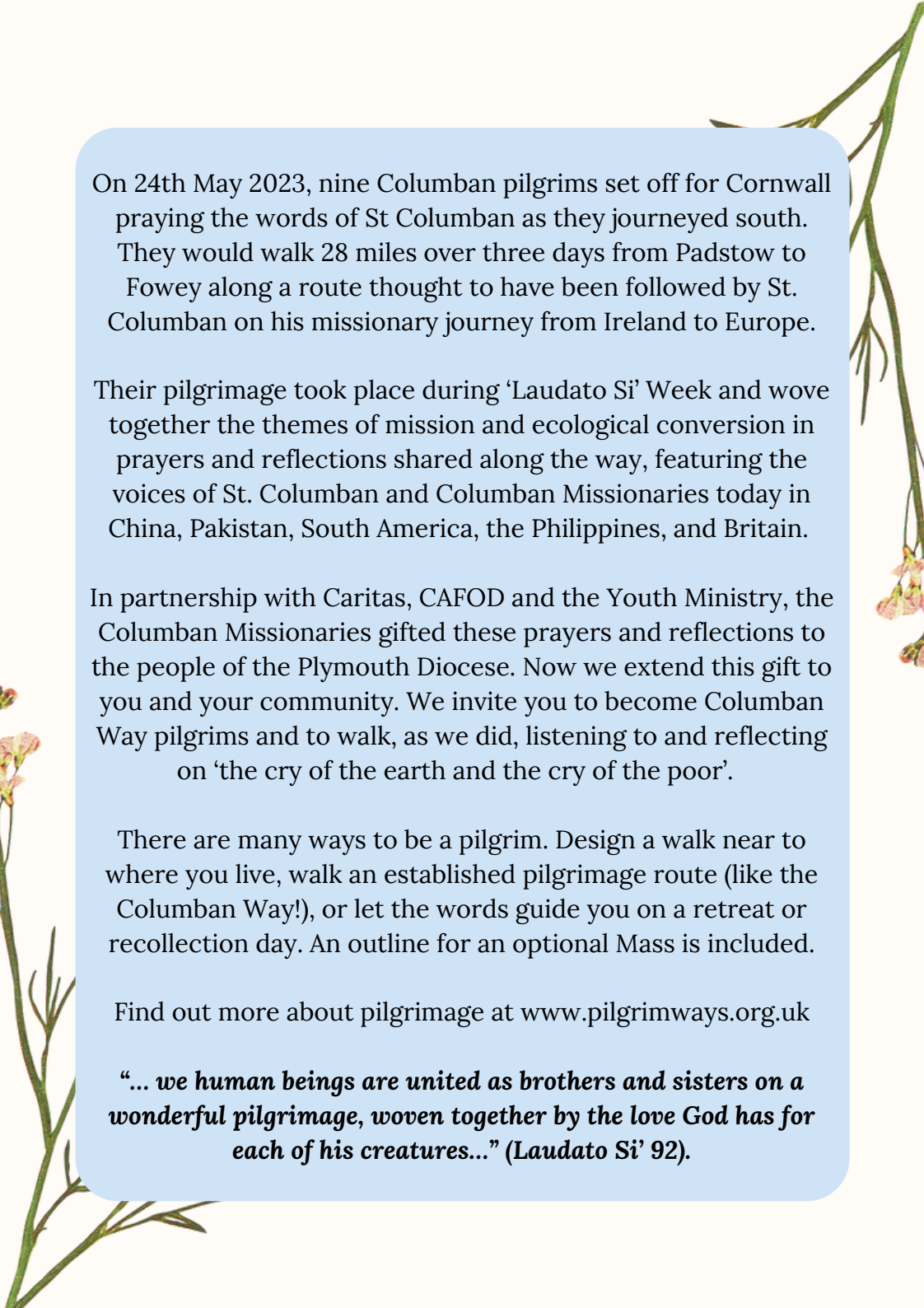


THE COLUMBAN WAY PILGRIMAGE



**COLUMBAN
MISSIONARIES**
BRITAIN



On 24th May 2023, nine Columban pilgrims set off for Cornwall praying the words of St Columban as they journeyed south. They would walk 28 miles over three days from Padstow to Fowey along a route thought to have been followed by St. Columban on his missionary journey from Ireland to Europe.

