

# GLASGOW CATHOLIC WORKER

'Faith, Works, Love, Mercy'

'Our goal is ... to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.' - Laudato Si'

## Evolving environmentalist

I have a confession to make – I have never been what one might call "environmental". I was a city girl, growing up in Brooklyn New York and I've never lived any more than 10 miles from a city. I loved the beauty of the countryside on vacations as a child, and as an adult I fell madly in love with the Scottish Highlands. But in terms of linking the beauty of this earth to any kind of environmental action - it was never a priority for me. And even after discovering the beautiful Catholic faith, I sadly didn't connect my new spirituality to the physical beauty of the world. I was always on the

"side" of the environmentalists - like a good leftie, I carried a bag that said "reduce, re-use, recycle" – but the passion was simply not there.

All of this has started to change in the last couple years – slowly – but change nonetheless. As I have learned more about the nuclear weapons on our doorstep at Faslane – and the destruction they could cause to our planet - I've been challenged to think more about our collective home. I have also spent time ruminating on the diabolical loss of human life in Nagasaki and Hiroshima and it occurred to me that while the human loss tears my heart in two - the plants, and animals, and hills and trees have also suffered. My "heart" has now

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*Around 300 million children currently live in areas where the air is toxic*

## Chickens going Cheap

There is something not right down at the farm.



Going into a supermarket where most of us get our food you are offered various commodities, identical peppers or turnips or cucumbers all individually wrapped in plastic. Despite there being thousands of varieties of apples in the UK you only see a couple of varieties on the shelf like Royal Gala or Pink Lady. Although there are over 500 varieties of potatoes few are available in the supermarkets and many are only described rather nondescriptly as 'Loose White Potatoes', where do they come

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from, who grew them, what variety are they? Salad leaves packed as washed and ready to eat marked as 'Packaged in a protective atmosphere' what-

***The space allocated to a chicken on the shelves of the supermarket is probably not much less than the space they got when alive.***

ever that is. Bananas piled high but who grew them and how do they get to be so cheap and in such good nick? And Chickens going cheap .

I think the point that concerns me is that we have come to demand price, convenience and consistency in our fresh food beyond what is reasonable or healthy. We have a serious disconnect between the handy (expensive) conveniently packed vegetables on the one hand and the land and the farmer on the other.

Take the bananas, Chiquita bananas for instance have funded paramilitary and rebel groups in Columbia and spray their bananas with chemicals harmful to the workers and the en-

vironment. Many banana plantations employ children 15 years old and under who work eight to 12 hours a day. The handy bagged salad in its 'protective atmosphere' or Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP) is washed in Chlorine often grown in Spain. An investigation by the Guardian some years ago uncovered migrant workers who were living in appalling conditions and were paid half of legal minimum wage all to grow salad vegetables for British supermarkets.

Laudato Si points out that **"Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act."** We can't accept the status quo. The way things are has had and continues to have a pro-

found negative effect on our environment causing pollution, damage to the fertility of the soil and the welfare of the animals and workers. We need to know where our food comes from and what the real cost of it is.

When we are able to buy chickens nicely packed in convenient regu-

lar sizes for £3.00 each you have to ask yourself how can you raise a chicken with any sort of quality of life and pay the workers a fair wage for less than the cost of a pint of



*'Sibley' - Winter Storage Squash—  
grown in my garden in Glasgow  
Summer 2018*



## Locavore's Big Plan

Locavore's Big Plan sets out our ambition to scale up what we do to launch a large social enterprise grocery store which offers a viable alternative to supermarkets. We want our new store to be the sort of place most people can do most of their grocery shopping so that we can increase our market share and use it to shape a food system which is better for society and our environment.

Instead of food profits going to big corporations and their shareholders we want your food spending to work harder for society. That means investing in local growers, paying fair wages (we're a living wage employer) and developing other initiatives which help build a fairer and more sustainable society.

349 Victoria Road  
Glasgow G42 7SA



*One of Locavore's organic growing sites April 2019, awaiting planting*

beer? The space allocated to the chicken on the shelves of the supermarket is probably not much less than the space they got when alive. I remember visiting a farm in Ireland with my wife and our children. They kept free range chickens but also kept rescued chickens from battery farming. The difference was horrible, whereas the free range chickens darted around inquisitive and noisy, flashes of red and brown, making our children squeal, the factory farmed chickens had difficulty walking and looked ill, they seemed to have feathers missing.

