

DIAKONIA Film Evening : THE LETTER (Laudato Si), June 26th 2023

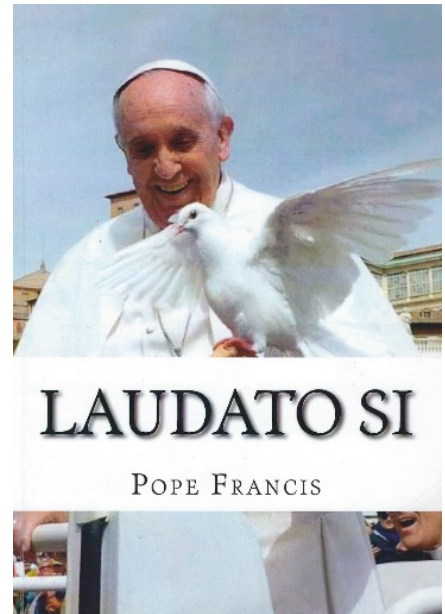
This event was hosted by Marcella and Pádraig McCarthy at their home in Niederanven. It was attended by 15 people, including Fr Michael, most of whom from the English-speaking community.

The purpose of the evening was to watch the 2022 documentary *The Letter* in a convivial environment, followed by a discussion of the film, and a presentation of Steve McCarthy's book *God, who on earth are you?*

Film: the 80-minute film, centred on Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudati si*, traced the backgrounds of five representatives of groups (or 'voices') of people affected by /involved in environmental justice issues, and especially the emergency of climate change. These were the Senegalese climate refugee, the Brazilian indigenous leader, the Indian teenager climate activist, the American couple of marine biologists and conservationists, and also the Scottish academic, president of the *Laudato Si* movement. They each receive letters of invitation from the Vatican to meet and discuss with Pope Francis; while in Rome and Assisi they share their own experiences and forge bonds which support them in continuing their work back home.

Discussion : the film was considered by some to be out-dated – perhaps a reflection of how swiftly the last years' events have contributed to a back-tracking on previous commitments to combating climate change. The multi-faith (and none) approach was felt to be very positive.

There was general agreement that the root cause of our planet's problems is the untenable capitalist model of unlimited growth; this has created a totally consumerist society with a glaring inequality of wealth distribution, largely influenced by U.S. corporations, and those who imitate them. A re-evaluation of



work, especially unpaid work, is necessary – could the introduction of a universal basic income help ?

While we may not be able to bring influence to bear at global level, we most certainly can act at individual and community level. Bottom-up change is possible, especially through education (awareness-raising of recycling, for example, in schools). Grass-roots initiatives are being taken and should be more widely known (e.g. the Walferdange ‘repair café’).

Book: Steve briefly presented aspects of his book as reflected in the illustrations contained in it. Notably, the Rublev icon of the Holy Trinity highlights the relational dimension of the Triune God, who, while remaining a mystery, nonetheless inspires us to see our connections with each other and with God’s creation. More prosaically, another photo showed members of our parish besides Lake Tiberias during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.



In the intermission between the film and the discussion, we enjoyed pizza and drinks, and Marcella and Pádraig’s lovely garden. Many thanks to them for organising this convivial event, to all who attended, and to the parish for its financial support. A collection taken for the Ilula orphanage project raised 80 euros.