Their pilgrimage took place during 'Laudato Si' Week and wove together the themes of mission and ecological conversion in prayers and reflections shared along the way, featuring the voices of St. Columban and Columban Missionaries today in China, Pakistan, South America, the Philippines, and Britain.

In partnership with Caritas, CAFOD and the Youth Ministry, the Columban Missionaries gifted these prayers and reflections to the people of the Plymouth Diocese. Now we extend this gift to you and your community. We invite you to become Columban Way pilgrims and to walk, as we did, listening to and reflecting on 'the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'.

There are many ways to be a pilgrim. Design a walk near to where you live, walk an established pilgrimage route (like the Columban Way!), or let the words guide you on a retreat or recollection day. An outline for an optional Mass is included.

Find out more about pilgrimage at www.pilgrimways.org.uk

"... we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures..." (Laudato Si' 92).

PRAYER BY SAINT COLUMBAN

Lord,

May everything we do this day
begin with your blessing and
continue with your help.

May everything we say this day
begin with your love and continue
with your grace.

May everything we plan this day
begin with your inspiration and
continue with your peace.

So that throughout our lives, all
that we begin in you may by you
be happily ended and
all that we seek through you may
be lovingly attended.

Amen

Blessing

May God bless us,

May Jesus be with us in all our
journeys,

May the Holy Spirit guide, direct
and keep us safe.

In the name of the Father, Son
and Holy Spirit.

Amen





The Columban Way Pilgrimage

WELCOME TO THE COMMISSIONING SERVICE

For each of us, there are many reasons for this pilgrimage.

Together, we walk listening to and reflecting on the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, particularly focused on areas of the world where Columban Missionaries live and work.

An extract from Laudato Si'

"Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth". (Laudato Si 92)

'A prayer for our earth' from Laudato Si'

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace,
that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.



The Columban Way Pilgrimage

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.


We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.
Amen

We walk in the footsteps of St. Columban, who in late middle age felt called to leave his monastery and country and sail with his companions into the unknown, never to return.

Extract from St. Columban

“let us concern ourselves with things divine, and as pilgrims ever sigh for and desire our homeland; for the end of the road is ever the object of travellers’ hopes and desires, and thus, since we are travellers and pilgrims in the world, let us ever ponder on the end of the road, that is of our life, for the end of our roadway is our home... Therefore let this principle abide with us, that on the road we so live as travellers, as pilgrims, as guests of the world”.
(Sermon 8)



Litany of Saint Columban

St. Columban

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, pilgrim and wanderer for Christ

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, monk and missionary

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, abbot and brother

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, contemplative and prophetic

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, defender of truth and freedom

R/. Pray for us



The Columban Way Pilgrimage

St. Columban, dove of peace

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, friend of nature

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, lover of animals

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, protector of the environment

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, healer of the sick

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, courageous and fearless

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, forgiving and rich in mercy

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, promoter of justice, peace and integrity

R/. Pray for us

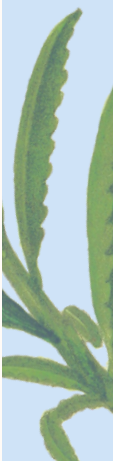

St. Columban, true to the Word of God

R/. Pray for us

St. Columban, intercede to God for us

R/. Pray for us.

What are your reasons for this pilgrimage?





The Columban Way Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage and care for creation – a reflection from Jack Edwards

Jack is a former Faith in Action volunteer with the Columban Missionaries and walked the Columban Way in May 2023.

A pilgrimage is a strange thing to encounter in our modern world. The idea of getting rid of the comforts of modern life, leaving behind your TV, central heating, even the luxury of a crowded bus ride, and starting to walk to your destination, be it hours or months away. You don't know what dangers you might find on your journey. Torrential downpours, injury, getting lost and in our case even facing the beast of Bodmin Moor! The image of a pilgrim trudging slowly from town to town in search of some illusive destination, reliant on the kindness of strangers, owning nothing but what can fit in the bag on their back, can be an unsettling one. It seems a pilgrim is someone voluntarily choosing to be poor and must suffer on the way.

