

Message from the Chair

Dear friends,

Despite all the restrictions and limitations imposed by the lockdown it is good to see the work and interest in justice and peace carrying on. It has been necessary too to change our way of working. It was good to see so many joining in our online discussion recently and receive the helpful and thoughtful comments made about the environmental policy for the diocese. They will help in taking forward this important matter. There are so many matters of justice and peace in our own nation and in the world that need our attention and action and prayer. Lent and Spring are just around the corner. May it be a time of conversion and renewal for us all.

Fr Gerry.

In this issue:

Our on-line discussion forum:	page 2
Action Against Genocide:	page 2
Father Paddy O'Mahony Remembered:	page 3
PREFACE Sharing in the life of God:	page 4
Smarties:	page 5
Kris Pears:	page 6
Fratelli Tutti:	page 6
Friends of the Holy Land:	page 8
Lenten Retreat 2021:	page 8
Brushstrokes Appeal:	page 9
Racial Justice:	page 9
Indian Theological Association :	page 10
Pope Francis:	page 11
Let Us Dream :	page 12
Israel must work with Palestinian:	page 13
Never Again War! :	page 15
New Wineskins:	page 16
Walk for Water:	page 16
Batthula Trust:	page 17
Living in the Plastic age:	page 18
Nuclear Weapons:	page: 18

Dates for your diary:

Dates for 2021 (All meetings on Zoom)

Saturday 13th March Lenten Retreat

Monday 19th April
Commission meeting, 11am

Tuesday 11th May
On-line discussion forum, 7pm

Monday 12th July
Commission meeting, 11am

July:
on-line discussion forum date and time to be agreed

Monday 13th September
Commission meeting, 11am

27th September to 3rd October Our Assembly

Monday 1st November
Commission meeting, 11am

COP26 UN climate conference, which will now take place between 1 and 12 November 2021 in Glasgow.

Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission

Online Forum 26th January 2021

The Commission hosted this Forum as a follow up to our online Assembly last Autumn. Following the Assembly we received enough feedback to suggest that an online meeting could be useful and so we set a date for January.

One urgent need is to attract new members and so we thought that a short introduction by each member might help to show that we are ordinary Catholics with an interest in matters of Justice and Peace, both at home and worldwide. We do hope that others will come forward to join us.

We meet four times a year, usually in Coventry, but at present our meetings are online. We arrange an Annual Retreat each Lent and an Assembly each Autumn. We produce newsletters three times a year and maintain an up-to-date website. We also advise the Archbishop whenever needed.

In addition to introducing our members we wanted to introduce our Environmental Policy which is a draft at present. The Trustees of the Diocese will be meeting in April and, we hope, they will adopt this Policy. Participants in the Forum were sent the Policy and we asked them for suggestions. I think everyone agreed that we did not provide anywhere near enough time for discussion and we will rectify this in future meetings.

The brief reports back highlighted the need for us to make amendments to our document in a number of areas. Most comments said the wording was not urgent enough. We have received further suggestions through the feedback forms. Commission members will consider all of the various proposals. We are also consulting the Kenelm Youth Trust and Schools via School Chaplains.

I think that online Meeting was a success. There were 25 participants and my hope is that we can meet again in the not too distant future, with an improved document. Perhaps we can host Forums on other issues as well. Finally, a word of thanks to Janet Vaughan, our Justice and Peace Administrator for all her work in sending out invitations and making the evening run smoothly.

Phil Mayland
2ND Feb. 2021

Our next discussion form is planned to take place using Zoom at 7pm on Tuesday 11th May



ACTION AGAINST GENOCIDE OF UYGHUR MUSLIMS

Join Nisa Nashim West Midlands and a live panel of speakers discussing the plight of Uyghur Muslims in China and what we can all do.

Uyghurs in Xinjiang are persecuted because of their Islamic faith, incarcerated in concentration camps, subjected to forced labour, and women have been forcibly sterilised.

Speakers include Rahima Mahmut (of World Uyghur Congress) & Birmingham Faith Leaders

PC: Patrika/Al-Jazeera

Rahima Mahmut

22 FEBRUARY 2021
@1930 UK time
via Zoom.

Book at [Eventbrite](#) or email nisanashimwestmids@gmail.com

Nisa-Nashim
Jewish Muslim Women's Network

PC: Human Rights Watch

Action Against Genocide

Please accept this as a personal invitation to the zoom event which we have organised to draw attention to the terrible plight of the Chinese Uyghur Muslims to take place on Monday February 22nd at 7.30pm. Further information can be found in the attachment.

Nisa Nashim (Women in Hebrew and Arabic) West Midlands is a group of local Jewish and Muslim Women established some 5 years ago, to build bridges between our two communities through gaining a greater understanding of each other's faith, culture and way of life.

We are united in our efforts to seek justice for the Uyghur Muslims and sincerely hope that you together with many others, will join us to hear more about what has happened and is currently happening to these persecuted people and to find out what we can do to highlight their plight.

Bookings for the event can be made through [Eventbrite](#)

We look forward to welcoming you to our event. Please forward this email on to others who you feel would want to join us.

