



# Missionary Society of St Columban

聖 高 隆 龐 傳 教 會

*General Council*

## Columban Missionaries Announce Pledge to Divest from Fossil Fuels.

**Hong Kong, October 4, 2016.** Inspired by Pope Francis and in honor of September's Season of Creation and the Feast of St Francis, the Missionary Society of St. Columban pledges to take steps to divest from fossil fuels. In addition, we commit to putting resources into Positive Impact Investing alternatives.

**Pope Francis** is leading the way for Catholic institutions to choose a Divest – Reinvest strategy when he writes in the encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, that “technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels ....needs to be progressively replaced without delay” (par. 165) and “A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear of those who wield political, economic, and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products” (par.206).

**Columban Superior General, Fr. Kevin O'Neill**, says of the pledge, “Columbans have a long history of commitment to caring for the Earth as part of our missionary identity. We see our Socially and Environmentally Responsible Investment policy as an important expression of that commitment and therefore are exploring ways to direct our investments towards *funds which respond positively to our issue priorities such as renewable energy, community-based microenterprise, and peace initiatives*<sup>1</sup>.”

**Columban Fr. Sean McDonagh**, leading international eco-theologian, advocates for divestment and corporate responsibility, “For religious people, the aim of divestment is to bankrupt the fossil fuel industry morally, not financially. Hopefully, because of their duty to manage their resources, these companies will invest in renewable forms of energy.”<sup>2</sup>

From moral, environmental and financial perspectives, fossil fuels are not the way forward. Over the next five years, the Missionary Society of St Columban will begin divesting away from fossil fuels, as well as putting resources into Positive Impact Investing alternatives. This is a concrete step we can take as missionaries to demonstrate our commitment to the care of and respect for the earth as well as faithful stewardship of the goods entrusted to us.

###

### **Media Inquiries:**

Amy Woolam Echeverria

International Coordinator for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation

[amywe@columban.org](mailto:amywe@columban.org)

1.301.503.9222 / skype awe0106

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from Missionary Society of St. Columban Policy on Socially and Environmentally Responsible Investing.

<sup>2</sup> Sean McDonagh, SSC, *Our Common Home: The Encyclical of Pope Francis on the Environment with Commentary by Sean McDonagh*. Orbis Books 2016, p 45-47.