

REPORT ON THE DAY OF DIALOGUE

SEEDS OF HOPE

Growing Biodiversity; Growing Parish Communities.
A *Laudato Si'* event for parishes and communities across Dublin.

Friday, 16 May 2025 | 10am to 3.30pm | Cost €20

Margaret Aylward Centre for Faith and Dialogue

To register please go to www.margaretaylwardcentre.ie/events .

Packed lunch required. Tea/coffee will be provided.

To celebrate 10 years of *Laudato Si'*, please join us for a day of reflection, inspiration and practical support to empower individuals and parishes to move from thought to action in walking more gently on the earth.



Jane Mellett

Morning Speakers:



Nellie McLaughlin RSM



Yosef Dvores

Afternoon Workshops:

- Raising Hope – Discovering the Hope in *Laudato Si'* Today: Róisín Alexander Pye
- The *Laudato Si'* Award: Natalie Doherty
- Parishes and Pocket Forests: Catherine Cleary
- Introduction to Mapping your Grounds: Lucy Bell
- Actions for Pollinators by Faith Communities: Enda Mullen CHF
- Nurturing Biodiversity in your Church Grounds with DLR Rewilding Project: Yosef Dvores

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Jane Mellett - Laudato Si' at 10 - Hope for our Common Home

Jane reflected on the legacy of Pope Francis, particularly focusing on his encyclical Laudato Si. Rooted in faith and science, it emphasizes the importance of familial love for the earth and the interconnectedness of all things. Pointing out the spiritual crisis within humanity due to the loss of connection with nature, it highlights the need for eco-spirituality and contemplation.

Reconnecting with creation can lead to ecological conversion, which is seen as a part of the Christian vocation and prioritising intergenerational justice. She also highlighted the profound influence of Laudato Si' at the Paris COP in 2015 and the publication of Laudate Deum in 2023, which criticized the lack of progress. She reflected on the success of global divestment efforts energized by faith groups and the potential of the Return to Nature initiative of the Irish Bishops to rewild 30% of parish ground.

Community engagement and activity was identified as key to success and the appointment of Biodiversity officers to every county council can offer support. The importance of the movie The Letter, which brings Laudato Si to a wider audience was also mentioned.

Challenges include issues around the management of rewilding, adherence to policies like No Mow May, and the need for formation on care for creation within Catholicism. More work is needed to promote interfaith dialogue as well as wider youth engagement, address leadership issues, recognise and overcome language barriers, and illustrate the urgency of this issue for everyone.



Nellie McLaughlin "Caring for Creation: an issue or way of life?"

Nellie emphasized the importance of making caring for creation a way of life rather than just an issue. She identified the need to address the root causes of environmental problems, highlighting humanity's perception of itself as separate from the Earth and called for a reconnection with the Earth, recognizing it as a sentient living being and our common home. Various sources were referenced, including Jude Currivan: "HOME can be expressed and understood as Heaven On Mother Earth,"

Joanna Macy and Anne Primavesi. Participants were invited to see ourselves as part of the Earth rather than above it. She mentioned the Montreal Protocol (reduction of emissions to help repair the ozone layer) as a successful initiative and highlighted the correlation between the message of Laudato Si and the need for harmony among Earth's living systems (air, soil, sun, water) to sustain life.

Parallels were drawn between creation and scripture, citing various verses from the Book of John. Earth Overshoot Day in Ireland in 2025 was 17th May, globally it was 25th July, all of which points to the overuse of Earth's resources. Humanity represents 0.01% of all creation, but we are using the equivalent of 1.7 earths' resources and are responsible for destruction arising from fossil fuel industry, arms and militarism, drugs, viruses, mass migration and injustice. The need for active hope and action was reiterated, drawing on the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of an integral ecological vision.

She suggested that this was a Titanic moment, representing an SOS for planet Earth, and that what is needed is a change of context and perspective, to see ourselves as part of community of all creation and to respond to the crisis with love, compassion and action.

Nellie asked everyone to reflect on the burning question of our time "what did you do once you knew?" and quoting Mary Oliver she invited participants to "keep room in your heart for the unimaginable."

She also shared the poem "Go to the limits of your longing" by Rainer Maria Rilke:

Go to the Limits of Your Longing

Rainer Maria Rilke

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,
go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.

Flare up like a flame
and make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself lose me.

Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.

Give me your hand.

After lunch, participants had the opportunity to attend two of the workshops below:

- Laudato Si' Awards in Dublin Diocese- Natalie Doherty and Teresa Menendez
- Raising Hope - Discovering the hope in Laudato Si Today - Róisín Alexander-Pye
- Parishes and Pocket Forests - Catherine Cleary
- Action for Pollinators for Faith Communities- Enda Mullen
- Mapping your grounds for biodiversity - Enda Mullen