

Faith in Action Group
Ballineaspaig Parish, Cork
Application for Eco-Congregation Gold Award



December 2020

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Foreword

As Parish Priest and a member of the Faith in Action Group, I endorse the application for the Gold Medal Award.

The Faith in Action Group has many achievements and is engaged in many ongoing activities. They keep us informed and enthused about the connection between our environment and our Christian Faith. They help us to protect and enjoy our natural environment. *Laudato Si'* has become very familiar to us through their study and Lenten Talks. "Creation Time" is highlighted and celebrated as a time to "live our vocation to be protectors of God's creation".

May God bless their work and give them the courage to continue.

Fr. Bertie O'Mahony

Explanatory Note

Our initial Eco-Congregation Award was presented in October 2015 and some photographs of the presentation ceremony and subsequent celebrations are given overleaf. Since then the work of the Faith in Action Group has continued to focus increasingly on environmental issues.

Eco-Congregation Ireland encourages parishes and faith communities to take steps in four areas (practical, spiritual, community and global) to become more environmentally aware and eco-friendly. Accordingly this report has assigned each of our activities over the last five years to one of the four suggested headings. Activities are listed alphabetically in each of the four sections.

Inevitably this division into sections can create a false dichotomy. To take one example: our annual Harvest Sunday. Following a specially themed Harvest Mass, the community shares in the church grounds the home-grown fruit, vegetables, and home-made foods, which the Faith in Action Group has encouraged them to produce. Members of the congregation who wish to avail of these goods give a donation which is used to support our twin parish Turkwel in Kenya. The occasion is a perfect blend of the practical, spiritual, community and global aspects of our work all coming together. For the purposes of this report Harvest Sunday has been recorded under the Spiritual heading.

Award Ceremony & Celebrations: 4 October 2015





SPIRITUAL

Climate Justice Candle



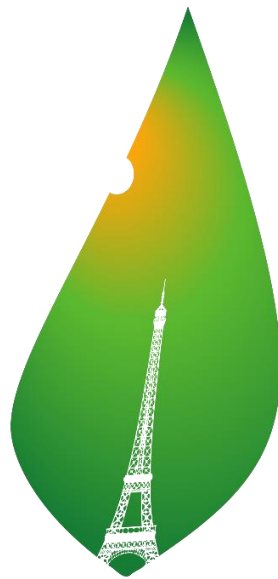
Sanctuary



Lenten Talk

The ECI Climate Justice Candle was present in the Church sanctuary over the weekend of the 25/26 March 2017. It was lit and special prayers for the environment were said at all the weekend Masses. It was also lit at our final Lenten talk. A short explanatory piece was published in the Bulletin. We estimated that up to 2,000 parishioners were involved in, or informed of, the initiative over the weekend. The Climate Justice Candle was again hosted by the parish on 23 September 2018.

Day of Prayer for the success of the Paris Talks (COP21 Paris 2015)



PARIS2015
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE
COP21·CMP11

Pope Francis called for a Day of Prayer on 29 November 2015, preceding the vital UN Conference on Climate Change, to ask for God's inspiration on our leaders.

In response, an Hour of Prayer was held in the parish Crypt from 5 – 6pm that day. An invitation was circulated to parishioners and to neighbouring parishes.

About 35 – 40 people participated in the hour of quiet reflection, readings, prayer, and music.

At the conclusion, copies of a leaflet with 55 suggestions for possible personal action in relation to climate change, together with copies of a leaflet on Climate Justice contributed by the SMA Justice Office, were made available.

Earth Hour

In recent years we have celebrated Earth Hour towards the end of March by inviting participants to come and share by candlelight in an hour of prayer, music, and reflection.

Sample Programme:

28 March 2015: 8.30-9.30 p.m.

8.30	Rosalie Moloney	Welcome
		Lighting of main candles
		Turning off of lights
	Genevieve Coleman	Opening Prayer
	Ruth McDonnell	Harp Music
	Gerrie O'Callaghan	Canticle of the Creatures
	Catherine McCarthy	Song
		<i>Silence</i>
8.50	Clare McCutcheon	Deep Peace
	Irene Higgins	A Prayer of Gratitude for Creation
	Ruth McDonnell	Harp Music
	Margaret Hassett	I see his Blood upon the Rose
	Catherine McCarthy	Song
		<i>Silence</i>
9.10	Máire Mulcahy	Prayer
	Ruth McDonnell	Harp Music
	David Clifford	In Praise of the Earth
		<i>Silence</i>
	Rosalie Moloney	Concluding Prayer

Eco-Parish Guide: Bringing Laudato Si' to Life

In March 2020 Ballineaspig parish appeared in the *Eco-Parish Guide: Bringing Laudato Si' to Life* as one of the parishes exhibiting “exemplary work from around the world”. The guide offers practical ways to care for creation and respond to the pope's call to action. It is a tool for pastors, staff, pastoral councils, and parishioners to combat climate change.

ECO-CONGREGATION AWARD

BALLINEASPAIG PARISH, Dennehy's Cross, Cork, Ireland

Ballineaspig's Faith in Action Group is following Eco-Congregation Ireland guidelines in responding to Laudato Si and Pope Francis' call for “ecological conversion.”

The parish, with the full support and encouragement of the parish priests, works to take an ecological approach to worship, lifestyle, property and finance management, community outreach, and care for the developing world. The parish was awarded an Eco award in 2015.

Programmes of talks, discussions, and workshops on aspects of the environment, climate change, and social justice are held each year. Articles and tips under the heading of “Creation Matters” are included

in the weekly parish bulletin. There is an ongoing focus on the plight of refugees and asylum seekers, and the parish has campaigned on their behalf. The parish promotes the availability and use of Fairtrade products and became Ireland's first Fairtrade Parish in 2006.

The recent magnificent refurbishment of the parish church used completely eco-friendly methods and materials. A biodiversity garden has been developed in the grounds. Special liturgical celebrations are held for Earth Hour and at Harvest time and a Harvest Festival has provided not only a celebration but a social occasion and an opportunity for fundraising.

For more than fifteen years Ballineaspig parish has linked with Turkwel Parish in Kenya. Through fundraising events, the parish has provided support for sinking

wells to provide water for drinking and irrigation of crops, building a health clinic and stocking it with medication and equipment, installing solar panels in clinic and schools, and running a feeding programme for children.

Máire, Chair of the Faith in Action Group, observed: “The Eco-Congregation resources, support, encouragement and interfaith involvement have greatly helped our focus and action on ecological justice.”



Photo courtesy of Ballineaspig Parish

Harvest Festival Celebration and Sharing

Starting in 2014, the parish has celebrated the Harvest on an Autumn Sunday. It has become an annual event since then.

The 10.30 Mass is celebrated with specially selected liturgy and music.

Following the 10.30 and 12.15 Masses a Bring and Buy is held out of doors (so far we have been blessed with the weather!). Parishioners are invited to bring produce from their homes and gardens, or locally grown, including fruit, vegetables, home baking, jams, flowers, and pot plants. Parishioners 'buy' items to bring home by giving a donation for Turkwel parish.

Fairtrade teas and coffees and home baking are available, so that parishioners can meet and chat. The whole celebration has become a great community builder.



Harvest Celebration



Harvest Celebration



More donations arrive



Fairtrade Refreshments

Harvest Celebration: Notice in Parish Bulletin 2015

Creation Matters

Harvest Thanksgiving and Sharing Celebration

The World Council of Churches has designated 1st September to 4th October as "Creation Time", when churches are encouraged to celebrate the wonders of Creation and to reflect on our responsibilities for planet earth.

For our celebration of *Creation Time* here in Ballineaspig, we will hold a

Special Harvest Thanksgiving and Sharing Celebration

next Sunday, 27th September.

At the 10.30 Mass, we will celebrate the gifts of creation through specially selected prayers and music. The church will be decorated with a harvest shrine and baskets of produce.



Before and after the 10.30 and 12.15 Masses we will hold an outdoor

Bring and Buy.

Weather permitting, we will set up tables outside the Parish Office (-or inside if it rains!).

Do you remember those seeds we distributed on World Environment Day in June? Now is your opportunity to share the fruits of their harvest with neighbours here in Cork and, by donating or buying produce, share with our **Kenyan** brothers and sisters in Turkwel, who are not blessed with our bounty.

Please **bring** along some home grown or locally sourced produce (vegetables, herbs, plants, flowers, fruits, jams, home baked bread, cakes etc.) and **buy** something to bring home. There will also be an opportunity for a chat with neighbours and friends over a cup of Fairtrade tea or coffee.

All the funds raised will go to the feeding programme in Turkwel.

Please come and bring a friend!

Faith in Action Group

Harvest Celebration: Letter from Parishioner

Dear Faith In Action Members,

Thank you very much for a wonderful summer of flowers! In May, I collected some seeds from your stand outside the church, after Mass.

Not being a green-fingered type, I more or less threw the seeds in a patch in my front garden and hoped for the best! Within a very short time I was delighted to see the shoots emerging. I thinned them, as best I could, watered them (before the hosepipe ban), and generally did my best for them. Well, I must say that I got immense enjoyment from watching the flowers that blossomed throughout the summer! It was always a surprise, because I wouldn't have been able to identify a flower from just the leaves of the plant. I think the biggest surprise of all was the sunflower!

Another positive outcome of the Faith in Action initiative was the abundance of bees that were attracted to the garden!

I'm not sure, but you may be having a "harvest celebration" soon. I am going away for a fortnight and might miss it. I'd like to contribute, so instead of actual flowers, I have been busy with my camera all summer, and I offer you these fruits of my labour!

