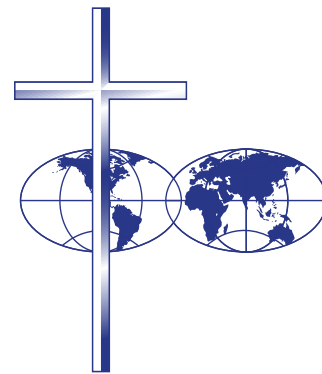


# Vocation for Justice



Winter 2021 Volume 35 No 3

**Columban Schools Media  
Competition 2022, page 11  
[columbancompetition.com](http://columbancompetition.com)**

## Anyone Can Make a Difference



**Centrespread: Countdown  
to COP26**

***A Columban team walked part of the Relay to COP26.***

**COLUMBAN MISSION**

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



# Editorial

"Ellen, Ellen!" My mum was calling me through the smog as I left my nursery school in West London. Children were trying to reunite with parents at the end of a school day in December 1962. Visibility was so poor I couldn't see my outstretched hand! No masks, but my scarf was up over my mouth and nose. I'm old enough to remember the smog of that year which killed 700 people.

The killing of thousands by multiple London smogs over decades led to the passing of the 1956 Clean Air Act. It restricted the burning of domestic fuels in urban areas with the introduction of smokeless zones. We stopped seeing the coalman with his horse and cart, delivering to the coal bunker under our stairs. And we stopped choking on air smelling of sulphur. Battersea Power Station was eventually closed.

It was structural change which ended the London smogs. And nothing less than structural change this time on a vaster global scale - is needed to address today's environmental crises. We are more aware of this after the devastating 9 August report from scientists of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It said warming to date has made changes to many of our planetary support systems and the consequences will continue to worsen. The report demonstrates that efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, a key target of the Paris Agreement, will certainly fail unless drastic action is taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In this year of UK leadership of COP26 in Glasgow, the UK must take the lead. A huge discussion is going on regarding Individual Lifestyle Change versus System Change. Both are important and linked, but I feel we in the Justice and Peace Network must particularly address System Change. It is a popular call at young people's climate strikes.

But what does 'System Change' mean?

Structural change is needed to drastically transition away from fossil fuels this decade. In the political world the UK is better on aspirational noises than action. Many UK government policies are taking us in the wrong direction - dithering over a new coal mine,



*Columban group at the July 2021 NJPN Annual Conference.*

scrapping over a billion in funding for energy efficiency, letting our banks fuel climate destruction across the world, slashing overseas aid. The negative impacts of industrial farming particularly animal farming with its production of methane are becoming more and more evident and must be addressed. Our centrespread shows key asks at COP26. Our support for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill is clear on page 8.

Action by the corporate world is crucial too. Just 100 companies have been the source of more than 70% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions since 1988, according to the Carbon Majors Report of 2017. Top of the list are fossil fuel producers. Despite all their "greenwash" they are continuing with business as usual. In July, Channel 4 revealed that fossil fuel companies - including BP, Shell and ExxonMobil - have lobbied the UK government ahead of COP26 for "greater recognition of the role of fossil gas" so that fossil fuels continue to be a "vital part of the solution"! Despite its net zero 'ambitions', BP has also lobbied the EU to support fossil gas. Another key issue picked up by Global Justice Now is corporate courts giving fossil fuel companies the power to sue governments for taking action on climate.

The Conference of the Parties (COP26) to be held in Glasgow in November cannot afford to fail. Collective problems need collective solutions. Columbans were in Paris in 2015 where there was a binding agreement to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and crucially adapt to its effects. The Glasgow COP will review

developments. Columbans will be there again. A successful COP26 will be a success for the poor. The Church is amplifying the demands of the poorest nations where climate impacts are most devastating. It is our moral duty to do this. Moreover, what may first become apparent amongst the most vulnerable will, in time, impact everyone.

We launch our next Schools Competition with this issue, 'Anyone can make a difference 21<sup>st</sup> Century Changemakers'. See page 11. We can all do something. While billionaires jostle to leave our devastated Earth, we can work for a stable climate and protection from destruction by industry, military or extreme weather events.

Let's take inspiration from the Young Christian Climate Network's Relay to COP which has been making its way to Scotland, raising awareness along the route. Columbans joined in London and Birmingham. The Camino to COP has now set off too. Let's support them. The Laudato Si' Action Platform a decade-long journey towards responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor - will be launched on 4 October. Look out for Operation Noah announcing the next tranche of divestment by religious groups on 25 October. And we must encourage governments to accept that their concept of national security, sustained by a military-industrial complex, is anachronistic and irrelevant to the current crisis.

Indigenous people look around eight generations ahead. Let us be hopeful, look to the long-term, act for justice and peace, live more sustainably and pray! ■

*Ellen Teague*

## Spirituality to Save our Common Home

**Liam O'Callaghan SSC**

**Irish Columban Liam O'Callaghan has experienced extreme heatwaves in Pakistan where he is on mission. He coordinates Justice, Peace and Ecology work there, along with Interreligious Dialogue.**

The Sixth Assessment Report of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was released on 8 August 2021 and it made for grim reading. The UN Secretary General said the report "is a code red for humanity.....the alarm bells are ringing and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk". It is also indisputable that humans are responsible for these changes.

