



# Vocation for Justice

Autumn 2025 Volume 39 No 3

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**Let us have your email.  
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**COLUMBAN MISSION**

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

# EDITORIAL

**2025 is an important year: 10 years since the Paris Agreement on climate change and the launch of the environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*.**

Yet, the world is falling behind in its efforts to face up to the climate crisis. Against this backdrop, the upcoming COP30 meeting in November - taking place in the Brazilian Amazon - could mark a turning point. Church leaders stress the urgency on page 4.

This edition of Vocation for Justice comes in the Season of Creation (1 September to 4 October), a time of prayer and action for the protection of our common home. If we listen to the 'cry of the Earth', we cannot help but notice more frequent and intense extreme weather, fires, biodiversity loss, droughts, climate induced conflict, desertification, and migration. The 'signs of the times' are calling us to action. But how? Ideas are given in our centrespread.

One of the Catholic Social Teaching workshops we offer for teachers has the title: 'Oh no something bad has happened – let's do a cake sale!' During the session, Catholic educators explore something of the 'repertoire of action' available in the face of injustice, helping them realise the importance of modelling a range of different things young people can do to make a difference. This goes beyond charity, and includes encounter, learning more, prayer, participation, petitioning, campaigning, and so on. The point is we need many people engaging in action for justice, peace and ecology in many different ways!

Over July I had the privilege of supporting a number of different types of action, with a pleasing variety of audiences. Here at St Columban's in Solihull we had the last of the 800+ primary school pupils that took part in the summer term's retreat days in our 'rewilding' project – young people getting hands-on experience with nature.

On 9 July, working with the Faithful Companions of Jesus Centre for Spirituality and EcoJustice, we were

in London supporting students, teachers and chaplains from six secondary schools and 6th forms in lobbying their MPs and speaking to the media about the climate crisis. Between them they spoke to three MPs, two staff of MPs, two baronesses, lots of media (including Sky News and our own Ellen Teague), plus lots of climate activists, Bishop John Arnold, CAFOD's Christine Allen and many more – what a day! See more on page 9.

The 21-23 July was the 'Festival of Encounter' at the St Cassian's centre, bringing together educators with participants from the refugee story-sharing group 'Stories of Hope and Home' to explore challenging and changing the narrative about people seeking sanctuary in Britain. And finally, on the last weekend of the month, I took part in the annual National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) conference, this time on the theme of 'Towards a Just Peace – Challenging the Inevitability of Violence.' The conference is always inspirational, not least in the commitment of the faith-inspired activist-participants to their own ongoing learning.

Which brings us to this edition of 'Vocation for Justice', our penultimate printed copy (see box – and please make sure you've given us your email address!). Like every edition it offers formation, ideas and invitation to action, and resources – highlighting relevant responses to the **cry of the Earth and cry of the Poor** from the 'repertoire of action'. The theme this time is 'Making Peace in the Season of Creation', echoing the international theme of the 2025 Season of Creation.

*James Trewby*



James Trewby and Bishop John Arnold at the Westminster mass lobby on the climate crisis.

## Next steps for 'Vocation for Justice'

Thanks to all who responded to the consultation about the future of 'Vocation for Justice' as a printed magazine, and to all of you for your support for the justice, peace and ecology mission.

With the increasing costs of printing and postage, and the growth in electronic media since 'Vocation for Justice' was founded in 1986, we have been discerning next steps. The consultation results were helpful. It was encouraging to hear so much appreciation for 'Vocation for Justice', and how readers use it for ongoing formation and to stimulate prayer and action. We certainly want to continue to support this. At the same time, the majority response was acceptance of moving to an electronic format, for both cost and environmental reasons. This is the path we have decided to take.

This is therefore the penultimate printed edition.

If you wish to be kept informed about the new electronic format...and you have already given us your email – thank you. No action is required.

... and you have not given us your email – please scan the QR code below or go to <https://tinyurl.com/6jzah2fs> and complete the form.

... and if you do not use email – we do not want to lose you! Might you have a friend or family member who'd be willing to print materials for you? If so, you can ask them to scan the QR code and give us their email.





# SPIRITUALITY

## The Moral Imperative to live in 'Right-Relationship' with God and Creation

Fr Kevin McDonagh

The complex web of life and relationships that comprise the living planet - our bio-diverse common home - to which we humans are both united and innately dependent, is profoundly disturbed and even debased. This phenomenon is being perceived, in one fashion or other, across all cultures and the political and religious divide alike.

People of faith, and indeed people of no religious belief at all, are beginning to sense at the core of their consciousness that the state of connectedness that ought to prevail and underly all of animate and inanimate reality on our living planet is disintegrating into a state of disconnectedness and negative relationship. The economic and technological systems that our human society has developed are depleting and degrading the natural world in unsustainable ways. There-in lies the nub of the dilemma that afflicts the equilibrium of relationships of all life systems across the global environment.

However, from the perspective of faith and our Judeo-Christian tradition there is an additional dimension to our already ruinous relationship with ourselves and the natural world. Our faith reminds us that life itself and our living planet are gifted to us by our Creator God. We and all that inhabits and comprises the Earth are fruits of Creation. As we may recall from our biblical tradition and creation accounts, we humans were charged, in the beginning, to be stewards and caretakers of God's project Earth. Our mission was to administer it and not abuse or abase it.

The Scriptures are clear on this matter. The 'Jubilee' tradition in the Old Testament reminds us that the land is to be rested and restored to previous holders every seventh and every 49th/50th year. The land, the Earth itself, belong to

God alone. Nevertheless, many of us today find ourselves increasingly divorced from such tradition and any meaningful right-relationship with the transcendent and spiritual realm of things. Hence, much of humanity is existentially disoriented and spiritually impoverished and thus unable to experience joy and gratitude in our relationships with the web of life encountered in the natural world of which we ourselves are an integral part.