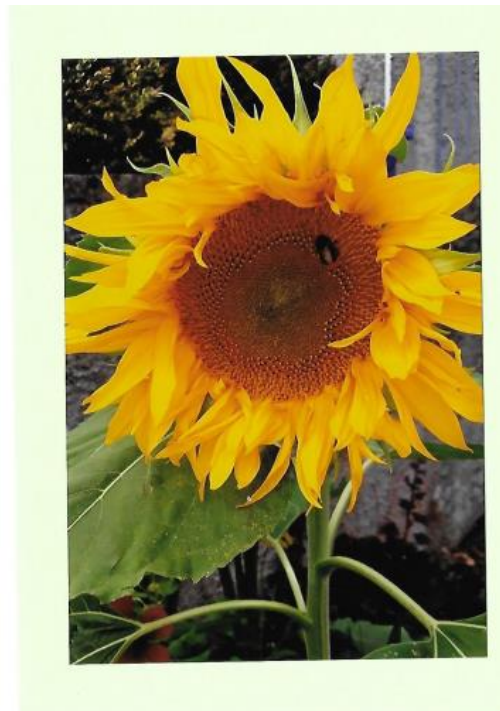
Feel free to do with them what you will. I hope they come in handy to someone. I'm sorry that I don't have individual covers for the cards and envelopes - I haven't been able to source them.

Kindest regards,

Margaret McCarthy.

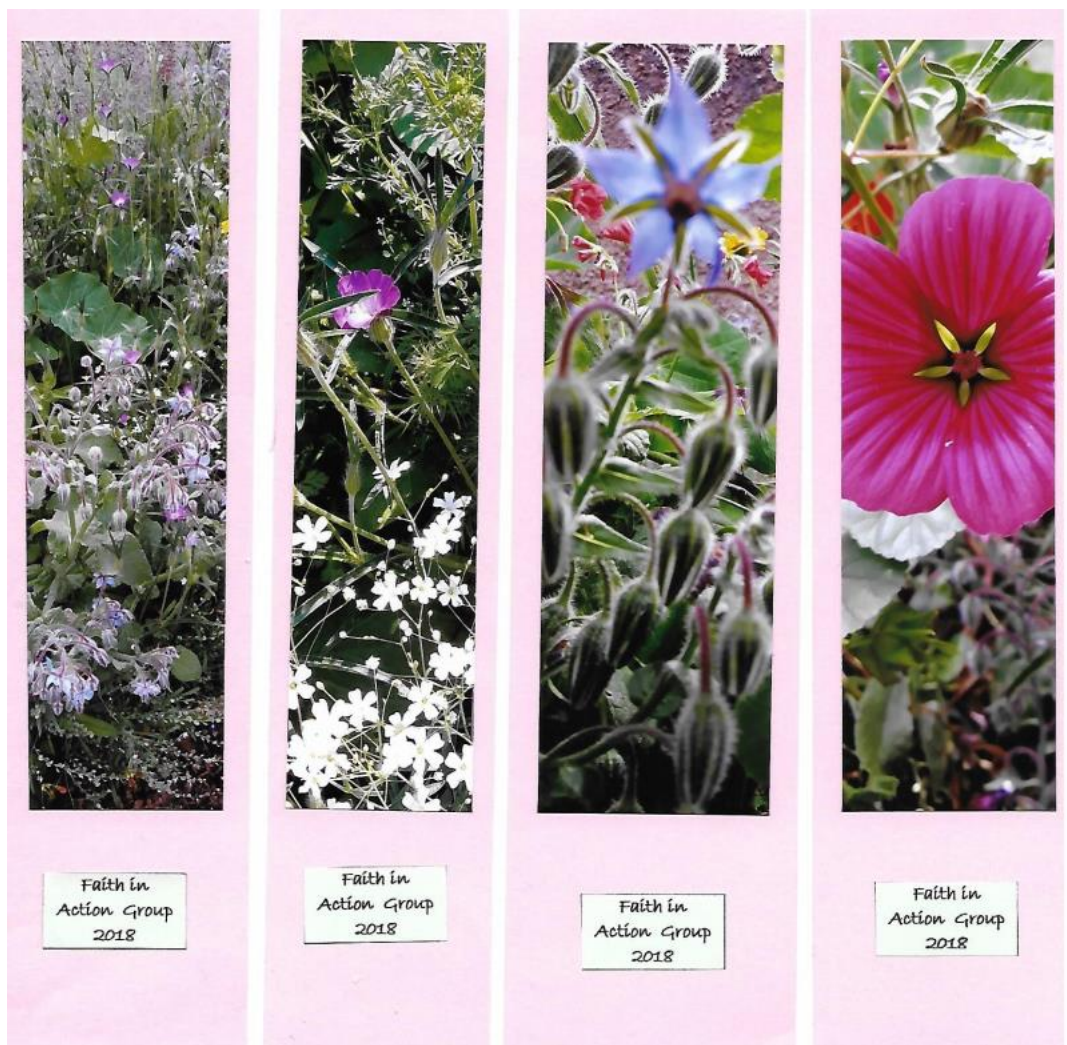
Harvest Celebration

*Cards made by Margaret McCarthy
from photographs of flowers grown from seed*



Harvest Celebration

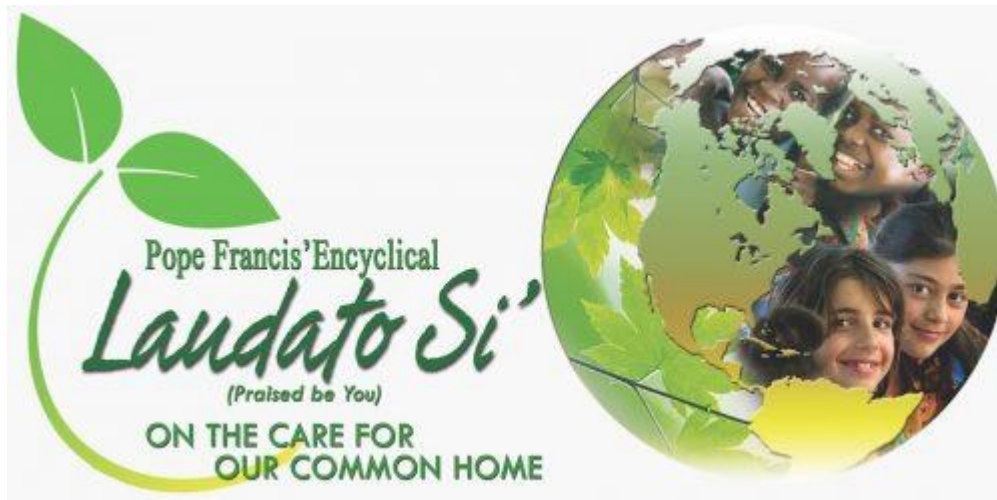
*Bookmarks made by Margaret McCarthy
from photographs of flowers grown from seed*



Harvest Celebration: *From Seed to Plate*



***Laudato Si'* – related activities**



Since Pope Francis wrote *Laudato Si'* in 2015, it touched people in a way that had a ripple effect not just locally but globally. He was following in the footsteps of many people before him in expressing the need to care for the earth – St Francis of Assisi, St Therese of Lisieux, St Kateri Tekakwitha – to name but a few. One person's actions are not going to stop the climate emergency. But one person's actions can change his or her life and in turn influence others and the communities in which they live. The Faith in Action group at Dennehy's Cross read, heard and reflected on ways to bring the message to life and action in our lives.

Lenten talks taking up this theme were planned and organized, focusing on our natural environment, raising awareness of the wonderful riches around us, and exploring how we can enhance and publicise our local natural amenities. Participants come to these talks from far and near; they have now become an annual event in our calendar and are looked forward to eagerly. A local river/park walk was enhanced and is being enjoyed by many. Patios, back and front gardens were rejuvenated with flowers, fruit, and vegetables. We are enjoying our new-found gifts and experiences; as new horticulturists and gardeners we exchange advice, seeds and indeed produce. Seed Sunday and Harvest Sunday have taken on a whole new lease of life.

PRACTICAL

Biodiversity Garden

In May 2015 it was agreed to create a biodiversity garden on a bank on the south side of the Church, where new boundary railings were being erected. It was hoped that this garden would both enhance the surroundings of the Church and would also serve as a model to inspire parishioners to create their own biodiverse plots. A list of suitable plants was drawn up and were carefully bought or foraged, while other plants were donated. A *meitheal* was formed to plant and care for the garden and members of the Faith in Action group spent many hours of planning, planting, and tending. Among the items planted were Nepeta (“catmint”) and Buddleia (“butterfly bush”), Honeysuckle, Ferns, Marjoram, Marigolds, Mullein and Bluebells, carrots, onions, and potatoes.

When the railings were extended in the autumn of 2015 there were suggestions that the garden could also be extended. In the spring of 2016 plans for the erection of External Stations of the Cross necessitated relocating the biodiversity garden and replacing it with low growing, low maintenance planting. There were also health and safety issues. In the event it was not feasible to relocate the garden and a valuable experiment came to an end – for the time being.





Creation Matters

The members of the Faith in Action Group contribute Eco Tips to the Parish Bulletin to be published whenever there is space. Since the Bulletin has been reduced to a single page there are not as many opportunities for publicity as heretofore.

