentless today, but sooner or later, extinction will rob our planet of the ability to sustain many forms of life, possibly even our own".

Faith groups will be engaging with the UN Convention COP15 in China. It is an important opportunity for policy advocacy as well as for education and action. The Laudato Si' Movement, Union of International Superiors General (UISG), are amongst those promoting the Petition: Healthy People, Healthy Planet, which targets political leaders participating in COP26 and COP15. ■

Healthy People, Healthy Planet petition

<https://thecatholicpetition.org/>

'The Wailing of God's Creatures - Catholic Social Teaching, Human Activity and the collapse of Ecological Biodiversity' available at: <https://lsri.campion.ox.ac.uk/news/lsri-publishes-new-report-current-biodiversity-crisis>

Columban Biodiversity Podcasts

Last year, in preparation for COP15, the Columbans produced a podcast mini-series about biodiversity. Six episodes explored biodiversity and a related issue such as economic justice, peace, and migration - all related to Catholic Social Teaching. Now a Season 2 is produced and six themes cover Biodiversity in relation to Young People, Indigenous Communities, Food Insecurity, Climate Change, Beyond COP 15 and COP26, and The Spirituality of Biodiversity.

Download at: www.columbancenter.org/jubileepodcast

A Just Transition

Andy Whitmore

Andy Whitmore is Co-Chair London Mining Network, of which Columban JPIC is a member.

London Mining Network (LMN) made the most of the opportunity of Glasgow's COP26. As a UK-based campaign and solidarity organisation we supported member groups and overseas partners to have their voices heard. LMN members had been active in the COP26 Coalition that helped organise civil society participation, as well as local and on-line events. Despite numerous concerns around COVID, and visa difficulties, partners came from as far afield as Colombia, India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

LMN has a wide range of minerals-related issues that are concerned with climate change. The most obvious is focussed on the continued burning of coal. In a COP that was meant to – but ultimately failed – to kill off coal, local communities added to global concerns by stressing the impacts coal had on their land and livelihoods, their water and their health. Siti Maimunah, of Mining Advocacy Network JATAM in Indonesia – who LMN supported at COP26 – made a speech describing how as she arrived in the UK a 25-year-old man called Febi was found drowned in an abandoned coal mine pit near Samarinda, East Kalimantan. She described how Febi was treated as another number, in the same way COP in its 26th meeting had become another number. She called for us all to work together to show that we are not numbers.

LMN member the UK Coal Action Network helped launch a film, 'Finite', about community conflicts over open-cast coal mines in the UK and Germany. The film demonstrates how conflicted mine-workers can be, with German unionised coal miners supporting the expansion of coal mining into the ancient Hambach Forest. So, the call for a Just Transition for fossil fuel workers who may lose out economically - and need alternative livelihoods - has increasingly been interwoven into demands for ending fossil fuels.

Such calls for a Just Transition are necessary, but are only part of the solution. The term 'Just Transition' itself is often a disputed term.

Indigenous activists view such a transition as being just to Mother Earth too, and so the term has expanded into concepts of ecological justice; it is increasingly seen as a framework for a fair shift to an economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable and just.

The idea of a wider Just Transition also includes the minerals needed to produce this energy transition, be it to create devices to capture renewable energy, batteries for storing energy or the transmission of electricity. There is a need to ensure they are not extracted at the expense of impacted communities, mineworkers or the environment. The World Bank estimates that over three billion tons of minerals and metals will be needed for the switch to renewable energy. There are concerns that an unchecked increase in the extraction of transition minerals - including lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, silver and rare earth elements - will unleash widespread destruction and human rights abuses.

Essentially we need to look beyond just fossil fuels as we are in a 'materials crisis' not just an 'energy crisis'. We have an ongoing massive increase in extraction of all resources that is unsustainable for people and planet. Our use of natural resources has more than tripled since 1970.

There is therefore a real danger that this extractive expansion will create a new era of 'green extractivism' And this will be done in the name of solving climate change, extracted by newly rebranded 'green' mining conglomerates. Those who stand to be sacrificed come from already established mining areas, such as the lithium triangle in South America or the cobalt mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo, but also newer ones such as expanded nickel mines in the Philippines or

Indonesia, or the proposed Resolution Copper mine on San Carlos Apache territory in the US. Even Europe is being targeted with potential rare earth mines in Sweden, and lithium mining in Serbia, Spain and Cornwall. This is coupled with potential expansion into entirely new extractive frontiers such as mining on the ocean floor.



