

GLAS

A Pastoral Resource to Supplement

The Cry of the Earth

A Call to Action for Climate Justice



trócaire

Acknowledgements

TRÓCAIRE WOULD LIKE TO thank all who contributed to the creation of this resource. A particular word of thanks to Jane Mellett (Parish Pastoral Worker, Archdiocese of Dublin), Noirín Lynch (Diocesan Pastoral Co-ordinator, Diocese of Limerick) and Maureen Kelly (Diocesan Pastoral Worker, Diocese of Killaloe), without whom this resource would not have been possible. Their pursuit of justice in our world and attentiveness to bringing this imperative message to the Irish faithful has enabled the delivery of a message of solidarity in Irish parishes and dioceses. We are also pleased to be working in partnership with Eco-Congregation Ireland – a project of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting.

Additional Pastoral and Climate Justice resources and images can be accessed through our website www.trocaire.org/parishes. This dedicated website contains a variety of resources, photos, stories, videos, powerpoints, interactive and campaigning materials related to the *Cry of the Earth* resource and our current *Climate Justice Campaign*. Please log on to find out more!

Table of Contents

Trócaire s Work on Climate Justice4

Introduction5

Key Ethical Principles in *The Cry of the Earth*6

Cycle of Change7

Session 1 – Reconnecting with the Sacredness of the Earth.....8

Session 2 – Stewards of Creation15

Session 3 – Who is Under Our Carbon Footprint?23

Session 4 – What Can We Do? Spirituality in Action30

Getting Started: Resources for Parishes34

The Eco-Aware Parish Checklist37

Creation Prayer Service for the Feast of St Francis of Assisi41

Hymns to Accompany *The Cry of the Earth*44

Climate Justice Quiz.....46

Appendix47



Trócaire's Work on Climate Justice

CLIMATE JUSTICE HAS BEEN A part of Trócaire's work mandate for many years now. Here at home, we have long been campaigning for Ireland to bring in a strong climate law with strong targets. The Irish Government published the revised Heads of Climate Action and Low-Carbon Development Bill on 23 April 2014. The publication of this draft bill is welcome, but it lacks the sense of urgency that is required to tackle climate change.

It will require significant amendments before being passed into law to make it the strong bill we need. This law should ensure Ireland reduces its carbon footprint and becomes part of the solution to the earth's climate crisis. And so our campaigning and lobbying work will continue.

Internationally, Trócaire works with other organisations to call on world leaders to agree to a new global deal to tackle climate change. On the ground, changes in rainfall and drought patterns are having a devastating effect on small farmers in the developing world. It is predicted that yields from rain-fed agriculture will drop by 50 per cent by 2020, deepening the food and water crises we already face.

Lack of access to water is a critical concern. Today, some 783 million people do not have access to clean water, leading to 4,000 child deaths per day from water-borne illnesses.

Without urgent action, climate change presents a

major threat to the right to water for even more people. By 2025, almost two-thirds of the world's population (5.4 billion people) are likely to experience some kind of water stress, and for one billion of them the shortage will be severe.

Trócaire works with farmers to become more food secure and better able to cope with the impacts of climate change. By increasing their crop yields and diversifying the crops they grow, farmers are in a better position to deal with the effects of drought, flood or tropical storm.

Gaining access to water for irrigation and using techniques that conserve soil and water are part of how farmers are adapting their farming practices for long-term resilience in a changing climate. In 2013, Trócaire supported livelihood programmes in fifteen countries, benefiting some 656,000 people directly and nearly 1.5 million people indirectly.

Trócaire is also proud to partner with Green schools. This programme looks at challenges such as sustainable consumption, climate justice and sustainable development in Irish schools, helping to educate children about stewardship and global solidarity.

Introduction

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME to read this resource and to explore the concept of *Climate Justice* and our *Stewardship of the Earth*. Our busy lives can often put us out of sync with the gift of creation and the sacredness of the earth. We can be out of touch with the fact that we are living at a critical moment in the history of our planet.

This pastoral resource, including the four group study sessions, will enable your parish and diocese to take time to listen to the cry of the earth, as we are encouraged to do in the recent pastoral letter of the Irish Catholic Bishops. The Bishops' Letter is an invitation to individuals and parish communities to reflect on our relationship, as the human

community, with the beautiful earth God has gifted us.

The Bishops' Letter is written in the context of the acute challenge of climate change. There is now an overwhelming consensus among scientists and credible national and international organisations that if we continue as before, climate change will have catastrophic effects on our planet. Already there are signs of change in our own climate but the impact is felt most acutely by the poorest people in our world.

This resource will help us to understand what is happening to the earth and what the future holds if we continue as before. It will offer suggestions and guide our reflection and prayers on how we can work

together to take more responsible care of our planet now and for the sake of generations to come.

Pope Francis continuously highlights this same responsibility for Christians. In his papal address in March 2013 he wrote that:

The Church is likewise conscious of the responsibility which all of us have for our world, for the whole of creation, which we must love and protect. There is much that we can do to benefit the poor, the needy and those who suffer, and to favour justice, promote reconciliation and build peace.



Key Ethical Principles in *The Cry of the Earth*

THE CORE OF THE MORAL issue is that actions which we take today can undermine the well-being of millions of people now, especially the poor, and condemn further generations to live in an inhospitable world. Catholic moral tradition and social doctrine offer a number of core principles that can guide our response to the challenge of climate change. These include:

THE COMMON GOOD

Humans are part of, and have a unique responsibility for, the interaction between all living creatures and the atmosphere, land and water. This principle of the universal common good highlights the need for greater global solidarity and civic friendship around the question of energy consumption in particular. Commitment to the common good requires a change of mindset, a conversion of mind and heart.

What is needed is an effective shift in mentality which can lead to the adoption of new lifestyles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments.

POPE BENEDICT XVI
CARITAS IN VERITATE, 51

Christians across the world have a vital role in forming the conscience of their governments on this issue.

THE UNIVERSAL DESTINATION OF THE GOODS OF THE EARTH

The universal destination of goods requires a common effort to obtain for every person and for all peoples the conditions necessary for integral development, so that everyone can contribute to making a more humane and sustainable world. This requires that the poor, the marginalised and in all cases those whose living conditions interfere with their proper growth should be the focus of particular concern.

SUBSIDIARITY

This principle holds that each person or group should take the appropriate action at a personal or local level when addressing an issue common to all.

SOLIDARITY

As Christians, we cannot consider ourselves or our obligations in isolation from others or from the endangered earth and its creatures. Solidarity is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good of all ... because we are all really responsible for all . (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38)

DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

This principle challenges rich nations to provide adequate compensation for any unpreventable climate change damages they cause. A key dimension of distributive justice is the Polluter Pays Principle.

SUSTAINABILITY

This means that our present needs must not be met in a way that puts the needs of future generations at risk.



Your river in heaven brims over
to provide its grain.

PSALM 65

Cycle of Change

Our four sessions will be based on this cycle:

A. Personal or Community Experience

Each of the sessions begins by evoking a personal or community experience related to the theme, or reflecting on an activity we engaged with during the previous week or what has stayed with us from the previous session.

B. Reflective and Critical Analysis

Reflection, input and information related to the theme of the session.

C. The Christian Vision

Our vision is informed by Scripture and Church teaching and by the faith tradition of our people.

D. Pause – A Time for Stillness

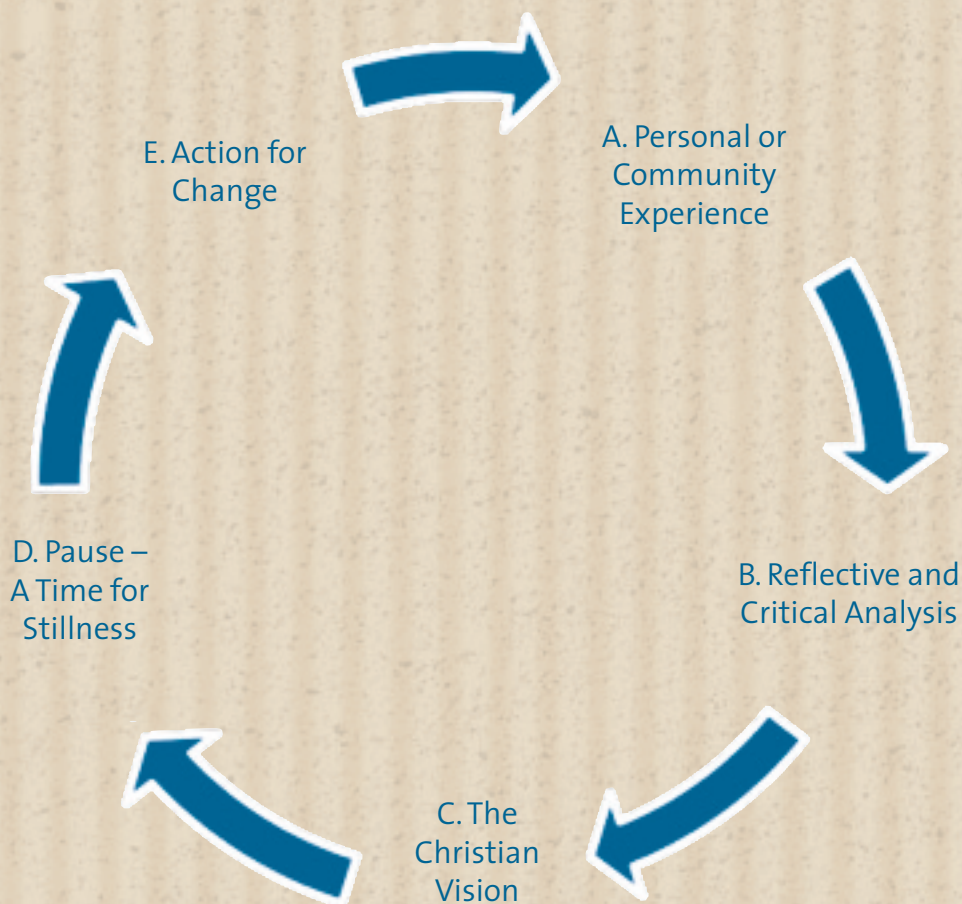
We take time to reflect on what we have heard so far and how it is impacting on us.

E. Action for Change

We encourage and are encouraged to take on some activity related to the theme and to consider what commitments we might make personally and as a Church community towards working for climate justice.

Prayer is an integral part of the process. There is a time for prayer at the beginning of each session. In Session 1, the Prayer Time comes after our reflection on God's Gift of Creation.

Note: Participants will need to have a notebook and writing materials as they will be invited to make notes in a journal during all of the sessions. This will help them to remember the content of the sessions and their own insights, and will be a valuable record of the four sessions.



Session 1

Reconnecting with the Sacredness of the Earth

1. INTRODUCTION

In this first session our focus will be on reconnecting with the wonder of creation and the marvel of the earth we share. This is God's gift to us.

As we begin, let's take a moment of quiet and stillness to gather into this meeting space. I invite you now to become aware of your body, and how you are seated. Be aware of your feet resting on the earth and being supported by it. Be aware of how the earth continually supports you. Be aware of your breath, the breath of life, and how it sustains you. Remember how God breathed over creation and brought it to life. As you breathe in, receive God's gift of love for all creation. Invite that same breath of God's spirit to be with us during our time together.

2. GROUP INTRODUCTIONS

We create our conversation circle by taking the globe in our hands, speaking our names and saying what attracted us to join this conversation circle.

3. A PLACE I LOVE

Broadcaster John Quinn produced a series of radio documentaries for RTÉ called *This Place Made Me*. Contributors to the series were invited to travel back with the presenter to a place that was significant and formative for them. All kinds of places were revisited ones. Artist Paddy Graham returned to Monaghanstown Bog in County Westmeath.

I would sit here as a boy and have a primal experience of the deep, rich, luscious, bog land. I had a sense of being rooted in it. I would look up at the sky, with the larks hanging there, and then back down to the earth in a great circular sweep. I understood nature and God like that for years. The meeting of earth and sky – that horizon appears in all my paintings, locking everything together ...

