

Dear Eco-Congregation friends



Welcome to the September/October 2019 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter. The ECI committee hopes everyone had a wonderful and inspiring Season of Creation. The photo to the left shows the beautiful creation banner on the lectern in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Sean McDermott Street, Dublin, taken by Fr Hugh O'Donnell.



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.

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.](#)



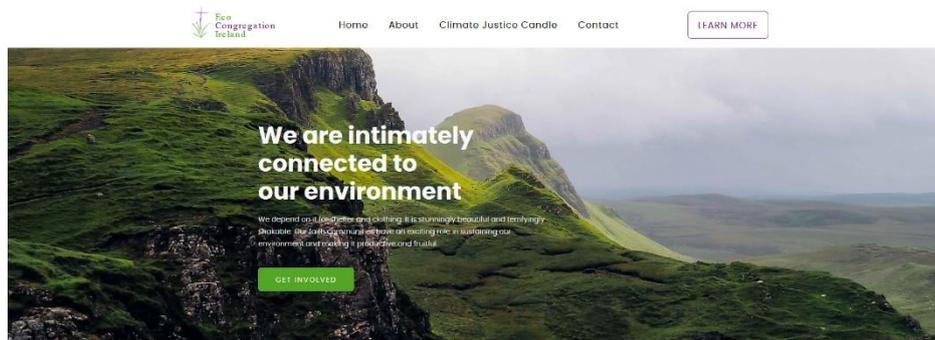
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Eco-Congregation Ireland has a New Website!

You are welcome to visit the new Eco- Congregation Ireland website! [Just click here!](#) Our new website is still full of our news and resources but now presented in a much more colourful and contemporary way.



Our Climate Justice Candle – The Journey Continues!

The Eco-Congregation Ireland [Climate Justice Candle](#) has been weaving its ecumenical and climate justice journey around Ireland since the launch of the project in 2015. 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 Westport Eco-Congregation

Caroline Goucher sent ECI this report; [Westport Eco-Congregation](#) hosted the ECI Climate Justice Candle for Season of Creation with Holy Trinity and in St Mary's Parish Churches, with celebration and awareness of Care for our Common Home at numerous events. On the 24th of September, our main event was held in Westport Townhall, where Lorna Gold and Saoirse McHugh addressed a full house and inspired the parish in the hope we can have for the advocacy and protection of



our planet and the actions we can take in this time of turbulence and uncertainty. Eunice Hall and Michael Hall (Principal of Sligo Grammar) parishioners of St. Salvator's, Donagh Parish in Glaslough, Co. Monaghan, were present on the night and the candle was passed over as it travels around the parishes of Ireland on its ecumenical journey.

ECI Climate Justice Candle visits Dundrum Methodist Church, Dublin

Helen Shiel sent ECI this report: [Dundrum Methodist Church](#) recently recommitted to ECI after a lull of several years. As so many of our congregation are environmentally active one of our greatest challenges has been making the link between the environment and our faith so hosting the candle was a salutary reminder that climate action is first and foremost a gospel imperative and therefore a justice issue.



We were fortunate to be able to extend the candle's sojourn with us for several weeks and so we had the opportunity to ask the children and willing teens to light it at the joint services with accompanying short introductions by the Rev Stephen Taylor and two members of the eco team, prayers and hymns. The first Sunday it was lit by a young boy and his sister who was celebrating her eighth birthday and the final service it was lit by a teenage boy who was actually being confirmed that very morning! The candle generated some interesting discussion and follow up after the services (though we would have loved much more!) and also at the Open Door Café and Bowls Club. We believe it also encouraged several of the congregation to join the Dundrum Climate Vigil on September 20th in support of the Students Call for Climate Action.

ECI Climate Justice Candle – Journey around the Salesian Cosmology Group Members

The ECI Climate Justice Candle travelled around the members of the Salesian Cosmology Group throughout the month of July and beginning of August this summer. In July it visited Caherdavin Community, Limerick, FCJ Community, Limerick, Raheen Parish, Limerick, Good Shepherd Community, St. Lelia's Church Limerick, Augustinian Church, O'Connell Street, Limerick and Blanchardstown Oratory. In August it visited the Capuchin Community gathering in Clane, Co. Kildare and the Salesian Sisters community, Donnybrook & Provincial gathering Dublin. You can see more photos of the candle's visit to the Salesian Cosmology Group members [on the ECI website here](#) and read some of the encouraging comments received.



