

CONCEPT NOTE - Parallel Event for the 2024 High Level Political Forum

Parallel Event Title: Responding to Climate Anxiety: Cultivating Resilience and Hope in Youth

Date: Monday, July 8, 2024

Time: 3pm EDT

Zoom Registration Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0scuGoqjsqHdOl4qDJKi6D3GFGthGBITo>

Target Audience: Academics, youth, religious congregations and their networks, IBVM UN NGO network

Event Sponsors: Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Loreto Generalate; Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace NGO to the UN; Medical Mission Sisters; Maryknoll Sisters of St Dominic

Event Partners: Regis-St. Michael's Faculty of the Theology; Elliott Allen Institute for Theology and Ecology; The Mary Ward Centre

Event Objective:

In response to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target 13.3 on climate change, this webinar will raise awareness and educate about faith-based tools and responses to climate anxiety in youth. Participants will engage in conversation concerning climate change and climate anxiety, offering means for young people to cultivate resilience and hope in the face of this reality.

Background and Context:

At the 2024 High Level Political Forum, the UN will undertake an in depth review of five of the SDGs, including SDG 13 on Climate Action. Climate change is driving rapid global insecurity. According to the 2023 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it is certain that greenhouse gas emissions have caused global warming, with the global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850-1900 levels in 2011-2020. Over 3 billion people live in regions that are highly vulnerable to climate change, where there is mutual vulnerability between ecosystem and human life. Extreme climate events cause food and water insecurity, and disproportionately affect those living in the Global South.¹

Climate change also affects global health and well-being. Young people, in particular, see a future of uncertainty because of climate change. A 2023 Canadian study found that young people in Canada most commonly report feeling afraid (66%), sad (65%), anxious (63%),

¹Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *CLIMATE CHANGE 2023 Synthesis Report*
https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

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helpless (58%), and powerless (56%) in response to climate change. The least commonly reported feelings were grief (34%), optimism (21%), and indifference (20%).²

Climate anxiety, while not consistently defined, can “be understood as heightened distress related to the climate crisis that is characterized by a constellation of strong and interconnected emotions such as worry, fear, sadness, anger, and powerlessness. Climate anxiety is future-oriented and related to eco-anxiety more broadly; some scholars understand climate anxiety as a specific form of eco-anxiety.”³

In response to the increasing phenomenon of youth climate anxiety, researchers are looking at means of creating resilience and hope for the future. The Regis-St. Michael's Faculty of Theology has received a grant from the Association of Theological Schools for a project entitled “Critical Conversations in Catholic Education: Educating Towards Ecological Resilience in a Climate Justice Curriculum.” The project fosters robust conversation around important theological and social issues facing Catholic educators in ways that empower these educators to think in theologically and pedagogically creative ways, and in particular, to engage the griefs and anxieties of students and teachers as we come together to build communities committed to socio-ecological resilience. The project is co-directed by Dr. Cynthia Cameron, Patrick and Barbara Keenan Chair of Religious Education and Assistant Professor of Religious Education and Dr. Hilda Koster, Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto Associate Professor in Ecological Theology and Director of the Elliott Allen Institute for Theology and Ecology, Regis St. Michael's Faculty of Theology, University of St. Michael's College.

This webinar will engage a diverse set of speakers from around the world on the topic of youth climate anxiety and responses of resilience and hope. Speakers include academics, youth, and community partners.

Proposed Speakers:

- Dr. Hilda Koster / Dr. Cynthia Cameron, Regis-St. Michael's Faculty of Theology
- Moderator: Kekhashan Basu, Founder, Green Hope Foundation
- Panelists:
 - Melodie Ng, Toronto urban organic farmer
 - Blair Nelsen, Waterspirit, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace)
 - Sr. Immaculate Tusingwire MMS, Global Laudato Si Movement
 - Thomas Gould, Youth Representative for Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

² Lindsay P. Galwaya, Ellen Field, “Climate emotions and anxiety among young people in Canada: A national survey and call to action.” The Journal of Climate Change and Health, <https://www.yorku.ca/unsdgs/toolkit/wp-content/uploads/sites/617/2023/05/1-s2.0-S2667278223000032-main.pdf>

³ Lindsay P. Galwaya, Ellen Field, “Climate emotions and anxiety among young people in Canada: A national survey and call to action.” The Journal of Climate Change and Health, <https://www.yorku.ca/unsdgs/toolkit/wp-content/uploads/sites/617/2023/05/1-s2.0-S2667278223000032-main.pdf>

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Draft Outline

Virtual Parallel Event

Time	Content	Speakers
	Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, Introduction of Moderator (5 mins)	Margaret Lacson, MM or Lauren Grant?
	Project Presentation (10 mins) “Critical Conversations in Catholic Education: Educating Towards Ecological Resilience in a Climate Justice Curriculum.”	Dr. Hilda Koster / Dr. Cynthia Cameron
	Panel Discussion – Canadian and International Perspectives on Cultivating Resilience and Hope in Youth (45 mins) 5 minutes per speaker Approximately 20 minutes for conversation among panelists and Q&A from audience	<i>Panel Moderator:</i> Kekhashan Basu <i>Speakers:</i> 1. Melodie Ng, Toronto Urban Farmer [confirmed] 2. Blair Nelsen, Waterspirit (UN representative for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace) [confirmed] 3. Sr. Immaculate Tusingwire MMS, Global Laudato Si Movement (Uganda) [confirmed] 4. Thomas Gould, Youth Representation, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns [confirmed]

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	<p>Small Group Conversation (15 mins)</p> <p>In groups of 5 people, small group facilitators will guide a conversation on the following three questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your experience of climate anxiety? - How do you cultivate resilience and hope in your context? - What practices or resources from your faith tradition (or other source) can contribute toward cultivating resilience and hope in response to climate anxiety? <p>Large Group Sharing in Chat (2 mins)</p>	<p><i>Moderator:</i> Sarah Rudolph, IBVM</p> <p>Small group facilitators: MaryAnne Francalanza fcJ Sarah Rudolph Janet Palafox Jane Caspillo Lauren Grant Margaret Lacson Blair Nelsen Rosemary B Immaculate Tusingwire</p>
	<p>Closing (5 mins)</p>	<p>Jane Caspillo, MMS</p>