Below is a recent example and also the list of Eco Tips that was sent to the parish secretary from which she could choose tips for inclusion in the Bulletin during 2018 and 2019.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Creation Matters</u></p> <p>Transport is responsible for 20% of Ireland's total greenhouse gas emissions. If we reduce our maximum driving speed to 80km/hr, we can reduce our carbon dioxide emissions by 30%, as well as reducing particulate matter and nitrogen oxides emissions ! This would not only benefit the environment, but would make life safer, reduce stress levels and reduce fuel costs.</p> <p>It takes a conscious effort to change our driving habits, but there's so much to be gained. For more, see www.80max.ie</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Faith in Action Group</p>
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Parish Bulletin: 27 September 2020

Thought for the Day – and for Life

- Walk, cycle, or take public transport where possible. This will save you money, reduce energy use and CO₂ emissions, and improve your cardiovascular health.
- Look into carpooling.
- Turn off lights when you leave the room.
- Don't turn on lights at all for as long as you can—open your curtains and enjoy natural light.
- Take a break from screen time and take a hike.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Switch to chemical-free cleaning products or make your own eco-friendly cleaning products.
- Don't run the water unless you are using it or catching it in a bucket for use.
- Only do full loads of washing.
- Fix dripping taps.
- Place a brick or a two-litre plastic bottle filled with water in your toilet cistern to reduce toilet water usage by 20%.

- Fix a water butt to a down pipe to collect rainwater for the garden.
- Production of plastic bottles uses petroleum and massive amounts of energy. So, use tap water rather than bottled!
- Reuse scrap paper. Print on two sides, or let your kids colour on the back side of used paper.
- Wear an extra jumper or use a rug / blanket before you resort to turning on (or up) the heat.
- Reusing packaging material saves more energy than recycling. By avoiding extra packaging, you save both energy and landfill space.
- Lower your thermostat in the winter.
- Instead of using countless plastic bags to hold food items, like leftovers, use reusable glass or porcelain storage containers. They're safe for the microwave, oven, and dishwasher (minus the plastic lids), plus they don't leach harmful chemicals into your food.
- Scrape dishes rather than rinsing before adding them to the dishwasher. Today's washers can handle it! Be sure to run the washer only when full.
- Support local and organic farmers with your food purchases. It's better for the earth, air, and water, and for our bodies. One kilo of New Zealand apples accounts for its own weight in CO₂ emissions by the time it has been transported to Ireland.
- Change your light bulbs to compact fluorescents when they burn out. CFLs use a fraction of the energy that incandescents use, which reduces greenhouse gases; they last much longer; and they'll save you money on your utility bills.
- Forget ammonia-based window cleaners! The windows in your home can be effectively cleaned with 4 tablespoons lemon juice mixed with a half-gallon of water. Other effective cleaners for glass and mirrors are rubbing alcohol and witch hazel.
- Protect Wildlife: Human activity is leading to extinction of endangered species and habitats. Protect places like beaches and forests that are habitats for animals.
- When a hot serving dish or glass of water has marred the surface of a wood table, you can quickly get rid of the mark by making a thin paste of salad oil or lemon oil and salt. Wipe the paste on, then lightly buff the area as you wipe it off with a soft cloth.
- Switch to chemical-free cleaning products or make your own eco-friendly cleaning products. For example, your basic vinegar and water solution is perfect for cleaning most types of bare floors in your home. Mix up one cup vinegar with one gallon warm water (be sure it's warm!) and mop it onto a ceramic tile, linoleum, vinyl, or wood floor. There is no need to rinse afterward -- saving both time and water.

- Turn the thermostat for your living areas down to 20°C. The temperature in hallways and bedrooms should be cooler, ideally between 15-18°C.
- Use the radiator valve to turn the temperature down or off in rooms that you do not use a lot.
- Set your hot water thermostat to between 60-65°C, to make sure that you do not overheat your water.
- Most of the energy used by a dishwasher and washing machine is for water heating. Run them on a lower temperature setting and save on your energy costs. Wash clothes at 30°C if they aren't particularly dirty.
- Keep your fridge's temperature at between 2–3°C for the best performance. This keeps your food safe to eat and avoids freezing (and ruining) your fruit and veg. The freezer should be set to -15°C.
- Set the times that your heating comes on and off so that it fits with your daily routine.
- Many homeowners are investing in smarter heating controls. These are often offered by their energy supplier. They control both time and temperature and are easily programmable to your daily and weekly routines all from your smartphone. SEAI offer a grant of €700 to help you finance this upgrade.
- An immersion timer can be really useful for ensuring you have hot water only when you need it. Then keep that hot water warm with insulation or a lagging jacket on the immersion.
- Turn the heating off when you leave the house or if you go away. Remember, your radiators will continue to heat your home for some time after the heating has been turned off.
- Switch off all your appliances at night and when you are not home. You should turn off your computer whenever you are not going to use it for more than an hour.
- Use a power strip which means that at night or when you leave the house, you can easily unplug your devices at once.
- When your food is nearly cooked, turn off the rings/oven and use the built-up heat to finish cooking your food.
- Hold off switching on lights in the evening until absolutely necessary.
- Position your furniture so you make the most of natural light.
- Replace failed light bulbs with energy efficient options, in particular LED lights. Select the lowest wattage bulb needed to light the room/area and consider the size of the space and how much natural light the space gets.

- Try to use the washing machine and dishwasher at times when there is lower energy demand and avoid turning it on between 7-9 in the morning and 5-7 at night. This may not save you money but will help avoid excessive CO₂ emissions from power stations.
- Tumble dryers are big energy guzzlers so dry clothes on a clothes horse or washing line.
- Don't leave the fridge door open for too long while getting food. For every 10–20 seconds the door is open it takes 45 minutes for the fridge to cool down to its original temperature.
- Don't put warm or hot food straight into the fridge or freezer. The fridge or freezer has to work extra hard and draw more energy to cool it down. Thawing food in the fridge is better for keeping your food safe to eat and keeps the fridge cool.
- Close doors between rooms that are heated and unheated to keep the heat in.
- Check windows, keyholes, and doors for draughts of cold air and plug them. Unused fireplace? A chimney balloon will keep the draughts out and the heat in.
- Close curtains to keep heat in, but open them in the morning to let the heat of the sun in.
- A shower typically uses 20% of the energy compared to a full bath, so keep the bath as a treat.
- Don't leave the hot tap running - you are pouring energy and money down the drain.
- Keep your oven door shut and use the space well. Batch cooking saves you time and energy, especially if you have a busy lifestyle.
- Don't let the heat escape by covering your pots and pans with a lid. The lid keeps the heat in and reduces condensation in the kitchen. Use the right sized hob for your pan - the closer the match, the less energy you use.
- Don't boil full kettles for one cup of tea, but do make sure you have enough water to cover the element.

Gardening and Recycling Workshops and Visits

Gardening/Recycling events have become a standard part of our annual programme, open to parishioners and to neighbouring communities. 2015 saw two workshops led by Jan van Soest, Organic Horticulturist: one on raised bed planting and one on waste minimisation and composting. The workshops were very worthwhile and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.



26 May 2015: Those attending were expected to lend a hand.



In 2016 a workshop on garden composting was held on 12 May. This was attended by people from Ballineaspig and neighbouring parishes. Two weeks later Mary Walsh, Environmental Awareness Officer, Cork City Council, gave a presentation on Waste Minimisation and Recycling on Tuesday, 24 May, in the Church Crypt.

In 2017 and 2018 gardening demonstrations on topics such as patio gardening, spring gardening, and autumn gardening, were held in conjunction with Atkins Garden World. 2019 saw a change of venue when a visit was made on 1 May to the Field of Dreams, which is a life and skills training centre for adults with Down Syndrome. Courses here include horticulture, catering, hospitality, and admin skills. The visit to the Field of Dreams included a 30-minute tour of the 3-acre site and polytunnels with a chance to meet the students at their horticultural activities. The tour was followed by a cup of tea. The visit to the Field of Dreams was very worthwhile and enjoyed by all participants.



*1 May 2019:
Visit to the Field of Dreams*



*Putting theory into
practice:
Leaf mulching in a city
garden*

Seed Sunday

In June 2014 we celebrated World Environment Day by distributing free seeds to parishioners following each Mass. The seeds are a selection of easily grown vegetables and flowers. They encourage people, particularly families, to become involved in “growing their own”. Some parishioners have been able to bring their homegrown produce to the Harvest Festival.

Seed Sunday has now become an annual event on the parish calendar.



Sustainable Energy Community



In 2018 we joined the national Sustainable Energy Community Network. A Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) is a community working together to develop a sustainable energy system.

With the help of a Mentor appointed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), we applied to SEAI for funding to commission an Energy Master Plan for Ballineaspig Parish and surrounding area, focusing initially on carrying out detailed Building Energy Ratings (BERs) of a number of houses in the parish and surrounding areas. Our application was successful, and we were granted €10,000 to enable us to appoint an energy consultancy to carry out the assessments, analyse the results and present us with a register of energy saving opportunities in respect of all the premises audited. Our aim was to extrapolate the lessons gleaned from these premises and share them with the wider community. We sent a Request for Quotation to three local energy companies. Cork Energy Rating Company won the tender.

We held a public information meeting in March 2019 to brief everyone on the scheme and to enable us to decide on next steps (e.g., which homes to select for BERs and what follow on actions can be achieved). The meeting was very well attended by people from the wider Bishopstown area.

Sixteen householders opted to have BER assessments carried out. As part of our project, Cork Energy Rating Company also carried out BERs assessments of six apartments in Áras Leon, Bishopstown Senior Citizens Housing Association sheltered housing complex, run by Bishopstown Lions Club.

