

Vocation for Justice



Editorial

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Anticipating the Encyclical

**“If we destroy Creation, Creation will destroy us.
Never forget this.”** Pope Francis

The General Election has just taken place. It's a sad state of affairs that one of the most important issues facing humankind at this time was hardly mentioned in the different campaigns, even though the vast majority of scientists agree that this issue has long term catastrophic consequences for all of us. The issue, of course, is climate change, especially as it manifests itself in global warming.

It must be a cause of concern for all of us that so many people choose to ignore the dangers of global warming and so put the lives of their children and grandchildren at risk. This newsletter has frequently referred to it over the years. Our own Columban ecological theologian **Fr Sean McDonagh** was one of the first “voices in the desert” to draw our attention to this problem. Our recent Popes have also raised their voices to alert us to the dangers here. On 9 February, Pope Francis addressed creation care in his homily at Mass at the Casa Santa Marta, saying that caring for God's gift of creation is part of the Christian vocation. On 28 March, St Peter's Basilica joined **Earth Hour** and turned out its lights for one hour to raise awareness about climate change and recognise this challenge as a moral issue.

We see the effects of global warming all around us. A melting Arctic and Antarctic, unprecedented droughts across the world, extreme examples of flooding, and uncontrollable wildfires are all examples of the changing climate. We are also observing desertification, rising sea levels as well as stronger

extreme weather events like hurricanes and cyclones. As citizens we owe it to our family, community and country to educate ourselves on the facts about climate change and how human activity is the primary cause.

In a few weeks' time, Pope Francis is due to release an encyclical on climate change. It is the first ever from a Pope on this matter. In the encyclical the Pope will bring together issues of social justice and economic inequity along with the environment and climate change. Last month, the Pope told a gathering of thousands in St Peter's Square, Rome: **“If we destroy Creation, Creation will destroy us. Never forget this.”**

Cardinal Peter Turkson, the Vatican spokesman on climate change issues, in a talk in Ireland during March, noted that Pope Francis

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focuses on **“an economic culture that puts money and profit ahead of people”** and on the reality **“that we cannot save the environment without also addressing the profound injustices in the distribution of the goods of the earth”**. These concerns are rooted in biblical teachings.

This issue of *Vocation for Justice* is dedicated mainly to climate change as we eagerly await the encyclical from Pope Francis. ■

Peter Hughes SSC



Cover of the DVD 'Conflict and Climate Change'.

Polyp and Eva Schluinke

COLUMBAN MISSION

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

A Man for All Seasons: Pope Francis and the Environment

Celia Deane-Drummond

Pope Francis's encyclical on ecology will be ethically challenging in its call to care for people and planet, provocative in its call to take climate change seriously, and deeply theological. It will be argued that creation care is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be a Christian. But, how new is this strand in Catholic social thought? Is this a theological shift or not?

Francis will carve out something that is distinctive and characteristic of his vocational identity in alignment with that great patron saint of ecology, St Francis of Assisi. But Francis will be very careful to show the sources of this theological emphasis. It is like a light that has been hidden and now at last can be put in a prominent place. This light is one that will shine brightly in a world groaning under the weight of sin in all its ramifications - including ecological destruction and climate change.

The persona of Francis himself is also significant, for he walks the walk as well as talks the talk by showing through his daily actions what it means to display those great theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. These virtues, combined with a real humility towards others, bring an authenticity to his message that is hard to resist. He reminds his listeners that creation care, alongside solidarity with those that are poor and peacemaking, are the three fundamental aspects of his ministry.

The love of creation

It is Jesus Christ who provides a pattern for right creaturely relationships, and God's affirmation of the natural world becomes evident through the incarnation - God becoming human, material reality. This is a Christology of cosmic proportions, not just limited to the human sphere alone. The whole of creation, according to *Romans 8:22*, groans. If that groaning was the last word, there would be reason for despair. But as Pope Francis has already indicated in *Evangelii Gaudium*, the message of Christianity is fundamentally a hope-filled one based on the power of the resurrection. Can this

message of hope and joy still make sense in the context of climate change, ecological devastation and numerous and compounding social injustices? Pope Francis will insist that it can, that the last word for Christians has to be one of faith in the providential care of God, alongside ultimate hope in the power of the resurrection and restoration of all things.

There are, of course, some intermediate steps along the way between the eschatological future and the difficulties that we find in the present. These steps represent our particular human responsibilities and how to act in the world.

Ecological conversion

The language of **ecological conversion** was used by John Paul II on a number of occasions. It is remarkable that the humanistic intent of Catholic social thought has become so narrowly focused on human rights to the expense of other concerns, instead of viewing human flourishing as properly embedded in a rich tissue of material, ecological interrelationships. Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff was so taken, indeed, with the relevance of material interrelationships of ecology that they displaced to a large extent an earlier primacy given to human social thought. And Pope Francis has, on all accounts, asked to read all of Boff's writings in the lead up to this encyclical.

In one sense, Boff is quite correct to assume that Earth is more fundamental to consider theologically compared with human beings. For a planet that dies will not be a proper or habitable home for humanity. But he seems to go further than suggesting that the purpose of Earth serves humanity. In view of the destructive turn in humanity's dealing with Earth, and its domination of it, Boff insists that it is time to give Earth its due. A belief that the Holy Spirit is at work in creation is not all that controversial. The early Church Fathers, such as Basil of Caesarea or Athanasius of Antioch, believed much the same.