Andy Whitmore at COP26.

During a webinar on the issue, Trusha Reddy of WOMIN in South Africa pointed to supporting the alternatives and resistance that are already happening in Africa – particularly those communities promoting the right to say no – as well as

creating a development model which isn't based on profit but is centred on people and planet.

LMN and its partners used the opportunity of Transport Day at COP26 to raise the issue of transition minerals. Community leaders stood at the gates of the official venue and spoke to a Declaration on Mining and the Energy Transition. 141 organisations across the globe signed up to the statement demanding that the transition to renewable energy sources must be just and equitable and accompanied by a simultaneous transformation away from irresponsible mining. The Declaration called on climate negotiators at COP26 to make a binding commitment to source transition minerals responsibly.

The Declaration highlighted the need to explore alternatives to reduce the wasteful linear model of extraction, production and disposing. It will be essential to reconsider concepts of economic growth and consumption, promoting a 'circular economy' where resources are re-used, but also a reduction in consumption in general. Such principles, if put into practice, would require major shifts in personal, government and business prioritisation. However, they would also form the basis of a true Just Transition. ■

<https://londonminingnetwork.org/>

VOICES FROM COP26

Columban 2021 Climate Statement: <https://columbans.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Columban-Climate-Change-Statement-2021-Final.pdf>



“A growing ‘ecological debt’ raises the issue of foreign debt, the burden of which often hinders the development of peoples.”
 Pope Francis’ speech, delivered by Cardinal Parolin



‘Which future will you fund?’
 NGO Protest



‘No More Fossil Fuels’
 Jesuit Missions’ placards.

“Even with all the new pledges made at COP26, global warming is still projected to exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius target, which would make it difficult for vulnerable countries like the Philippines to adapt to climate change impacts.”

Rodne Galicha, Filipino environmentalist



“Women are at the frontlines when disasters happen. It is their hard work that is wasted when the farms are destroyed or when their crops are destroyed. It is women who have to walk very long distances to look for water.”



Vanessa Nakate, Ugandan environmentalist



“We champion agroecology as a climate solution.”
 Soil Association

“Racist ideologies about black people can really limit the participation of non-white climate activists and detrimentally push out the voices of marginalised groups.... Western campaigners and protesters need to help amplify the voices, actions and efforts of communities in the Global South who are silenced.”
 Tobi Oyedele, Columban Faith in Action Volunteer



“It’s a matter of life and survival for many of us”.
Tuvalu’s Climate Minister
Seve Paeniu



“We remind governments of their commitments made in Paris in 2015 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, and of Article 17 of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights to protect the environment, the biosphere and biodiversity.”
Glasgow COP26 Multifaith Declaration



‘Columbans raise concerns about people forced to migrate due to ecosystem degradation and the impacts of climate change, including Indigenous Peoples who rely on local environments for their livelihoods.’
Columban COP26 Climate Statement



‘Reparations for the loss and damage already happening in the Global South.’
COP26 Coalition



‘War contributes to climate change through the extractive industries, the arms trade, and the use of fuels and explosives.’

Climate Change causes soil degradation, conflict over resources, mass migration, and social instability. About 6% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from military-related activity – however these are not included in emission reduction targets.’
Pax Christi



“Earth’s resources are finite and not just to be used by the powerful and rich.”
Bishop William Nolan



‘Demand for transition minerals, such as a copper and lithium, is predicted to increase as much six times due to demand for electric vehicles - a fact mining companies are keen to capitalise on. ‘Dirty mining’ and harm to Indigenous peoples and their lands are at the foundation of many nations’ energy transition.’
London Mining Network

ASKS OF COP27

The UK is COP President until Nov 2022. Urge the UK to ensure that #ClimateJustice is kept on the table:

Keep 1.5 alive

Accelerate a just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy

Tackle global deforestation

Protect and restore ecosystems

Provide financial support to developing countries to ensure they can adapt and respond to the climate crisis

Youth at COP26 '24 Hours for the Climate'

James Trewby

The Columban Justice and Peace Education Worker, interviews Anna Marshall and Angel Nakhle, two of the young adults who helped put on 24 hours of climate stories and prayers from around the world at COP26 in Glasgow.

