

Dear Eco-Congregation friends



Welcome to the March/April 2019 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter. Spring is here! Let's get outside and enjoy God's beautiful creation!



Are you interested in learning more about Eco-Congregation Ireland? Perhaps your congregation or parish has an interest in the environment and has thought about becoming an Eco-Congregation? The [Eco-Congregation Committee](#) has Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Quaker representatives on it and they are happy to come to speak to your group no matter how small! The contact details are listed at the end of this newsletter and at the above link.

Do you know we are on Facebook? You can access the Eco-Congregation Ireland Facebook profile [here](#) or just go to facebook.com and search 'Eco-Congregation Ireland'. It's a great place to keep up to date with ECI's activities and access current news and information from other NGOs and faith organisations.

Would you like to start your journey towards an Eco-Congregation Ireland Award? A good way to get started is by completing our [Environmental Check Up for Your Church!](#) Send us your completed Checklist and one of our committee will be in touch to help you move towards an application for an Eco-Congregation Ireland award.

Don't forget! ECI will award two certificates in the earlier stages of your journey towards the final Eco-Congregation Ireland Award to mark stages on the way - the Awareness Certificate and the Endeavour Certificate. [Learn more on the ECI website here.](#) So far in 2019 the following churches and parishes have received ECI certificates:

ECI Awareness Certificate 2019: Cloonclare Church of Ireland, Manorhamilton; St Joseph, Mary and Benildus Parish, Waterford; Kilnamanagh-Castleview Parish, Tallaght; Theology Study Group, Parish of Maghera, Newcastle, Co Down; Douglas Union.

ECI Endeavour Certificate 2019: Hillsborough Presbyterian; St Mary's Church, Carlow; Dublin Unitarian Church; The Parish of Our Lady and St. Joseph, Prosperous; Presentation Sisters.



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Our Climate Justice Candle – The Journey Continues!

The Eco-Congregation Ireland [Climate Justice Candle](#) has been weaving its ecumenical and climate justice journey around Ireland since the launch of the project in 2015. Our new candle has headed off on its ecumenical and climate justice journey again! If you would like to be part of this initiative and use the new candle in a future event, simply drop us an email to info@ecocongregationireland.com. We look forward to hearing from YOU!

ECI Climate Justice Candle visits the Corrymeela Community

Alex Wimberly, Chaplain at [the Corrymeela Community](#) sent ECI a report on the ECI Climate Justice Candle's visit there. Corrymeela is Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation centre. They are an ecumenical Christian community with a mission of transforming division through human encounter. They hosted the ECI Climate Justice Candle for the entire month of February 2019 at their Ballycastle centre. The



community held worship twice a day in the Croí (their space for prayer and reflection) and throughout the month they focused on the issues of climate justice and ecological sustainability. Corrymeela has long held environmental issues close to their heart. Along with a history of incorporating ecological themes into their worshipping life, they have made decisions with their environmental impact in mind. Alex's report in full and their photos of the Climate Justice Candle's visit to Corrymeela [can be found on the ECI website here.](#)

ECI Climate Justice Candle visits Cabra West Parish

Philomena Neary RSC, Parish Sister at Cabra West Parish sent ECI a report on the visit of the ECI Climate Justice Candle to their parish. This Parish, [The Church of the Most Precious Blood, Cabra West](#) was delighted to host this candle for a long week-end, 21st – 24th March 2019. It spent its first day in the 'Prayer Room' of St. Catherine's Senior School. In preparation for its visit the children prepared 'footprints' where they wrote their promise on how they would reduce their carbon footprint to protect our common home.