ECI Climate Justice Candle visits Sligo Grammar School

Michael Hall sent ECI this report: on Friday 27th September Eco-Congregation Ireland's Climate Justice candle was lit in Calry Church at a Special Assembly focussing on climate change. In Calry Church the students and staff of Sligo Grammar School gathered to witness the lighting of the candle in Sligo before it moves on to the Diocese of Clogher in Monaghan. During the service led by Canon Patrick Bamber, the Headmaster, Mr Michael Hall, addressed the students on the challenges of reversing climate change, and the responsibility of each individual to make the small changes needed to do this. The school choir sang the lovely hymn "Morning has Broken" as the candle was lit and prayers were read by students. The



Grammar School is very proud to be part of this initiative as it is beyond doubt that climate change and global warming are the greatest challenges facing our students as they look towards the future. The candle's visit proved to be instrumental in reinvigorating the school's Green School Policy and climate strategy.



Awards! Awards! Holy Faith Sisters receive ECI Award!

On 8th September, at a missioning ritual in their chapel in Glasnevin, the Holy Faith Sisters were presented with an Eco-Congregation Ireland award by Catherine Brennan SSL. As a region of the Holy Faith Congregation, the sisters had been intensifying their efforts over the past few years to be more mindful of caring for the environment in their daily lives. Catherine spoke of the astonishing energy, enthusiasm and knowledge demonstrated by the committee members. "Their desire to make a difference is matched by their numerous actions". In particular she commented on their eco-spirituality as exemplified in two books of collected prayers and reflections, with creation themes, put together by the sisters.



She also noted that many of the sisters were involved in the day to day commitment to good environmental practice, as reflected in their report. One community received a certificate from City Bin as one of the top ten recyclers. The comprehensive guide "Taking Steps to Care for our Common Home" is another highlight as it offers a range of simple steps anyone can take to safeguard the planet. Sisters have also initiated and supported efforts to take care of God's creation in three parishes where they live. Those sisters who are able were also involved in the biodiversity garden with its half-acre wildflower meadow on the site of the Margaret Aylward Centre. The centre itself uses an eco-friendly source of energy and has a beautiful green roof. The above photo shows Sr Catherine presenting the plaque to Sr Evelyn, Regional leader of the Sisters.

Orlagh-in-the-City Community receives ECI Awareness Award

The Orlagh-in-the City Community which developed from the Augustinian Retreat House (Orlagh) in the foothills of the Dublin mountains recently received its Awareness Award from Eco-Congregation Ireland. This was presented by Sr. Catherine Brennan at 10:30 mass on September 8th celebrated by Fr. John Byrne OSA and Fr. Kieran O'Mahony OSA. The Community is based in the St. Benildus Retreat Centre in Kilmacud on Dublin's southside.



When making the award Catherine Brennan SSL gave an insight into the work of Eco-Congregation Ireland and highlighted the need to understand climate change issues in a faith context. The award has encouraged the Community to further pursue its eco-journey. Some of their current environment related activities include: emphasising the theme of creation in liturgy, a reading group, nature walks, attendance at FridaysForFuture demonstrations at Dail Eireann, contributing to the Great Green Wall of Africa project. For further details of the Orlagh-in-the-City Community see www.orphaginthecity.ie

Season of Creation 2019 News

Some friends of Eco-Congregation Ireland sent news of their activities during Season of Creation 2019:

St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church, Clontarf Road, Dublin had a display in the front porch of their parish church arranged by Sister Bernadette, a member of their Justice and Peace Group, and her helpers. The back garden of the Presbytery of St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Parish Clontarf was once an area of tarmac for cars. It is now a lovely colourful garden where finches and many other birds feed. To mark Season of Creation, Jane Mellett from Trócaire gave a talk in the Parish Centre entitled 'The global climate protests: Why Catholics might be involved'.



The **Parish of Ballymote** began the celebration of the Season of Creation with a penitential service before mass on Sunday 1st September. Each week the season was celebrated with an hour of prayer. On the vigil of St. Francis of Assisi parishioners had a joyful evening with the blessing of pets followed by refreshments for families and pets.