James: Why did you want to go to Glasgow?

Anna: It was an opportunity of a lifetime. Glasgow is so close, being in the UK. It was an international climate event for a pressing issue. Glasgow was about turning dreams into a reality.

Angel: Exactly, when will we ever get a COP in the UK again? I am a firm believer that we should act now. When I was offered the opportunity how could I have said no? As humans we have grown independent from nature and we feel we don't need it. There is a failure to realise that nature is at the root of everything we have.

Anna: Pope Francis talks about how so many people now are nature-deprived. Thinking about the climate march we joined on 6 November, on the Global Day of Climate Action, we started in a park next to a river. Then we walked into the streets of Glasgow, surrounded by housing. In a way, we were hoping to bring nature and its beauty with us. It reminded me of why I wanted to go to Glasgow, and what we were marching for.

James: What have you learned and what have you taken away from the experience?

Angel: One thing we both agreed we learned is that both big and small things can trigger a change.

Anna: For example, if you ask someone to buy a reusable bottle instead of a plastic water bottle, someone else might overhear and agree and go buy one, even if the person you were speaking to doesn't. As people who went to COP26 and did the prayer vigil, we learned that now is the time to keep pushing no matter how big or small our impact appears to be.

Angel: Agreed. Another thing I learned is that we are so privileged to be able to live in a country where we are heard, we are listened to. Some people aren't able to change because of their circumstances - they need to provide for their families and they can't afford a

sustainable lifestyle. We should do our best to spread the word and help them to be heard. Thanks to the prayer vigil, the stories that people shared were sent to COP delegates in the hope of making an impact. I am glad those stories have been heard by someone.

Anna: I was on the comment section on YouTube for quite a while, and I was reading through some of the comments and messages, and particularly looking through the 'share your stories' document, I had a chance to spend time sitting and reading people's experiences. What I learned about other people's experiences across the world was invaluable. I learned so much about my privilege as much as I learned about other people's experiences, and it was really humbling. I feel I have a greater base knowledge now about how the environment and people globally are affected, which I can use to spread the word about climate change and people who are suffering right now.

James: What was a moment that stayed with you?

Angel: The march - everyone just coming together, passionate, and willing to change. We are together in this. Poor or rich, we should all work together. The whole experience, honestly, felt like a dream, unforgettable and precious.

Anna: Alongside the prayer vigil, which was fantastic, carrying the Earth globe through the march. I saw how if someone saw a hole in the globe, they would rush to it with a plaster and tape. [Anna is referring to the inflatable globe we carried with the *Laudato Si'* Movement, which ripped and had to be repaired at the start of the march.] It was like we were taping the world up and fixing the world. And I was just thinking that this world is deflating, and we are trying to keep it together. It made my heart happy. My second moment is when we met a Filipino priest, Brother Angel, who is a political activist. He had to leave the Philippines because of his

campaigning, and it struck me that he was on the climate march. It was reinforcing the idea that all those issues are important and intertwined. You just have to remember how central the environment is to everyone; it is something that grounded so many people from all around the world. Many people have other calls to action too, but the climate is definitely a universal call we all have to answer!

James: What are your reflections on the outcomes of COP26?

Anna: Greta Thunberg had said early on that COP26 was a failure. But it was hard to judge it then, considering that we didn't know what the impact would be. But I think, now that we've had a gap, we can say that the impacts haven't been enough. People really haven't changed.

Angel: And some people still think that we shouldn't change, that we can bury our heads in the ground, and the climate crisis will solve itself. But you can see the difference between this COP and the COP that was held in Paris. People are now beginning to act.

Anna: But they don't seem to realise the extent to which we have to act. 'Loss and damage' is about recognising the histories of countries, and those that can afford it will have to pay and provide the help needed and recognise their responsibilities. We all have a role to play, and COP26 was just the beginning of our journey! ■

See the Vigil at: <https://www.24hoursfortheclimate.org/>

Ellen Teague's Blogs from Glasgow's COP26: <https://columbans.co.uk/justice-peace/8684/cop26-blog-15-glasgow-ends-today-but-the-real-work-begins-now/>

"We don't prioritise the climate today. Our goal isn't to lower emissions. Our goal is to find solutions that allow us to continue life today. Of course you can ask 'Can't we have both?' But the uncomfortable truth is that we've left it too late for that." Greta Thunberg

"Destruction of Earth's environment is the human rights challenge of our time." Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Peacemaking in 2022

Pax Christi

In his 2022 message for the World Day of Peace on 1 January, Pope Francis called for a decrease in military spending, greater investment in education, and care for the environment. "The pursuit of a genuine process of international disarmament can only prove beneficial for the development of peoples and nations, freeing up financial resources better used for health care, schools, infrastructure, care of the land and so forth," he said.