On completion of the BERs, Cork Energy Rating Company produced an Energy Master Plan (EMP) for Ballineaspig, based on a combination of desk research using publicly available data from the Central Statistics Office, SEAI and elsewhere plus the field research from the BER process.

In November 2019 we held a meeting to present the findings to those who had BERs done. The meeting was also attended by our Mentor, Conor O'Brien, by Stephen McGovern of Cork Energy Rating Company and by John O'Leary of The Energy Hub, a not-for-profit organisation that provides project management

to energy improvement projects. Participants were given their detailed energy audit results, which set out costed options for them to achieve sample increases in BER ratings. It was agreed that those interested in pursuing energy upgrades would be put in contact with the Energy Hub to discuss their options. This process started in January 2020 but has not progressed due to the Covid crisis.

As a Sustainable Energy Community, we also facilitated Bishopstown Community Association to obtain grants for two of their community premises, Wilton Park House (a senior citizens facility) and Bishopstown House (used by scouts and by a community playschool) which enabled them to upgrade their lighting and heating, with a projected primary energy saving of 40,000 kWh per annum and a cost saving of €2,751 per annum.

The process involved in becoming an SEC is quite challenging for a small parish group. In order to secure grant approval from SEAI, we had to submit confirmation from Revenue that we were VAT exempt and complete an extensive suite of forms, which included an SEC Network application form, a very detailed partnership application form, a community charter, and a declaration of financial resources. This latter requirement, which requires an SEC to commit to making funds available up front to meet the first milestone costs of the project, might present an insurmountable difficulty for some community groups; we were fortunate to have financial backing from our parish.

Once grant approval was received, we conducted a tendering and selection process to appoint an energy consultant. Following this appointment, there was a considerable amount of further work required: arranging public meetings; disseminating information before and after the meetings; agreeing the scope of work to be carried out; liaising with the participants and consultant while the work progressed; submitting milestone reports to SEAI; applying to SEAI for stage payments made to the consultant; issue of BER Certs to participants; organisation of meeting to launch the EMP; follow up with those interested in energy upgrades.

Fortunately, we had an excellent mentor, Conor O'Brien, who was always available to guide us through the process. We also have a wide range of administrative and academic skills in our group to draw upon.

Like other SEC groups, we have a concern about the technical capacity of SECs to progress Energy Master Plans to the next level necessary to achieve measurable results. Notwithstanding the difficulties, we remain firmly committed to the fundamental aims of SEC networks, and once Covid-19 restrictions have been removed, we will review and reframe our plans for developing a sustainable energy system in our area, either from within or without the SEC structure.

Vegetarian Cookery Demonstrations



Vegetarian Cookery Demonstration: 21 March 2018

There is growing awareness worldwide that what we choose to eat has major implications for our energy consumption and so for global warming.



6.30pm
CIT Tourism & Hospitality Dept.,
CIT Campus, Rossa Avenue

**VEGETARIAN COOKERY
DEMONSTRATION**

Here is an ideal opportunity to discover new vegetarian recipes to try at home. For our health's sake & in defence of our climate, it's a great idea to cut back on the amount of meat we eat. The Faith in Action Group of Ballineaspig Parish organised this demonstration in conjunction with CIT Tourism & Hospitality Dept.

Booking essential.
T: Clare 087 649 2554



It takes approximately ten times as much energy to produce animal protein (e.g., beef, lamb, poultry) as it does to produce the equivalent amount of plant protein. So switching to vegetarian foods makes a real contribution to reducing our carbon footprint.

Recognising this, we organised a Vegetarian Cookery Demonstration in conjunction with the Cork Institute of Technology on 6 April 2017 and again on 21 March 2018. The Tourism and Hospitality demonstration kitchen was packed to capacity on each occasion and there was a great response. There was a break mid-evening, where participants were treated to refreshments, including some delicious baking produced by the catering students earlier in the day. In both years the event reached a wider audience through its inclusion in the Cork Lifelong Learning Festival programme.

COMMUNITY

Christmas Gifts for Children in Direct Provision



Some gifts donated in 2019 & 2020

For the last five years our Faith in Action group has organised a scheme of providing Christmas gifts for young children in Direct Provision centres. The key to our involvement is that a sister of Mercy, Sr. Frances, was already working with parents of young families in the Kinsale Road Direct Provision centre so basic information about the ages and gender of young children was available to us.

Armed with that knowledge, our ever-diligent secretary, Clare, prepared a set of gift cards each with the first name, age and gender of a particular child of primary school age or younger. These cards together with an explanatory note were made available by members of Faith in Action at the church entrances at weekend Masses. Parishioners who wished to be involved in the gift giving scheme were invited to take a card, buy, and wrap an appropriate gift in the price range 15 to 20 euro and to return it with the card attached to the parish office or sacristy within a certain time. The response has been tremendous and the cards are always taken very quickly. This enabled the donation of 55 gifts to children in the Kinsale Road Direct Provision centre in December 2015, to 45 children in 2016 and to 47 more in 2017. The gifts are delivered by members of Faith in Action under the guidance of Sr. Frances.

Some adjustments have been necessary to deal with the fact that not all cards are returned but on such occasions other parishioners have generously donated to fill the gap. Since 2018 those who take a card are asked for their names and contact numbers which facilitates follow-up. 45 gifts were distributed to the children in direct provision at Ashbourne House in 2018, and in December 2019 49 gifts were delivered on 20th to the same centre just before a Christmas party.

Covid-19 demanded further adjustments in 2020. Parishioners were informed by email and were invited to contact our secretary for details if they wished to buy a gift for a child in direct provision. 50 gifts were distributed at the Ashbourne House centre. Christmas is a time of heightened generosity and this simple scheme touches the hearts of many.

Community Environment Action Fund



Since 2014 we have made successful annual applications to Cork City Council for a grant from the Community Environment Action fund (under the umbrella of Local Agenda 21) which promotes sustainable development by supporting small-scale environmental projects at local level. To date we have received grants of €7,050.

This has been a valuable two-way link. On the one hand we have gained useful funds to offset the costs of our various projects. We have also benefitted from the annual application process which reminds us of such criteria as partnership arrangements; awareness raising potential; practical promotion of good environmental practice and sustainable living; dealing with issues common to other communities which involve solutions that can be applied elsewhere. On the other hand, when most applicants are secular groups, our application reminds the Council of the important contribution local Churches and religious groups can make to environmental issues. A Council official has even attended some of our Lenten Talks.

Curraheen River Walk

Within the parish boundaries there is a fully paved, wheelchair accessible walk through wild parkland along by the River Curraheen. It is part of a much longer walk running all the way from Curraheen, eastwards to the City Centre or westwards to Ballincollig (shown in red on the map below).



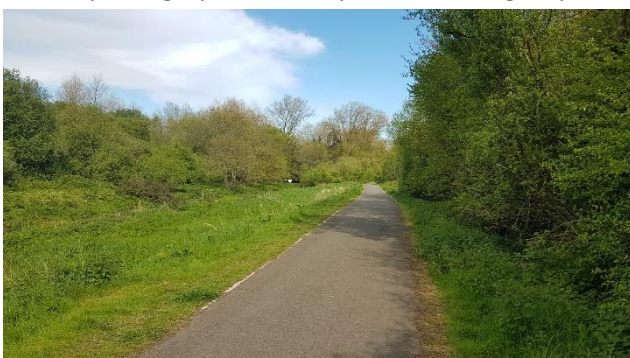
1. Map/Information Boards

The walk, which is very well maintained by Cork City Council and by Bishopstown Tidy Towns Committee, contains a wealth of trees and plants, is host to a wide variety of flora and fauna, and includes many natural and historical places of beauty. In 2017, we decided to explore the possibility of identifying and documenting these, and erecting wildlife information boards/nature signs at the start and end points of the local walk, in partnership with Cork City Council.

We successfully applied to Cork City Council for funding for these information boards under the Local Agenda 21 Environment Partnership Fund. In subsequent meetings with them, we agreed to develop a map board that would show the path and many of the landmarks, features and facilities that were to be found between the Curraheen Road and the carpark in the Lee Fields.

A parishioner who has great experience in mapping provided us with a detailed map of this section of the walk. Display maps in various locations (Ballincollig Powder Mills and Doneraile Park) were studied to further develop our concept of what the display map should contain and how it would best be presented.

We got input from the Bishopstown Tidy Towns committee, who also provided us with some stunning nature photographs taken by one of their group.