Urgent action is required; how can this be brought about? For some time now, there has been a growing awareness that the ecological crisis is fundamentally a spiritual crisis. The American environmental lawyer and activist, James Gustave Speth, said: "I used to think that top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that 30 years of good science could address these problems. I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with these we need a cultural and spiritual transformation."

This is echoed in the 2015 encyclical from Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*, which was very influential in the build up to COP21 in Paris where 198 countries signed the Paris agreement. One commentator said, "the common wisdom is that, without *Laudato Si'*, it is far from sure that the Paris Agreement would have been signed".

A central concept of *Laudato Si'* is 'integral ecology,' which sees everything as inter-connected; it is situated in an evolutionary context and sees the universe as sacred. It is inseparable from the notion of the common good, highlighting that the poor are always worst affected by the effects of climate change and the centrality of justice:

social justice, climate justice and inter-generational justice. It tries to break with the logic of violence, selfishness and exploitation and is captured succinctly by the challenge of "what kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us?" (LS 161) It clearly believes that issues of ecology, economics, politics, ethics and spirituality are closely connected.

*Laudato Si'* gives a clarion call for "an ecological conversion"; the conversion called for is radical and nowhere more clearly needed than in the economic field. The capitalist system, which is now normative worldwide and built on unlimited economic growth, rampant consumption and unrestrained globalisation, is on a destructive and suicidal path toward planetary catastrophe.

Jason Hickel, in his book '*Less is More*' says that one of the most damaging things about capitalism is that it is "fundamentally unhinged from any conception of human need". It piles its rewards onto the wealthiest first. The more dire the poverty, the more invisible it is to capital. And it takes no account of what it destroys in the process of turning things into money. A central principle of capitalism is to take more than you give. Historically, that process has driven empire and slavery, and today it drives climate change and ecological breakdown. Wealthier countries take from the global atmosphere in yet another form of colonialism.

A creation-centered spirituality works towards bringing about an "ecological conversion" in economic, political and social systems. This new vision entails that the pursuit of happiness is sought not in more accumulation and spending but in the growth of human solidarity, community and inclusion; where people achieve their potential and where the benefits of economic activity are shared equitably. Where

democracy and civic participation flourish at all levels and where the environment is sustained for current and future generations. Pope Francis' "ecological conversion" is deeper and more challenging than most realise.

Creation-centered spirituality seeks new ways of understanding how God reveals Godself. Traditionally, 'scripture' is the means of revelation most familiar to us but there is another book - creation itself - as *Laudato Si'* tells us "the magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness". Deeper physical, emotional and intellectual encounter with creation can spark our human thirst for God. However, in today's fast changing world, many are becoming more divorced from encounter with the earth.

But, if we can learn to pay attention to nature, we will become aware of the degradation all around and in particular the loss of species. If we want to leave behind a better world then there is a need for profound changes to political, economic, cultural and social systems, as well as to our individual lifestyles. Action begins here driven by this spirituality.

In Columban work in Pakistan, this spirituality guides us in responding to the environmental crisis as we work in parishes, school and community groups, offering workshops and training modules. We also work from an interfaith perspective, for many school and community events are interfaith Muslim, Hindu, Christian. While interfaith work is not easy in Pakistan, working together to protect "our common home" can bring people together and so help break down misunderstandings. ■



Fr Liam O'Callaghan speaks to students in a seminar on trees and plants at St Paul's High School in Hyderabad.

## Climate Action in Times of Covid

**Dr Lorna Gold**

***The Chair of Laudato Si' Movement spoke on 24 July at the 2021 annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales (NJPN).***

The pandemic is teaching us important lessons about ourselves and our world which perhaps we had ignored for far too long. Pope Francis, in his wonderful book 'Let us Dream', talks about the fact that the definition of crisis is change. The pandemic is a crisis and therefore none of us will come out of it the same as we went in. And because the crisis is global, it changes all of us. It is a shared experience. The Pope says that whilst we know change is inevitable, we don't know exactly how we will be changed we have choices. We can react with anger, fear, selfishness... or we can choose to respond with solidarity, compassion and love.

Just think of the outcomes of other major global crises in history. The Second World War was the most awful tragedy with millions of deaths, and the holocaust. Out of it came the United Nations and major global institutions, international law, human rights, the welfare state, the NHS. Whilst by no means perfect, out of crisis came an era defined by international cooperation and the rallying cry 'never again'. History, like individual human lives, is built on cycles of tragedy and rebirth, dying and re-imagining society. Somehow, the pandemic is teaching us about deep connection we are all connected to each other and to nature.

The pandemic has taught us other lessons which are critical to tackling the climate crisis too. In particular, what it means to act together to face a common threat. Greta Thunberg and the climate strikers have called for the world to treat the climate crisis like the emergency it is. The scientists tell us that we are currently on a warming path which will render large parts of the world uninhabitable by the end of the century. Because of the time it takes to effect change everywhere (you can't just turn off the coal powerplants unless there is a clean energy alternative built; you can't magic up green alternatives to transport), actions we take in the next couple of years will

determine how this plays out in the next decades. Whilst governments eventually called climate emergencies, very little actually changed.

