



Eco
Congregation
Ireland



Welcome to the Summer 2023 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter! The Eco-Congregation Ireland committee wishes everyone a peaceful and joyous summertime! If you have any information or stories you would like to share in our future newsletters, we would love to hear from YOU! Please send them to info@ecocongregationireland.com.

ECI Climate Justice Candle Visits ...

Saints Patrick & Felim Cathedral, Cavan

Patricia Keenan sent us this report: Bishop Martin Hayes and the Kilmore Care of Creation Group were delighted to host the Eco-Congregation Ireland Climate Justice Candle during the week of the eight anniversary of Pope Francis' Encyclical on Care for Our Common Home. As sacred care of creation music filled the Cathedral and the pillars adorned with stunning artwork depicting images of the earth and humanity by local students, Bishop Martin lit the climate justice candle to begin the Liturgy. The youth of the parish and the congregation at large made a significant contribution to the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.



In his homily, Bishop Martin emphasized that “we are a people of hope and where Jesus has gone we are called to follow. Our mission as God’s people is to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. The presence of the Climate Justice Candle stands as an invitation to prayer and reflection on climate justice. The key message is a call to acknowledge that all of God’s creation is created to sustain all that He has created.” This is an invitation for each one of us to make conscious decisions on a daily basis to share more equally and live more justly.

The Kilmore Care of Creation Group comprises members from the Catholic Community and the neighbouring Church of Ireland Community. An information handout was prepared for members of the congregation which contained a beautiful prayer for the earth and some important links containing the work of many organisations including Trócaire. Members of the congregation who have yet to watch Pope Francis’ film documentary ‘The Letter’ were encouraged to do so at www.theletterfilm.org.

The Candle created a vocal point throughout the week not only in the Cathedral but in the surrounding parishes, convent, and schools within the Diocese. For more information: <https://www.kilmorediocese.ie/shine-a-light-on-climate-justice-hope-for-the-earth-hope-for-humanity/>.

The Cavan Parish are currently liaising with the Kilmore Care of Creation on a number of projects on the grounds of the Cathedral which are aimed at supporting biodiversity and expanding circles of solidarity.

Methodist Centenary Church, Dublin

Maureen Rowan sent us this report: Methodist Centenary hosted the candle from 28th May to 4th June. In advance its arrival, we held a discussion evening entitled Climate Crisis: Sustaining Hope and Realism as an Eco-Congregation and provided reflections from the event for the ECI Newsletter.

Through our wayside pulpit we let the local community and users of our buildings know that Climate Justice was a focus of our prayers and would be the central concern of our service on Sunday 4th June. The day of the service we were blessed with weather that illuminated the gifts of nature around us.



Rev Andrew Kingston held the children in thrall with slides of what he had observed in his garden as he ate his breakfast (multitasker that he is!). The three-year-olds enthusiastically identified the fledglings in the nest and the bees at work spreading pollen as they celebrated the everyday miracles of creation.

The sermon focussed on the biblical significance of grain, wine and oil, three crops which were difficult to grow successfully and made the faithful acutely aware of their dependency on God, the weather, the environment and the community. We were also reminded of Paul's rebuke to the Corinthians for tucking into a substantial communion meal while excluding the poorer members (1 Corinthians 11:18-22).

In advance of our prayers of intercession, we reflected on the undeniable facts of exclusion and destruction in the global south as a result of over consumption in the developed world. We prayed for strength to sustain our commitment to Eco-Congregation Ireland, be advocates for political change and be clear thinking as we navigate practical issues such as the cost of retrofitting to decarbonise, travelling overland or by air, eating locally sourced or imported plant-based foods, slowing down enough to take public transport.

The presence of the Climate Justice Candle connected us to the many communities who have prayed around it and the words of our neighbour Rev Martin Sauter of St Finian's Lutheran Church who was the first to host after the Paris Agreement in 2015. "Truly, the Holy Spirit has been at work. But, the work, as we all sense, is far from over; much more prayer, much more thought and action on all levels needs to follow. The traveling candle can be a wonderful symbol accompanying us."



The Teresian Association

Maria Theresa Gayondato sent us this report: The Teresian Association (TA) in Ireland hosted the ECI Climate Justice Candle from 7-21 June 2023 to pray for young people going to the World Youth Day in Lisbon and for the success of the 4th International Conference on Care for Creation that will take place the 31st July, the eve of WYD with the theme Young people's commitment to Integral Ecology. Lifestyles for a

new humanity. During the two weeks, a group gathered daily to pray sharing reflections and concrete actions to foster greater commitment in everyday living.