The Candle then took more 'steps' to the Church for their week-end Masses. Some of the children's footprints were on display – highlighting the steps they are taking to protect our earth. Special leaflets were prepared for their liturgies including hymns, Penitential Rite, Creed and Prayer of the Faithful. Parishioners pledged themselves to live responsibly and use only their fair share of the earth's resources. Parishioners were encouraged to enjoy Creation! To take time see heaven in nature! And to go on a Carbon Fast for Lent! [You can view their photos and read their beautiful creed on the ECI website here.](#)

ECI Annual Review 2018 now online

[The Eco-Congregation Ireland Annual Review 2018 is now online - read it here!](#) It includes ECI's highlights for 2018, including presenting awards to Drumalis Retreat and Conference Centre, Larne, Co Antrim, Westport Eco-Congregation, Co Mayo, St. Joseph's Parish, SMA, Wilton, Cork and Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church, Belfast and the journey of our Climate Justice Candle in 2018. [Read it in full here.](#)



New Methodist Representative on ECI Committee

The [Eco-Congregation Ireland committee](#) has a new representative from the [Methodist Church in Ireland](#)! Steven Johnston is a member of [Gorey Methodist Church](#), Co Wexford. He has three children and seven grandchildren, ranging in age from 12 to 33. He serves on various committees and is a volunteer driver for the Irish Cancer Society. Welcome aboard Steven!



Catherine Brennan SSL visits the Parish of Maghera Theology Group in Newcastle, County Down

The Parish of Maghera Theology Group in Newcastle County Down, 'Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea' welcomed Catherine Brennan SSL,



Catholic representative on the ECI committee, who spoke about environmental issues - spiritual, practical, community and global. The group has studied works by authors like Michael Morwood, Richard Rohr and Brian McClaren and are presently reading Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si". They were interested to hear ideas and advice on the question "How can I green my church?" They have received their Awareness certificate and are beginning their journey with ECI!

Our Parish, Our Common Home – Laudato Si' Day 12 April 2019

The Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Council for Justice and Peace and the Laudato Si' Working Group of the Council for Catechetics of the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference, are hosting a day on transforming our understanding of our faith with Laudato Si' on 12 April 2019.

The day is intended for representatives from parishes and dioceses across the North. The aim is to introduce attendees to Laudato Si' and to explore how care for creation is an indispensable part of Catholic faith. There will also be practical advice and examples given on the day as to how to incorporate the message of Laudato Si' into the life of a parish. The idea is that participants will then 'take back' this message and share it with others in their parish community and champion its importance in parish life. There is no fee for attending but attendees must register in advance with their diocesan offices and the Council for Justice and Peace at cjp@iecon.ie.

#Pennies4Plastics: A Lenten Initiative from the Church of Ireland, Eco-Congregation Ireland and the Representative Church Body

Throughout Lent 2019, the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal, Eco-Congregation Ireland and the Representative Church Body (RCB) will be inviting individuals, families, parishes, schools, and Sunday schools and clubs to prayerfully reduce their use of plastic. #Pennies4Plastics is an exciting initiative that celebrates God's Creation, challenges us to make small changes this Lent that help protect this Creation, and raises vital funds for Waste Aid which supports recycling in the Gambia, where many communities have no formal waste management system.

It encourages all those taking part to: get informed about single-use plastic; get busy making changes (with lots of different ideas); learn about how plastic waste is being transformed in the Gambia; and pray for the important environmental issues around waste and plastics. A resource, full to the brim with everything you need to reduce plastic waste and help others to do the same, [is now available here](#). This can be downloaded in full or in four different sections covering information, action, giving, and school assemblies and All Age Worship. You can read more about this initiative [on the ECI website here](#).

Tuam Parish has been very busy!

Anne Quinn sent ECI this update: the parish is showing how homes old and new can be accommodating for swifts as the parish works in conjunction with Swift Conservation Ireland. They held a wonderful demonstration of vegetarian cooking as part of the Parish's Food Awareness Programme. Anne Marie Martin spoke at Sunday Mass on the work of Trócaire in the area of



social and climate justice, and parishioners walked in the St Patrick's Day parade in conjunction with Tuam Tidy Towns who went with the theme of Going Green. [View their photos here.](#)

An Tairseach Organic Farm and Ecology Centre spring talks schedule is now available

For more information and to book contact them on 0404 61833 or info@antairseach.ie. Learn more about the courses here <https://antairseach.ie/>. All are welcome!