Before the pandemic, human society had forgotten what it means to take collective action in a crisis, to act together. We had become completely sold on the idea that it is enough for us all to follow our individual self-interest, to do what is right for us in the short term. We had become wrapped up in the false notion that market economics and politics would save us from ourselves and the ravages of climate change. We had devalued the potential that we have to act together for a greater good when we decide to do so. I don't think we really believed we could do it. The pandemic, however, with all its flawed responses, has taught us a huge lesson: we can bend curves if we all play our part. We can do impossible things like invent and roll out vaccines in record time, lock down our economies to save countless lives, get public information out to vast numbers of people, put in place safety nets for the vulnerable. Responsible collective action, guided by solidarity and enlightened self-interest is, perhaps, the most powerful tool we have in a crisis, not blind market forces.

And now, whilst there is a hankering to get back to normal, there is an equally strong sense that we need to create a new normal. We are deeply conscious that the old normal was unsustainable, in so many ways, including from an environmental perspective. The challenge now is to create a kind of normal which breaks with the cycles of environmental destruction and points a clear pathway to a different future. We have many of the building blocks for that future but what is lacking is the ability to see beyond the narrow frame we have drawn for ourselves. Shifting this framework is no easy task as that future has to be guided by different values and how these are translated into key policy choices.



*Christine Allen (CAFOD Director), Bishop John Arnold (Environment Bishop) and Lorna Gold at the conference.*

A lot will politically depend on how pandemic politics play out in the coming months. Almost every country in the world is now facing huge debts as a result of the pandemic. The hard financial question of who pays for the changes that need to happen to tackle climate change are front and centre. Where is the \$100 billion per year that was promised in Paris for the poorest countries?

In the face of all this, how can we do our part however small to respond to *Laudato Si'*. We must ensure that as we emerge from the pandemic, we do not go back to our old ways, but use this to become a Kairos moment for the whole world to tackle the climate emergency?

There are many practical things we can do to listen to the cry of the Earth and the poor. One element I would like to stress is the power of community. Pope Francis' vision of ecological conversion is very specific. He says we need a community conversion. We usually associate conversion experience as something personal, but conversion is almost always something mediated by others, something that happens through others. So, what does it mean for us to convert together? And what if that process of community ecological conversion was to extend to the entire world of faith communities that still encompass 80% of the world's population? A community conversion involves us repenting together, agreeing follow through in a spirit of synodality, changing institutional structures, making clear plans, and ritualising our changes such as through the Season of Creation. It is extraordinarily powerful.

Conversion is about stepping into a new reality and inviting others in. We have to approach the future in this spirit of hope and renewal. ■



## Healthy Planet, Healthy People

**Columbans are encouraging support for a petition - see centrespread - for Catholics to push for action at UN meetings on biodiversity (COP15) and climate change (COP26).**

*Dear COP15 President Li Ganjie, COP26 President Alok Sharma, and all political leaders participating in COP15 and COP26:*

'United in solidarity with the most vulnerable, we Catholics and other people of faith implore you to take urgent action in line with the science for all of creation at this year's COP15 and COP26. Our common home and our common family are suffering. The COVID-19 crisis has been yet another alarming symptom of an ecological emergency. Humankind cannot be healthy on a sick planet.

At the Earth Day Summit in April, Pope Francis said: "We know that one does not emerge from a crisis the same. We emerge either better or worse... We need to ensure that the environment is cleaner, purer and that it is conserved. We must care for nature so that nature may care for us."

Our planet's biodiversity is disintegrating at the hands of humans. Biologists estimate that we are driving species to extinction at a rate of up to 1,000 times faster than without human influence. In parallel, the worsening climate crisis is causing rising sea levels and more extreme weather, devastating lives and livelihoods. This interconnected crisis is impacting most adversely on our poorest sisters and brothers across the planet who have done least to cause it. But none of us, rich or poor, are immune. The climate crisis and biodiversity collapse are twin crises. A warming world is exacerbating the spiraling loss of blameless species. And further loss of nature will jeopardise our capacity to deliver on the 1.5 degree limit to global warming.

Acting in line with the best available science on both the climate and biodiversity crises is fundamental for human and planetary health and survival. We must also open our hearts, believers and non-believers alike, to the right of all species to exist. All life, human and other than human, holds intrinsic value. Their right to thrive is not dependent on serving humanity, but is a way to give glory to the Creator.

Despite the overwhelming scientific evidence and numerous national declarations of climate and ecological emergencies, world leaders have yet to act commensurate with the scientific and moral urgency. We must grieve for lives and life lost, and we must do better. As a faith community, we know "that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps" (*Laudato Si'* 61). We must recognise that Indigenous peoples and local communities are at the center of protecting nature, and we must support them. "When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best" (*LS 146*).

We urge you, leaders, to explicitly recognise human-induced climate change and biodiversity as part of one and the same crisis. Acknowledge the need for ambitious, integrated, and transformative action that responds to both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. Urgently affirm the Paris Agreement to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and to a new biodiversity global goal of 50% conservation of lands and waters, and restoration and sustainable management of all the rest of land and water bodies to ensure no more biodiversity loss. Recognise the ecological debt of high income nations and agree to reform the financial system and cancellation of debt, so that all countries can restart economies that work for all peoples and the planet.