Yet while we see the Pilgrim as lowly and humble the idea of pilgrimage is something else entirely. In our history books we learn of the Pilgrimage of Grace (an armed rebellion) and we often come across figures like the Pope who recently made a Pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan. It seems that a pilgrimage can be about more than suffering. A pilgrim carries their clothes on their back, a stick in their hand but in their Heart and soul they carry something much more important. They carry Hope, Joy, Peace, repentance, sorrow, Grace, and all of these mere reflections for Love, for God's Love carried with them as they go.

And we on this pilgrimage from sea to sea are doing it from love. The love that has brought us here in the footsteps of our forebear St Columban is that which we bear towards our planet, responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Over the next few days we will walk from coast to coast, through farmland and moorland in some of the richest nature left in our country and we will treasure every moment. For too many people in our world today the countryside around them is too wasted, too hostile for them to have engaged in a pilgrimage of their own. As Pope Francis says, the throwaway culture of our world is making our common home 'look like an immense pile of filth'.



The Columban Way Pilgrimage

St Columban travelled from his native Ireland and passed through Cornwall on the way to Europe. He felt so passionately about the message he felt in his heart that he left the world he knew behind and set out to a new world on foot. In today's high speed world we have forgotten that slow and steady can take you round the world and back. By passing through the world slowly on foot we rediscover the truth that as Pope Francis says: "Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth."

As we walk with hearts full of love, hope for the future and sorrow for our failings, we offer up our suffering, our prayers and our love to God and his world calling for a change of heart.

May our pilgrimage light a fire from Padstow to Fowey that shines out across the world. We need nothing less than an ecological conversion of hearts, for us all to become Pilgrims of Hope walking the way to healing our world and to do so with Joy singing while we go!

Closing prayer

Adapted from "The River of Life Prayer Book"

Dear Pilgrims,

As you go into the wilderness of the land and of your heart---

May you experience the ever-flowing grace of God's presence!

May you be immersed so fully in God's love
that you learn to let go and swim!

May you engage deeply and radically with the natural world,
As steward, co-creator, and friend!

May you drink anew from the divine source,
the stream of living water!

And may you be transformed, may the stagnant waters of your spirit
begin to flow, and may all which is dead in you rise again!

God is here. The river awaits. Let the adventure begin.

Amen

Day 1



BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Throughout our pilgrimage we will take inspiration from three sources – scripture, St. Columban and Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si’*. Columbans around the world, ordained, lay missionaries and co-workers, have been asked to select extracts for us to reflect on, to share something of the ‘cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor’ in their contexts, and to give us questions for pondering and discussion as we walk.

Today we will focus on materials sent to us from China by Fr. Dan Troy, Columban missionary priest.



FIRST REFLECTION

Opening prayer

Adapted from the Laudato Si' Movement Prayer Book

Creator, we are embarking on a journey towards greater love for you, our brothers and sisters, and your creation.

Holy Spirit, we humbly ask that you guide us on our journey as we seek to discern and respond to your will.

Redeemer, we thank you for the new hope that unites us with all those who are healing their relationships with God, creation, and the human family.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Extract from Laudato Si' and comment from Fr. Dan Troy

“The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighbourhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves.” (Laudato Si' 84)

In childhood we all experienced the natural world in some way. It may have been playing in the local river or climbing a favourite tree or occasionally gazing at the vast array of stars in the night sky. Pope Francis encourages us to reflect on those memories and to find the deeper meaning that is still there for us. This deeper meaning, when we discover it, sheds light on our relationship with God. Through God's infinitely mysterious and patient work, the natural world has gradually and deeply shaped who we are as people.

Questions to ponder and discuss

What early memories of the natural world continue to bring joy to your life? In the joy of what you see in those memories, what might God be saying to you?

SECOND REFLECTION

Scripture reading and comment from Fr. Dan Troy - Matthew 6:26

“Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”

Jesus had a deep familiarity with the natural world. In Matthew’s gospel Jesus speaks about the birds of the sky in a way that allowed people to understand the Father’s care for them. If we have an opportunity to hold a small bird in our hands, it can be an experience of deep wonder. A creature so small and light is understood in a new way if it is resting gently in our hands. Jesus had the ability to link these beautiful birds to our relationship with God. In this way the birds created by God actually become pointers to us of who God is in our lives, small gentle feathered creatures turning our gaze towards our shared Creator.