And then there was the great silence – which isn't silence at all of course. If you slow down and listen you will hear that choir of noises, an orchestra of beautiful sounds – buzzing, chirping, flitting. It 'earths' you ... This is where I pray. I don't say words. I just look and listen. It's a prayer of wonder about nature.



4. REFLECTION ON EXPERIENCE

Do you have a place in nature that is special for you? Is there a place that holds special memories, or one that you like to revisit, a place where you feel rooted, a place that earths you? Make some notes about this special place in nature and what it means to you.

Time is given for participants to think about their own special place and what it holds for them.

Pair and Share: When they have made their own notes, participants are invited to share in pairs about their favourite place in nature and its meaning for them.

Group Sharing: Allow time for the pair-sharing, then gather the group and make a group list of their significant places in nature. Invite the group to think about whether these special places in nature will be available in the same way for their children or grandchildren.

5. OUR CHRISTIAN STORY ABOUT CREATION

(PowerPoint presentation available at www.trocaire.org/parish/climate)

- Christians believe that God is the creator of all that exists, that all of creation comes from God's hand and that God takes delight in it. God rejoiced in all that was created and saw that indeed it was very good (Gn 1:30).
- The Bible also calls us to be stewards of God's creation. God took Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it (Gn 2:15). The verbs till and keep used in this context have echoes of service and commitment. They suggest a duty of care given to us by God to keep the earth from harm.
- Celtic Christianity had an acute awareness of the presence of God in the wonders and splendours of nature. Celtic saints such as Patrick, Brigid, Ciarán, Gobnait, Kevin, Imy, Columba and Columban were very sensitive to the presence of God in creation. In the Celtic mind, the visible physical world and the invisible spiritual world were interwoven, inseparable. They believed that in nature the divine light pierced the veil that separates heaven from earth.¹ At special times of the year, such as *Samhain* or *Imbolg*,² or in sacred places like holy wells or monastic sites, the veil between the two worlds is especially thin.
- Many legends grew up around Columban, especially at the monastery in Luxeuil in eastern France. Squirrels and doves were pictured playing in the folds of his cowl. Birds also approached him and nestled in the palms of his hands. Even wild beasts were said to have obeyed his commands. In his sermon Concerning the Faith he wrote, If you wish to understand the Creator, learn about his creatures.³



In the Celtic mind, Christ walked among us in two shoes. One was Scripture and the other was Creation. This was also a dominant theme in the life of another great Celtic and Franciscan theologian, Blessed John Duns Scotus, who died in 1308. For Scotus, the universe was so wondrous as to be compared to a beautiful canticle, a symphony of joy and harmony.

- The presence and revelation of God in nature is celebrated in Celtic prayers, poetry and benedictions. Perhaps we can remember some of these. Examples include prayers like St Patrick's Breastplate, or the Celtic Benediction, or poems such as *I See His Blood Upon The Rose* by Joseph Mary Plunkett.

(Handout 1 gives some texts which may be familiar. Less familiar but very beautiful is Tireachan's Creed from the Book of Armagh AD 670)

- Poets and mystics of our own time have experienced God's presence in creation in very profound ways. Bede Griffiths OSB lived in an ashram in India for much of his life. He describes one such moment:

I walked out alone in the evening ... a lark rose suddenly from the ground beside the tree by which I was standing, and poured out its song above my head, and then sank – still singing – to rest ... Everything then grew still as the sunset faded and a veil of dusk began to cover the earth. I remember now the feeling of awe which came over me. I felt inclined to kneel to the ground, as though I had been standing in the presence of an angel; and I hardly dared to look on the face of the sky because it seemed as though it was but a veil before the face of God.

- The Social Teaching of the Church and that of our most recent popes highlight the sacredness of the gift of creation and our responsibility to respect and care for it.

Creation therefore remains a kind of first revelation which speaks to us clearly of the Creator and which can lead us ever more deeply into the mystery of God's love for us.

JOHN PAUL II
WEEKLY AUDIENCE, 30 JANUARY 2002

Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.

POPE FRANCIS
PAPAL AUDIENCE, 21 MAY 2014

For Discussion

- ◆ What parts of this Christian Story of our relationship with Creation strike you?
- ◆ What feelings, memories, associations came alive for you as you listened?
- ◆ Have you experienced moments – such as the one described by Bede Griffiths – when you were particularly aware of the presence of God in nature?
- ◆ Have you a sense of God's call to us personally and as a Christian community at this time in relation to Creation?

Following the discussion, participants are invited to reflect for a few moments and to make notes of anything that stays with them from the input and discussion.

6. TIME FOR STILLNESS AND PRAYER

Let's take a few moments in silence to gather the blessings of our sharing this evening, the insights we've had, the memories that have come to us. Let's take some time to think about what we are taking away with us.

If time allows, participants are invited to write down what they are taking with them in their journals or share it with the person seated beside them.

We close our sharing this evening and our time together with a time of prayer. We have seen how the Celtic saints believed that God is revealed to us through nature. We celebrate this in our prayer and give thanks for the gift of Creation.

Hymn: 'The Heavens Are Telling the Glory of God' (Marty Haugen)

(or another from the list – See Appendix for 'Hymns for Cry of the Earth', p. 47)

Poem: 'I See His Blood Upon the Rose' (Joseph Mary Plunkett)

I see his blood upon the rose
And in the stars the glory of his eyes,
His body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.

I see his face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but his voice – and carven by his power
Rocks are his written words.

All pathways by his feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.⁴

Reading

The new awareness that is sweeping our planet reminds us that we are so interconnected with the air we breathe, the trees of the forest, the flowers of the field, the mountains and rivers, that their diminishment is our diminishment, their destruction is our destruction. Not only the beauty and majesty, but also the chaos and power of the natural world inspire our poetry, our art, and our spiritual life with a sense of wonder. When we fan the flame of wonder in our hearts there is a new meaning in our lives. Our hearts expand in care of those who journey with us and for our planet earth which is our home. To be aware of the caress of a summer breeze, the beauty of a flower, the smile of a friend, or the sparkle of a wave in flight, is a gift beyond price. It is the gift of wonder enfolded in awe.

FROM WILDFLOWER JOURNEY PRAYERS:

A COLLECTION OF PRAYERS AND READINGS WITH PHOTOGRAPHY, JACINTA SHAILER SGS⁵

Psalm Responsory: from Psalm 148

Response: We praise you God, Creator of all that exists.

Reader: Alleluia. Praise our God!

Across the heavens, from the heights,
all you angels, heavenly beings, sing praise, sing praise! **R.**

Reader: Sun and moon, glittering stars, sing praise, sing praise!
Highest heavens, rain clouds, sing praise, sing praise. **R.**

Reader: Let there be praise; from the depths of the earth,
from creatures of the deep.
Fire and hail, snow and mist, storms, winds, mountains, hills,
fruit trees and cedars, wild beasts and tame, snakes and birds. **R.**

Reader: Praise, praise the holy name, this name before all names. **R.**

PSALM 148: 1-4, 7-10, 13⁶

(Alternative Psalm 8)⁷

*Response: Wonderful God, Creator,
the whole earth declares your greatness.*

Reader: Your glory glows in the heavens,
it is babbled by babies and sung by children. **R.**

Reader: When I look at the sky which you have made,
the moon and the stars that you set in place:
where do human beings fit in the pattern? **R.**

Reader: What are we that you care for us?
You have made us only a little lower than yourself;
and crowned us with glory and honour. **R.**

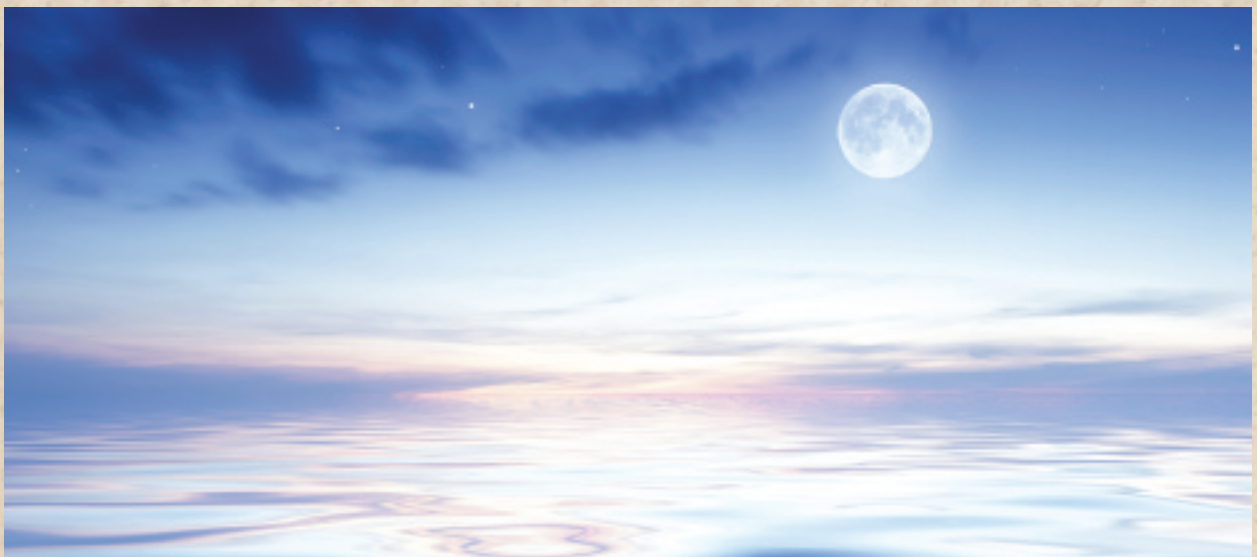
Reader: You share with us responsibility
to care for sheep and cattle, wild things, birds and fish,
everything that lives in the sea:
to work with you, within creation. **R.**

Closing Prayer

Creator of the universe, we pray in gratitude and praise.
You were there at the beginning of all things,
shaping our world and preparing it for us.
You have provided the mountains and the trees,
the waters and the earth.
Help us to be caretakers of your gifts,
protecting the land from abuse, and ready to share with all in need.
Show us how to use our science and technology in creative,
not destructive ways.
Deepen our awareness of our connectedness with all your creation,
So that future generations will also enjoy every blessing. Amen.⁸

Blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing stream to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.⁹



7. ACTION FOR CHANGE

Our focus this evening has been on becoming aware of the wonder of God's gift of Creation and our call to be stewards of that creation. How will you bring that awareness into your week? What action will you take this week? Here are some suggestions:

Find a spot, a special place, a spiritual home, a walk, a place by a river or at the sea, a favourite tree, a hill top, a garden corner. Let nature take hold of you and listen. Let the richness of creation flow through you. Take some time to be still in the presence of God in this place with an attentive spirit. Engage your senses, sight, sound, touch, smell, and deepen your awareness of God in the many sounds and sights around you. Listen to your body, be aware of your breathing and be alive to all your senses. Be aware of the presence of God as you sit silently or walk on holy ground, with God in creation beneath your feet, by your side and in the cosmos beyond.

You may choose to take a photograph, sketch a picture or record sounds to remember the moment.

In his book, *A New Harmony: The Spirit, the Earth and the Human Soul*,¹⁰ Celtic spirituality scholar John Philip Newell points out that our western culture has made us heavy-footed, and deadened our capacity to be in touch with the earth. He suggests an intentional practice of walking barefooted on the earth to sensitise us. He quotes Carl Jung: When you walk with naked feet, how can you ever forget the earth?¹¹



Think of walking barefoot in the grass. Think of placing our bare foot into the coolness of a refreshing stream. When we do, we see in a new way. Doors of perception are opened in us ... A heightened sense of the earth on which we walk is not just about pleasurable experiences. It is about knowing and reverencing the creation of which we are a part. (John Philip Newell)

Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. (Ex 3:5)

Participants are invited to take a few minutes to think about what specific action they will take this week to reconnect with creation and to make a note about it.

Blessing (said together)

Bless to us, O God,
the earth beneath our feet.
Bless to us, O God,
the path whereon we go.
Bless to us, O God,
the people whom we meet.¹²

¹ We find this idea very powerfully in the writings of the ninth-century Irish scholar Don Scotus Eriugena.

