

Dear Eco-Congregation friends



Welcome to the May/June 2019 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter. Wishing all our friends a lovely summertime! Let's get outside and enjoy God's beautiful creation!



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

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

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

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

ECI Awareness Certificate 2019: Since our last newsletter **St John the Baptist Parish, Clontarf, Dublin, St Finbarr's South Parish, Cork and St Joseph's Parish, Bonnybrook, Dublin** all received their ECI Awareness Certificates!



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Our Climate Justice Candle – The Journey Continues!

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

ECI Climate Justice Candle visits Dromantine Eco-Spirituality Group, Newry

In August 2017, Fr.Paddy O Rourke SMA formed this group at Dromantine. It is a gathering of people who are interested in how to best live their relationship with God, each other and with Creation. Members meet on a monthly basis with an opening prayer and reflection. They focus on the following issues: waste management, energy conservation, biodiversity, networking and organic gardening. Over the past two years through the leadership at Dromantine, they have made changes to reduce carbon emissions.



With hosting the ECI Climate Justice Candle the group is showing that they support and encourage others to shine a light on climate justice. The map of the world which sits behind the candle in the above photo, reminds us all of those countries already feeling the impact of man-made climate change. The effects of climate change are felt by people who are least responsible for causing the problem. They are bearing the burden of our actions and consumption of our planet resources. [Read more here](#). The Dromantine Eco Spirituality Group will hold its next meeting on Tuesday 11 June at 7pm in the Slattery Room. This month Joe Devlin bird enthusiast will be giving a talk and presentation on the wildlife around Dromantine.



ECI Climate Justice Candle takes centre-stage at the 'Our Parish, Our Common Home' Laudato Si' Day, Dromantine Retreat Centre, Newry

This event on 12 April 2019 was hosted by the Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs (NICCOSA) and the Council for Justice and Peace, both initiatives of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. A wide range of speakers presented, including those from the Council for Justice and Peace, the Laudato Si' Group of the Council for Catechetics of the Bishops' Conference, the SMA laity officer and those involved with Eco-Congregation Ireland in the North who could speak about the practical experience of incorporating Laudato Si' into the life of their community. The event was open to parishioners from dioceses across the North and the aim was to inspire attendees to take up the message of Laudato Si' in their own homes, communities and parishes.



For the day, the organisers requested the use of the Climate Justice Candle. It was placed at the top of the room beside the speaking podium and Bishop Alan McGuckian, Chair of NICCOSA and the Council for Justice and Peace, invited one of the schoolgirls present, from St Mary's Grammar School Newry, to light the candle while the following was said:

This candle has travelled the length and breadth of the country. The light of this candle symbolises our desire to come to know more deeply the God of all Creation. This light symbolises our desire to love our wonderful Creator God with greater and greater passion. This light symbolises our desire to make manifest our love of God through how we treat all of God's creation. It symbolises the love we are called to bring to one another as God's sons and daughters and the care we are called to give to the weakest among us; those who are marginalised and made poor because of the injustices in our world. [Read this story in full on the ECI website here](#).

ECI Climate Justice Candle visits Cork Ecumenical Bible Week

Rev Geraldine Gracie from Cork Methodist Church sent ECI a report of the ECI Climate Justice Candle's visit to Cork Ecumenical Bible Week, 21-16 May 2019. The theme was *The earth is the Lord's and everything in it*. During the week, four speakers addressed the theme from very different perspectives. Rev. Elaine Murray, Rector in Carrigaline and Monkstown, Dominican Fr. Ben Hegarty, Dr. Richard Scriven, lecturer in Geography in UCG and keynote speaker Dr. Jessie Rogers, Scripture Lecturer in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, all presented on this topic. The ECI Climate Justice Candle was lit at each event where it was admired and its meaning discussed. On Sunday morning 25th May it was lit at the Rogation Day Service in St. Luke's Church, Douglas, Cork where the guest Preacher was Rev. Andrew Orr, Chair of ECI. You can read about the candle's visit to Cork Ecumenical Week in more detail [on the ECI website here](#).



