



Dear Eco-Congregation Friends

Welcome to the Summer 2020 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter! We hope you all are well and getting out into nature when the sun shines! Some stories and reflections to encourage us in this strange and difficult time.

Save the Date! ECI Online Conference

Eco-Congregation Ireland will be holding an **online** conference on Saturday 3 October 2020 to celebrate Season of Creation! The theme is **Planetary Emergency: How to Have Hope**. More details and booking information at a later date! Keep an eye on your emails and the [ECI Facebook feed](#).

ECI VIRTUAL Climate Justice Candle to Continue Over Summer



We have decided to continue with our VIRTUAL ECI Climate Justice Candle over the summer months! All information on how to get involved below – we would love to hear from YOU! >>

Sekeeta Crowley, one of [ECI's Climate Justice Candle](#) volunteers in Co Cork came up with the wonderful idea of creating a virtual ECI Climate Justice Candle community! Under the present circumstances it is no longer physically possible to circulate the ECI candle, however the need for prayer and action for climate

justice has not gone away, and the risk of it being hidden during the Covid-19 crisis is real and at a time when it is needed all the more.

Therefore, [ECI invites you to designate one of your own candles as your very own Climate Justice Candle](#). It can be any size – simply make it look special and put it in a prominent safe place in your home. Print out one of the prayers given below (or write your own) and set it by the candle (but not so it risks catching fire!). What you then do is up to you. Involve the family in setting it up. Start a discussion with the children as to why you are doing it and why it is needed. Pray when you can. Perhaps choose a day and a time. Prayerfully consider actions you can take to reduce your own impact on the Earth and use the time at home to talk to the family!

Post a photo of your candle on Facebook with Shine a Light on Climate Justice as a title and the link to the Eco-Congregation Ireland website – <https://www.ecocongregationireland.com/>. Please also email your photo to Eco-Congregation Ireland so that we can share it on the ECI website and Facebook page – send to info@ecocongregationireland.com. These stories will make up a wonderful collection of climate justice actions during the Covid-19 era. Don't forget, to let us know where you are based. [Sekeeta has created a prayer card for use with your candle which you can print off](#), fold length-ways and put a piece of card inside to stiffen it so you can prop it up against something, should you so wish. Prayers front and back.

A Prayer for Our Earth (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. 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.

Give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, we confess that the way we are using fossil fuels and other destructive forms of energy today is destroying the forests, changing the climate, the seas, the soils, the biodiversity and the balance of life on our fragile planet, dispossessing the poor and future generations. Help us to choose life for all that is a risk-for neighbours near and far and for those that come after us. Give us the knowledge to learn what we do not know but long to understand, so that we may honour and nurture all that makes us one with you. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Thank you to all who have hosted an ECI VIRTUAL climate justice candle so far! They are:

Blessington Parish

Carmel O'Neill sent ECI this update: During the weeks of lockdown due to Covid-19, Fr Richard and Pastoral worker Aine Egan set up a weekly prayer service with parents and their children on the Blessington Parish webcam. On Thursday 11 June Carmel O'Neill took the opportunity to speak to the children on ways in which they can encourage bees and butterflies into their gardens. In the weeks following lockdown there had been a noticeable increase of bumble bees, possibly due to the good weather but also helped by the fact that there was less cutting and strimming of roadside verges.



Carmel recommended some easy to grow annuals and suggested grouping them in large bold groups to attract the bees. Emphasis was placed on the importance of leaving dandelions to flower as they are an important source of nectar. Other suggestions included tips on how to grow a wildflower patch, where to erect bird boxes and most importantly avoiding sprays that contain chemicals. It is also a good idea to leave an untidy patch in the garden to help the survival of the bumble bee in the winter months. A tidy garden is not always the best garden! The prayer service concluded with prayers for the environment which the children themselves submitted for the prayer service. *The photos show Blessington Parish's Virtual Climate Justice Candle.*



Johnstown Parish Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation

Recently Geraldine Murphy from Johnstown Parish Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation set up a small table with a simple Climate Justice Candle and a framed Laudato Si prayer. Each Friday, Geraldine and her husband light the candle and say the prayer together. They have committed to pray each Friday.



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Eco-Congregation Ireland Certificates

ECI will award two certificates in the earlier stages of your journey towards the final Eco-Congregation Ireland Award to mark stages on the way - the Awareness Certificate and the Endeavour Certificate. [Learn more on the ECI website here.](#)

Since our last newsletter **Church of Our Lady, Blessington, St Joseph's Church, Vallemount, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Lacken, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Johnstown, Killiney, St Patrick's Church, Mayobridge, Castlebar Parish and Nenagh Union of Parishes** received their Awareness Certificates.



St John the Baptist Church, Clontarf, An Domhan Glas Environmental Group, Holy Cross and St Joseph's Parish, Bonnybrook all received their Endeavour Certificates. Well done to all!