The **Diocese of Limerick** in partnership with Trócaire, hosted a Season of Creation workshop on Tuesday the 27th of August in the Ballybrown/Clarina Community Resource Centre. The workshop was designed to support parishes in preparing for the Season of Creation. Trócaire shared stories of their experiences at a global level. Sr Betty Baker shared practical resources and ideas for liturgies and practical actions that could be undertaken in Limerick parishes during the Season of Creation in line with this year's Season of Creation theme "the web of life". The resources, which include prayers and reflections, homily notes, a prayer service and action ideas for parishioners, can be accessed on the [Diocese of Limerick website](http://www.dioceseoflimerick.ie).



On 15 September, the **Laudato Si Eco Parish Group in Prosperous Parish Church**, celebrated the Season of Creation. Mass began with Amazing Grace, prayers of the faithful were for creation, and the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. The Laudato Si Eco Parish group introduced their work to the congregation. They had a talk on biodiversity in the hall, on eco bricks, and the 20th September Day of Action. The group encouraged and enabled others to be involved.



Westport Eco-Congregation – ‘Generations Together for Action on Climate Change’. This awareness raising event was the jewel in the crown for Season of Creation schedule of events. In this Climate Emergency, the full house in Westport Townhall were inspired by the passion of all the speakers, with encouraging positive actions, as they continue to Care of our Common Home.



Diocese of Kerry's Season of Creation activities included: tree planting by Bishop Sat 7th after SOC mass; a leaflet sent out to all parishes from JPIC plus notes for priest; [a workshop Food Floods and Faith in Killarney](#); [a walk Climate Crisis to the Oak Tree in Tralee](#); faith presence at [Global Day of action with Fridays for Future](#); JPIC stall at an Eco-Congregation at an event called Knowing Nature in Killarney House; two Care of Creation parish groups started during Season of Creation in Dingle parish and in St Johns Parish, Tralee; lots of publicity on Radio Kerry and diocesan website and Facebook and in the local papers. You can view lots of photos at the links above.



At the weekly school assembly on Friday 4th October, the children of **St Mary's School, Carrigaline**, remembered the life and work of St Francis and how he is the patron saint of animals and the environment and our first Eco Saint! The school is in the process of getting their 2nd Green Flag and is the parish school of **Carrigaline Union**, an Eco-Congregation.



Morning Conference – Climate Change: A Limerick Response

The Salesian Cosmology Group is holding a morning conference on Saturday 19 October 2019 from 10.30am to 1.30pm in Don Bosco Centre, Milford, Limerick. The title of the conference is 'Climate Change: A Limerick Response' and the main speaker is Nellie McLaughlin RSM. All are welcome. If you wish to participate please contact: Teresa 086 3236728/terdev70@hotmail.com or Betty 087 2995004/bettybaker0908@gmail.com. The Salesian Cosmology Group emerged ten years ago amid a growing awareness of the impact of human activity on Planet Earth. They use the medium of conferences and workshops to raise consciousness levels so that everyone can contribute to a lifestyle that will respect our Earth's resources and ecosystems that sustain us daily. New members are always welcome!



South Belfast Quaker Meeting takes part in Belfast Climate Strike

A number of Friends from South Belfast Quaker Meeting took part in the Global Climate Strike in Belfast on Friday 20th September calling for more action from governments on the climate emergency and the climate crisis. In Belfast, the event started with a gathering in the Cornmarket area of the city centre. The demonstrators held a colourful protest, with speeches and chants, before hundreds lay on the ground to take part in a mass "die-in", which was organised by the Extinction Rebellion movement. Everyone then set off on their march through the city. Organisers at the Belfast event estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 activists marched through the city centre to a rally in the grounds of City Hall.



Next Meeting of the NI Creation Care Network

The next meeting of the NI Creation Care Network will take place on Saturday 12th October from 10am until 12:30pm at Regent Street Presbyterian Church, 48a Regent Street, Newtownards BT23 4LP. For those travelling from the Antrim area, there will be a car share from Ballymartin Park & Ride. Meeting at 9.00am and leaving 9.05am for anyone interested. Folks can contact Bertie Stirling for queries (bertie.stirling@arocha.org). All welcome!