In his message, '**Education, work and dialogue between generations: tools for building lasting peace**', Pope Francis lamented that despite numerous efforts aimed at fostering the conditions for peace, "the deafening noise of war and conflict is intensifying" and "an economic model based on individualism rather than on solidary sharing continues to prevail".

The cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth are constantly make themselves heard, pleading for justice and peace. Francis acknowledged the myriad of ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted human relationships, economic opportunities and exacerbated inequalities. He called for an intergenerational dialogue to facilitate greater understanding between different generations. He felt, "great social challenges and peace processes necessarily call for dialogue between the keepers of memory - the elderly - and those who move history forward - the young."

Regarding God's creation, the environment "is on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next". We ought to esteem and encourage all those young people who work for a more just world, one that is careful to safeguard the creation entrusted to our stewardship. They go about this with restlessness, enthusiasm and most of all a sense of responsibility before the urgent change of direction required by the challenges emerging from the present ethical and socio-environmental crisis.

All can work together to build a more peaceful world, starting from the hearts of individuals and relationships in the family, then within society and with the environment, and all the way up to relationships between peoples and nations.

In his message to parishes for **Peace Sunday on 16 January in England and Wales**, the Pax Christi National President, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool, acknowledged that the past year had been one of unprecedented and continuing challenges. "We are all conscious of the need to restore and rebuild our communities here and around the world, accepting that we need new ways of working and relating to each other, he said. He urged practical support of Pax Christi's peacework, saying, "the Christian message of peace, through reconciliation, justice and nonviolence, can offer hope and direction in these times."

Pax Christi England and Wales, a membership organisation, hopes to regain momentum since last year's observance of Peace Sunday was so curtailed by Covid. It relies on Peace Sunday donations to help fund its work, and those were down by 75 percent in 2021. This goes alongside providing materials for parishes, schools and families to explore their role in peacemaking. The Pax Christi England and Wales website offers, 'Activities & Prayers' pages for children's liturgies and for schools. Education Worker, Aisling Griffin, provides assembly/form-time notes and an 'Artists for Peace' project, inviting young people to create images, videos, graphics, that illustrate the link between peace and care of creation. Materials can be used at any time during the year.

In Scotland, a letter to all parishes on peace was read in parishes on 2 January, written by Bishop William Nolan of Galloway, President of Scotland Justice and Peace. He contrasted the vast sums spent on military spending with the millions of displaced people facing persecution and poverty. He called on Catholics to "recognise the dignity of our fellow human beings, particularly those who are strangers to us."

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2022/>

Welcome the Stranger

The 27 migrant deaths in the English Channel on 24 November 2021 were 16 Iraqi Kurds, four Afghans, three Ethiopians, one Iranian Kurd, one Somali, one Vietnamese and one Egyptian. They included seven women and two minors.

In a statement before Christmas, the Catholic Church in France commented that its members have long been involved in welcoming migrants and refugees. Hospitality and support projects have multiplied in most dioceses and many Catholics are committed, in collaboration with others, to work for the reception, protection, promotion and integration of people.

In England and Wales, Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Migrants and Refugees said: "A remedy needs to be found immediately to prevent more tragedies and, at the same time, address the underlying causes which force refugees to flee their homeland. War, poverty, persecution and climate change need to be recognised and addressed."