Irish Council of Churches - Climate Justice Affirmations

This year the AGM of the [Irish Council of Churches](#) took place in the Jethro Centre in Lurgan at the beginning of April. The keynote address was given by Professor John Barry, Professor of Green Political Economy at Queen's University Belfast. Professor Barry shared insights into the very real issue of Climate Breakdown and how churches and faith communities can care for creation. He spoke on the cardinal virtues of justice, courage, temperance and prudence as ways the Church can look to reform how the planet is being used. His message was one of hope; that if everyone is intentional in their actions then we can make a lasting difference.



Dr Damian Jackson, ICC Programme Officer then directed delegates to the collection of [Shared Climate Justice and Care for Creation Affirmations](#) from Member Churches and other organisations. These affirmations aim to stimulate reflection on how our actions impact the environment and others and also to provide a starting point for churches to work together in addressing these issues practically.

ICC is doing [a series of blog posts](#) - each reflecting on a different one of the affirmations. The first of these blog posts can be accessed here [Climate Justice – The Preciousness of Creation that God Called Good](#). [Visit this link to read a summary](#) of Professor John Barry's talk by Gillian Armstrong, Quaker representative at the AGM of the Irish Council of Churches. Above photo: Professor John Barry © Irish Council of Churches, 2019.

Parish action on climate change and biodiversity highlighted at Church of Ireland General Synod

The [Church of Ireland's General Synod](#) met in Derry/Londonderry for the first time from 16th- 18th May. What churches and individuals can do to combat climate change and biodiversity was one of the major themes of the meeting. The [Church and Society Commission](#) showed a short film which was introduced by Rev. Andrew Orr, Chair of Eco-Congregation Ireland. It highlighted the work of three parishes: Carlow, who have been working on biodiversity in their churchyards; Holywood, who have moved away from single use plastics, and Bushmills, who audited their energy use and installed solar panels on the church roof.



Andrew went to talk about the [All Ireland Pollinators Campaign](#), and distributed the [Faith Communities Pollinators Plan](#), along with [ECI's own leaflet](#) to all the delegates. Bishop Ken Kearon of Limerick highlighted the work being done by churches all across the country and Bishop Harold Miller of Down urged people to support Tear Fund's 'This is a Rubbish Campaign' to reduce their use of plastic. You can read more about this discussion on climate change at the Church of Ireland General Synod [on the ECI website here](#).

St Joseph the Artisan Church, Bonnybrook, Dublin receives ECI Awareness Certificate

The new Care for the Earth Ministry Group, Bonnybrook has been building on the awareness work which began through their parish pastoral council considering the document 'How can I green my church?' On May 21st they received Eco-Congregation Ireland Awareness Certificate, which they felt was a wonderfully encouraging affirmation and an impetus to continue their work of caring for God's gift to us of our beautiful world. Up to now parishioners have: secured a section of the lawn in front of the family centre as a wildflower garden, with thriving cowslips, clover, dandelions, daisies; begun to organise a biodiversity garden at the rear of the family centre, a place already rich in pollinator friendly flowers and plants and allow part to become a wildflower meadow; procured a water butt for conservation of water and use in the garden; provided nesting areas for insects; availed of the occasion of their church refurbishment to make the building environmentally friendly; from time to time, made (and continue to make) care for the earth part of the intercessory prayers at Eucharist; placed a weekly climate justice action in their parish newsletter under the heading, 'Help us put the Bonny back into Bonnybrook by ...' Example: 'To the three R's - reduce, reuse, recycle, add COMPOST: compost your vegetable/garden waste to create rich, dark, soil'. [You can read more here](#).



Saint John the Baptist Roman Catholic Parish in Clontarf, Dublin has also received their Eco-Congregation Ireland Awareness Certificate and will now begin to work towards their Eco-Congregation Ireland Endeavor Certificate and eventually towards the overall Eco-Congregation Ireland Award. Their journey has begun!