² The Celtic feast of *Samhain* corresponds to our celebration of All Saints and All Souls. The Celtic feast of *Imbolg* corresponds to St Brigid's feast on 1 February.

³ *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, p. 19.

⁴ Poem by Joseph Mary Plunkett in Nicholson and Lee (eds), *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* (1917).

⁵ Jacinta Shailer SGS, *Wildflower Journey Prayers: A Collection of Prayers and Readings with Photography* (Australia: Rainbow Books, 2007).

⁶ This adaptation is taken from Donal Harrington and Julie Kavanagh, *Prayer for Parish Groups* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1998), p. 182.

⁷ Adapted/translation from the Iona Community. See Neil Paynter and Helen Boothroyd, *Holy Ground: Liturgies and Worship for an Engaged Spirituality* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2005), p. 245.

⁸ Michael Gormly SSC at <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/spirituality-for-justice/prayers>.

⁹ Original prayer adapted from the *Carmina Gadelica* (literally Songs of the Gaels) prayers from the Highlands of Scotland and the islands off the coast, painstakingly collected by

Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912). It is thought that these prayers were deeply influenced by the spirituality of the Columban foundation on Iona.

¹⁰ John Philip Newell, *A New Harmony: The Spirit, the Earth and the Human Soul* (Edinburgh: St George's Press, 2012), p. 17.

¹¹ C. G. Jung, *Civilizations in Transition* (New York: Bollingen, 1964), p. 518 and quoted in Newell, *A New Harmony: The Spirit, the Earth and the Human Soul*, op. cit.

¹² Traditional Blessing used before setting out on a journey. A Dhia beannaigh agus ceim ina bhfuil me ag dul, beannaigh an cr   at   faoim chos.

Session 2

Stewards of Creation

Opening Prayer

You may like to use the following meditation to bring the group to stillness:

Close your eyes. Take deep, slow breaths, conscious of the air that you are breathing into your body, air which energises you, heals you, gives you life. Repeat the following mantra: Lord you are closer to me than my own breathing (St Thérèse).

(Pause for 1–2 minutes)

Take a moment to recall all of the things you have received from the earth since you were conceived ... From the sun, from the land, from the air, from water (*Pause*). We receive abundantly every day. In the past week, what have you received from the planet?

In our last session, we pondered the Christian story of creation. We ask God's Spirit to be with us and guide us as we gather here to explore *The Cry of the Earth*. Let us first become aware of God's presence. Let us begin, not in our own name, but in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reader 1: Our home, planet earth, God's creation, is an extraordinarily beautiful and fruitful place. It is appropriately called 'the garden planet' of the universe. We humans, with every other species, depend totally on the proper functioning of the planet for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food that sustains us and the multiple other ways in which the earth supports us and every other creature. Though the earth appears very robust, we know that it can be quite fragile and that small changes, over time, can have enormous consequences for life.¹

All: Lord, give us the courage to be stewards and protectors of your creation. Help us to be more aware of the world around us, to listen to your creation, to hear what nature is saying to us.

Reader 2: When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established – what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour.



You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!²

All: Lord, give us the courage to be stewards and protectors of your creation. Help us to be more aware of the world around us, to listen to your creation, to hear what nature is saying to us.

Suggestion for music: Listen by Christy Moore³

Suggestion for video: <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/hayden-planetarium/digital-universe>
The Digital Universe ⁴

Together we pray: Creator of the universe, we pray in gratitude and praise.

You were there at the beginning of all things, shaping our world and preparing it for us.

You have provided the mountains and the trees, the waters and the earth.

Help us to be caretakers of your gifts, protecting the land from abuse, and ready to share with all in need. Show us how to use our science and technology in creative, not destructive ways.

Deepen our awareness of our connectedness with all your creation, so that future generations will also enjoy every blessing. Amen.⁵

1. PERSONAL/COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

In our last session we reflected on the wonders of God's creation and on our own experiences of nature. Looking back over your journals and conversations so far:

- ◆ What has stayed with you from our last session?
- ◆ What did you find encouraging, inspiring or challenging?

Allow a moment of stillness, then invite participants to chat in pairs for 2–3 minutes. Bringing them back together, ask them to consider in silence for a moment, not their own opinions, but rather what they have learnt from others sharing.

Listen to one another and note responses for later – you don't need to answer all questions or comments immediately.

2. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

This activity aims to explore climate justice in our world today. Ask people to get into groups and work together on the questions. (See p. 46 for the Climate Justice Quiz.)

Climate Justice Quiz

1. For 85,000 of the past 100,000 years, much of Ireland was covered with glaciers. True/False?

True. At times in the history of our planet, the earth has been almost a ball of ice. At other times, there was no ice on earth and tropical creatures swam in the Arctic Ocean. Such natural causes of climate fluctuations can also occur on shorter timescales, such as happened in Europe from the fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, causing rivers such as the Liffey to freeze regularly in winter. Scientists however, notably those associated with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), believe that the climate change we are now experiencing goes beyond the range of natural fluctuation and that this is caused mainly by human activity, particularly the burning of fossil fuel. Ice cores taken from the Arctic and Antarctic tell us that for the past 10,000 years, right up to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago, there was roughly 280 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere. In spring of this year the value approached 402ppm, unprecedented over the past 800,000 years. Concentrations are rising by about 2ppm every year.⁶

2. According to the most recent IPCC report, what are the consequences of climate change?

- Risk of death, injury, ill-health or disrupted livelihoods in low-lying coastal zones and small island developing states and other small islands, due to storm surges, coastal flooding and sea-level rise.

- Systemic risks due to extreme weather events leading to breakdown of infrastructure networks and critical services such as electricity, water supply and health and emergency services. Many of the low-lying islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, such as the Maldives, Tuvalu and Kiribati, are already feeling the effects of rising sea levels. The storms which ravaged the coast of Ireland last winter were rendered more potent by slightly higher sea levels than they would have been a century ago.
- Risk of mortality and morbidity during periods of extreme heat, particularly for vulnerable urban populations and those working outdoors in urban or rural areas.
- Risk of food insecurity and the breakdown of food systems linked to warming, drought, flooding and precipitation variability and extremes, particularly for poorer populations in urban and rural settings.
- Risk of loss of rural livelihoods and income due to insufficient access to drinking and irrigation water and reduced agricultural productivity, particularly for farmers and pastoralists with minimal capital in semi-arid regions.
- Risk of loss of marine and coastal ecosystems, biodiversity and the ecosystem goods, functions and services they provide for coastal livelihoods, especially for fishing communities in the tropics and the Arctic.
- Risk of loss of terrestrial and inland water ecosystems, biodiversity and the ecosystem goods, functions and services they provide for livelihoods.⁷

3. Why is climate justice a concern in Ireland?

In an Irish context, climate change will have a major impact on the agricultural industry. Changes in climate would make it difficult to grow potatoes in places where the summers become significantly drier. Other crops, such as maize, will benefit from the changes. It is estimated that climate change could cost the Irish agricultural sector between €1 and €2 billion per annum. Irish climate scientists predict that there will be an increase in temperature in Ireland of approximately 1.5 degrees Celsius by mid-century. There will be increases in precipitation, especially in the winter months, causing increased problems of flooding. Marked decreases in rainfall during the summer months are likely to put huge pressure on public authorities, especially in terms of providing drinkable water for Dublin and other cities and large towns situated in the eastern part of the country. A study conducted for the National Botanical Gardens of Ireland estimated that 171 native plant species, making up 20 per cent of the total Irish flora, are vulnerable to climate change. Natural habitats for many threatened plants may no longer be able to support their indigenous species. Some of the plants and animals we take for granted in the Irish landscape may disappear.⁸

4. How many planet earths would we need if everyone consumed such as we do in Ireland?

Three! Ireland has one of the highest per capita rates of carbon emissions in Europe at 9.3 metric tonnes per capita in CO₂ emissions (UK: 7.7; China 5.3). We don't have three planet earths, but that's how many we would need if every country consumed and polluted like Ireland. We must rethink the way we consume as a nation.

5. What is climate justice?

Climate justice is the fair treatment of all people and freedom from discrimination. It includes the creation of policies and projects that address climate change, the systems that create climate change and perpetuate discrimination.

6. How does climate justice affect our sisters and brothers in so-called developing countries?

Changes in rainfall and drought patterns are having a devastating effect on small farmers in the developing world. It is predicted that yields from rain-fed agriculture will drop by 50 per cent by 2020 – deepening the food and water crises we already face. For example, in Malawi 90 per cent of small farmers depend on rain for their crops. Without it, their crops will fail and drought means famine.



7. The world is currently undergoing the biggest mass species extinction since the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. True/False?

True. It is estimated that the species extinction rate is now up to 1,000 times higher than the normal background rate. This is mainly due to habitat destruction, pollution, hunting and climate change, all caused by human activity. (See www.climatechange.ie.)

8. How has Ireland already made positive impact changes in terms of climate justice?

Smokeless coal – Research has indicated that the smoky coal ban introduced in Dublin in 1990 resulted in up to 350 fewer deaths and reduced consumer fuel costs of up to €184 million per year. It has clearly been effective in reducing air pollution with proven benefits for human health and our environment, and has led to improved quality of life in cities and towns where the ban applies to coal. ⁹

Plastic bags – The plastic bag levy was first introduced in 2002 in order to reduce the consumption of disposable plastic bags by influencing consumer behaviour. It had an immediate effect on consumer behaviour, with a decrease in plastic bag usage from an estimated 328 bags per capita to 21 bags per capita overnight. In total, the tax is thought to have led to a billion fewer bags being used each year in Ireland. The tax persuaded shoppers to bring their own reusable bags with them on shopping trips, or to request far fewer bags at the checkout.

9. We buy, use and throw away paper every day – for computers and photocopiers, toilet paper, paper towels, packaging, newspapers, magazines. We might be more mindful of our use of paper when we consider the other things trees gift us with. Can we identify some such gifts?

- a) Trees absorb and store carbon, make oxygen for us to breathe, stabilise soils and filter water.
- b) Trees create complex ecosystems full of lichens, mosses, vascular plants and birds.
- c) Trees create beauty, awe, restfulness, peace and opportunities for reflection and gratitude.

10. Most people understand why recycling is better for the environment, but why is composting so much better than throwing food waste in the landfill?

Compost is made up of decayed organic matter (food, grass clippings, leaves, etc.) that looks much like soil. It is rich in beneficial biological organisms, nutrients and bacteria that provide multiple benefits for back garden ecosystems. Other benefits of creating and using compost include:



- **Saving water**

Compost cuts water use by 30 per cent. Adding compost to your garden helps to save water by providing a natural barrier against evaporation. Soil that is rich in organic matter retains water much more readily than poor quality soil.

- **Kind to the environment**

Compost is super food for gardens. It fosters a vibrant, living soil ecosystem. Also, since compost fixes carbon it helps fight global warming and eliminates the need for fossil fuel fertilisers which are incredibly energy intensive to manufacture. Making your own compost at home also recycles your household food and garden waste, saving it from unsustainable landfills.

Tips on how to compost are available from <http://www.trocaire.org/uptous/compost>

11. In Genesis 1:26-27 it says that God made humankind in his own image and let them ‘have dominion over the earth’. What does the word ‘dominion’ mean in this context?

It is claimed that Christianity has used this text to see other creatures and the earth itself as a resource to be plundered and which is exclusively for human use. The text does give humans dominion over the earth, but it is a dominion of service, of responsibility and care, patterned on God's own dominion over all creatures. The Hebrew word for dominion (*radah*) means to reign, as in to take responsibility for, to protect, to care for. Therefore human beings are created as stewards of the earth. As the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* explains:

God freely confers being and life on everything that exists. Man and woman, created in his image and likeness, are for that very reason called to be the visible sign and the effective instrument of divine gratuitousness in the garden where God has placed them as cultivators and custodians of the goods of creation. (26)

12. Climate justice is a moral issue. True/False?

True. We have become more aware that we cannot have life to the full on a plundered, polluted and ailing planet. While climate change is a technical, scientific and economic issue, it is also a moral one. The core of the moral issue is that actions which we take today can undermine the well-being of millions of people now, especially the poor, and condemn further generations to live in an inhospitable world.