Azra Ali, Aviv Glaser, Salma Hamid, Abda Khan, Husna Khimji, Rabbi Margaret Jacobi, Ruth Jacobs, Mandy Ross and Benita Wishart

Nisa Nashim West Midlands Uyghur Campaign
Planning Group

Father Paddy O'Mahony Remembered

I do not think it is too much of an exaggeration to say that for the people and parish of Our Lady of the Wayside Shirley, Father Paddy O'Mahony remains a legend. Parish priest from 1962 until his death in 1991 he was both a visionary and a revolutionary in what he believed the church of Jesus Christ was called to be and do. In that sense he was a man very much way ahead of his time. For him the church had to be active, a dynamic force for good in the world and the most obvious way to do this was by reaching out to and supporting some of the poorest people on the planet. So from the back streets of Calcutta to the Bushmen of the Kalahari, from the indigenous people of Bolivia to schools in Uganda, from refugees in South Sudan to oppressed Christians in Pakistan, the parish and people of Our Lady of the Wayside in the name of Jesus Christ would be there for them.

Father O'Mahony had the gift of being able to persuade local GP's and pharmacists to give up out of date and unwanted medication, which he would then send to the other side of the world where they were much needed. He galvanized the gifts of the laity putting them to work in a system, which made such charitable generosity possible. Equally he would challenge the institution of the church on its financial affairs especially when it came to its choice of investment. As a result he famously questioned those responsible for such decisions to explain why the church of Jesus Christ believed it to be morally right to invest in South Africa a country ravaged by injustice and inequality because of its system of apartheid.

As if all of this was not enough he set up a 'Justice and Peace' group within the parish, which is still in operation to this day. At the same time parishioners were organised to send letters and cards to victims of oppression and prisoners of conscience. Collection boxes, for Calcutta, were put at the doors of the church to remind people, as they entered and left, that to serve the poor and needy is, in fact, to serve Christ himself. These collection boxes remain in place and last year the trust set up in his name raised over £30,000. One of Father O'Mahony's famous sayings was, 'Need not Creed' making the church available for everyone and turning no one away.

For him the church, as the body of Christ on earth, does not exist purely for its own sake but rather to recognise and respond to suffering humanity. Even the design and build of the parish church itself gives expression to his understanding of God. In essence Father O'Mahony was a priest with a dedicated commitment to justice for the poor, weak and marginalised. Something of which, I have no doubt, the current Pope Francis, would entirely approve of.

It has now been thirty years since Father O'Mahony died and as the parish deacon I wanted to do something to commemorate his life and work. As a result I wrote a book called, 'Sharing in the Life of God

– A Journey Into the Real Meaning of Easter,' inspired very much by his vision of what God, in Christ, invites us, as his people, to both be and do. All the profits from the project are being donated to the 'Father O'Mahony Memorial Trust,' which continues his work with the world's poorest and most needy people today.

Deacon Sean Loone
Our Lady of the Wayside, Shirley



To find our more follow the links below:

'Sharing in the Life of God – A Journey Into the Real Meaning of Easter' is currently available from Amazon in dual format.

<http://ourladyofthewaysidechurchshirley.co.uk/2021/01/14/deacon-seans-new-book/>

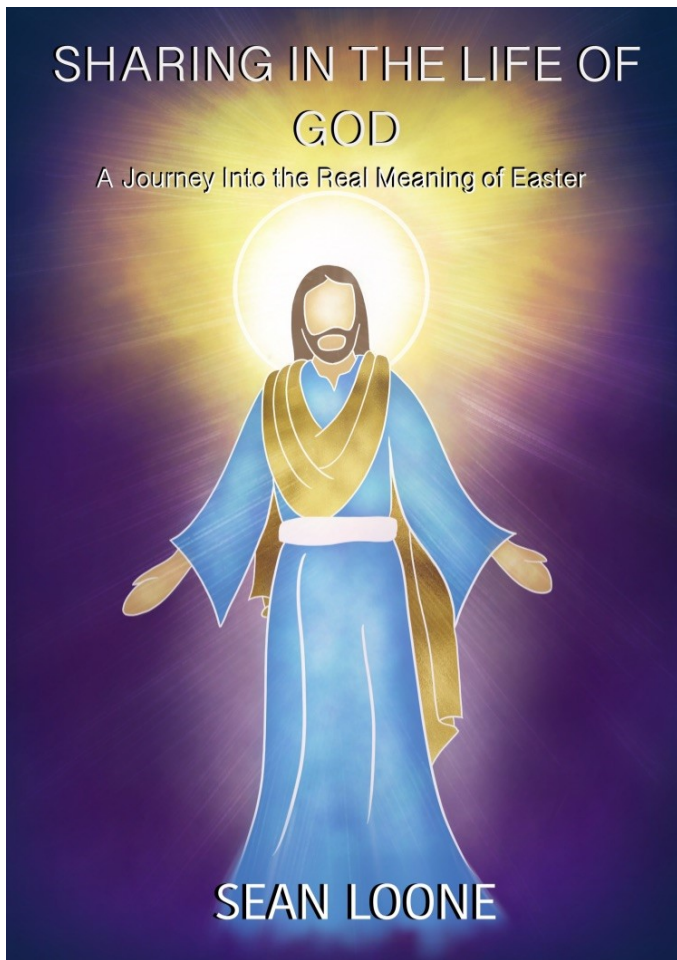
<http://ourladyofthewaysidechurchshirley.co.uk/2021/01/13/encounter-programme-with-fr-o-mahoney/>