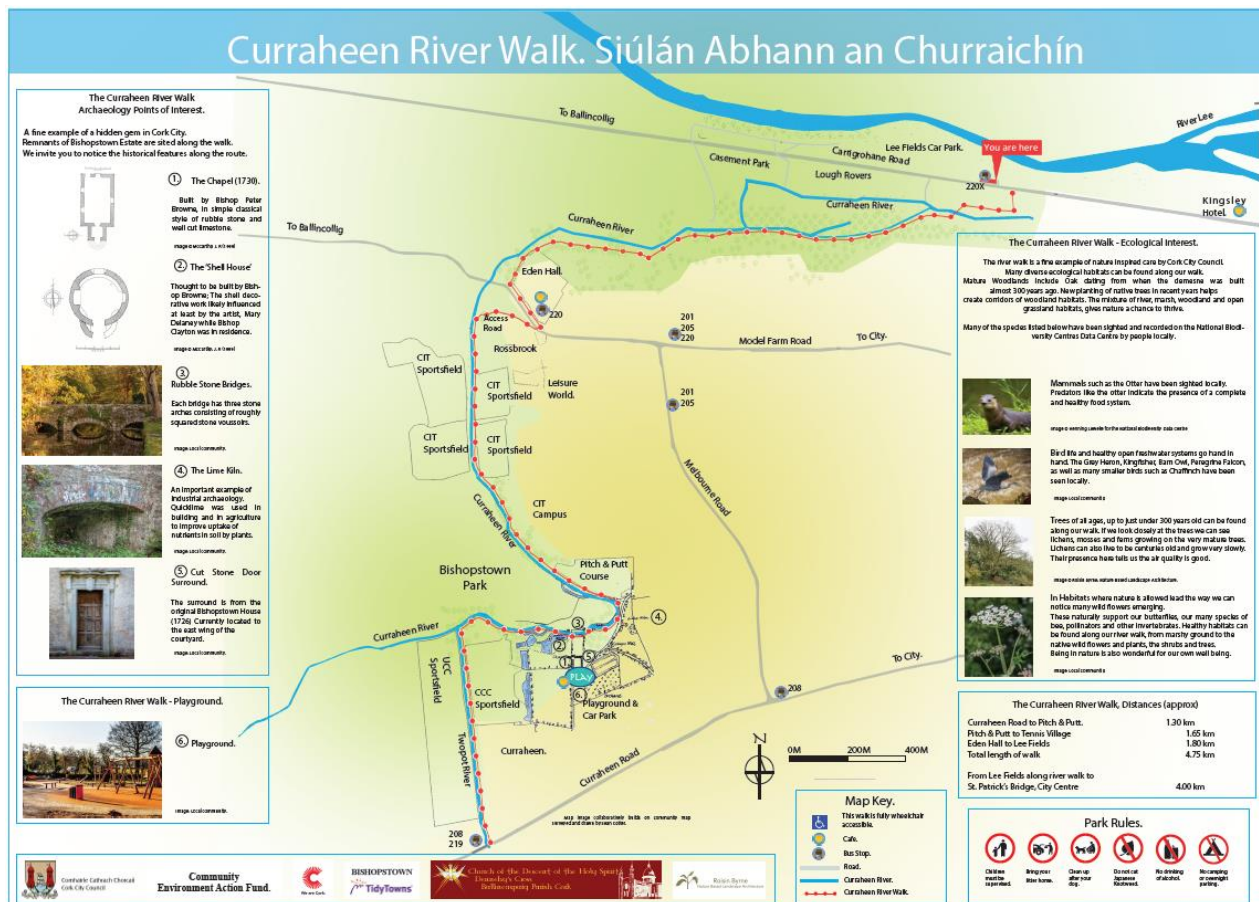




Curraheen River Walk | Curraheen River Walk (Irish)



This was submitted to Cork City Council in mid-2019. As this is the first map/information board to be erected on any of the Cork City walkways, they have now retained a Landscape Architect, Róisín Byrne, to advise them. Her recent drafts have been shared with us by the City Council and we have given feedback on each occasion, suggesting various corrections, amendments, and improvements. The following is the latest version (v.16).



We hope that the first board will be finalised and erected shortly.

Intergenerational Conference on Climate Justice



On 13 November 2019, a member of the Faith in Action Group participated in the Cork Conference on Intergenerational Climate Justice which was held in the City Hall. The conference provided an opportunity for city and county schools and interested adults to share ideas on climate justice between generations. President Michael D. Higgins gave a keynote address on Climate Change.

The conference was organised by the Society of African Missions (SMA), Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles (OLA), Saint Anne's Shandon Eco-Congregation, and Blackpool Parish/North Cathedral Justice group.

Over 200 people attended, half of whom were teenagers. Adults from the Wilton Justice group, Elders for Earth, and others from around Cork also participated.

Interaction with other Eco-Congregation Groups

Involvement with other Eco-Congregation groups is an important and still developing aspect of our work. To date this has included co-operation with individual parishes, parish unions or religious orders; with groups of like-minded parishes; and with a whole region, as in the Trócaire Conference in Carlow in March 2020. (For details of the last, see “Promoting the Ideals of Eco-Congregation Ireland” on page 41.)

One member of our group, who is a member of the SMA Justice Group, was involved in the development of the Eco-Congregation policy of the SMA order and is also a member of the Wilton Justice group in Wilton parish. A member of our group has also interacted with and advised a group in the Rochestown/Douglas parish who are in the process of becoming an Eco-Parish. Two members liaised with and offered advice on arranging practical sessions to a representative of the Douglas Union of Parishes Eco-Congregation committee.

Some activities in the Wilton and Ballineaspig parishes, such as the Lenten talks, are shared. A number of our group participated in a gathering of Eco-Parishes in the South Parish in October 2019. Other shared activities include participation with members from other Eco-Congregation groups, as well as with members of the public, in some of the Climate Marches held in Cork city.



Following the Eco-Congregation Ireland online conference on “Planetary Emergency: How to Have Hope” on 3 October 2020 which was attended by a member of the Faith in Action Group, one of the speakers, Denise Gabuzda, a member of Cork Quaker Meeting, who has been involved for many years in Eco-Quakers Ireland, was invited to give one of our Lenten Talks. Professor Gabuzda accepted the invitation and her talk will take place by Zoom on 9 March 2021.

Lenten Talks

2016–2020/21

Since 2016 our Lenten Talks have responded to the challenge laid down by Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter of 24 May 2015, *Laudato Si'*, by striving to raise awareness of the need to care for our planet, highlighting issues related to climate and social justice. To this end we have drawn on the expertise of local and international speakers.

2016

Theme: Social Justice

16 February	Justin Kilcullen, former director of Trócaire, spoke about global climate, justice, and sustainable development goals.
23 February	Paul Healy, Trócaire's country director in Kenya, spoke on climate justice and climate migration, with specific emphasis on Kenya.
1 March	Fr Seán Healy, SMA, Director of Social Justice Ireland, spoke on social justice with particular reference to Ireland.
8 March	Dáithí Ó hAodha of our Faith in Action group tackled the need to respond to the foregoing talks in a practical manner.

2017

Theme: The wonder of creation – our response

7 March	Professor John Breen spoke on the life of bees.
21 March	Bishop Tim Carroll, SMA, shared his personal passion for Cosmology with us.
28 March	Fr Declan Mansfield, PP, focussed on Scripture references to the wonders of the universe as God's creation

2018

Theme: The wonders of creation – our response

20 February	Kevin Corcoran, environmental biologist, spoke on Trees and the environment.
27 February	Talk rescheduled owing to severe weather.
8 March	Micheál Lehane, Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, addressed us.
13 March	Professor John Breen addressed us again, this time on Ants.

2019

Theme: The wonders of creation – our response

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 19 March | Fr Diarmuid Ó Murchú, 'Keeping hope alive in our troubled times'. |
| 26 March | Dr Rosalie Moloney, "'And God saw that it was good": the Book of Genesis and tomorrow's world'. |
| 2 April | Sr Nellie McLoughlin, RSM, 'The wonder of creation: the miracle of life'. |
| 9 April | Dr Tom Kelly, 'Night train – the extraordinary world of bird migration'. |

2020

Theme: Our common home – our responsibility

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 3 March | Sr Nora McNamara, MSHR, spoke on 'Nourishing humanity'. Her pioneering work and success with preserving the white yam from extinction in Nigeria offers great hope for future food security in that country. |
|---------|--|

2021

Our national lockdown owing to the Corona virus necessitated rescheduling our remaining 2020 speakers to 2021, when these talks will take place, virtually if necessary, on the Tuesdays of Lent:

Gerry Forde, 'Integral ecology in *Laudato Si'*'.

Professor Emer Rogan, 'Whales and dolphins in Irish waters'.

Ann Twomey, local historian, 'Mary Elmes'.

Professor Denise Gabuzda, 'Looking with hope to the future'.

Our Lenten Talks last for 50 minutes, followed by time for questions and Fairtrade refreshments.

All talks have been widely publicised in local parishes and schools and in local newsletters and are well attended. We now have 194 on our mailing list.

The speakers were well prepared and very well received, as the talks have been informative, stimulating, delightful and challenging.

Parish Walks

The Faith in Action Group organised two parish walks in the summer and autumn of 2018 to highlight, in the first instance, the natural beauty which is to be found on our own doorstep, and in the second, to place the spotlight on the built heritage of the area.

The River Walk

On a beautiful summer's evening, 7 June 2018, the group assembled close to Inchiggagin Bridge, on the north-western boundary of the parish. They proceeded to walk beside the Curraheen River in the direction of the city. Dr. Tom Kelly, the renowned Zoologist/Ornithologist/Biologist, led the group and to the fascinated audience explained the topography of the area, its flora, fauna, and wildlife. He pointed out that the Curraheen river is but a small tributary of the River Lee and that its alluvial rich soil supports a wide and diverse ecological system, e.g., in the riverbed, one finds willow and alder trees and hazel; on the south slope, planted species, such as beech and oak, and parasites abound. On the evening he identified many of our common birds by their song (jay, blackbirds, etc.), and spoke of the lifespan and migratory patterns of our birds. The audience was very reluctant to end a most pleasant and enjoyable evening.



Dr Tom Kelly



Parish Walk

History Walk

At the western boundary of our parish lies a municipal park, known locally as Murphy's Farm, so named for the last family to farm this land. It comprises seventy-five acres, now laid out in riverside walks, playing pitches, a pitch and putt course, a tennis club, a children's playground, a Foróige Youth Club, a Scout Hall, a Community Playgroup, and a Special Needs School. It is a very popular walking and exercise area.