The issue of battery farming or in the USA CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) may well get worse with the advent of Brexit as any trade deal with the USA may require us to accept some of their farming produce and by implication their methods, chlorine washed chickens. And

we haven't yet mentioned Cattle which are increasingly reared using intensive animal farming methods (the feedlot meat industry) where the lack of space and muck that the cattle have to endure require large quantities of antibiotics - 70% of all antibiotics manufactured in the United States are used for the feedlot meat industry.

Some questions we might ask when we buy:

- How far has this product travelled, sourcing food that has been grown locally is best, reducing food miles, reducing carbon emissions.
- How has it been grown or how has the animal been raised?
- Has the food and the land its grown on been contaminated by chemical pesticides?

- Does the grower get a fair price, do the labours receive a just wage?
- Can we buy from smaller local co-ops supplying locally produced food? We need to diversify by encouraging local producers and break up the monopoly of big corporations, supermarket chains in the UK hold 97% the grocery market.

I wonder though how we will change, how many years has the plight of chickens been known yet free-range chicken accounts for just 5% and organic 1% of UK chicken production. As Laudato Si puts it "Together with our obligation to use the earth's goods responsibly, we are called to recognize that other living beings have a value of their own in God's eyes: "by their mere existence they bless him and give him glory", and indeed, "the Lord rejoices in all his works" (Ps 104:31)."

Tell that to the chickens.

*Michael Sutherland*



started to feel what only my "head" knew before – that our land is precious. And this past year I discovered the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins which has struck a chord in me that hasn't been struck before. His poetry – about the love of God for us as witnessed in the bountiful beauty of the earth – and his lamentations on what humans do to each other and our planet – has left me breathless.



*Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ*

Hopkins says that "the world is charged with the Grandeur of God – it will flame out, like shining from shook foil". He then goes on to lament that generations "have trod and trod on this grandeur – all is bleared and smeared with toil". Hopkins was speaking to us from the mid to late 1800s, before the full impact of

industrialization could possibly have been known – before cars and airplanes, before computers and weapons of mass destruction. How did he know – was he a prophet? Could he see, in the factories starting churn – in

the obsession with "development" – the destructive road we were taking?

Anyone who reads "God's Grandeur" will find a haunting voice from the past, yet one that could be speaking about our world in 2019.

Hopkins poem does not end in misery – it ends with redemption. Although the "soil is bare now" there is still hope. The hope lies in God. "Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World Broods – with Warm Breast and with ah! Bright wings"! God is still with us, and with His whole creation – all is not lost. But I think

Hopkins is issuing us with a challenge- it is we, God's children, who are called to help usher in "His kingdom come – on earth, as in Heaven" . Maybe we are to be the hands of the Holy Ghost using our wings to save the elements of the planet we have left. I certainly hope in my time left on earth to take the glorious words of Hopkins and use them to create more passion for our home – and to be one small piece of the spirit that redeems this planet of ours.

*Tamara Horsburgh*

## Get involved:

**Round Table Discussions :** On the 3rd Tuesday of every month we meet to discuss a topic and help us together to clarify our thoughts.

We meet at 6:15. Please email us for details of where we'll be meeting.

**Soup Kitchen:** Help out at our weekly Soup Kitchen in Cadogan Street, Glasgow City Centre

**Place of Welcome for Refugees: Saturdays 9am-1pm**

Help teach English at Garnethill Multicultural Centre (Basement) 21 Rose Street Glasgow or just socialise.

**Monthly Witness at Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base**

Join us on the first Saturday of each month at 2:30pm outside the South Gate.

Website: [www.catholicworker.org.uk](http://www.catholicworker.org.uk)

Email: [glw@catholicworker.org.uk](mailto:glw@catholicworker.org.uk)

Twitter: @CatholicWorkerG

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/glasgowcatholicworker](https://www.facebook.com/glasgowcatholicworker)

## God's Grandeur by Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

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# Gardening

By Wendell Berry

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Odd as I am sure it will appear to some, I can think of no better form of personal involvement in the cure of the environment than that of gardening. A person who is growing a garden, if he is growing it organically, is improving a piece of the world. He is producing something to eat, which makes him somewhat independent of the grocery business, but he is also enlarging, for himself, the meaning

of food and the pleasure of eating. The food he grows will be fresher, more nutritious, less contaminated by poisons and preservatives and dyes than what he can buy at a store. He is reducing the trash problem; a garden is not a disposable container, and it will digest and re-use its own wastes. If he enjoys working in his garden, then he is less dependent on an automobile or a merchant for his pleasure.

