



CHURCH of IRELAND GENERAL SYNOD
CHURCH in SOCIETY COMMITTEE
Ecological and Environmental Sub-Committee

Over the past year the sub-committee has continued its work on two fronts. On the one hand the ecumenical work has further developed through Eco-Congregation Ireland, where progress has been advanced with the addition of the Society of Friends to the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland representatives on the panel.

Several parishes (including two from the Church of Ireland) are almost ready to undergo assessment for the Eco-Congregation Award. If successful these will be the first to receive the award under the Irish administration, the only other Irish award having been made to St Molua's Stormont before the Irish branch of Eco-Congregation came into being.

Eco-Congregation Ireland has also made a significant contribution to the work of several other bodies including Friends of the Earth, Trocaire and Christian Aid with a regular report made to the Inter-Church Meeting. The sub-committee expresses its thanks to the other members of the Eco-Congregation Ireland Committee: Helen Sheil (Methodist Church), Catherine Brennan SSL (Roman Catholic Church), Natasha Harty (Society of Friends), Joe Furphy (Presbyterian Church).

On the second front, progress has continued within the Church of Ireland and there has been a concerted effort to encourage individual parishes to become "eco-friendly".

The *Ecological Workshop* held at the Emmaus Centre, Swords, saw attendance double from the previous year's workshop at Dromantine with a healthy balance between northern and southern delegates. The number of parishes showing an interest in environmental work continues to grow steadily and the advice of the sub-committee continues to be sought on a regular basis.

One successful and particularly constructive development has been the establishment of an e-mail magazine entitled *Greening the Church*, produced intermittently, and sent to individuals throughout the Church of Ireland. The number of recipients is growing with every edition and this cost-free project is intended to provide information on the many and varied activities of eco-parishes throughout the country and to encourage further development at "grass roots" level.

Through the sub-committee many Church of Ireland parishes took part in the very worthwhile and rewarding *Global Day of Action on Climate Change* (Saturday 8 December 2007) when church bells were rung throughout the country and mass demonstrations were held in several centres including Dublin and Belfast. The aim of the

action, which coincided with the Bali talks on climate change, was to draw the matter of climate change to the attention of everyone including local politicians.

The sub-committee has also been encouraging the viewing of the Al Gore film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, which it considers to be a valuable and thought-provoking contribution to the debate on Global Warming. The film has now been shown at several centres throughout the land.

The development of an Environmental Policy for central and Church offices has further progressed in the past year and is now nearing completion.

The thanks of the sub-committee is expressed to all those who have recently acted as consultants in respect of its work.

FUTURE OBJECTIVES

- Further encourage good ecological practice at parish level by continuing the publication of *Greening the Church* and holding the annual *Ecological Workshop*;
- Complete the *Environmental Policy* for central and Church offices;
- Continue ecological and environmental inter-church activity by encouraging parishes to use Eco-Congregation Ireland and to apply for the Eco-Congregation Award.