However, not too many people who frequent Murphy's Farm are aware of its rich historical past. In order to rectify this situation, the Faith in Action Group acquired the services of Ms Mary Sleeman, the Archaeologist with Cork County Council, to conduct a walking tour of the Farm on 14 October 2018. She explained that Murphy's Farm/Bishopstown House originally formed part of the manorial lands of the Church of Ireland bishops of Cork and Ross, whose cathedral seat is St. Finbarre's at Gillabbey, some three miles distant to the east. Starting from the old courtyard area, Mary led the assembled group to view the architectural features which remain of Dr. Peter Browne's demesne. We learnt that in 1721 Dr Browne had set aside 118 acres of land for the purpose of building a summer residence for himself and his successor bishops, that he landscaped the gardens and installed water features at an estimated cost of 2,000 pounds from his own resources. The works were completed between 1726 and 1730.

We saw the carved limestone lintel of the original house, (now forming the doorway of Bishopstown farm house), the remaining walls of the old kitchen garden and orchard, the Bishop's well, the ruins of the chapel, the walled garden with bridges over the Curraheen River, the Bishop's Walk leading to the Shell House/Folly, which is thought to have served as study/retreat for Bishop Browne, the lime kiln, the diverted river to form ponds, now somewhat overgrown, and pieces of the cobbled courtyard which bore the Bishop's coat of arms. A very informative walk, it was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.



Bishop Peter Browne

Painting by Hugh Howard (Trinity College Dublin collection)

Promoting the Ideals of Eco-Congregation Ireland at the Trócaire Conference in Carlow, March 2020

Early in 2020 Sr. Catherine encouraged us to assist in the facilitation of a workshop at the Trócaire Conference in Carlow on 4 March. The idea of the conference was to equip parishes to bring *Laudato Si'* to life in their local parish communities. As a group we prepared a PowerPoint presentation outlining the history and the range of projects we were involved in over the years.

The conference at the Dolmen Hotel was mainly targeted at those from parishes in the Kildare and Leighlin, Ossory, and Ferns Dioceses. In total there were over 250 participants from the south-east in attendance.

Speakers included:

- Climatologist Professor John Sweeney talking about “From Climate Science to Climate Justice”;
- Dr Lorna Gold of Trócaire providing an introduction to the contents of *Laudato Si'*;
- Pádraic Fogarty of the Irish Wildlife Trust talking about “Responding to biodiversity breakdown in Ireland”;
- Fr Dermot Lane talking about “Ecology and Spirituality in *Laudato Si'*”.

After lunch there was a series of six workshops, and each was presented twice. Sr. Catherine and FIA facilitated a workshop entitled “**The Eco-Parish Award**”. The workshop provided information on what was involved in signing up to the Eco-Parish award, as well as the wider work of Eco-Congregation:

- How to become an Eco-Parish and enter the Eco-Parish award scheme;
- How to create spaces for biodiversity on church grounds;
- How to link your parish with local authorities;
- How to conduct an energy audit of Church buildings;
- How to access community grants for eco-projects.



our

In association with

trócaire

KANDLE



ROMAN CATHOLIC
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
OF IRELAND



Traveller Visibility Group



In 2014 the Traveller Visibility Group's Fairhill Women's Group in Cork created a seven-metre-long rosary beads depicting their personal experiences, to raise awareness around improving the health status of Travellers. The rosary beads used the Social Determinants of Health model to tell their message, highlighting many day-to-day factors which affect health. This work was supported by Jean O'Donoghue (Traveller Community Health Worker) and facilitated by traveller artist Leanne McDonagh (Cork ETB Art & Creativity Tutor). The completed rosary beads were put on display in the Traveller Culture Exhibit in Cork Public Museum during the 2014 Cork Lifelong Learning Festival.



Jean O'Donoghue

Members of the Faith in Action group saw the exhibition at the Museum and proposed that the Visibility Group be invited to display the beads in the Church. It was put on display in the sanctuary during Masses on the weekend of 23rd/24th May 2015 and Traveller families living in the parish were invited to attend. At the 12.15 Mass Jean O'Donoghue on behalf of the Fairhill Women's Group spoke very movingly about its making and then the beads were blessed by the parish priest. It was the first time Jean had spoken like this in public and the beads and her speech were very positively received, both after the Mass and during the subsequent refreshments in the Crypt.

GLOBAL

Draft National Mitigation Plan Consultation



In 2017 the Draft National Mitigation Plan to transition Ireland to a low carbon economy by 2050 was the subject of a publication consultation. The following submission was made.

Draft National Mitigation Plan

Consultation Response from Faith in Action Group, Ballineaspig Parish,

Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Dennehy's Cross, Cork

Introduction:

The Paris Agreement, which came into force on 14th Nov 2016, is an international agreement to restrict global temperature change to below 2 degrees C above pre-industrial levels, and if possible to 1.5 degrees C.

Ireland signed up to the Paris Agreement, and agreed to meet legally-binding targets for GHG emission reduction by 2020 and 2030.

Ireland's 2020 target:

- for non-Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) emissions is to be 20% below those of 2005
- renewable energy sources to increase to 16% of total energy sources
- a 20% improvement in our energy efficiency

Latest Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) projections that our emission target will not be met and is likely to be 6% versus the target of 20%.

Only 9% of our energy requirements of 2015 were met from renewable sources.

Additional measures are urgently needed, especially in the agriculture and transport areas; Agricultural emissions are projected to increase by 6 – 7% by 2020; and Transport emissions by 10 – 16%.

The National Mitigation Plan is to be finalised for submission to Government for June 2017.

Observations:

No consideration is given in the Draft Plan to the reality that we will probably not meet our legally binding targets.

- This will certainly lead to financial penalties;
- We will not be doing our fair share, and will be parasitic on the work of those countries which do meet their targets;
- We will be contributing to further global climate injustice, particularly experienced in less-developed countries.

We need to identify the costs of NOT meeting our targets, and to invest urgently in meeting our targets, rather than waste money in paying penalties for our failure.

The Agriculture and Food Policy needs to be modified to address the major contribution (33%) of this sector to the GHG emissions.

Ireland has been pleading special status for agriculture, claiming among other things, that it is more efficient than in other countries. However, a recent EU analysis (Irish Times, April 1 2017) claims that Ireland has the highest GHG emissions per euro output in the EU!

In the “Residential” area, which accounts for 10.1% of overall GHG emissions, the pricing structure of electricity and gas needs to be examined.

At present there is little incentive for individual consumers to reduce their electricity or gas usage. This is because under the present pricing structure the network/site charge fee forms a major component of the bill, while the unit charge for energy forms the minor component.

Overall, we **need clear, annual targets for decarbonisation for each sectoral area:**

While some of the possible mitigation measures have been presented in the Draft, others are a ‘work in progress’.

Finally, there is an urgent need for each individual and group to be informed and actively working on this global national programme.

Fairtrade

As a Fairtrade certificated Parish, we have raised awareness and promoted the use of Fairtrade goods for many years. In 2015 for the Eco-Congregation Ireland Award Ceremony all refreshments were Fairtrade. This continued in 2016 when a stand was commissioned to display our Fairtrade certification within the church. Signage was also displayed on both sides of the church to advertise our Fairtrade status. In the continuing efforts to promote Fairtrade, we have held Fairtrade Fortnights every year. Activities include the local schools reaffirming their commitment to Fairtrade by ensuring that Fairtrade products are used in the schools. A Fairtrade Quiz was held in the local Primary school to help promote Fairtrade among the younger generation. Also during Fairtrade Fortnight, teas/coffees and home baked goods, all made using Fairtrade ingredients, are offered after Sunday Masses to the congregation. These are very well received, and people are surprised at how many Fairtrade goods are available. Fairtrade tea and coffee are served at all parish events throughout the year and groups that use the parish rooms are asked to do the same.

Members of the Faith in Action Committee have attended Fairtrade Conferences and returned with information of action being taken to encourage the use of Fairtrade. As part of this action, the Committee has written to business asking them where possible to use Fairtrade goods. Retailers have also been contacted to request lists of their Fairtrade products. In our continuing efforts to promote Fairtrade, we are always looking for new and varied ways to show that by using Fairtrade goods we are helping the producers enjoy better lives, while in return we are getting good quality products.



A FAIR GUIDE TO CHRISTMAS 2020



MAKE THE FAIRTRADE CHOICE THIS
YEAR

The Great Green Wall



On 13 November 2019, seven members of the Faith in Action Group attended a Private Screening of the award-winning Climate Change documentary, *The Great Green Wall*. The film is part funded by Irish Aid. The SMA who, through their Laudato Tree Project, are championing the Great Green Wall in partnership with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Tree Council of Ireland, was granted permission to host a private screening of the film, where President Michael D. Higgins and his wife were guests of honour.

When the Great Green Wall is completed, it will be the longest continuous living organism on the planet – three times longer than Australia's Great Barrier Reef. It will cross the continent of Africa from Senegal to the Republic of Djibouti, 8,000 kilometres, and is a major African Union project aimed at halting desertification in the Sahel region, due to Global Warming.

The invitation to attend the private screening reflects the links and co-operation between the Faith in Action Group and the Justice Group in the neighbouring SMA parish of Wilton and with the SMA Justice Group.

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Programme (TTIP)



In 2015 the issue of the TTIP, a proposed EU/US trade deal, and its implications for Ireland was a cause of concern. While it was difficult to get clear information about TTIP, as the negotiations were being held under a shroud of secrecy, it appeared that if agreed, it would give large corporate bodies powers which would in many instances supersede the rights of democratic governments. There was also concern about the agreement's implications for workers' rights and the possible erosion of environmental and health standards. The implications of TTIP were raised with the four Southern MEPs, relevant government ministers and party spokespersons, IFA and other relevant organisations, and the Irish Times. Some responses were received. Two members represented the Faith in Action group at a public meeting on the issue in the Cork Quaker Meeting House on 29 May 2015.