WYD Lisbon 2023

In the fourth and final local preparations for WYD Lisbon, we paused for a moment for a Summer Solstice Service of Light starting with these introductory lines: Summer solstice is about celebrating our connection to the earth, and our dependence on the sun for our life. It is the time to stay out until the stars come out and enjoy the sounds and scents that accompany twilight. It is a space where we can reflect on big themes and rise to the challenge of Integral Ecology, Social Friendship and Mercy.



World Refugee Day – June 20, 2023

The candle was brought to Kilmacud Parish on the eve of Refugee Day for a 10 min Prayer Service before the morning mass, particularly for the Climate Refugees around the world. Prayers and reflections highlighted the plight of refugees around the world.

Summer Solstice 2023 Service of Light

We started the Service of Light by giving thanks for summer to celebrate the longest day of the year. The song video “Web of Life” was played for the three mornings to introduce the Climate Justice Candle Prayer Service in the Parish. After the Service, we watched the Laudato Si film “The Letter.” It gave us an insight into the challenges of sustainable lifestyles. [Read the report in full on the ECI website here.](#)

African Missions SMA, Blackrock Road, Cork

Angelo sent us this report: African Missions SMA, Blackrock Road, Cork (SMA) chose the first week of February, Lá Fhéile Bríde, which marked the beginning of the Celtic Spring to use the Climate Justice Candle and the theme ‘Shine a light on climate change’. It was a time for us to sow new seeds and allow the Spring buds to open as we continue to honour God’s creation.



We felt challenged to play our part as individuals and as communities by taking action here in our homes in SMA Blackrock Road, and join with the Our Lady of Apostles in Ardfoyle, Cork. By becoming involved we felt linked with local and global climate initiatives offering us an opportunity to “speak truth to power” ourselves. We can only speak that truth if we are trying to live it.



We were very conscious of the candle being passed on to us as it connected us to the wider body of people involved. Fr. Jerome Anoumou-Sassou, originally from Togo, received the Climate Justice Candle from Pastor Matt Gould from the Carraig Centre in Ballincollig and brought it to Blackrock Road. By adapting the ECI resources, CAFOD resources and integrating them with our own we came together for a prayer service which [we have put on YouTube.](#)

It was not all action as time was given for participants to reflect on some activity they might undertake, and to consider what commitments they might make personally and in their community to work for climate

justice. Each person present lit an individual candle symbolic of honouring God of Creation and a prayer that we be empowered to be bearers of the light of hope and shine a light on Climate Change.

This began our Week of Prayer on Climate Justice. Intercessions were prepared for daily masses as well as personal worship. We linked up with the local schools and showed them the candle and explained what it meant. Due to their timetabled restrictions, we were unable to hold a prayer service with them but they have scheduled one into their Autumn timetable to use in their liturgies.

Over the weekend Fr. Jerome sacredly brought the candle from the SMA Religious Community to the SMA Parish Church. The three masses were given over to theme of 'Shine a light on climate change'. The congregation were also invited to take away a prayer card with an adapted version of the Laudato Si Climate Justice prayer.



The three weekend masses were celebrated by Fr. Michael McCabe SMA who blessed the candle on its installation in the Church while Fr. Michael O'Shea SMA and Bp. Tim Carroll SMA focused the themes of their homilies on Care for our Common Home and God's Creation on the Sunday morning masses. On our Sunday bulletins (space permitting) now offer different prayers for God's Creation or offer tips on how to care for God's Creation. The light continues to shine

[View all their photos on the ECI website here](#)

[Download the SMA Prayer for Creation](#)

[Download the Climate Justice Service](#)

[Download Fr Michael McCabe's liturgy](#)

[Download God in Nature liturgy](#)

Congregation of Dominican Sisters Cabra

Lara Kelly sent us this report: The Congregation of Dominican Sisters Cabra was delighted to host the Climate Justice Candle during a very special week in July 2023 – a week-long gathering of over 75 Sisters from the Congregation from around Ireland, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Argentina and Louisiana, USA.

Alongside education, justice and ministry, the areas of ecology and ecological education and spirituality are core to the work of the Congregation and were discussed at the meeting, so it was very meaningful to have the Climate Justice Candle lighting at the top of the room each day. Sisters who had been involved in writing the Congregation's 'Green Policy' took part in the ceremony of lighting the candle and reading aloud a prayer to the earth.