New Irish inter-faith climate group FaithS for Climate Action hold Interfaith Prayer Service

An Interfaith Prayer Service organised by a new Irish inter-faith climate group "FaithS for Climate Action" gathered in solidarity with the youth climate strikers in Dublin. Gathering at the Famine Memorial on Custom House Quay the representatives of various faith communities in Ireland sought to raise awareness that there is now a dire need for concrete action on climate change as this is an issue which affects everyone, no matter what faith they profess. Around 100 people attended the prayer before the protest, which



included readings from each of the faith traditions sacred texts, all on the theme of caring for Mother Earth. Read Jane Mellett's report of this event in full [on the ECI website here](#).

EcoCFO at the Ploughing 2019

Rev David White sent ECI this report. EcoCFO, the Environment Committee of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, was delighted to be part of the National Ploughing Championships which were held this year in County Carlow. Each day had a theme. Day 1: Children and Young People; Day 2: Vocation and Day 3: Environment. Those present had the opportunity to promote the 'New Eco Awards' which were launched last May. Parishes were also reminded that following on from the Tree Conference last April, EcoCFO is keen to support parishes as they manage trees on their properties. EcoCFO's next public event will be 'Morning Seminars' which will be led by Niamh Brennan in Carlow. Niamh is currently studying for her PhD in Trinity College, Dublin and is well-known for her work in the area of Cosmology and Creation spirituality. Read David's report [in full on the ECI website here](#). The above photo shows some visitors to the ploughing on Environment Day. You can read about the Church of Ireland stand at the National Ploughing Championships on [the diocesan news website here](#)



A new environment album on the Church of Ireland's Flickr website highlights photos and stories about initiatives to care for Creation, developed either by the Church or alongside other Churches and organisations. Readers can check this out at www.flickr.com/churchofireland.

In Memory of Anne Primavesi

Anne Primavesi noted scholar and author died on May 4th 2019. Born in Dublin, Anne (Sheridan) Primavesi, joined the Holy Faith Congregation. Following her marriage to Mark Primavesi, Anne (with Mark's great support) continued her commitment to spirituality, theology and ecology through her many published works, seminars, lectures, and study days in Europe and around the world. Several Irish and other European congregations were privileged to have her speak at their events. In September 2012 Anne spoke at the inaugural conference of Eco-Congregation Ireland. The title of her lecture: 'Listening to the Future Listening to the Present', focussing on the need to cultivate unity. Beyond Ireland, many deeply appreciated her ground breaking work on the relationship between ecology and theology. As some have remarked since her death, she was way before her time, having been deeply influenced by James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis in relation to feminist theory and theology. As well as her scholarship and her expertise in theology, ecology and their relationship Anne will be remembered for her simplicity, her kindness and her deep compassion for the whole community of life. *Gabrielle Stuart*



Tearfund Ireland holds prayer and worship time for our climate

On the evening of 23rd September, [Tearfund Ireland](#) held a special event in Third Space, Smithfield, to gather for a time of prayer and worship for our climate. Inspired by the UN Summit on Climate Change held in NYC the same day, the night was filled with prayer for those involved with or affected by climate change. The evening began with songs of reverence for God's wonderful creation, led by St. Catherine's Ryan Ashley. Tearfund's Katie Lynch shared about the repercussions of climate change on those living in poverty, leading into a time of prayer for those most affected by the changing environment. Attendees prayed that God would stir the hearts of global leaders at the summit,



and prayed for swift action to be taken. Following a prayer of lament, those attending renewed their commitment to live responsibly and the evening concluded with all worshipping God and His creation.

Update from Rathfarnham Church of Ireland Parish

Andrew Shorten sent ECI an update on the work in his parish: In Rathfarnham Church of Ireland Parish we have been active in supporting eco initiatives such as Pennies4Plastics. Parishioners took part in the Climate Action March last Friday 20th September including the Inter-Faith prayers beforehand at the Famine Memorial in Dublin. Our primary school principal Joyce Perdue received three paragraphs of coverage in Saturday's Irish Times in relation to the protest march led by school pupils and college students.



I write an Eco-Congregation section in our monthly parish newsletter. Recent articles have included a review of Mary Robinson's excellent book "Climate Justice" and an account of the climate change seminar in Trinity College's Science Gallery last year, which was organised by the Church of Ireland's Church and Society Commission. At the end of last year, representatives of the parish had a meeting with John Lahart TD and we were impressed by his grasp of the facts and commitment to change. One practical step we have taken is to make a digital copy of our parish newsletter available by email. We have cut the print run down by 50 copies. Overall we are doing less colour printing of service sheets and we have cut postal deliveries in half.