Season of Creation 2020 Resources Available!

The Season of Creation liturgical resources for 2020 are now available online! The theme this year is "Cultivating Hope". Pope Francis has designated May 2020 – May 2021 as a special anniversary year for Laudato Si'. These resources will help you to plan how you and your faith community might pray, reflect and take action. They include homily notes, mass parts, prayers, reflections for each Sunday of the Season as well as practical actions. [All information and resources available here.](#)

These resources have been prepared by the Catholic Communications Office, the Bishops' Council for Justice and Peace, the Laudato Si' Working Group, Trócaire, and the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Brother Richard Hendrick OFm Cap provided the beautiful reflections on the natural world.

Catherine Brennan SSL from the ECI committee is a member of the Laudato Si Working Group of the Council for Catechetics of the Bishops' Conference.



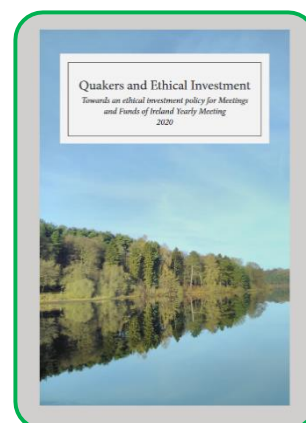
Eco-Congregation Scotland launch Creation Time 2020 Resources

Our friends at [Eco-Congregation Scotland](#) launched this year's Creation Time materials on Tuesday 4th August 2020. They have again linked this year with the now [Faith Nurture Forum](#) and [Weekly Worship](#) of the [Church of Scotland](#) to produce Creation Time materials for 2020, free and accessible for use by any congregation as an ecumenical resource. You can now download each week, or all four weeks combined as 73 pages –on their webpage: <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/creation-time/>



Quakers and Ethical Investment Booklet

Eco Quakers Ireland and the Ireland Yearly Meeting Investment Committee have produced a booklet to promote an ethical investment policy for Quaker Meetings in Ireland and for IYM Funds. The Quakers and Ethical Investment booklet, which arose out of a widespread concern among Friends in Ireland about the investment of funds under Friends' care, is designed to give broad guidance on investment within the ethical framework which Friends have set. The booklet is initially being launched in digital form, but some hard copies will be printed and made available at Yearly Meeting 2021. [You can download and read more about this publication here.](#)



New Blog by Rev Richard Beadle – Fields of Treasure

Rev Richard Beadle is a Church of Ireland minister living and serving on the Irish border in counties Fermanagh and Leitrim. Richard has created a new blog called '[Fields of Treasure](#)'. His



blog explores thoughts about Treasure. Treasure is the Church's fifth mark of mission: "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Richard states 'I'm not a conservation expert but I am trying to learn about the precious world around me where humans and creation interact'.

Richard also has some photographs free for churches to use on <https://www.flickr.com/people/188713332@N04/>. All views on this blog are his own. Richard shares 'Psalm 24 verse 1 shares, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it!" We have a responsibility to treasure and look after the creation that God has so wonderfully made. When we treat it as solely ours, we ruin it. These photos are simply a reminder of the incredible variety of life that we take for granted on our doorstep, if only we would open our eyes'.

South Belfast Quaker Meeting Being Grateful Video Project

During the COVID-19 pandemic, South Belfast Quaker Meeting had the idea to ask members what they were grateful for. The result was a series of three videos which are available to [view on their website here](#). What had been planned as a single video turned into an ongoing project with multiple videos due to the number of submissions from members and attenders of the meeting. A recurring theme in the videos is the role the natural environment plays in our well-being, comfort and good mental health.



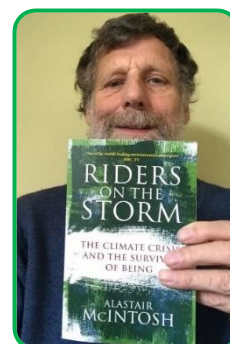
Latest News from the Orlagh-in-the-City Laudato Si' Group

Lorcan McDermott sent ECI this update: Our virtual Sunday worship is continuing by Zoom. In early July we held a garden Mass in St. Benildus Retreat Centre Kilmacud, our usual location for Mass. It went very well, there was no difficulty with social distancing, lots of fresh air, if a little damp! Some of the Laudato Si' group have been attending the Fridays for Future gatherings at the Dail. Numbers may be small, but we are helping keep the climate action issue live and making connections between climate change and Covid-19. On occasion we have been joined by Green Party TDs, senators and ministers. Our book club's reading of Elizabeth Johnson's *Ask the Beasts*, is very informative on biodiversity. Now that restrictions have been eased, we can explore more of the biodiversity of Dublin city and county!



New publication by Alastair McIntosh!