Latest News from the Parish of Our Lady and St John in Carrigaline

One of the first actions of the [Carrigaline Parish Caring for Creation Group](#) was to look at how to make coffee mornings and fundraising events held in the parish more eco-friendly. Their small group worked together on a leaflet entitled 'Holding eco-friendly coffee mornings' and this document was shared with parish staff who were very happy to ensure that it would be implemented! The Parish Centre is in the process of



changing to a counter-top food waste caddy and an outdoor food composter system. The Altar Society who takes care of flowers for the church will also be able to use the composter.

A bike rack has been purchased for parishioners who would prefer to cycle to Mass rather than drive. The rack will be put in place as soon as the church building works have been completed. Their next piece of work is to look at the cleaning products currently used in the church and look at changing them for more environmentally-friendly products. Finally, some parishioners joined the recently-organised and student-led Climate Strike in Cork City. Parishioners felt was truly heartening to be part of an energetic movement of young people who are demanding that our elected officials take concrete action to protect the planet for future generations. Well done to all! [View more photos here.](#)

St Anne's Shandon celebrates Fairtrade Fortnight

St. Anne's Shandon Eco-Congregation this year marked Fairtrade Fortnight which ran from Monday 25th February to Sunday 10th March. This year the campaign encouraged parishioners to Create Fairtrade.

During the fortnight, St Anne's Church focused on raising awareness among their parishioners, the local community and their visitors to promote Fairtrade. They had a small information stand and posters in the Church and had some hampers to show an interesting variety of Fairtrade products. Parishioners wanted to emphasise that by choosing to support Fairtrade as a parish and as individuals, we can add our voice to demands for a trading system that puts people, not profit, at the heart of the transaction.



The Eco-Congregation group ran a crossword competition, where they had 3 sponsored prizes of some Bewley's hampers of Fairtrade tea/coffee and drinking chocolate. In conjunction with this year's confirmation class they also hosted a Fairtrade breakfast on Sunday March 10th for parishioners and had a

delightful Fairtrade based feast. No one went home hungry! This year's campaign may be over but the mission continues! [View their photos here.](#)

St. Finbarr's South Parish, Cork starts their Eco Journey

Maria Young from St. Finbarr's South Parish, Cork Eco-Congregation sent ECI this update: We are a recently formed group, we first came together in January 2019 and held our third meeting on March 28th. Eco-Congregation St Finbarr's South have embarked on three distinct initiatives: the group have completed a door to door survey on a particular street Needham Place in the South Parish to enquire if people would be interested in learning about sustainable ways to conserve energy in the home; the group has started a paper recycling effort in the heart of St Finbarr's South by asking residents of three particular streets to bring their old newspapers and general paper to the Shelf Bookshop on George's Quay from where it will be collected and brought to a local company who will convert it into green insulation; the group plan to conduct an audit of the trees in South Parish and record them on Google Maps. They have enlisted the help of UCC, the local primary school children and volunteers. They hope to have this audit completed by early summer and available for viewing. [Read Maria's update in full on the ECI website.](#)



Latest News from Cloughjordan Community Development Committee

Gearóid Ofoighil sent ECI this update from the [Cloughjordan Community Development Committee](#): At the National Biodiversity Conference in Dublin Castle, the community supported conservation efforts with the raised bog restoration LIFE Project at Scohaboy Bog. SAC were showcased as part of a documentary celebrating conservation success stories. The Cloughjordan Community Development Committee are the local partners in this award winning conservation project with Coillte Forest and the NPWS. The Scohaboy project also demonstrates a powerful community response to affecting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular those of Health and Well-Being and Climate Action.



Under the CCDC mantle, a workshop was held in the Thomas MacDonagh Museum to explore what makes communities successful in their initiatives. Taking the Scohaboy project as an eco-system example, the workshop was part of series of case studies funded by the EPA and delivered by Dr. Craig Bullock from UCD to be incorporated into a new handbook for communities for conservation success within the Community Wetlands Forum. [View their photos here.](#)

An Tobar Spiritan Retreat Centre: The Wonder of Creation Retreat: 31 May – 3 June 2019

Title: The Wonder of Creation: The Miracle of Life - An Invitation To Walk with God in Self-Discovery within the Mystery of the Unfolding Universe. A three day retreat in the beautiful surroundings of An Tobar. Facilitator: Nellie McLaughlin. Cost: €350.00 all inclusive. Dates: May 31st-June 3rd 2019. For more information contact: [An Tobar Spiritan Retreat Centre](#), Ardbraccan, Navan, Co Meath. Phone: 046-9078973. Email: antobarnavan@gmail.com or visit www.antobar.ie. All welcome!