Question to ponder and discuss

What role can we play in helping others have an “experience of deep wonder”?

THIRD REFLECTION

Prayer from Fr. Dan Troy

God of all creation, we thank you for the beauty of the world you have generously provided for us. In the huge land of China, the wonder of your creation is to be seen in the variety of places and climates, the expanse of seas, rivers and lakes, the scale of the grasslands and mountain ranges, the mystery of the birds, animals and insects, the silent presence of the trees and flowers, the vast night sky, the multitude of life forms and the endless variety of people who live here. Aware of how we have damaged the beauty of your creation, we ask for Your forgiveness. May a new way of living lead us to a deep cherishing of all You have created so that that the joy of the Risen Christ will fill all of creation. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we seek to live in peace with all of your creatures, formed in deep love by You, our Creator, for the mysterious reasons best known to You alone.

Amen

Extract from St. Columban

“a life unlike your own can be your teacher”

Question to ponder and discuss

Which of your life experiences, learnings or motivations would you like to share with your fellow pilgrims?



The Columban Way Pilgrimage

SUGGESTIONS FOR A LAUDATO SI' PILGRIMAGE MASS

Introduction

We gather today as pilgrims as sisters and brothers and with all of creation. We remember Pope Francis urging in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor and to humbly place ourselves in communion with our common home.

Penitential Rite

Lord, you invite us into communion with all of creation

Lord, have mercy

Christ, we are a people longing for healing and reconciliation

Christ have mercy

Lord, open our hearts so that we may hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor

Lord have mercy

First Reading - Isaiah 58:6-11

Responsorial Psalm

Pope Francis speaks of “each creature singing the hymn of its existence” (LS 85). Select a psalm that enables the community to join the singing of earth’s creatures. Suggestions: Psalms 98, 104, 148, 150, Daniel 3: 56-88.

Gospel - Matthew 6:24-33

Prayers of the faithful

O Creator God, teach us to see your footprints in the beauty of creation. Help us to listen to the voice of creation, inspire us to respect the rights of all people, and all living species to share in your gifts today and to be always mindful of those who come after us.
Lord hear us...

The page features decorative illustrations of pink flowers and green leaves. One cluster of pink flowers is in the top right corner, another is on the right side, and a third is in the bottom left corner. Green leaves are scattered throughout, particularly on the right and bottom edges.

The Columban Way Pilgrimage

God of all life, we give thanks for the gift of the earth, our common home. At this time, many people, the oceans, and the eco-systems of the earth are struggling to survive. Help us to change our ways and guide us to live a life which is not centred exclusively on ourselves but on the needs of others and the worship of you as our ultimate concern. Lord hear us...

Offertory

Include symbols of creation such as a basket of food or flowers from people's gardens, or invite children to present animals or an animal craft that they have created during catechesis. On this occasion, it is important to be attentive to the bread and wine that are brought to the table. Perhaps a member of the community might make the bread so that it is truly "the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands."

Sending forth/Earth Day Blessing prayer

As we go forth, walking in the light of the Cosmic Christ, we give thanks for the way we are held and nurtured by our common home of creation. Nourished by bread and wine, body and blood of Christ, may our hearts be fixed as steadfast pilgrims on a journey towards healing and reconciliation between the human and non-human natural world. May our gratitude lead us to live humbly and walk with care and respect for all that God has created.

Suggested Chants from Taizé

1. The kingdom of God is justice and peace
2. Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
3. In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,

For more ideas and resources, visit the following websites:

<https://laudatosimovement.org/resources/>

<https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>

<https://columbans.co.uk/resources/>



Day 2

FOURTH REFLECTION

This morning we will use materials sent from Pakistan by Fr. Liam O'Callaghan, Columban missionary priest.