The domination of the planet is recognised by secular scholars through notions such as the geological era of the *Anthropocene*. The capacity of Earth to stabilise its conditions of temperature and gaseous envelope in James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis is one that Boff takes extremely seriously. For the disruption of climate change in particular means that Gaian stability is under threat and is likely to collapse, given that conditions are rapidly approaching a tipping point.

Building justice and peace

We can expect Pope Francis not just to continue the interweaving of social justice and ecology, but also to reinforce the connectedness between different realms. While development and environmental concerns were split apart historically, we find scholars now recognising their mutual dependence - so sustainable development is also integral human development.

The last three pontiffs have all made sure that peacemaking and creation care go hand in hand. In his 2014 Message for the World Day of Peace, Pope Francis recognised how fraternity between nations is also with the natural world - "*Fraternity helps to preserve and cultivate nature*". Interventions in the natural world have to be "*responsible*", imbued with wisdom and "*with respect for the beauty, finality, and usefulness of every living thing and its place in the ecosystem*".

Justice breaks down where there is greed, and where dominion is interpreted wrongly as possession, exploitation and manipulation. So Francis will almost certainly call for, as he did in World Youth Day in July 2013, a turning away from a culture of selfishness and individualism, to one that "*builds up and leads to a more habitable world*" through solidarity. And that solidarity is with the global family of brothers and sisters, and with the natural world, based on the thought of Francis of Assisi. ■

Celia Deane-Drummond writes on ecotheology. Full article at <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2015/03/30/4207593.htm>

Columban Education

Invitation to Mission

James Trewby

Columban Justice and Peace Education Worker



Visiting an Immigration Advocacy Centre in downtown El Paso. James is far right.

Over Easter I had the privilege of accompanying a group of Catholic justice and peace activists and educators to visit Columban missionaries and others working in the borderlands between the U.S. and Mexico. This was more than just an overseas trip; it was the highlight of our Columban 'Invitation to Mission' programme, which had also included prayer, reflection, a sleep out with Housing Justice (in January!) and intercultural learning visits with Columban lay missionaries.

The programme is part of an international Columban commitment to "nurturing the missionary spirit and fostering global solidarity" through cross-cultural encounters. We aim to develop commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation by sharing our broad understanding of the concept of mission. Group members are already putting their learning into action in numerous ways: inputs in schools, at prayer groups, to diocesan assemblies and so on.

Looking back, the programme feels like a success. And yet I've really struggled to write up an evaluation. How can I prove we've met our aims? Concepts like 'nurturing the missionary spirit' and 'fostering global solidarity' don't lend themselves easily to measurement! It feels almost irreverent, like trying to rate the beauty of a sunset.

However, I feel extracts from participants' reflections and blogs give insight into the success of the programme.....

After first preparation weekend (sleep out):

I can't write about what it feels like to lay your head on a pavement every night, or how it feels to have nowhere private to go to the toilet. But I can say that I learned an awful lot. It was a quiet kind of learning; a brief but sobering education that gently shook my shoulders in a very practical and unassuming kind of way. It has left me with questions about justice, human dignity, charity and statutory responsibility. And it has challenged me to play my small part in campaigning for change.

(Kyra Trewby)

After second preparation weekend (intercultural learning visit):

We went with one of the Columban lay missionaries to meet an asylum seeker in Birmingham. She told us of how she travelled to the UK on a diplomatic passport but felt unable to return after a change of government in her home country. This story was so different from the one we are used to hearing, the one where people pay huge amounts of money to be transported in danger. It was certainly an eye opening experience.

(Adrian Dixon)

Blogs from the borderlands:

In the yard of her house in Juarez, Mexico, Sr Betty has a memorial wall upon which she invites visitors to write the names of people disappeared or murdered over the last 20 years. Free trade agreements and the structural reforms they accompanied failed to lift many out of poverty and increased the stakes for those capturing the wealth generated. This drove an epidemic of violence in the city, with up to 300 murders a month. Few investigations are undertaken, few people get justice. Sr Betty's simple memorial seems to be the only place of recognition of the loss of life.

(Daniel Hale)

The learning we've done so far has led me to a deeper understanding of the emotions involved on both sides of the issue of migration. Ultimately it has made me value the dignity of every person and the importance of having a voice!

(Jess Barnett)

Looking down from the summit of Christi Rey, a mountain on the border, I saw the black line of the fence dividing El Paso from Ciudad Juarez and a man on horseback keeping patrol. Looking up at Jesus' statue, overlooking the area, I felt great sadness. I saw this human divide through His eyes and realised its falsity and folly. Here are two communities with shared history and heritage separated by a wire fence. Here the U.S. ploughs billions of dollars into an enforcement, detention and legal system designed to deter people from crossing; condemning many people to an unwelcoming and uncertain future. But here also, on both sides of the border, God's love and generosity is at work through individuals, churches and charities, inspiring hope in the darkest of circumstances.

(Joseph Cooper)

We travelled across the border to Juarez to start the Tridium with Mass of the Last Supper at San Juan Diego chapel. This small community welcomed our group. Through sharing in the Eucharist I felt a sense of belonging and of being united with them in faith.

(Matthew Sanderson)

**To read more, please visit
www.columbans.co.uk**

Global Catholic Climate Movement

Catholic organisations and leaders throughout the world have announced their collaboration in a new movement working towards a sustainable climate future.