Catholic moral tradition and social doctrine, based on the revelation of God's love for all creation in the Scriptures and on the inherent dignity of every person, offer a number of core principles that can guide our response to the challenge of climate change.¹⁰ As Christians we cannot consider ourselves or our obligations in isolation from others or from the endangered earth and its creatures.

3. THE CHRISTIAN VISION

Our vision is informed by Scripture and Church teaching and by the faith tradition of our people. Using the quotes below, discuss what Christianity has to say about climate justice. What does God say? What does the Church say?

But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.¹¹

In Caritas in Veritate, Pope Benedict XVI emphasises this principle of the 'universal common good' highlighting the need for greater global solidarity and civic friendship around the question of energy consumption in particular. 'What is also needed,' he explains, 'is a worldwide redistribution of energy resources, so that countries lacking those resources can have access to them. The fate of those countries cannot be left in the hand of whoever is the first to claim the spoils, or whoever is able to prevail over the rest ... everyone must responsibly recognise the impact they will have on future generations, particularly the many young people in the poorer nations, who ask to assume their active part in the construction of a better world (49).¹²

The human family has received from the Creator a common gift: nature. The Christian view of creation includes a positive judgement about the legitimacy of interventions on nature if these are meant to be beneficial and are performed responsibly, that is to say, by acknowledging the 'grammar' inscribed in nature and by wisely using resources for the benefit of all, with respect for the beauty, finality and usefulness of every living being and its place in the ecosystem. Nature, in a word, is at our disposition and we are called to exercise a responsible stewardship over it. Yet so often we are driven by greed and by the arrogance of dominion, possession, manipulation and exploitation; we do not preserve nature; nor do we respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations.¹³

4. PAUSE – A TIME FOR STILLNESS

We take time to reflect on what we have heard so far and how it is impacting on us.

You may like to play some music or give some quiet time for reflection as participants answer the following questions:

In groups/using journals:

- ◆ What has struck you from this session?
- ◆ What have you found challenging?
- ◆ Did you hear anything that you were not expecting to hear?
- ◆ What will you do in the coming week as a result of this experience (see the next section for suggestions)?

5. ACTION FOR CHANGE

Here participants are encouraged to take on some activity related to the theme and to consider what commitments they might make personally and as a Church community to working for climate justice.

- Calculate your own **carbon footprint** online at <http://www.foe.ie/justoneearth/carboncalculator/>
Note: You may like to do this with the group during the session.
- Decide on which of the quiz items you can take action on this week – maybe carrying a water bottle with you so you don't have to keep using up energy and plastic by buying new ones, or thinking about how you can use less paper, compost more, etc. You may simply *observe* how you use certain resources.
- **Listen to the cry of the earth:** Watch the news, read the newspapers. What is nature saying to us today? Bring back an article or story for next week that is an example of the cry of the earth.
- **Listen to the cry of the earth:** Take a walk, mindful of the environment around you. The following reflection may help:¹⁴

At Dawn – Walk outside and listen to the music of nature in the early morning. Feel the presence of light giving life to the day.

Morning – On the way to work and at work we are conscious of what sounds fill the environment, pausing to listen from time to time and wondering.

Silence – For a full hour in the day we stay silent and listen intently, whether in nature, in a church or a special place.

Dinner – At dinner we are aware of the sounds that sustain our lives, our minds, our bodies and our spirits. Be aware of the food on our plates and where it comes from; the water we drink; what sustains us and gives us life.

Dusk – Before and after sunset, we listen to the signals of life emanating from nature. Beneath the night sky we listen to the heavens, the winds and the songs of the stars. We look upwards in awe and wonder at God's creation.

At the end of the day we reflect and record those sounds of the environment that disturbed us, delighted us or lifted our spirits



Closing Prayer – St Francis' Canticle of the Sun

O most High, almighty, good Lord God, to you belong praise, glory, honour, and all blessing!
Praised be my Lord God with all creatures; and especially our brother the sun, which brings us the day, and the light; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendour: O Lord, he signifies you to us!
Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, which God has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by which you uphold in life all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, which is very serviceable to us, and humble, and precious, and clean.

Praised be my Lord for brother fire, through which you give us light in the darkness: and he is bright, and pleasant, and very mighty, and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the Earth, which sustains us and keeps us, and yields diverse fruits, and flowers of many colours, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for God's love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for you, O most High, shall give them a crown!

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body, from which no one escapes. Woe to him who dies in mortal sin!

Blessed are they who are found walking by your most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

Praise you, and bless you the Lord, and give thanks to God, and serve God with great humility.

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, 1182–1226

¹ *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, p. 3.

² Psalm 8:3-9.

³ Listen by Christy Moore, Columbia Records, 2009.

⁴ American Museum of Natural History.

⁵ Michael Gormly SSC at <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/spirituality-for-justice/prayers>.

⁶ *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, p. 5.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 5–7. These predictions are based on a 2 degree Celsius rise in average global temperature. According to the scientists we have consulted, a rise of 4 degrees Celsius, which could happen unless we take remedial action soon, would do enormous damage to the life-supporting

systems of the planet. A global temperature rise of 2 degrees Celsius is generally taken as the threshold beyond which recovery would be difficult. The longer we delay in making a transition to a low carbon world, the more difficult the task becomes. Unless dramatic steps are taken to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions within the next decade, it will be almost impossible to avoid dangerous climate change.

⁸ *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, pp. 7–8.

⁹ Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, <http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/AirQuality/SmokyCoalBan/News/MainBody,30689,en.htm>.

¹⁰ *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, pp. 14–18 gives a good explanation of key ethical principals involved, such as The Common Good, Solidarity, Subsidiarity, etc.

¹¹ Job 12:7-10.

¹² *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, p. 14.

¹³ Pope Francis – Message For The Celebration Of The World Day Of Peace 2014, *Fraternity, The Foundation And Pathway To Peace*, #9, 1 January 2014.

¹⁴ From the South Australian Council of Church A Day of Listening. Available online from http://www.sacc.asn.au/_data/Day_of_listening_2014.pdf.

Session 3

Who is Under Our Carbon Footprint?

Opening Prayer

Reader 1: This is what the Lord says: Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths; Ask where the good way lies and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.¹

Reader 2: The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole ... The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere.²

Reader 3: God, the Creator, gave the earth to the whole human race. Each person is therefore entitled to have access to what he or she needs in order to live and develop. Pope Paul VI emphasised this truth when he reminded us that: God intended the earth and everything in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should flow fairly to all. All other rights, whatever they may be, including the rights of property and free trade, are to be subordinated to this principle. They should in no way hinder it; in fact, they should actively facilitate its implementation. Redirecting these rights back to their original purpose must be regarded as an important and urgent social duty (*Populorum Progressio*, 22).³

Leader: Heavenly Father, through your Eternal Word all of creation came into existence, and is held in being by your Holy Spirit. In the lives we lead and the choices we make, help us to be mindful of the impact upon your world and its people, near and far, now and in future generations, so we may be faithful stewards of all that you have entrusted to us, until that time when all things are reconciled to you.

Response: *Creator and Redeemer, hear our prayer.*

We pray for your wisdom, to safeguard the earth, its soil and all that grows in it. R.

We pray for your understanding, to cleanse the air and all that breathes. R.

We pray for your knowledge, to find ways to preserve our waters and all that live in them. R.

We pray for your guidance, to protect all living beings with whom we share our planet. **R.**

We pray for your compassion, to reach out to all those affected by extremes of weather, changes in climate, and the degradation of the environment.

We pray for your insight, to use the resources entrusted to us wisely and well, justly and safely. R.

We pray for your perseverance, to ensure that all humanity may have adequate food and water, shelter and sanitation, peace and well-being, and so can live in dignity, without fear. **R.**

We pray for your courage, to do all that is necessary to restore the beauty of your handiwork wherever we have damaged or harmed it. **R.**

We pray for your grace, that each of us may be faithful stewards of all you have given us, in the choices we make and how we live our daily lives. **R.**⁴



Creator of the universe, we pray in gratitude and praise.
 You were there at the beginning of all things,
 shaping our world and preparing it for us.
 You have provided the mountains and the trees,
 the waters and the earth.
 Help us to be caretakers of your gifts,
 protecting the land from abuse, and ready to share with all in need.
 Show us how to use our science and technology in creative,
 not destructive ways.
 Deepen our awareness of our connectedness with all your creation,
 so that future generations will also enjoy every blessing. Amen.⁵

1. REFLECTION ON PERSONAL OR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

In our last session we reflected on the cry of the earth and the effects that climate change is having on our world locally and globally. Looking back over your journal and our conversations so far:

- What stayed with you from our last session?
- What did you find encouraging, inspiring or challenging?
- What did you notice this week? Did you do anything differently?
- Did anyone calculate their carbon footprint or bring a climate related story to the group?
- Did you use the reflection on listening to the cry of the earth?

Allow a moment of stillness, then invite participants to chat in pairs for 2–3 minutes. Bringing them back together, ask them to consider in silence for a moment, not their own opinions, but rather what they have learnt from others sharing.

2. REFLECTION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES RELATING TO CLIMATE JUSTICE

Read one or more of the case studies provided. In subgroups, note how climate change is affecting the people in these communities.

- Why is this a justice issue?
- Share your responses to these stories and maybe reflect on Matthew 25:40 – Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me – in light of both the environment (St Francis called the sun and moon and animals his brothers and sisters), and the many people whom we now understand as being under our carbon footprint.

Kenya

Muthui is six years old and lives in the village of Ngiluni in eastern Kenya. He lives on a farm with his grandmother and his two brothers (Muthui's mother died in 2012). The area of Kenya where the family lives is very dry. The rains that people need to drink, wash, grow their food and give to their animals only come twice a year. In the last few years these rains have not been as good as people hoped. This has meant that getting enough water has become really difficult.

Muthui's family do not live near a river (it is a 50km round trip to the nearest river, which is so dry that they are forced to scoop dirty water from a hole in the river bed) and because the rains have been really bad and the land has been so dry, they have not had enough water to drink or grow their crops. Muthui's grandmother had to borrow water from her neighbours so that the boys could get a drink. The local parish had to give the family food. Even then, because there was no water for cooking, sometimes all Muthui and his brothers had to eat was flour mixed



Muthui, age 6, Kenya. Photo: Trócaire

with a tiny bit of water to make a thick paste. The family's goats died because there wasn't enough water for them to drink. There was no spare water to wash properly and Muthui and his brothers had to use a damp cloth to try to keep clean. Muthui's grandmother says it was a terrible time.

Trócaire has helped this family and many others like them in Kenya. After the family's goats died because of the drought in 2011, Trócaire supplied them with five new goats to start again. Then in November 2012, Trócaire and the Diocese of Kitui drilled a water point near Muthui's home. This water point pumps water from deep in the earth up to a storage tank. People can then fill their containers from this tank. The water is clean and doesn't run out – it's always there.

Mozambique

Mozambique – Mavinga Well. Photo: Trócaire



Felipe Macaniji was born in the village of Beia Peia, which is located in Sofala Province in central Mozambique. He is thirty-two years old and lives with his twenty-seven-year-old wife. They do not have children yet. When unseasonably early and severe floods hit their village in early January this year, Felipe and his wife lost their home. They are currently living in a tent in a resettlement centre on higher ground.

Felipe and his wife have a farm in nearby Mavinga village, where they grow corn, sorghum and vegetables. They grow just for household consumption. Felipe also tries to find any casual labour he can to supplement their household income. Several years ago, Felipe went to South Africa to search for better

opportunities. He found work there washing clothes but after a while he returned to Mozambique.

Felipe and his community have been affected by climate change. A long time ago, floods were not like now. It was possible to produce enough to eat. Now it's different. Floods come, and then one or two weeks later, we have floods again. The crops fail and people are left hungry and with no food to eat or buy. Before we didn't have as many cyclones as we do now. He is not able to do much to cope with these changes. When we lose our crops in the floods, all we can do is replant.