It is this existential crisis that underlies and gives rise to the global ecological crisis which now widely threatens humanity and so many life systems in our common home.

In summary, as we view this troubling question through the prism of our faith tradition, we come to realize that the ecological crisis that afflicts us all is, in the final analysis, a deep spiritual crisis. This is clearly not something that we can resolve alone through some superhuman effort. Indeed, it is also true that not even if we could be immediately in a state of restored right-relationship with our Creator in the present time we could, ipso facto, overcome the advanced state of ecological disintegration that we find ourselves immersed in.

Notwithstanding, given the catastrophic dimension of ecological breakdown that impacts our planet, we, as people of faith, need to seek communion with and entrust ourselves to the God of Life. Jesus,

who is the Lord of history and who united Himself not only with us humans but also bonded Himself with the physical earth in His body as an earthling, truly embodies for us ecological hope. He is the One who can draw us beyond all crises and towards a new Heaven and a new Earth. There is no other spiritual path to follow as this entire calamity of extinction crisis is already beyond finite human powers alone. Human ingenuity, insight and endeavour is not enough.

Yet, it is true that we humans have many resources and tools to combat the ecological extinction threat and the climate crisis. We must spare no effort in using all of them tirelessly. We indeed can turn to scientific knowledge and research, to technological breakthroughs and, of course, to radical political and social change. Let us protest and resist when that is the right thing to do. But we need, above all, a power beyond ourselves. We need profound communion with the One who is the Alpha and Omega. We need Divine Light and Love to carry us through the 'way of the cross' that lies ahead. This is precisely why Pope Francis in the encyclical 'Laudato Si' calls us to open ourselves to a radical "ecological conversion". Let us commit to this urgently and faithfully throughout this Jubilee Year of Hope!



Columban Team at the July NJPN Conference. Fr Kevin is on the left.



**COP30  
BRASIL  
AMAZÔNIA**  
BELÉM 2025

## COP30:

### Bishops from the global south appeal for climate justice

Catholic bishops from Latin America, Asia and Africa released a joint statement on 1 July calling for justice ahead of COP30, the annual UN climate talks taking place in Belem, Brazil, this November. It is a pivotal moment for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change process to address the need for concrete climate action and financial commitments.

The Bishops' statement is titled 'A call for climate justice and the common home: ecological conversion, transformation and resistance to false solutions'. It noted the tenth anniversary of 'Laudato Si' and of the Paris Agreement.

Cardinal Jaime Spengler Archbishop of Porto Alegre in Brazil, and president of the Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council (CELAM), said he raised a voice, "that is not mine alone, but that of the Amazonian peoples, the martyrs of the land, the riverside, indigenous, Afro-descendant, peasant and urban communities who have tenderly cared for life in the midst of the threat, a situation that led us to launch a campaign to defend them a few months ago: 'Life is hanging by a thread'."

Cardinal Spengler told COP30, "there is no climate justice without ecological conversion, and there is no ecological conversion without resistance to false solutions." He denounced, "the masking of interests under names like 'green capitalism' and 'transition economy', which perpetuate extractivist and technocratic logics." And rejected "the financialization of nature, carbon markets, energy monocultures without prior

consultation, the recent opening of new oil wells which is even more serious in the Amazon, and abusive mining in the name of sustainability." He added that, "environmental problems have ethical and spiritual roots which require that we replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing."

Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrão, Archbishop of Goa and Damão in India, and president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), reported that, "from Asia, a land of immense spiritual, cultural, and ecological diversity, we join the global clamour for a transformation that is not only technical, but ethical, prophetic, and profoundly human." He wanted COP30, "to be not just another event, but a moral turning point." He described the statement as, "a call to conscience in the face of a system that threatens to devour creation, as if the planet were just another commodity," and suggested, "it is not just a matter of changing policies; it is a matter of changing hearts."

Millions of Asians are already living the devastating effects of climate change: typhoons, forced migration, loss of islands, pollution of rivers. Yet, "false solutions" are advancing: mega infrastructures, displacement for "clean" energy that does not respect human dignity, and "soulless mining in the name of green batteries". Cardinal Ferrão called for the Loss and Damage Fund, established at COP27 in 2022, to be fully operational, to help nations recover from climate-related losses.

He said: "We demand that the ancestral wisdom of our communities be heard. Stop the expansion of fossil fuels, expand clean renewable energy solutions in consultation with men and women in local communities, especially decentralized solutions. Rich countries ought to recognize and pay their ecological debt."

Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, Archbishop of Kinshasa in Democratic Republic of Congo, and president of the Symposium

of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), said, "I am speaking to you on behalf of the Churches on the African continent, a land rich in biodiversity, minerals and cultures, but impoverished by centuries of extractivism, slavery and exploitation." He described Africa as, "not a poor continent, it is a plundered continent."

He highlighted that with global warming Africa is experiencing desertification, already affecting 500 million people in the South, and urged action "to avoid irreversible impact on the climate and natural systems." Yet, he was critical of current planning for an energy transition which created more victims. He asked: "How can we accept that, in the name of the 'energy transition', entire communities are being wiped out in the search for lithium, cobalt or nickel? How can we tolerate carbon markets turning our forests into financial assets, while our communities remain deprived of drinking water?" The Cardinal said: "Enough of false solutions, enough of decisions taken without listening to those on the front line of climate collapse!"