New publication by Quaker and friend of Eco-Congregation Ireland Alastair McIntosh! This book will be published on 13 August 2020 and is available here >> <https://bit.ly/30cZpS4>. You can read a review of Alastair's book by [Eco-Congregation Scotland](#) here >> <https://bit.ly/2CU53jf>. You are welcome to join in with the launch of Alastair's new book on Thursday, 13 August 2020 live on Zoom. [All information available by clicking on this link](#).



Latest news from Clogher Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation Group

Clogher Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation Group have been involved in the following activities: July 25th –August 15th – working on new Bio-diversity Garden at St Michael's Community Centre, Enniskillen; August 15th –Picnic at Dromoney Falls,



Kesh, Co Fermanagh-organised by Neville Armstrong; Bishop Larry Duffy of Clogher working on Letter to the Diocese on Laudato Si.

'Re-imagining Society Sustainably' – EcoQuakers Ireland Online Event

EcoQuakers Ireland held an online event on Saturday 18 July entitled 'Re-imagining Society Sustainably' as we look to rebuild society in the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic. Three interesting speakers addressed the theme, followed by a plenary session. It was a wonderfully stimulating session.

Denise Gabuzda, IYM Clerk and physics and astronomy lecturer at University College Cork, painted a wonderful picture of a more equal society with more renewable energy, more locally grown food, stronger communities, protection of biodiversity and a more peaceful earth. She said imagining a future like this was the first step to it becoming a reality. "As our planet heals, so will we as we appreciate the inter-connectedness of all living things," she said.



Romanian-born and US-raised Oana Sariana Marian, an artist and writer and founder of the Active Hope Network who is pursuing a PhD in Theology at Trinity College Dublin, spoke about the need for climate grief and imagination as we work towards a sustainable future. She also encouraged each of us to self-audit how we spend our money and to educate ourselves about how our society is functioning within the wider global economy.

Féidhlim Harty of Cork and Limerick Quaker Meetings and founder of [FH Wetland Systems](#) said there were 5 things we could do to help create a more sustainable future: spend our money consciously; live more simply; advocate for change; build and strengthen connections; remain optimistic and 'hold the vision'. He encouraged us to nurture a clear vision of a beautiful earth and to anchor this in our minds through prayer and meditation. [You can access the speakers' full scripts and view the recording of the event on the Quakers in Ireland website here.](#)

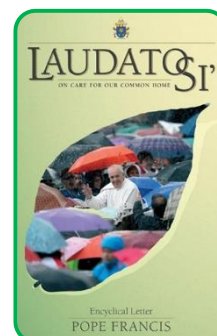
Latest News from the Corrymeela Community Climate Justice Group

Eleanor Duff sent ECI this update: The Corrymeela Community Climate Justice Group has continued its work virtually, sharing information and keeping abreast of developments. Of particular interest was the involvement of a number of members in the UK wide Virtual Lobby of MPs, The Time is Now for a Green and Fair Recovery. Members of the group, along with others took part in Zoom meetings with a number of Northern Ireland MPs, Ian Paisley, Gavin Robinson and Sir Jeffrey Donaldson of the DUP and there was also a meeting led by Claire Hannah of SDLP although none of the group took part. Feedback from our participants was positive and each MP showed an interest and commitment to the climate and environmental agenda. Members of the group agreed to follow up with contact and possible meetings with other political parties. There is also a suggestion for an event at Corrymeela focusing on climate and environmental issues whenever things get back to normal. You can read Eleanor's report in full on the [ECI website here.](#)



Trocaire's Laudato Si' Book Club Resource is Now Available for Download

Trocaire's Laudato Si' Book Club resource is now available for download for parishes / groups to run their own 7-week journey through Laudato Si'. The resource is available at this link: <https://www.trocaire.org/resources/parishes/laudato-si>



An Tairseach is Open and Looking Forward to Seeing You!

An Tairseach is open and is very much looking forward to welcoming you over the coming months! There are lots of Earth-centred workshops available. Due to their new Covid Safe measures, places are very limited so please be sure to book early! If you would like further information please call 0404 61833 or email on info@antairseach.ie or book directly on their website. All talks can be viewed and booked from the events calendar [here](#). >>



Autumn Talks 2020

Cosmology
- Niamh Brennan
Sept 14th, 21st, 28th & Oct 5th, 12th, 19th
- 9.30am to 12.30 pm
The Universe Story, is a creation story based on the major scientific insights which have led to our current understanding of the Universe. Niamh will explore emerging spirituality in light of this Cosmic story.
Cost: €20 (2 sessions). Includes tea/coffee & snack. Dinner at 12.30 is €20 extra.

Theology Through An Ecological Lens
- Sr Colette Kane O.P.
Sept 17th, 29th & Oct 6th, 13th, 27th
- 9.30am to 12.30 pm
In these sessions Colette will explore connections between biblical wisdom and eco-justice.
Cost: €20 (2 sessions). Includes tea/coffee & snack. Dinner at 12.30 is €20 extra.