Latest News from ...

Johnstown Killiney Parish

Geraldine Murphy sent us this update: recently, we planted some more shrubs and flowers, with biodiversity in mind, in Johnstown/Killiney Church Grounds. The plants below will attract bees especially, hopefully butterflies as well:

- Forsythia, yellow , shrub
- Delphinium, blue, white
- Leucanthemum, white daisy
- Astilbe, red, pink
- Geranium, pink, purple
- Heuchera, white, pink
- Aquilegia, purple
- Dicentre, white/red
- Popavar (poppy), purple, red
- Salvia, purple
- Lychnis, red
- Achillea, yellow
- Crocosmia, red
- Small triangle bed has geranium and Begonia



Westport Eco-Congregation

Bríd McAuley sent us this latest news: This summer is a season of hello and goodbyes in Westport. We were delighted to welcome Rev Suzanne Cousins the new Rector of Holy Trinity Church of Ireland. We are sad to say goodbye to Fr Charlie McDonnell as he moves to Athenry and we look forward to welcoming Fr John Kenny. Fr Charlie was extremely supportive and encouraging of Westport Eco-Congregation's activities to highlight climate change. Westport Eco-Congregation highlighted Plastic Free July on their Facebook page daily and the parish newsletter carried practical tips and suggestions on ways to eliminate plastic from households.



South Belfast Quaker Meeting

Kerry Nicholson sent us this latest news: South Belfast Quaker Meeting House has been on Marlborough Park North in South Belfast for nearly 60 years. It is a quiet residential location just off the bustling Lisburn Road shopping district. Our Meeting is small by most church standards with about 40-50 attending on Sunday mornings. Quakers have a strong commitment to the environment with a testimony to work towards sustainability. Our members are particularly keen to support eco initiatives.

Over the past two years, South Belfast Quakers have been updating our garden to attract more pollinators by planting lots of wild flowers in the bedding areas around the building. We have also stopped mowing areas of the lawn around the meeting house to let more plants grow.

We decided to declare our grounds as a Conservation Area for the Native Irish Honey Bee as we want to support our



native biodiversity. Declaring our Meeting House grounds is just a first step. We hope to extend the Conservation Area to include our Burial Ground later in 2023.

Belfast Quakers have encouraged local beekeepers to use our Belfast Burial Ground as an apiary for the Native Irish Honey Bee. The bees at this location benefit from being beside wonderfully tended gardens with lots of different flowers and plants to feed on.

Around the Church of Ireland

Creating a School Garden

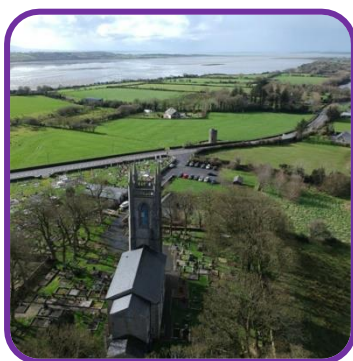
A group of parishes in the border area of Clogher Diocese has been busy creating a garden and prayer resource for local schoolchildren. The project at Belleek Primary School is to create an outdoor learning space and prayer garden where children can grow their own vegetables and flowers and also have reflective prayer space. Many of the younger children from Garrison, Belleek, Slavin and Kiltyclogher attend the primary school and their rector, the Revd Rebecca Guilda, is a member of the Board of Governors.



To help fund the project, Rebecca ran the equivalent distance from her rectory to the school (four miles) some 40 times last autumn with a target of raising £500. However, her efforts were so successful that she raised more than double her target figure! She also received a grant from the Board of Education (Northern Ireland). Now the new garden is being transformed from a rundown activity area by volunteers, with the installation of raised beds to grow sensory plants, a pond and seating area and a wildflower garden for the children to enjoy.

New Life for Belfast Site

Glencairn Community Garden, at the foot of the Belfast Hills, is full of colour and life on an acre of what was previously derelict land beside St Andrew's Parish Church. Stephen Whitten from the North Belfast Centre of Mission and a core team of volunteers have been busy planting, painting, building, harvesting and more. The garden is bursting with vegetables as well as flowers, trees and an abundance of wild grasses and wildflowers.