Cardinal Besungu concluded that, "as missionary apostles of an outgoing, synodal Church, we will go to COP30 to build peace in the midst of this piecemeal war against creation."

**The document can be uploaded at:**  
[https://secam.org/wp-content/uploads/ENG\\_The-Churches-Global-South-on-occasion-of-COP30-1.pdf](https://secam.org/wp-content/uploads/ENG_The-Churches-Global-South-on-occasion-of-COP30-1.pdf)

#### Faith in Action at COP30

'Jesuits for Climate Justice: Faith in Action at COP30' is a campaign of Jesuit Missions. It calls for: Cancelling the debt of poor countries; Establishing a just energy transition; Ensuring sustainable food sovereignty measures based on agro-ecological practices. Information and Jesuit blogs from the conference in Belem 10-21 November at: <https://jesuitmissions.org.uk/campaign/jesuits-for-climate-justice-faith-in-action-at-cop30/>



## Faiths Declaration to UN Oceans Conference Columban JPIC

*The third UN Oceans Conference met in Nice, France, on 9-13 June to discuss issues affecting the biome that makes up 70% of Earth's surface. A multifaith delegation attended and it presented a landmark declaration, 'Faith in the Ocean', a foundation for faith-based advocacy in marine conservation. With deeply rooted moral authority, vast global networks, and strong connections to coastal communities, faith communities have the potential to drive change.*

*The declaration is now signed by more than 550 faith groups. Catholic signatories include: Missionary Society of St Columban, Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, and Maryknoll Fathers, Brothers and Sisters. The text follows:*

### Preamble:

As representatives of diverse faiths and spiritual traditions, we recognize the profound relationship between humanity and the ocean.

### Call to Action

As people of faith and goodwill, unified in purpose, we commit to urgent, transformative action that restores right relationship with the ocean and with one another. We affirm the importance of centring human rights in all ocean governance and conservation, and support, in particular, the calls brought forward by Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers, and coastal communities.

### We therefore call for the following:

**1: Protect and restore at least 30% of our ocean by 2030** through effectively managed marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). This sacred commitment requires not just quantity but quality of protection, designations that truly safeguard marine ecosystems from harmful activities, including destructive fishing practices,

offshore oil and gas activities, and other damaging industrial activities.

**2: Support the moratorium on deep-sea mining.** The ocean's depths must be protected from exploitation that could irreversibly damage ancient ecosystems. The international community should prioritize precautionary principles and preservation, only taking decisions to consider such potentially damaging activities when science and inclusive consultation can guide responsible deep ocean governance.

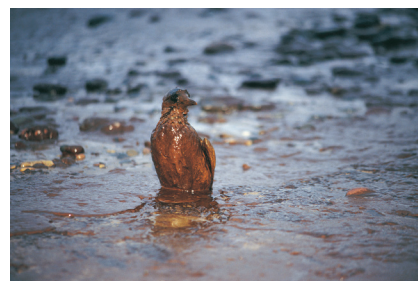
**3: Ratify and implement the High Seas Treaty** (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement) as soon as possible, providing the legal framework necessary to protect marine biodiversity and promote greater ocean equity in international waters, which constitute nearly two-thirds of the global ocean, store vast amounts of carbon, and hold vast biodiversity, but have remained largely unprotected.

**4: Address marine pollution comprehensively,** including plastic pollution, discharge of sewage and chemicals, underwater noise pollution, heavy metals, and nutrient runoff that threaten marine ecosystems and human health. We support the creation of a Global Plastics Treaty to tackle this crisis at its source.

**5: Recognize the ocean's vital role in regulating climate and support ocean-based climate solutions** by ensuring coherence between the outcomes of the UN Oceans Conference and the latest reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). We call for urgent action to address ocean warming, acidification, deoxygenation, and sea level rise, while scaling up fair, equitable and rights-based blue carbon initiatives and nature-based solutions.

<https://www.oceans.faith/sign>

See a recording of a webinar side event during the conference, sponsored by religious groups, titled 'Disturbance in the Deep: A Rights-Based and Values-Based Approach to Deep Sea Conservation.' <https://mogc.me/dsm-sideevent>



Bird caught in an oil spill.

### 'Sacred Ocean, Shared Responsibility: Faith-Based Approaches to Ocean Action'

This May 2025 report examines the critical role of faith communities in advancing marine conservation globally. It suggests that with 85% of the world's population adhering to religious traditions, these communities represent a powerful yet often overlooked force for ocean protection. Faith institutions bring unique strengths to conservation efforts: moral authority that transcends political divisions, vast global networks reaching billions of people, deep connections to vulnerable coastal communities, management of significant financial and land resources, and the capacity to inspire value-based behaviour change.

Case studies include A Rocha's Marine Conservation Programme, which centres on protecting diverse marine ecosystems through scientific research infused with Christian theological perspectives. Also, Pastoral da Pesca, Brazil's Catholic Movement for artisanal fishers. Work has included a 'Course on Theology of the Waters' which has trained 640 pastoral agents since 2019, mainstreaming ocean care into catechesis. Parish-based teams help coastal communities map their traditional fishing territories, documenting both ecological and spiritual significance. Community assemblies establish sustainable fishing regulations that receive religious blessing during Mass, enhancing compliance through spiritual authority.

Download at: <https://www.oceans.faith/report>

# CELEBRATING THE SEASON OF CREATION

## SEASON OF CREATION 2025 PRAYER

**Creator of all,**  
we praise you for the gift of life and  
for the faith that unites us in care  
for our common home.

We confess how estranged we have  
become - from one another, from  
your Creation, and from our truest  
selves.

