



# TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

*The firstfruits of hope*  
(Rom 8:19-25)



## Journey of Hope A Walk for the Season of Creation

*Saturday, 28 September 2024, 10.30 am – 1.30 pm  
beginning in Mount Street Gardens, London W1*



*Photo: Unsplash/Anthony Delanoix*

*Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without  
the words, and never stops at all,*

*And sweetest in the gale is heard; and sore must be the storm that could abash the  
little bird that kept so many warm.*

*I've heard it in the chilliest land, and on the strangest sea; yet, never, in extremity, it  
asked a crumb of me.*

*Emily Dickinson*

## **Reading: from the 'Contemplation to Attain Love' in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola**

'God dwells in creatures; in the elements, giving them existence; in the plants, giving them life; in the animals, giving them sensation; in human beings, giving them intelligence.' (Exx 235) 'God ... is working in the heavens, elements, plants, fruits, cattle and all the rest – giving them their existence, conserving them, concurring with their vegetative and sensitive activities, and so forth.' (Exx 236)

## **Celtic blessings for those going on a journey** *recited by all*

Bless to me, O God, the earth beneath my foot.  
Bless to me, O God, the path whereon I go.  
Bless to me, O God, the thing of my desire.  
Thou evermore of evermore, bless Thou to me my rest.

As Thou wast before at my life's beginning, be Thou again at my journey's end.  
As Thou wast besides at my soul's shaping,  
Father, be Thou too, at my journey's close.

The blessing-help of the Three be upon my wishing.  
The blessing-help of the Three be upon my willing.  
The blessing-help of the Three be upon my walking, and upon my knees  
that they may never weaken.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
May the Three in One be with us day and night,  
Whether in the depths of the sea or on the mountainside,  
May our Mother be with us, her arm around our head.

Amen.

***We walk along Mount Street to Berkeley Square and cross into the gardens in the middle of the square.***

## Stop 1 – Berkeley Square

### Main focus: mining

The mining industry is crucial to the current industrial economy, but it is hugely destructive. Most mining uses the ‘opencast’ method, digging enormous holes in the ground to reach the rocks in which the desired minerals are found. Vegetation and soil are removed, water sources disrupted or destroyed, and people living over the minerals evicted, often by force. Much mining now takes place on Indigenous Peoples’ land or that of other land-based people practicing small-scale agriculture. Their cultures and livelihoods are sacrificed for the benefit of consumers and shareholders far away. Wastes from mining can create toxic pollution for thousands of years after mining finishes. Dams built to contain mining wastes often collapse, causing environmental destruction and human deaths.

Many mining companies have offices in London and raise money on the London Stock Exchange. One of the world’s largest mining companies is Glencore, which is also the largest non-state-owned coal mining company. It has offices in Berkeley Street. Our speakers will share with us points of concern about the company and signs of hope for the future. Things do not have to stay the way they are!

We then spend some moments in silent meditation, during which you may wish to ponder words from Pope Francis’ encyclical letter *Laudato Si, on care for our common home*.

### Points for meditation from *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis

LS 69 Together with our obligation to use the earth’s goods responsibly, we are called to recognise 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” (Psalm 104.31). By virtue of our unique dignity and our gift of intelligence, we are called to respect creation and its inherent laws, for “the Lord by wisdom founded the earth” (Proverbs 3.19). In our time, the Church does not simply state that other creatures are completely subordinated to the good of human beings, as if they had no worth in themselves and can be treated as we wish.

LS90 We should be concerned lest other living beings be treated irresponsibly. But we should be particularly indignant at the enormous

inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some considering themselves more worthy than others. We fail to see that some are mired in desperate and degrading poverty, with no way out, while others have not the faintest idea what to do with their possessions, vainly showing off their supposed superiority and leaving behind them so much waste that, if it were the case everywhere, would destroy the planet. In practice, we continue to tolerate that some consider themselves more human than others, as if they had been born with greater rights.

LS91 A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.