CAFOD Lent 2021 Prayer Card

Loving God, we hear your call to all who thirst for a brighter future: Come to the water.
Pour out your Spirit upon us and lead us to walk alongside one another.
Let a desire for change well up within us.
May we overflow with compassion and love.
And as a stream wears away stone, may we reshape our world together to reflect your kingdom of hope for all.
Amen.

You can order our Prayer Cards from the CAFOD Shop



For him the church, as the body of Christ on earth, does not exist purely for its own sake but rather to recognise and respond to suffering humanity. As a result he would often refer to the balance that needed to be struck between, 'commitment to the family of the parish and the family of humanity,' which he called 'an enjoyable tension.' Indeed, the design of the parish church itself bears witness to this with its abundance of plants reflecting the need for the people of God to constantly grow in their understanding and practice of the faith, running water indicating the life-giving power of baptism and views to the outside world showing that the Church is open to all. What this meant was that Father O'Mahony was a priest with a dedicated commitment to justice for the poor, weak and marginalised. Something of which, I have no doubt, the current Pope, Francis, would entirely approve of.

As a result Father O'Mahony set up a 'Justice and Peace' group, which still operates in the parish today. He also set up a system for collecting surplus medicines from local doctors and pharmacists that would be sorted and catalogued, by volunteers from the parish, before being sent to those people in parts of the world with the greatest need. Collection boxes, for Calcutta, were put at the doors of the Church to remind people, as they entered and left, that to serve the poor and needy is, in fact, to serve Christ himself. These same boxes, with the same message of faith and commitment to the poor, are still there today.

PREFACE

The Father O'Mahony Memorial Trust

This is a book about Easter and I am writing this preface last of all. One area I have chosen to explore, in detail, is how God, through the resurrection of his son, shares his very life with us. As a result, Easter is something to be experienced. You can imagine my surprise therefore when I came across some of the words of Father Paddy O'Mahony, parish priest of Our Lady of the Wayside from 1962 until his death on Saint Stephen's day in 1991. Introducing the statue of the Risen Christ, by Elizabeth Frink, to the parish he said, 'Every time a prisoner of conscience is liberated, Christ rises again. Every time a woman is able to feed her children, say in Ethiopia, Christ rises again.' Here then, in these very words you find the essence of what I am trying to say in this book, that the resurrection of Christ is something that we can experience in the here and now.

Father O'Mahony would often talk of the four basic freedoms, which in his opinion, every human being is entitled to and they are,

- Freedom from Hunger
- Freedom from Illness
- Freedom from Ignorance
- Freedom from Oppression

There are too many projects Father O'Mahony committed the parish to for me to mention here but from the bushmen of the Kalahari threatened with extinction, to the people of the Turkhana desert in Kenya where a fatal disease threatened to wipe them out if it was not for the parish sending 6,000 vials of the life-saving drug Pentostan, to Sister Sylvia working with the indigenousness Indians of Bolivia, Doctor Towey working in a mission in Uganda alongside Miss Jean Johnson who set up a school there, The Comboni Sisters running a refugee centre in South Sudan and finally the Millhill Fathers working with the oppressed Christians in Pakistan.

I think it is safe to say that Father O'Mahony saw it as the duty and obligation of Christians to respond to the needs of suffering humanity. If you ever get the chance to visit the parish Church of Our Lady of the Wayside take the time to look at the arms of the figure of the Resurrected Christ, behind the altar, and see that they are held open in a gesture of welcome. This is the vision Father O'Mahony had for the church and for the parish, that its arms would always be open to those in need.

Sadly in 1991 Father O'Mahony died but in 1994 a Trust was set up in the parish to continue his work. In the same way that he identified the lesser-known cries of the poor, weak and marginalised so the Trust exists to respond to suffering humanity and to do whatever it can to help them. This is why I am donating all the profits from the sale of this book to, 'The Father O'Mahony Memorial Trust,' something, I

believe, he would whole-heartedly approve of. There are, literally, too many names to mention for me when describing the work of the Trust and if I have missed anyone out by name I apologise. However, I would like to mention, in particular, Creina Hearn, Hugh Smith and Maureen Jennings for their long association with and commitment to the work of the Trust.

At the very core of this book you will find an understanding of God who invites us to share in his very life. At Easter when Christ bursts out of the empty tomb shattering Satan, sin and death for all time, he beckons us to life but to life in him. Or putting it another way, to a new way of living, a new way of being, a total participation in God's life and in so doing to be transformed by his grace. We know this is happening when we hear the cries of those less fortunate than ourselves, the cry of suffering humanity itself and just like Our Lord and Saviour our response is one of compassion, generosity and love. As I write these final words I cannot help but feel that Father O'Mahony would approve. My hope now is that in some small way they may also help others grow in their knowledge, understanding and love of the God who shares his very life with us.