Concerned about human-made climate change and united by the Catholic faith, the movement aims to care for God's creation, for the poor – who are the most vulnerable to climate disruption – and for future generations who will face the worst impacts in the coming years.

Columban missionaries are part of this movement. Political leaders are being urged to commit to ambitious climate action and keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degree Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels.

The movement endorses Catholic environmental teachings and calls for prayer and action among the world's Catholics, making it the first time that such a global movement of Catholics has networked on climate issues.

Cardinal Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, presented a statement from the movement to Pope Francis during his trip to the Philippines in January, where he met survivors of Typhoon Haiyan.

Patrick Carolan, executive director of the Franciscan Action Network, a member of the group, says: *"The statement calls for Catholics to promote the teachings of the Church, appreciate their moral responsibility to act, and raise awareness about climate change and its impacts, particularly on the poor and future generations. Catholics are encouraged to take part in future actions that seek a strong international climate agreement, and entrust all our efforts to Jesus Christ, who makes all things new."*

The Global Catholic Climate Movement has taken the bishops' appeal online and made it into a petition that all can sign:

www.catholicclimatemovement.global



Encyclical Preparations

In early May, Columban missionaries attended a meeting of international Catholic leaders in Rome to plan for the release of the environment encyclical.

Fr Michael Czerny, SJ, Secretary to Cardinal Turkson, President of Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, explained that 'encyclical' translates as "pass it on" and called for that to happen when it is released. He suggested that Catholics should "exercise our political responsibility in the face of a collective political poverty".

Columbans were represented by **Sean McDonagh** SSC, international eco-theologian (Ireland), **John Leydon** SSC, co-founder of the Global Catholic Climate movement (Philippines), and **Amy Woolham-Echeverria**, International JPIC Coordinator (US). Sean McDonagh said at the conference: "We need humility as a Church and we, the Church, can't keep our science in the 1700s."



At an encyclical planning conference in Rome on 7 May are: Sean McDonagh, Amy Echeverria and John Leydon.

Vatican Climate Conference

A strong statement on climate change came from the Vatican in April. After a one-day conference on 28 April, scientists, world leaders and interfaith leaders declared that, "human-induced climate change is a scientific reality, and its decisive mitigation is a moral and religious imperative for humanity". It added:

- The poor and excluded face dire threats from climate disruptions, including the increased frequency of droughts, extreme storms, heat waves, and rising sea levels;
- The world has within its technological grasp, financial means, and know-how the means to mitigate climate change while also ending extreme poverty, through the application of sustainable development solutions including the adoption of low-carbon energy systems;
- The financing of sustainable development, including climate mitigation, should be bolstered through new incentives for the transition towards low-carbon energy, and through the relentless pursuit of peace, which also will enable the shift of public financing from military spending to urgent investments for sustainable development;
- Climate-change mitigation will require a rapid transformation to a world powered by renewable and other low-carbon energy and the sustainable management of ecosystems.

Bishops Defend Amazonia



Fr Peter Hughes (second from right) with Columban JPIC workers based in Washington - Elizabeth Nye, Amy Echeverria, and Scott Wright.

March 19 was an important and historic day for the Catholic Church across the Americas. U.S. and Canadian bishops joined their Latin American counterparts who came to Washington to testify over the environmental and social ills wrought by extractive industries, such as mining and logging. They particularly highlighted human rights and environmental violations in the Amazon River Basin, calling for greater protection of the Earth and the 40 million people in the region, including three million vulnerable indigenous people.

Columban Peter Hughes, who is based in Peru and is Executive Secretary for the Department of Justice and Solidarity at the Latin American bishops' council, known by its Spanish acronym as CELAM, was one of the group. He has been instrumental in a two-year-long process to bring together the episcopal voices of South, Central, and North America. The testimony to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission was the first time the episcopal conferences of the Americas had come together to speak out in a unified voice on extractive industries. He and fellow members of the Latin American Bishops Conference and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops testified before the Commission.

Fr Peter Hughes expressed the Church's concern for the impact of extractive industries on people and creation, and its commitment to care

and respect for all of creation. He said: *"We see what is happening to the rivers, to animal life, to bird life and particularly to the people, who are the age-old first inhabitants of the region. Their lives are being destroyed, their lands are being taken, their cultures are being trodden down.... We have great hope, that we will use the resources available to us through our people, networks, organisations, congregations, so that we may be more faithful people in proclaiming the Gospel of Life."*

Extractive industries, such as mining and oil and gas drilling, have historically inflicted lasting damage to the communities and environments in which they are located. Rarely do poor people or countries benefit from the extraction of these resources, which too often destroys the environment, exploits local labour, displaces communities and undermines sustainable development.

Bishop Roque Paloschi of Roraima, a member of the Brazilian Bishops' Amazon Commission, reflected that, *"the large financial companies must bear some of the responsibility, as they finance the operations of transnational mining and logging firms"*.

Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, New Mexico, chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, reported a link between extraction and immigration. *"We cannot separate the*

consequences of migration from the fundamental 'root causes' existing in these countries". He felt that "key policies facilitated by our trade agreements, as well as the resultant conduct of U.S. and Canadian mining companies in these countries, have too often contributed to destructive environmental and public health consequences for communities throughout Latin America".

Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini Imeri of Huehuetenango, Guatemala, reported that his consciousness was first raised on extractive issues 10 years ago when he was bishop of San Marcos, Guatemala. In investigating a gold mining operation: *"We found out ... they will use cyanide. We read about cyanide. We found it was no good. It was poison. Activists would lead protests, but officials would arrest them to intimidate others."*

Archbishop Pedro Barreto Jimeno of Huancayo, Peru used to receive death threats for his activism on behalf of people living in his country's mining districts. He said he used to be known as *"the ecological archbishop"* for his advocacy. *"I hated it,"* Archbishop Barreto said, because it implied that his activity was merely personal. But now with Pope Francis, a fellow Latin American, as Pope and speaking out on environmental issues, *"we are all ecological bishops,"* Archbishop Barreto said.

The Vatican has thrown its weight behind the new Latin American Church transnational network. REPAM, the acronym for this network which stands for *"Red Ecclesial Panamazonica"* – (Panamazon Ecclesial Network). Started as a project of the nine Churches of the Amazon region under the umbrella of CELAM, and with the blessing of the Holy See, it now involves the Catholic Churches and many of its institutions in the nine countries that are part of this region: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam and French Guyana, Peru and Venezuela. This collaborative initiative also involves lay organisations and religious orders. ■

In Britain the Columbans support the work of the London Mining Network. www.londonminingnetwork.org

CHILE – Right to Water

The Columban Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Office in Chile participated in a march for 'Water and Life' through the streets of Valparaiso on Earth Day 22 April. As members of Chile's Ecumenical Coalition for the Care of Creation, Columbans work collaboratively on the issue of 'Water'. Two years ago they helped organise a similar march through Santiago demanding that the state regain control of the management of water, which was privatised by the Pinochet dictatorship in 1981. Today, logging and mining companies are two of the largest consumers of Chile's water. The protest - of environmentalists, indigenous groups, Chile's biggest workers' union, students and church activists - demanded greater environmental protection. According to César Correa, the JPIC Co-ordinator in Chile, water is "a common good and access to it is a human right".



César Correa (green tee-shirt) at the march 'Water and Life'.



Columban superior general Fr Kevin O'Neill (front) and Fr Pat Cunningham pray and protest at Gangjeong.

KOREA – Tackling Destructive Militarism

Just off the coast of South Korea, the beautiful island of Jeju is host to a unique coral reef ecosystem in the surrounding sea and biodiversity on land. In spite of this, the South Korean government has been constructing a Naval Base at the village of Gangjeong, meaning 'Village of the Water'. The construction of this base threatens peace in the region, as well as the contamination of water sources and destruction of the environment. The Korean church has long supported local people's stand against this militarisation and the Columbans in Korea have helped local villagers draw international attention to the issue. All are concerned that the base, being just 300 miles from China, will raise tensions in the region.

PHILIPPINES – Conservation and Eco-consciousness

Preda is a non-profit foundation near Olongapo City, set up 25 years ago by Columban Fr Shay Cullen to uphold the human rights of children and provide livelihoods. One initiative is the establishment of fair-trading partnerships and Preda specialises in the export of dried fruits - pineapple, tamarind, guava, and, particularly, mango. The carabao mango thrives in scant soil, and its roots mesh together to arrest soil erosion. Insects and worms thrive in the soil, bringing back the songbirds. Preda offers practical assistance: mango saplings are given to farmers free of charge, and interest-free loans are granted that alleviate a family's hardship between planting and harvest time. Preda also promises to buy each entire crop, and pays a premium price for it. More than 2,000 families benefit directly. Conservation and eco-consciousness is an integral part of Preda's belief. This system, coupled with the companion-planting of neem trees, whose antiseptic properties help to keep the soil and surroundings disease free, is not reliant on expensive artificial pesticides, yet still yields blemish-free fruit, increasing the crop's value at harvest time. A virtuous cycle is thus begun, in which the people care for the land and the land the people.



Joining in climate prayers and calls for climate action.

PERU - March for the Climate

December 2014 saw Columban missionaries joining the Inter-Religious Council of Peru - Religions for Peace to participate in Prayer and Fasting in preparing for the UN Climate Change talks (COP20) which met in Lima that month. The Columban JPIC worker in Lima, Laura Vargas, has highlighted that Peru's Quelccaya ice cap - if it continues to melt at the current rate - will be gone by 2100. Tens of thousands of people who rely on melt water for drinking water and electricity will be left high, dry, and in the dark. 39% of Peru's mountain glaciers have already been lost.

CARING FOR CREATION

AUSTRALIA – Inter-faith Creation Care

In 2003, the Columban Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice, part of the Columban Mission Institute, initiated a meeting to promote appreciation of and care for creation. People came from the Aboriginal, Anglican, Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, Islamic and Uniting Church traditions, and the **Faith Ecology Network** was formed. This Australian interfaith network of people committed to their faith traditions and to caring for the Earth is facilitated by the Columban Office for Peace, Ecology and Justice. Educational materials produced by the Columbans in Australia include 'Grace of Forests'. <http://www.columban.org.au/our-works/peace-ecology-and-justice/peace-ecology-and-justice>

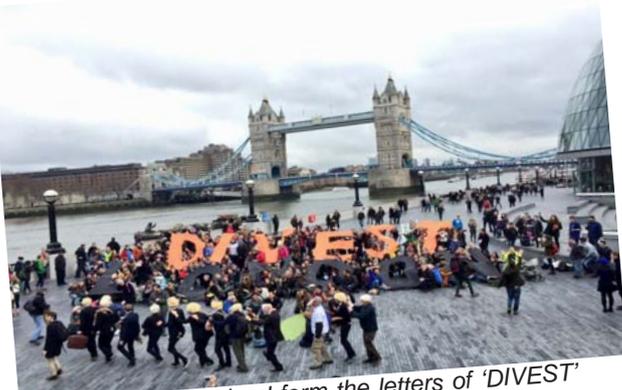


Columban Fr Charles Rue leads climate prayers near the Sydney Opera House.