Turkwel Links 2015-2019

Our long-standing links with Turkwel Parish have continued to be nurtured and developed during the past five years. Each Thursday we are united with the people of Turkwel, when prayers are offered in each parish for the parishioners of the other.

In Ballineaspig Parish the following prayer is read at the 9.30 am Mass:

Praying with our sister parish in Turkwel,
Lord, inspire us to use wisely the resources of our planet
and to share them justly with our neighbour.
Cherishing our fellow parishioners in Turkwel,
we pray that they may have the blessings of clean water
and sustaining harvests
and live in health, dignity, and peace.

Turkwel Prayer:

Akilip apei ka ngasisitae kanisa yok Turkwel,
Ekapolon nakinae sua aosou atosubeta akwap kosi
ka akimor ngiboro amam atiakatiaka ka ngikidunyet
ka aminakin ngikanupak alo Turkwel, kilipit
atamar toyakatar apiaro angakipi ana ajokak
ka ariamum ngalemat a akiyar
a ngawat ka acoikin Ekisil.

Now that Masses in Ballineaspig Parish are being streamed on Church Services TV we hope that the parishioners in Turkwel may be able to participate online in the Thursday Mass in Dennehy's Cross.

Turkwel Parish in the Catholic Diocese of Lodwar with the Clinics at Lorugum and Kalemunyang



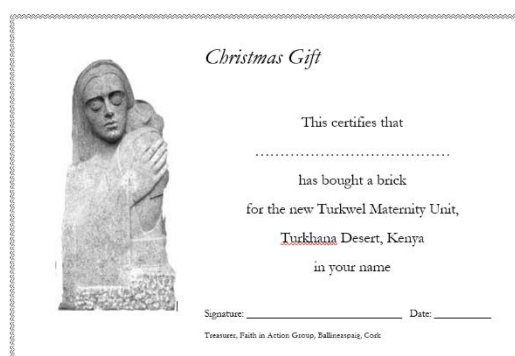
Each year to determine the focus of that year's Turkwel fundraising, we consult the local people and in particular Sr Pascalia Chiro, with the assistance of Fr Oliver Noonan SMA, former parish priest of Turkwel. Sr Pascalia, a member of the Kenyan Sisters of Mary of Kakamega, runs the St Elizabeth Lorugum Health Centre and the St Bridgid Kalemunyang Dispensary on behalf of the Kenya Episcopal Conference-Catholic

Secretariat. She has worked in Lorugum Health Centre for the past 17 years. For the last five years our support for Turkwel has focused particularly on nutrition programmes and on the improvement of the facilities in both the Lorugum and Kalemunyang clinics.

Summary of Turkwel Project Funding: 2015-2019					
Year	Harvest Thanksgiving	Donations	Christmas Fundraising	Total	Project
2015	€1,308.08		€1,692.80	€3,000.88	Nutrition programme for families and children and for women with HIV and Aids
2016	€1,480.89		€1,640.25	€3,121.14	Medical equipment and beds for the Health Clinic in Lorugum
2017	€1,252.19		€2,435.37	€3,687.56	Clinic equipment for the two clinics in Lorugum and Kalemunyang
2018	€2,050.00		€725.00*	€2,775.00	Funds held over to 2019
2019	€1,357.37	€70.00	€105,257.66	€106,685.03	Building and equipping of Maternity Ward in Kalemunyang
*In November 2018 in light of the many financial demands at Christmas time, it was decided to defer our main fundraising collection for Turkwel until the spring. The Jubilee Bells Advent Service collection was made as usual.					

From 2015 to the autumn of 2019 our Turkwel fundraising, apart from occasional donations, has taken three main forms: Harvest Thanksgiving, Christmas fundraising and the Jubilee Bells Advent Service collection.

1. At the Harvest Thanksgiving, parishioners donate produce and goods that they have grown, baked, or made, and other parishioners can then acquire them by making a donation. All the donations from the Bring and Buy go to the Turkwel fund. In 2019 the celebration was once again a great success, but attendance was down on previous years because its date (22 September) clashed with Ireland's Rugby World Cup match against Scotland!
2. Each December specially printed Christmas cards and gift certificates were sold in the Parish Office after Mass: on certain weekends by a rota of Faith in Action members and during the week by the Parish secretary.



2019 Christmas gift certificate

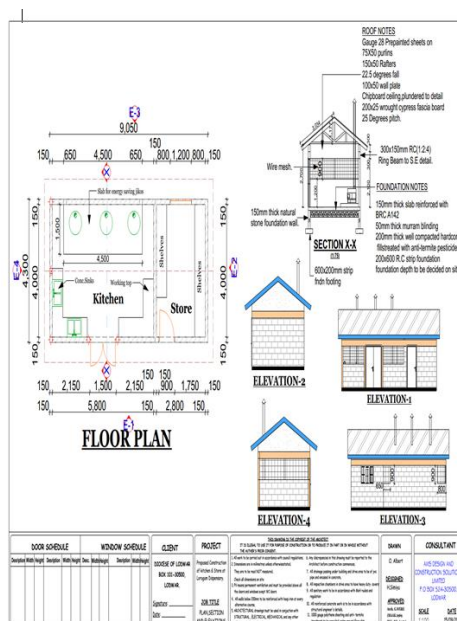
In the autumn of 2019 the major fundraising campaign to build the Maternity Unit was launched and the methods used are detailed on pages 51-53.


- The collection made at the annual Jubilee Bells Advent Concert is a happy example of two parish groups, the Jubilee Bells and the Faith in Action group, working together with the support of parishioners. The Jubilee Bells, a handbell choir formed in the Jubilee Year 2000, organise an Advent Concert with participation by adult and children music and singing groups. At the beginning of the concert a member of the Faith in Action groups explains our connection with Turkwel and an exit collection, all of which goes to Turkwel, is taken up with the assistance of Faith in Action members.



Jubilee Bells

Despite the significant achievement of the building of the Kalemunyang Maternity Unit (described overleaf) there will be no resting on our laurels. The invitation to the opening of the Unit featured a design for a kitchen/food store, which is required to supply the needs of the patients and medical staff. Sr Pascalia is indefatigable and our Turkwel project for 2021 may already be determined.





DIOCESE OF LODWAR

ST. BRIGID

KALEMUNYANG

DISPENSARY


WELCOMES BSHOP., FR., SR. REV. PST.

BRO. HON. DOC. MR. MRS, MISS.

& GUEST.....

TO THE

LAUNCHING OF THE MATERNITY WARD



WITH GOD'S GRACE, EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Building a Maternity Unit in Kalemunyang, Turkwel - The Realization of a Dream

The Project

During 2005/2006, the Faith in Action group in Ballineaspaig Parish, Cork, developed links with Turkwel Parish in Kenya. Their parish priest at that time was Fr Oliver Noonan SMA, a native of Cork.

The link is a twofold one, through prayer for each other and through practical help by supporting them financially, to dig wells, develop irrigation schemes, build a health clinic, and assist with the ongoing costs of equipping and running the clinic.

While he has now moved on to other work in Kenya, Fr Oliver retains his close relationship with the people of Turkwel. In 2019, we asked him to advise us about the most pressing needs of our sister parish. He contacted Sr. Pascalia, the Sister in charge of the health clinic in Kalemunyang. She responded by sharing her dream of building a maternity unit adjacent to the health clinic to serve the Kalemunyang catchment area in Turkwel Parish. *"It has been a challenge conducting deliveries without a maternity ward but with hope and your help we are looking forward to the realization of our dreams. It will be a great achievement for our community."*

We asked Sr. Pascalia where the new unit would be built. She replied, *"It will be on the right side of the existing building near the improvised small delivery room (manyatta) as it shows in the attached photos"*.



Kalemunyang Clinic



Improvised small delivery room (manyatta)

Raising the Funds

In May 2019 we received a quotation and plans from Sr. Pascalia. Now we knew that our target was €90,000. To quote Fr Oliver when we first discussed the idea, *"It would of course be a little expensive but God is great!"*

It seemed like a huge amount, but we were fully confident that the people of Ballineaspaig would not be found wanting. We decided to produce a special information pamphlet, because we knew that once people understood how great was the need, and how such a facility would change, improve, or save the lives of so many mothers and babies, they would be generous in their response.

Thanks to sponsorship by a private donor, we were able to produce enough professionally designed and printed pamphlets for distribution to every home in the parish and surrounding area.

HOW TO DONATE

“ Currently we don't have any other source of funding unless God opens his own ways - Sr. Pascalia (Matron) **”**

You can make a donation in cash, by cheque or by bank transfer

If paying by cheque, please make it payable to: Faith in Action - Turkwel.

If you wish to pay by bank transfer, the bank details are:

Faith in Action – Turkwel,
AIB, Western Rd., Cork
Account no. 23320035 **BIC** AIBKIE2D
Sort Code 934194
IBAN IE24 AIBK 9341 9423 3200 35

If paying by cash or by cheque, please place your donation in the envelope provided. You can return the envelope at any of the weekend Masses, or by post or by hand to the Parish Office, or to Fr. Bertie or to Fr. Tom.

If you would like a receipt, please complete the section below and return it with your donation.