With Pope Francis leading us, we pray that you and all political leaders throughout the world, tasked to make life-saving decisions in this critical year, will bring us out better from the COVID-19 crisis towards an equitable common home for all life, for generations to come.' ■

## Biodiversity Podcasts Season 2

The Missionary Society of St Columban is registered as an accredited organisation with the UN Convention on Biodiversity (COP15), which is due to meet online 11-15 October and then in-person negotiations next year in China. The Columbans have submitted Columban policy recommendations. The UN states that, "urgent political action" is needed "globally, regionally and nationally to transform economic, social and financial models so that the trends that have exacerbated biodiversity loss will stabilise in the next ten years and allow for the recovery of natural ecosystems in the following 20 years".



**'Jubilee for the Earth' is a podcast mini-series about biodiversity, produced by the Missionary Society of St. Columban for the Season of Creation last year.**

Six episodes explored biodiversity and a related issue like economic justice, peace, migration, and other topics related to Catholic Social Teaching. The fourth podcast 'Nonviolence for the Earth' featured Ellen Teague, and advocated choosing to live simply and sustainably, preventing conflicts before they become violent, and campaigning against the expansion of militarism around the world. We need this not only to save human life but to save all life on Earth.

**This year, a Season 2 of podcasts have been produced. The six themes cover Biodiversity in relation to Young People, Indigenous Communities, Food Insecurity, Climate Change, Beyond COP 15 and COP26, The Spirituality of Biodiversity.**

**Download at:**  
[www.columbancenter.org/jubileepodcast](http://www.columbancenter.org/jubileepodcast)

# COUNTDOWN TO COP 26

## ASKS

- .. **Tackle the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis together. Genuinely protect nature: forests, species and oceans.**
- .. **Commit to ambitious action on climate change before 2030 to cut emissions in line with a 1.5-degree world**
- .. **Plug the climate finance gap to support the countries and communities most vulnerable to the climate crisis, so they can respond and adapt to climate impacts such as floods, drought or other extreme weather events**
- .. **Protect and respect human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in climate and biodiversity action**
- .. **End all public finance and subsidies for fossil fuels. Instead fund a just transition to renewable energy systems**
- .. **Cancel Global South debt to free up funds for governments to invest in mitigation and adaptation.**
- .. **Support legal mechanisms to hold transnational corporations to account for undermining human rights and fuelling climate change. In addition, rewrite global trade rules to reverse deregulation, protect the environment and remove the threat of corporate litigation**
- .. **Reverse cuts to the aid budget**

## EVENTS

4 October - Launch of the Laudato Si Action Platform  
[www.laudatosiactionplatform.org](http://www.laudatosiactionplatform.org)

28-31 October - UN Conference of Youth, looking at youth engagement with COP26  
<https://ukcoy16.org/what-is-coy>

Oct 30 - Nov 12 COP26 Multi-faith Prayer Vigil  
Online and in person in Glasgow.  
<http://www.earthvigil.co.uk/xr-faith-bridge-cop-26-vigil/>

### COP 1-12 NOVEMBER

1-12 November Civil Society Convergence Spaces - creative hubs across Glasgow where activists can gather and connect  
<https://cop26coalition.org/>

5-6 November Days of Action in Glasgow and across the UK

7-9 November Alternative Summit in Glasgow in-person and online

## PILGRIMAGES

Young Christian Climate Network 'Relay to COP'  
[www.yccn.uk](http://www.yccn.uk) Cornwall to Glasgow 13 June - 30 October

Camino to COP26 <https://caminotocop.com>  
London to Glasgow 5 September - 29 October



Rachel Mander (above) and Melanie Nazareth (right) on 'Camino to Cop26'

## WEBSITES

Glasgow COP action  
<https://cop26coalition.org/>

The Climate Coalition  
[www.theclimatecoalition.org/](http://www.theclimatecoalition.org/)

Laudato Si' Movement <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/>

Green Christian COP26  
<https://greenchristian.org.uk/cop-26-glasgow-2021/>



# GLASGOW 1-12 November

## CAMPAIGNS



Healthy Planet, Healthy People Petition (calls for climate and biodiversity action) <https://thecatholicpetition.org/>

Global Prayer and Action Chain for Climate Justice  
[www.prayandact4climate.org/action/petition/](http://www.prayandact4climate.org/action/petition/)

Reclaim our common home CAFOD Campaign includes calling on banks to cancel the debt of the world's poorest nations.  
<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Latest-campaigns>

Operation Noah's Bright Now Campaign for fossil-free churches  
<https://brightnow.org.uk>

Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill. The Bill asks the UK to take responsibility for its fair share of greenhouse gas emissions.  
[www.ceebill.uk](http://www.ceebill.uk)

Global Justice Now [www.globaljustice.org.uk/](http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/)

**"I've mostly given up being either optimistic or pessimistic. Our odds of success are not incredibly good, but I wake up every day saying 'What can I do to change the odds a little? And it's not impossible, the task that we have ahead. We're not going to stop global warming, but slowing it to the point that we can cope with it remains within the realms of possibility.'"**

**Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org**

## PRAYER

Prayer service booklet 'A Prayer for our Earth' encourages prayer for the success of COP26. Produced by Justice & Peace Scotland, Glasgow Catholic Worker and the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) and others.