Innovative heating in Sligo

Drumcliffe Church, in Co. Sligo, is currently heated with an air-to-water heat pump and is likely to be one of few churches in Ireland using a heat pump as a heating source. Looking upwards, the parish is keen to explore installing solar panels on the roof and use this to heat the underfloor electric heating system.

As part of National Biodiversity Week, the children of the Glebe National School, Aughrim, Co. Galway, recently conducted a wildflower survey in the Aughrim Climate Action Park and in the Rectory Garden Project.

The results were staggering. Thanks to the gradual processes of re-wilding, there is now an extravagant range of wildlife flourishing in the meadows and walled gardens. From daisies and dandelions to forget-me-nots to gentian speedwell; from clover and brambles to yellow rattle and yellow iris; from cuckoo flowers and cow parsley to purple vetch and phacelia, there is beauty beyond imagining, to delight the hearts of those who are eagle-eyed enough to seek it out.

Wildflowers abounding in Aughrim

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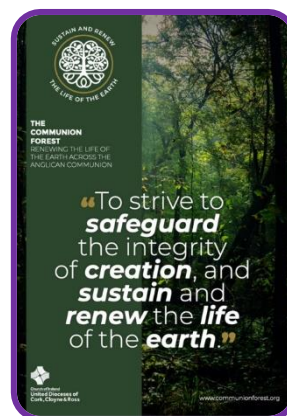
A Thriving Garden in Co. Down

With the help of a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Award, Magheralin, outside Lurgan, Co. Down, has created a beautiful garden in its church grounds. The Garden of Reflection, which was officially opened last November, is a space to be shared and enjoyed by pollinators and people alike. It's a place for the whole community, a place of beauty to be still and enjoy Creation.



Forest Puts Down Roots

Among the news Bishop Paul Colton brought back from the Lambeth Conference was that of the inauguration of the Anglican Communion Forest. On behalf of all being confirmed in 2023 in Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Bishop Colton reached out to the Irish voluntary group Reforest Nation and arranged that Reforest Nation will plant an entire forest of 300 trees in their name. Each person being confirmed in the diocese this year has received a specially created certificate which combines the certificate of Reforest Nation with the artwork of the Anglican Communion Forest adapted, with permission, for use in the diocese.



Church Trustees Prioritise Environment

The Church of Ireland's Environmental Charter, approved by General Synod in 2015, asks all members to play their part in the stewardship of Creation, by recognising and reducing waste, increasing their awareness of environmental issues, exercising leadership, identifying with the developing world, and seeking to influence policy.



To help fulfil its commitment, the Representative Body – the Church's central trustee body, has set out four main areas where it expects to make the greatest difference in improving environmental sustainability. Firstly, the RB will reduce energy usage in light and heat through insulation and installing LED lighting, and encouraging the use of sustainable energy. Likewise, in transportation, there will

be a focus on reducing distances travelled and encouraging more energy-efficient forms of transport. Waste will be minimised and, where it occurs, disposed of in ways which limit its impact on ecosystems. There will also be a focus on preserving both the variety and numbers of flora and fauna, as is already happening through the beehives in the grounds of Church House, in Rathmines.

These priorities, through the current Climate Change Policy, will be accompanied with guidance in Parish Resources on the Church of Ireland's website. Central church committees will seek to encourage a biodiverse and low energy environment through grants issued to parishes and dioceses. For example, €100,000 has been allocated from the Church Fabric and Development Fund for a Properties Energy Efficiency Grants programme for church buildings, which will be opened up in the coming year.

St Molua's Church of Ireland, Stormont, Belfast

Heather Loughridge sent us this report: The Eco Group at St Molua's Church of Ireland, Stormont, Belfast were pleased to host our first Repair Café on the last Saturday morning in June.

Early in 2023, as we looked for new ways to spread the message of "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle", we were introduced to the concept of Repair Cafe, and feel privileged to have partnered with members of the Belfast branch to facilitate their first visit to St Molua's.



Repair Cafe is a global movement with its origins in Amsterdam, and driven by local volunteers who are passionate about helping us all to be more sustainable in our everyday living. Through offering their skills to make repairs to all kinds of items, they are prolonging and rejuvenating the life of our "stuff", and in the process perhaps giving us the confidence to tackle it ourselves in the future.

Our morning was a great success, and saw many and varied repairs to lamps, bikes, curtains, coffee makers, trouser hems, replacement zips etc... the list goes on. Many visitors came from well beyond the local area, and it was hugely satisfying to witness the delight of those who had been lucky enough to have a well-loved item restored and made serviceable again.

