

A Report from Climate Fest Castlebar 2019



Members of Climate Fest Castlebar Organising Committee.

L-R: Laura Dixon (Climate Action Officer, Mayo County Council), Lukasz Kryzwon (Green-Schools Travel), Mary Doherty rsm (Western Province), Yvonne Horkan (Castlebar Parish), Margaret Tiernan rsm (Western Province), Mary Trench (Mercy Associates), Deaglain Ó Rian (GMIT Green Campus), Sharon Cameron (Environmental Awareness Officer, Mayo County Council).
Absent: Mary Connell



The VAKS group was followed by
Fr. Conal Eustace P.P.
Castlebar Parish
bearing the lighted
**Eco-Congregation
Candle**
forward to the stage while
Mary Connell read the
opening ceremony prayer.



VAKS (Volunteers At Knock Shrine) carrying a sick globe on a stretcher process through the assembly for the opening ceremony heralding what the day was about.



M.C. Gerry Glennon
Stage decoration was done by Ann Lavin, Knock Shrine

Climate Fest Castlebar was born out of desire to bring an action focused Climate Change event to the locality so that the phrase ‘act locally and think globally’ could become a reality in our effort to play our part in averting the ‘Climate Change Emergency’ facing our world today.

Aware of the interconnectedness of all life, made known to us through the lens of Twentieth Century science and intuited long ago by the mystics, we the Lifestyle Choices Group felt called to bring that interconnectedness to life by networking and working more collaboratively with others to achieve our desire

goal. Castlebar was thought to be as a possible venue to further the dream. Like minded co-workers were sought out, these were found in members of the Castlebar Parish Pastoral Council, Mayo County Council, GMIT staff Castlebar and the Together in Mercy Group.

The first coming together of the working group took place in Ard Bhríde in April 2019, this was but the first of many, many meetings. In time the venue, GMIT Castlebar, the title of the event 'Climate Fest' and the date, Saturday 27th September, the last Saturday of Creation time, which runs from 1st September - 4th October was decided. GMIT on being approached for the use of their venue were only too delighted to come on board in the person of the GMIT Green Campus Organiser *Deaglain Ó Rian*. As the monthly meetings went on, the event gained momentum. The committee were competent high-tech people who from early on decided that this would be a 'no trace' event with a message for all generations, locally and beyond. For the less technological among us it was communication via e-mail, e-mail messages came flying in and out at every hour of the day and night with ideas and arrangements. We were all given tasks to do. In time a wide-ranging programme of activities to celebrate the beauty of the planet and showcase ways to change lifestyles was drawn up.

Saturday 27 September was a busy day as the 400 attendees enthusiastically spent their time moving from lectures to workshops, trying to get as much information as possible, one could sense the hunger in people to learn how they could best play their part in addressing the challenge of climate change.

The Workshop topics were: 'Sustainable Fashion', 'Tips for Sorting, Recycling and Reducing Food Waste in the Home', 'Energy Hacks for the Home' and 'Becoming an Eco community/Eco Parish' these appealed to different age groups and interests.



Sr. Catherine Brennan of Eco-Congregation Ireland encouraged Parishes to adopt an Eco- Friendly approach to worship, lifestyle and an outreach to the local community and the Third World.



Sr. Catherine Brennan SSL – shares resources for Parish Communities and individuals looking to take on the Eco-Congregation challenge.

	
<p>Sharon Cameron (Environmental Awareness Officer, Mayo County Council). Had an abundance of food tips to offer, also sharing the shocking reality of our waste of food.</p>	<p>Loreto Hogge - Lifestyle Choices Group and Smret Weakliam prepares a cup of coffee for all who visited their stand in true Ethiopians style.</p>
	
<p>Smret, demonstrates Ethiopia's/Eritrea unique Hospitality in its Coffee Culture to the delight of many on the day.</p>	



Men's sheds group were a wonderful ground support, taking care of all the needful outdoor duties on the day.



Horkan's garden expert, Padraic Horkan is passionate about promoting health and wellbeing and a better lifestyle through gardening. Padraic shares his expertise, insights and wisdom with a captive audience.



Green Schools Travel Officer, Lukasz Krzywon shared tips on reducing one's carbon footprint by switching to a more sustainable option - Electric Vehicles (EVs). There were vehicles from local suppliers on display on the day. Assisting with the workshop are Sr. Margaret Killoran and ?



Guest speakers on the day included environmentalist, Jane Mellett (*Trocaire's Laudato Si' Officer*), Saoirse McHugh (*Green Party candidate in the recent EU elections*), John Weaklim (*CEO Irish NGO VITA*), Laura Dixon, (*Climate Action Officer, Mayo County Council*), Martina Kilian (*Green Campus Officer GMIT Castlebar*), Theo and Maude Cullen-Mouze (*Student Climate Strikers*). There were also local environmental groups, schools and businesses with displays and stands, all committed to reducing their impact on the planet.



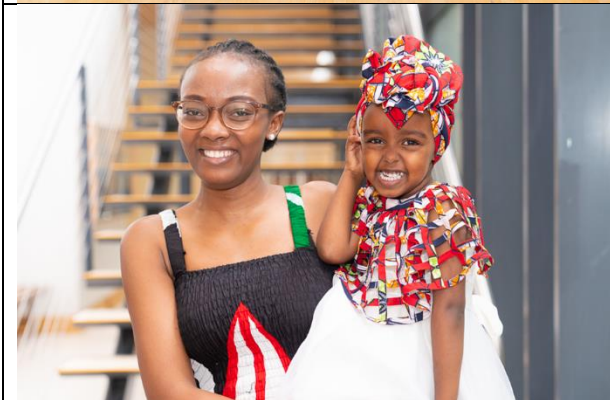
Jane Mellett, Trocaire's spokesperson on Laudato 'Si' gave an inspirational address, sharing the extent to which Laudato Si' has touched the whole world, and the challenge to answer its call now.



