

Dear Friends,

We send our deepest love and prayers to all during this time of worldwide crisis and pandemic. Many have experienced firsthand the effects of this deadly virus and many more have tragically lost their lives.

During this time of crisis we are reminded of the words of Mahatma Gandhi; "To live simply so that others may simply live." Our communities have become united in their efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 by staying at home, avoiding unnecessary travel, and supporting vulnerable members of society who are at the most risk. Together these actions have prevented the worst effects of the disease and allowed vital time for frontline medical staff to save countless lives.

However, we have already seen that these actions have also had some effect on slowing the increase of carbon emissions and the ensuing climate breakdown. We have seen polluted skies and waters cleared, wildlife and biodiversity return to our cities, and the largest reduction in carbon emissions in eighty years.

The Climate Crisis we face is as dangerous and fast-spreading as the Coronavirus, but the actions taken to challenge one can be used to challenge the other. Both are of grave international concern and threaten the lives of everyone on the Earth. This current pandemic has shown that our leaders are capable of decisive action in the face of a global problem, and that our society is willing and able to change in order to prevent disaster.

As Quakers, we follow a testimony of simplicity and believe that a simple life is the most beneficial for ourselves and our society. As we begin to emerge from a national shutdown, we remind Friends of that testimony of simplicity and how many lives were saved during this crisis, and how many more can be saved in the future, by living simply. We encourage Friends to continue the practices of simple living developed during this shutdown and to use them in preventing climate breakdown.

Signed on behalf of Eco-Quakers Ireland Committee,  
Brían Ó Súilleabháin