Bookings for "repair slots" were made through Belfast Repair Cafe's own online system. There was also provision for a limited number of "walk-ins" on the day and volunteers admitted to always enjoying the surprises they got in the mix of items brought through the doors!



A vital feature of the Repair Cafe concept is that the owner of the item sits with the volunteer while the Repair is carried out in the hope that they might gain knowledge and skills for the future. Inevitably, some items will not be repairable, or the job might just be too lengthy in the time available. In such cases appropriate advice is always given.

And let's not forget the other important feature of all such events... the pop up "Pay as you Feel" Cafe, especially appreciated by those waiting for their appointed slot. Thanks are due to the parish

volunteers who provided the tea, coffee and sweet treats for the cafe, and then made sure that the repairers were given a welcome soup lunch after their hard work. All in all a really worthwhile event which we plan to repeat ... hopefully Spring 24.

Blessington, Valleymount, Lacken

Carmel O'Neill sent us this latest news: Just two weeks before her sudden passing, the late Sr Catherine Brennan RIP decided to present an award to Valleymount parish based on a number of biodiversity projects carried out over the past three years in the church grounds.

These included the creation of a Memory Garden dedicated to the memory of the residents of Ballinahown who sacrificed their homes and livelihoods for the construction of the Blessington lake and reservoir in 1940. The lake supplies water to Dublin city. Other projects included the restoration of Our Lady's Grotto and the cultivation of an area of waste ground behind the grotto into a shaded garden.



In early Spring of this year, a community shed group was formed with eight members from the locality. It was decided to establish an organic vegetable garden using raised beds. Two beds were allocated to the primary school children, who with the help of their teachers planted lettuce scallions cabbage and marigolds during their lunch break. The main beds have produced peas, mange tout, cabbage, kale, broccoli and outdoor tomatoes. The future plans are to erect a polytunnel and plant some veg indoors along with bee pollinator flowers for flower boxes in the village.

At the graduation ceremony for 6th class on June 26th, Fr Richard blessed the plaque and Carmel O Neill encouraged the children to be proactive in their Green school initiatives in secondary school. We are relying on these students to be our future environmentalists and to play their part in addressing the problems caused by global warming and climate change.

Blessington Tidy Towns launched Blessington Bug Ambassadors earlier this year. The aim of the initiative is to inspire young people aged 9 and up foster a deep appreciation for the world of insects that inhabit our local area.

Under the guidance of local entomologist Bryan Murray of Bees of Ireland, 15 children and their parents embarked on a two hour field trip to Russborough House and Walled gardens. The vibrant flowers in the garden proved to be a hotspot for Irish bees, butterflies, hoverflies and ladybirds. Not only were the children helped to identify insects but also to recognise the vital role that insects play in maintaining a balanced thriving eco system. The event was a great success and is a shining example of the importance of engaging children with nature and instilling in them a sense of wonder and curiosity.



Lacken Bird Houses. One member of Lacken Tidy Village put his woodwork skills to good use by designing colourful bird boxes using recycled off cuts of timber. These were then treated with varnish to make them waterproof while the holes are 32 mm in size to attract finches. The three bird boxes are located in Lacken church car park and on two sections of the mass path in the village. We hope that these attractive bird boxes will provide shelter for our smaller bird population in winter and a safe breeding habitat in the Spring.

Blessington Sensory garden. Archbishop Dermot Farrell visited Blessington church on May 7th to present an eco award. To mark the occasion, an apple tree was blessed at the back of the church marked out for a new sensory garden. The parish Centre adjacent to this area now provides meals and social engagement for our Senior citizens four days weekly. Members of the Daycare Committee have been busy assembling portable planter boxes to grow lettuce scallions and tomatoes. Sunflowers and marigolds are planted in pots. A disused bird box was erected on the wall and to the delight of our senior citizens attracted a sparrow. A number of fledglings hatched out in late June

There are plans to develop other sensory aspects to this area by installing chime bells, a water feature and trailing climber plants to add colour to the bare walls. To view all their photos, [visit the ECI website here.](#)



Church of St Thérèse, Mount Merrion

Clodagh O'Reilly-Boyles sent us this latest news: At St Therese's we were joined by a wonderful community of bees and rare flora and fauna for a summer celebrating Creation. POLLINATING PARISH: we have recently pledged our parish to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan on the National Biodiversity Data Centre.