An Tobar Spiritan Retreat Centre



Children's Eco Ministry in Carlow Union of Parishes

Rev David White, Rector, [Carlow Union of Parishes](#) sent ECI a report sharing with us the great work the children are doing in the parishes. The Junior All-Ireland Pollinator Plan has been the inspiration for so much good work in the Parish. Over the past two years or so the children have been working hard at creating habitats and raising awareness around our need to help pollinators. They opened their Sunday Club year in St. Mary's with wellington boots for church. Eleven children and five adults worked in the garden planting their Climber's Wall. This was part of their God's Welcoming Church gardening project. The children had a fantastic day and learned how to plant and care for new plants.



In October the children from the Sunday Club met at the Dolmen Hotel for a very special prize-giving. Their 'God's Welcoming Church' Project had won an Eco Award at the Diocesan Synod for Cashel, Ferns and Ossory! The children were delighted with their beautiful wooden plaque and a new buddleia for the garden. You can read a lot more about their fantastic work and [view their photos on the ECI website here](#).

Tree Care and Renewal – Eco CFO Conference

[Eco CFO, the Environment Committee of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory](#), held a Conference 'Tree Care and Renewal' on Saturday 23 March in Kilkenny College. Donal Magner, Forestry Editor, The Irish Farmers' Journal, encouraged participants to think about what creating a wood culture might be like and highlighted the spiritual, aesthetic, ecological, economic benefits of trees. Eileen Woodbyrne from Teagasc at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin pointed out that a well-chosen, correctly planted and well-maintained tree has the potential to make an enormous environmental and aesthetic contribution for our generation and those who will follow us.



The Anglican Consultative Council's fifth Mark of Mission is: To Strive to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation and Sustain and Renew the Life of the Earth. Climate change, irresponsible use of natural resources, pollution, loss of biodiversity are just some of the challenges facing the natural world. But if we really believe that Creation is a gift and a responsibility, offered to humanity as a means to deepen our relationship within the mystery of God, then this must be seen in how we treat trees, which after all, we have received as part of our inherited heritage. Rev David White from the EcoCFO Committee sent ECI a [report which you can read in full here](#).

International Dark Sky Week, 31 March to 7 April 2019 – A full week of FREE events across Co Mayo!

With the biggest programme yet to celebrate [International Dark Sky Week](#), the [Friends of Mayo Dark Skies Community Group](#) has arranged a full week of free events for all the family to enjoy across the county. Events include evenings of poetry, stargazing, storytelling, astronomy, magic and community lighting, there is something for everyone. Duncan Stewart, now patron of Mayo Dark Skies, will headline an event on community lighting and this is just one of the events featured in this full programme. Events are free but prior registration required online via Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/international-dark-sky-week>



[in-mayo-31-march-7-april-2019-registration-57995614444](#).
mayodarksky@gmail.com or 086 8595166.

For More information contact

The Universe is a Revelatory Experience – Drumalis, 24-29 June 2019

This retreat, with Anne Harnett CP, Margaret Rose McSparran CP and team, opens the doorway to our revelatory cosmic scriptures so that we may experience the deep time story of love's emergence and unfolding. The invitation is to awaken within us a new understanding of holiness in an emerging universe. Details: 24-29 June 2019 in Drumalis Retreat and Conference Centre, 47 Glenarm Road, Larne, County Antrim, BT40 1DT. Tel 028 2827 2196/2827 6455. Email:

drumalis@btconnect.com. Website: www.drumalis.co.uk. During the retreat, participants will have time and space to experience the evolving story of the Universe and nurture the attitude of "serene attentiveness" which Pope Francis proposes in Laudato Si. [You can read more and view the retreat leaflet here.](#)



Clogher Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group – Upcoming Events

[Clogher JPIC Group](#) has shared these upcoming events. All Welcome!