Opening prayer

"In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God, for 'if the world has a beginning and if it has been created, we must enquire who gave it this beginning, and who was its Creator'. Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope" (Laudato Si' 244)
Amen

Scripture extract chosen by Fr. Liam - John 10:10

"I came that they may have life and have it to the full."

Questions to ponder and discuss

When have you felt fully alive in your vocation? What can you learn from this as you continue your earthly journey?



FIFTH REFLECTION

Laudato Si' extract and comment from Fr. Liam

“Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.” (Laudato Si' 33)

I find this paragraph really stark and cuts to the heart of the problem. Biodiversity loss is a reality in Pakistan. Four species have become extinct: tiger, swamp deer, lion and Indian one-horned rhino. Others are endangered, including the markhor (the national animal of Pakistan), the Indus river dolphin, Marco Polo sheep and the snow leopard. And ecosystems are at risk, including coral reefs and mangrove forests in the South.

From Ellen Teague of the Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology team in Britain

The UK boasts more than 70,000 known species of animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms, but the majority of assessments indicate that the abundance of its wildlife is declining. There has been a 13% decline in the average abundance of wildlife in the UK since the 1970s. Growing pressure from introduced diseases, invasive non-native species and climate change is expected to further exacerbate the decline of the UK's natural wealth over the coming decades.

Question to ponder and discuss

Do you realise what becoming extinct forever means?

SIXTH REFLECTION

Opening prayer, from the Columbans in the Philippines

Lord, we praise and thank you for the beauty and goodness of creation around us. Help us to reverence all of creation, respecting the rights of all species, and the integrity of the elements. Your plundered Earth, with its rich variety of endangered species, is crying out for healing. Help us to be instruments of that healing, O Lord, and to redeem the harm we have done to the planet. Help us to hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, and together with all people of good will, work together to find ways of protecting and caring for creation - ways of preventing the destruction of habitats and soil, and of saving species from extinction. Rain down your Spirit of wisdom upon us for this crucial work; through Christ our Lord. Amen

Extract from St. Columban

“let us eat what is needful, not what panders; let us eat with the poor, drink with the poor, share with the poor, that even so we may deserve to share with the poor in that place where they shall be satisfied who here for Christ's sake hunger and thirst after righteousness.” (Sermon 7)

Question to ponder and discuss

How do we practice solidarity? How might we go further?

SEVENTH REFLECTION

Extract from St. Columban

“Understand the creation, if you wish to know the Creator; if you will not know the former either, be silent concerning the Creator, and believe in the Creator.” (Sermon 1, 5)

Extracts from Laudato Si’

“The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains – everything is, as it were, a caress of God.” (84)

“To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment”. (222)

“We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full. Jesus taught us this attitude when he invited us to contemplate the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, or when seeing the rich young man and knowing his restlessness, “he looked at him with love” (Mk 10:21).” (226)

You are invited to spend time meditatively sketching, being fully present to some small detail of creation. You can use the blank page provided. No pressure - the moment is far more important than the drawing!





Day 3



EIGHTH REFLECTION

Opening prayer

Adapted from Laudato Si'

As morning dawns we praise you, for
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness
all that exists.

As we walk the journey of this day,
pour out on us the power of your love.
Fill us with peace, that we may
protect life and beauty.

May we act this day in solidarity with
the forgotten of this earth,
And sow beauty, not pollution and
destruction.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

Laudato Si' extract and comment from Adriana Curaqueo Alarcon, the Columban JPIC Coordinator in the South America Region

"...when our hearts are authentically
open to universal communion, this
sense of fraternity excludes nothing
and no one." (Laudato Si' 92)





The Columban Way Pilgrimage

To nurture a united heart open to universal communion is perhaps the greatest task we are called upon. We need to commit ourselves to ensure that all living things have a place in our common home, so that no one or nothing feels excluded or unprotected, because we recognize the mutual interdependence that is capable of recreating the relationships that have been damaged, or even been broken over the centuries. In Chile we are witness to, and suffer from, this relationship breakdown; we find it difficult to meet face-to-face with this other, who also wants a place in society and demands recognition as a valid partner. It becomes more difficult, I think, because suggesting we reweave or rebuild the links that connect all living beings involves a transformation of the heart, and this proposal can be branded as “illusory”, even “naïve”, but if we really want to stop the increasing deterioration of our planet and of those who inhabit it we will have to take on the ethical challenge of the crisis, which is a call to cultivate “an heart open to universal communion.”