A video of the bishop speaking in Dover to mark the World Day of Migrants and Refugees on 25 September 2001 can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i5WVVSy-dw>



Mauricio Silva and Nathalie Marytsch, from Columban Missionaries Britain, coordinate activities and house meetings at Fatima House, Birmingham, which offers safe shelter for up to 11 women asylum seekers. The project is in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Coat of Hopes

Images of flowers, rainbows, trees, flowing water, polar bears, bees, birds feeding chicks in a nest and phrases such as 'Hope, Faith and Love', 'Save our children's future', 'Act Justly' adorned a Coat of Hopes which inspired all who saw it at COP26 in Glasgow. It is a patchwork garment made of embroidered pieces of blanket, created by a diverse range of people along the 500-mile Camino to COP walk. Columban Missionaries and friends from eight different nationalities contributed patches to the coat. <https://www.coatofhopes.uk/>



New 'Beacon Parish Scheme'

As a contribution towards Catholic youth ministry in parishes in England and Wales, Million Minutes offers a news scheme for parish youth. Six parishes signed up in 2021 across Liverpool, East Anglia, Clifton, Leeds and Shrewsbury Dioceses, and already two more have signed up for 2022. The scheme is based around Catholic Social Teaching and focuses on youth-centred parish renewal. There are links to synodal conversations. <https://millionminutes.org/blog/2021yearinreview>

CAFOD's 60th anniversary year

CAFOD marks 60 years this Spring, celebrating with the women's groups who founded the Catholic International Development Charity in England and Wales. The Columbans are members of the National Justice and Peace Environment Group which thanked CAFOD's Maria Elena Arana for three decades of collaboration when she retired at the end of 2021. She met up with the Columbans several times at November's COP26 in Glasgow to push for climate justice.

Sr Pamela Hussey

Sr Pamela Hussey, beloved of justice and peace campaigners in the UK and Central America, died on 13 December. A sister of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, she was 99 years old. She received letters from two Popes, Benedict XVI and Francis, congratulating her on her Diamond Jubilee as a nun. In the 1980s and 90s Pamela worked on the El Salvador desk at the Catholic Institute for International Relations, particularly supporting justice work in the Archdiocese of San Salvador. She was a Patron of the Archbishop Romero Trust. Books included 'Free From Fear: Women in El Salvador's Church (1990)' and, 'Women Making a Difference' with Marigold Best (2001).



EL SALVADOR: Bishops urge protection of Water

"The reality of water in our country is worrying", said the Bishops of El Salvador in a December 2021 statement entitled 'Water is a precious resource that we must all protect'. It notes that about 42 mining projects threaten to pollute El Salvador's rivers. 70% of the 590 rivers are already contaminated and their waters cannot be used for human or animal consumption. Other main causes that generate pollution in rivers are businesses which discharge their wastewater into rivers, municipalities that do not have systems to treat wastewater, and the lack of sanitation.

Ridding the world of nuclear weapons

Peace groups are marking the first anniversary of The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entering into force in January 2021, making nuclear weapons finally illegal under international law. The first Meeting of States Parties will be held in Vienna during March 2022. So, the countries that have joined the treaty will be meeting for the first time to discuss some of the treaty's technical details and commit to concrete steps to meet their obligations. Christian CND is

amongst the peace groups urging the UK government to sign. <https://christiancnd.org.uk/>

Business and Human Rights

CAFOD is calling for a new law to ensure that UK businesses act to prevent human rights and environmental abuse, and that if they fail they can be held accountable. The need for new rules has been acknowledged by more than 110 bishops from all around the world who have signed a statement calling for an end to such corporate abuse. Supporters are urged to contact MPs and ask them to back a new Business, Human Rights and Environment Act.

Climate Crisis costs billions, says charity

A new report by Christian Aid, 'Counting the cost 2021: a year of climate breakdown,' identifies 10 destructive events which cost US\$1.5 billion or more. Among them is Hurricane Ida which struck the US in August costing \$65 billion and killed 95 people. July floods in Europe cost \$43 billion and killed 240, while floods in China's Henan province caused \$17.5 billion of destruction and killed 320. In addition to the financial cost, these extreme weather events caused severe human suffering from food insecurity, drought and mass displacements.

Christian Aid urged that in 2022 more is done to provide financial support to the most vulnerable countries, in particular the creation of a fund to deal with loss and damage suffered in poor countries due to the climate crisis. Such climate devastation is set to continue without emissions' cuts. Report at: www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/our-work/counting-cost-2021-year-climate-breakdown

SOUTH SUDAN: Corporate accountability

The South Sudan Council of Churches - including the Catholic Church - has welcomed the decision by the Swedish Public Prosecution authority to indict two oil executives from Swedish oil company Lundin Energy for aiding and abetting war crimes in South Sudan between 1999 and 2003. Amnesty International and Christian Aid both published reports on the South Sudan conflict and highlighted links with the extractive oil industry.