Stations of the Cross finally completed after almost 60 years to be displayed in An Tairseach, Co Wicklow

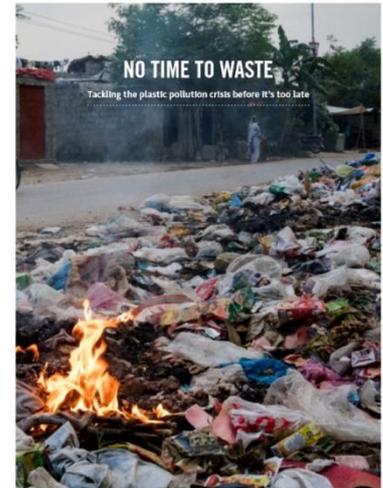
Fourteen handcrafted Stations of the Cross, which were started in Kenya nearly 60 years ago, are finally being completed in Ireland by a guild of needlecraft women in Dublin. A Benedictine artist nun of Stanbrook Abbey in England, Dame Felicity Werburg Welch OSB, was commissioned by Elizabeth Ryan to paint fourteen Stations of the Cross for an ambitious needlework project, intended in the 1960s for her local church in Molo, Kenya, where she was born and living with her family. When Elizabeth Ryan came back from Kenya to live in Ireland she brought these panels with her to finish, but she was diagnosed with cancer and died in the mid-1980's unable to complete this project.

These Stations of the Cross have been requested to be seen by so many people that they are going on display in two venues in June prior to being taken back to Kenya. For a week commencing Saturday 8th June in the Parish Church of St Michael & St Mary, Rathdrum until Sunday 16th June. Then Mr Michael Ryan will launch the exhibition of the Stations in the Dominican Convent Chapel in Wicklow Town, on Wednesday 19th June at 4pm as part of the Midsummer celebration in [An Tairseach, Organic Farm and Ecology Centre](#). [Read more here](#).



No Time to Waste: A new report from Tearfund

Tearfund have launched a report, titled *No Time to Waste*, which you can read [here](#). It highlights the human impact of waste around the world, offering some scary statistics and some aspirational asks, which could change the lives and outcomes of millions of people, as well as reducing the impact of waste on the environment. The campaign associated with the *No Time to Waste* report is asking governments, donors and companies to break the link between waste, plastics and poverty. This means slowing the flow of harmful waste and working with communities to ensure their access to waste collection. Humanity faces an environmental and health crisis caused by waste. The time to act is now. *No Time to Waste* is produced by Tearfund, Fauna & Flora International, WasteAid and the Institute of Development Studies.



Come along to Tearfund's film screening on Wednesday the 12th of June in Bewley's. They will be showing *Before the Flood*, a National Geographic film about our changing climate. There will be a lively discussion over tea and biscuits afterwards, and they will offer you some practical ways you can reduce your plastic waste. Register for the event [here](#)! Keep an eye on Tearfund Ireland's emails and [website](#) to find out how you and your church can get involved in their waste-focused campaign in the coming months.



Local Environmental Gatherings: Connect-Communicate-Collaborate – Working together for a Sustainable Future

Do you want to take action for the environment? These gatherings are the perfect opportunity to meet others who are interested in, and working for, positive change for our future. Hear of examples of local action that can be replicated in your area, learn how the Local Environmental Networks are set up and how to strengthen your own Network, as well as how to get involved in local climate dialogue and action. Two upcoming gatherings:



Blessington on Saturday June 15th. This day is aimed at anyone from counties Wicklow, Kildare, Meath and South Dublin, and will introduce Local Environmental Networks, give an introduction to the Sustainable Development Goals, and host a Biodiversity Workshop. Everyone is welcome to attend. You can see more info and RSVP here on [eventbrite](#). **Galway and Mayo on June 29th** – [eventbrite](#).

Northern Ireland Creation Care Network meets at The Grange Retreat

The Northern Ireland Creation Care Network convened its 13th Meeting on Saturday 30th March 2019 at The Grange Retreat between Gilford and Portadown. The group was greeted by host and owner Caroline Somerville and treated to some delicious scones, tea and coffee in the dining room. Caroline gave the group a brief history of The Grange Retreat, which is her family home and has two B1 listed buildings dating back to 1780, with grounds covering five acres including a mature orchard and gardens. The centre can facilitate approximately 20 people and Caroline can be contacted at - 123grangeretreat@gmail.com. Bertie Stirling, a member of the Network sent ECI a report on what was discussed at their meeting at The Grange Retreat and you can read it [in full on the ECI website here](#). The next meeting of the Network will be late September/ early October 2019 and all are welcome to attend.



