

PARISH RESOURCE FOR LENT 2026

'Strength and honour
are her clothing'
(Proverbs 31:25)

trocaire
TOGETHER FOR A JUST WORLD

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ABOUT TRÓCAIRE

Trócaire is the overseas development agency of the Irish Catholic Church.

We work in partnership with local development and humanitarian actors, to support people and communities to tackle the root causes of poverty, injustice and violence and to use their own power to create positive and lasting change. Trócaire is rooted in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, the social teaching of the Church, which inspires us to live out the Gospel message of inclusion, love, justice and dignity for all. It is inspired by Scripture, the wisdom of Church leaders, and the lived experience of grassroots movements. In the words of Trócaire's founding document, in which the bishops of Ireland gave the organisation a strong and clear mandate, 'We know that we cannot claim to love God if we do not love our fellow men and women.'

Trócaire has worked through local partner organisations since its foundation. Partnership is at the heart of how Trócaire works. We work with local faith and non-faith-based organisations who share our values and who are working on any or all of our core programme areas of women's empowerment, resource rights and humanitarian preparedness and response. These organisations understand the needs of their communities and

are best placed to work with communities to deliver sustainable long-term change.

The theme of the 2026 Trócaire Lenten campaign centres on the story of a multi-generational, female-led household in rural Rwanda. At just 28 years old, Uwamahoro is carrying the weight of three generations on her shoulders. She supports her mother, Verediana, 68, who lives with a disability, her daughter Ineza, 7 and her niece Vanessa, 12. Earning just 60 cent per day working on the land, Uwamahoro is doing the best she can to feed her family and keep the children in school, but it's never enough. The next storm could destroy everything Uwamahoro has built. Their house is crumbling, the roof is leaking, they live in darkness with no electricity, and with each storm, they fear for their safety. This is not unusual for women across Rwanda, where severe storms are striking faster and more often, before families can recover from the last. We are asking the people of Ireland to help Uwamahoro rebuild her family's lives and restore their hopes for the future. We wish to thank Bishop Kevin Doran and Pariah Pastoral Worker Mary Kirk for their help in writing this resource.

INTRODUCTION TO RWANDA AND TRÓCAIRE'S WORK

Rwanda is a small, landlocked and densely populated country with around 13.6 million people, of which 52 percent are women, 65 percent are under the age of 30 and 72 percent live in rural areas.

Less than half the size of Ireland, but more than double the population, Rwanda's rural population density is amongst the highest in the world.

The country's economy remains largely dependent on agriculture, with 69 percent of rural households involved in small-scale farming on small plots of land. Irregular rainfall, drought, floods, pests and diseases, together with intense competition for agricultural land, continue to affect food security.

Located on the East African Rift, a region of intense tectonic activity, Rwanda is known as the 'Land of a Thousand Hills', with lush, sloped land covering much of the country, particularly the west. This means that as the effects of climate change have intensified, and flash flooding has become more common, the threat of landslides has risen. The Climate Just Communities (CJC) programme includes participants whose homes have been destroyed by such landslides in recent years.

In 2024, Rwanda hosted around 135,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi. Rwanda experiences shocks and stressors, including the effects of regional conflicts, a changing climate with increases in floods, droughts, and landslides.

Education in Rwanda

The government in Rwanda takes education very seriously and primary school is free. However, a lot of families, including Uwamahoro's, still struggle to pay for the costs associated with sending their children to school, such as uniform costs and materials. In the family's community, there are technically no school fees, but the

school asks for a contribution per child, per term to cover the cost of school lunches, which places a burden on parents like Uwamahoro. The costs of school uniforms, copybooks etc also need to be covered by families. There are state exams for older children, which also cost money.

How the Climate Crisis is Affecting Rwanda

Rising rainfall, rising risk

In Western Rwanda, intense rainfall is now five times more likely to lead to deadly flooding and landslides, displacing families and destroying homes. (Ref: UN OCHA, 2023)

A food crisis fuelled by floods

Worsening storms and poor soil have caused crop yields to drop by over 50% in some regions. For farming families, this means more hunger and less income. (Ref: FAO, 2023)

Women carry the burden

Across Rwanda, women do 70% of agricultural work, as men are more likely to seek paid work in cities or towns. When climate change strikes, it is the work of mothers and grandmothers which is affected. (Ref: UN Women, 2022)



MEET THE FAMILY FROM THE TRÓCAIRE BOX

At just 28, Uwamahoro has the weight of three generations on her shoulders.

Living on the equivalent of 60 cent income a day from working in the fields of the local community, Uwamahoro is supporting her mother, Verediana, 67, her daughter Ineza, 7 and her niece Vanessa, 12.

Every morning, Uwamahoro sets out to find work in the local community. After rising at 6am or earlier, she cooks porridge for her mother and children, one of only two daily meals they have, she gets the children ready for the walk to school and then leaves to find some work for the day.