- 7 April 2019 at 1.30pm: Clogher Earth Day – Gathering at the Holy Well in Belcoo
- 12 April 2019 from 9.00am - 4.00pm: Laudato Si Day in Dromantine, Newry
- Clogher Diocesan Workshop on Caring for Creation - to be held in Monaghan (date to be confirmed)
- Day with nature and picnic at Drumonney Falls near Kesh (date to be confirmed)
- Outdoor liturgy on Devenish island in August (date to be confirmed)



Westport Eco-Congregation hosts 'How to Recycle at Home' information evening

[Westport Eco-Congregation](#) hosted an information evening to an enthusiastic audience on Domestic Recycling. Sharon Cameron, Environment Awareness Officer Mayo County Council gave tips on how to make the best use of your recycling bin, with a demonstration on the difference between rigid plastic that can be recycled and soft flimsy plastic that cannot be recycled. Stanley Bourke of Bourke Waste informed the attendees of what happens to recycled materials, compost and general waste after the bin lorry takes it away from our kerbside.



Abi O'Callaghan Platt, explained the 'No Home for Plastic' Research Project. She is recruiting householders who wish to join up to this behavioural change journey. For more information email Abi at: abi@voicereiland.org. McKinley Neal, PAX Whole Foods and Eco Goods provided positive tips on how we can use packaging over and over and reduce our impact when we do our shopping. The essence of her ethos is to 'Refuse' single use plastic in the first place, and 'Reuse' where we can. This event was in

collaboration with Westport's Holy Trinity and St. Mary's Parishes and Mayo County Council. Westport Eco-Congregation believes are all working together to get out a clear message to help people improve Ireland's recycling rates and reduce levels of contamination in household recycling bins.

A Spring Day in Dalgan: The Story of Farming in Ireland with Dr John Feehan

All are welcome to this event: Saturday 6th April 2019, 9.30am – 3.30pm: (Registration 9.15am), venue: Columban Ecological Institute, St Columban's, Dalgan, Navan, Co Meath.

A drama in three acts: Act 1 is 'The Story of Farming Past' followed by questions and coffee at 11.00am. Act 2 will tell of 'Farming Today' and will be followed by lunch at 12.30pm. In the afternoon, participants will head outdoors for a fieldwork session. Act 3 will be an attempt to peer into the mists of what 'Farming in the Future' will be. If you wish to attend please book with Elizabeth Mc Ardle, devofficemail@gmail.com. Cost €30 and includes full lunch and morning tea/coffee. Students €10 and you may pay on the day. Please bring a notebook and pen. Suitable outdoor clothes, rain wear and walking boots are all recommended and the day will go ahead whatever the weather.



Dr Dermot Lane gives Lenten talk at Church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar

Dr. Dermot Lane is a priest of the Archdiocese of Dublin. He is an author, theologian and retired parish priest of Balally Parish in Dublin 16. His publications include a booklet on Catholic Education in the light of Vatican II and *Laudato Si'* (2015). He also has a chapter on "Anthropological and Theological Reflections on *Laudato Si'*" in *Laudato Si': An Irish Response*, edited by Sean McDonagh, (2017). Dr Lane gave a talk on the subject "Some aspects of personal, social and community responsibility in relation to care of the earth" based on the contents of Pope Francis's Encyclical *Laudato Si* which was held on Tuesday 26 March 2019 in the [Three Patrons Church Rathgar](#).



Update from Forest Friends Ireland

John Houghton from [Forest Friends Ireland](#) sent ECI this update. Forest Friends Ireland launched the Peace Forest Ireland project in 2014 in St. Columba's Park in Derry/Londonderry. This is a partnership project and groups and individuals are welcomed to be part of it. Peace tree planting is used as a mechanism to bring communities together in the process. Since 2014 they have been planting peace trees in all the border counties north and south of the border. They would like to know what organisations and individuals would like to be part to their Forest Friends World Peace Tree Project which they hope to launch in a few month's time.