<https://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/>

**Creator God,**  
**this Earth is miraculous and beautiful. Forgive our confusion and inaction as we confront the challenges of climate change.**  
**In the light of your truth, seen so clearly in the life and teaching of Jesus, help us to re-examine ourselves and our lifestyle choices and see clearly the implications of how we live on all that sustains life on this earth. May we follow your leading in caring for every aspect of this precious world, which you made and love.**  
**We pray for world leaders to agree radical actions in Glasgow this November that will help protect our world from the impact of global heating for future generations.**  
**Throughout history you have moved people to do amazing things for the sake of their neighbours. Inspire us now to work together, as your people, to change priorities in the way we live, so that we build a fair and safe world for all your creation; a world where your will is done as it is in heaven.**  
**Amen.**  
**(Pray and Fast for the Climate)**



'Relay to COP' service at Westminster Cathedral on 6 August.

## CEE Bill: Churches Should Step Up

**Melanie Nazareth**

***Melanie is an activist within Christian Climate Action. She recently completed a masters degree in Theology, Ecology and Ethics with the Jesuits, and argues that the UK must back climate intentions with actions and legislation.***

The Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill is a ground-breaking blueprint for serious climate and ecological action in the UK. Its aim is to make climate targets into law so that government is bound to them. This is not the case currently and even the limited targets we currently have are not being met.

The CEE Bill, drafted by an alliance of economists, environmentalists, legal and scientific experts, would ensure the UK takes full responsibility for all of its greenhouse gas emissions, not just the ones that are generated within our own borders. It would include our carbon emissions from aviation, shipping and international trade, which are currently ignored, and it would rule out relying on offsetting or theoretical carbon capture which are currently used as an excuse to carry on carbon producing business as usual.

The Bill is a way to accelerate ambition on the environmental crisis too, by requiring action to actively restore biodiverse habitats in the UK and to reduce damage to the environment in our supply chains across the world. It calls for a Citizen's Assembly to assess the details of how emissions cuts and other measures are to be achieved in a democratic and transparent way. In using this deliberative process of a representative selection of the people who make up UK society to assist policy making, it embeds aspects of Catholic Social Teaching on subsidiarity.

A stable climate and ecological preservation directly relate to physical security and subsistence and are also core to our Catholic teachings on human dignity. Catholic Social Teaching also tells us that the practice of solidarity is a necessary component of our faith. This entails a dedication to the disadvantaged, not just through individual actions but also through our collective effort as the Church to make social, political, and economic structures more just. Poorly designed climate change policies will have adverse

consequences for the poor and vulnerable, and the Church should be advocating for legislation that reflects an integral ecology, addresses the global nature of climate change and seeks to enhance rather than diminish the economic situation of people in poverty. The CEE Bill does all these things.

The current crisis is an issue of the right to life. The lack of meaningful action on climate and ecological breakdown and the reliance on future technologies denies life to those in poorer nations, future generations and other species. In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict tells us that the Church has a responsibility to defend the gifts of creation that belong to everyone and to protect humankind from self-destruction and must assert this responsibility in the public sphere.

Time is fast running out for climate, nature and the most vulnerable people. Support by the Catholic Church would make a significant difference to the speed and success of the campaign for the CEE Bill. The more grassroots support the Bill has, the more likely it becomes that the government will take it into law.

Initially presented in the 2019-21 parliamentary session by Caroline Lucas MP, the CEE Bill was reintroduced as a Presentation Bill in June 2021. This is a type of Private Members Bill that is introduced without debate in the House of Commons. Parliamentary support is growing. It now has the support of 115 MPs across eight political parties from all parts of the UK and 29 members of the House of Lords, including the Conservative Peer Baroness Verma, as well a growing numbers of local authorities and other organisations.

Even so, getting a Presentation Bill into law is a lengthy and difficult process. The Climate Change Act of 2008 began life as a private member's bill written by Friends of the Earth in 2005, but we need the

measures introduced by the CEE Bill to become law much more quickly. We need to act with the greatest of urgency upon what Pope Francis identifies as, "that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded." It is important that the Church and its agencies step up to this, but individuals can also make a vital contribution.

See <https://www.ceebill.uk>. Resources including 'A Faith Response to the CEE Bill' at Green Christian: <https://greenchristian.org.uk/the-climate-and-ecological-emergency-bill/> ■

### Caroline Lucas MP says:

We have a Climate Change Act, passed in 2008. But the Act is showing its age, and has holes in it which urgently need patching. Even if we met all its targets, we still wouldn't be doing our fair share to avert the risk of climate catastrophe.

It doesn't address emissions from aviation and shipping, nor those from consumption, which has allowed successive governments to claim credit for cutting emissions when they have simply been outsourced to other countries while we consume what's produced. If those emissions were on our balance sheet the true picture for the UK would be a reduction just 10% compared to 1990, rather than the 42% that ministers claim.

That's why I'm introducing a new climate bill to sit alongside the Climate Change Act, to build on its strengths and fix its weaknesses. The CEE Bill will focus on nature too, on biodiversity and the protection of soils which are vital for farming and as a natural store for carbon.

We must move with the times, and they are changing rapidly. We need new targets and a new approach. My Early Day Motion on the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill has drawn cross-party support, though not yet from Conservative MPs.