Other News

Ripple Effect – Harvest Resources

Ann Hatton Church Development Executive, Ripple Effect sent us this news: **Will your church help grandmothers like Agness fight hunger this harvest with climate-resilient seeds, trees and bees?**

How is your church celebrating Harvest this year? Whether you are taking part in Creationtide or Season of Creation this autumn, working towards an Eco Church award or simply celebrating Harvest we at [Ripple Effect](https://rippleeffect.org) have some exciting new Harvest resources to share with you. Download our free resources at rippleeffect.org/harvest to help your festivities run smoothly.



Use our Harvest resources to find out how seeds, trees and bees could help grandmothers like Agness (in the photo above) to fight hunger and the climate crisis. Agness lives on the front line of the climate crisis in central Zambia where crops are often destroyed due to erratic weather conditions. Earlier this year, Agness's maize crop was washed away by flash floods. She is now worried about having enough food to feed her extended family of 40 in the coming months.

In Zambia, nearly two thirds of people live below the poverty line. Because of this, Zambia has one of the lowest life expectancies and highest death rates in the world, largely due to high levels of HIV/AIDs. Sadly, Agness has lost multiple family members to this and now cares for their children as well as her own. You can find out more about Agness story in our [Harvest resources](https://rippleeffect.org/harvest-resources).

By donating your Harvest collection, hosting a Harvest supper or Songs of Praise event, your church's support could help us to work alongside grandmothers like Agness as they learn how to transform their farms with climate-resilient seeds, trees and bees. This Harvest you can be part of this ripple of change! In September, you can learn more about the challenges farmers are facing in rural Africa and how Ripple Effect is working with communities to fight hunger and the climate crisis. Join us at our virtual Harvest to hear from our project team in Zambia. Find out more: rippleeffect.org/harvest-event

Make your Harvest Festival one to remember!

You are invited to 'Start a ripple effect this September': Join our virtual Harvest event to hear from our team in Zambia about the challenges farmers are facing and how [Ripple Effect](#) is working with communities to fight hunger and the climate crisis this harvest. There will also be a special opportunity for you to ask questions. When: 11 September, 2.00-3.00. [Register today](#) to receive a link to this very special opportunity. Use our resources to help with your next Eco Church award! [Download your free harvest resources](#), including an all-age service outline, video, youth activities and a poster, to make your Harvest Festival one to remember! Please do get in touch with me if you would like any further information: ann.hatton@rippleeffect.org

Resources for Season of Creation

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have shared [resources here](#). Eco-Congregation Scotland has shared the following links to Season of Creation resources which are Lectionary-based and thematic and include 40+ short 'stilling videos' (landscape/wildlife, no words, to introduce a time of prayer or reflection), and soon a set of 5 sermon-length location video reflections:

[Eco-Congregation Scotland resources](#)

[Eco-Congregation Scotland thematic resources](#)

[Eco-Congregation Scotland stilling video resources](#)

[Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference resources](#)



Bold for Climate Action

Patricia Devlin from the Orlagh in the City Eucharistic Community in Dublin wishes to share information about a project for older people, by older people to become a more visible public presence for Climate Justice.



SAVE THE DATE NOTICE

Hello,

I'm with BOLD Climate Action – a climate education project by and for older people. We're developing awareness-raising workshops on climate change for older people – and we are inviting you to join our discussion series on key topics on climate change and older people. We're taking a participatory approach. We'll learn from experts and inspiring speakers – and agree on what we think are the most important aspects of climate change for older people in Ireland – including government action. BOLD Climate Action is committed to older people's civic participation by building knowledge and confidence on climate change – and empowering older people to get involved.

From September 2023 to January 2024, we'll hold a discussion series which will be the first phase of our climate education work. We'll draw on the input of speakers and participants' comments and reflections. This will help us develop our next phase of outreach workshops on the climate crisis – we want these to be relevant to – and empowering of older people in Ireland.