We acknowledge that our greed and  
destructive impulses have fractured  
our relationships with you, with  
others, and with the Earth.

Fertile fields have become barren,  
forests lie desolate, oceans and  
rivers are polluted.

Thriving communities have become  
places of suffering, and Earth cries  
out.

**Beloved Christ,**  
who spoke “Shalom” to frightened  
hearts, stir us to compassionate  
action.

Inspire us to work for the end of  
conflict, and for the full restoration  
of broken relationships - with you,  
with the ecumenical community,  
with the human family, and with all  
Creation.

**Prince of Peace,**  
through your wounds, teach us  
to stand in solidarity with the  
woundedness of others, of creation,  
and of the world.

Through your resurrection, make  
us people of hope - with a vision of  
swords turned into ploughshares  
and tears transformed into joy.

May we come together as one  
family, to labour for your peace - a  
shalom where all your people may  
dwell in safety, and rest in quiet  
places.

Amen.

**The Season of Creation is a  
time to renew our relationship  
with God and all of Creation  
through celebration, conversion,  
and commitment. This annual  
ecumenical season 1 September –  
4 October invites Christians to pray  
and act together for our common  
home.**

**Visit the Season of Creation  
website for spiritual and  
liturgical materials.** [https://  
seasonofcreation.org/resources/](https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/)



A 'Stewardship' display at St. Ambrose Barlow  
Catholic Primary School in Birmingham

### Special moments

The Feast of Francis of Assisi is on  
4 October. He is beloved by many  
Christian denominations as the patron  
saint of ecology. This year, 2025,  
marks the 800th anniversary of his  
iconic 'Canticle of the Creatures.'

And 3 October is CAFOD'S Family Fast  
Day.

### Consider Hosting a Eucharistic celebration:

A Catholic liturgical guide, which  
Columbans helped to produce, is  
available on the Season of Creation  
website at

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Nqi\\_  
sbZO6ystPucMbxWht95bQbJlr6G9w/  
view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Nqi_sbZO6ystPucMbxWht95bQbJlr6G9w/view)

- **Penitence:** During the Penitential  
Act, express lament for environmental  
damage and repentance for our sins  
against God's Creation. Images or  
pictures can be shown.

- **Symbols:** Include symbols from  
nature to be taken to the altar  
alongside bread and wine as part of  
the Offertory (eg. branches, harvest  
gifts of creation such as fruit)

- **Sermon:** To include references  
to care for Creation and to God as  
Creator.

- **Prayers:** Include prayer intentions  
referring to care for Creation.

- **Visuals:** Work with children or youth  
to set up an artistic 'Creation

Scene' symbolizing God's creation of  
the world and display it prominently.

- **Nature sounds:** Consider playing  
sounds of nature (e.g. bird song)  
instead of a hymn during Communion.

- **Drama and dance:** young people  
could prepare a drama or liturgical  
dance on the theme.

### Hold an outdoor activity such as a contemplative walk or Pilgrimage:

Organize a reflective walk to deepen  
communion with all life. Your  
destination could be a site of natural  
beauty, focusing on gratitude and a  
commitment to its protection, or a



Harvest Vegetables

place of environmental degradation,  
focusing on lament, confession, and  
a call to restoration. Or visit a local  
nature reserve or protected wildlife  
area. Invite park rangers, wildfire  
response teams, farmers, foresters,  
shepherds, beekeepers, or scouting  
groups to share their experiences and  
insights.

Invite Christian organizations focused  
on justice, peace, and reconciliation to  
participate and contribute to reflection

- **Moments of Silence:** Pause to listen  
to Creation's song and join in its  
worship without words.

- **Form a group to study ecologically-  
themed Scriptures or pray creation-  
centred prayers while walking in  
nature.**

### Support local Education and Sustainability Activities:

Promote sustainable lifestyles  
through education, awareness, and  
practical action. These efforts help us  
reflect on how we live and consume,  
recognize the effects of consumerism,  
and encourage meaningful change.  
Examples include:

- Local clean-ups
- Tree planting for reforestation and  
biodiversity
- Recycling initiatives
- Community/parish gardens for  
sustainable food practices
- Organize or support environmental  
marches or campaigns
- Host film screenings or public  
dialogues
- Organize concerts or art  
performances celebrating Creation
- Bible studies on Creation care  
passages
- Community walks with reflections on  
greening efforts
- Dedicate a public space as  
a 'Garden of Peace' with a  
commemorative plaque
- Pray the Vespers service for  
September:  
[https://www.creationjustice.org/  
vespers.html](https://www.creationjustice.org/vespers.html)
- Hold an art or poetry exhibition  
themed around 'Peace with Creation'.



# CELEBRATING THE SEASON OF CREATION

## Youth and Children:

- Look into the Columban 'Flourish' project for young people

<https://columbans.co.uk/justice-peace/16295/flourish-connecting-faith-nature-and-young-hearts/>

- Run essay or drawing competitions for children and youth
- This year's symbol - a dove carrying an olive branch, bringing life to the Garden of Peace - invites us to reflect on the interconnectedness of caring for our common home, solidarity, and peace. Create and present dove drawings with olive branches
- Create a new school garden or area where seeds and plants can be nurtured. Start growing vegetables and fruit

- Plan Ecumenical Friday Night Youth Gatherings focused on Creation Care

- Organize an eco-camp with eco-education sessions
- Play the hymn, 'Let All Creation Sing' from Arocha's website: <https://arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/season-of-creation/>

## Advocacy:

This Season of Creation, Christians worldwide will be engaging with political and commercial action. Key issues are:

**DEBT** - The debt crisis and the climate crisis are closely related and mutually reinforcing. Instead of developing resilience to the climate crisis poorer nations are trapped in endless cycles of debt to the richer countries that have caused the crisis.

