

NEP JPIC Justice Event  
—26th November 2019



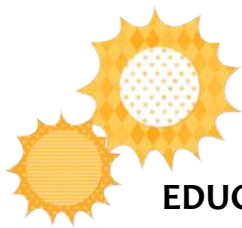
**Making a commitment  
to Sustainable Living at  
personal, family &  
community level**

*“A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” ~ Laudato Sí*

**Presentation Sisters Union (North East Ireland)**

***“How do we ‘carry Nano’s lantern’ ... and ‘hear the cry of the Earth, and those kept poor’ ”?***





## **EDUCATING FOR THE COVENANT BETWEEN HUMANITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

“A person who could afford to spend and consume more but regularly uses less heating and wears warmer clothes, shows the kind of convictions and attitudes which help to protect the environment.

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle.

Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.

We must not think that these efforts are not going to change the world. They benefit society, often unbeknown to us, for they call forth a goodness which, albeit unseen, inevitably tends to spread. Furthermore, such actions can restore our sense of self-esteem; they can enable us to live more fully and to feel that life on earth is worthwhile.

Ecological education can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere. Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life”.

**(Extract from Laudato Sí—(#211-213)**

**Pope Francis calls the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path. This encyclical is written with both hope and resolve, looking to our common future with candor and humility.**

**(Published May 2015) [HERE](#)**



# INTRODUCTION

**“When we speak of the ‘environment’ what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it.” (LS#139)**

Through all of the media at our disposal we are constantly being made aware of the impact of climate change on the future of our planet. More recently **The Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service (IPBES)** published its global assessment on the state of the world’s biodiversity and ecosystem services (May 2019) The findings of this assessment did not come as any surprise to those working in the field of nature conservation. The headlines could not have been anymore stark:

- Nature’s Dangerous Decline ‘Unprecedented’
- Species Extinction Rates ‘Accelerating’
- Current global response insufficient;
- ‘Transformative changes’ needed to restore and protect nature; 1,000,000 species threatened with extinction

The report showed that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history — and that the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely. The health of ecosystems on which we (and all other species) depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our and future generation’s economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide. The link to sustainable development is clear.

Our collaborative contribution to these realities is quite shocking.

The Report also stressed that it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global. It concludes:

*“Through transformative change, nature can still be conserved, restored and used sustainably – this is also key to meeting most other global goals. By transformative change, the report means a fundamental, system-wide re-organisation across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values”.*

**So how can we go about ‘sowing hope for the planet’?**

# Our consumption of Energy

## The call to Sustainable Living asks us:

To consider what our needs are and how we use energy and resources, so that future generations will be able to meet their needs?

### Energy efficiency can start in the home.

- Make yourself aware of energy-saving tips that cost nothing e.g. remembering to 'switch equipment off' after use or taking practical actions that help reduce energy consumption and cost such as ensuring you have appropriate insulation to conserve heat and reduce energy wastage.
- Shop to inform yourself and access the best environmentally friendly products currently available both in terms of manufacturing processes and energy consumption.
- When purchasing consider 'A' rated appliances whenever possible as they can save their replacement cost over their lifetime and benefit the environment.





# Actions to reduce energy usage

ACTION	I WILL TRY THIS (✓)	ACTION TAKEN	COMMENTS
Discuss these actions with the rest of your household			
Record your energy bill			
Turn off appliances when not in use			
Check thermostats & adjust if necessary			
Purchase at least x1 energy efficient light bulb			
Dry clothes outside on a line if available			
Configure your PC to energy saving mode			
Use lids on saucepans			
Only boil the amount of water you require			
Avoid half loads when using washing machine & dishwasher			
Check central heating is operating to maximum efficiency			
Check the insulation in your home—attic, windows & doors, hot tank			

# Our consumption of Water

## The call to Sustainable Living asks us:

To consider what we need to do to conserve water (one of the Earth's most valuable resources) in terms of what we use, what we waste, what we destroy?