Creation, Evolution & Faith
- John Feehan
Sept 22nd, 29th, 24th - 9.30am to 4pm
Sept 25th - 9.30am to 12.30pm
This three and a half day conference will deal with the mystery of God in all of creation. John's profound insights into the beauty and wonder of the natural world have led him to become passionate about our responsibility as humans to care for our common home. (includes materials & publications)
€190 - booking fee €50. Includes talks, 4 full meals, tea/coffee & snack. En-suite accommodation is available for this short course at €45 per night (2 nights or more)

The Mystical Imagination of Patrick Kavanagh, A Button Hole in Heaven
- Una Agnew
Oct 1st - 9.30am to 12.30pm
This half day will explore the essence of Kavanagh's faith which was often more hinted at than given full expression.
Cost: €20 (2 sessions). Includes tea/coffee & snack. Dinner at 12.30 is €20 extra.

The Call for an 'Integral Ecology' in Laudato Si
- Dermot A. Lane
Oct 8th - 9.30am to 12.30pm
What is an 'Integral Ecology'? Dermot will outline the radical meaning of an 'Integral Ecology' and its implications for the life of faith and the way we do Theology today. He currently works in Balally Parish in Dublin and formerly was President of Mater Dei Institute of Education.
Cost: €20 (2 sessions). Includes tea/coffee & snack. Dinner at 12.30 is €20 extra.

Climate Activism / Future Fridays
- Jane Mellett
October 15th - 9.30am to 12.30 pm
Jane Mellett is the Laudato Si Officer with Trocaire. In 2018 she embarked on a 1,000 km climate pilgrimage carrying the message of Laudato Si from Italy to the UN Climate Conference in Poland (COP24). Since then she has been involved in the Global Climate Strikes (Fridays For Future) with a special focus on mobilising faith communities to respond to the call of Laudato Si. (Jane has a background in pastoral ministry, theology and spirituality)
Cost: €20 (2 sessions). Includes tea/coffee & snack. Dinner at 12.30 is €20 extra.

A Creed for Today: Faith and Commitment for our New Earth Awareness - Donal Dorr SPMS
Oct 21st - 9.30am to 12.30pm
Rather than seeing ecological spirituality as an adjunct to Christian doctrine, Donal Dorr views it as central to our understanding of Christianity today and integral to understanding our relationship with the natural world. Stressing the importance of our new earth awareness, the presenter lays out a compelling vision for how we should live at both a spiritual and practical level in terms of our Christian faith and our attendant role as stewards of the Earth.
Cost: €20 (2 sessions). Includes tea/coffee & snack. Dinner at 12.30 is €20 extra.

Celtic Spirituality – Echoing still
- Pat Murphy
October 29th, 9.30am - 12.30 pm
In this workshop Fr. Pat Murphy formerly of Tearmann Spirituality Centre Glendalough will help us reflect on themes from Celtic Spirituality which are still necessary for today.
Cost: €20 (2 sessions). Includes tea/coffee & snack. Dinner at 12.30 is €20 extra.

Incarnating the Human: New Theological Horizons - Diarmuid O'Murchu
Nov 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th - 9.30 to 12.30pm
This four-part module will outline an expanded understanding of Incarnation, embracing the emerging wisdom of the New Story in our time as well as deeply challenging insights from theology and scripture.
Day One (Mon): Our Evolving Human Story, grounded in the sacredness of Creation.
Day Two (Tues): How our Creative God Incarnates in our evolving world and in our long human story.
Day Three (Wed): New horizons for understanding our Christian faith arising from multidisciplinary research today.
Day Four (Thurs): The Eucharist in the context of the New Story, culminating with the celebration of Eucharist.
€20 per evening (2 sessions). Includes tea/coffee & snack. Dinner at 12.30pm is €20 extra. These sessions stand alone or as a group. Participants are welcome to attend just one or all four. En-suite accommodation is available at €50 for one night or €45 per night for two nights or more.

We offer delicious meals prepared by qualified chefs using fresh organic produce straight from our farm.