An Epistle from Christ Church Presbyterian to the Church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar

Máire O'Kelly from the Church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar sent ECI this update: Rev Dr Celia Kenny from [Christ Church Presbyterian](#) sent an epistle to the [Church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar](#). 'At the beginning of May 2019, members of Three Patrons Church joined us for a 2-day celebration of creation called 'Not Just a 7 Day Wonder'. This was designed as a mini-festival focused on the diversity of the planet, a reminder of the delicacy of its ecosystem, and of our responsibility for stewardship. We saw this as a time to contemplate the capacity – inherent in every human being – to enhance the integrity of the created world through art and music, technology and poetry, and wise husbandry of the earth's resources. Included in the programme for the weekend was an exhibition of art and poetry entitled 'Being Animal', by Lisa Kinsell and Celia Kenny, which was first shown in Smock Alley in December 2018. Lisa Kinsell is an artist whose work is rooted in her experience of living in the African Bush. Celia Kenny is a writer and lecturer in religion and theology, a Church of Scotland minister who is also on the Renaissance team of Christ Church Rathgar. On behalf of all the members of Christ Church Rathgar, may I extend our thanks to the prayer team from Three Patrons who joined us on the May weekend. Our hope is that there will be many more times of collaboration and celebration.' [Read in full here](#).



Creating a buzz in the Parish of Carrigaline!

Janet Twomey from the Parish of Carrigaline sent ECI this update: Sunflower 'Teddy Bear' seeds were recently distributed at the Sunday Children's Mass in Carrigaline. Families have started to sow the seeds and they have already come up in their seed trays. They will soon be ready to be planted in the soil. Reaching a height of 40cm, they are easy to take care of. They are so eye-catching with their bright orange flower and should be in full bloom by mid-Summer, especially if the sun shines.



As we all know, our bee populations are in decline because of climate change but a new study relating to sunflower pollen has given us some hope! Researchers in the University of Massachusetts have found that Honeybees fed on a diet of sunflower pollen have much lower rates of infection. Bumblebees fed on a sunflower diet have better colony health than bees fed on diets of other flower pollens. Let's hope that our bee population will flock to Carrigaline and enjoy the pollen produced by these beautiful sunflowers. 'Praise

be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs up, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs' (Laudato Si' 1).

Westport Eco-Congregation celebrates Earth Hour

On 30th of March [Westport Eco-Congregation](#) marked Earth Hour with lots of activities. Tea lights surrounded the town's centre piece as the 'The Rolling Sun Singers' choir set the atmosphere, followed by Piper Elisha Gannon playing a medley that led to spontaneous dancing. There was a magical atmosphere created by the crowd of 90 that gathered. This symbolic show of solidarity in this global event for the planet, was opened by Caroline Goucher stating that 'Earth Hour offers us all an opportunity to spend a focussed hour with our global community taking action for climate change. This year there is more of an urgency than ever to gather, unite and advocate for Our Planet.' [You can read Caroline report of Earth Hour in Westport here.](#)



Plans are well underway in Westport for Season of Creation 2019

Westport Eco-Congregation is delighted to welcome Lorna Gold of Trócaire as their keynote speaker on September 24th 2019. Lorna will discuss her book '[Climate Generation: Awakening To Our Children's Future](#)', with talks from local secondary school students who are actively part of the Climate Strikes and have addressed the Oireachtas in Dáil Éireann earlier this year. This cross-generational event will raise the profile of the collaboration required across all ages, colour and creed for 'Our Common Home'. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and Holy Trinity Church of Ireland will co-host the ECI Climate Justice Candle during Season of Creation to [Shine a Light on Climate Justice.](#)

Earth Hour in Balally Parish

In the [Church of the Ascension of the Lord, Balally](#), Dublin 16, a candlelight vigil for Earth Hour was held on March 30th between 8.30 and 9.30pm. During this hour, when all lights and devices were turned off, the congregation was reminded by selected poems, prayers, readings from scripture and Laudato Si, of our responsibility for the damage we humans are doing to our beautiful, fragile earth, contributing to climate change which is already



devastating the lives of many people in the poorest countries of our world. At the end of a quiet hour of reflection, participants were urged to make the necessary changes in our own daily lives to ensure that we leave a sustainable planet to the generations who come after us.