## Calls are for

1. Debt relief for low-income countries, without economic conditions.
2. A fairer global debt system in which the build-up of unsustainable sovereign debt in the global South is prevented in the first place.
3. Adequate climate finance accessible to vulnerable communities, and as grants not loans.

Sign on to the petition, become part of a global call to turn debt into hope: <https://turndebtintohope.caritas.org/> and see Cafod's campaign, 'We need a debt justice law' <https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/164876/action/1>



A Pilgrim Ways pilgrimage

**CLIMATE** – Green Christian is running a 'Make them Pay' petition. It calls for the super-rich and polluting corporations – not ordinary people – to pay for the costs of phasing out fossil fuels and building a better, fairer society. <https://greenchristian.org.uk/make-them-pay/>

And more than 620 faith groups are among those calling for endorsement of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty - <https://fossilfueltreaty.org/faitth-letter>

**BIODIVERSITY** – The Climate and Nature Bill is the only proposed legislation in the UK that tackles the climate and nature crises together based on both the latest science and global justice. Green Christian is encouraging individuals and churches to sign. See <https://greenchristian.org.uk/the-climate-and-nature-bill/>

**PEACE** – Ecological Justice is an advocacy priority of Pax Christi International, the global Catholic peace organisation. Extractive industries, for example, severely impact Latin American communities. Pax Christi International advocates for ecological justice to be prioritised on international human rights and development agendas, amplifying the voices of affected communities. <https://paxchristi.net/impacting-public-policies/> And see <https://paxchristi.org.uk/> and <https://www.paxchristiscotland.org/>

## Share your experience:

By sharing your experiences, you inspire others to care for our common home.

- Capture moments of your community in action to inspire others worldwide to pray and act for Creation. Obtain consent before sharing photos of individuals. Avoid close-ups of children unless you have parental/guardian permission.
- Use social media and blogs. Post images and stories during planning and celebrations, tagging them with #SeasonOfCreation to feature on the official website.
- Follow and interact with the official Season of Creation channels on Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and share your experiences. You can subscribe to the Season of Creation YouTube channel.
- Write a blog post about your community's celebration and include #SeasonOfCreation.

Credit: Season of Creation resources



Green Christian's information leaflets, including 'Nine Ways of Living Gently'

## Reflection on connections between hope, migration and mission

Pope Leo XIV

**Welcoming migrants and refugees is a Columban mission priority. In this edited extract from his July Message for the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees on 4-5 October, Pope Leo emphasizes the important witness that Catholic migrants and refugees can offer in a world affected by conflict, inequality and the climate crisis, in hoping and searching for a better and more peaceful future.**

The current global context is sadly marked by wars, violence, injustice and extreme weather events, which force millions of people to leave their homelands in search of refuge elsewhere. The widespread tendency to look after the interests of limited communities poses a serious threat to the sharing of responsibility, multilateral cooperation, the pursuit of the common good and global solidarity for the benefit of our entire human family. The prospect of a renewed arms race and the development of new armaments, including nuclear weapons, the lack of consideration for the harmful effects of the ongoing climate crisis, and the impact of profound economic inequalities make the challenges of the present and the future increasingly demanding.

Faced with frightening scenarios and the possibility of global devastation, it is important that there be a growing desire in people's hearts for a future of peace and of respect for the dignity of all. Such a future is essential to God's plan for humanity and the rest of creation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: "The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man and woman; it takes up the hopes that inspire human activities" (#1818). What is more, the search for happiness, and the prospect of finding it beyond one's place of origin, is certainly



Bishop Paul McAleenan speaks at a monthly ecumenical vigil for refugees at the Home Office in London.

one of the main motivations for the movement of people today.

This link between migration and hope is clearly evident in many contemporary experiences of migration. Many migrants, refugees and displaced persons are privileged witnesses of hope. Indeed, they demonstrate this daily through their resilience and trust in God, as they face adversity while seeking a future in which they glimpse that integral human development and happiness are possible.

In a world darkened by war and injustice, even when all seems lost, migrants and refugees stand as messengers of hope. Their courage and tenacity bear heroic testimony to a faith that sees beyond what our eyes can see and gives them the strength to defy death on the various contemporary migration routes.

Migrants and refugees remind the Church of her pilgrim dimension, perpetually journeying towards her final homeland, sustained by a hope that is a theological virtue.

In a special way, Catholic migrants and refugees can become missionaries of hope in the countries that welcome them, forging new paths of faith where the message of Jesus Christ has not yet arrived or initiating interreligious dialogue based on everyday life and the search for common values. With their spiritual enthusiasm and vitality, they can help revitalize ecclesial communities that have become rigid and weighed down, where spiritual desertification is

advancing at an alarming rate. Their presence, then, should be recognized and appreciated as a true divine blessing, an opportunity to open oneself to the grace of God, who gives new energy and hope to his Church: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb 13:2).

The communities that welcome them can also be a living witness to hope, one that is understood as the promise of a present and a future where the dignity of all as children of God is recognized. In this way, migrants and refugees are recognized as brothers and sisters, part of a family in which they can express their talents and participate fully in community life.

