Immersion in Living Waters: Xavier College Students Take Action for Creation

Upon entering the grounds of Xavier College in Ba, one detail caught my attention: a gate bearing the name **"Columban Fathers Gate."** Having visited the school only once before, I was pleasantly surprised to see this reminder of the Columbans' longstanding presence in the school's history. It stands as a symbol of the enduring relationship between Xavier College and the Columban Mission, whose members served the school during its formative years and continue to share in its mission today.



Caption: : As students worked along the riverbanks, they collected rubbish, including plastic waste and other discarded materials that had accumulated or been washed downstream.

Established in 1953 as an all-boys school, Xavier College transitioned to co-education in 1970 and has continued to serve the educational needs of young people in Ba and the surrounding communities.



Caption: Madam Melania (right) with a student, planting bamboos along the riverbanks, which help to fortify the land from flood waters. Source: Margie Muller

On 25 September 2026, the Columban JPIC team had the privilege of joining students from Xavier College for a **Season of Creation River clean-up and tree-planting initiative** along the Ba River. Guided by this year's Season of Creation theme, *"Immersion in Living Waters,"* the initiative invited students to reflect on the importance of water as a source of life and our shared responsibility to protect the rivers and waterways that sustain our communities and the wider web of life.



Caption: : Following the clean-up and tree planting, students gathered to pray the 2026 Season of Creation Prayer.

Inspired by the biblical vision of life-giving water in Ezekiel 47:1–12, the theme reminds us that water is not merely a resource to be used. To immerse ourselves in living waters is to recognise our deep connection with creation and to respond through practical acts of care, restoration and protection.



Caption: The planting initiative offered students a tangible way to contribute to the long-term care of their local environment.

As students worked along the riverbanks, they collected rubbish, including plastic waste and other discarded materials that had accumulated or been washed downstream. Such waste poses a threat to the health of the river, its aquatic life and the communities that depend on it. The clean-up was therefore a practical expression of the Season of Creation's call to move beyond reflection towards meaningful action in defence of our common home.

Alongside the clean-up, students planted trees, including bamboo shoots, to help strengthen and stabilise the riverbanks. Given the area's vulnerability to flooding, protecting the riverbanks is particularly important in reducing erosion and limiting the risk of the banks giving way during periods of heavy rain and rising water levels. The planting initiative offered students a tangible way to contribute to the long-term care of their local environment.



Caption: Students at Xavier College remind us that ecological conversion begins with recognising our place within creation and responding, together, to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.

The clean-up campaign formed part of a week-long environmental initiative at Xavier College, led by the school's Religious Department under the guidance of Madam Melania and School Manager Ms. Margie Muller. Both have been strong advocates for integrating faith into action through environmental education and sustainability initiatives.

Their efforts remind us that ecological conversion begins with recognising our place within creation and responding, together, to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.