BRITAIN – Advocacy and Solidarity

Columban JPIC has joined the international initiative to pray and fast for action on the 1st of each month to address climate change in the lead up to December's crunch climate meeting in Paris. The 1st May event was held at the Assumption Centre in Kensington and organised by the Religious of the Assumption, Columban JPIC and Pax Christi. At an ecumenical climate service in London in March, Columban Peter Hughes called for politicians to be made accountable for the promises made regarding climate change. Speaking to several hundred people at St Mary le Strand church in Central London, prior to the start of the annual climate change march, the head of Columban JPIC suggested that "when a part of creation dies, a bit of us dies as well". Columban JPIC was

represented at London's City Hall on 14 February as climate activists called on the Greater London Authority to divest from polluting fossil fuels. They spelt out the words 'DIVEST LONDON' in large colourful letters. The action was part of a series of 500 coordinated events in 67 countries on Global Divestment Day, which called on companies, governments, universities and other public institutions to break their financial ties with the fossil fuel industry and end their investments in one of the major drivers of climate change.



Columban JPIC helped form the letters of 'DIVEST' at the City Hall event in London.

Columbans in Fiji celebrated International Earth Day on 22 April by planting a yasi tree, coconut trees and some dalo plants in their garden.



The 15th Annual General Meeting of Cultural Exchange with China on Saturday 23 May is focusing on 'China and Climate Change'. Keynote speakers in St Aloysius Church Hall at London's Euston are Columban eco-theologian Fr Sean McDonagh and Rob Elsworth, Climate and Energy Policy Analyst at CAFOD. 020 8202 2555

> Sean is the author of numerous articles and nine books including *Climate Change: The Challenge to All of Us*, *Greening the Christian Millennium*, *To Care for the Earth* and *Dying for Water*. He highlights the causes and consequences of issues such as global warming, genetically engineered food, water, pollution, the nuclear industry and loss of biodiversity. He is a patron of Green Christian.

INTERNATIONAL - Awareness-Raising

Irish Columban Fr Sean McDonagh is known around the world as an eco-theologian who works to raise awareness of the connections between justice and peace issues, environmental sustainability and faith. >



Fr Sean McDonagh speaking at a climate conference in Manila in 2007.

Learning about Faith and Environment

Anna Brown

Anna Brown is the first 'Faith in Action Graduate Volunteer', spending a year working with Columban Justice and Peace Education and with St Mary's University Chaplaincy. In this interview she tells the Columban Education Worker, James Trewby, about the 'Faith and Environment' dimension of her recent learning visit to the Philippines.

How do you understand Faith and Environment?

I'd never given much thought to the relationship between faith and the environment, but my time in the Philippines helped me to understand how important this is! I was so impressed by the passion, commitment and joy-filled work of both Fr Brian Gore (at the Negros Nine Demo Farm on Negros) and Fr John Leydon (at CELL, the Center for Ecozoic Living and Learning near Manila) in caring for creation. I was struck by their devotion to organic farming and educational initiatives, and was interested in what they had to say about humanitarian work always being linked to the environment. For example, there were initiatives to recycle materials rather than throw them away as an effort to improve sanitation in shared washing areas in slums. I felt the Columbans I met were prophetic in their understanding of environment and faith!

Did you see any impact of climate change on the poor?

My time in the Philippines showed me first-hand just how destructive climate change is to poor communities. The poorest are the most susceptible to dramatic changes brought with severe weather conditions as a direct impact of climate change. This is particularly prevalent in the Philippines where typhoons are a regular occurrence. What was striking is that it is these environmental disasters that push people further into poverty. This, in turn, can lead people into devastating circumstance such as being trafficked. The PREDA project of Fr Shay Cullen seeks to tackle environment issues in its work to end child sex trafficking, as the direct correlation between the two is clear.

What did you think of the Negros Nine tree planting project?

The planting is so important! Through planting trees they are trying to preserve the natural water resource that the local community is completely dependent on. The farm not only actively tries to combat deforestation but also educates the community about planting and the long term importance of natural resources.

What were some of the threats to the environment you became aware of in the Philippines?

In some of the poorer slum communities the amount of litter and pollution to water sources is shocking. In one area I visited, the water is so polluted by carrier bags and food wrappers that community members are worried about the long term health risks this is causing. One of the Columban Lay Missionaries I met is now looking into more environmentally friendly ways to give out food resources and increase awareness of recycling.

How are CELL and the Negros Nine Demo Farm using farming to promote change?

Both Columban centres are pushing organic farming, proving that it is as

productive as genetically modified crops. It is better for the environment, better for food production, educational for other farmers and ultimately more sustainable. I loved how Columban farms were trying to set a really great, practical example amongst their communities.

What impact has reflecting on the environment had on your faith?