### We can start in the home.

- All water that leaves our home ends up somewhere and problems with water quality is a frequent issue. Excessive inputs of phosphates are causing major water pollution. These are present in many of our detergents & cleaning agents. Other causes of water pollution include pesticides and fertilisers, discharge from manufacturing and leaking landfill sites.
- Unattended household leaks, dripping taps, leaving taps running, using more water than we need for washing and showering etc., all contribute to wastage of this valuable resource.
- When purchasing consider 'A' rated appliances whenever possible as they can save their replacement cost over their lifetime and benefit the environment.





# Actions to conserve Water

ACTION	I WILL TRY THIS (v)	ACTION TAKEN	COMMENTS
Discuss these actions with the rest of your household			
Record your energy bill			
Mend leaking taps & toilets			
Install low-flow water shower heads & taps			
Put a 1 litre plastic bottle in toilet cistern			
Take showers instead of baths			
Turn off tap while brushing teeth			
Use eco-friendly cleaning agents, washing powders & washing up liquid etc.			
Use watering can rather than a hose			
Collect rainwater for the garden			
Wash your car at home & use a bucket rather than a hose			
Find out about your local water supply/policies /practices			



# Our consumption of Goods

## The call to Sustainable Living asks us:

To consider ‘the buying minefield’ and the impact of rampant consumerism on the planet? How do you opt out of a consumerist mentality?

### We can start by:

- Use your spending power constructively, by supporting progressive companies who operate out of good ethical standards and use environmentally/climate friendly production processes and display either the Fairtrade Mark, are GM-friendly, Eco-friendly etc., Our shopping habits can bring about change in the way in which even the largest food corporations and supermarkets do their day-to-day business.
- Each decision as a consumer, no matter how small, has an impact—especially when you know that millions of others are doing the same
- It is important to educate ourselves about the social and environmental impact of food and products that we use daily and take for granted.





# Actions to reduce consumption

ACTION	I WILL TRY THIS (✓)	ACTION TAKEN	COMMENTS
Discuss these actions with the rest of your household			
What companies are you supporting through what you consume?			
Research the ethics of these companies			
Familiarise yourself with brands you want to support			
Buy loose fruit & veg			
Use containers that are recyclable			
What products can be refilled?			
Find out how your food is produced?			
Buy local if possible			
How can you reduce your use of plastics?			
Can you reuse/repair? Buy rechargeable			
Take a community action to promote sustainable living			

# Transport & Travel

## The call to Sustainable Living asks us:

To consider our daily commute, our transport options and the impact that the mode of travel we choose for work and leisure has on our environment in terms of air quality/harmful emissions, human health, the size of our carbon footprint?

### You can start by:

- Looking at how you can reduce car travel—especially for short journeys.
- Investigate the potential for car-sharing/car pooling on the daily commute?
- Research and use public transport options.
- Take action to reduce air miles and encourage others to do the same.





# Actions to reduce emissions

ACTION	I WILL TRY THIS (✓)	ACTION TAKEN	COMMENTS
Discuss these actions with the rest of your household			
Be aware of the level of your car emissions			
Check your fuel consumption			
Leave the car at home—walk/cycle/ use public transport			
Get your car serviced regularly			
Do not leave the engine running when stationary			
Car share where possible			
Plan ahead to combine trips—so reducing the use of the car			
Check the pressure in your tyres and your fuel consumption			
Is an electric car an options?			
Plan your travel to reduce air miles			

# Consider ‘Going Organic’

## The call to Sustainable Living asks us:

To consider the sustainability and reduced environmental impact of organic food production processes and how this can inform our contribution to ‘Care of the Earth through the reduction in the use of pesticides, fertilisers, fungicides etc., improving soil content and increasing CO<sub>2</sub> absorption.

### We can start by:

- Making the best of the patch of Earth entrusted to us.
- How to manage appropriate food waste through composting.
- Locating your nearest Farmer’s Market and buy local and organic, if available.
- Grow your own vegetables?
- Inform yourself on the care of animals and poultry and on the recognised certifications for organic, sustainably produced and animal welfare standards.
- Be aware of the air miles your food may have travelled to reach you—buy ‘Irish’ and seasonable .