### Links to UK action:

More than 200 organisations sign open letter in response to anti-refugee protests in UK

<https://togetherwithrefugees.org.uk/far-right-response-aug-2025/>

Columban outreach at Fatima House

<https://columbans.co.uk/interreligious-dialogue/16557/10-years-on/>

Sign up for regular news from Jesuit Refugee Service UK

<http://jrsuk.net/subscribe>

A new report published by Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul Services reveals how UK government policy is generating widespread poverty and hardship among people seeking asylum. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/53063>

Campaigns of Asylum Matters <https://asylummatters.org/campaigns/>

Schools Education Pack from Refugee Action

<https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Refugee-Action-Primary-Schools-pack-2025.pdf>



## Lobbying for People, Climate and Nature

Ellen Teague

**Members of the Columban Justice and Peace Ecology (JPE) Team – James Trewby, Fr Kevin McDonagh, Sr MaryAnne Francalanza, Anna Blackman, Abi Yendole and myself – attended the mass lobby of parliament on climate change and biodiversity on 9 July. Columbans were among the faith groups at Westminster joining the call for action ‘For People, For Climate, For Nature’.**

Campaigners met their local MPs from across the UK, urging them to tackle the climate crisis and protect the natural world in line with moral responsibility, human dignity and the stewardship of creation. They wanted the government to commit to delivering funds to communities hit hardest by climate change, to restore nature and back UK jobs for a greener, fairer future, and to cancel the debts of the world’s poorest countries. Many discussed UK government preparations for November’s UN COP30 climate summit.

The lobby was organised by The Climate Coalition, which represents more than 120 leading UK organisations, secular and faith based. It includes CAFOD, Green Christian, Operation Noah and Columbans. More than 5,000 people from across the UK attended and it is thought at least 500 MPs were lobbied.

Campaigners gathered in Parliament Square for photos wearing colourful t-shirts, holding up artwork, flags, signs and banners reading: ‘Act Now, Change Forever.’ CAFOD groups displayed, ‘We are pilgrims of Hope.’ Laudato Si Animators displayed, ‘Laudato Si Movement.’ A grandparents group called Our Grandchildren’s Climate, were in the crowd to campaign for pensions to divest away from fossil fuels. Meanwhile, around 50 people attended a Christian Climate Action prayerful vigil outside Parliament’s gates.



The Columban group in Parliament Square.

Between the Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology Team - led by James Trewby - and the London FCJ Centre for Spirituality and Ecojustice – led by Sr MaryAnne Francalanza - five schools in Birmingham Archdiocese and one in Liverpool Archdiocese sent delegates to the lobby. They were Bishop Ullathorne and Cardinal Newman in Coventry, Archbishop Illsley and St Thomas Aquinas in Birmingham, St Peters in Solihull and Bellerive in Liverpool. “What a privilege to support young adults from Catholic schools to raise their voices,” said James Trewby; “I was so impressed with the way they put Catholic Social Teaching into action - sharing concern not only for their own futures, but also for biodiversity and people around the world.”

In the afternoon groups from Catholic schools gathered at Westminster Cathedral Hall for activities organised by CAFOD, and met with CAFOD’s head Christine Allen. Two students from Cardinal Newman School in Coventry described the lobby as “really exciting” and linked to work they do locally such as tree planting. They would be reporting in their school newsletter. Their chaplain, Alfie MacMillan, reported that the children spoke confidently with MPs, having a good base knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching, regular experience in the school’s eco-groups, and education work with CAFOD. St Oscar Romero School in Worthing reported having five action groups which promote sustainability, including tackling climate change.

Catholic groups came together for a 5.30pm Mass at Westminster Cathedral celebrated by Bishop John Arnold of Salford. He reminded that in ‘Laudato Si’, Pope Francis stressed the need to care for God’s creation and said, “Pope Leo is following the same vision.” Fr Charles Chilufya SJ, a CAFOD partner from Kenya, delivered the homily to a congregation where many wore CAFOD t-shirts and lobby wristbands.

Fr Charles – who has spoken to UN, G20, and IMF/World Bank meetings, advocating for debt relief, climate justice, and economic systems that serve people over profit - said, “we are breaking bread together at the end of a remarkable day which demonstrated our shared humanity.” He suggested the lobby was in a long tradition of Church campaigning for justice, listening to ‘the cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor’. He recalled the Jubilee Debt campaign at the millennium and the Make Poverty History march in Edinburgh in 2005, where Church leaders publicly demonstrated “leadership rooted in love and compassion.” He urged the congregation to continue this mission.

This September, the lobby goes local. From 13-20 September, The Climate Coalition is inviting people across the UK to take part in Lobby Week: a nationwide push to meet your MP in your own community. And Saturday 15 November is the annual Day of Action for Climate Justice, which coincides with COP30 in Brazil.

### The Climate Coalition

<https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/act-now-change-forever>

### CAFOD

<https://cafod.org.uk/campaign>

### Columban JPE

<https://columbans.co.uk/update/justice-peace/>

## Bishop calls for environmental action

In a statement to mark the 2025 Season of Creation, the Lead Bishop for the Environment of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Bishop John Arnold, has called for Catholics to address environmental crises. Action, he says, needs to take place at every level in society – from the personal to the parish, in politics and in business. He urges Catholics and people of goodwill to be challenged by Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical letter 'Laudato Si', to change our lifestyles, build healthy communities, and to educate ourselves and others on integral ecology – the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world. He says, "we only have to observe the many extreme weather events, conflicts over natural resources and destructive environmental practices that have been taking place in recent times to understand the importance and urgency of this task." <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishop-calls-for-action-at-every-level-in-society-to-address-environmental-crises/>

## 'Raising Hope' 10 Years of 'Laudato Si'

From 1-3 October 2025, a global conference at Castel Gandolfo near Rome will bring together voices of faith from around the world to commemorate a decade of inspiration, commitment, and action for our common home. Columbians will be represented. It is possible to connect online at <https://raisinghope.earth/conference/>

## Catholic People's Week focus on climate

'Where is God in the climate crisis?' was the theme of a Catholic People's Week (CPW) held at the Scottish Borders, 9-16 August. The seriousness of the climate crisis was acknowledged and responses discussed. This year, CPW is celebrating its 80th year running week-long holidays and events "to revitalise the heart, mind and spirit of Catholic people today".