Deacon Sean
January 2021

If you would like to find out more about the work of the Trust or make a donation please contact:

'The Father O'Mahony Memorial Trust'
Our Lady of the Wayside Church
Stratford Road
Shirley
Solihull
West Midlands
B90 4AY

Ourladyofthewaysidechurchshirley.co.uk

Email: olw.shirley@rcaob.org.uk



Smarties becomes the first global confectionery brand to switch to recyclable paper packaging

Nestlé announced on the 26th January 2021 that its popular Smarties brand is now using recyclable paper packaging for its confectionery products worldwide.

This represents a transition of 90% of the Smarties range, as 10% was previously already packed in recyclable paper packaging. Smarties is the first global confectionery brand to switch to recyclable paper packaging, removing approximately 250 million plastic packs sold globally every year.

Nestlé began introducing Smarties sharing block packed in recyclable paper in the UK last year.

Alexander von Maillot, Global Head of Confectionery at Nestlé, said: "Shifting Smarties packaging to recyclable paper is one of our key sustainable packaging initiatives in the confectionery category. It is a further step in realizing Nestlé's ambition to make all of its packaging recyclable or reusable by 2025 and to reduce its use of virgin plastics by one third in the same period."

The new Smarties paper packaging is sourced sustainably and is made of a coated paper, paper labels or carton board. Information about how to properly dispose of Smarties paper packaging is also included on its labels to raise consumer awareness.

Louise Barrett, Head of the Nestlé Confectionery Product Technology Centre in York, said: "Developing safe and convenient paper-based solutions for Smarties has required the pioneering of new materials and testing by Nestlé packaging experts at our R&D Center for confectionery in York, UK and the Swiss-based Institute of Packaging Sciences. We adapted our existing manufacturing lines to allow for the careful handling that is required for paper, while also ensuring recyclability across all new formats."

The transformation of the Smarties packaging is only one of the brands' 'SMART Initiatives', which aim to support sustainability and enhance the overall product experience.

Kris Pears

Our newest Commission Member



I joined the commission in November 2020 as the Pax Christi representative following Ann Kelly's retirement.

- I have been involved in areas of Social Justice since my sixth form days at Bishop Ullathorne in Coventry when I was part of a small group who became involved with Coventry Church Housing Association, helping to move individuals and families and get their properties cleaned up and decorated.
- Since then I have spent many years as a CAFOD volunteer speaker and activist (including being fortunate enough to be a member of the lobby group in Paris for COP21 in Dec 2015). I hope to be in Glasgow for COP26 later this year.
- I am an MP correspondent and write regularly to my MP about both local & national issues. I used to have a very good relationship with Jim Cunningham until his retirement at the last election, I met him on a number of occasions both in Coventry and in the House, including a CAFOD event in the Speakers' rooms.
- I've attended major demonstrations like Drop the Debt, in Birmingham in the 1990s and the anti-Trident march in London about 3 years ago.
- I belong to my parish's J&P and Live Simply groups St Thomas More in Coventry was an early parish to achieve the LS Award.
- I am also a member of the Coventry Deanery J&P group, we have been working for a number of years to get the West Midlands Pension Fund to disinvest in companies which manufacture arms, especially those who sell them to conflict zones such as Yemen.
- I've been involved with NJPN for 5 or 6 years attending the annual conference at Swanwick.
- More recently I joined Pax Christi participating in activities locally, such as our silent vigils at Coventry Cathedral marking Hiroshima & Nagasaki anniversaries and outside HSBC bank to protest about their financing of companies who either arm Israel or fund equipment that destroys Palestinian homes and olive tree plantations.
- I am a member of the Community of the Passion, we work at sites of suffering both locally and nationally for example CAPS (Catholics for Aids Prevention & Support) and work with refugees & asylum seekers.

- I worked as a volunteer with the Coventry Winter Night Shelter for 6 years until we were forced to close by the pandemic last March. We were not able to open as usual in December this winter, for obvious reasons.
- I am Trustee (& the current Treasurer) of WorkCare Coventry & Warwickshire Ltd, an ecumenical charity which puts chaplains into the workplace, where they are a listening ear for staff who don't find it easy (or sometimes possible) to talk to their managers or colleagues about issues which are either work related or personal. We have also run Job Clubs for many years, a service which is likely to be in high demand when the Pandemic is over and it looks as though there could be more than 3 million people unemployed.



Fratelli Tutti

Fratelli Tutti, a prophetic call for a better future based on Universal Love. A personal reflection.

I want to share some thoughts about this encyclical and its part in the development of Pope Francis' teachings. These thoughts are mine. I have read Fratelli Tutti, (it's long) but full of references to past church teachings, --Vatican 2, Pope, St Paul 6th, Pope St John Paul 2nd, Pope Benedict, very many others, and of course Francis' own teachings. It can be seen as a bringing together of previous teachings, in the light of the huge world crises we are witnessing, and it offers a solution to the serious problems we are facing today. We really do need to build a better world.

