

NJPN Comment in the Catholic Universe - Paul Donovan: Clock ticking on climate crisis

One of the few positives to come out of the Covid_pandemic has been a worldwide reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. Due to a reduction in emitting activities, there was a 6.4% reduction (2.3 billion tonnes) in emissions worldwide. Emissions caused by aviation dropped by 48% on the preceding year.

The UN Environment Program estimates that a cut of 7.6% will be needed each year for the next decade if global warming is to stay below the 1.5 degrees level required to stop devastating effects. In 2018, the Inter-governmental panel on Climate Change report warned that there were 12 years left to stop run away warming.

Yet, the world is making very slow progress. The reduction of the past year provides a temporary respite, the problem being that when the world economy gets back to normal, the emissions level will return to the previous damaging levels. What is required is fundamental change in the way that the world economy operates, so the processes will see those CO2 reductions occur on an everyday basis, not as part of, what we hope is, a one-off crisis.

Certainly, much more needs to be done. In this country, following the financial crash of 2008, the Labour government heavily backed the renewables sector. The fledgling sector grew on the back of a feed in tariff scheme, that encouraged people to become their own micro-generators. A number of churches enthusiastically took part.

Unfortunately, this industry did not receive the same support under successive governments since 2010.

What is needed is to invest in the green economy to get things going. The UK economy is incredibly service sector based, which means it will be one of the slowest to recover. Why not really back the green/renewable sector, making it a bedrock of our economy going forward. There also needs to be action taken to stop the mass extinction of so many species.

Millions of people have reconnected with nature over the past year. Rewilding and the promotion of biodiversity must be the watchwords across all of society. We all need to remember that 12-year deadline to save the world – we are already a quarter way through the timescale, yet the work has hardly started.

See: paulfdonovan.blogspot.com

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