An Tairseach, Organic Farm & Ecology Centre,
Kilmartin Hill, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow A67 YX26
Tel: + 353 (0)404 61833 Email: info@antairseach.ie
Web: antairseach.ie



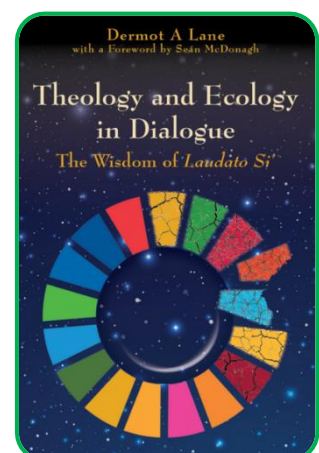

This project is supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Pobol through the Community Services Programme



Bailiún na Míreann
Government of Ireland

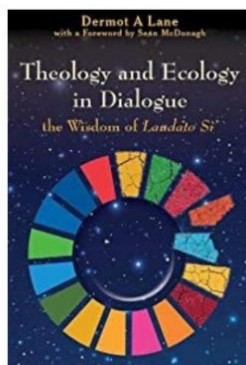
Launch of *Theology & Ecology in Dialogue: The Wisdom of Laudato Si* by Fr Dermot Lane on YouTube

Messenger Publications welcomed an audience of over 200 viewers to the digital launch of [Theology & Ecology In Dialogue: The Wisdom of Laudato Si](#) by Fr Dermot Lane on 22 June 2020. In Fr Dermot Lane's own words, 'The book builds bridges between theology and ecology. It challenges theology to re-imagine who we are, who the Spirit is, who Christ is, where creation is going, and what is the role of liturgy in society—all in the glare of the climate crisis.' The Irish Catholic described the book as *mapping out a theology for the third millennium*. The event was recorded and may be viewed, or shared with friends and colleagues by clicking the following link: <https://youtu.be/HaPLa6g9iGQ>. This book launch was hosted by Messenger Publications in conjunction with the Laudato Si Working Group of the Catechetics Council of the Irish Episcopal Conference.



Fr Dermot Lane's Book Club

All welcome! Details below >>



Theology & Ecology in Dialogue The Wisdom of Laudato Si

Join us with **Fr Dermot A. Lane**
as we read his new publication
Commencing Wed, 12 August 2020 | 7.30pm
To register for this 6 week online book club
please email: info@macfd.ie



trócaire

Galilee
Spirituality Centre

John Feehan Wildflowers YouTube Videos

John Feehan and his film crew in Co Offaly have made short YouTube videos of the wildflowers which bloom in the area. You can view these videos here -

<https://www.youtube.com/user/offalyheritage>.



Update from Westport Eco-Congregation

Caroline Goucher sent ECI this update: As we take a summer break, we have plans in place for Season of Creation 2020. This is a special season which is now part of the Irish Liturgical Calendar. We will celebrate within our churches, and in our community with inter-faith events. We reach out nationally to all interested groups and individuals as we host, 'The Laudato Si Book Club' (Via Zoom) during this special season from Tuesday 1st September, and to Tuesday 6th October, 7.30pm for 1 hour. Jane Mellett of Trocaire facilitates these webinars on this particular theme, and we can assure you it will be very engaging, informative and enjoyable. To register please contact ktfriel@gmail.com or 087 8520602.



VOICE – Deposit Refund Scheme in Ireland

Colin O'Byrne, Project Manager with VOICE ([Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment](#)) sent ECI an article about the introduction of a Deposit Refund Scheme in Ireland, such

VOICE
urging greener choices now!

an introduction constituting one of VOICE's objectives in their goal to address issues of waste in Ireland. VOICE is looking for your support as they seek to maintain pressure on the Government to make good on their commitment to introduce a DRS in Ireland. The addition of your voice or that of your organisation will be invaluable to their efforts in this regard. Please feel free to contact Colin O'Byrne (colin@voiceireland.org) if you would like to get involved or would like more information on a DRS and how it can work for your community. [You can read Colin's article in full on the ECI website.](#)

Forest Friends Ireland Cross Border Peace Forest Project

John Haughton, Project Facilitator and Co-founder of this project sent ECI this update: Forest Friends Ireland Cross Border Peace Forest Project is at an advanced stage of planning and a plan for the project including resources and other supports and personnel needed are included in the plan. The plan can be sourced on www.forestfriends.ie. Please contact Forest Friends if you can help with any aspect of the project by contacting me directly at my email jjhaughton@gmail.com and I will advise you on any aspect of the project. Thank you in advance for your help. Website – www.forestfriends.ie. Facebook – www.facebook.com/forestfriendsireland. Peace Forest Facebook is www.facebook.com/peaceforestireland



Parish Environmental Group of Holy Family Parish, Kill of the Grange, Dunlaoghaire – Latest News

Jerome Connolly from this group sent ECI their update: the Parish Environmental Group of Holy Family Parish, Kill of the Grange, Dunlaoghaire, was formed four years ago. We meet monthly in our parish resource centre to report on actions undertaken, agree new ones, exchange information and swap experiences.