This income of 1,000 Rwandan Francs, or 60 cent per day, is reliant on the landowners in the local

community and the crops their lands produce, such as climbing beans or coffee beans. If there is no work in the fields, Uwamahoro cleans clothes or offers to clean the school to earn a wage.

Uwamahoro works from 7am until 1pm every day, when she goes home to help her mother in the house. The grandmother of the family, 68-year-old Verediana, lives with a disability and is unable to work. The family do not have any livestock or land, so they are solely reliant on Uwamahoro's income to buy food, along with whatever they can gather themselves from around the local community, such as cassava leaves and beans,



Uwamahoro, Vanessa, Ineza and Verediana at their home.
Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

which she pounds down to make a stew. She said, “you can’t work for 1,000 Rwandan Francs and get lunch and supper for the family – that’s why we only take supper in the evening. If we had money to get lunch, we would also be happy to have lunch as well.”

The house Uwamahoro’s family live in is a small mudbrick structure with three small, virtually empty rooms. With no electricity or windows, the family live in near total darkness all day and night. They used to have a separate outdoor kitchen where they could cook safely and burn firewood for the stove without smoke filling the house. However, a heavy rainstorm destroyed the kitchen. Now, Uwamahoro cooks using a small pot and some firewood in the back room of the house, while her mother and the children stay in another room to avoid the smoke. After heavy rains, when the firewood is wet, the smoke intensifies and spreads into other rooms.

Impact of the rains

Losing her kitchen is just one of the many ways the increasingly severe rainstorms have impacted Uwamahoro and her family. Waking one night to a terrible rainstorm, Uwamahoro suggested to her mother that the family take the children and shelter elsewhere. Deciding there was nowhere else to go, they waited through the storm and watched as the roof was torn from the building. For a time, they covered what they could of the house with banana leaves until Uwamahoro could borrow some money to have a temporary roof put in place.

All of the family’s belongings were destroyed by those heavy rains, including their floor mattresses, bedsheets, kitchen equipment and dinnerware. Most of these, they haven’t had the money to replace, so they each sleep on a mattress made from long grasses, basic bedcovers and among the family, they share “one cup, one plate, one saucepan”.

The heavy rains also impact the children’s schooling as their notebooks were damaged, and it was a while before there was money to replace them. When rains are prolonged, the children are unable to make it up the hill as the muddy ground becomes impassable from floods.

Some members of the community who have radios spread the word of incoming storms with their neighbours. When this happens,



Ineza playing.

Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

Uwamahoro, Verediana and the children huddle together for the night and wait for the rains to pass. When the conditions are bad enough, work on the land is paused so many are left without an avenue to income until the weather improves. Being housebound also restricts the family’s ability to get food, so when the rains come, Uwamahoro said they “often sleep without eating”. Her mother, Verediana, said that hunger is her biggest worry, and that sometimes she is so hungry she feels like she could die.

The impact of the rains on the environment is also significant. Heavy rains destroy the crops, beans cannot be harvested, affecting both income and food sources for the whole community.

Thérèse, a neighbour of Uwamahoro’s and a community leader, explains that climate change has had a disproportionate affect on women in the community. “Mostly it affects women. Most of our activities are farming, especially for household feeding. When climate change affects the seasons, it affects the harvest.” She explains that they have started to plant some of the crops earlier to avoid the severe rains, but both rains and drought can



Uwamahoro standing beside the mud slide.

Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

affect the harvest, with extended dry seasons also impacting the supply of drinking water to families in the area. The family gather water from a nearby well, with Vanessa, Uwamahoro's niece, often carrying the jerrycan back to the house to help with the preparation of meals.

Education and the future

Both Vanessa, age 12, and Ineza, age 7, attend school about a 30 minute walk from the house, walking up one of the community's many steep hills to start class every morning at 8am. Uwamahoro believes strongly in her children getting an education, which she didn't have the opportunity to get when she was younger. She said that "if we had a child that went to school, they could get a job and help the family. We don't have anyone in our family who is educated, and that is why we are struggling so much. In Rwanda, when you have an education, you have a future".

In Rwanda, education is mostly free, but the school asks families to pay 1,000 Rwandan Francs (RWF) per term as a contribution towards school meals, but Uwamahoro, along with many other families, often does not have this to spare. When there is no money, she cannot pay the fees, or buy the children the clothes, shoes or books that they need for school. Or sometimes, they eat less, cooking just cassava leaves, so they can afford to pay for school. Uwamahoro relies on

the kindness of the community to make sure the children can continue their studies. They do not have electricity, so Uwamahoro borrowed RWF 500 from a neighbour to buy a small torch so that Ineza could continue her studies in the evenings at home.

For the future, Uwamahoro's biggest hope is to have help with fixing her house, so it is liveable, and to have a reliable daily income. She hopes one day she can get a sewing machine and start a business working in tailoring in the community.