For further information, please phone the Parish Office (021-4344452) or email faithinactionballineaspalg@gmail.com

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount: _____

BIRTH - AND DEATH - IN THE DESERT




The nomadic Turkhanas traverse the semi-arid lands of Northern Kenya in search of water and pasture for their animals. On a Sunday afternoon, the mission is called to one of these families living outside the village. A woman has given birth to a new baby – it has been a difficult birth, both mother and child are in urgent need of medical help. The family are distraught.

On an initial assessment the local nurse, whom we have brought with us, tells us the life of the child is in danger. After much discussion we convince the family to go to the local health centre for help. The family are prepared and we set out.

How we wish we could have reached them earlier or there was a health centre with maternity facilities nearby – unfortunately, it is going to be a long journey. As we reach the health centre the condition of the little baby has deteriorated and our worst fears are realized. The baby has passed away – the world seems a very unjust place - a life has been lost. We could have saved this life if we had the necessary maternity facilities.

- Fr Oliver Noonan, SMA

A Faith in Action Initiative - Ballineaspalg Parish, Cork.
Brochure generously sponsored by private donor.
Design and Printing on recycled paper by Snap,Cork.


Can we come together to build a Maternity Unit in our sister parish, Turkwel?



Seahra Murphy, Madonnas and Child

Target: €90,000

THE LOCATION




Kalemnyang in Turkwel Parish has a catchment area of about ten villages and is a centre for small trade and commerce. It is a transit place for many Turkhanas who travel from north to south and east to west, as they migrate in search of grazing for their animals. Many of these people base themselves there for some months because of the availability of food and security.

The building of Kalemnyang dispensary in 2009, funded by Ballineaspalg parish, was a great milestone in providing adequate health care for the people. Ten years on and Kalemnyang is now a bigger village and with new medical needs. One of these is the most basic need of all - to provide a proper maternity ward for the safe arrival of newly-born babies where mothers receive proper attention and care.

*The maternity ward will provide **proper ante and post-natal care** for new mothers and babies, and **reduce deaths**.*

CURRENT SITUATION: THE FACTS



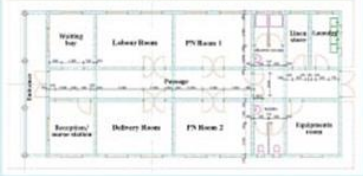
- **NO** Maternity Unit for catchment population of 9,352 as well as hundreds of migrants
- **NO** State Support
- **NO** specialist facilities but as many as 24 deliveries per month
- Only facility: an improvised delivery room in dispensary observation room
- Main hospital – 65 km away across the desert
- Mortality rate of Kenyan **mothers** – 75 times rate in Ireland
- Mortality rate of Kenyan **babies** – 10 times rate in Ireland

“ It has been a challenge conducting deliveries without a maternity ward but with hope and your help we are looking forward to the realization of our dreams. It will be a great achievement for our community - Sr Pascalia (Matron) **”**

THE PLAN

6-bed Maternity Ward:

- Reception
- Labour Room
- Delivery Room
- Postnatal Ward
- Shower Rooms
- Toilets

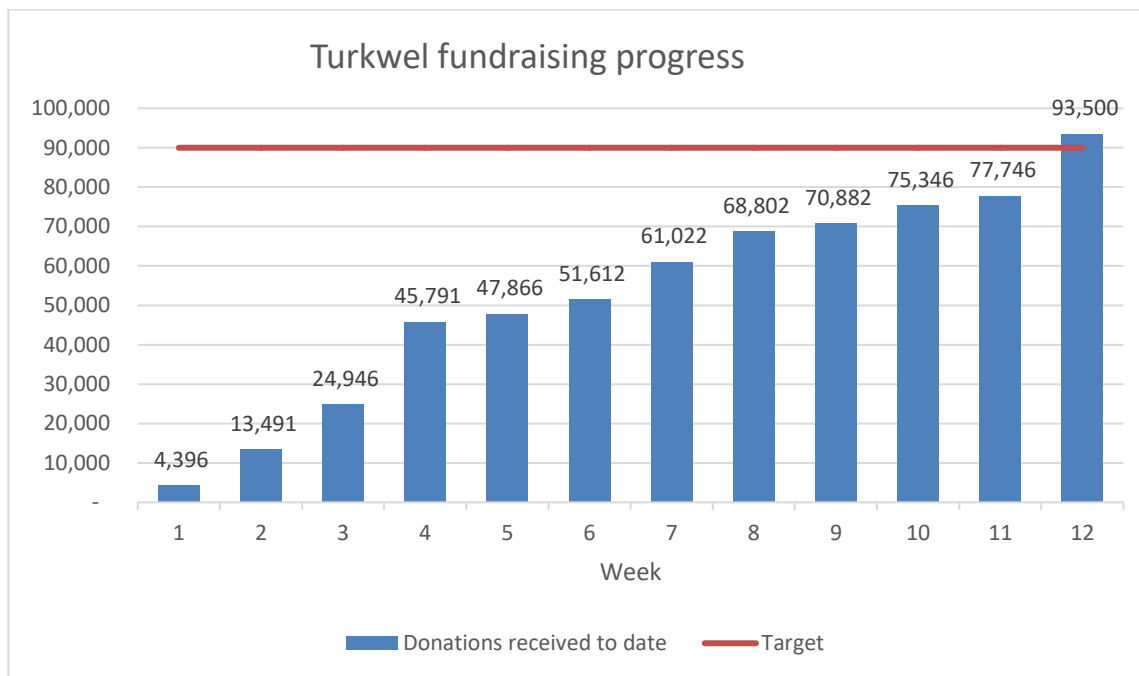


Maternity Equipment:

- Suction machine
- Incubator
- Oxygen concentrator
- Ambu bag
- Baby cots
- Baby weighing scales
- Delivery packs
- Ultrasound machine
- Sterilizer

We distributed the pamphlet after all the weekend Masses on 5/6 October and dropped a copy to every house in the parish over the following week. And the response was indeed generous. After only four weeks we were half-way to achieving our target; by Christmas 2019 we had exceeded it.

The chart below shows the extraordinary week by week response for the 12 weeks from 6 October to 23 December.



In early December 2019 we were able to give Sr. Pascalia the go ahead to appoint a builder. She responded:

“The staff and Kalemunyang community are very grateful for the good news received from your parish, we are very very happy as you can imagine, in fact to us it is a miracle. To the almighty God we thank him for the success of the fund raising.”

After Christmas donations continued, albeit at a slower pace. Then, early in February, we received confirmation from ElectricAid that our application for €10,000 for the purchase of equipment for the Unit had been successful. This brought our total to **€104,555.34**. We were then able to advise Sr. Pascalia that there were sufficient funds to include the installation of solar power, which had not been included in the original brief, but which we felt was environmentally essential.

Project Costs

The full costs, including solar power and an additional water tank, are as follows:

	Kenyan Shillings	Euro
Building	7,721,311	
Solar Installation	476,200	
Equipment including water tank and plumbing	2,527,700	
Additional costs for extra water tank and plumbing	113,945	
Architecture and engineering fees	55,000	
Total estimated cost	KSH 10,894,156	
Total transferred to Sr Pascalia (based on estimated exchange rates at dates of transfers)	KSH 10,934,142	€99,388.20
Total donations received €105,255.34 + €2.32 interest		€105,257.66
Remaining funds to cover contingencies		€5,869.46

Construction begins

It took a few weeks for the formalities to be concluded. Three builders were invited to tender for the project and were interviewed by Sr Pascalia and Fr Oliver. On Fr Oliver's advice, Sr Pascalia opened a separate bank account for the project, so that all expenditure could be recorded and accounted for independently. Once the builder was chosen, we transferred some funds to the new account so that materials could be purchased. Then, in the second week in March, work began.

11 March 2020



April 2020



Work continued despite dangerous floods at the end of April and the builders' break in late June/early July.

September 2020



Official Opening: 30 October 2020



Original Clinic on left, New Maternity Unit on right

On Friday, 30 October 2020 the unit was blessed and officially opened at 9:00 am and at 2:00 pm the first baby girl, Rosalie Pascalia, was born. Deo Gratias.



Baby Rosalie Pascalia with Sr Pascalia







WoW BAGS



We sold a box of 188 WoW (Wonders of Waste) bags after the Masses on 7/8 May 2016. A group of unemployed women in the Pampagna area of the Philippines, a rural area severely damaged by volcanic eruption in 1991, transform waste into beautiful and practical products. Working with Helen Mitchell, an Irish lay missionary, they retrieve plastic drinks cartons from the mountains of plastic waste in dumps. The women clean and sort these brightly coloured cartons and, having experimented and perfected their methods and designs, they now produce a beautiful range of sturdy, attractive and practical bags. These bags are then sold through a network of volunteers, and the proceeds help these women to change their lives and provide for their families. Almost 100,000 waste plastic pouches are now recycled annually; production methods cause no damage and generate no pollution. By supporting this project we gave our parishioners an insight into an inspiring example of sustainable living.

Members of the Faith in Action Group (2015-2020)

Cumulative List

Fr Tom Clancy
Genevieve Coleman
Sr Frances Cummins
Margaret Hassett†
David Clifford
Genevieve Coleman
Bríd Dunne
Evelyn Gaylard†
Rose Hayes
Irene Higgins
Bill Kealy
Maria Kearney
Theresa Lynch
Denise McCarthy
Theresa McCarthy
Clare McCutcheon
Sr Maria McGuinness
Rosalie Moloney
Máire Mulcahy
Seamus Murphy†
Gerrie O’Callaghan
Daithi Ó hAodha
Nessa O’Hegarty
Fr Bertie O’Mahony
Sr Lucy O’Sullivan
Michael Sexton