



Missionary Society of St Columban  
聖高隆龐傳教會  
*General Council*

**Columban Missionaries Call for Just and Binding Agreements at the UN COP21 in Paris**

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Columban General Council on the opening of the United Nations' COP21 in Paris, joins Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, faith leaders and millions of people around the world in calling for just and legally binding agreements by governments to limit human-induced carbon emissions which are changing Earth's climate.

**Columban Superior General, Fr. Kevin O'Neill**, "Our mission experience of living with poor communities that have been marginalized and the natural world that has been exploited as well as Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching, and science impel us to seek ways to restore right relationships with all of Creation. The reality of climate change invites us to ongoing personal and communal ecological conversion which leads to both personal lifestyle and structural change"<sup>1</sup>.

Specifically, Columban missionaries support the call of the **Global Catholic Climate Movement** for governments at COP21 to cut carbon emissions to keep the global temperature rise below the dangerous 1.5°C threshold, and to aid the world's poorest in coping with climate change impacts.

Internationally recognized eco-theologian, **Columban Fr. Sean McDonagh** says, "We must continually learn from science, evolve our theology, and humbly situate ourselves in the wider creation story that began with the initial flaring forth 13.7 billion years ago to the world in which we live now and in to the future. We must be open to encounter creation and learn from it."

As Pope Francis speaks of Integral Ecology in *Laudato Si'*, Columban missionaries see the links between climate change and social concerns such as global migration, conflicts and war, economic poverty, and unsustainable development models. Our missionary commitments in response to the damaging impacts of climate change and inter-related concerns include: ongoing ecological conversion, formation, advocacy, inter-religious dialogue, community development, and socially responsible investing.

We join the Holy Father, people of all faiths and good will – and welcome the recent Islamic and Buddhist declarations<sup>2</sup> on climate change - in pleading for a major break-through in Paris, for a comprehensive and transformational agreement supported by all based on principles of solidarity, justice and participation.<sup>3</sup> True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good. (*Laudato Si'* #178)

**We pray a Prayer for the Earth<sup>4</sup>:**

*God of love, teach us to care for this world our common home. Inspire government leaders as they gather in Paris to listen to and heed the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor; to be united in heart and mind in responding courageously; to seek the common good and protect the beautiful earthly garden you have created for us, for all our brothers and sisters, for all generations to come. Amen*

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<sup>1</sup> Columban Statement on Climate Change: <http://www.columbans.co.uk/news/jpic-policy-statements-of-the-columban-missionary-society/>

<sup>2</sup> Buddhist declaration: <http://gbccc.org/> ; Islamic declaration: <http://islamicclimatedeclaration.org/islamic-declaration-on-global-climate-change/>

<sup>3</sup> Address of the Holy Father, United Nations Headquarters, New York, Friday 25 September 2015.

<sup>4</sup> In a statement released by presidents of all associations of continental bishops conferences 22 October 2015. <http://www.cidse.org/newsroom/press-release-catholic-church-worldwide-calls-for-urgent-climate-action-and-for-a-major-break-through-at-the-cop-21-paris-conference.html>