Through its local partner Ajoago, Trócaire has provided emergency relief for flood victims, in the form of tents, water, latrines, seeds and tools. Felipe says, The support was welcome, especially the latrines. People were defecating in the open, but not anymore. Felipe and his wife plan to stay in the resettlement centre and would like to build a house there. Trócaire and Ajoago are planning a long-term project to help families in Beia Peia and surrounding communities strengthen their livelihoods and cope with the impacts of climate change.

Philippines

Gerardo and Jovita Amantillo were both at home when Typhoon Haiyan struck on 8 November 2013. The couple, both aged seventy-four, had been warned that a bad storm was on its way but nothing had prepared them for the intensity of what they faced.

The winds had been battering their home for several hours when suddenly the waves crashed down all around them, destroying their home and leaving Gerardo and Jovita fighting for their lives. The strength of the waves carried Gerardo and Jovita out of their home. They survived only by clinging to the neighbour's roof – almost three metres off the ground.

We held on to the roof, says Gerardo. The only reason the roof was not blown away was because there were so many of us lying on it. After around two hours the winds died down and the water receded. Our house was completely gone. Miraculously, they received only superficial wounds to their legs and were otherwise unharmed. However, sitting on Ormoc pier waiting for a boat to take them off Leyte island, which was the worst affected region of the Philippines, the couple has just one small bag of possessions. Everything else was lost.



Typhoon Haiyan, Philippines, 2013. Photo: Trócaire

We stayed with neighbours for a few nights but we plan on living with our son for the next few months, says Gerardo. I do not know when we will be able to move back.

Across the Philippines, over 4 million people were displaced by Typhoon Haiyan. Approximately 400,000 are living in evacuation centres, with the rest sheltering with friends or family. Trócaire provided shelter and food to people who lost their homes, but has also helped to rebuild affected areas so that people like Gerardo and Jovita can look forward to the day when they can return home.

Ethiopia

Dried earth in northern Ethiopia. Photo: Trócaire



In the Tigray district of Ethiopia, the biggest problem is something that many people in the world take for granted: water.

Prolonged droughts and disappearing water sources have caused great difficulty for rural communities in Tigray, who must battle the effects of climate change on their farms. Trócaire has funded a project which has brought irrigation to over 30,000 people in the region. Irrigation has enabled farmers in Tigray to harvest up to three times a year and boost crop production. Farmers have also been trained in new farming techniques, while newly constructed hygiene and sanitation facilities have greatly reduced health risks for the people.

Gebre Nigusse, aged forty-six, from Biera village was among the farmers to benefit from the project. Gebre is a farmer but the lack of water was making it difficult to harvest enough food to provide for his family. There was no irrigation and erratic rains could not be relied upon. The Trócaire-funded project has changed everything. I did not do much irrigation until I joined the project four years ago, he explains. The project constructed canals and I took part in the construction. I received training, fruit and elephant grass seedling.

I dug two hand wells for irrigation and bought a water pump from the vegetable money. I have planted coffee trees and will increase my fruit trees up to 120. I know I can resist drought through irrigation.

Ireland

Developing countries are not the only ones at risk when it comes to the destruction of their environment and climate change. The Irish Environmental Protection Agency has been analysing the effects of climate change on Ireland and the findings are astonishing.

Recent obvious effects of climate change in Ireland have included:

- A steady rise in temperature
- A significant increase in rainfall along the northern and western coasts
- Flooding in major towns and cities
- Water shortages and prolonged rainfall.

It is obvious that in recent years the weather system in Ireland has been changing dramatically. Whether it is repeated flooding in Clonmel in Tipperary, flooding in Cork in 2013, or the destruction of homes, farms, livelihoods and properties along the Clare coastline because of severe storms in 2013. Without changes to our lifestyles and the world's emission of carbon emissions, Ireland, like every country in the world, also faces many threats. Some future negative impacts may include:

- Ocean acidification – destruction of marine eco-systems
- Coastal and river flooding. In November 2009 the highest rainfall since records began in 1866 was recorded in Ireland. The relief effort cost the government €70 million
- Poorer water quality
- Rise in sea levels
- Changes in distribution of species
- Potential extinction of vulnerable species
- More severe storms and destructive rainfall

- Erosion along the eastern seaboard – with rising sea levels, the east coast of Ireland faces potential threat of flooding and erosion because of its soft coastline
- Poorer health quality – pollution of the environment can lead to poor health. Chemicals, waste and poor water quality and air pollution has contributed to many deaths worldwide and pose a risk to all countries, including Ireland.

Do you know of somebody in Ireland who has been affected by climate change? Share a story about a friend, relative or other who has been affected by climate change in Ireland.

References

www.askaboutireland.ie/climatechange

www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment

3. THE CHRISTIAN VISION

Our vision is informed by Scripture and Church teaching and by the faith tradition of our people. Using the quotes below, discuss what Christianity has to say about climate justice. What does God say? What does the Church say?

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord.⁶

As Christians we cannot consider ourselves or our obligations in isolation from others or from the endangered earth and its creatures. Solidarity ... is a 'firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good of all ... because we are all really responsible for all'.⁷

Let us be protectors of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment ... To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope.⁸

4. PAUSE – A TIME FOR STILLNESS

We take time to reflect on what we have heard so far and how it is impacting on us.

You may like to play some music or give some quiet time for reflection as participants answer the following questions:

In groups/using journals:

- ◆ What has struck you from this session?
- ◆ What have you found challenging?
- ◆ Did you hear anything that you were not expecting to hear?
- ◆ What will you do in the coming week as a result of this experience (see section Getting Started: Resources for Parish , p. 34, for suggestions)?

We find ourselves ethically destitute just when, for the first time, we are faced with ultimacy, the irreversible closing down of the earth's functioning in its major life systems. Our ethical traditions know how to deal with suicide, homicide and even genocide, but these traditions collapse entirely when confronted with biocide, the killing of the life systems of the earth, and geocide, the devastation of the earth itself.⁹

5. ACTION FOR CHANGE

Here participants are encouraged to take on some activity related to the theme and to consider what commitments they might make personally and as a Church community to work for climate justice.

The global situation can seem so overwhelming. But there are things that we can do as activists for climate justice.

- **Action:** We can plant trees, eat less meat, change to energy-saving light bulbs.
- **Fairtrade:** Fairtrade promotes sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalised producers and workers in developing countries. The movement focuses in particular on products that are typically exported from developing countries to developed countries, such as coffee, cocoa, sugar, tea, bananas, honey, cotton, wine, fresh fruit, chocolate, flowers and gold. Is your parish a Fairtrade parish? Find out how your parish can become Fairtrade at http://fairtrade.ie/get_involved/fairtrade_parish.html.
- **Localisation:** The more local produce we buy the less pressure we put on the environment. How far does your food travel? We can be extra vigilant when we go shopping. Think Global, Act Local. We will also be contributing to our local economies and jobs.
- **Solidarity:** We can tell the story of those suffering as a result of climate change. We all have a responsibility in this. Through sharing these stories we raise awareness and contribute to change in the way we live.
- **We listen to God in creation and ponder on the sacredness of the world around us:**¹⁰ One day or hour of silence listening to God in creation may seem simple, yet demands much from us. However, in return, this silence offers us a rich experience of learning through the Holy Spirit. We are invited to listen:

On holy ground

Be present with Christ as you sit silently or walk on holy ground, with God in creation beneath your feet, by your side and in the cosmos beyond.

With all five senses

Engage all five senses and deepen your awareness of God in the many sounds and sights around you. Listen to your body, be aware of your breathing and be alive to all your senses.

Observing closely

Observe all your emotions in relation to God's creation, whether boredom, distraction, joy, wonder or surprise. Take notes to remember what you observe and experience.

Staying still

Be still in the presence of God in creation with a cool, attentive spirit. You may choose to take a photograph, sketch a picture or record sounds to remember the moment.

In prayerful silence

Remember to silence or switch your phone off for the time of silence, and speak only when necessary. Pray silently alone or with others, conscious of God's presence then and there in creation.



Trócaire Volunteers for Climate Justice. Photo: Trócaire

Closing Prayer – St Francis’ Canticle of the Sun

O most High, almighty, good Lord God, to you belong praise, glory, honour, and all blessing!
Praised be my Lord God with all creatures; and especially our brother the sun, which brings us the day, and the light; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendour: O Lord, he signifies you to us!
Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, which God has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by which you uphold in life all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, which is very serviceable to us, and humble, and precious, and clean.

Praised be my Lord for brother fire, through which you give us light in the darkness: and he is bright, and pleasant, and very mighty, and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the Earth, which sustains us and keeps us, and yields diverse fruits, and flowers of many colours, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for God’s love’s sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for you, O most High, shall give them a crown!

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body, from which no one escapes. Woe to him who dies in mortal sin!

Blessed are they who are found walking by your most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

Praise you, and bless you the Lord, and give thanks to God, and serve God with great humility.

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, 1182–1226

¹ Jeremiah 6:16–19.

² Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (48 and 51).

³ *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, p. 15.

⁴ Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town.

⁵ Michael Gormly SSC at <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/spirituality-for-justice/prayers>.

⁶ Psalm 96:11–13.

⁷ *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, p. 16.

⁸ Pope Francis, Saint Peter’s Square, 19 March 2013.

⁹ Thomas Berry, from *The Universe and the University*, a paper delivered at Harvard University, 1996.

¹⁰ From the South Australian Council of Church, *A Day of Listening*. Available online from http://www.sacc.asn.au/_data/Day_of_listening_2014.pdf.



Parched earth in East Africa during the drought of 2011. Photo: Trócaire

Session Four

What Can We Do? Spirituality in Action



OPENING REFLECTION

- ◆ Place a bowl of locally sourced, organic fruit at the centre of the group, pointing out where the fruit came from (local market? farmer? For more information try <http://www.irishseedsavers.ie>).
- ◆ Invite each person to choose one piece of fruit and to hold the fruit loosely in their hands.
- ◆ Invite participants to close their eyes and to turn the fruit in their hands, noticing the texture of the skin, the smell and the shape of the fruit.
- ◆ Consider where this fruit came from, the land it grew in, and the farmer that took care of the trees and harvested this fruit. Consider the spring blossoms, summer growth and autumn harvest.
- ◆ If they would like to, participants can taste the fruit, reflecting on the gift that fresh organic fruit is to our lives. (Some napkins might be provided!)
- ◆ We take a moment to give thanks for the fruits of creation and to those who work to share it with us.

PERSONAL OR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

Spirituality in action – what now?

Over the past four weeks we have reflected on our own experiences of nature and on God's dream for creation; on our environmental reality today; and on climate justice for all our brothers and sisters across the world. Looking back over your journals and conversations so far:

- What are your thoughts and feelings at this stage about this theme?
- What have you found encouraging, inspiring or challenging in this conversation?

Allow a moment of stillness, then invite participants to chat in pairs for 2–3 minutes. Bringing them back together, ask them to consider in silence for a moment, not their own opinions, but rather what they have learnt from the others sharing. Ask how participants are thinking or feeling now as we enter the final day of the process.

Listen to one another and note responses for later – you don't need to answer all questions or comments immediately.

REFLECTION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Responsible – me?

Leader: In the document *The Cry of the Earth* we are reflecting on, Cardinal Brady says:

Grateful to God for the gift of his creation, I encourage all people of good will to reflect urgently on how we can work together to take more responsible care of our planet now and for the sake of generations yet unborn.¹

As Christians, you and I have a duty to deal with climate justice, a moral obligation to behave correctly towards poorer countries, towards nature and towards future generations.

- What would it look like if Christians took their responsibility more seriously?
- What might be happening? How might people be thinking?
- What are the challenges or blocks for us in terms of this responsibility today? What helps?