## US Religious walk for migrants

On 14 August, nearly 500 Catholic sisters walked a 'Pilgrimage of Hope' in Atlanta, Georgia, to protest forced migration, climate change, and racism in the US under the Trump administration. The hundreds of sisters were in town for an annual conference of the association of leaders of American Catholic women's congregations.

## Faiths call for nuclear abolition

A joint Interfaith international statement was issued in August by Church organisations and faith groups on the 80th anniversary of first use of nuclear weapons. Signatories included the International Union of Superiors General, Catholic Religious Australia, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, and Pax Christi International. The statement called for peace, nuclear abolition, and justice. "This is a time to affirm that another way is possible: one rooted in solidarity, human dignity, and hope," it said. The statement suggested that by redirecting the approximately \$100 billion spent on nuclear weapons development in 2024 instead towards health, education, human rights, and ecological well-being, "we could make a profound difference in supporting the realization of the UN 2030 Agenda and responding to the crises of our time." It endorsed the 2021 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

## Scotland: Archbishop leads anti-nuclear vigil

Over 130 Christians gathered at Faslane, the home of Britain's nuclear weapons, for prayer and protest on 2 August. Archbishop William Nolan, President of Justice & Peace Scotland, was there and said, "the phrase 'never again' gained much currency 80 years ago, but the actions of nuclear powers, including our own, run contrary to that." The HM Naval Base Clyde is home to the Royal Navy's nuclear-armed submarine fleet.

## Challenging the silencing of protest

A Catholic priest was one of the 522 citizens arrested and charged under section 13 of the Terrorism Act on Saturday 9 August at Parliament Square, Westminster. Carmelite priest Fr John McGowan - from a parish in Westminster Diocese - said, "I was upset that our government is not doing enough to stop the massacre of the people in Gaza: 60,000 dead, one third of whom are children.....and the last straw was when the Home Secretary called 'Palestine Action' a terrorist group.... I do not believe that this group are terrorists." Jonathon Porritt, a patron of Green Christian, was also arrested. He said, "I was there to support Defend our Juries in its demand that the proscription of the non-violent protest group Palestine Action should be lifted." He said, "the Home Secretary's principal purpose in seeking to proscribe Palestine Action is to silence protest," adding that, "there is no way Palestine Action can be compared with Islamic State or Boko Haram under the Terrorism Act."

## AI "raises troubling questions", says Pope Leo

"AI, especially Generative AI, has opened new horizons on many different levels, including enhancing research in healthcare and scientific discovery, but also raises troubling questions on its possible repercussions on humanity's openness to truth and beauty, on our distinctive ability to grasp and process reality." Pope Leo XIV made this observation in his message to the Second Annual Rome Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in June. He noted its presence, "attests to the urgent need for serious reflection and ongoing discussion on the inherently ethical dimension of AI, as well as its responsible governance," and said he was pleased that the second day of the Conference took place in the Apostolic Palace, "a clear indication of the Church's desire to participate in these discussions that directly affect the present and future of our human family."



## SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION 2026

The Columbans are looking for students in Britain and Ireland (aged 13-18 inclusive) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme:

**"BECOMING A REFUGEE IS NEVER A CHOICE, BUT HOW WE RESPOND IS."**

(UN Secretary-General António Guterres)

**COMPETITION LAUNCH:**  
21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025 - WORLD PEACE DAY  
**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES:** 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026  
**WINNERS ANNOUNCED:** 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026

More details: [www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com)



Catholic Social Teaching calls us to 'welcome the stranger'. We invite young people to explore perceptions of people seeking sanctuary, considering practical examples of welcome and solidarity.

**PRINT PRIZES**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> £300**  
2<sup>ND</sup> £150 • 3<sup>RD</sup> £100

**IMAGE PRIZES**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> £300**  
2<sup>ND</sup> £150 • 3<sup>RD</sup> £100



**COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES**  
BRITAIN

### Columban Schools Competition 2026

Look out for the launch of the 2026 Columban Schools Competition on World Peace Day 21 September 2025. The competition is run by Columban missionaries in Britain and Ireland. The title is:

**"Becoming a refugee is never a choice. But how we respond is."**

(UN Secretary-General António Guterres)

The issue of Migrants and Refugees is a Columban Mission priority, and Catholic Social Teaching calls us to 'welcome the stranger'. Columbans invite young people 13-18 years to explore perceptions of people seeking sanctuary and highlight practical examples of welcome and solidarity.

Students are encouraged - through images or written entries - to explore how we, as communities of faith, can respond with love to those seeking refuge and safety. Whether inspired by scripture, Catholic Social Teaching, or real-life stories of resilience and hope, this is a chance to spotlight what it truly means to welcome refugees. Please help make schools aware of the competition.

The closing date is 14 Feb 2026. Announcement of winners on 9 March 2026.

Full details at: <https://www.columbancompetition.com/>

In celebration of Refugee Week 2025, the Columban Missionaries in Britain released a new hymn, titled 'Welcome and Love.' It was written by the JPE Coordinator in Britain, James Trewby. <https://columbans.co.uk/education/16478/a-song-to-inspire-welcome-and-love/>

### Columban Pilgrimage 25 September

The Season of Creation – 1 September to 4 October – has a special focus on pilgrimages in this Jubilee Year. In collaboration with the Laudato Si' Centre in the Diocese of Salford, Columbans are hosting a 'Hope for Our Common Home' pilgrimage on 25 September. It will involve winners of the 2025 Columban Schools competition.