Activities include: a monthly litter clean-up of the church grounds and the roads and green areas within half a mile of the church; a regular weekly insert on ecological topics in our parish newsletter; establishment of a wild flower area to one side of the church; preparation and display of environmental posters at the entrances to the church; reporting on our activities to each meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council; one information night with outside speakers on practical topics such as recycling, plastics etc; preparation of sample prayers on environmental themes, which are regularly included in the bidding prayers; contact with our local deanery to encourage neighbouring parishes to set up their own environmental groups; our parish clergy and Parish Council have been very supportive, and environmental matters are included from time to time in homilies and bidding prayers; arising from reflection on our monthly litter clean-up, we decided that more radical action was needed and we prepared a briefing paper setting out the arguments for a national deposit refund scheme. Such schemes operate successfully in other countries and one is urgently needed in Ireland. [You can read this update in more detail on the ECI website.](#) Well done to all!

Rev Andrew Kingston Creates a Donnybrook Biblical Garden!

Rev Andrew Kingston from the Methodist Church in Ireland has created this wonderful garden at his manse including Biblical herbs, trees, vegetables and flowers and you can read his list of plants in his article [on the ECI website here](#) along with his stories of how why he planted them. These are just some of the Biblical plants that are thriving in Donnybrook. Visitors are very



welcome, and admission is free. A printed full colour brochure is available for a €10 donation to Methodist World Development & Relief for the support of a water project in Dabane, Zimbabwe. To arrange a visit to 11 Arranmore Road, Dublin D04 F8N0 phone or text Rev Andrew Kingston on 0831520171. The visit can be conducted safely outdoors as there is a door at the side of the Manse. Parking in front of the Manse driveway is free. Why not go along this summer and be inspired!

Latest News from the JPIC Committee of the Diocese of Kerry

Sylvia Thompson sent ECI this latest news from the Diocese of Kerry, in this special 5th anniversary year for Laudato Si: The *Season of Creation* is coming up very soon so we have been preparing for some months now. The theme chosen this year by the Laudato Si' Working Group of the Council for Catechetics (Irish Bishops) is **Cultivating Hope. A Faith Response to the Climate Crisis**. We have prepared a leaflet or brochure and this year were delighted to do so in conjunction with the Laudato Si' Working Group. This leaflet is available for all dioceses across the country. It focuses on how we can cultivate hope by our actions at home, in our parishes and local communities across the different areas of *biodiversity, food, plastic pollution and the climate crisis*. Find this and all the other resources on www.catholicbishops.ie (Search 'Season of Creation').



All parishes will be advised of the liturgical resources on this website and encouraged to use them on at least one Sunday during the Season. Then on Thursday September 17th at 8pm we are going to host a webinar on the same theme again in conjunction with the LS Working Group. Lorna Gold will be our keynote speaker and she will be joined by a panel of local people of different ages already involved in various ways. The invitation to register for the free webinar will be publicised in the middle of August (see www.dioceseofkerry.ie). Finally, the JPIC committee will circulate its own prayer and reflection resource to be used at an outside gathering in parishes during the Season and will host its own outside event in Tralee on September 1st (weather and Coronavirus permitting).

Ambitious Plans for the Rebirth of Umeras Bog

Plans to develop Umeras bog, located between Monasterevin and Rathangan, into a tourist peatlands park creating a tranquil place to complement the Blueway and redevelopment of Ballykelly Mills as a tourist hub have been formulated by a local community group. Local spokesperson, wildlife and rural development expert Eddie Smyth, approached the Irish Peatlands Conservation Council in July 2019 to begin a discussion on the future of the bog. With Bord na Mona decommissioning bogs and power stations there was an opportunity for communities to voice their views on how our bogs can fit into the development vision of local areas. He approached Bord Na Mona and the National Parks and Wildlife service and learned that their plans were to block the drains and return Umeras Bog to Nature. A local development group was formed to advance plans for what he describes as this unique area of heritage and beauty. The group, made up of locals, was inspired by the Lough Boora Discovery Park in Offaly which attracts 100,000 visitors annually and the location beside the Grand Canal which is a protected scenic route. [Read their press release here.](#) [Download their leaflet here.](#)



Bonnybrook Parish – The Amazing Power of Rain!

Margo Delaney from Bonnybrook Parish sent ECI this update: In mid-April, the Care for the Earth Ministry group cleared a small area in front of the Family Centre. The aim was to create a wildflower meadow. With enthusiasm, the grass and wildflower seeds were sown. Then came the long, wonderfully hot, dry days of May. Despite diligent watering from the harvested water in the water butt, nothing emerged but a few

weak grass seedlings. Hope began to weaken. Nature has its own rhythm: June brought abundant rains and with that emerges the colourful display of flowers and green grasses as shown below:



So now that there is a display, we can put up our sign at last!



Some time ago, Joe Jones, St Joseph's Parish Moderator, presented the idea of creating a labyrinth for the use of local people and visitors in the nearby Stardust Park. The original labyrinth was a simple grass outline that got overgrown with the passage of time. Now, with the renewals of the park, our more permanent labyrinth has been constructed. This picture was taken by David, a member of the parish PPC.



Eco Challenge!