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

St Francis of Assisi as our Christian role model

*... in the midst of this crisis there is also a wonderful opportunity. It is an opportunity to create a more just and sustainable world, to develop a more simple and balanced style of life. In short, it is an opportunity to become more Christ-like, especially in our attitude to the poor and to the goods of this earth.*²

Saint [John Paul II] wrote that St Francis ought to be an example for Catholics today, 'not to behave like dissident predators where nature is concerned, but to assume responsibility for it, taking all care so that everything stays healthy and integrated, so as to offer a welcoming and friendly environment even to those who succeed us'.

*Francis did not look at the natural world from a utilitarian perspective. He did not see it as merely providing food, clothing and shelter for humans. Rather, his response to the gift of creation was joy, wonder, praise and gratitude. One of the great legacies of Francis is that he expanded the concept of 'neighbour' to include not only the human race, but the whole of creation and its creatures.*³

- What do you know of St Francis of Assisi?
- What stories of his inspire? What qualities of his might point a way ahead for us?

TIME FOR STILLNESS – A MOMENT TO PONDER

Take some moments in stillness to consider:

- How can we be more Christ-like in our attitudes and actions?
- Can we learn from St Francis how to live sustainably and well?

ACTION FOR CHANGE

*The primary objective of this pastoral letter is to reconnect us with our responsibilities as stewards of the earth, entrusted to us by our Creator. It is not enough to assume that climate justice is a matter for hierarchy or leaders alone. Instead, each parish and community of believers must own this injustice and play our part in prayer, solidarity and action towards a solution for the Common Good.*⁴

Something to consider for diocesan, pastoral area or parish groups:

- Which is most helpful to this group?
- How are we being called as a group, and as individuals, now?

As a local group, consider some actions to take now. The attached parish resources, especially the parish GLAS checklist, might help.

- Choose starter actions: you might decide to continue together as a group, and/or take the eco-checklist, or tell others about these four nights, etc.
- Sign your parish up for the Parish GLAS Award (in association with Eco-Congregation Ireland and Trócaire).

- Choose a first step: your group might meet with the pastoral council to discuss this, to share eco-information with parishioners, or to participate in Trócaire's Climate Justice Campaign.
- As the group's level of understanding and commitment to the cause develops, you might consider engaging with elected representatives. Long-term solutions to climate change require political actions by Government. Your group can play an important role in encouraging local elected representatives to ensure that climate justice is on the Government's agenda.

The group leader facilitates the group to a decision on their next step. The group might decide to inform local leaders like clergy and pastoral council of their progress at this point.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: In the Book of Genesis the Lord says, 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.'⁵

We have pondered on God's dream for creation, on our reality and responsibilities. Let us bring all this to God now as we pray ... in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reader 1: God, in whom we live and move and have our being, has given us the gift of this beautiful earth. Creation flows out of the heart of an infinitely loving Creator. Touched by God's hand, our world is holy.⁶ We are all invited to love, respect and care for God's creation.

Scripture reminds us of God's covenant with his people – a sacred promise between God and man.

Reader 2: From the Book of Genesis: Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth ... Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you – the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you – every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I



bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth. ⁷

HYMN: AG CRÍOST AN SÍOL

Ag Críost an síol,
ag Críost an fómhar;
in iothlainn Dé go dtugtar sinn.
Ag Críost an mhuir,
ag Críost an t-iasc;
líonta Dé go gcastar sinn.

fhás go haois, ó aois go bás,
do dhá láimh, a Chríost, anall tharainn.
bhás go críoch nach críoch ach athfhás,
i bParthas na ngrás go rabhaimid.

*To Christ the seed, to Christ the crop,
into the barn of Christ may we be brought.
To Christ the sea, to Christ the fish,
into the nets of Christ may we be caught up.
From growth to age, from age to death,
Thy two arms here, O Christ, about us.
From death to end,
not end but growth,
in blessed Paradise may we be together.*

Reader 1: Response (all): *Gather us in Lord, Gather us in.*

- Into your love for all of creation, for everything you have made. **R.**
- Into your love for the most vulnerable, for the broken and the weak. **R.**
- Into your promise to be always with us, into your friendship that endures. **R.**
- Into your healing and your hope Lord. **R.**

PRAYER TOGETHER: A PRAYER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Creator of the universe, we pray in gratitude and praise.

You were there at the beginning of all things, shaping our world and preparing it for us.

You have provided the mountains and the trees, the waters and the earth.

Help us to be caretakers of your gifts, protecting the land from abuse, and ready to share with all in need.

Show us how to use our science and technology in creative, not destructive ways.

Deepen our awareness of our connectedness with all your creation,
so that future generations will also enjoy every blessing. Amen.

MICHAEL GORMLY SSC AT [HTTP://WWW.SOCIALJUSTICE.CATHOLIC.ORG.AU/SPIRITUALITY-FOR-JUSTICE/PRAYERS](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/spirituality-for-justice/prayers)

¹ *The Cry of the Earth*, Irish Bishops Pastoral Letter, foreword, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵ Genesis 8:28.

⁶ *The Cry of the Earth*, foreword, p. 2.

⁷ Genesis 9:1, 8-17.

Getting Started: Resources for Parishes

THIS SECTION IS LIKE A manual for the pastoral area or diocesan group who has studied the previous four study sessions. Its aim is to help people from theory to practice, from ideas to action. It aims to be practical, achievable and sustainable.

The primary objective of this pastoral letter is to reconnect us with our responsibilities as stewards of the earth, entrusted to us by our creator. It is not enough to assume that climate justice is a matter for hierarchy or leaders alone. Instead, each parish and community of believers must own this injustice and play our part in prayer, solidarity and action towards a solution for the common good.

1. Diocesan, pastoral area and/or parish responses. Linking with schools and local community development initiatives. Which group best defines you – diocesan, pastoral area or parish? Here are some planning suggestions for each:

A diocesan group

- Gather a group with some interest or experience in this area. The group's role is to reflect on the document and create local discussion and action on the theme. A successful group might develop into the environmental committee of the diocesan Justice and Peace commission.
- Reflect: The key principles outlined in this document and how they relate to this area and its people.

- Local: Particular local features, issues or resources might be noted. Such information could be shared with parish and pastoral area groups for discussion or as a resource pack.
- The diocesan organisation: What challenges are being presented to diocesan offices, committees, policies and procedures? How might diocesan communication, consumption and organisation engage with the challenges? How might pastoral planners in education, parish and chaplaincies be engaged?

A pastoral area or cluster group

- This group would be invited together by the diocesan committee or local leaders. It might be facilitated by these to host a book club style reflection on the document using this resource or similar.

- Local: The group could create a small calendar of local events or resources for parishes that highlight the theme of harvest, creation or climate change, etc. Drawing on existing traditions, this might include a harvest Mass, a local celebration at a holy well or a pilgrim walk.
- Organisation: The group might host an evening on this theme for parishioners in the area, inviting partner organisations like Trócaire or Eco-Congregation Ireland to come along and speak on the issue.

A parish or chaplaincy group

- This group might encourage interested parishioners to attend pastoral area or diocesan events on this theme.
- Study this document and raise awareness of this conversation by hosting a talk or discussion on the theme.



- Use some of the ideas in the document – at Sunday Mass, in schools and in the community.
- Conduct a parish impact survey (see attached eco-checklist), which might show clear opportunities for improvement. Bring these findings to the parish pastoral council, inviting the parish clergy and council to adopt practical measures.

2. Local ideas section

Reflect

- Form a study group who together might pray and study resources such as this *Cry of the Earth* pastoral letter, the parish pastoral programme that supports it, as well as Pope Francis' new encyclical, *Evangelii Gaudium*.
- Gather a group of like-minded people and set up a social justice group in your parish that would focus from time to time on environmental/ecological issues.
- Host an environmental audit of your parish and surrounding areas and share this information with your community. Highlight the more pressing issues and set goals for the community to work towards.

Invite action:

- **Parish Pastoral Council**
 - Bring the results of a parish eco-checklist to your parish clergy and pastoral council for consideration.
 - Suggest that your local parish pastoral council should have an environmental officer as a permanent role on their committee.

Parish Liturgy

- Hold a parish Novena/Mission focused upon the theme of creation and climate justice.
- Re-think how your parish might celebrate the theme of Harvest (include the voice of farmers and people overseas as an example, and their views on how climate change is affecting their lives).

Family Ministry

- Invite a local drama group or the Family Mass group to act out the creation story for the whole community (Genesis 1:1–2:4).

Education

- Invite the local primary school to share their Green School story with the entire parish community ... and see what you can learn from them!
- Invite a speaker to your parish or school (Trócaire or other) to give an insight into the issues the world faces regarding climate change and how it is already having devastating impacts on some of the world's poorest people.

Parish activity

- Create an eco-space or a Garden of Eden in your parish where people might come to enjoy the beauty of nature and to contemplate on God's creation.
- Host a film event or a series of movie nights focused upon environmental issues.
- Work with your local town council to become a

fair trade town and a more environmentally friendly place to live.

Campaigning

- Invite a Trócaire speaker to your parish or group to learn what specific actions can be taken to support its climate justice campaign.
- Engage with local elected representatives, highlighting the need for the government to take specific action to address climate change. You might visit them at their constituency office or invite them to a climate justice-themed Mass or event.

3. A parish/pastoral areas GLAS Award – Building simple, sustainable communities for the glory of God

- Parish groups track their record and choose areas of improvement based on their abilities and energy.
- **Steps**
 - Print out the Eco-Aware Parish Checklist (see p. 37) and resources.
 - Invite a member of Eco-Congregation Ireland to meet your group.
 - Group sets up a timeline. For example:
 - One month to complete survey
 - One month to consider response and possible actions
 - Presentation to parish pastoral council and clergy with recommendations
 - Month 3: Report back to diocesan group asking for eco-aware status
 - Month 6: Report on progress



Eliyeta and Steven Muyeye farming in Malawi. Photo: Trócaire

- Month 12: Final report with parish presentation and – where deemed complete – award will be presented to parish by Eco-Congregation Ireland in association with Trócaire
 - Annual gathering with bishop to celebrate awards.
 - *Levels of award*
 - Bronze: The Eco-Aware Award: *Acknowledging interest and enthusiasm*
 - A parish group has met with a diocesan rep and agreed to conduct a parish eco-survey
 - The community has publicised and held eco-events or a study group on the document
 - The parish has signed up to receive Eco-Congregation Ireland's monthly email newsletter.
 - Silver: The Eco-Committed Award: *Recognising local commitment and action*
 - Eco-survey complete with recommendations submitted to the parish pastoral council
 - The parish has worked with a local partner to develop this theme
 - Some recommendations acted on and in place
 - Report sent into diocesan committee
 - The parish has invited Trócaire to share information about its climate justice campaign.
 - Gold: The Eco-Living Award: *From the local to the global*
 - The parish has carried out all the recommendations of its eco-survey
 - The parish has information, communication and resources in place so parishioners can make eco-aware choices and learn about climate justice
 - The parish has engaged with elected representative(s) in relation to Ireland's commitment to climate justice.
- For more information on the GLAS Award, or to register your parish/diocese for this award, please contact Eco-Congregation Ireland at: info@ecocongregationireland.com. Once a parish has been working consistently for two years, incorporating physical, spiritual, community and global eco-matters, an application may then be made for a full Eco-Congregation Ireland Award. Parishes/dioceses who complete the GLAS award will be invited to an awards ceremony and given official recognition of their achievements.

The Eco-Aware Parish Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to offer you and your parish a simple way to identify climate justice issues. Use this as a resource to become aware of the areas in which your parish is already doing well, and the areas where improvements are possible.

Inspired by the Eco-Congregation Initiative in Ireland, Eco-Congregation Ireland is a project of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting that encourages parishes to take an eco-friendly approach to worship, lifestyle, property and finance management, youth and children's work, community outreach and contact with the developing world. Eco-Congregation Ireland has operated an Eco-Award scheme for almost ten years, and the website is full of resources and ideas to help you and your parish on your eco-journey. www.ecocongregationireland.com

1. PRAYING TOGETHER – PARISH LITURGY

The Eucharist is the 'source and summit' of our community life as Christians. Every liturgical celebration – in church, homes, graveyards or hillsides – is a public expression of who we are as Catholics. Sometimes we give special attention and thanks to nature and God's creation, for example, at harvest time or on World Day of Peace.