Writings by Fran Brady

Fran Brady is the [EcoQuaker representative](#) on the ECI committee. She is a regular contributor to The Friendly Word, the bimonthly magazine published by Quakers in Ireland. Fran has written on two very important topics recently and you can read these articles in full on the ECI website: [Say No to Palm Oil](#) and [Touch the Earth with Tenderness.](#)



Wonders of Waste Bags: Eco livelihood project in the Philippines

Wonders of Waste Bags – WoW bags is a small eco livelihood project in the Philippines addressing big problems, that of plastic pollution and poverty. Started in 2006 by Irish lay missionary Helen Mitchell to give direct income to mothers, it works in partnership with Irish parishes, schools, women's groups, universities who help spread the story of WoW and generate sales of their bags.



Women in two poor communities collect, wash, and sort plastic juice cartons which are similar to Sunkist in Ireland. These are then quality checked by another woman before being sorted by colour and size and passed to the 3 women who are the WoW sewers. The end result is a fairly traded, beautifully made bag. All the bags are designed by the group and all the women work from home thus combining their role as mothers with being able to earn a regular income. Working this way also maximizes their income as they are not spending money on child care, fare, lunches or 'going to work' clothes. WoW Bags is showing in a very practical way that recycling pays. You can read Helen's report and view her photos [in full on the ECI website here](#). You can read an article in *The Far East* [about WoW Bags here](#).

Update from Loving Sister Earth

Brian Grogan SJ sent ECI an update on the work of [Loving Sister Earth](#) which included news on a successful seminar on Laudato Si, titled 'There is No Planet B' on 18 May at the Shrine at Knock; the participation of members of Loving Sister Earth at the ECI Award ceremony at Tuam Cathedral; the upcoming National Holy Wells Day 2019 which will be celebrated all over the country on 16 June including a gathering at St Broc's Well, in the car park of the Poor Clare Sisters, Simmonscourt Road, Dublin 4 at 3pm. St Broc's Well was built for the World Meeting of Families last August, and has already become a focus of devotion. A series of Reflections by Brian Grogan SJ, author of the booklet *Finding God in a Leaf*, will be found [on the Loving Sister Earth website](#) over the nine days preceding National Holy Wells Day. Loving Sister Earth has shared a beautiful Creation Novena for National Holy Wells Day. [The full novena is available here](#).



National Holy Wells Day

Sunday June 16th 2019

Prayer Ritual 3pm

To pray for the Protection and Fair Distribution of Water at St. Broc's Well, St. Damien's, Poor Clare Monastery
Simmonscourt Road,
Ballsbridge, D4

You are invited to attend this prayer ritual

and join in union with others gathered around Holy Wells throughout Ireland on this National Holy Wells Day

W: www.loving sisterearth.com
E: loving sisterearth@gmail.com

Manorhamilton Church of Ireland to host talk on beekeeping for National Heritage Week

Manorhamilton Church of Ireland, Co. Leitrim will host an information evening on beekeeping research, bee health, education, and environmental issues as part of National Heritage Week. There will be advice, guidance and expert opinion for anyone considering beekeeping or just recently involved. The speaker is from Fermanagh Beekeeping Association and the event is open to non-beekeepers or novice beekeepers. Admission is free. Contact 0834239485 for more information or visit <https://www.ubka.org/>.



World Environment Day 2019: Celebrations at St Thomas Orthodox Church, Dublin

Fr. Anish John shared that the young people of the Parish led the World Environment Day celebrations after worship on 1st of June. The importance of caring for the environment and a talk on the theme of this year 'Air Pollution' by the United Nations was arranged. Parish Sunday school children were given saplings and trees. The Parish office at Palmerstown and its surrounding areas were cleaned of any plastic waste or litter. Many plants and trees were also planted at the new church site, Malankara House Palmerstown, Dublin.