# Actions in relation to organic

ACTION	I WILL TRY THIS (✓)	ACTION TAKEN	COMMENTS
Discuss these actions with the rest of your household			
Add at least one organic food product to your basket			
Source supplies of organic food locally			
Purchase also non-food based organic products as part of your shop			
Are you using pesticides/ non –organic fertilisers—change this			
Care for water quality avoiding bleaches & chemicals			
Improve your soil quality by using your own home-made compost			
Increase biodiversity in your garden/flower beds			
Become familiar with organic and non-organic produce by reading and research			

# Green Cleaning

## The call to Sustainable Living asks us:

To consider how our modern lives are bombarded by more and more chemicals which claim to clean faster and cleaner. The problems associated with cleaning products come from the chemicals that most of them contain, many of which are harmful to health or which, after entering the water system, take a long time to breakdown while others may not in fact break down at all and eventually enter the food chain.

## We can start by:

- Looking at our cleaning products under the sink and in the bathroom—read especially the warnings and chemical content list on the container.
- How biodegradable are they?
- Is the container recyclable or refillable?
- What can I use as a less harmful alternative?





# Actions in relation to cleaning

ACTION	I WILL TRY THIS (✓)	ACTION TAKEN	COMMENTS
Discuss these actions with the rest of your household			
Examine the cleaning agents you are using—are they eco-friendly?			
Become familiar with harmful chemicals			
Estimate your current expenditure on cleaning agents			
Make a decision on how you are going to change your habits			
Try some home made cleaning agents			
Add at least one Eco-friendly cleaning agent to your shopping basket			
Are there refill options for single use containers?			
Try a non-bio powder alternative to normal washing powder			
At the end of the month estimate your savings			



# Managing Waste

## **The call to Sustainable Living asks us:**

To consider that we are using up the resources of the Earth much faster than they can be regenerated. We already know (backed by scientific knowledge) that if we continue at the present rate of production and consumption we are burning up the Earth's resources without any hope of replenishment, leaving nothing for future generations.

## **We can start by:**

- Reducing the waste we produce by using less and by reusing, repairing and recycling what we can, reducing the burden on land-fill and tackling our growing inability to manage mountains of recycling
- Managing our waste in a sustainable way means that we view waste differently. Much of what we call waste can be either valuable as a resource for which another use can be found, or for the material that it contains which has the potential to become another product.
- Consider that resource depletion and waste generation are two sides of the same coin. Waste generation has been increasing in tandem with our increasing consumption of goods and services.



# Actions to manage waste

ACTION	I WILL TRY THIS (✓)	ACTION TAKEN	COMMENTS
Discuss these actions with the rest of your household			
How much waste do you generate in a year—aim to half this amount			
Prevention is the key to avoiding waste—make a decision to buy only the quantity you need			
Minimise/Reduce the waste you generate—own and use a reusable shopping bag			
Be aware of excess packaging—do you need individually wrapped items?			
Reuse—maintain, repair, share, sell on?			
Recycle—choose as far as possible items made from recycled content, that can be recycled again			
Disposal—Don't let landfill be your first step			

# Resources

## Informing the call to sustainable living

### Useful Websites

**Presentation Sisters Union—NE Ireland** <https://presentationsistersne.ie/> (See tags for ‘Care of the Earth’ and Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation)

**The International Presentation Association** <http://internationalpresentationassociation.org/>

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**An Tairseach** <https://antairseach.ie/>

**Bees for Development** <http://www.beesfordevelopment.org/>

**Biodiversity Ireland** <http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/>

**Bumble Bee Conservation** <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/>

**Catholic Climate Covenant** <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>

**Catholic Climate Movement** <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/>

**Centre for Biological Diversity** <https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/>

**Climate Generation—Lorna Gold** <https://lornagold.com/>

**Eco-Congregation Ireland** <https://www.ecocongregationireland.com/>

**Friends of the Earth Europe** <http://www.foeeurope.org/>

**Green Peace International** <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/>

**Loving Sister Earth** <http://lovingsisterearth.com/>

**Repak Ireland** <https://repak.ie/>

**Sewing Hope for the Planet** <https://www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org/>

**Sonairte** <http://sonairte.ie/>

**UN Environmental Organisation** <https://www.unenvironment.org/>

**USIG** <http://www.internationalunionsuperiorsgeneral.org/>



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