In addition to reading these documents I have listened to and discussed some of the material with staff from CAFOD, and I also listened to Fr Augusto Zampini-Davies who is the Adjunct Secretary of the Dicastery for the Promoting of Integral Human Development and the COVID19 Commission at the Vatican. Fr Augusto worked at CAFOD advising on theology for a few years before going to the Vatican. He hails from Argentina and knows Pope Francis well.

Fr Augusto explains that we have faced a number of crises in the past few years. We had the financial meltdown in 2007 to 2010; we are faced with the Climate Emergency and now a Global Pandemic. During all these times the very poorest in the world have suffered the most. Inequality in the world has grown exponentially. Inequality within the rich, developed countries has grown.

We have seen this in our own country. Pope Francis is pointing the way forward to resolve all these crises because they are connected.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, (2013), Pope Francis addresses the gross inequalities of mass poverty and writes “... it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter. {E.G.188.} Integral Development is one of the theme in *Laudato Si'*. I would like to point you to another paragraph from *Evangelii Gaudium*, 202. It ends with “Inequality is the root of social ills.”

Laudato Si', *On Care For Our Common Home*, has become much better known and more frequently referred to. When we were in Paris, December 2015, many people from various parts of the world, especially South and Central America, would come to greet us because our placards carried quotations from this Encyclical. It was published in May 2015 with the hope that it would influence the Climate talks later that year. The fact that an agreement was made and has been ratified is testament to Pope Francis, although the agreement needs to be implemented and improved. This we hope will happen later this year.

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis examines the Biblical stories of creation and forcefully and clearly tells us that the idea of ‘dominion’, of total domination, is mistaken and misguided. He clearly tells us that our responsibility is to care for all of creation and hand it on to the next generations for their use. This is a far cry from where we are today with manmade climate emergency. He calls us to an ‘ecological conversion’, a change in the way in which each of us lives and uses the resources of the planet. He condemns the ‘throwaway culture of consumerism’. He tells us we have created a ‘massive pile of filth’.

Fratelli Tutti, brothers and sisters all, is another quite remarkable document. What strikes me is just how many different church documents, whether from Popes or Bishops, Saints or Councils, Francis refers to and develops further where applicable. It is this development, this progression of principles applied to today’s problems and situations which gives us a firm and concrete starting point for us to begin looking at how we are to live.

Pope Francis points out that “... the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seem an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalised indifference.” (30) He voices the hope that when this pandemic is over we will not be thinking “in terms of ‘them’ and ‘those’ but only ‘us’ ”.

In a wonderful chapter entitled ‘A Stranger on the Road’, Francis discusses the parable of the Good Samaritan. He looks at this from many standpoints and

tells us it is here we are faced with “the basic decision we need to make in order to rebuild our wounded world” (67) We need to identify with and imitate the Good Samaritan. In many parts of our country, we have seen and are seeing so many acts of kindness, (another theme in *F.T.*). Individuals, groups, in our own communities coming together to offer help and support. We are also seeing some of those in power ignoring the needs and trying to carry on with their own selfish, self-serving ways.

Leaders, governments, are quarrelling over vaccines. Those with power and money are putting themselves first, including our own government. Even harsher measures are put in place to prevent refugees and migrants from finding safety. The Secretary General of the U.N. has appealed frequently for a fair and equitable distribution of vaccines to the whole world, but he is being ignored. At the same time our country has reduced its commitment to overseas aid.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis calls for a better kind of politics based on Universal Love. He asks politicians to ask themselves not “How many voted for me?” or “How many had a positive image of me?” but “How much love did I put into my work?” “What did I do for the progress of our people?” and “How much social peace did I sow?” There is much more in chapter 5.

Pope Francis is very positive in the final chapters entitled *Dialogue and Friendship in Society*, and *Paths of Renewed Encounter*. He discusses a new culture based on Encounter. He highlights the plight and the desires of indigenous peoples and invites us to “Recover Kindness”. Pope Francis once again, and in detail, discusses the situations which lead to conflict and war, and he declares “...it is very difficult nowadays to invoke rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a ‘just war’. Never again War!”

A little further he discusses the idea of the death penalty. He tells us that because of the inalienable dignity of each human being, “Christians and people of goodwill are called to work, not only for the abolition of the death penalty, but also to work for the improvement of prison conditions....”

Pope Francis opens *Fratelli Tutti* by recalling his encounter with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, and closes with their joint appeal for peace justice and fraternity. These are pertinent and extremely moving. Please read for yourselves.

