

# Connecting for Creation



## Parish Community Action Sheet

Climate change is not only an issue facing us thirty years down the road. In recent times Trócaire staff and partners have witnessed how dramatic changes in climate patterns are challenging the lives of the most vulnerable people in the world. The impact of climate change in developing countries is undermining poor people's ability to survive. One particular challenge faced by those we work with and support is how to deal with erratic rains and increasingly prolonged droughts.

The majority of people in Africa are dependent on rain-fed agricultural production in order to meet their own food needs and to generate some additional income. The global pattern of extremes in weather conditions is making this way of living more and more precarious and risky. Too much rain is washing soil and seeds away and crops are wilting due to drought.

Climate change is exacerbating cycles of poverty. Hard won development gains over the years are being rapidly eroded

as people are forced to survive as best they can through increasingly desperate coping mechanisms that include the sale of assets, migration and further degradation of the environment. Since its inception, Trócaire has been firmly committed to issues of global justice. We see the impacts of climate change on the world's poorest and most vulnerable as one of the 21st century's greatest injustices. While rich countries continue to consume and use energy levels far beyond what is fair and sustainable, the greatest impact is being felt by the poorest people who are least able to cope.

As the enormous impact of climate change on the earth becomes increasingly evident, Trócaire is driven by the fact that the poorest communities are being forced to deal with those changes today. Trócaire is urging dioceses and parishes across the country to answer the cry of the earth and to make a stand on behalf of God's creation and of humanity itself. As followers of Christ we are given an automatic mandate to become stewards of our earth.

**"We are committed to ensuring that all inhabitants of this planet receive their daily bread, fresh air to breathe and clean water to drink as we are aware that, if we want justice and peace, we must protect the habitat that sustains us. The believers among us ask God to grant us this wish."**

**(The pontifical Academy of Sciences 2001)**

## Climate change in the Developing World

Meet Andrew. He is from Northern Kenya in east Africa. Currently, this region is experiencing its worst drought in over sixty years. Ten million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are now dependent on food aid. Drought is not new in this region, but people's capacity to cope with it has been eroded by conflict, lack of investment, increased competition for land and water, and even more so from the effects of climate change. Poor people are being hit the hardest and have the least means to cope with these environmental consequences. Andrew and his family built their homes on a site near Lokitaung precisely because there was a river, perhaps 50 metres wide, running alongside it. That river is now as dry as the barren land that stretches for a thousand kilometres on every side of it. "Other years were different," he says. "There have been droughts here before but never like this one. This one is worse because it is all over the region. Normally if it is bad here we can go somewhere else, but now it is bad all over. There is nowhere to go."



Andrew Lodio, Kenya.

### Inside this action sheet:

Climate Change in the Developing World	1
<b>The Cry of the Earth</b> (Bishops Pastoral Letter)	2
What Can Our Parish Do?	3
More Information	3
Liturgy Resources	4





## The Christian Response

Have you seen the pastoral reflection on climate change called 'The Cry of the Earth'? It was produced by the Irish Bishops Conference to help guide the Irish Church on issues regarding Climate Change

### In this Document:

- 1: Facts and reflections on Climate Change
- 2: Our Christian response to Climate Change
- 3: Is there hope?...Jesus the source of hope for all creation
- 4: What can our Parish do?

**'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'**

### Why is this document good?

It could help all followers of Christ realise their role in protecting our environment. It calls upon all Parishes, communities, social-justice groups to re-think their approach in caring for creation

## Did You Know?

**Climate research estimates that by 2050 there could be up to 150 million environmental refugees.**

*'The poor and the needy seek water, and there is none; Their tongue is parched with thirst. I the Lord will respond to them.'*  
(Is 41:17-20)

In the Columban parish of Our Lord of Peace, Lima, Peru, getting water to the poorest families is a difficult job. Water is sold from trucks that operate between 4:30 and 6 a.m. A varied assortment of containers are filled, and people live off these for the rest of the day. In part of the parish we found we could connect to the mains supply. The challenge was that the houses are built on a steep

hill with unstable ground. Working in solidarity, members of the parish, using rocks available locally as well as donations of cement and other materials were able to connect 25 families to a source of running water. Access to clean running water is a real blessing.