Discussion Series:

1. Energy Costs, Older People & the Climate Crisis, Tuesday 12 September, 11 am – 2 pm [or 3 pm?], [Guests will include speakers from Age Action and Friends of the Earth.]
2. Just Transition, Equality and Older People, Tues 17 October 2023, 11 am.
3. Global Climate Justice and Older People in Ireland, Tues 14 November 2023, 11 am.
4. Intergenerational Solidarity and the Climate Crisis, January 2024, 11 am

All sessions will all take place in person in Dublin city centre. A light lunch will be provided. Further details of the sessions will be available soon. You can register for all or one of the discussions. Please contact us for further information at ppkdevlin@gmail.com

The National Recycling Bin Survey

Stephen Byrne, Project Manager with Voice Ireland sent us this information: Is too much waste coming into your home? Are you fed up with the endless single-use plastic and packaging in our supermarkets and retail stores? This summer, have your say. The National Recycling Bin Survey is live and open until August 31st.

The National Recycling Bin Survey is a pioneering study created by Sick of Plastic, a national campaign facilitated by VOICE and Friends of the Earth Ireland, two of the country's leading environmental NGOs.

We are working to empower communities to take action on single-use plastic which is clogging up our homes and polluting our natural environment. Taking part in the Survey is a hands-on way to engage with the circular economy, a model of production and consumption that aims to use resources consciously and continuously. It involves reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and sharing rather than wasting. The circular economy is a means of safeguarding the earth and nature.

Apply online at voiceireland.org and recycle as usual for a period of two weeks. Next, count your waste items based on their source and material. This can be done either by emptying your bin prior to collection day or by tallying your recycling waste as you go. Choose a method that suits you. Lastly, input this data into our online survey which will be sent to you upon signing up, along with instructional material and our ready-made tally sheet.

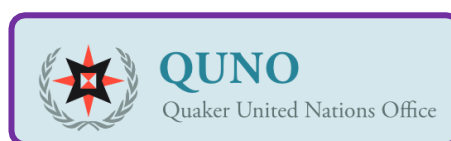
Participating in this survey will help us collect key data on household recycling waste and drive our policy work to hold industries accountable and reduce Ireland's reliance on single-use plastic and packaging. Complete the Survey before August 31st and you will be in with a chance of winning one of five €100 One4All gift vouchers. Apply today: <https://bit.ly/ApplyToTheNationalRecycleBinSurvey>



Publications ...

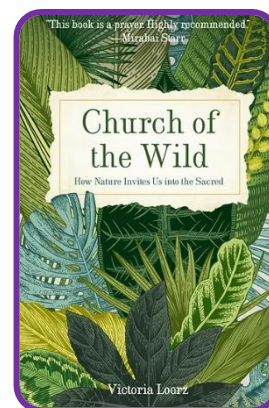
QUNO Publications Available

Two publications are available from the Quaker United Nations Office: Highlighting the latest scientific findings for urgent and equitable climate action from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – [A Government Official's Toolkit](#) and a faith perspective for [Fair Financing for Loss and Damage](#).



Church of the Wild – How Nature Invites Us into the Sacred by Victoria Loorz

Once upon a time, humans lived in intimate relationship with nature. With an eco-spiritual lens on biblical narratives and a fresh look at a community larger than our own species, Church of the Wild uncovers the wild roots of faith and helps us deepen our commitment to a suffering earth by falling in love with it—and calling it church. Through mystical encounters with wild deer, whispers from a scrubby oak tree, wordless conversation with a cougar, and more, Victoria Loorz helps us connect to a love that literally holds the world together—a love that calls us into communion with all creatures. [Learn more here](#).



Prayers/Reflections for the Earth

A Reflection by Fr Hugh O'Donnell

Seals in Wicklow

On a July evening four of us step along the uneven coastal path going south of Wicklow Town. We are hoping to see the seals who have made these coves their home and a place to play, to raise a family and to greet their human cousins who must seem more like fish out of water to them.

Of course we pride ourselves on our achievements in travelling into space or being able to send messages round the world in an instant or devising microscopes and medical equipment and have no memory of having once been water babies ourselves!

Along the way, John Feehan points out the wild flowers discreetly following the Little Way of St Thérèse and a cushion of sheep's bit that catches his eye. But mostly we are looking with one eye on the wide Irish Sea in search of these curious creatures.

Happily we manage to see three of them, two at play, and one who comes close to the shingle beach to say hello. We gaze at one another for a while then the seal dives and resurfaces like a child saying, 'see what I can do!' And we do see and inwardly applaud. Although we will never understand their seaview we feel some lost connection stirring in us that knows we are kin. It confirms that they too are at home here, that they belong as much as we belong.

Evening is closing in as we return, strangely at peace and grateful, minding our step.