Latest news from Carrigaline Parish

Janet Twomey sent ECI this update: our [Parish Care for the Earth group](#) met recently to talk about progress and plans over the coming months. We marked the Season of Creation in the parish with reflections appearing on each of the front pages of the weekly Church bulletin over the past number of weeks. The main news is that we have a [new communal collection point in the parish centre where people can bring their crisp and biscuit packet waste](#). We have also installed a compost tumbler in the parish centre, which will compost all our green and food waste,

and we are delighted to have it. A few of us also went to join the Global Climate Strike in Cork City on Friday, 20th September to lend our presence and voices, along with those of the young people who spoke loud and clear about the commitments our government needs to stick to in order to meet our promised carbon reductions!



Latest news from Clogher JPIC Group

Fr Joseph McVeigh sent ECI this latest news: some members of the Clogher JPIC group joined the students in the Diamond Enniskillen on the day of the climate strike. The group attended Biodiversity Day at Castlearchdale Biodiversity Park on Saturday 28th September. Sarah Jane Beacon from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to speak about Biodiversity and Clogher Diocesan Annual Conference on Wednesday 16 October to discuss Climate Justice. Guest Speaker: Lorna Gold from Trocaire. Prayers offered every day during the Season of Creation in St Michael's Church, Enniskillen, including special prayers on Friday 4 October-Feast of St Francis of Assisi. Leaflets about Biodiversity and Climate change distributed in Churches in Enniskillen, Lisnaskea and Newtownbutler.



Latest news from Gardiner Street Parish

Ciara Murphy sent ECI this update: Gardiner Street Parish, alongside the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, attended the Global Climate Strike on the 20th September. We came together to demand action from our Government about the climate emergency. On the 5th October, Gardiner Street Parish held a workshop on "[Working together to care for our Common Home](#)". Fr. Brian Grogan SJ, Ciara Murphy (Environmental Policy Advocate at JCFJ) and representatives from the Gardiner Street Eco-Congregation presented at this event.



Armagh Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission to host event on Climate Change

A morning conference on 'Climate Change AND the Church or Climate Change IN the Church' will be held on Saturday 9th November 2019, 10am-1pm in the O Fiaich Library, 15 Moy Road, Armagh BT61 7LY. Speakers: Fr Sean McDonagh, climate activist and theologian, Dympna Mallon, SMA laity coordinator and grandmother as well as two young representatives from a local secondary school. Places are limited and allocated on a first come, first serve basis. Please register by emailing armaghjusticeandpeace@gmail.com or by writing to Armagh Justice and Peace Commission c/o Unit 1, 49 Keady Road, Armagh BT60 3NL

Latest News from Vita

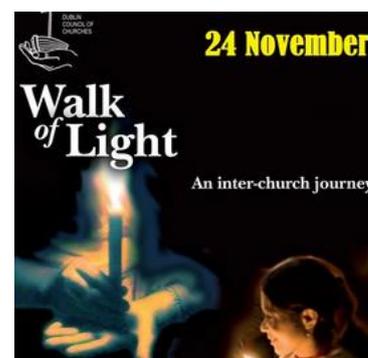
Holly Hughes, Communications and Fundraising Officer with Vita sent ECI this update: It has been a busy and thrilling few months for the Vita team with September bringing with it many exciting updates! To celebrate the day of Global Climate Action that took place on Friday, September 20th, Vita launched a week-long installation in the offices of their partners, Dublin City Council. The installation used the simple example of cooking to demonstrate the energy, health, and economic inequalities between Ireland and the parts of Africa where climate change is having the biggest effect. Vita was privileged to have the 12 year-old environmental activist, Flossie Donnelly, join them for the launch alongside Green Party Councillor Michael Pidgeon. Both guests spoke passionately and eloquently about our need to act local and think global when addressing climate change and provided an inspirational start to an emotional day of activism!