The prototype they hope to use for the project is the Auroville World Peace Centre located in Tamil Nadu, South East India. John visited this amazing project a few years ago and thought why not have a like project in remembrance of all those who made sacrifices and in many cases the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. Please contact him if you wish to be part of the Forest Friends World Peace Tree Project. Useful links: www.forestfriends.ie, www.facebook.com/forestfriendsireland, www.facebook.com/peaceforestireland.

Latest News from Jubilee

Dr Jonny Hanson of [Jubilee](http://www.jubilee.coop) sent ECI this update on their work: **Share Offer Latest** - In total, we have raised £302,070 from 156 member-owners. Thanks to everyone who contributed! A special thanks to all of the organisations who supported our share offer in various ways, including Cooperative Alternatives, Cooperatives UK, the Plunkett Foundation, the Co-op Foundation and Awards for All/the Community Fund. Together, we've made history by purchasing Northern Ireland's first community-owned farm.



Big Cats talk - Jubilee sold out the Ulster Museum Lecture Theatre with Jonny's Northern Ireland Science Festival big cat talk. Over 180 people gathered for an interactive presentation on one of the natural world's most inspiring and dynamic animal families. From tracking leopards in the African bush as a teenager to conducting cutting-edge research on snow leopards in the Himalayas, Jonny discussed his work with 20 cat species on four continents, and asked if it's time to reintroduce big cats to the island of Ireland. Jonny can tailor this talk to any age group or audience so why not book a big cat presentation for your school, church, community or corporate event? Email mail@jubilee.coop for prices and bookings.

CSA Across Borders event update - Twenty-five people came together for this event organised by the UK and Ireland CSA Networks and hosted by Jubilee. Featuring a guided tour of Jubilee Farm, several talks from current CSAs and a brainstorming session, the event aimed to kickstart the CSA movement in Northern Ireland. Alongside Jubilee Farm, another four CSAs are in various stages of development across Northern Ireland.

Jubilee Farm Community Meetings - Come along to one of our community meetings! You'll hear from Jubilee's Managing Director Dr Jonny Hanson about the story of and vision for Jubilee Farm; listen to local Jubilee Farm member-owners on why they support the project; and have the chance to participate in a Q&A session. Dates in photo above.

Where There is Water, There is Life! by Catherine Devitt, Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice

In the March issue of [Sacred Heart Messenger](http://www.sacredheartmessenger.com) magazine, Catherine Devitt, Environmental Justice Officer at the [Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice](http://www.jesuitcentre.org) shares her article 'Where There is Water, There is Life!' where she alerts us to the chronic lack of clean water in many parts of the world, due in many instances to the commodification of water and the impacts of climate change. In her article Catherine highlights one of the principal concerns of Pope Francis – the environment. She alerts us to a chronic lack of availability of clean, life-giving water in many parts of the world. [You can read her article here](#). Also, in her article [You Are What You Eat](#) Catherine alerts us to the significant wastage of food that is



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produced globally, inviting us to consider changing our eating habits, in line with former president Mary Robinson's suggestion.

The Presentation Bog Lixnaw

Brian O'Toole, Director of the Presentation Interprovincial Justice Desk, sent ECI this report on the Presentation Bog Lixnaw:

In 1875 the Presentation Sisters were invited to Lixnaw Parish, North Kerry to educate the children of tenant farmers. The Presentation Sisters who have a long commitment to our care for our earth felt that it was now time to allow this bog to rest and for the carbon contained within to continue to be a carbon sink that offers a down payment on a healthier future for all.

Today the bog is full of water, alive with insect and plant life. The pure air that can be breathed when standing on this bog confirms that the carbon sink is cleaning the air we breathe. The restored Presentation Sisters Bog in Lixnaw is an example to others that such restoration is important and that we should work together to ensure that there would be a just transition from the harvesting of turf to the use of renewable energies.



You can read Brian's inspirational report on the Presentation Bog Lixnaw [in full on the ECI website here](#). You can also read an article on the bog at the following link: ['The Raised Bog of Lixnaw: Raised Bog Raised Hopes](#).