A Poem by Fr Hugh O'Donnell in Memory of Sr Catherine Brennan

WAKE

for Catherine who loved being here

The sisters assemble to welcome her home; she's been gone three months making her way uneasily from scan to drip from x-ray to exit as days won't leave without an answer. I am early so go to Ernesto's for coffee and listen to Omara, her feel for what can't be said, her voice exiled from dark. Hope

is fine but don't expect too much of what you have known before. Old lace still good, a crucifix, rippled flesh secured. How would you call it Catherine? Time to compose ourselves in the music of heartbreak as Omara can't do it for us, time to let you off on your way, the way that you went into the light.

The photo on the right shows a field of bog asphodel on Tory Island taken by Fr Hugh.

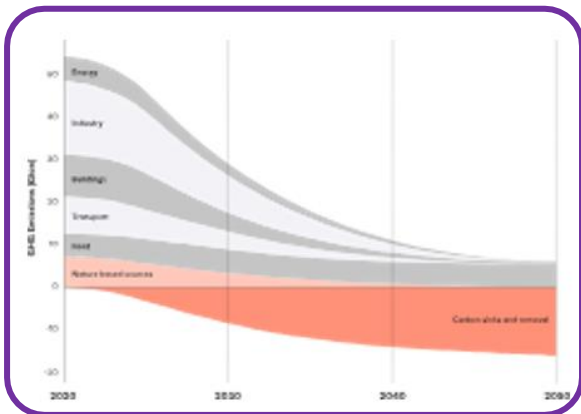


Rev Trevor Sargent's Ecological Notes for July/August 2023: What Does 'Zero Emissions Day' Mean to You?

This month on Thursday, 21st September, around the world, people will be doing whatever they can to give the planet a chance to breathe, by taking a break from burning fossil fuels. Zero Emissions Day was begun in Nova Scotia in 2008, as a practical way to 'light a candle, rather than curse the darkness', as one might say! It is no secret that the world is burning up. Global warming, or (global boiling, as Antonio Gutierrez, the United Nations Secretary General, is now calling it,) has given us record breaking levels of rain, wind and heat (depending on where you live) and one of the prime reasons for these accelerating extremes are greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.



Zero Emissions Day gets its name from the global scientific requirement that humanity must reduce current greenhouse gas emissions to 'zero', i.e.. the level we emitted before the Industrial Revolution, by the year 2050. Zero Emissions Day is a good time to think: 'how can I play my part to avoid life becoming hell on earth for our children and grandchildren?'



The graph on the left gives a sense of the challenge which is before us all. The greenhouse gas burden of each sector is listed, namely Energy, Industry, Buildings, Transport, Food and then Nature Based Sources. Below the zero emissions line are Carbon Sinks and Removal which are ways (such as permanent forestry) of soaking up unavoidable GHG emissions which are created by growing food, an essential activity for humans to live.

The radical changes society needs to make to reach zero GHG emissions by 2050 will test our capability of 'loving our neighbour as ourselves', perhaps more than any

other experience to date. For all our difficulties with the rainy Irish summer we have just had, southern societies are suffering more acutely from global extremes of heat, drought and famine. Paradoxically, Irish tourism is forecast to benefit from a 9pc increase in visitor numbers, as Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal become too hot for vacations. (E.U. Joint Research Centre 2023). The moral questions for all Irish people, especially those claiming to be Christian, is, will we empathise with those who are suffering the most from 'global boiling', or will we turn our backs on these victims because there is a short term economic gain for Ireland?

Prayer for Season of Creation, by Val Brown, Head of Christian Aid Scotland

God of all people, of all creatures;

We thank you for the world that you have created,

Where each ecosystem lives in delicate balance

And where the world produces the food and the clean water
that we all need to sustain life.

The bounty of the harvest is a testament to the wonder of creation.

And yet we know that all creation is groaning

The weather isn't what it was and that throws out the created balance

Making it harder for farmers to grow the food we all need.

Thank you for the efforts of people locally, nationally and globally to care for
your world

For the people who use their creative energy to work for solutions,

For the people who raise their voices to call for justice,

For the people who make small changes every day to tread more lightly on the
earth.

May we all learn to live simply, so that others can simply live.

Amen

With kindest regards,

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Roman Catholic representative

The Catholic representative position is currently vacant following the death of our friend Catherine Brennan SSL.

Until a new rep is appointed, please contact the Chairperson.

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