Vita has also been nominated for the 2019 Irish Times Innovation Award, becoming one of fifteen finalists to be shortlisted from over one hundred applications. Vita was nominated under the Sustainability category for its model of social impact carbon offsetting and is thrilled to be recognised with such a prestigious accolade. We are waiting with baited breath for the results to be released at a special celebration on November 5th! Keep an eye on all Vita's upcoming events [here](#)

Dublin Council of Churches 2019 Walk of Light

This year's Dublin Walk of Light will take place on 24 November at 4pm, opening at St. Finian's Lutheran Church and concluding at Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Rathmines, stopping off in between at Rathmines R.C. Church will be under the theme: *Walking for Our planet home - The earth belongs to the Lord and all that is therein (Psalm 24.1)*. Jane Mellett, *Laudato Si* officer of Trócaire Dublin will address the event. The Walk of Light is in its 15th year. It is under the auspices of the [Dublin Council of Churches](#) and is jointly organised by the group of congregations in the greater Leeson Street/Rathmines area of Dublin City centre. All welcome!



'Finding God in Nature' – talk by Donal Dorr at St Finbarr's South Parish, Cork

St Finbarr's South Parish Cork are hosting a talk for Eco-Congregations in Cork City and County by Donal Dorr titled "Finding God in Nature". The parishioners have invited Eco-Congregations/groups from other parishes in Cork, from all denominations. Half of the evening will be given to creating an opportunity for people to network, exchange ideas and form new links with the various other eco communities in Cork. This talk is taking place on Thursday October 17th at 7.30pm at the Meeting Hall at St Finbarr's South, Dunbar Street, Cork.



Eco Challenge!

Getting about on an E bike!

In Rev Trevor Sargent's Ecological Notes for October 2019 he shares with us the joy of his new E bike and encourages us to consider the benefits cycling. Trevor is one of the Church of Ireland representatives on the ECI committee and ministers in the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. You can read the points below in detail on the [on the ECI website here](#). The photo to the right shows Trevor heading off on the e-bike after celebrating lunchtime Holy Communion at Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford, with robes, stole, Bible and Prayer Book in a luminous briefcase on the back carrier.



The benefits of cycling, especially on an E bike!

1. Cycling is made easy;
2. Enough juice for a day's journeying;
3. Low running costs;
4. No bureaucracy such as motor tax;
5. One solution to transport pollution;
6. Seeing and been seen;
7. As sociable as walking the dog;
8. Embrace a younger you

Prayer for the Earth

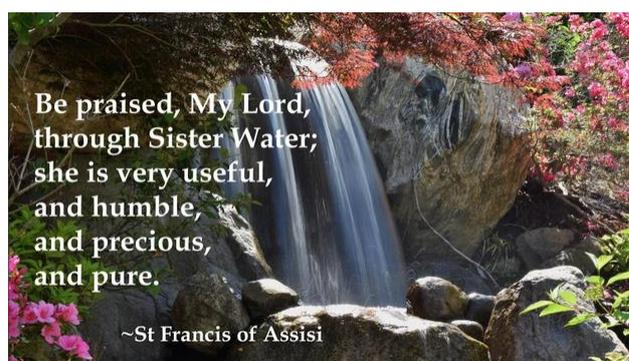
Fr Hugh O'Donnell is a poet and ministers with the Salesian community in the parish of Sean McDermott Street in Dublin. Fr Hugh shares the following reflection with us:

A Pail of Water

When you see a child lost in attention while holding her hands under running water you sense that some deep connection is being made beyond words.

Through enjoying the feel of it, cool, silky and playful, she is having a spiritual experience although it's not the usual way to describe it; 'turn off that tap, will you!' It's no coincidence that almost every form of religious expression makes use of water – from submersion in a sacred river as a form of renewal, to dipping one's fingers in a font by a church door, to a minister sprinkling drops of water over the people in blessing.

Like life itself, however, we savour it best in small amounts, in a cup of water when we are thirsty or being hooked up to a drip in a hospital when de-hydrated! It seems we find it hard to comprehend abundance. Where water is piped to our homes, for instance, it soon becomes 'what comes out of the tap', just as an



ocean is where fish live and where we bury our waste! We fail to appreciate its living quality as no Grace is regularly said before taking a sip, no gratitude addressed to the source.

When Anne Sullivan held Helen Keller's hand under the water pump and traced the word water on her other hand, Helen understood. We need to make that discovery again, to reverence water for what it is, or *who* she is, according to Francis, 'Sister Water, humble, precious, and pure'. Amen

With kindest regards,

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