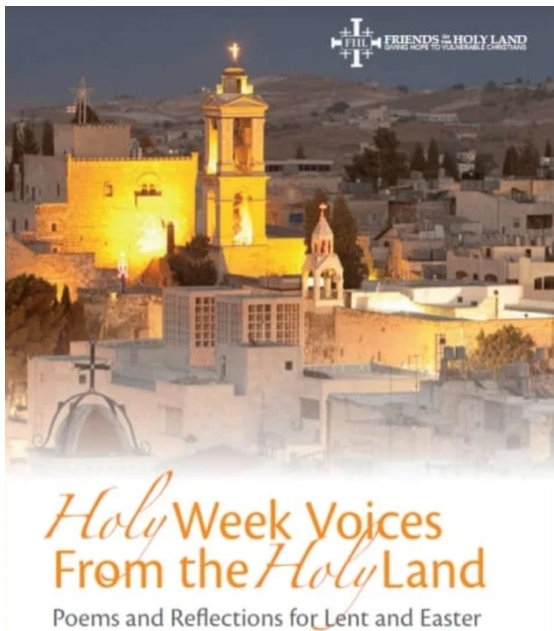
I want to close with Pope Francis’ call to advance along the paths of hope. Here are paragraphs 54 and 55, from *Fratelli Tutti*: entitled HOPE.

54. Despite these dark clouds, which may not be ignored, I would like in the following pages to take up and discuss many new paths of hope. For God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family.

The recent pandemic enabled us to recognize and appreciate once more all those around us who, in the midst of fear, responded by putting their lives on the line. We began to realize that our lives are interwoven with and sustained by ordinary people valiantly shaping the decisive events of our shared history: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caretakers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests and religious... They understood that no one is saved alone.[51]

55. I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope "speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile".[52] Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.

Phil Mayland
JANUARY 2021



Friends of the Holy Land

The Evangelisation Office would like to invite you to a series of Lent reflections beginning on 19th February from 1:30-2:30pm, each Friday for 6 weeks.

The Friends of the Holy Land have produced a beautiful resource made up of poems, reflections, scripture readings and images, accompanying Jesus through his Passion Death and Resurrection.

Contributions come from Christian leaders in the Holy Land, representing many Christians struggling at this time of lockdown.

If you would like to join us on this journey, please contact Natalie for the Zoom codes at natalie.orefice@rcaob.org.uk or see the attached poster or links below for more information.

While a copy of the book is not necessary to take part in these reflections, we would still encourage you to support Christians in the Holy Land by buying a copy at the link below. In addition, the book contains a further 9 reflections which can be read between the arranged meetings.

Yours in Christ, Paul Northam.

Buy the Book:

<https://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/lenten-book>



Birmingham Justice and Peace Lenten retreat Saturday 13 March 2021

An invitation to explore our understanding of
Being in Communion...

with God, with each other
and with all of creation.

Prayer, reflection and contemplative practices will be woven through our journey together. There will also be opportunity to share in break out groups.



Session 1 10:30 am –12 Noon
Session 2 1pm - 2:30pm

The retreat will be led by **Sr Mary Deane**
Presentation Sisters
<http://bit.ly/LentRetreat2021>

Brushstrokes Community Project

Please Support and Share our
COVID Fundraising Appeal!

Support our COVID appeal to provide essential support to the most vulnerable families in Sandwell.

We are excited to launch our first ever public fundraising appeal hoping to raise £85,000 to continue to support the most vulnerable families in Sandwell.

The pandemic has had a severe impact on Brushstrokes' clients with many more people turning to the project for advice and support during these difficult times. More people are struggling to put food on the table and need our support, advice and guidance to avoid crises like homelessness and destitution. We want to be there so that everyone gets the support that they need and deserve.

As a valued supporter of Brushstrokes, we are asking that you support our public appeal by:

Making a donation if you can, we know times are tough, and share on social media

Liking and sharing our Brushstrokes Facebook page to encourage other people to give

Telling your friends, family and colleagues about our work and our appeal to inspire them to support us too

Could you organise a fundraiser in aid of the campaign? We'll be sharing ideas for ways to get involved Please donate at: www.justgiving.com/campaign/covidbrushstrokes

Find us also on Facebook: Brushstrokes Sandwe/1

Together we can change the lives of our most vulnerable community members to live a better tomorrow



Racial Justice.

This article is a combination of a reflection by CARJ, the Catholic Association for Racial Justice and a message from the Bishops Conference prepared by Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Racial Justice. We celebrate Racial Justice Sunday, each year, at the end of January, but racial justice must be at the heart of all our attitudes, awareness, thoughts, and actions each and every day.

'A Time to Act' – Reflection

Wednesday, January 13th, 2021 @ 1:20 pm

A reflection on the theme of Racial Justice Sunday 2021 - 'A Time for Action'.

Racial Justice Sunday 2021

At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus outlines his Mission in the synagogue in Nazareth:

'He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new
sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour'.

His ministry was one of compassionate involvement, concern for the disadvantaged. Aware of obstacles, including those of the Law, which limited joy and fulfilment Jesus acted. He confronted, sometimes angrily, what undermined a person's dignity. The theme of Racial Justice Sunday 2021 is A Time to Act. Racial issues and inequalities were identified nationally and internationally in 2020 generating awareness, emotion and outrage. In light of this, Racial Justice Sunday 2021 is particularly significant.

