

CAPPF UK 2021-2022 Programme:

Creation, the Environment and the Church in the Face of a Political Imperative

In November of this year, the COP26 summit in Glasgow will bring together 25,000 delegates from around the world to discuss the policy, business and societal responses to the challenges presented by global warming. Specifically, it intends to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This is happening in the wake of Covid and discussions about how a 'Great Reset' can contribute meaningfully to a more ecological, sustainable and equitable economy. Governments, NGOs, lobby groups, and even investors are demanding wholesale and rapid changes to the economy, consumer preferences and even to the shape of society. Such large-scale and fast-paced transitions are not without their challenges, nor free of controversy, not least the displacement of millions of jobs and sizeable transfers of wealth between various industrial sectors and segments of the population as policy interventions dictate the winners and losers.

The Catholic Church, as an 'expert in humanity', and endowed with two millennia of teachings on God's creation, the vocation of man, his ranking in the order of creation and his relationship to other creatures and created matter, is well-positioned to contribute meaningfully to the debate, and most especially through a theological reading of Creation. Yet in some circles, the two first commandments of the Creator, 'go forth and multiply' and 'fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth' are considered antiquated, or even dangerous views, which, if followed by too many, would assuredly lead to the implosion of the planet, ecological catastrophe and social unrest.

In a highly-charged political debate, pitting climate alarmists against climate skeptics, neo-malthusians and technical autocrats against those who believe in providence, big bang theorists and darwinists against creationists, animists and those who believe animals are at least equal to humans against those who see man as made in God's likeness and image, those who believe the transition to carbon-neutral can be managed organically by allowing market forces to operate, versus those who want to engineer a faster transition through subsidies, taxes, regulation and forced divestments, we intend to provide a series of lectures and discussions addressing the challenges and opportunities that environmental concerns present, for the Church and for our economies and societies, from the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.

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Agenda

1) A theological reading of creation – what has the Church got to say?

- The purpose of creation
- The order and ranking of created species
- A critical reading of Laudato Si – what did it miss?
- Evangelising the green movement

2) The transition to carbon-neutral

- Central banks and the shift to climate objectives
- The ethics and dynamics of divestment strategies
- Managing the transition : subsidies, taxes and regulation

3) The demographic question

- Neo-malthusians and the population control agenda
- Global warming and migratory flows
- The coming demographic winter
- Pro-natal policies vs the culture of death

4) An ordered care for creation

- What place for 'green policies' and how ought they to be designed?
- What role and space for beauty in our living spaces (architecture, environment)
- Should humans always be the priority?
- Urbanization – a good or bad thing?
- The precautionary principle – too much of a good thing?

5) Man vs machine – a Christian anthropology

- Should man alter nature? The ethics of GMOs
- CRISPR, gene editing, transhumanism - To what extent can human nature be altered?
- Technocracy, progress and philosophical materialism – where does progress end?