



# Thursday: 'Protecting Our Common Home'

## Keywords

**Grandeur Conservation Scenario Challenge Awakening Franciscan Sustainability Origin Green Firm Resolve**

In relation to 'Protecting Our Common Home', what is the world saying?

**Watch:** [https://youtu.be/uFwlaEv\\_ArY](https://youtu.be/uFwlaEv_ArY)

## Think – Pair – Share

1. List all the ways in which the United States of America are showing that protecting our common home is important.
2. Compare your list with your neighbour's list. Then each group of two students shares with another two students. If your neighbour / group has a point that you don't have, add it to your list
3. In your groups, discuss the following: How did President Obama react to the decision to shut down the 'Land and Water Conservation Fund'?

## Reflective Exercise

How did you react to hearing President Obama quote Pope Francis? In what way has President Obama acted to show that he believes that the world is a 'Gift from God'. Research other things that President Obama has done in his time as President to show that he believes in protecting our common home.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis describes our common home as 'like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.' If we truly believe this, how can we do it so much harm? How can we not protect it?

**Task:** Imagine that you could see the world through the eyes of the following. Describe your experience. You may need to use the internet to research these scenarios.

Scenario	Experience
A honey bee	
A migrant fleeing their home	
A person living in a polluted, over populated city who is suffering from lung disease	
A woman and child in Bangladesh who has been rescued from flooding	
An orphan in Haiti whose family have been killed in a hurricane	
A child living in an over populated neighbourhood with no access to green space	
Adolescent in their room unable to switch off their technological devices	
A person compulsively shopping online	



In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis calls us to 'contemplate with wonder, the universe in all its grandeur and beauty.' By doing this, we offer praise to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, has written a poem called 'God's Grandeur.' The very first line tells us that 'the world is charged with the grandeur of God.' Read the poem and engage with the accompanying questions.

### 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.

### Questions:

1. What theme dominates the poem?
2. Explain the term 'grandeur of God.'
3. Describe the things man has done to the world?
4. What will be the impact of this treatment for nature?
5. According to the poet, what offers protection to the earth?
6. Why do you think this poem is relevant to the message that Pope Francis is delivering in *Laudato Si'*?

### Challenge

'Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.'

How do we do this? And what are the benefits of protecting our common home?

**Watch:** <https://youtu.be/EtF-vDvJ6p0>

### Discussion:

Having watched the video, describe the ways in which these three actions are connected. Create a poster or any form of artistic display that promotes how we can help protect our common home. The artistic display must use the phrase 'All you need is light, soil and water.'





### Reflective Exercise

Consider the importance of education in this video. Where does the sharing lead?

### Extension Exercise

Saint Teresa writes 'I am a little pencil in the hands of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world'. Imagine that you are that pencil in God's hands. What gifts and talents are unique to you that could bring about an ecological change?

### Task:

Pope Francis is the first pope to take the name 'Francis'. He took the name because of St Francis of Assisi. Research the life of St Francis of Assisi and explore the reasons why Pope Francis took his papal name from St Francis of Assisi. Having done this, explore the 'Franciscan' Order. Read about the work that they do and consider the following question: would St Francis be proud of the work of the Franciscan Order in Ireland today?' (You must give reasons for your answer)



### Faith, Hope and Love

#### Faith

In the sacrament of Baptism we were given the gift of our faith and in the sacrament of Confirmation, we are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Our faith can give us the strength and courage to overcome the obstacles in our lives - even a challenge as great as a global crisis.

#### Hope

The Gospel message is a 'Good News' message. It is a message of hope that no matter what challenges life puts in our way; God is with us. 'I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.' (Matt. 28:20)

#### Love

Jesus said 'And now these three things remain; faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love.' Love is at the heart of our common home. Therefore, love ought to be at the heart of protecting our common home. 'True love is love that causes us pain, that hurts yet brings us joy...that is why we must pray to have the courage to love.' (Mother Teresa, 'No Greater Love')

### Faith, Hope and Love in Action

Faith, Hope and Love are very much the foundation for how Christians think and act. An example of Faith, Hope and Love in action is Darkness Into Light. The following account is of the Mitchelstown *Darkness into Light*.

In 2016 we held our first *Darkness Into Light* walk / run in Mitchelstown in support of Pieta House. I had taken part in the walk in Limerick the previous year and really felt supported and connected to the people around me. However, as I walked around the streets of Limerick, I heard a nagging voice in my head saying 'I need to bring this further.' So, having spoken to some people in my local community, I set up a public meeting and we formed an organising committee. We were met with enormous support and positivity within our community. Pledges of support were given from a wide section of the community. *Darkness Into Light* is the flagship fundraising event from Pieta House. Pieta House provides a free counselling service for people who are at risk of committing suicide or are self-harming. On the 7th May 2016, at 4.15 a.m., over 2,000 people walked in solidarity with all those who have been affected by suicide or self-harm. We sent out a message to our community, and beyond, that no state of mind is permanent and we each have a part to play in lighting the way for one another. After the event, I heard many stories about how people felt understood, uplifted, less isolated and empowered, as they knew they were not alone. (Anonymous)



**Questions:**

1. List some of the internal challenges facing the writer of this piece as she set out on her journey to bring Darkness Into Light to Mitchelstown.
2. What were the benefits for the participants that took part in Darkness Into Light, Mitchelstown?
3. Have you ever taken part in *Darkness Into Light* or a similar project? If so, write an account of your experience.

**Reflective Exercise**

Having read the above account of one woman's experience of Darkness Into Light, can you identify some of the benefits from the experience of taking part in/ bearing witnessing to Darkness Into Light for those who are affected by suicide or self-harm. Research some accounts of this online.

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**An Irish Project**

**Watch:** <https://youtu.be/FXUA95sBfik>

**Task:**

Having watched the video, explain the phrase 'A bold promise to the world!'

**What is Origin Green**

(Information found at [www.origingreen.ie](http://www.origingreen.ie))

**Brainstorm:** Ask students if they have heard of **Origin Green** or if they know anything about it.

Read the list of bullet points that contain facts about **Origin Green**.

- Launched in 2012
- National sustainability programme
- The only sustainability programme in the world that operates at a national level
- Unites the Government, private sector and food producers
- Set and achieve measurable sustainability targets
- Reduce environmental impact
- Serve local communities
- Aim: that every farm and food manufacturing business throughout Ireland will be on the road to sustainable production by the end of 2016
- 2008 Bord Bia begins initial research
- 2009 – Bord Bia receive Carbon Footprinting Training
- 2010 – Assessment of the food and drink industry
- 2011 – Bord Bia's research is complete
- 2012 – Bord Bia pilot new sustainability charter
- 2013 – Bord Bia host inaugural Global Sustainability Conference
- 2014 – Over 360 food and drink manufacturers registered interest
- 2015 – Over 470 food and drink manufacturers registered interest & Carbon footprinting being used in the areas of Lamb, Pigs and Poultry





**Numeracy Task:**

Create a timeline to represent the development made by Origin Green. Do not limit yourself to the information here. Refer to the website for a more detailed image of the developments made by Origin Green.

**Numeracy Task:**

Origin Green has 122 verified members. (You will find the list at [www.origingreen.ie](http://www.origingreen.ie))

Explore the list of members and identify the following:

1. The percentage of companies you know on the list
2. The percentage of companies you use from the list

We are called to 'Protect our Common Home'. We need to take responsibility for the work that needs to be done during this global ecological crisis. Let us strive to care, connect and share.