Questions to ponder and discuss

How can we nurture hearts open to connection with all creation?
What opportunities and challenges face us?

NINTH REFLECTION

Comment from Wesley Coccozello of the St. Columban Mission for Justice, Peace and Ecology in the United States - Romans 8:18-23

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies."

St. Columban taught us that "a life unlike your own can be your teacher." For centuries we've understood those lives to be human ones, but what if non-human lives have had something to teach us too? We just haven't been listening for all this time. In this extract, St. Paul sees how all creation is part of God's plan and that the resurrection isn't only for humans. How does that realisation change the way we understand God? Clearly, God's loving plan is much bigger than we ever imagined.

Question to ponder and discuss

What if non-human lives have had something to teach us too?

CLOSING REFLECTION

Extract from St. Columban

“I am always on pilgrimage, moving from the day of my birth up till the day of death, and throughout the individual days of my life I change, and what things change or how they change I do not see; and I can never see my whole life in one together, and what yesterday I was, today I am not, and thus what today I am, tomorrow I shall not be.” (Sermon 6,1)

In a moment of silence, pause to consider how this pilgrimage has changed us. If you wish, share your insights with the group.

Litany of Saint Columban

Go to pages 5 and 6.

Closing prayer

Adapted from Laudato Si'

God of the poor,
helper of the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation.
May our prayer at the end of this pilgrimage
unite us with every creature,
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us these days.
Encourage us all, we pray, in our ongoing commitments to mission:
justice, peace, care for creation, dialogue, invitation, welcome and
service.
In Jesus' name,
Amen

The page features a light blue background with illustrations of pink flowers and green leaves. The flowers are located in the top right, bottom left, and middle right areas. The green leaves are interspersed among the flowers, particularly on the right side and bottom left.

The Columban Way Pilgrimage

Personal Notes and Reflections

ST. COLUMBAN

Adapted from 'The Way of St. Columban: A nine step pilgrimage'

Columban was born in Leinster, Ireland in 543, he became a monk in Bangor under the Abbot Comgall. Around the age of 45 he left his homeland with a group of companions to continue his missionary journey as a Pilgrim for Christ across continental Europe. He ended his earthly pilgrimage in Bobbio in Northern Italy in 615. A founder of monasteries and communities, healer, prophet, missionary, he has inspired peoples throughout the centuries to focus on their life's journey and embrace the call to follow Christ.

In late middle-age he felt called to leave his monastery in Bangor and sailed with twelve companions into the unknown. He had a twofold reason for going: to forego the pleasures of home, to leave Ireland and never return, making this sacrifice out of love of God; and secondly to spread the Gospel.

He became a migrant in Europe and experienced everything that meant getting to know another culture that was not his own. He had to make inroads into the social and political structures of places like Luxeuil, Bregenz and Bobbio and negotiate his welcome. He had to become familiar with the practise of local Kings, the local church and bishops. Often he was not made welcome.

Columban's love and respect for nature was reflected in the beautiful places chosen for his monasteries. While the monks lived off the land, rivers and seas, they did not devastate the forests, neither did they deplete the rivers of fish. They befriended the wilderness and even made friends with the wild beasts and animals. They were the precursors of St. Francis and his love for nature, and call us to a new respect for ecology.

As Columban journeyed across Europe, he was dedicated to living and spreading the Gospel. He was wrapped up in the mystery of the God. His encounter with God was in the quite places and his church was the cave on the hillside outside villages and towns. We hope the steps of this walk will give us a sense of what Columban was about and an inspiration to continue the mission. A mission grounded in our own particular reality and in the soil that we trod. A mission that recognises the presence of God in our midst, who speaks to us in the telling of our story, who connects with us through those with whom we live and who touches us through people we meet along the road.

The words of St. Columban are taken from:

O'Fiaich, Tomás 'Columbanus in his own words'. Veritas 1974

O'Hara, Alexander 'Saint Columbanus: Selected writings'. Veritas 2015