*Columban Fr. Maurice Foley has worked in Peru since 1978.*



## What can our Parish Do?

- » Organise a specific Climate Change study group to look at the Bishop's Pastoral letter 'Cry of the Earth'
- » Hold a Justice and Peace Prayer Service
- » Hold a tree planting ceremony – link with a local conservation project
- » Arrange for a special 'Symbols of Care for Creation' during Mass in Parish
- » Start a Social Justice group in your Parish – first focus? Climate change.
- » Hold an awareness day in your Parish and local schools...Show a DVD on Climate change
- » Distribute Trócaire 'UP TO US' postcards, signed and return to Trócaire
- » Try and make your Parish & Community a more 'Eco-Friendly' Place –display an energy certificate in your Church and Parish Centre.
- » Ask your Parish Council to do an eco-audit of your Parish and to draw up an Parish Environmental Policy
- » Ask your Parish Priest to include the theme of 'Care for God's Creation' in more of his homilies
- » Enrol in the Eco-congregation Ireland Parish environmental programme
- » Post a link on your Parish website to the Eco-congregation Ireland newsletter
- » Invite Trócaire and other eco - speakers to your community
- » Organise displays, photo-exhibitions and colouring competition about caring for creation
- » Recycle
- » Use eco-friendly cleaning materials in the Parish
- » Look at the use of paper in your Parish... how many misalette's are wasted etc
- » Turn down the thermostat by 2 degrees

## Where can I get more info?

- » [www.trocaire.org/uptous](http://www.trocaire.org/uptous)
- » [www.missionalive.com](http://www.missionalive.com)
- » [www.columban.com](http://www.columban.com)
- » [www.change.ie](http://www.change.ie)
- » [www.carboncalculator.co.uk](http://www.carboncalculator.co.uk)
- » [www.fairtrade.org](http://www.fairtrade.org)
- » [www.praying-nature.com](http://www.praying-nature.com)
- » [www.globalresponse.org](http://www.globalresponse.org)
- » [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)
- » [www.ctbi.org.uk/403](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/403)
- » [www.ourplanet.com](http://www.ourplanet.com)

## Starting a Social Justice / Care for Creation Group

1. Find a group of like-minded people
2. Start a Parish / Community Social Justice Group (this could be a good ecumenical project)
3. As a group/ Parish, begin to highlight some unjust structures in the world
4. Live the Gospels—Work towards a common good by taking action, highlighting injustices in our word and sharing what you know
5. Pray on it!

### Prayer of Commitment (for Justice & Peace Groups)

God, creator of this beautiful universe, your will is that all creation enjoy fullness of life.

Inspire us to delight in diversity and to be builders of community.

We promise to highlight the issues brought on by climate change and to work for change at all levels, including within ourselves.

May we try always to be connected to the earth, to you and to each other, in solidarity and love through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Our Father...

#### Pray together:

**As the air sings with songs of glory, as the water flashes with the silver of creation, as the forests bloom with leaves for the healing of the nations, so may God's light and love fill our hearts and souls and minds**

Every year the Diocese of Kerry hosts an annual 'Kerry Earth Week'. This was launched by the Kerry Diocesan Justice, Peace & Creation Committee. During this week in September, parishes host ecofriendly Events

### Did you know?

**In 2008, the Vatican won an award for going green? The roof of the Paul VI audience hall was fitted with a gigantic solarpowered generator which was the same size as a soccer pitch.**



# Prayers for Creation

**The Whole earth is full of God's glory (Is 6:3)**

## Intercessions

» We pray for all leaders of Church and State. May they serve as pioneering examples of care and protection over our earth.....

**Lord Hear us.**

» We pray for our Parish Community; that we may grow together as loving stewards of our suffering earth.....

**Lord hear us.**

» We pray for a remedy to Climate change in our world; May we be enlightened and inspired to do what is right for the benefit of all of God's creation.....

**Lord Hear us.**

» We pray for the developing world, especially vulnerable communities who feel the harsh effects of our changing climate.....

**Lord Hear us.**

## Scripture Reflections on Creation:

- » Genesis 1:30
- » Psalms 24, 104; 24,
- » Rom 8:19
- » Rom 1:20

**"The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom he had formed" (Genesis 2:15)**

## Earth, Teach Me

Earth teach me quiet ~ as the grasses are still with new light.  
Earth teach me suffering ~ as old stones suffer with memory.  
Earth teach me humility ~ as blossoms are humble with beginning.  
Earth teach me caring ~ as mothers nurture their young.  
Earth teach me courage ~ as the tree that stands alone.  
Earth teach me limitation ~ as the ant that crawls on the ground.  
Earth teach me freedom ~ as the eagle that soars in the sky.  
Earth teach me acceptance ~ as the leaves that die each fall.  
Earth teach me renewal ~ as the seed that rises in the spring.  
Earth teach me to forget myself ~ as melted snow forgets its life.

## Care for Creation – Prayer

**God, our Creator, You have given us the earth, the sky and the seas. Show us the way to care for the earth, not just for today but for ages to come. Let no plan or work of ours damage or destroy the beauty of your creation. Send forth your spirit to direct us, to care for the earth and all creation. Amen.**

## Hymns:

- » For the beauty of the earth (Rutter);
- » All the earth proclaim the Lord (Deiss);
- » Here I am Lord (I the lord of sea and sky) (Schutte);
- » In You creation finds it's joy (Mc Donagh)

## St. Francis of Assisi:

**In 1980, Blessed Pope John Paul II declared St. Francis of Assisi Patron saint of the Environment. Well known for his love of nature we pray to St. Francis for the strength to love and care for our environment, God's gift to us, in the same way.**