The world is truly a gift from God. It is a world where God became incarnate and dwelled and it is a world where we all live. We have a duty to preserve the God-given dignity of every creature! In practical terms, I feel this means we're called to educate others about the importance of making positive decisions with regard to the environment. CELL is also committed to using the environment as a place for prayer and retreats – it can bring us closer to God.

What do people here make of your environmental reflections?

Recently a priest here asked me why I thought we should focus attention on the environment when there are people suffering. It was interesting because I automatically became very defensive, explaining about my time overseas and the direct impact environmental issues have on people. It also made me reflect that prevention is better than cure; if we can stop causing damage to creation, we can help prevent many other problems. ■



Anna Brown (far right) at the Negros Nine Farm in the Philippines.

Livesimply Parish Award

Ellen Teague



Jon Stricklin-Coutinho, Judy Ann Masters and Canon Pat Browne.

It is such a privilege to be an assessor for the Livesimply Parish Award, to see the Church at grassroots level making a commitment to live more simply and sustainably and in solidarity with the world's poor.

The latest visit, on 15 April, was to Holy Apostles in Pimlico which has become the nineteenth parish in England and Wales, and the third in Westminster Diocese, to be recommended for the award. Parishes putting their faith into action must undertake three substantial actions, and then at least six other initiatives. In addition, they must show that the programme is sustainable, with the setting of targets and good engagement with the whole congregation. The second assessor, Jon Stricklin-Coutinho, CAFOD Diocesan Manager for Westminster, and I were shown around the church and grounds by Judy Ann Masters, who has been overseeing parish work towards the award since official registration in December 2013. The parish priest, Canon Pat Browne, told us how the whole parish is kept involved through parish newsletters and the website, noticeboards and homilies.

A properly labelled and managed recycling system has been set up on church premises, with posters and information about recycling displayed. The church lighting has been changed to low-energy light bulbs and the energy efficiency of

parish buildings improved, particularly installing double glazing throughout the parish hall. There is also a link to a local 'green electricity' project. Holy Apostles is an extremely active beacon Fairtrade Parish, with all beverages fairly traded products and posters inform visitors of this. The parish has hosted several major 'Fairtrade' meetings in recent years. There is significant greenery around the premises and all well maintained, demonstrating to passers-by that the Church cares for the environment.

The parish supports a local 'Foodbanks' project, including collecting food in the parish for distribution, and the hall is open for homeless people to sleep overnight in winter months. Key advocacy campaigns of organisations such as CAFOD, Pax Christi and Housing Justice are supported. Looking around Judy's office, a placard from 'The Wave' climate lobby of 2009 caught my eye. Nearly 50 different parish projects with a social justice focus include dementia outreach to the elderly and 'mini-vinnies' SVP work with children in the local Catholic primary school. The parish invited CAFOD in for a weekend with the Confirmation Group focusing on solidarity with wider world issues. There is regular educational and reflective work on Catholic Social Teaching.

All of this recalled for me the first parish I assessed for the award - St John Bosco Church near Reading and in Portsmouth Diocese. "You can climb up this ladder and look at our solar panels", suggested proud parishioner Paul Draper. "That won't be necessary, I'll look at the photos" I responded, feeling queasy just looking skyward up the steep steps. I was impressed later to see photos of the parish priest up on the church roof blessing its new panels. Paul and Rita Belletty had worked so hard for several years, having 16 solar panels put on the Church roof to reduce carbon emissions, instigating an annual Creation Mass and 'Walk to Church' Sunday, and many other initiatives.



Archbishop Peter Smith blesses the new garden at Petts Wood Parish.

St James Parish in Petts Wood, South-East London, was the first parish in Southwark Archdiocese to achieve the award. The parish created a wildlife garden and worship space, to provide a quiet place for worship, meditation and reflection, as well as an area for encouraging wildlife. Parishioners had dug the heavy clay soil on land behind the church to lay down the garden and plant trees. They spoke during my visit of the co-operation and friendship engendered. A special Livesimply parish mass is held regularly. Parishioners mark baptisms, birthdays and other memorable occasions with the planting of trees in British woodlands. More than 70 have been sponsored and the details recorded on a symbolic tree in the parish porch, decorated with paper leaves giving details. "The support from our parishioners has been incredible" says the key animator of the project - Roger Wright. ■

www.livesimplyaward.org.uk

Methodists distance themselves from fossil fuels

The Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church, which manages investments of £1.1 billion for the Church, has announced a new investment policy on climate change. The UK's fourth largest Christian Church has said it could rule out future investments in the dirtiest fossil fuels, such as oil and coal from tar sands. The policy, *Climate Change - Implications for Different Fuels*, states that companies with investment plans that imply a low probability that emission reduction targets will be met, or which have significant exposure to coal or oil from tar sands, "would be inconsistent with the positions and actions of the Methodist Church and may lead to exclusion from investment portfolios".

<http://www.cfbmethodistchurch.org.uk/ethics/position-papers/cfb-climate>

Church of England sells off fossil fuel shares

The Church of England is continuing to clean up its investment portfolio, selling £12 million of its shares in fossil fuel companies, as part of a new climate change policy. The Church says it will no longer make any direct investments in companies that generate more than 10% of their revenue from extracting thermal coal or producing oil from tar sands. Bishop Nick Holtam, the lead Bishop on the environment in the Church of England, reflects that climate change is "the most pressing moral issue in our world". Tom Joy, director of investments at the Church Commissioners, reports that the Church wants to be "at the forefront of institutional investors seeking to address the challenge of energy transition".