For Verediana, living with a disability adds more challenges to the family's daily life. Having survived the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Verediana has experienced very significant trauma in her life. Verediana has lived in the community since she was a young girl. Although there were a number of small houses on her family's plot of land, which were destroyed during the war, leaving them with only the house she lives in now with Uwamahoro. Verediana's faith helps her endure, she says "the only thing we do is believe in God, and we are hopeful that the God who created us will make sure we have a good life in the future because he knows more than we do."

As a single parent with the weight of three generations of her family on her shoulders, Uwamahoro remains strong despite the many

challenges she faces. “That is love”, she says, “when things come, there is nothing else you can do.” For someone who has had a very difficult life, and continues to face very significant daily challenges, Verediana is quite positive and says that what she requires is very little.

‘What I can tell people is that if I only get what to eat and what to drink, that is enough.’

How is Trócaire helping?

The family are involved in the Climate Just Communities (CJC), a Trócaire programme that is implemented in collaboration with our local partners, including Duterimbere ONG, based in Rwanda. The CJC empowers communities to build long-term resilience to climate change. Families in Karongi live with huge challenges such as unpredictable weather, food insecurity, and loss of livelihoods. The programme aims to empower these communities, particularly women, youth, persons with disabilities, and inclusion to adopt sustainable practices that both mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Through the CJC, families in areas like Karongi receive support to cope with unpredictable weather, food insecurity, and loss of livelihoods. This includes:

- **Climate adaptation support**, such as repairing or rebuilding homes damaged by climate-related events.
- **Livelihood improvements**, like the provision of small livestock and clean, the distribution of efficient cookstoves.
- **Access to essential services**, including community health insurance for vulnerable households.
- **Training in sustainable practices** that both mitigate climate change and help families adapt to it.

The CJC programme strengthens community resilience by ensuring fair access to resources, promoting environmental sustainability, and enabling meaningful participation in decision-making, particularly for women.



Ineza playing.

Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

Trócaire’s support, in collaboration with the CJC, helps communities better prepare for, respond to, and recover from the growing impacts of climate change.

Solution and Impact

Impact

Last year, Trócaire worked with over 40,000 people in at-risk communities across Rwanda, helping vulnerable families build resilience against climate change by:

- Supporting over 2,500 women to receive training in sustainable resource management
- Providing over 20,000 families with fuel-efficient cookstoves to reduce firewood use
- Planting over 320,000 trees across the country

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Newsletter

Last year, Trócaire worked with over 40,000 people in at-risk communities across Rwanda, helping vulnerable families build resilience against climate change by:

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- Providing over 20,000 families with fuel-efficient cookstoves to reduce firewood use
- Planting over 320,000 trees across the country



Prayers of the Faithful

1) We pray for the people of Karongi, Western Rwanda who we journey with this Lent. As we learn more about the challenges they face to survive, may we stand in solidarity with them as followers of Jesus.

Lord, hear us

2) For Uwamahoro, her mother Verediana, daughter Ineza age 7, and niece Vanessa age 12 who are on the Trócaire Box this year. May we open our hearts to share generously with them through financial assistance, prayerful support and playing our part in caring more deeply for our common home this Lent.

Lord, hear us.



Communion Reflection

**Inspire in us a spirit of awe
by Sr Maura Fitzsimons, PBVM***

*Divine Creator, God,
We thank You
for the wonder of the universe
and its eons of time and life
that has sustained us.
We thank You for our sister mother earth,
her beauty and giftedness,
the bounty of her days
and her sacred ground.
Sadly, we have abused
earth's sacred space
and have misread its sacred story,
claiming it as our own,
opposing Your divine plan.
Its gift of sustainability*

*has been snatched away,
diminishing its sustenance
for the good of all.
Yes, we can hear its anguished cries
of pain and distress;
its resources stripped bare,
its climate distorted,
its water and soil poisoned,
its landscape unable to cope.
Creator God,
Help us to care for sister mother earth
with loving attention
to its sacred journey.
As it gives of itself without measure.
Inspire in us a spirit of awe
for its beauty and many life forms.
Amen.*



* Laudato Si' Animator. Shaw, Mississippi, United States of America. Reference: [Laudato Si' Movement Prayer Book](https://laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book)
laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book

A CHANGE OF MINDSET

First Sunday of Lent – Homily Notes

Bishop Kevin Doran (Bishop of Elphin and of Achonry)

On this First Sunday of Lent, the Church invites us to listen to the Gospel account of the Temptation of Jesus. It may seem strange that Jesus, who had just been Baptised and was “filled with the Holy Spirit”, experienced the temptation to abandon the mission entrusted to him, and to prioritise wealth and influence. The Gospel reminds us that even if we are close to God, we can be tempted. While the circumstances may differ, the temptation is usually the same, to put ourselves and our own agenda first. In his preaching Jesus asks us to “seek first the kingdom of God”. That is the focus of this season of Lent.