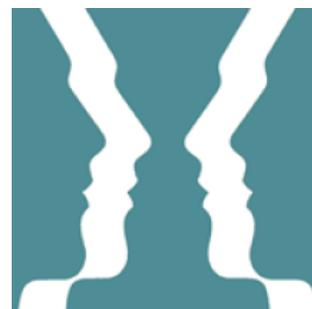
Eco Tips from Killiskey Parish

Stephanie McDonald, a parishioner in [Nun's Cross Church, Killiskey Parish](#) shared their latest Eco Tips which are published in their monthly church announcements sheet. These latest Eco Tips focus on Food and we are encouraged to try to buy more local food – this both supports local farmers / market gardeners and also reduces food miles. We can eat food that is in season, rather than wanting strawberries, for example, all year round. Organically grown food clearly has less environmental impact so is a good option if affordability and availability allow. We can try growing some fruit or vegetables ourselves. [You can read these Eco Tips in full here.](#)



Irish Baptist Networks & Christians in Science face 2 face evening in Belfast

Irish Baptist Networks and Christians in Science invite you to a face 2 face evening with Revd Dr John Weaver on Tuesday 18th June 2019 at 7:30pm in Windsor Baptist Church, 140 Malone Avenue, Belfast BT9 6ET. In this interactive event, John Weaver will present a biblical challenge on Creation Care to help us stop and think afresh about our responsibilities both as individuals and churches. This will then be followed with a time for discussion and feedback.



John Weaver is a scientist who became a Baptist Minister. He is the Chair of the International Baptist Theological Studies Centre, Amsterdam, was a College tutor in Oxford and was Principal of South Wales Baptist College. A former president of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, John is now its spokesperson and advisor on environmental issues. He is a Vice President of the John Ray Initiative connecting Environment, Science and Christianity. All welcome! [More information and event flier available here.](#)

Climate Emergency Bill Dáil Protest- Keep it in the Ground!

Support and share - Tuesday, 11 June 2019 from 17:30-18:30 - protest of the Climate Change movement outside Dáil Éireann. [All information available here.](#)



Moving Away from Fossil Fuels by Catherine Devitt

In the July issue of [Sacred Heart Messenger](#) magazine, Catherine Devitt shares her article *Moving Away from Fossil Fuels* where she highlights the moral obligation we have to quickly move away from fossil fuels to a low carbon economy. You can read here article here: [Moving Away from Fossil Fuels.](#)



Future We Need Group celebrates!

The Future We Need Group meeting on April 29th covered many aspects of advocacy leading up to the elections. The group looked at the various initiatives, which would offer opportunity to speak to or contact those going for public office in an effort to ensure that politicians were aware and could make a difference in terms of care of Planet Earth. Some of the group attended a session in the Carmelite Centre in Dublin where a variety of organisations were vocal on burning issues relating to a changed policy that will benefit our natural world here in Ireland. Among those present were Financial Justice Ireland, Social Justice Ireland, Trócaire, Nothere-NotAnywhere, Friends of the Earth and the Trade Unions. After their meeting members celebrated with Denise Boyle FMDM (centre of above photo) who this year marked her Golden Jubilee on April 27th.



After their meeting members celebrated with Denise Boyle FMDM (centre of above photo) who this year marked her Golden Jubilee on April 27th.

Update from St. Finbarre's South Parish, Cork

Maria Young from St. Finbarre's South Parish, Cork Eco-Congregation sent ECI this update: St Finbarre's South raised money for the victims of cyclone Idai in Malawi, the parishioners of South Parish, Cork were very generous and will be kept updated on the progress of a house building programme in Malawi that they contributed to. Eco-Congregation South Parish completed their energy survey of Needham Place and have invited Conor O'Brien a mentor to Sustainable Energy Communities along with Solene Volmont, a local resident who recently retrofitted her house to give a joint public talk on saving energy in the home and what is involved in becoming an SEC. Eco-Congregation South Parish continue to work in schools and will host a talk presented by Cork Nature Network on the Otters of Cork. Finally the South Parish Eco-Congregation's effort to divert all household paper waste to a local depot is proving very successful. The paper is collected and taken to Ecocel who convert it into green insulation.



Vita Celebrates 30 years and exciting climate mitigation projects in East Africa

Holly Hughes sent ECI a report sharing how [Vita](#) has seen exciting new developments recently, not least of which was their 30th birthday recently. Vita strives to implement community-led programmes in East Africa that prioritise decarbonisation and climate mitigation and safeguard the



futures of rural communities through sustainable livelihoods. Fuel-efficient cookstoves are an important element of this strategy and are quickly gaining popularity in areas that have been harshly affected by worsening environmental conditions. In Ethiopia, Vita has ambitious plans to achieve green status in these areas through climate mitigation programmes. This cookstove project perfectly demonstrates how, now more than ever, everything is connected to protecting God's Earth and why climate mitigation is a fundamental part of safeguarding and improving the lives of many. [You can read Holly's report in full here](#) and view more photos.