He is involving himself directly in the work of feeding people.

If you think I'm wandering off the subject, let me remind you that most of the vegetables necessary for a family of four can be grown on a plot of forty by sixty feet. I think we might

see in this an economic potential of considerable importance, since we now appear to be facing the possibility of widespread famine. How much food could be grown in the dooryards of cities and suburbs? How much could be grown along the extravagant right-of-ways of the interstate system? Or how much could be grown, by the intensive prac-



*"most of the vegetables necessary for a family of four can be grown on a plot of forty by sixty feet."*

tices and economics of the small farm, on so-called marginal lands? Louis Bromfield liked to point out that the people of France survived crisis after crisis because they were a nation of gardeners, who in times of want turned with

great skill to their own small plots of ground. And F. H. King, an agriculture professor who travelled extensively in the Orient in 1907, talked to a Chinese farmer who supported a family of twelve, "one donkey, one cow... and two pigs on 2.5 acres of cultivated land" – and who did this, moreover, by agricultural methods that were sound enough organically to have maintained his land in prime fertility through several thou-

sand years of such use. These are possibilities that are readily apparent and attractive to minds that are prepared to Think Little.

To Big Thinkers – the bureaucrats and businessmen of agriculture they are quite simply invisible. But intensive, organic agriculture kept the farms of the Orient thriving for thousands of years, whereas exten-

sive—which is to say, exploitive or extractive-agriculture has critically reduced the fertility of American farmlands in a few centuries or even a few decades.

A person who undertakes to grow a garden at home, by practices that will preserve rather than exploit the economy of the soil, has set his mind decisively against what is wrong with us. He is helping himself in a way that dignifies him and that is rich in meaning and pleasure. But he is doing something else that is more important: he is making vital contact with the soil and the weather on which his life depends. He will no longer look upon rain as an impediment of traffic, or upon the sun as a holiday decoration. And his sense of man's dependence on the world will have grown precise enough, one would hope, to be politically clarifying and useful.

*An extract from Think Small*



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## Notre Dame is burning

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As I write this I keep looking at the live videos of Notre Dame as it burns, as the spire topples over into the flames and I can hardly bare to watch. I have been at Notre Dame de Paris a number of times over the years, the last one being last

d'Arcole which crosses the Seine. There's something about being alone in a foreign city which makes me feel no longer like a tourist more of a local, particularly when I am going to mass. Anyway I could see the spire of Notre Dame as I crossed the river then further along the Rue d'Arcole the two towers appeared.



year when we were staying at a hotel within walking distance. I nipped out early one morning along the Rue de Rivoli and eventually across the Pont

Often people criticise the Catholic Church for such glorious buildings when there is such poverty. When I go into Notre Dame I can only think that it's

a magnificent hymn to God, a place where anyone can go to pray and admire, not a treasure hidden in some private mansion but for all, you just need to look at the sadness on the faces of those watching Notre Dame burn.

Anyway before I sat down for mass I looked around some of the small dark side chapels and it was there that I came across a statue of St Joseph and the child Jesus, I took the picture you see aside. I have seen many statues of St Joseph and the child Jesus but none ever appealed to me like this one. Joseph appears to be in his carpenter's shop, he wears a carpenter's axe and you see tools at his feet. But as I looked I realised Jesus is being mischievous, trying to prize away a set square or a piece of wood from Joseph. I sat there a long time thinking about this and how happy Jesus looked. We are at the start of Holy, but this statue depicted another Jesus not a man who 'was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain' but a happy wee boy with his loving Father. I loved that statue and now I think it's probably burned to ashes.

Although the stained glass windows, the statues and gargoyles are magnificent or should I say were magnificent it's the contemplation of Joseph and the mischievous child Jesus that I treasure, it still makes me smile despite this terrible fire.

Michael Sutherland

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## Notre Dame - built on Faith

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'Peter Maurin, our co-founder, loved Cathedrals, he idealised Cathedrals as the spiritual and material heart and soul of rural Catholic communities and the source of peace in the world, but perhaps when you think of the great Cathedrals of old Europe, you don't initially think of Catholic Worker, with its origins in depression era New York.

Yet our roots go much further back to rural France, as Peter once wrote in the Catholic Worker Newspaper -

"People who built the Cathedral of Chartres knew how to combine cult, that is to say liturgy, with culture, that is to say philosophy, and cultivation, that is to say agriculture."