Images of poverty and hunger, war and natural disaster appear regularly on all our devices, almost as they happen. It is simply not possible for us to separate the suffering and the struggle of others from the reality of our own lives. Just by way of example, the coffee we drink each day is harvested by women like Uwamahoro in Rwanda. She works long hours in the heat of the day to produce it, but at the end of the day, she can't afford to feed her family or put a new roof on her house. Why is her reality so different from ours?

Forty years ago, Pope John Paul II wrote about how sinful attitudes, such as thirst for power and the desire for excessive profit, give rise to what he described as “sinful social structures”, resulting in poverty for individual people and whole populations in other parts of the world. In his letter “Dilexi Te” (DT), Pope Leo comments that, once these sinful structures take hold: “it then becomes normal to ignore the poor and live as if they do not exist. It then likewise seems reasonable to organise the economy in such a way that sacrifices are demanded of the masses in order to serve the needs of the powerful”. (DT, 93).

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Gospel Mt:1-11



Ineza playing near her home.
Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

Pope Leo is not asking us to give up coffee; he is asking us for a “change of mindset”. Beginning with each one of us, the sinful personal attitudes that shape our world can be replaced with the attitude of Christian solidarity or “social charity”, which sees people like Uwamahoro and her family, as people like ourselves, with all the hopes and fears and needs that we have. A new mindset will not just change how we act; it will also motivate us to be “influencers” for change in the way that governments and large multi-nationals act towards the people who live in the communities from which they draw their wealth. How might you be an influencer for change?.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Newsletter

The next storm could destroy everything this family has built. You can help Uwamahoro, the mother on our Trócaire box, to repair and rebuild her family's future.



Prayers of the Faithful

1) For all people in those parts of the world where extreme weather and storms destroy crops and homes and leave families in situations of extreme hunger and need. May we listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.
Lord, hear us.

2) We pray that governments, policymakers, communities and individuals will urgently work together to alleviate the effects of climate change especially on those communities who suffer most from its impacts.
Lord, hear us.



Communion Reflection *Everything sings greatness* by Giovanni Zanaboni*

*Praise and thanks be to You,
Creator of the universe
For the beauty and variety You have given us.
As seasons change,
the colours of the woods, countryside and meadows
also change continuously
and bring joy to our eyes,
along with new scents even for those who cannot see.
How marvelous the perfect mechanism that You thought of,
one of an orderly and joyful coexistence,
and with so much responsibility*

*for the beings You created in Your own image
and likeness!
The scent of the flowers, the majesty of the trees,
the song of the birds, the spectacle of the mushrooms
make of Your woods stupendous cathedrals,
where we celebrate in joy
the memorial of creation and our covenant as brothers and sisters.
From the heights of the snowy peaks
and from the depths of the abysses of the cerulean seas
everything sings the greatness of God our Creator.
Laudato Si', our Lord! Amen*



* Originally written in Italian by Giovanni Zanaboni, Laudato Si' Animator. Arcidosso, Toscana, Italy. Reference: *Laudato Si' Movement Prayer Book* laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book

BECOMING VISIBLE SIGNS OF GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN

Second Sunday of Lent – Homily Notes

Bishop Kevin Doran (Bishop of Elphin and of Achonry)

Abraham was a wandering shepherd, whom God chose to be the father of a great nation. The fulfilment of the promise begins with the birth of Isaac, when Abraham and his wife Sarah were already quite old. It is only natural that Abraham would want to show his appreciation. But what is he to do when God asks him to go up a high mountain and to sacrifice his only son, on whom the whole promise depends? As it turns out, this is not a story of child sacrifice, but a story about Abraham's willingness to put God first in his life. The mountain symbolises an encounter with God.

Our Gospel passage is also about an encounter with God on a mountain, and about a "beloved Son", Jesus, whose whole life is offered in sacrifice. We are asked to "listen to him". Listening to Jesus is not just about hearing what he says. It is also about "hearing" what he tells us by the way that he lives. Jesus doesn't just tell us to love our neighbour, to be kind to the poor, to reach out to those who are on the margins. He actually does all of these things on a daily basis in his ministry. We often say of a child: "she is the image of her mother", or "he is just like his father". Jesus is the beloved Son, because He is just like his Father. He reflects in his own life the faithful love of God. That is his mission, and it is our mission also, because, through our Baptism, we are one body in Christ.

In our Trócaire Lenten programme this year, we meet a family of four women, spread across three generations. We are told that Uwamahoro's husband went to Kigali and never returned. We don't know why. Neither do we know why she has been left caring for her niece. We do know that they live in a society which lacks many of the social protections that we take for granted. So, from the time she gets up in the morning until she goes to bed at night, Uwamahoro lays

"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

Gospel Mt 17:1-9



Uwamahoro and Verediana mother and daughter cooking at her home.

Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

down her life for Ineza and Vanessa and for her elderly mother, Verediana. She is, for them, the most immediate sign of God's love.

What can we learn from all of this? Perhaps, like Peter, James and John, who go up the mountain with Jesus, we are being reminded that it is not enough for us to sit in the presence of God; we are also called to "go back down the mountain" and bring the love of God with us, to those who are close to us, but also to those who are far way, because they too are the beloved sons and daughters of God.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Newsletter

Vanessa, age 12, and Ineza, age 7, who appear on the Trócaire box this Lent, attend school about a 30-minute walk from their house, walking up one of the community's many steep hills to start class every morning at 8am.



Prayers of the Faithful

- For all those who work with Trócaire to build a just and fairer world. Bless them with strength and courage as they stand up against injustice and suffering; guide them in their work to provide programmes to support the most vulnerable.

Lord, hear us.

- We pray for women and girls who have suffered the devastating effects of gender-based violence and who live in fear as a result. Give us the courage to build a better world where women and girls can live safely and all are treated with equal dignity and respect as children of God.

Lord, hear us.



Communion Reflection

Prayer for indigenous and original peoples by Laura Vicuña Pereira Manso*

Great Spirit, the essence of all Nature, Breath of life that creates and recreates all beings, Our indigenous and original peoples hear Your voice in the waters, lands, sun, winds, and dewfall that moisten our sister mother earth and the germinated seeds that turn into food.

They see the love of Your beauty in the flora and fauna, in the pollination of birds, butterflies, and bees, the nectar of life everywhere.

Teach us to hear their sacred instruments and flutes that elevate body and spirit to the eternal world.

Give us Your Wisdom to rescue our harmony,

interconnecting us in a grand scheme, weaving and threading the web of life.

*May Your power be the sunlight that illuminates our joint living for the "good living" or *sumak kawsay*, *buen vivir*.*

Force of Life, give us Your Strength to keep alive our peoples who most care for our common home.

Sustain our grteat Hut, which yearns for life and respect.

Make us hear Your life in the moan, cry, and voice of the forests and of the people that grow from the womb of the earth.

Amen.



* Originally written in Portuguese by Laura Vicuña Pereira Manso, of the Kariri Indigenous People, Franciscan Catechist Sister. Missionary of the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI), member of the Executive Committee of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon (CEAMA), and member of the Post-Synodal Council of the Amazon Synod. Reference: *Laudato Sí Movement Prayer Book* laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book

'WOMEN POSSESS THE SAME DIGNITY AND IDENTICAL RIGHTS AS MEN'

Third Sunday of Lent – Homily Notes

Bishop Kevin Doran (Bishop of Elphin and of Achonry)

If you have ever gone trekking, especially in warm weather, you will know how important it is to carry plenty of water. You will also have discovered that a litre of water weighs one kilo and, whatever you bring, you have to carry. The Samaritan woman who came to the well was almost certainly planning to return home with a very heavy load.

Pope Leo reminds us in his recent letter of encouragement "Dilexi Te" that, even today, women are expected to carry disproportionate burdens in many societies. "The organisation of societies worldwide is still far from reflecting clearly that women possess the same dignity and identical rights as men". Going for water is often the work of women and children.

For Uwamahoro, the problem seems to be too much water in the wrong place. It would be a great help to her family if somebody would fix her roof. But their real need is for the kind of authentic development that solves problems at their source. Imagine the difference it would make if sufficient funding were invested in drainage. Imagine what it would be like to have clean water coming from a well in the centre of every village, and local people who were trained to install those wells and to repair them.

In our Gospel, Jesus invites the Samaritan woman to come to him for "living water". He tells her that there is more to life than the daily routine of coming to the well. Her life is worth much more than that. Yes, of course, she and her family will be thirsty again tomorrow, and she may still have to come to the well. But the new life that Jesus offers her, changes her understanding of herself and of her place in the world. She cannot wait to tell everyone what has happened to her.

The Gospel of the Samaritan woman is used on the Third Sunday of Lent, because Lent is

"A Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

Gospel Jn 4:5-42



Vanessa carrying water home.
Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

traditionally a time of preparation for Baptism. For us who are already Baptised, it is a time for thinking once again about what it really means to be Baptised. In much the same way Baptism gives us a new understanding of our meaning as persons and our mission in the world. As members of the Body of Christ, we look at things with his eyes. We see clearly that it is not enough to have compassion from a distance. We need to come close to the poor, as He did and to work for a world in which "people no longer die of hunger or survive in conditions unfit for human beings". (Pope Leo, Dilexi Te, # 11)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Newsletter

As a single mother, with the weight of three generations of her family on her shoulders, Uwamahoro remains strong despite the many challenges she faces. "That is love", she says, "when things come, there is nothing else you can do." For someone who has had a very difficult life, and continues to face very significant daily challenges, Verediana is quite positive and says that what she requires is very little.