# Columban Education

## Ecological Education in Covid

**James Trewby**

**From the Columban Justice and Peace Education Worker.**

Work with educators and young people has continued through the pandemic, but the way in which it happens keeps changing.



Last summer and into the Season of Creation I was able to visit schools but mostly ran activities outside. This led to eco-retreats that took place rain or shine – and in Britain that often means rain. In the days before the pandemic these would have used the grounds, hall and chapel at St Columban's, but this has not been possible for a good while now. Instead, I was taking young people to their local parks or gardens in their schools, finishing days with prayer outside and participation in online 'virtual' protests and climate strikes.

Our second lockdown led to things moving online. Our zoom account was put to good use as I organised JPIC encounters for many groups of educators and youth ministers – meeting with activists, missionaries, religious and people impacted by climate change. Another iteration of the same idea involved recording these. An example that might be of interest to readers includes Liam O'Callaghan in Pakistan, AG Sano in the Philippines and Anna Marshall - a winner of our Columban media competition in the UK. See: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAb9-8p\\_gLc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAb9-8p_gLc)

More recently, work is face to face again, including retreat days for teachers exploring *Laudato Si'* in hills (one day, pouring with rain, and a teacher slipping in the mud; a second with perfect sunshine). This year's Season of Creation has seen schools eager to explore see-judge-act, *Laudato Si'* and care for our common home before COP26.

The model has evolved into a hybrid, with zoom encounters with Marj in Fiji (she continued heroically even while suffering with COVID and I reassured the school the virus protection on their computer would keep students safe!), prayer stations outside reflecting on the cry of Earth and what we'd heard from Marj about increasing frequency and intensity of typhoons and then political action aimed at our politicians before COP26.

Looking ahead, I'm working with a group of 13 schools to put on a programme for the Season of Creation. COVID-allowing. It will culminate with a Mass for the feast of St Francis of Assisi at St Chad's Cathedral in which the final blessing and dismissal leads directly to the young people processing with banners and symbols made from recycled materials to meet with politicians in the city centre – prayer, pilgrimage and protest!

Plans for COP26 include me being in Glasgow with around eight young adults to learn, campaign and pray. The dream is to bring messages from around the Columban world (send to [education@columbans.co.uk](mailto:education@columbans.co.uk)), including those gathered via the online Columban International Youth Encounters, and to live stream. ■

## Why I took part in 'Relay to COP26'

**Florence Wright**

This year in November world leaders are meeting in Glasgow at COP26, the UN climate conference. We, the Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN), are asking them to *rise to the moment* and protect people over bank balances. So as an act of hope, love and faith we are walking from Cornwall (where the G7 meeting took place in June) to Glasgow as a Relay. We'd love you to join us, all ages and all denominations.

The Relay began on the 13 June and I took part as it passed through London in early August. My specific role was to coordinate events in London.

I became involved with YCCN over the course of my 'COVID Gap Year,' because, instead of travelling, I have grown in a passion for climate justice. I had always cared about the planet and attended the school strikes for climate, but it was during the pandemic that I had the time to realise how serious the situation is, that it is something God cares about and that I could get involved.

I began to respond to this myself by making small changes to my own lifestyle, like cutting down on plastic and upcycling (creative reuse) but found it was easy to become overwhelmed at how small an impact my own decisions made. So joining YCCN enabled me to be involved with collaborative action and our shared faith makes the group encouraging and hopeful to be a part of. I still try to make changes to my lifestyle but these have become more like acts of worship to God and creation rather than because I think they alone will save the planet. Therefore don't feel guilty if you find these changes hard or get things wrong. Imperfect sustainability is the way to go.

YCCN has shown me that together we have power, and with our Relay we have specific asks for the government and world leaders particularly around money. This is because those countries in vulnerable situations who are most affected by climate change, are the least at fault and the least able to afford solutions. Therefore we call on the UK government to cancel public debt for these countries, and put pressure on private creditors to do the same.

Join us for the Relay to COP26! You can sign up for the Relay on our website <https://www.yccn.uk/>. You can check our map to see if the Relay is coming near you. ■

**Florence** is a 19-year-old Gap Year Student Living in London with a passion for Climate Justice and is a member of YCCN. She is heading to Durham University in September.



## Next Divestment Announcement

As fossil fuel companies continue to explore for more oil and gas, many church bodies will be joining the next Global Divestment Announcement on 25 October. In 2021, UK Churches fully divesting from fossil fuels have included the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union, Church in Wales and the Church of Scotland.

Looking at Life through the lens of *Laudato Si'* Journey to 2030 has produced a 6th form Religious Education syllabus 'On Care for our Common Home' in a see, judge, act framework over 10 lessons and optional debate, assessment and school action planning sessions. In the UK this syllabus is intended for Core RE, ages 16-18. The syllabus is also very suitable for parishes and other community settings wishing to explore *Laudato Si'*.