Answer the questions below with one of the following:

- Never • Occasionally • At special times of the year only • Frequently • Other

How often in a typical year would environmental concerns be included in our liturgy? _____

When you pray as a parish, do you

- Speak of God as our creator, the one who made all of creation? _____
- Praise and thank God for nature, creatures and the world God made? _____
- Ask for forgiveness for times when we harm God's gift of creation? _____
- Pray for the healing of our environment? _____

Does your parish celebrate God's creation through

- Outdoor celebrations like a graveyard Mass, holy well or similar? _____
- Local pilgrim walks or stations? _____
- Natural materials within worship, like Fairtrade wine or linen? _____

Does your church music express thanks and praise to God for the world we live in? _____

2. GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER – WHAT WE BELIEVE

What do we believe, how do we learn about our faith, how do we learn about Church teaching, scripture and tradition?

Answer the questions below with one of the following:

- Never • Once a year • Occasionally • Frequently • Other

Does your parish

- Organise eco-aware talks, workshops or similar events, e.g. a Trócaire speaker? _____
- Have information about or access to Christian teaching on environmental issues, e.g. diocesan events, national resources? _____
- Offer parishioners information or resources on the environment and climate justice – measuring carbon footprint, public transport options, etc.? _____

- Participate in or organise events in the local community that include environmental issues? _____
- Include climate justice issues in its planning or formation events? _____

3. CHILDREN, TEENS AND FAMILY FAITH

Parish experience can be very helpful for children, young adults and their families as they come to understand and grow in faith.

Answer the questions below with one of the following:

- Never • Once a year • Occasionally • Frequently • Other
- Do your sacramental preparation programmes address climate justice issues, such as care for creation and respect for all life? _____
- When you have a special family focused liturgy, does it consider the environment or address climate justice issues? _____
- Is the parish engaging with teenagers on issues of climate justice – youth club, youth ministry programmes, involving teens in local environmental groups, etc.? _____
- How are your Catholic schools engaging with the issue of climate justice? _____
- Can the parish be a positive influence in this matter with local schools, pre-schools and family organisations? _____

4. CHURCH PROPERTY

How we take care of our church property can make a huge difference, especially in the long term. Consider our church buildings, but also offices, schools, halls and houses. Speak to the parish priest and finance committee, asking their help to make a list of church property in this parish.

Answer the questions below with one of the following:

- Yes • Most • Some • Few • None
- Are all properties well-insulated? _____
- Do all heating systems have timer and thermostatic controls in public spaces? _____
- Are energy-saving light bulbs fitted in all rooms? _____
- Are building/equipment users encouraged (through posters, announcements, etc.) to switch off unnecessary lights and not leave items on standby? _____
- Are meetings timetabled so as to minimise heating use? _____
- Is consideration given to the size of rooms used for activities, so that heating and lighting are not wasted? _____
- Are water outlets regularly checked to fix drips and leaks? _____
- Where possible, have water-saving devices been installed (e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off taps)? _____

In terms of the parish approach to green spaces, identify the actions below as having or being one of the following:

- Priority • Some consideration • Not a priority • No policy
- Care for wildlife-friendly management (e.g. minimal use of weed killers and pesticides, leaving some areas to grow, valuing old trees, hedges, walls and stones) _____
- The inclusion of native plant species and plants that benefit wildlife (e.g. flowers used by moths and butterflies, berry-bearing trees for birds, hawthorn and blackthorn) _____
- Inclusion of features to benefit wildlife (e.g. bird-feeding station, bird nest boxes, bat boxes, piles of leaves and rotting logs for insects and hedgehogs) _____
- Area for prayer/contemplation/outdoor worship _____
- Area for recreation _____

5. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

When the parish is making purchases, what values define choices we make? Assess your church's existing good practice and identify issues for consideration and action.

Which of the following best describes the approach to purchasing and financial management in your parish?

- Clear set of values influencing policy
- Policy is under consideration
- No policy planned

Answer the questions below with one of the following:

- Yes • Sometimes • Hope to soon • No

- Does the parish purchase ethically sourced and/or sustainable produce, e.g. Fairtrade? _____
- Are local suppliers used where possible? _____
- Are environmentally-friendly cleaning materials and paint used in maintenance? _____
- Does the parish purchase recycled paper and envelopes? _____
- Does the parish check the environmental policies of its bank as well as any potential contractors? _____
- Does the parish use an ethical investment policy for any investments of parish money? _____

With regards to catering and events, does your parish

- Use crockery rather than disposable cups and plates? _____
- Use farmers markets and other local suppliers (to promote local economy and reduce food miles)? _____
- Ensure waste minimisation? _____
- Have recycling facilities that can be used by church members, building users or local community? _____

6. PERSONAL LIFESTYLE – SUPPORTING PARISHIONERS TO MAKE ECO-AWARE CHOICES

Awareness raising, information and support can make a huge difference in the daily choices made by parishioners.

Answer the questions below with one of the following:

- Have done • Could consider • Not a priority

Does your parish

- Publish green tips in a church/parish magazine/bulletin? _____
- Promote awareness through posters or information from environmental organisations (e.g. home energy audit)? _____
- Encourage recycling by providing collection points or informing people of civic facilities? _____
- Encourage walking and cycling to church? _____
- Encourage parishioners to discover their carbon footprint and consider how to reduce it?
<http://www.foe.ie/justoneearth/carboncalculator/> _____

7. COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER – OUTREACH TO ALL

It is good to show other local organisations our commitment to climate justice and to work with them on common goals.

Answer the questions below with one of the following:

- Have done • Could consider • Not a priority

Does your parish

- Contact local environmental groups to see how you can co-operate, e.g. schools, youth groups and community development organisations? _____
- Participate in local environmental initiatives or policy formation? _____
- Draw on links that group members have with other climate justice bodies, e.g. Trócaire, Eco-Congregation Ireland, Irish Wildlife Trust, Irish Environmental Network, etc.? _____
- Support or initiate community projects which benefit the environment, e.g. Tidy Towns, Credit Union, etc.? _____

Climate justice also calls us to consider our commitment to the wider world.

Answer the questions below with one of the following:

- Have done • Could consider • Not a priority

Does your parish

- Support the work of Christian development agencies, e.g. Trócaire and Eco-Congregation Ireland? _____
- Twin with overseas communities or churches? _____
- Support the work of international conservation? _____
- Promote Fairtrade products? _____

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

This checklist has helped you to understand the levels of eco-awareness in your parish, particularly in the context of three broad areas:

- Parish liturgy and faith
- Church property and management of resources
- Parishioners' personal lifestyle and community outreach

The next step is for you to identify, in each of these areas:

1. Three points where your parish is already working well.
2. Three points that your parish can improve on.

It is now time to create an action plan for your group and share it with your parish pastoral council and clergy. Together you can make a substantial contribution to climate justice locally and internationally!

Creation Prayer Service for the Feast of St Francis of Assisi – 4 October

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: We gather as followers of Christ to celebrate the feast day of St Francis of Assisi, a man well known for his simplicity of life, commitment to the poor, humility and love for all God's creatures, great and small. Saint Francis reached out to those who were poor and marginalised and also to non-human creatures because of his recognition of the interconnectedness of all creation.

We pray that we might mirror the actions of St Francis, choosing instead to live simply and humbly as respectful stewards of the earth and creation.

OPENING HYMN: Morning Has Broken

*Let us pray
Loving God, help us to find ways
to live the wisdom of St Francis
of Assisi. Give us the gift of
simplicity that we may be able
to concentrate on you above all
else. Teach us humility in our
relationships with the earth and
its beings.*

*Help us to understand poverty
as the emptying of ourselves for
the sake of love for our
neighbour. Let the joy of St
Francis transform our own way
of seeing the world.
We ask this through Christ our
Lord.
Amen.*

PSALM 104

*Response: Send forth your Spirit,
O Lord, and renew the face of
the earth.*

Bless the Lord my soul,
Lord God, how great you are,

clothed in majesty and glory,
wrapped in light as in a robe. **R.**

You founded the earth on its
base, to stand firm from age to
age.

You wrapped it with the ocean
like a cloak; the waters stand
higher than the mountains. **R.**

You make springs gush forth in
the valleys, they flow in-
between the hills.

On their banks dwell the birds
of heaven; from the branches
they sing their song. **R.**

From your dwelling you water
the hills; earth drinks its fill of
your gift.

You make the grass grow for
the cattle and the plants, to
serve man's needs. **R.**

How many are your works O
Lord! In wisdom you have made
them all!

The earth is full of your riches.
Bless the Lord, O my soul! **R.**

A REFLECTION ON THE QUALITIES OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

On Poverty

Francis' appreciation and understanding of the poor developed over time. By progressively releasing himself from the everyday trivial constraints of life, Francis discovered the freedom to trust God with his entire being. His open hands, symbolic of a humble heart, extended themselves towards the God on whom he truly depended for

his existence and his happiness. No longer did wealth or any material items have absolute value; only God was absolute.

- *How dependent on God are you?*
- *What are the things that get in the way of your relationship with your brothers and sisters in need in our world?*

On Simplicity

Francis was well known for his simple lifestyle. He refused ownership of property, preferred houses without decoration, begged for food and lived as a pilgrim in answer to the Gospel. If we follow Francis, we choose a simple lifestyle, not because we want to free up some time or even find peace and quiet, but because we desire to put God first. By embracing the path of simplicity, we gain freedom to be ourselves and the space and silence to hear God. The simpler our lives become, the more room there will be in our hearts to embrace deep peace and harmony with all of humanity.

- *Does your life seem like it is in a constant state of flux and activity?*
- *What things or concerns have taken God's place in your life?*

On Humility

Francis possessed a humble and reverent stance toward all life. This was not due to poor

self-esteem or any loss of identity. Because Francis believed he was truly loved by God, his humility was a response to the goodness he had received from the creator. He reminds us to let go of our arrogant stance in which we see ourselves as proprietors of others and of the natural world. He referred to all creatures as his brothers and sisters. Humility calls us back to our true place in the universe so that we are not about control and self-importance, but about reaching out to others. Francis considered himself no friend of Christ if he did not cherish those for whom Christ died.

- *What is your attitude in the world: self-important or humble?*
- *Do you believe that you are good and truly loved by God?*

HYMN: Here I Am, Lord

LITURGICAL ACTION: Seeds of Hope
(Seeds should be dispensed amongst the congregation and a bowl filled with soil placed in front of the altar.)

Having had a chance to reflect on the qualities of poverty, simplicity and humility, we invite you to come forward and to sow a seed of hope in the earth provided.

The image of Christ on the crucifix spoke to St Francis, saying, Go repair my church, which as you see is falling completely into ruin. Today, we each sow a seed as a renewal of our commitment towards rebuilding a church for the poor, and as a sign of our care for the environment and the resources which both sustain and surround it.

As you approach the altar to sow your seed of hope, as a way of reflecting, please repeat the phrase Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

(Afterwards, the seeds should be planted in a pot and placed in a public place for everybody to enjoy when they bloom.)

Music can be played as people come forward.

REFLECTION ON THE WORDS AND MINISTRY OF POPE FRANCIS

Pope Francis shows us the way as models of humility, poverty and simplicity. Indeed, he purposefully chose the name Francis so that his time as pontiff would be committed to the values and attributes shown by St Francis of Assisi. In one of his first addresses to Catholics around the world, he said:

Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation!

The vocation of being a 'protector', however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!

Whenever human beings fail to live up to this responsibility, whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened ...

To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope!

To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves: this is a service that the Bishop of Rome is called to carry out,



yet one to which all of us are called, so that the star of hope will shine brightly. Let us protect with love all that God has given us!

POWERPOINT WITH WORDS OF 'JESUS CHRIST THE APPLE TREE'

In the eighteenth-century hymn, Jesus Christ the Apple Tree, we delight in both nature and Christ. We are invited to sit under the apple tree and relax with Jesus who enlivens and nourishes us. The beauty of nature and our salvation have long been connected in the imagery of a tree, from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, to the Tree of Salvation from which the Cross was carved.