Action is needed

Action is needed to further the cause of racial justice. What can we do?

In recent years Pope Francis has repeatedly used four verbs encouraging positive and direct action in relation to migrants and refugees, '**Welcome, Protect, Promote and Integrate**'. These same words are essential to advancing the cause of racial justice. None can be omitted, it is as necessary to have plans to Promote and Integrate as it is to Welcome.

We need to challenge ourselves to act now so that this may be achieved.



RACIAL JUSTICE

Bishop's Message for RJS 2021

Wednesday, January 13th, 2021 @ 1:34 pm
Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Racial Justice says in his message: "It's not enough to simply denounce racism. This is a time to act. In the words of Pope Francis: 'God asks us to dare to create something new.'"

Ethnic minorities have suffered disproportionately from the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating a systemic problem with racial injustice in our society. This was dramatically brought home with the brutal killing of George Floyd and the reaction it provoked. As Pope Francis reflects: "instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think."

Dismantle structures of injustice

These shameful reminders of racism demand meaningful action to confront and dismantle sinful structures of injustice. Our brother Bishops in the USA remind us that: "all of us are in need of personal, ongoing conversion. Our churches and our civic and social institutions are in need of ongoing reform. If racism is confronted by addressing its causes and the injustice it produces, then healing can occur." Racism is a sin and a violation of human dignity in which we are all complicit. As Catholics we need to acknowledge and confront our own failings, as individuals and as a Church.

Every single one of our parishes, schools and organisations has a responsibility to actively practise anti-racism in all aspects of our mission.

We need to address the lack of visible diversity at every level, so that people can see themselves, their race, their culture and their history in the Church's life.

We need to engage suppliers and businesses from all parts of the community, seeking out those which promote diversity and inclusivity.

Most importantly we need to actively invite people from different ethnic communities to share their experiences and genuinely listen to their voices, however challenging this may be.

A Time to Act

It is not enough to simply denounce racism. This is a time to act. In the words of the Holy Father: "This is a moment to dream big, to rethink our priorities — what we value, what we want, what we seek — and to commit to act in our daily life on what we have dreamed of. God asks us to dare to create something new."

Bishop Paul McAleenan
Lead Bishop for Racial Justice

Thanks to CARJ and to Bishop Paul. Any mistakes in this article are mine. Further articles on Racial Justice will follow.

Phil Mayland
February 2021



Indian Theological Association in solidarity with farmers' struggle for justice

Feb 3rd, 2021

The Indian Theological Association (ITA) has issued the following statement expressing their solidarity with the farmers' struggle for justice.

Tens of thousands of farmers have gathered at the outskirts of Delhi from November 26 last year protesting against the three contentious farm laws: The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, The Essential Commodities Act (Amendment) Bill and the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill. All these three bills have made Indian farmers, most of them own less than one acre even more vulnerable by giving the levers of power to the big agri-business companies.

The newly imposed farm laws are a blatant attack on the Indian democracy by the present federal government run by Shri Narendra Modi. The corporate-friendly federal government neither had any consultations with the many farmer unions across India nor with the opposition parties in the Parliament. The central government unabashedly, manipulating its majority in the lower house of the Parliament executed the bills. Further, by trespassing into a state subject, agriculture, this government has weakened the federal structure of the Indian Union.

Farmers camped at the protest sites while enduring the biting cold, explain how these controversial farm laws while exploiting them, will benefit the Corporates to make huge profits at the expense of their sweat and blood.

"The farm laws will impoverish us further and we will lose our lands," they say. "We demand that these laws are repealed. Any postponement like 'freezing the laws for some months' is a deliberate attempt to weaken our movement," affirm farmers in one voice.

Farmers stress that they have no legal protection vis-a-vis the big agro-business companies they are pitted against, if disputes arise. "Is it possible for a marginal farmer to fight the multinationals?" ask farmers. In addition, the government has given a free hand for these big companies to hoard food stuff and make huge profits. This step will push millions of poor people to abject poverty. More than seventy elderly farmers have died unable to withstand the severe cold wave. The government has turned a blind eye on the suffering of the farmers and has turned stone deaf to their cries for justice.

'Farm laws' are yet another deliberate attempt to weaken the Indian democracy. The right-wing Hindutva groups' dream of establishing an ethnic Hindu State would be possible only by replacing the sovereign, secular, democratic, socialist republic established by Constitution of India. Demonetization, the abolition of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, and enactment of Citizenship (Amendment Act) that discriminates people against one another in terms of religion are the other significant moves to destroy the Constitutional democracy of India.

It is in this context, one finds the determination and courage of farmers in the face of brutal power of the government remarkable. They are fearless to speak the truth in the corridors of power. Their patience and perseverance are outstanding. It is inspiring to see how thousands are fed in the camps by 'langar' (community kitchen) and cleanliness and order maintained everywhere.

In the protest sites one witnesses to the cry of the vulnerable. "When they cry out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate (Exodus 22: 27). God listens to the cry of the oppressed and stands with them in their struggle for justice.