The Bees and Trees – New Initiative by Cookstown & South Derry Circuit of the Methodist Church in Ireland

A few members of the congregation of the Cookstown and South Derry Circuit of the Methodist Church in Ireland have started this initiative. The aim is to encourage and support anyone and everyone to keep honey bees, and to plant trees. Where possible, bee keepers would sell a nucleus of bees to a new keeper for the cost price of a basic six-frame polystyrene hive with a free colony of bees installed inside. When a bee keeper is in a position to give a beginner a starter nucleus, ideally it could be given to a person of a different faith/tradition, or none. In this way, it is all constantly growing and looking outwards rather than inwards.



This initiative also encourages tree planting for the bees. This could happen on two fronts by twinning urban and rural congregations, where city and town congregations could plant and grow saplings and farmers and landowners from rural congregations could identify and plant up strips and scraps of less productive land with bee friendly saplings. Alan Keys sent ECI this report which [you can read in more detail on the ECI website here](#).

Eco Challenge!

Earth Day – 22 April 2019

Will your church celebrate [Earth Day](#)? Earth Day is now a global event each year. It is a day of political action and civic participation. People march, sign petitions, meet with their elected officials, plant trees, clean-up their towns and roads. Corporations and



governments use it to make pledges and announce sustainability measures. Faith leaders, including Pope Francis, connect Earth Day with protecting God's greatest creations, humans, biodiversity and the planet that we all live on.

Rev Trevor Sargent's Ecological Notes for April 2019 encourage us to celebrate Earth Day. Trevor is one of the Church of Ireland representatives on the ECI committee and ministers in the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. Trevor shared his Ecological Notes with us for the month of April. [You can read his reflection on Earth Day on the ECI website here.](#)

Prayer for the Earth

Reflection on Composting by Catherine Brennan SSL

Catherine Brennan SSL, Catholic representative on the ECI committee, shared this reflection on composting:

I look at compost and marvel at its mystery. Organic materials are gathered and heaped together. Heat is generated from within, steam rises and gradually the contents break down. Eventually everything is unrecognizable and we have rich, dark soil. In dying to its own life, the organic waste births a new material, which is life-giving for plants and for us humans who enjoy the fruits of the earth. Compost tells me that the reality of life, death and resurrection is at the heart of creation's mystery.



Something always dies as new life comes forth. Whenever dark times come our way "We must be still, and still moving into another intensity for a deeper communion" (T.S. Eliot).

It is inevitable that experience of disintegration happens. The breakdown of the compost tells us that if we are to realize the more of life and if our lives are to be life giving for others we must accept life's changes. The life, death and resurrection cycle is the deepest myth of all of reality.

The death and resurrection of Jesus, therefore, is not something new to the created universe, but a uniquely divine manifestation of what already is, and of what is all around us. The mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus holds before us the truth of God's abiding presence and transforming activity in all of Creation.

Prayer for Composters

God, we thank you for the composters

The blind workers underground.

*The bacteria, the worms, the fungi, the insects,
the earth's diligent workers, those upon whom we walk.*

*Spirit of Life, you who know their silent language,
convey our thanks. Give greetings from the humans who for a
short time live above the earth.*

*Say that we depend on their work and that we also are
related to them, as humanity is born from earth and to earth returns.*

Say that every day we enjoy the fruit of their work.

May God bless you, little sisters and brothers, in the compost.

May health and appetite be with you, always.

Amen

With kindest regards,

Karen Nicholson
Administrative Officer

info@ecocongregationireland.com
+353 (0) 89 974 0744

Rev Andrew Orr
Chair and Church of Ireland representative

andreworr1234@gmail.com
+353 (0) 87 419 6051

Catherine Brennan SSL
Roman Catholic representative

catherinebrennanssl38@gmail.com
+353 (0) 87 259 9071

Joe Furphy
Presbyterian representative

jfurphy@aol.com
+44 (0) 28 9061 2311

Fran Brady
Religious Society of Friends representative

wastenot@eircom.net
+353 (0) 1 837 6464

Steven Johnston
Methodist representative

steven100537@gmail.com
+353 (0) 87 925 9565