Reflection on Air Pollution by Fr Hugh O'Donnell

Fr Hugh O'Donnell is a poet and ministers with the Salesian community in the parish of Sean McDermott Street in Dublin. Fr Hugh has shared a reflection on air pollution with us. In his reflection he says: 'I thought of a line from Shakespeare's play, 'Macbeth', when I visited friends in the country - 'heavenly breath smells woongly here' – for indeed the sweetness of fresh air and spring and soil and herb made a bouquet for the nose. I had just arrived from Dublin city centre with its fossil-fuelled air and began to wonder what had I been breathing all this time'. [You can read Fr Hugh's reflection in full here.](#)

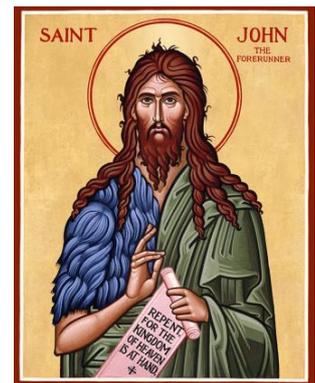


Eco Challenge!

Could John the Baptist be called a 'minimalist'?

Rev Trevor Sargent's Ecological Notes for June 2019 encourage us to consider the Birth of John the Baptist on 24 June. Trevor is one of the Church of Ireland representatives on the ECI committee and ministers in the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory.

In his ecological notes Trevor encourages us to: think about how simply St John lived. Simple living was important to both John and Jesus. Two thousand years on, scientists are clearly saying that if humanity is to make the transition to a sustainable way of life within the next twelve years, simple living is again vital.



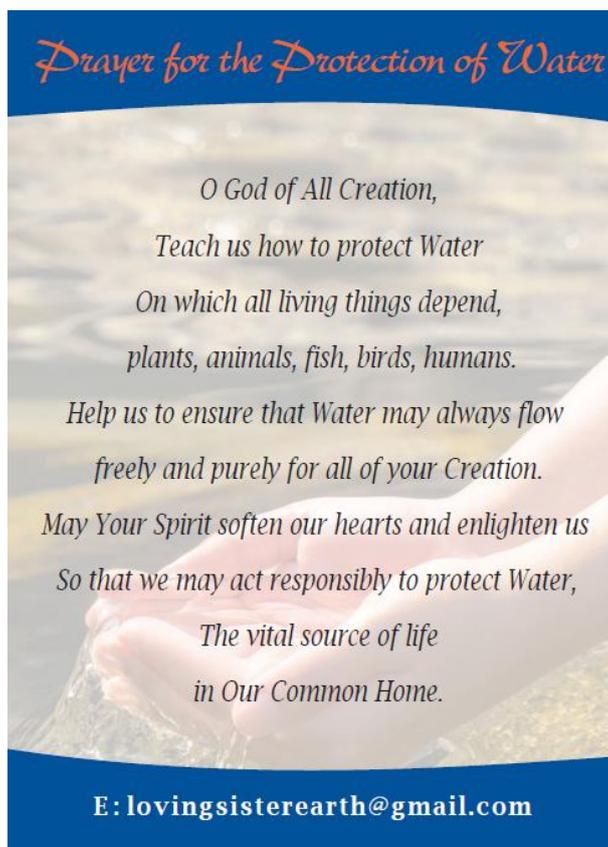
How about being more intentional to live more simply as the day to celebrate The Birth of John the Baptist approaches?

- Shopping: Do I really need this product? Why?
- Stuff: Box up things which are not often used. After three months, if you have not opened the box, give the contents away.
- Tools: Can I borrow it? Can I share it? Can I get one second hand?
- Foods or Flowers: Were they grown ethically, locally, organically? Are they for sale without packaging? Could we grow them ourselves?
- Don't watch TV for a period. Did you miss it? What happened instead?

Read Trevor's ecological notes [in full on the ECI website here.](#)

Prayer for the Earth

For National Holy Wells Day, [Loving Sister Earth](#) has shared this *Prayer for the Protection of Water*:



With kindest regards,

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