As such, all of us of the Glasgow Catholic Worker Community were devastated as we watched the recent fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, for this holy place is very much part of our own heritage and our spirituality too. Yet, perhaps the ideas of Peter Maurin and Catholic Worker might

### Hail Mary - "Je Vous Salue Marie"

Je vous salue, Marie pleine de grâce ;  
le Seigneur est avec vous.  
Vous êtes bénie entre toutes les femmes et Jésus,  
le fruit de vos entrailles, est béni.  
Sainte Marie, Mère de Dieu,  
priez pour nous pauvres pécheurs,  
maintenant et à l'heure de notre mort.

preservation of French Cathedrals, but Charles Peguy thought that the faith that builds Cathedrals is after all the thing that matters".

help to offer a vision of how we might rebuild Notre Dame?

For example, when Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral was being constructed, Peter dreamed of a magnificent domed Cathedral built for the greater glory of God and also built for the homeless and hungry of Merseyside. Maurin writes -

"We need Parish Homes as well as Parish Domes. In the new Cathedral of Liverpool there will be a Home as well as a dome".

And so, maybe the reconstructed Notre Dame might be restored to its former glory while also creating a new space which could accommodate the poor and destitute of Paris.

Maurin also offers us advice on how the rebuild might be funded, not by business cash or with borrowed money but with all our love, prayers, donations and contributions - "The Cathedral of Chartres was not built with money borrowed from money lenders.

The Cathedral of Chartres was not built by workers working for wages. Maurice Barres used to worry about the



Finally, perhaps the last word on why we must rebuild the Cathedral, should go to our dearest fellow Catholic Worker Jim Forest who visited us last year. As Jim reminded us that the great Cathedrals were constructed by the faithful who knew that they were laying the foundations for future generations and for something they would never see. They were working for a greater good, as part of a community, the living and the dead, the past and the present.

This is why buildings like Notre Dame are important, when we enter inside, they attest to our yearnings and our hopes of eternity, as beings who are born and die.

*Ross Ahlfeld*

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# Change Or Die

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"We can't save the world by playing the rules, because the rules have to be changed. Everything needs to change, and it has to start today"

Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish schoolgirl, said these words and the world paid attention - for a while anyway. She had articulated the concerns felt by many young (and not so young) people in the world.

There is a particular poignancy and potency in these words coming from a child. The famous Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno once said that whenever he encountered a really difficult problem, he asked his 7 yr. old daughter the answer. We too should consciously and courageously adopt a child-like simplicity and directness when dealing with our problems. Matthew tells us how Jesus invited a little child to join him and his disciples saying, "Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"

Notice the reference to change. Nobody likes change. We are creatures of habit and routine, fixed and settled in our familiar ways. And after all, we are educated adults aren't we?

But now we have to change, if we want a future. It is no longer a matter of appealing to altruism, but a question of our very survival, literally.

The Pope's encyclical "Laudato Si" analyses our dilemma in great depth and with wonderful insight. So the scholarly judgement of an adult Pope concurs with the innate wisdom of a little girl. There is something momentous and poetic about this concordance. If only the world would read this document. But few will, I fear.



*Greta Thunberg*

**I think we always knew deep down inside that we just couldn't go on the way we were. Now scientists tell us we have only 14 years or so left, before we have climate disaster.**

Today we face a dilemma of death; will it be by a conscious decision, or by a failure to act? Right now there is a young man sitting at a control panel 24/7 waiting to fire a missile. When ordered, he will launch nuclear bombs of incredible power and destructiveness. Apart from causing unimaginable human carnage this will, in effect, sterilize the planet. Nuclear winter (isn't it funny how you never hear this expression nowadays?) will destroy the biosphere. This will be a global catastrophe that we inflict on ourselves.

We think we are tremendously sophisticated because we have made such marvellous advances

in the sciences, but the truth is our position is really primitive, from as ethical point of view. We are right back where we started. "I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore life, that both you and your children may live" (Deut. 30 19).

And we have chosen death. In our madness and stupidity, we have chosen to reverse genesis, surely the greatest blasphemy ever. How can we talk of loving God, but destroy God's creation?

We live in a hopeless, post Christian world, not because secularism has won the argument, but because we have failed to be witness to the alternative. Our prophetic voice is hesitant, or silent.

As the American Jew, Abraham Joshua Heschel said "It is customary to blame secularism for the eclipse of religion in modern society. But it would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive and insipid. When faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain, when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than the voice of compassion - its message becomes meaningless".

Extinction hasn't happened yet, and until it does, we must act as if we had hope.

*Brian Quail*