<https://theecg.org/resources/6-form-syllabus/>

## Columban calls for Universal Basic Income

In his latest book, 'Robots, Ethics and the Future of Jobs' Columban Sean McDonagh proposes to decouple paid work from the provision of basic human needs. The idea is that every person receives a regular unconditional payment. He feels this is a sensible response to the main concern of his book: the mass unemployment threatened by increasing automation. ISBN-10:1788123069

## Pray for a world without nuclear weapons

The Chair of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Department for International Affairs called for prayers on the anniversary of the dropping of the world's first nuclear bombs. Bishop Declan Lang said: "As people in Japan and across the world commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, and Nagasaki on 9 August, we once again recall Pope Francis' words at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial and join him in prayer for a world without nuclear weapons." Columban JPIC joined Pax Christi's two-hour prayer vigil for peace at Westminster Cathedral on 6 August, commemorating the 76th anniversary of the nuclear attack on Hiroshima which killed more than 140,000 people. Posters were displayed and prayer cards handed out to cathedral visitors. Pax Christi was there again on 9 August - commemorating those who

died when the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki three days after Hiroshima, killing about 80,000 people. Other commemorations were held in Coventry, Oxford and locations around the UK.

## Dioceses make carbon-neutral announcements

The Diocese of Westminster is the second Catholic Diocese - after Plymouth - to commit to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030 in its parishes and curial buildings. Inspired by *Laudato Si'*, the trustees will encourage schools to follow the same path. The Church has established Inter Fuel Management (IFM), a Catholic mutual which sources energy from green sources. Also, Churchmarketplace, owned by the dioceses of England and Wales, increases collective purchasing power towards a carbon-neutral future.

## Don't let corporate courts block climate action

Corporate courts have long been used to oppose environmental protections. Now that we are seeing more governments around the world begin to take long needed action to tackle the climate crisis, we are seeing more and more corporate court cases challenging those actions. The US, for example, is being sued by a Canadian fossil fuel company, TC Energy, after President Biden cancelled the Keystone tar sands pipeline. See *Global Justice Now*: <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/our-campaigns/trade/corporate-courts/>

## A little girl on a BIG journey

Little Amal is the giant puppet at the heart of *The Walk*, travelling 8,000km in support of refugees. This year, the 3.5 metre-tall living artwork of a young Syrian refugee child will walk across Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and the UK to focus attention on the urgent needs of young refugees. On 23-25 October Little Amal will be in Central London - walking up the steps of St Paul's Cathedral and being welcomed by faith leaders. She will also be at Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral. <https://www.walkwithamal.org/events/amal-sees-the-city/>

## Challenge Poverty Week (11-17 October 2021)

An opportunity to say what needs to change after Covid to enable communities in UK to thrive. The pandemic has highlighted that poverty and inequality hit some communities harder than others. Action

ideas include: Meeting your MP, hosting a storytelling or discussion event and using social media. It's a chance for voices often ignored to be heard. <https://challengepoverty.co.uk/>

## Tribal rights defender dies

Fr Stan Swamy SJ died in hospital in India on 5 July, after appalling treatment by the Government of India which had jailed him for eight months. He was painted as a terrorist because of his work with Adivasi and other oppressed communities in India to resist the mining industry and other injustices. He has been called a martyr by the Catholic Bishops of Asia.



Hiroshima Vigil at Westminster Cathedral on 6 August



# Action Ideas

**“No one is too small to make a difference, everyone can do something. If everyone does something, then huge differences can happen.”**  
Climate activist Greta Thunberg to Channel 4 News.

## SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION

We are looking for students (Year 9 to Year 13) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme:

# ANYONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### 21ST CENTURY CHANGEMAKERS

Who in the world today is doing something about inequality, injustice, exclusion and environmental degradation? What can they teach us? How can we draw on our own faith and personal experience to be changemakers?

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: FRIDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2022**

For more information on entry guidelines see:  
[www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com)  
or email [hello@columbancompetition.com](mailto:hello@columbancompetition.com)

**PRINT PRIZES**  
1<sup>st</sup> £300  
2<sup>nd</sup> £150 • 3<sup>rd</sup> £100

**IMAGE PRIZES**  
1<sup>st</sup> £300  
2<sup>nd</sup> £150 • 3<sup>rd</sup> £100

 COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

The Columban Schools Media Competition is now in its 5th year and it has been exciting to see the growing number of entries as each year passes. This year's theme, **'Anyone can make a difference – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Changemakers,'** is based on a quote from climate activist Greta Thunberg.

This is an opportunity to hear young people's voices on the changemakers of our time.

**The deadline for the competition is 11th February 2022.**

**[www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com)**

## Reclaiming our Common Home

CAFOD is currently running a campaign called **RECLAIM OUR COMMON HOME**. Sign the petition online at <https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/73304/petition/1>. Parishes can also order free petition cards from: <https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/73304/petition/1>. **PARLIAMENT IN YOUR PARISH** encourages parishes to hold virtual meetings with their MPs before COP26. Use the parish's website, newsletter and social media channels. <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Campaign-with-us/Parliament-in-your-parish>

## Green your money

We can all take steps through how we save and invest, our pensions and our spending to help fund the transformation we need to avoid climate catastrophe, restore nature and protect the poorest communities. Three Bible Studies have been produced by Church Action on Tax Justice that address issues of income and wealth, equality and redistribution, poverty and justice. <https://inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/money/ethical-money/it-doesnt-cost-the-earth-to-green-your-finances-1120303>

## Laudato Si' Action Platform

On 4 October the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is launching its **Laudato**