Rev Trevor Sargent's Ecological Notes for Summer 2020 - A Solar Panel on Your Church Roof Could be Making Money for Your Parish!

'From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised'. (Ps. 113 v.3)

[You can read Trevor's Ecological Notes in full on the ECI website here](#), where he encourages us to think about the issue of solar panels for our church roofs and gives us examples of churches that have installed panels. Speaking of the Anglican Communion Trevor says:



'The Irish Government has been no more than lukewarm in encouraging roof space to be used for solar power generation. In 2009 a pilot scheme was launched to allow for surplus electricity from solar panels on roofs to be sold back to the grid by Minister for Energy, Eamon Ryan TD. However, 5 years later, after a change of government, that scheme was scrapped. Perhaps the Church of Ireland, as a custodian of a large number of south facing roof spaces could lobby the new government to allow parishes to sell back to the grid the surplus electricity generated from PV solar panels. As other churches in the Anglican Communion are proving, installing solar panels on south facing roofs can help to keep God's churches viable, not to mention God's planet'. Is this something our churches could consider?

Prayers/Reflections for the Earth

Umululu, The Big One – A Story About a Tree by Fr Michael O'Shea SMA, Mpima Forest, Zambia

They call me 'The Big One', the biggest tree in the forest, in the local language 'Umululu'. I'm a hundred feet tall and a dozen feet thick at my roots. I support a million leaves and thousands of twigs and branches – home to myriads of creatures big and small. No wonder they elected me 'King of the Forest', I didn't want to be but, considering my size, I suppose it was inevitable.



Sad things have happened in my kingdom which for long was a realm of relative harmony. The weather changed, rains failed, temperature soared. Winds from the north whispered that humans were slaying the forests for profit, not re-planting and leaving nothing for regeneration. These profiteers have no concern for future generations neither mine nor their own. They invaded my kingdom, relentless as soldier ants, axing, sawing, chopping, burning. I saw my own family, relatives and friends cut down mercilessly. I was spared because I'm venerated as a Sacred Tree around here and also because I was just too big and tough for these miserable unbelieving loggers to bother with but, rooted to the spot, I couldn't help my kin.

I had a partner once, a lovely acacia tree. We had many children; she and they were amongst the first to fall. I'm the last. People come to me for my herbal fruits and medicinal roots and bark – healing for everything from heartache to toothache. These herb seekers never take anything without leaving a token of gratitude – a coin, a cob of maize, a bunch of flowers.

At dawn my leaves awaken and turn to face the rising sun. Throughout the day they follow its gilded orbit soaking in carbon and hydrogen and breathing out oxygen – purifying the air for all living creatures. Each one of us trees can account for forty tons of carbon in our lifetime. While living we provide a safe habitat for birds, bees, butterflies and millions of other creatures, not to mention our function of giving shade, attracting rain, holding moisture, reducing erosion and moderating floods.

By day a yellow-billed kite perches on my top branch and tells me how the world is doing – not too well just now, he says. By night a wise old owl sits there meditating soulfully. Lower down during the day great

concourses of birds: sun birds, black-eyed bulbuls, scarlet-winged turacos, hoarse horn bills, deep-voiced coucals, red bishops, green pigeons, yellow canaries and little blue wax bills enliven the air, and my life, with choruses and conversation, singing, whistling, humming, honking, hooting, fluting, croaking, laughing, crying. Adult monkeys too confer, usually courteously, in my hallowed havens while their little ones frolic on my bending boughs. Sad, all are doomed, as I am. Humans, the owl says, will destroy nature until they themselves become the endangered species and then they'll destroy one another in their greed, violence and sickness.

Despite the wisdom of Brother Owl, something in my deepest soul tells me that the Supreme Mysterious Tree, the sap of life, who lives, rejoices and suffers with us, will somehow see us through. Once before, so the story goes, he sent his son to correct our ways and lead us to a new life, a way of love. Some humans didn't like his simple ways which threatened theirs and, as they couldn't change him, they nailed him to one of my kind and left him there to die. Since then some trees have red sap, red bark and red berries. They and many other trees and species believe he never left us.

A Reflection by Fr Hugh O'Donnell

Fr Hugh O'Donnell is a poet and ministers with the Salesian community in the parish of Sean McDermott Street in Dublin. He has taken the beautiful photo on the right. Fr Hugh shares the following reflection with us entitled 'As the Postman Said':

Allow me to speak up for snail mail! For snail is not so slow and these little creatures with a shell know well their whereabouts and will accomplish all that's asked of them from life with due diligence and wisdom. Even an hour or two spent in their company, you suspect, would be awesome.

I received a letter yesterday (not an email!) which I have read more than once and will return to. My friend has taken the time. For as long as she wrote I guess she was thinking of me, of shared interests, some local news, mentioning how the journey is going, the sick and the mended, before signing off.