Action Ideas

Laudato Si' Action Platform Help build a sustainable future

Pope Francis has invited Catholics - and anyone else interested - to join a seven-year journey to widen the reach of his 2015 encyclical on the environment in a time of global Climate Change and Biodiversity loss. It is known as the Laudato Si' Action Platform.

The invitation comes as communities globally have experienced extreme heat and drought, massive flooding, intense and long-burning wildfires, rising sea levels and failed crops in 2021. This is a global grassroots movement to create a more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable world. Pope Francis has called for a "new ecological approach that can transform our way of dwelling in the world, our lifestyles, our relationship with the resources of the earth and, in general, our way of looking at humanity and of living life."

The Platform encourages any Catholic institution, large or small, across the globe, to enroll in a multi-year, Vatican-backed process toward sustainability in the spirit of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on care for creation. Already, more than 4,000 church organisations and bodies - including the Columbans, Jesuits and the Salesian Sisters, the Pontifical Gregorian University and 80 Catholic colleges worldwide, the California bishops' conference and upwards of 1,000 families - have committed to the ambitious initiative to put integral ecology into practice in their lives and work. In the United States, 17 dioceses are participating and, in the Philippines, the 'Living Laudato Si' community has 2,400 members.

The **Centrespread of Vocation for Justice Summer 2021 contains Laudato Si Action Platform details:**

<https://columbans.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/NewsletterFINAL-3-PROOF-4.pdf>

The '**Laudato Si' Reader - An Alliance of Care for Our Common Home**' includes contributions from Columban Sean McDonagh and Celia Deane-Drummond, Director of the Laudato Si Research Institute in Oxford. Released as a special e-book by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Reader showcases the various ways people have brought *Laudato Si'* to life over the last six years. It has been edited by Fr Joshtrom Kureethadam, Coordinator of the Ecology and Creation sector of the Dicastery.

Download the book for free at: <https://www.humandevlopment.va/en/news/2021/published-laudato-si-reader.html>

In England and Wales the following projects tie in well with the Vatican initiative:

Carbon footprinting

The 'Guardians of Creation' team has released two guidance papers, one on decarbonising diocesan building stocks, and one on carbon accounting. Both available at: <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/areas/theology-and-ethics/guardians-of-creation/resources.aspx>
Diocesan Carbon Accounting guidance: <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/areas/theology-and-ethics/guardians-of-creation/docs/2021-nov-carbon-accounting.pdf>

The Diocese of Salford is the pilot for these papers.

See: <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/diocese/environment/guardiansofcreation/> and 'The Laudato Si Centre'
<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/diocese/environment/laudatosicentre/>

Livesimply Award

The *livesimply* award is an existing opportunity for Catholic communities - parishes, schools, religious orders and chaplaincies to show how they have been living simply, in solidarity with people in poverty, and sustainably with creation. 102 Livesimply awards have now been achieved, with more than 200 registrations of parishes and groups setting the process in motion.
<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Livesimply-award>

Journey to 2030

John Paul de Quay

The 'Journey to 2030' website is home to the Ecological Conversion Group's project. It aims to help parish communities to joyfully reimagine the future, and especially how their parish communities can be the hubs that enable social and environmental care.

'The Journey' engages the Church with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UN climate targets. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is brought in, helping us recognise our role as the salt in the leaven. We incorporated the *Laudato Si'* Goals into this work as they bring the UN goals and Catholic Social Teaching together beautifully.

The site offers:

Find a local network

People new to social or environmental action will find supportive networks in their diocese.

Getting started guide

A quick guide to ideas for motivating a community.

Parish Guide to *Laudato Si'*

Our guide provides an accessible way to learn about CST and in particular: '*Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*', in the context of a parish community. We are also creating guides on different aspects of parish life and our vocation to care for creation, covering topics such as political action, community organising, liturgy and prayer, wildlife gardening, use of community spaces, ethical consumption, travel, and energy.

Building a movement

This is a grassroots project, with laity working alongside clergy and religious, to help our Church build a movement of responding to and being changed by our urgent ecological and social crises. We hope to encourage a renewed interest in existing initiatives, and build a culture of care for creation.