Food Justice Week on Iona 12-18 September 2015

What about spending a week on the beautiful Scottish island of Iona to reflect on the challenges in creating just food systems globally. The week is run by the Iona Community, a dispersed Christian community working for peace and social justice, and led by Liz Dowler and Geoff Tansey of the Food Ethics Council. Accommodation will be in the **MacLeod Centre** - a friendly, accessible and welcoming place for all, especially families and young

people. Delicious food will be available as part of living in community, as the challenges of food justice are explored. How can we produce, trade, buy and eat more sustainably?

For more information email Liz Dowler on e.dowler@warwick.ac.uk

Refugee Week 15-21 June 2015

Refugee Week is a unique opportunity for us to experience and celebrate the rich diversity of refugee communities through theatre, music, dance, film and other events which take place all over the UK. Refugee Week aims to provide an important opportunity for asylum seekers and refugees to be seen, listened to and valued.

www.refugeeweek.org.uk

The Things That Make For Peace. 17-19 July 2015

The NJPN annual conference at Swanwick aims to identify the real threats to human security and how we can work together to create a world without war. Columban JPIC will be running several workshops, including one on 'Conflict and Climate Change'. 020 7901 486 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk. NJPN's submission to Rome on the Environment Encyclical is at <http://www.columbans.co.uk/news/anticipating-2015-environment-encyclical/>

The Economics of Hope 7 November 2015

Building on the success of its sell-out conference last year, Green Christian is organising a day to take further its ground-breaking *Joy in Enough* initiative. The day will help participants form a vision for an economy in which both people and planet will flourish and help the churches rethink their own mission and advocate for the alternative.

The Economics of Hope takes place from 11am to 5pm on 7 November at St Michael's Centre, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8PD, adjacent to Bristol Parkway station. www.greenchristian.org.uk/joy-in-enough

Pax Christi World Assembly

More than 150 people from around the world met in Bethlehem 13-18 May for the Pax Christi International Assembly to celebrate 70 years of the movement and share

peacemaking work and plans for the future. A group from the British Section participated and visited other parts of the West Bank following the meetings. The Columbans missionaries are members of Pax Christi International. www.paxchristi.net

Columban testifies to Congress about child trafficking

Reform of the police and judiciary in the Philippines in order to tackle human trafficking has been urged by an Irish Columban during a hearing at the U.S. Congress on 22 April. Fr Shay Cullen, founder of the Preda Foundation, which has worked for four decades to protect street children and tackle sex tourism in the Philippines, said that "while the Philippine government is striving to address the problem of human trafficking and improve the record of convictions much remains to be done".

Celebrating Young People Awards

Look out for the awards ceremony on 1 July in London. The awards celebrate the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the young people across England and Wales who are putting these principles into practice. Two members of Columban JPIC - Ellen Teague and James Trewby - are involved in assessing nominations. There are six different categories of award, all of which recognise the different ways that young people can engage in social action and make a positive difference in their communities and beyond. They include *Celebrating Human Dignity*, *Living out the Option for the Poor*, *Promoting Solidarity and Peace*, and *Caring for the Environment*. www.millionminutes.org/awards

Newsletter Feedback

Thank you to those who filled in our recent survey. Kind comments appreciated, such as "I find the articles most useful in that they help me to apply my faith in a practical way, even if reading about J & P issues is sometimes overwhelming". We have specifically been asked for more articles on JPIC and inter-religious dialogue, and where Pope Francis is taking the Church.

Action Ideas

Climate Lobby in June

On 17 June 2015 you are invited to parliament for a day of action, solidarity and celebration of all the things we love which are affected by climate change.

It's the first chance to talk with newly-elected MPs after May's general election and before December's crucial international climate talks in Paris. Come and tell your newly elected MP and the Government that the time for climate action is NOW. It will be a day filled with music, debate, friendship, solidarity and hope. There will be a national ask about implementing a plan for decarbonisation, and at the international level, the ask will be related to securing further climate finance in Paris.

Join the Columbans and the other organisations. As well as speaking to your MP there will be:

- Ecumenical services at two venues.
- An interfaith moment to reflect our universal mandate to care for creation.
- Craft activities for all ages.
- A rally to celebrate, with music and celebrity speakers.

Just a month after the General Election, 17 June is our big opportunity to show politicians we care about tackling poverty and climate change.

See www.cafod.org.uk/Events/Climate-change-lobby

Towards Fossil-free Churches

Bright Now is a campaign run by Operation Noah, an ecumenical Christian charity focusing on climate change. It is part of a growing global movement calling for disinvestment from fossil fuels (also known as divestment), but homes in on Churches in the UK.

Bright Now is calling on the Churches and the Christian community in the UK to:

- **divest from companies involved in the extraction of fossil fuels**
- **take a leading and influential role in the national debate on the ethics of investment in fossil fuels**
- **support the development of clean alternatives to fossil fuels through their investment policies.**

Why ask for these things?

The institutional Churches say they believe in ethical investment and care about climate change. But there can be a gap between the stated policy of the major denominations – and what they are actually doing in practice. By moving their investments, Churches would demonstrate the leadership that is largely missing from political leaders.

Why 'Bright Now'?

