



Missionary Society of St Columban General Council

**Columban Missionaries urge ambitious action at UN Climate Summit
31 October 2021**

The leadership of the Columban Missionaries urge governments gathering for COP26 in Glasgow **to agree and commit to ambitious policies and processes that protect our common home.**

We take seriously the warning by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres who spoke of the findings in the sixth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (2021). He said we face a “code red for humanity...the alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk”.

We applaud the joint September statement on climate change by Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Reverend Justin Welby, and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, which said: “All of us can play a part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and environmental degradation. Caring for God’s creation is a spiritual commission requiring a response of commitment.” Columban Missionaries recently released our updated [Climate Change Statement](#) to reflect our concerns and responses to the many interconnected ecological threats to our common home.

Inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, which says, “the climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all...it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life”, we urge for policies, **grounded in principles of urgency, intergenerational justice, human dignity and rights.** We ask delegates to adopt policies and approaches that:

- Make the connection between climate change and biodiversity loss;
- Keep temperature rise to below 1.5C;
- Listen to, protect, and preserve the wisdom of indigenous communities, women and youth;
- Shift the financial paradigm to one that promotes justice, dignity, equality and the culture of care for the natural world;

- Transform the energy sector to fossil free and;
- Transform the agriculture sector to agroecology that ensures human well-being and care for the Earth.

Columbans worldwide see intimately the devastating impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on the people and the earth and therefore as interwoven moral issues in need of prophetic responses. Our commitments include working collaboratively with ecumenical and interfaith grassroots prayer, education, and policy advocacy such as the [Healthy Planet, Healthy People Petition](#). We continue to apply negative screens in our financial investments to industries that harm the environment such as fossil fuels. We join with others in our local dioceses and with partners like the [Laudato Si’ Movement](#) and the [Laudato Si’ Action Platform](#) in responding to Pope Francis’ call to work for an integral ecology and human development.

Columbans and partners are organizing a 24-hour public prayer vigil November 5-6 in Glasgow and are inviting participants to join from around the world virtually at www.24hoursfortheclimate.org.

We celebrate and stand with the courageous Climate Pilgrims, supported by Columban Missionaries, who have walked thousands of kilometers to Glasgow from around the world in their witness for an urgent transition to a just climate economy, increase in climate finance, and policies that hold countries accountable for their climate commitments.

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