'Jesus Christ the Apple Tree'

*The tree of life, my soul hath seen, laden with fruit and always green.
The trees of nature, fruitless be, compar'd with Christ the apple tree.*

*This beauty doth all things excel, by faith I know but cannot tell
The glory which I now can see, in Jesus Christ the apple tree.*

*For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure deeply I have bought;
I miss'd for all, but now I see 'tis found in Jesus Christ the apple tree.*

*I'm weary with my former toil, Here I shall sit and rest awhile;
Under the shadow I will be, of Jesus Christ the apple tree.*

*With great delight I'll make my stay. There's none shall fright my soul away;
Among the sons of men I see, there's none like Christ the apple tree.*

*This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, it keeps my dying faith alive:
Which makes my soul in haste to be with Jesus Christ the apple tree.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We gather our faults and failings as children of God and our hopes for the future of creation as stewards of the earth as we pray, *Our Father ...*

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving Father, fill us with a spirit of joy and service. Show us how to put others' needs before our own. In all that we do at home, in school, or at work, bless us with a willing spirit and loving hearts. Help us to follow the example of St Francis of Assisi and to see him as a model of hope for our church and our world which calls us to be its protectors. May God bless us, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING SONG: Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace



Hymns to Accompany *The Cry of the Earth*

SONG IN YOU CREATION FINDS ITS JOY

Ronan McDonagh¹

Response

In you creation finds its joy,
you have clothed it in your
beauty; Alleluia.

To you our praise is due in Zion,
O God.
To you we pay our vows, you
who hear our prayer. **R.**

The ends of the earth stand in
awe at the sight of your
wonders.
The lands of sunrise and sunset
you fill with your joy. **R.**

You care for the earth, give it
water;
You fill it with riches.
Your river in heaven brims over
to provide its grain. **R.**

You crown the year with your
goodness.
Abundance flows in your steps.
In the pastures of the
wilderness it flows. **R.**

The hills are girded with joy,
the meadows covered with
flocks,
the valleys are decked with
wheat.
They shout for joy. **R.**

The following hymns, *The
Canticle of the Sun* and *All
Creatures of Our God and King*,
are based on the *Cantigo di
Frate Sole* (*The Canticle of
Brother Sun* of St Francis of
Assisi [1182–1226])

THE CANTICLE OF THE SUN

Marty Haugen²

Refrain

The heavens are telling the
glory of God,
and all creation is shouting for
joy.

Come, dance in the
forest, come play in the field,
and sing, sing to the glory of
the Lord.

Praise for the sun, the bringer
of day,
he carries the light of the Lord
in his rays;
the moon and the stars who
light up the way unto your
throne.

Praise the wind that blows
through the trees,
the seas mighty storms, the
gentle breeze;
they blow where they will,
they blow where they please, to
please the Lord.

Praise for the rain that waters
our fields,
and blesses our crops so all the
earth yields;
from death unto life her
mystery revealed springs forth
in joy.

Praise for the fire who gives us
his light,
the warmth of the sun to
brighten our night;
he dances with joy, his spirit so
bright, he sings of you.

Praise for the earth who makes
life to grow,
the creatures you made to let
your life show;
the flowers and trees that help
us to know the heart of love.

ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING

Tune by *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*,
1623³

All creatures of our God and
King
Lift up your voice and with us
sing
Oh, praise him, Alleluia
Thou burning sun with golden
beam
Thou silver moon with softer
gleam
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so
strong
Ye clouds that sail in heav'n
along
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!
Thou rising moon in praise
rejoice
Ye lights of evening find a voice
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Let all things their creator bless
And worship him in
humbleness
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father praise
the Son,
And praise the Spirit three in
one
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**ALL CREATURES OF OUR
LOVING GOD**

(same tune as previous)⁴

All creatures of our loving God,
Lift up your voice with praise
and laud.

Oh praise God! Alleluia!
You blazing sun with golden
beam
You silver moon with softer
gleam
Oh, praise God! Oh, praise God!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

You rushing wind, air, cloud and
rain,
By which all creatures you
sustain.
Oh, praise God! Alleluia!
You rising moon in praise
rejoice!
You lights of evening find a
voice!
Oh, praise God! Oh, praise God!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

You swirling water, flowing
clear,
Make music for your God to
hear.
O praise God! Alleluia!
You glowing fire who light the
night,
Providing warmth, enhancing
sight.
Oh, praise God! Oh, praise God!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Dear gentle earth, who day by
day,
Unfold your blessings on our
way.
O praise God! Alleluia!
The flowers and fruit that in
you grow,
Let them God's glory also
show!
Oh, praise God! Oh, praise God!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

THE PEACE OF THE EARTH

Guatamalan – Arr. John

Bell/Marty Haugen⁵

The peace of the earth be with
you,
the peace of the heavens, too.
The peace of the rivers be with
you,
the peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace flowing over you,
God's peace growing in you.

HOW GREAT THOU ART⁶

O Lord my God, When I in
awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds thy
hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling
thunder,
thy power throughout the
universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, my Saviour
God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great
thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour
God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great
thou art!

When through the woods, and
forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly
in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty
mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the
gentle breeze.

Then sings my soul, my Saviour
God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great
thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour
God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great
thou art!

LET ALL THE EARTH

Ken Canedo⁷

Refrain

Let all the earth cry out to God,
cry out to God with joy.
Praise the glory of his name.
Proclaim his glorious praise,
proclaim his glorious praise.

Alleluia, behold the wonders of
God.
Alleluia, oh, praise his
marvellous deeds.

Alleluia, for God has lifted our
hearts.
Alleluia! Sing praise, O people
of God.

Alleluia to God, who hears our
prayer.
Alleluia to God, our life and our
love.

¹ Psalm 64 adapted by Ronan
McDonagh © Ronan Mc Donagh from
Mass of St John of the Cross. Printed in
In Caelo: Songs for a Pilgrim People
(Dublin: Veritas, 1999).

² GIA Publications, 1980.

³ This can be found in *Liturgical Hymns
Old and New* (Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew
Publications Ltd), p. 103.

⁴ This version is taken from Diann L.
Neu, *Return Blessings* (Glasgow: Wild
Goose Publications, 2002), pp. 84–5.

⁵ GIA Publications, 2007.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 529.

⁷ Ken Canedo, *Doxology: Liturgical
Hymns in Praise of the Trinity* (CD)
(Oregon Catholic Press).

Climate Justice Quiz



1. For 85,000 of the past 100,000 years, much of Ireland was covered with glaciers. True/False?

2. According to the most recent IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report, what are the consequences of climate change?

3. Why is climate justice a concern in Ireland?

4. How many planet earths would we need if everyone consumed such as we do in Ireland?

5. What is climate justice?

6. How does climate justice affect our sisters and brothers in so-called developing countries?

7. The world is currently undergoing the biggest mass species extinction since the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. True/False?

8. How has Ireland already made positive changes in terms of climate justice?

9. We buy, use and throw away paper every day – for computers and photocopiers, toilet paper, paper towels, packaging, newspapers, magazines. We might be more mindful of our use of paper when we consider the other things trees gift us with. Can we identify some such gifts?

10. Most people understand why recycling is better for the environment, but why is composting so much better than throwing food waste in the landfill?

11. In Genesis 1:26-27 it says that God made humankind in his own image and let them have dominion over the earth. What does the word dominion mean in this context?

12. Climate justice is a moral issue. True/False?

Appendix

TÍRECHÁN'S CREED¹

Sometime around 670 AD, an Irish bishop named Tírechán set about collecting the traditions around St Patrick. This is part of the Creed or statement of faith which Tírechán puts on the lips of Patrick. The format suggests that it may have been used in the Liturgy.

Our God is the God of all humans.
The God of heaven and earth;
the God of the sea and the rivers;
the God of the sun and moon;
the God of all the heavenly bodies;
the God of the lofty mountains;
the God of the lowly valleys;
God is above the heavens
and God is in the heavens,
and God is beneath the heavens.
Heaven and earth and sea
and everything that is in them
such God has as his abode.
God inspires all things,
gives life to all things;
God stands above all things
and stands beneath all things.
God enlightens the light of the sun,
and strengthens the lights of the night and the stars.
God makes wells in arid land
and dry islands in the sea,
and places the stars in the service of the greater lights.
God has a Son who is co-eternal with himself
and similar in all respects to himself,
and neither is the Son younger than the Father
nor is the Father older than the Son.

And the Holy Spirit breathes in them.
And the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are inseparable.

THE LORICA (OR BREASTPLATE) OF ST PATRICK

I arise today:
in vast might, invocation of the Trinity,
belief in a Threeness
confession of Oneness
meeting in the Creator.

I arise today:
might of Heaven
brightness of Sun
whiteness of Snow
splendour of Fire
speed of Light
swiftness of Wind
depth of Sea
stability of Earth
firmness of Rock.

FROM THE CARMINA GADELICA

The Carmina Gadelica was a collection of ancient Celtic prayers collected in the highlands and islands off the coast of Scotland in the last decades of the nineteenth century by Alexander Carmichael. It is believed that the spirituality of these prayers was influenced by the nearness of the great monastic settlement founded by St Columba on Iona.

There is no plant in the ground,
but is full of his virtue,
there is no form in the strand,
but is full of his blessing.

There is no life in the sea,
there is no creature in the river,
there is naught in the firmament,
but proclaims his goodness.

There is no bird on the wing,
there is no star in the sky,
there is nothing beneath the sun,
but proclaim his goodness.²

ST COLUMBA'S WAY OF LIVING

The way of living practised by the monks of the Celtic Christian community is reflected in this poem attributed to St Columba. It gives an interesting insight into the sustainable and simple way of life practised in the Celtic monasteries based on a rhythm of prayer, study, teaching and physical work.

That I might bless the Lord
who orders all;
Heaven with its countless
bright orders,
land, strand and flood,
that I might search in all the books
that would help my soul;
at times kneeling to the heaven
of my heart,
at times singing psalms;
at times contemplating the King of Heaven,
chief of the Holy Ones;
at times at work without compulsion.
This would be delightful.
at times plucking *duilisc* from the rocks
at other times fishing.
At times distributing food to the poor
at times in a hermitage.³

THE HERMIT AND THE BLACKBIRD

This beautiful prayer/poem comes from the hermit tradition of Celtic Christianity. The blackbird intuitively experiences the Sacred Presence from the heart of its being.

I need to watch the sun, to
calculate the hours that I
should pray to God.
But the blackbird who nests in
the roof of my hut makes no
such calculation:
he sings God's praises all day
long.

I need books to read, to learn
the hidden truths of God.
But the blackbird who shares
my simple meals, needs no
written texts:
he can read the love of God in
every leaf and flower.

I need to beg forgiveness, to
make myself pure and fit for
God.
But the blackbird who drinks
with me from the stream sheds
no tears of contrition:
he is as God made him, with no
stain of sin.⁴



¹ Adapted from Thomas O Loughlin, *Journey on the Edges: The Celtic Tradition* (London: DLT, 2000).

² Alexander Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica* (Colorado: Lindisfarne Press, 1992), p. 188.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴ Quoted in Grace Clunie, *Sacred Living: Practical Inspirations from Celtic Spirituality for the Contemporary Spiritual Journey* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2011), p. 32.

This resource is printed on paper made from the wood pulp of managed forests.
For every tree felled, at last one tree is planted, thereby renewing natural resources.

RESOURCE CENTRES

MAYNOOTH
Maynooth, Co. Kildare
Tel: (01) 629 3333
Fax: (01) 629 0661
e-mail: info@trocaire.ie

DUBLIN
12 Cathedral Street, Dublin 1
Tel/Fax (01) 874 3876
e-mail: resources@trocaire.ie

CORK
9 Cook Street, Cork
Tel: (021) 427 5622
Fax: (021) 427 1874
e-mail: corkinfo@trocaire.ie

BELFAST
50 King Street, Belfast BT1 6AD
Tel: (028) 9080 8030
Fax: (028) 9080 8031
e-mail: infoni@trocaire.ie