The campaign believes that tackling climate change isn't just about what is wrong but also about what is right. It's vision is for an alternative future that is not dependent on fossil fuels, a future based on solutions not problems. Bright Now believes that a fossil-free future is a brighter future.

www.brightnow.org.uk

The People's Pilgrimage

In November and December people of all faiths will be walking and cycling towards Paris. There will be sections of the pilgrimage that people can join – you don't have to walk or cycle all the way!

Yeb Sano, who initiated the Prayer and Fasting for the Climate initiative after Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines, has stepped down as a Commissioner of the Philippines' Climate Change Commission to join OurVoices as Leader of The People's Pilgrimage. He says: *"I believe that going back to civil society is the best way for me to continue the fight against climate change. I have done my part as a climate negotiator."*

Westminster Justice and Peace is uniting with groups of Christians and people of different faiths and backgrounds who want to see an international agreement on significant reduction of carbon emissions at the UN Paris Climate talks in December 2015. To highlight the huge importance of these talks they plan to cycle to Paris to take part in rallies of support for climate justice and to meet other people of faith who want to see a change in our profligate use of fossil fuel.

**Phase 1 London-Newhaven
29-31 August 2015**

**Phase 2 Dieppe-Paris
1st week in December 2015**

Contact: justice@rcdow.org.uk



Members of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission preparing for the cycle ride to Paris - Barbara Kentish, Francis McDonagh and Fr Joe Ryan.

Climate change and the purposes of God -

A study course based on the Ash Wednesday Declaration Operation Noah

Targeted for use with Church and house groups, the content is based on Operation Noah's Ash Wednesday Declaration. There are five sessions, each with handouts for participants and notes for group leaders, downloadable from: <http://operationnoah.org/resources/lent-course-climate-change-purposes-god/>

Conflict & Climate Change Movement for Abolition of War

An 18-min DVD - which Columban JPIC helped produce - calls for an understanding of security which includes good stewardship of the natural world for the common good. Comes with a Resource Book. £8.99 (DVD and Resource Booklet) www.kevinmayhew.com/conflict-and-climate-change-book-and-dvd.html or 0845 388 1634.

Climate Change: The Agenda for Mission Today

Columban Missionary Society
Contains papers and reports presented in 2007 at a Columban international conference in the Philippines on Climate Change. It said, "the endangered Earth demands a new prophetic way of being missionaries". £6.00 inclusive of p&p from 020 8202 2555 or email jpicssc@btinternet.com.

Our Earth, Our Home - Green Assemblies for Key Stage 1-2 by Ellen Teague

These assemblies for primary age children aim to help them understand their relationship with the environment as part of the web of life, and to develop respect for other species and natural resources. Designed to be presented by the children, the assemblies are easily adjustable to suit both the very young and slightly older, and incorporate arts, crafts, dance and mime. £15.99 from Kevin Mayhew Publishers on 01449 737978 or sales@kevinmayhewltd.com.

Energy, Justice and Peace

A reflection on energy in the current context of development and environmental protection
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

The Pontifical Council for Justice & Peace has produced a reflection on energy in the current context of integral development and environmental protection, entitled **Energy, Justice and Peace**. Recognising that the Creator intends the gifts of creation to be nurtured and available to enhance the common good for all generations, the publication sets out to consider:

- energy in the context of development
- the unsustainability of some current practices
- energy as a threat to peace
- a vision for the harmonious management of energy

Energy is required to meet the most basic of human needs, such as provision of clean water, adequate nutrition and protection from the cold. With increasing world population and new technologies enhancing quality of life, energy demand is increasing at the same time as a transition from the environmentally-damaging burning of finite reserves of fossil fuels is required. Use of fossil fuels involves mining and deforestation, with consequent pollution of water, land and air across national boundaries. With three billion people relying on burning wood for heating and cooking, often with serious health implications, it is understandable that populations in low income countries aspire to have access to current technologies. Energy and developmental models need to evolve in a rational way, whilst addressing bad governance and corruption at a local level.

The challenges of a whole range of technologies, including biofuels and nuclear energy, are considered, with an emphasis on adoption of the precautionary principle and recognition that the needs of both urban and local communities have to be addressed. Micro grids, using technologies such as wind or hydro, can bring electricity to isolated communities.

The authors recommend a new energy paradigm, encompassing production, distribution and consumption to meet the development challenge and sustainability of creation. There must also be sufficient impetus to establish sound international and local governance, financially and through distribution, so that current injustices can be addressed.

It is in understanding how to provide for this paradigm that the authors suggest we can become instruments for real justice and peace. One chapter introduces the principle of universal destination, which covers not only environmental sustainability, but also economic and social sustainability. Using these parameters helps us to understand our role as stewards of creation, and how we can use Catholic social doctrine to underwrite the various conditions and policies that can bring about the changes needed. The final chapter provides concrete proposals for sustainable energy supplies, including renewables, accessible to all with full participation of civil society and ensuring good management of resources.

Available in English free from pcjustpax@justpeace.va

Ashley Ralston and Bernard Shaw
National Justice and Peace Network Environment Group

VOCATION FOR JUSTICE

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Team:
Peter Hughes, Ellen Teague, James Trewby, David Madden (administrator)
St. Joseph's, Watford Way, Hendon, London NW4 4TY.
Tel: 020 8202 2555. E-mail: JPICSSC@btconnect.com.

Website: www.columbans.co.uk f: **Columbans UK** t: **@columbansUK**

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