Saoirse McHugh (Green Party candidate in the recent EU elections) shared her experience of the many Climate Action Activities taking place in the West.



A group from the Direct Provision Centre, Ballyhanus performed a moving pageant on their lives thus far and the effects of Climate Change on their countries of origin.



The youngest member of the group stole the show.



Laura Dixon

Laura Dixon Climate Action Officer with Mayo Co. Co. played a pivotal role in the organization of the event and gave an excellent address on the County Council's Regional Climate Action plan for the months ahead.

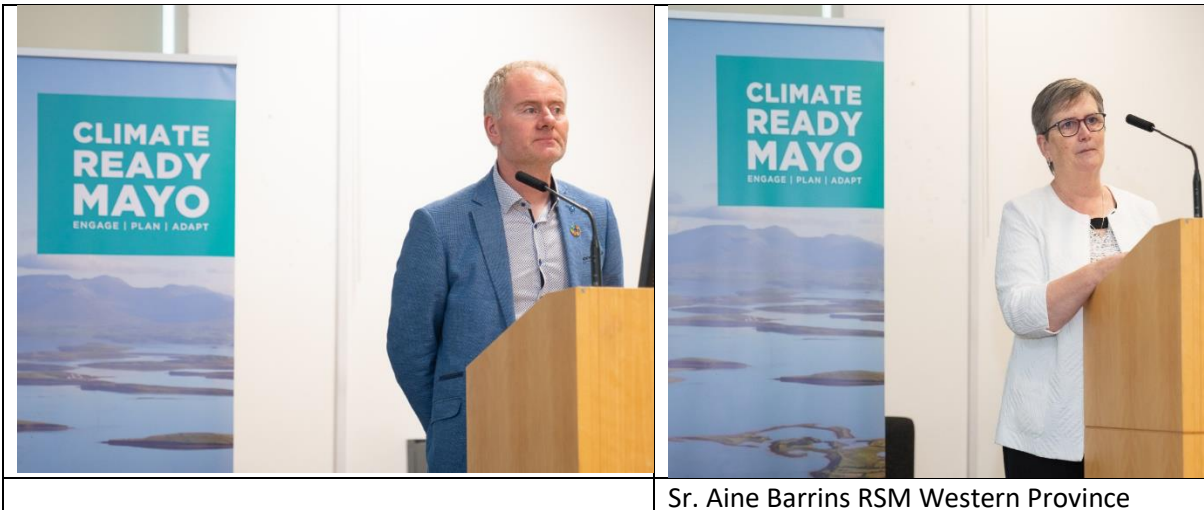


The smooth, efficient and pleasant running of the day was greatly made possible by the team of secondary school pupils who were at hand at every instance to guide and direct participants to the various venues and activities. Their youthful presence and enthusiasm were indeed a source of hope for all present.



The wonderful co-operation of all involved meant the day was seamless for start to finish, everyone was kept on their toes by the excellent master of ceremonies Midwest Radio's, Gerry Glennon, who is also a member of the Mercy Together group. We are deeply grateful to the many Mercy Sisters who helped out on the day and to the members of the Mercy Together Group who were also there to help with the smooth running of the day. We appreciated the wonderful support of so many of you, our sisters who made the effort to attend the day. The day in GMIT was brought to an end with words of thanks and appreciation from representatives of the co-hosting bodies namely: Deaglain O Rian, GMIT.

____? _____Manager,
Mayo Co. Co. and by Sr. Áine Barrins representing Mercy Western Province, who sent us off with words of hope.



Sr. Aine Barrins RSM Western Province

From GMIT in a few hours later we came together once again in the Parish Church in Castlebar – The Church of the Holy Rosary, for the celebration of the Sunday Vigil Mass. The con- celebrant were Fr. John McCormack and Fr. Conal Eustace.

The Ailing Globe on a stretcher was once again carried to the sanctuary, followed by the symbol of hope, the Eco-Congregation Candle in the entrance procession where Sr. Margaret Tiernan was invited to light the candle while Mary Connell, PPC led us in a Candle Lighting prayer.

Fr. Eustace very beautifully interwove the message from Climate Fest with the Eucharistic liturgy. The gospel reading on the day was the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man seemingly knew Lazarus, he was aware of him but it was for what he, the rich man, failed to do that caused him to be condemned.

Fr. Conal reminded us that we had spent a day, where our awareness had been raised regarding the imminent climate crisis and now that we had heard the call to act, let us do our part – ‘lest that we too, may not be condemned by future generations because of our failure to act to offset this Climate Change Crisis.

The liturgy was very much a community or parish celebration enhanced by the participation of the secondary school students in the readings, prayers and singing. The Secondary School Youth Choir under the leadership of Yvonne Horkan had re-assembled after the long summer holidays for the occasion, many of whom had been working earlier in the day as volunteers at the Climate Fest. Their presence, their uplifting singing served to bring hope and joy to all present and were a fitting part of what was an amazing day.

“How did Christ begin his great work, the salvation of the world?

He began simply, quietly. No fanfare. No fireworks.

No public launching.

He began by calling a few people-two in fact.

It was as simple as that.

He began with personal contact.
And that is how his work developed.
It passed from person to person by word of mouth.”

The above is an extract from the Communion Reflection read at Evening Mass and what better example could we follow and we go forth to play our part at this time of Climate Emergency where conscious climate action was never more needed.

Again, thanks to all of you for your wonderful support on the day.

Photographer John Mee, Castlebar.