Prayers of the Faithful

1) On this Mother's Day we ask your blessing on all mothers and all who are in a mothering role. We think especially of those mothers living in situations of war, conflict, deprivation, and the effects of climate change.
Lord, hear us.

2) For Uwamahoro in Rwanda, who supports not only her daughter, but also her mother and her niece. Loving Father, bless her with strength, and comfort her with hope, as she tries to support her family with love, despite all the challenges she faces.
Lord, hear us.



Communion Reflection

Prayer for courage to speak truth to power by Xavier Jeyaraj, SJ.*

*God our Father and Mother,
You are the source of all power that exists on earth
All powers proceed from You
inviting us to share and participate in its play
each according to our calling - in the service of life on earth.
In each passing generation, from Old Testament to today
You have raised up leaders and prophets
and they spoke the truth boldly and clearly.
You endowed Your leaders with needed courage
to speak truth to the kings and rulers
men and women who felt in their hearts
the suffering of the poor and heard the cry of the earth
and used their voices to ease the pain of the powerless
and voiceless.
The life and death of Jesus our leader
beckons us to carry the power of His truth in our
voices
to heal the wounded world and the creation.*

*We pray to the same Holy Spirit that once acted in Jesus.
O Holy Spirit, wake us up out of our personal worlds.
Open our eyes to see the pain and suffering of the people and the cry of Your creation.
While some amass more, many more go hungry
While some take control of others, others live in fear.
While some cause climate crisis, others protect and advocate.
Help us see and say those things that must be said.
Free us from the fear of consequences and give us the courage to speak the truth with justice and love.
With God's power working within us help us train young prophetic voices and energies to labor to establish the new earth and new heavens where everyone will use the power shared with them where there will be no powerful and powerless where all of us will be instruments of one great power manifesting many creative dimensions of Your love.
Amen*



* Member of LSM Global Membership Council and Board of Directors. India/Italy. Reference: *Laudato Si Movement Prayer Book* laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book

THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART

Fourth Sunday of Lent – Homily Notes

Bishop Kevin Doran (Bishop of Elphin and of Achonry)

The encounter between Jesus and the man born blind is one of those powerful Gospel stories which call us to faith. To understand it properly, we need to imagine what it might be like to have been blind from birth. How would you begin to form images of all the people, the places and the things that are so much a part of your life? In that sense, it is true to say that “the eyes are the window of the soul”.

Jesus affirms the love of God for those who are on the margins. The man in today’s Gospel may not have been able to see, but we are told at the very beginning of the story that “Jesus sees” him. That makes all the difference. The opening of the man’s eyes is not just a moment of healing; it is a moment of grace. Jesus says: “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Jesus says. He calls the man to faith, just as he calls each of us.

In biblical times, people often connected sickness and disability with sin, because they saw these things as punishments from God. That’s why the people in our Gospel story today asked Jesus “who sinned; this man or his parents for him to have been born blind”? People who are victims of their economic or social circumstances, can very easily become victims also of the ignorance and the blind prejudice of others. The first reading reassures us, however, that: “The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

Towards the end of the Gospel this week, Jesus turns the tables on the Pharisees. They point the finger at the man who had been blind from birth. But Jesus suggests that it is they who are blind, because they are unwilling to see what God is

“The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

Gospel Jn 9:1-41



Mother and Daughter Uwamahoro and Ineza in their home.
Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

doing in the life of a man whom they consider to be a sinner. The story of the man born blind challenges our attitudes to people in need. Do we even see them? Do we see the person behind the statistics? By inviting us to reflect on the story of one family in Rwanda, and by telling us their names, (Verediana, Uwamahoro, Ineza and Vanessa), Trócaire seeks to open our eyes to the human reality; to the personal story behind the work of development. Let’s not close our eyes. Let’s look at things with the eyes of God.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Newsletter

The family on the Trócaire box this year are involved in the 'Climate Just Communities' (CJC) a Trócaire partner in Rwanda. The CJC is run by local partners and empowers marginalised groups to adapt to the effects of climate change in their communities. It also supports people to lead and shape solutions that promote long term resilience and sustainability.



Prayers of the Faithful

1) We pray for peace in the world. May each of us be instruments of peace in our homes, parishes and communities so that the light of Christ's peace may spread throughout the world.

Lord, hear us.

2) We pray for ourselves and our parish community. As Christians, may the Holy Spirit guide us to an awareness of the needs of the poor so that we will seek to create a fairer and more equitable world.

Lord, hear us.