And recently Maurice came across some letters in a book of my grandfather's. They read like relics of another age now like the following one from April 1960 with its formality of expression and comforting tone that sound quaint to us; 'hereabouts the weather is seemingly settled and seasonable and that is as one wants it in relation to things generally'. Sixty years later, I say, 'bring back letter writing. Don't let the postal service die! Leave something for the next generation!'

'I don't give gifts anymore', says Rupert Sheldrake; 'I give experiences' as he tells of going on a walking pilgrimage to Canterbury with his grandson to mark the young man's birthday. A letter is a little pilgrimage from one heart to another, a Camino made by the hand as it moves deliberately down the page.

Earth Speaks – Coronavirus: The Inside Story – A Reflection by Sr Nellie McLaughlin

My dear People

I invite you to a heart-to-heart conversation, it is long overdue.

Let me explain what I mean.

I will be honest: all I want is to breathe freely.

I have been in and out of 'ICU' over many years now

It is taking a huge toll on my ability to do what I was born to do, what I love to do.

That is, to give and nurture life in all its diversity, beauty and complexity.



Perhaps you don't understand or have forgotten:

My burning heart, the sun, makes all life possible in endless generosity, warmth and abundance.

The crashing waves, meandering rivers and melodious streams water life, growth and freedom.

The invisible air blowing about in dancing leaves, sporting clouds and gentle breezes ensures that all of life is maintained vital, fresh and energetic.

The alchemy of my soil fertilizes life and flourishing in texture, taste and celebration.

And all the while the companionship of all beings, in the seas, on land and in the skies adds colour, music and grace to life as it continues to unfold in our amazing universe.

My resources are indeed abundant but finite.

You are now crippled with respiratory problems and frantically trying to source ventilators

I understand that feeling so well and wish to do anything to alleviate that dilemma.

But I need your co-operation

I am life's respiratory system par excellence and I need to keep healthy and functioning

I want to breathe freely so that all of life might continue to live and flourish.

BUT

You are not just gradually but systematically gagging me, choking my frantic efforts to live. I am literally dying to live and give life.

My breathing is becoming more and more intermittent and laboured, even excruciatingly painful.

I have tried to reach you for help for many years now...

There was that appalling rupture in my ozone layer- very painful for life's processes – but you got together and stitched a healing process which brought me such joy and renewed faith in my earth-family.

This was short-lived, however, as CO2 emissions escalate alarmingly, clogging my life-giving systems as I struggle moment by moment to create life and wellbeing for all creatures.

In recent years it is becoming more and more impossible for me to breathe freely....

I keep crying out appealing to your goodness born of life's innate spiritual depths.

I have endeavoured to get your attention in rapidly recurring life-changing phenomena, not of my making, eg. tsunamis, famines, droughts, floods, tornadoes, frightening ice-melt, choking oceans, deforestation, bush fires, wind storms, viruses. I naively thought that recent locusts swarms would alert you in their threatening multitudes and I even hoped that a child would manage to break open your obsessive/oppressive market- economy- armour but, alas, Greta too was ridiculed.

Coronavirus: Covid -19, perhaps another example of human interference, can, amid unbelievable suffering, become a much needed Spring/Easter awakening to a new, ever ancient, normal. A kairos, breakthrough opportunity, characterised by communal commitment to an economic and social recovery radically aligned to the Earth economy in its abundant yet finite richness. Let us together in trust weave this new dynamic of interdependent co-operation through healing and hope, generosity and reciprocity. May this become the signature tune for life unfolding in wellbeing, equality and prosperity for all beings in our Common Home.

The devastating loss of precious lives, the heroic efforts of front line staff – medical, political, educational, well-being, security, food, transport, domestic- must not be in vain. Believe me, I desperately, frantically, want to save lives but no longer have the stamina after so many years of depletion, especially in recent years.

When all is said and done - not when more is said than done - the choice is profound:

Please, please, please let me breathe freely by the way you live for only then will you and all beings enjoy the precious gifts of life, love and endless possibilities.

I await your response. In warm embrace, Planet Earth.

With kindest regards,

Karen Nicholson

Administrative Officer

info@ecocongregationireland.com

+353 (0) 89 974 0744

Rev Andrew Orr

Chair and Church of Ireland representative

andreworr1234@gmail.com

+353 (0) 87 419 6051

Catherine Brennan SSL

Roman Catholic representative

catherinebrennanssl38@gmail.com

+353 (0) 87 259 9071

Joe Furphy

Presbyterian representative

jsfurphy@aol.com

+44 (0) 28 9061 2311

Fran Brady

Religious Society of Friends representative

franbradywritings@gmail.com

+353 (0) 1 837 6464

Steven Johnston

Methodist representative

steven100537@gmail.com

+353 (0) 87 925 9565

Bill Patterson

Methodist representative

william.patterson@btinternet.com

+44 (0) 28 9145 0869