

Webcam Broadcast C-19 9

Hello Everyone! I hope you are safe and well.

Today is Monday 18th May 2020, the day when Phase 1 of the Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business begins.

It's also the beginning of a week recalling the publication 5 years ago of Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home, called Laudato Si'.

I think I got my appreciation of nature from my father. As a part-time farmer, he had to do battle with the forces of nature, day-by-day and season-by-season, whether because of inclement weather, or attack by disease on crops, or death of animals. He took it all in his stride. Nothing could best him – at least in his own mind. He faced the combat nobly, knowing that he was dealing with a formidable combatant, whom he respected.

It all brought him to reflect on and wonder at the immensity and marvel of life. He would ask, when he would sow a crop:

What does it all mean? And when he would reap a harvest he would comment: Isn't it all amazing and wonderful?

He delighted most of all in the birth of calves and lambs, and in the good taste of new potatoes and other vegetables and fruit he had grown himself. It was a battle worth fighting.

But it was all done with great respect. He was sad, even at times upset, when a kestrel or weasel got caught in a trap he had set for rats, or when he snared a fox that had taken hens, or when someone else set gorse fires, which destroyed countless little birds. They all needed to live too. They were part of the great reality as well.

5 years ago Pope Francis drew the world's attention to how we humans are impacting on Planet Earth, Our Common Home, in such a way as to replace what was a beautiful garden with a pile of filth; and more than that, to risk the very future of life on Earth by manmade Climate Change. His document has given inspiration to many movements around the world concerned

with Climate Change, Biodiversity and the survival of species into the future.

During the present Covid-19 Pandemic we are seeing countless acts of selfless dedication all around the world: neighbours offering free childcare to those who must work, the courage of those on the frontlines who enable life to continue, acts of compassion and grace towards those who must stay cocooned. This inspiring global response to the Pandemic, in which each of us does his or her own part to protect everyone, is the kind of response that is needed to solve the ecological crisis.

Despite the gravity of the present situation with the Covid-19 Pandemic, we need to recognise that there is another disaster on our doorsteps that will have far more serious consequences. If we don't take all those actions that we have been hearing about in recent times regarding Climate Change, life on Earth will be unbearable for many in 50 years time.

One of the things that Pope Francis set out to do in Laudato Si' was to point out to us all that action to save the Earth is central to Christian faith. We Christians should be taking action, not just because of the very practical reality that if we fail to do so, our children and grandchildren will inherit an Earth that is rapidly becoming unliveable; we should also be caring for the Earth because every part of it is both a precious gift from God and also a way in which God speaks to us day by day.

I exhort you to Google Laudato Si' Week 2020 and view Pope Francis' brief message for this week. It is about helping us all reshape the world that will arise after the Covid-19 Pandemic has passed. This present crisis is an opportunity to start anew, and to make sure that the world that arises after this crisis has passed is sustainable and just.

I also exhort you to look at David Attenborough’s new programme called Seven Worlds, One Planet. It is being screened on RTE 1 at 6.30 pm on Sundays. Its purpose is to explore consequences of human encroachment and Climate Change on wild habitat worldwide. And it’s not all a negative story. It shows that successful co-existence between humans and wildlife is possible.

I also recommend Mooney Goes Wild on RTE 1 Radio on Mondays at 10 pm, and The Zoo on RTE 1 Television on Fridays at 8.30 pm.

Bórdbia.ie/gardening is an excellent site if you want to improve your garden.

Finally, a few quotes from Pope Francis, from Laudato Si’:

He says we need an “ecological conversion”. (217)

“We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference.” (52)

“Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.” (139)

As Covid-19 restrictions are modified and gradually eased, we need to remember that the virus Covid-19 has not gone away.

It is still in the community. So, continue to:

- Stay at home.**
- Practice proper hand hygiene.**
- Practice proper respiratory etiquette.**
- And keep the 2 metre physical distance.**

This is how we save lives.

Until next time. Slán agus beannacht.