We hope to extend the reach to schools in 2022. Do visit our site.

www.journeyto2030.org

Resources

Every Bush Aflame

John Feehan

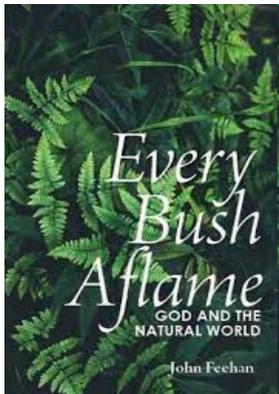
Veritas Publications

A book exploring the origins of biodiversity in Christian theology and its roots in our growing scientific understanding of the true nature and scale of

life's complexity and diversity. Also, exploring the implications of all this for the kind of Christian response called for in *Laudato Si'*.

Emphasis is laid on the importance of personal encounter with the natural world.

ISBN: 9781847309488



Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World.

Dr Katherine Hayhoe

Dr Hayhoe writes personally and persuasively, as a person of faith and as a scientist, about both the peril of the climate crisis and why we can still have hope. She draws connections between the scientific facts and our hope for healing a fragmented world.

ISBN-13 978-1982143831

Wreckers of the Earth: 300 London-based Companies destroying the planet

Corporate Watch

London is home to fossil fuel giants and to many of the worst mining polluters. It is the world's second-largest financial centre and a key financial marketplace for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and for trading oil, metals, minerals and other "commodities". The legacy of the British Empire still continues in the infrastructure and services London offers: insurance markets, law firms, arms dealers, PR agencies, and investment property.

<https://corporatewatch.org/wreckers-of-the-earth/>

A Bigger Picture

Vanessa Nakate

An inspirational book by an inspirational young author from Uganda. Nakate describes succinctly how Africa is the continent that produces the least greenhouse gasses but will suffer the most from uncontrolled global warming. She decided to do something about it, bravely organising small 'strikes' holding placards around Kampala. She goes on to describe how she was noticed by the United Nations as a consequence of her social media presence and posts and tweets about her climate activism. Despite starting to receive worldwide attention she still had to struggle against apparent racism and the difficulties of being taken seriously.

ISBN-13 978-0358654506

Green New Deal

New Economics Foundation

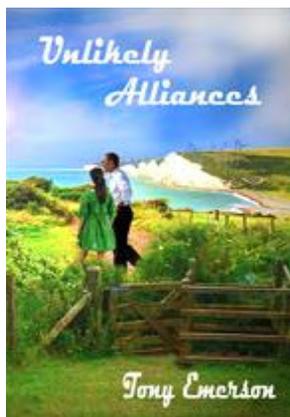
The UK needs a more just economy and more ambitious plans for climate action. The Green New Deal addresses economic, social and environmental crises together.

<https://neweconomics.org/2019/04/agreen-new-deal>

Unlikely Alliances

Tony Emerson

Set in 2029/30, the story is about how a community responds positively and effectively to the challenges of worsening climate conditions. It highlights how communities can contribute to climate action by doing



practical and exciting things. Local churches also play a significant role.

<https://joyinenough.org/2021/10/20/interview-stories-for-a-better-future/>

Exploitation of the Earth, Exploitation of People

Revd Dr John Weaver

This Briefing No.45 of the John Ray Initiative considers the impact of climate change on the poorest people of the world, the economic and political systems which contribute to increased vulnerability and forced migration, and the 'love of God, love of neighbour' which compels Christians to consider their engagement with these issues.

<https://jri.org.uk/exploitation-of-the-earth-exploitation-of-people/>

Sean McDonagh's 2004 book 'The Death of Life' on the loss of Biodiversity is at ISBN-10: 1856074641.

FOR LENT

DVD - Stations of the Forests Columban JPIC

An audio-visual lamenting devastation of rainforests and tribal people. A Resource Booklet provides agendas and reflections for meetings.

£7.00 inclusive of p&p

or download from <http://www.columbans.co.uk/resources/dvd-video/stations-of-therainforests/>

Combined Creation Time and Lent Resource Liverpool Archdiocese / CAFOD

<https://jp.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/combined-creation-time-and-lent-resources/> Hard copies at: <http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/formation-shop>

Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril

Elizabeth A. Johnson

How can we extend the Christian belief in salvation to include all created beings? Johnson invites us to consider what cosmic redemption might mean in our own time? ISBN-10: 162698266X

CAFOD LENT RESOURCES

<https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Lent-prayers>

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