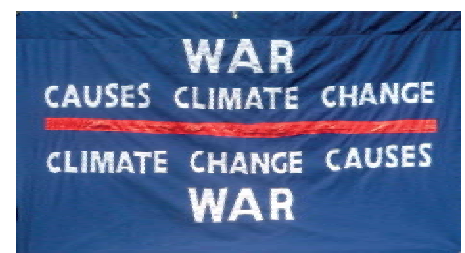
**Si' Action Platform**. In the spirit of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, this project includes seven sustainability goals to be achieved within seven years. They include adopting renewable energy; adopting simpler lifestyles; fostering ecological education and spirituality; advocating for sustainable development; and following ethical investment guidelines. "There is hope," Pope Francis says; "we can all collaborate, each with their own culture and experience, each with their own initiatives and abilities, so that our mother Earth returns to its original beauty and creation again shines according to God's plan."

**Church institutions can register to join the platform on its website:**

**[www.laudatosiactionplatform.org](http://www.laudatosiactionplatform.org).**

## MAW postcard

These can be ordered at £2.50 for 25 cards, and £5 for 50, including postage from: Movement for the Abolition of War, 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ or <https://www.abolishwar.org.net/shop>



# Resources

**Conflict & Climate Change Movement for Abolition of War**  
An 18-min DVD with Resource book. Columban JPIC helped produce. £8.99 from [www.kevinmayhew.com/conflict-and-climate-change-bookand-dvd.html](http://www.kevinmayhew.com/conflict-and-climate-change-bookand-dvd.html) or 0845 388 1634



**Climate Generation: Awakening to Our Children's Future**  
**Lorna Gold**

Dr Gold addresses the harsh reality of climate change but wraps the message in humanity and practical ways forward. She highlights stories of people who are doing amazing things to tackle the climate crisis. ISBN-13: 978-1847308412

**A Creed for Today: Faith and Commitment for our New Earth Awareness**  
**Donal Dorr**

Concern for environmental issues is at the heart of the Christian Gospel, argues theologian Donal Dorr. Veritas ISBN: 978-1847309389

**The New Climate War**  
**Michael Mann**

Michael Mann urges systemic change. He calls fossil fuel companies to account as huge contributors to the climate crisis in pursuit of profits. Mann shows that corporations and lobbyists have been successful in convincing us that climate change will be fine, if we just recycle our bottles and turn out the lights. He's optimistic though, because he sees what we really could do to turn down the heat. ISBN-10: 1913348687

**'PLENTY!'**  
**Green Christian**

A new group discussion resource for Churches on the economic drivers of current ecological crises. The six sessions engage with the implications of the current economic system and its impact on the

environmental crisis. Participants are encouraged to envision other, better ways of living. Download at: <https://joyinenough.org/>

**Creation Care Christian Responses to the Climate Emergency**  
**FaithJustice**

A six-session course for groups. A mixture of videos, interviews, book extracts, and questions for discussion. Produced by FaithJustice, with input from the Passionists, Jesuits, Operation Noah, and Christian Climate Action.

<https://creationcare.cc/>

**Protecting our common home: Land and environmental human rights defenders in Latin America**  
**CAFOD**

This report finds that States as well as businesses act with disregard for human rights and the environment. The COVID pandemic has exacerbated inequalities and led to increased attacks on land and environmental human rights defenders and their communities. <https://cafod.org.uk/About-us/Policy-and-research/Private-sector/Human-rights-Latin-America>

**Care of Creation Rosary**  
**CAFOD**

A rosary to "reaffirm our personal vocation to be stewards of creation." <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources/Care-of-creation-rosary>

**Prayerbook for the Climate and Ecological Emergency**  
**Jon Swales**

How can we look and love like Jesus in the coming years? How can we pray in the face of climate breakdown? <https://atyourservice.arocha.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/05/26-Prayers-for-the-Climate-and-Ecological-Emergency-Jon-Swales.pdf>

**Welcoming the Stranger**  
**Denise Cottrell-Boyce**

Explores how the Bible can help us better to understand our increasingly multi-cultural world and society, especially in light of the huge numbers of people fleeing war, poverty and oppression. How can we contribute to the rebuilding of a world of peace in our lives and local communities today? <http://www.dartonlongmantodd.co.uk/titles/2272-9780232534238-welcoming-the-stranger>

**Breaking free from mining – A 2050 blueprint**  
**Seas At Risk**

Warns about the disastrous environmental consequences of a new mining boom while showing how it can be prevented. Overconsumption and the paradigm of infinite economic growth require vast amounts of metals and minerals, driving one of the world's most polluting industries and a main contributor to climate change and biodiversity loss. It discusses existing and emerging alternatives to shift towards the use of resources within the limits of our planet. Downloadable from [www.seas-at-risk.org](http://www.seas-at-risk.org)



**COVID-19: Environment, Justice, and the Future**  
**Ruth Valerio, Martin Hodson, Margot Hodson, Timothy Howles**

Covers the environmental impacts of the lockdowns, and how to build back in a just and sustainable way. **Christian Discipleship in the Environmental Crisis: An exploration of fullness as an environmental ethic**  
**Margot Hodson**

The biblical concept of fullness provides a pathway to enable a restorative response. Both from the John Ray Initiative at <https://www.jri.org.uk>

## VOCATION FOR JUSTICE

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