Communion Reflection

Prayer for social justice
by Constance (Connie) Fahey*

*Spirit of Truth
Who enfolds our world in Your Love,
we come to You with a heavy heart.
How does one begin to dismantle the evils
of racism, sexism, classism, environmental
injustice
and other ism's permeating society?
Are we complicit with the corporate sin
of societal institutions by remaining silent
observers?
How can we be an instrument of peace and
radiate Your healing love?
People like Desmond Tutu, Martin Luther
King, Jr.
and protestors marching on our streets*

*denounce systemic injustices.
We read Scripture's injunctions--love God,
love my neighbor,
pray for my enemies, even those who
persecute me.
Are we heeding these difficult teachings?
Is it enough for us to welcome strangers into
our circle of relationships,
alleviate the suffering of the Lazaruses-on-
my-doorstep, and
celebrate the diversity of people and their
creeds?
Grace us that we have love for all,
promote justice for all,
and have mutual respect for all creation.
Amen*



* Franciscan Sisters of Mary, United States of America. Reference: *Laudato Si Movement Prayer Book* laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book

MOVING AWAY THE STONE

Fifth Sunday of Lent – Homily Notes

Bishop Kevin Doran (Bishop of Elphin and of Achonry)

Shortly before the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, his friend Lazarus died. Saint John tells us the story of his death and of the grief of his sisters Martha and Mary. We know from St Luke's Gospel (Luke 10), that Jesus was a "friend of the family". He had visited Martha and Mary in their home and enjoyed their hospitality. In human terms, this was a personal loss for Jesus.

As often happens, Jesus was away when his friend died. His return to Bethany is an expression not just of his own care for Martha and Mary, but also of the compassion of God. It seems strange, perhaps, that he doesn't rush back to save Lazarus. His mission, as he tells his disciples, is to reveal the power of God over death. "This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory".

The tombs of the dead were generally sealed with a huge stone. We see this in the case of Lazarus and also in the case of Jesus himself. The stone had the practical purpose of keeping animals out of the tomb, but it also seems to symbolise the barrier between life and death. Moving away the stone is the first step in setting Lazarus free from the chains of death. Lazarus was raised back to his ordinary life, so we must assume that he died again. The account of his being raised from the dead on this fifth Sunday of Lent prepares us, however, for the Resurrection of Jesus is a few weeks time; a Resurrection after which there is no more death.

It strikes me that the stone across the entrance of the tomb is a helpful symbol of the burden of poverty which weighs down, day after day on the four women in Rwanda, who have been introduced to us by Trócaire. For Verediana, it is the burden of having to depend entirely on her daughter. For Ineza and Vanessa, it is the

"Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again'."

Gospel Jn 11:1-45



Uwamahoro cooking at her home.
Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

experience of a childhood without a father and without material comforts, and an education which is interrupted by lack of resources. Uwamahoro, like any mother, wants nothing more than to provide the best of care and of opportunity for her family. For her, the rock symbolises the daily burden of knowing that everything depends on her and that if, for any reason, she cannot work, the whole family will suffer.

We know the compassion of Jesus. We are the people of Jesus. Who, in the name of Jesus, will take away the stone that cuts this family off from the life that they should have?

TRÓCAIRE'S WORK IN PARISHES AND COMMUNITIES

Trócaire's Church Team

Trócaire works with parishes and communities across the island of Ireland to educate, inspire and motivate people to take action for global justice. We are supported in this work by volunteers, parishioners, pastoral workers, priests and Bishops in dioceses across Ireland.

"Hold fast to love and justice"

Hosea 12:6

We visit parishes to deliver workshops and talks, encouraging people to explore the connection between their faith and taking action for justice, inspired by Gospel and the social teaching of the Church. We produce a range of resources for use in parish, particularly for Lent, the Season of Creation and Advent.

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is the Church's guide for living out faith in society rooted in the dignity of every person and the call to seek the common good. It emphasises principles like solidarity, care for the poor, and care for creation, helping us to build a more just and compassionate world. The Church team in Trócaire provide workshops on CST for parishes and communities.

Youth

Trócaire's Church Youth Officer works with young people in schools and parishes across Ireland, engaging them in Catholic Social Teaching and global justice, specifically in relation to Laudato Si' and climate justice. Through workshops, events and retreats, young people and youth leaders are inspired to act for justice, motivated by their faith and the social teaching of the Church which is at the heart of Trócaire's values.

