

Living Water: Columban Community Gathers for Ocean Prayer and Care for Creation

Organised by the Columban Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Ministry, the 2026 Season of Creation gathering brought together students from Corpus Christi College, members of the USP Catholic Students Association, former Columban Lay Missionaries and young people from around Suva at the St Columban Mission Centre in Nasese on Saturday, 3 October 2026.



Caption: In putting faith and words into action, participants also managed to partake in a clean-up campaign before concluding the program.

Centred on this year's theme, **“Living Water,”** the gathering brought participants together to reflect on the relationship between faith, creation and our responsibility to care for our common home.



Caption: The gathering brought together students, youths and the Columbans, for a time of reflection, prayer and action.

JPIC Coordinator Noa Tuivunilagi shared a reflection connecting the biblical vision of living water with the life and legacy of St Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. He highlighted growing concerns about microplastic contamination in Fiji's drinking water and coastal fish, reminding participants that environmental challenges do not exist in isolation. As *Laudato Si'* teaches us, **“everything is connected.”**



Caption: Columban LM Sainiana among student participants, in a moment of reflection on the theme of the Season of Creation and the Life of St Francis.

This was followed by a sharing from Columban Lay Missionary Sainiana Tamatawale, who reflected on her missionary experience at the US–Mexico border, where she witnessed the scarcity of water. Drawing from her Indigenous upbringing and personal relationship with the ocean, she spoke about understanding nature not as something separate from us, but as an integral part of who we are. Her sharing invited participants to consider how our lived experiences, cultural identities and relationships

with creation shape our responsibility to care for the earth.

The gathering included moments of silence, shared conversations and personal commitments to care for creation. Inspired by St Francis' understanding of creation as brother and sister, participants reflected on the importance of recognising the natural world as part of our wider family, deserving of care and respect. The program included a recitation of the "Canticle of the Creatures" by St. Francis Of Assisi.



Caption: Columban Fr. Donal leads the prayer by the ocean and gives the final blessing to the participants.

Fr Donal led the blessing of the ocean, offering a reflection drawn from *Laudato Si'* and its call to recognise the interconnectedness of all life.

The programme concluded with a beach clean-up along the shoreline in front of the Columban residence, putting the gathering's message into action. Following a time of prayer and reflection by the ocean, participants joined together to care for the very environment they had gathered to celebrate.



The gathering was a meaningful reminder that caring for creation begins with prayer and reflection but must also find expression in our everyday actions. As the Season of Creation concluded, participants were encouraged to carry its message forward through a renewed commitment to protect our waters, our communities and our common home.



Caption: Columban Fr. Frank was an eager listener and participant at the event.