### **Bidding prayer**

Let us pray for our sister, Mother Earth, our common home, for the healing of the Earth's climate and ecosystems; for all those whose lives are blighted by large scale mining; for human rights and environmental defenders suffering persecution for their work; and for the work of our Jesuit colleagues in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Lord, in your mercy,  
***Hear our prayer.***

### **Moving on...**

*We walk down Berkeley Street into Piccadilly, turn left, cross the street and go down St James's Street, taking the first left into Jermyn Street and third right into Duke of York Street, which brings us into St James's Square. We turn left and stop on the wide pavement in the corner of the square, just outside Rio Tinto's offices at 6 St James's Square and close to BP's at Number 1.*

## Stop 2 – St James’s Square

### **Main focus: extractive industries – mining, oil and gas**

Use of fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – is the main driver of damaging global heating, which is causing or exacerbating sea level rise, extreme weather events, desertification, ecosystem collapse, species extinctions and threats to food production and human health, especially the health of the world’s poor. The ‘extractive industries’ which supply the fossil fuels doing the damage, are nonetheless very profitable, and financial institutions, including ordinary people’s pension funds, banks and insurance companies, continue to invest in them.

Mining can also provide possible alternatives to fossil fuels, the minerals needed for wind turbines, solar panels and electric batteries. But the massive expansion currently planned to meet projected demand means that even more communities and ecosystems will be sacrificed in order to support an energy-intensive, materials-intensive lifestyle. Perhaps we need to re-evaluate our use of minerals and find ways to live well with less ‘stuff’.

BP is one of Britain’s largest companies and one of the largest oil and gas companies in the world. Rio Tinto is the world’s second largest mining company and produces minerals for the low-carbon transition as well as for many other uses, including for the weapons industry. Both companies have their head offices in St James’s Square. Our speakers will mention issues of concern and signs of hope. We will then have some moments of silent meditation.

### **Points for meditation from *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis**

LS21 Account must be taken of the pollution produced by residue, including dangerous waste present in different areas. Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive, from homes and businesses, from construction and demolition sites, from clinical, electronic and industrial sources. The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.

LS33 It is not enough to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant

and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.

### **Bidding prayer**

Let us pray for the stabilisation of the Earth's climate; for all those species and human communities suffering now because of global heating; for all who are working to avert climate catastrophe; and for those who will inherit the Earth from us.

Lord, in your mercy,  
***Hear our prayer.***

### **Moving on...**

*We walk out of the southeastern corner of St James's Square into Pall Mall, turn left, cross the road, turn right into Waterloo Place, pass the Duke of York Monument and walk down the steps on to The Mall. We cross The Mall and walk down the side of St James's Park, parallel to Horse Guards Parade, and turn left into Great George Street at the bottom. We continue along the north side of Parliament Square and on past Westminster tube station and Victoria Embankment and stop at the riverside corner of Westminster Bridge and Victoria Embankment, opposite Portcullis House.*

## **Stop 3 – Victoria Embankment**

### **Main focus: (1) water and agriculture (2) sustainable architecture**

Water, like air, is absolutely necessary for human life. Catholic Social Teaching states that everyone has a right to clean water to drink. But vast amounts of water are diverted into extractive, industrial and agricultural processes, or polluted by those processes. Production of certain fruits for export can divert water from local people. Rearing of livestock can cause severe water pollution. Production of a litre of soft drink can use many litres of water and leave polluted water in place of clean water.

Standing by the River Thames, we remember that it used to be extremely polluted. Construction of sewers and legislation to limit pollution meant that the river could sustain a greater variety of life, including fish, again.

But many rivers around the world remain seriously polluted. Many of the world's poorest people do not have access to clean drinking water. In areas where clean water is readily available, much of it is wasted.

Shelter is also a basic human need and is understood by the Church as a human right. Design of buildings can play an important part in working against climate change. Production of cement creates huge amounts of greenhouse gases. Concrete increases demand for sand as a building material, and sand mining can have very damaging effects on marine environments. Demand for steel for high rise buildings plays an important role in driving demand for iron ore mining, which has been responsible in recent years for two catastrophic waste dam collapses. Badly insulated buildings can be difficult to heat and cool, leading to excessive use of electricity and gas. Standing opposite Portcullis House, we consider the possibility and importance of 'sustainable' architecture.

We end with some moments of silent meditation.

### **Points for meditation from *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis**

LS 139 When we speak of the "environment", what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. 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. Recognising the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behaviour patterns, and the ways it grasps reality. Given the scale of change, it is no longer possible to find a specific, discrete answer for each part of the problem. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems and with social systems. We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combatting poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.