Caring for Our Common Home

Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical on the environmental crisis, Laudato Si', Trócaire's church

team have a programme of resources and support to help communities respond to the environmental crisis. We partner with the global Laudato Si' Movement in our work:

- Meeting monthly (online) with like-minded people who are inspired by their faith and Laudato Si' to take action for our common home
- Organising community screenings of *The Letter – A Message for the Earth* www.theletterfilm.org
- Laudato Si' courses, workshops and retreats for parish groups
- 'Return to Nature' - supporting parishes to return 30% of church grounds to nature by 2030 <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/laudato-si/returning-to-nature/>
- Supporting parishes to become **Eco-Parishes** through Eco-Congregation Ireland (ECI) <https://www.ecocongregationireland.com/>
- Encouraging people to join our **campaigns** on climate justice, Palestine and other areas of our work. Be part of making real changes that impact positively on people's lives: <https://www.trocaire.org/petitions/become-a-campaigner/>

Contacts for support on any of the above initiatives

- Róisín Alexander-Pye (Laudato Si' Officer): roisin.pye@trocaire.org
- Deirbhile Craven (Church Youth Officer): deirbhile.craven@trocaire.org
- Anna Keegan (Church Outreach Officer): anna.keegan@trocaire.org
- Jane Mellett (Church Outreach Manager): jane.mellett@trocaire.org

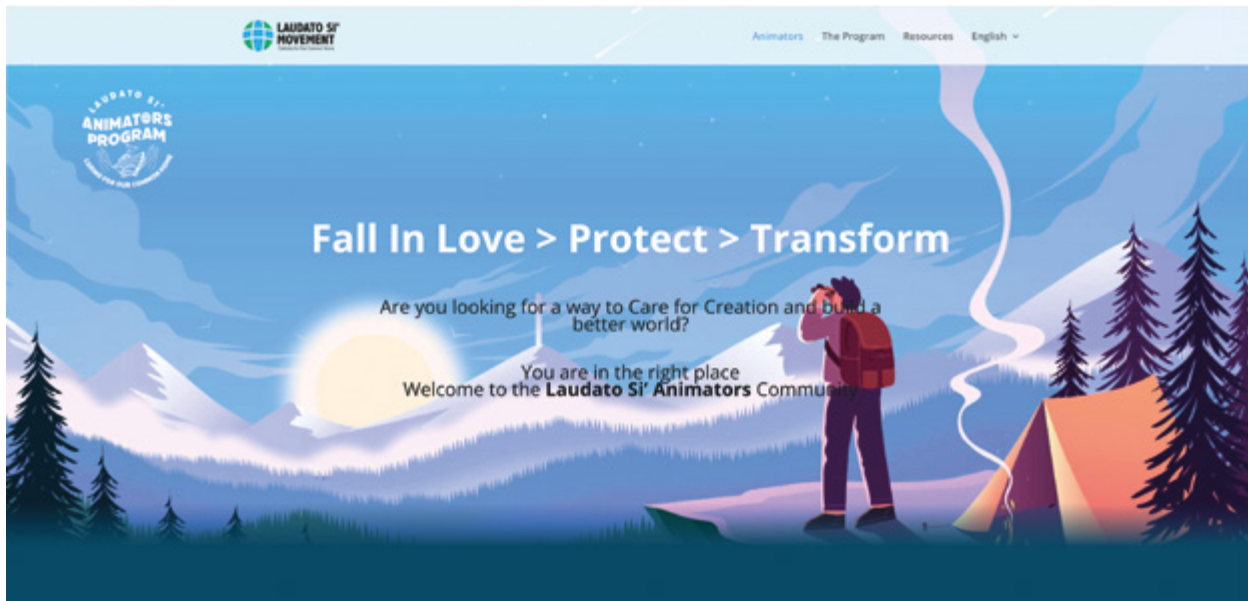
"For we know that things can change ... Truly, much can be done!"

Pope Francis, Laudato Si' 13, 180

trocaire.org/our-work/working-in-ireland/parishes

LAUDATO SI' ANIMATORS PROGRAMME

Wondering what you can do to help heal our common home? Join the Laudato Si' Animators programme.



- Laudato Si' Animators are members of the *Laudato Si' Movement*, a global community of prayer and action, who animate their local parishes and communities to engage in ecological spirituality, sustainable lifestyles and advocacy for climate and ecological justice. Animators work to bring Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* to life and care for our common home.
- Join a global movement of people passionate about caring more deeply for our common home, where we can find inspiration and encouragement.
- 4 free online sessions with an international community, starting April 15th 2026.
- Dynamic speakers, resources and ideas for your local community.
- Hear about the inspiring work taking place in parishes and communities all over the world, inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*.



- Register at <https://laudatosianimators.org/>
- You will receive support from the Irish network of Laudato Si' animators on completion of the course through Trócaire and the Laudato Si' Movement.
- For enquiries please contact roisin.pye@trocaire.org



"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

St Francis of Assisi



Ineza and Vanessa at school.
Photo credit: Garry Walsh,
Trócaire

TRÓCAIRE IS THE OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

More resources, photos and videos are available at:
trocaire.org/our-work/working-in-ireland/parishes

Cover photo: Uwamahoro supporting
her family.
Photo credit: Garry Walsh, Trócaire

Resource by Anna Keegan,
Bishop Kevin Doran and Mark Kirk.

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