The Laudato Si' Centre, based at Wardley Hall in the Diocese of Salford, is a pioneering hub for ecological education, practical action and spiritual reflection inspired by the encyclical of Pope Francis,

'Laudato Si'. It is also an inspiration for the rewilding and education work at St Columban's in Solihull. The pilgrimage is a public and prayerful expression of our concern for the environment, echoing 'the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor', as highlighted in 'Laudato Si'. Along the nine-mile route from the Laudato Si' Centre to Salford Cathedral's Temporary Church, pilgrims will engage with pressing environmental challenges of our time, such as biodiversity loss and the climate crisis.

"Being a pilgrim isn't just about travelling physically, it's about moving spiritually towards greater compassion, justice and care for others, especially the Earth and those most affected by injustice" explains James Trewby, Columban Justice Peace and Ecology Co-ordinator in Britain. There will be livestreams of the opening prayer liturgy and the evening Mass and if you register as a virtual pilgrim you will receive pilgrimage prayer resources. <https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/columban-pilgrimage-register/>

## RESOURCES

### Laudate Deum: A Last Call for the Planet

*Edited by Fr Joshtrom Kureethadam SDB and Dr Tobias Thornes*



In 2015, Pope Francis' landmark encyclical letter 'Laudato Si' called for radical action to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Eight years later, the dismay Pope Francis felt that global society and international governance was not making the necessary changes to address these crises, prompted him to issue a follow-up exhortation, 'Laudate Deum'. This book brings together experts exploring how 'Laudate Deum' speaks to us in the context of our time. Fr Joshtrom says: "Jesus' own final commission to his disciples was to, 'go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation' (Mark 16:15). Our mission, our God-given great commission, includes the whole of creation, not just human beings."

Available in PDF at: <https://lsri.campion.ox.ac.uk/node/1882>

### Fairtrade Fortnight Pack

#### Fairtrade Foundation

From 22 September to 5 October, this year's theme is 'Brew it Fair'. Over 100 million cups of tea are drunk in the UK every day. Consider hosting a Tea Party and raising awareness about fairtrade tea and other commodities.

<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/fairtrade-fortnight-2025/>

### Catholic Social Teaching and Investing in Climate Solutions

#### Operation Noah

Described as a 'toolkit for Catholic investors' this booklet showcases practical case studies and demonstrates the power of aligning investments with ethical goals.

Free printed copies from: <https://www.operationnoah.org/catholic-social-teaching-toolkit/>

### Martial Mining

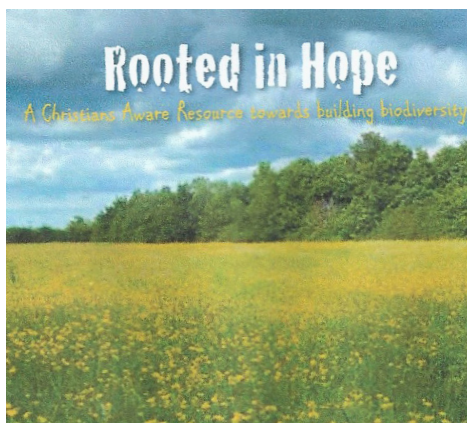
#### London Mining Network

Focuses on the relationship between extractivism and war, highlighting the necessity of metals and minerals for militarism, and the need for militarism in the mining process. Author Daniel Selwyn argues that militarism both diverts funds from human and ecological health, and provides fuel for the world's ongoing environmental crisis. He highlights an often overlooked entanglement between militarism and the climate crisis: the vast quantities of natural resources required to assemble weapons for war, and the even larger volume of toxic waste left in the wake of their extraction.

Download at:

<https://londonminingnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Martial-Mining.pdf>

### Rooted in Hope: A Christians Aware Resource towards building biodiversity



The main section is 'Stories of Hope' where good things are happening to reverse the decline of species and to build biodiversity. Ellen Teague contributed a chapter on 'Eco-systems.' David Attenborough has said: "It is the whole range of biodiversity that we must care for – the whole thing, rather than one or two stars."

£15.00 + £2.00 p&p from <https://christiansaware.org.uk/books>

### Mass for the Care of Creation

On the 10th anniversary of the publication of the encyclical 'Laudato Si', Pope Leo XIV has approved for use a new 'Mass for the Care of Creation'. The Pope used the new Mass for the first time on 9 July 2025, in a private Eucharist he celebrated at Borgo Laudato Si' at Castel Gandolfo.

Text at: <https://cbcew.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2025/08/Mass-Care-of-Creation-EW1.pdf>

### Realising the Sacred: The Ways of a Contemplative Synodal Church

#### David A. Jackson

David Jackson has written a timely book with two major features: the significance of the Catholic Church, and the underpinnings of the mystical tradition both past and present as the means of experiencing the Spirit of God at work.

<https://www.franciscanpublishing.com/books/spirituality/realising-the-sacred/>

### The Letter

A 2022 documentary film, telling the story of a journey to Rome of frontline leaders to discuss the encyclical letter 'Laudato Si' with Pope Francis.

Download at: <https://theletterfilm.org/>

### E-NEWSLETTER

Sign up to our free e-newsletter. Receive updates, news, stories and reflections by Columban Missionaries direct to your email, including a special focus on a Justice, Peace or Ecology (JPE) theme six times a year.

Scan the QR code or visit: [www.columbans.co.uk/enewsletter](http://www.columbans.co.uk/enewsletter)



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