LS 231 Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also 'macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones. ... Social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt

environmental degradation and to encourage a 'culture of care' which permeates all of society.

### **Bidding prayer**

Let us pray that the waters of the Earth may be treated with reverence and safeguarded with care; that polluted waters may be cleaned so as to become life-giving again; that all beings may have access to the water that they need to sustain life; and that the creators of our built environment may ensure that it enhances the life of the Earth, our common home.

Lord, in your mercy,  
***Hear our prayer.***

### **Moving on...**

*We return to Parliament Square, walk again along its north side, then cross Great George Street to walk past the Middlesex Guildhall on the west side, turn right into Victoria Street and gather under the trees by the raised grass area in front of the QEII Conference Centre.*

## **Stop 4 – Parliament Square**

### **Main focus: (1) public policy (2) institutional investment**

Standing close to the Houses of Parliament, the Supreme Court and various government offices, and to buildings connected with financial investment and corporate power, we consider how public policies, legal and investment decisions made in London – and often within a few hundred metres of where we are standing – affect people around the world, for good or ill, and how we can influence those decisions for good.

We end with a time of silent meditation.

### **Points for meditation from *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis**

LS49 It needs to be said that, generally speaking, there is little in the way of clear awareness of problems which especially affect the excluded. Yet they are the majority of the planet's population, billions of people. These days, they are mentioned in international political and economic discussions, but one often has the impression that their problems are brought up as an afterthought, a question which gets added almost out of



duty or in a tangential way, if not treated merely as collateral damage. ... This is due partly to the fact that many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centres of power, being located in affluent urban areas, are far removed from the poor, with little direct contact with their problems. They live and reason from the comfortable position of a high level of development and a quality of life well beyond the reach of the majority of the world's population. This lack of physical contact and encounter ... can lead to a numbing of conscience and to tendentious analyses which neglect parts of reality. At times this attitude exists side by side with a "green" rhetoric. Today, however, we have to realise that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*.

### **Bidding prayer**

Let us pray for those who wield political and economic power, that they may be enlightened by the wisdom of God and guided by the love of God, that their decisions may help to heal the Earth and enhance the lives of all beings on the Earth, particularly those who are most deprived and oppressed.

Lord, in your mercy,  
***Hear our prayer.***

### **Moving on...**

*We walk down Victoria Street to Westminster Cathedral Plaza, opposite the Cardinal Shopping Centre.*

## **Stop 5 – Victoria Street**

### **Main focus: the fashion industry**

Standing opposite the fashion shops in and around the Cardinal Shopping Centre, we note the effect of fast fashion on worker rights, water consumption and pollution, use of oil-based artificial fabrics and environmental impacts of dumping clothing in the Global South, where in some areas it creates serious pollution problems. We live in a consumer society that constantly urges us to buy more, equating what we possess with who we are. We note efforts being made by some fashion companies to address these problems.

We end with a time of silent meditation.

### **Points for meditation from *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis**

LS222 We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that “less is more”. A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment.

### **Bidding prayer**

Let us pray that we may all keep in mind the words of Christ: “Why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his royal robes was clothed like one of these.” Let us pray that the work of clothing ourselves may never harm our human brothers and sisters or our Mother Earth, but be a blessing to all beings.

Lord, in your mercy,  
***Hear our prayer.***

***As we finish, we reflect on our Journey of Hope in the words of the Jesuit poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins***

### **God’s Grandeur**

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.

***The event finishes with a blessing.***

*You may care to continue meditating on the subject as you travel home.*

**Final points for meditation from *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis**

LS97 The Lord was able to invite others to be attentive to the beauty that there is in the world because he himself was in constant touch with nature, lending it an attention full of fondness and wonder. As he made his way throughout the land, he often stopped to contemplate the beauty sown by his Father, and invited his disciples to perceive a divine message in things.

LS 233 The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things. Saint Bonaventure teaches us that "contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God's grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves."

LS 244, 245 We come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast. In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God... May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope. God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!



*Photo: Unsplash/NCI*

**Jesuit Missions is the international mission and development organisation of the Jesuits in Britain.**

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