The farmers are not seeking charity from the government or from their cronies. They demand their rights. We hope that the farmers who feed the nation will succeed in their struggle for justice. We believe that God who stands with the vulnerable will lead them to victory.

We the members of Indian Theological Association firmly support the cause of the farmers and all those who strive relentlessly for peace founded on justice. We demand that the government listens to the voice of the poor and repeals the controversial laws.

On behalf of Indian Theological Association,
Dr Vincent Kundukulam, President, ITA
Dr Kochurani Abraham, Vice President, ITA
Dr Raj Irudaya SJ, Secretary, ITA

Dr Joy Pulikkan SDB, Treasurer, ITA
Dr Jacob Parappally MSFS, Member, Ex. Committee, ITA
Dr Davis Varayilan CMI, Member, Committee, ITA
Dr PT Mathew SJ, Member, Ex Committee, ITA
Dr Victor Edwin SJ, Member, Ex Committee, ITA
Tags: India, Farmers, Victor Edwin SJ, Indian Theological Association



Pope Francis with Grand Imam of Al-Azhar ...
image: Vatican News

Pope Francis: Commit to fraternity every day of the year

Feb 3rd, 2021

During his General Audience on Wednesday, streamed from the Apostolic Library, Pope Francis told the faithful that Thursday, 4 February, will be the first International Day of Human Fraternity.

The world day was officially established by a Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in December 2020.

The initiative follows on from the historic signing of the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together on 4 February 2019, by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar (Cairo), Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, in Abu Dhabi on 4 February 2019 (pictured). The Pope and the Grand Imam spent almost half a year drafting the Document before his Apostolic Visit to the United Arab Emirates.

During the Audience, the Pope said he was pleased that "the nations of the entire world are joining in this celebration, aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue."

"The UN Resolution recognizes the contribution that dialogue among all religious groups can make towards an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind... May this

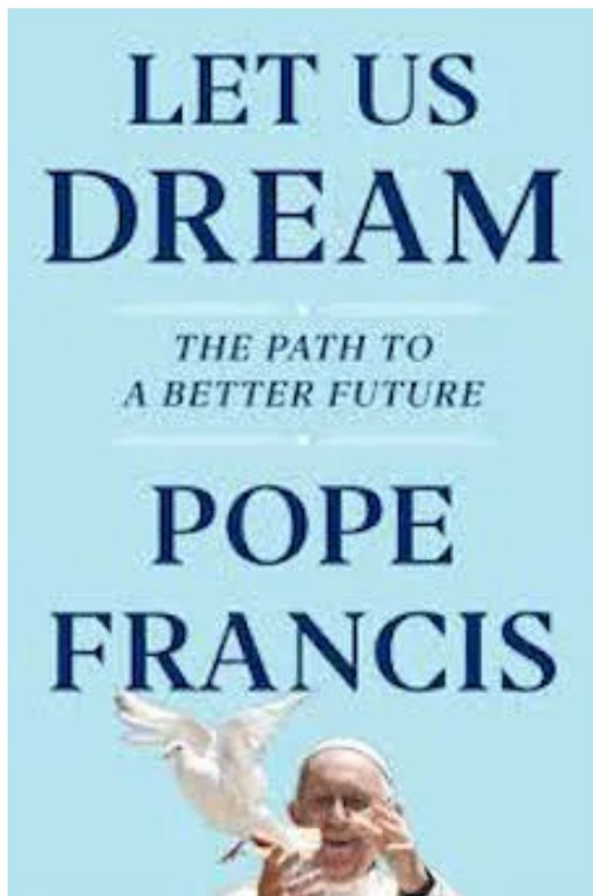
be our prayer today and our commitment every day of the year," he said.

The winners of the 2021 Zayed Award for Human Fraternity were also announced on Wednesday. They are Latifah Ibn Ziaten, Founder of Imad Association for Youth and Peace who, after losing her son to an act of terrorism, transformed her sorrow into reaching out to young people, and António Guterres, ninth Secretary General of the United Nations.

Announcing the winners of the Award, the Secretary-General of the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity, Judge Mohamed Abdel Salam, said, "This independent, global award was conceived to encourage and recognize those who inspire us all to play our part in creating a more understanding, inclusive and peaceful world. By examining the work and impact of both 2021 honorees, it is clear that they are both role models for the next generation, world leaders, and all those engaged in similarly noble pursuits for peace."

Both Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar will jointly present the award during the virtual ceremony on Thursday. The meeting and the award ceremony will be streamed in several languages starting at 14.30 (Rome time) - 13.30 (GMT time) - by Vatican News, the multimedia information portal of the Holy See, and broadcast by Vatican Media.

Source: Vatican News



Let Us Dream by Pope Francis.

This latest book by the Holy Father, in conversation with Austin Ivereigh, is quite wonderful.

It is easy to read, although the themes are deep and extremely important and urgent. Pope Francis discusses the Covid pandemic, the causes of poverty and inequality, the effects of this emergency and presents ways forward to heal the world. He does talk about the opportunity presented to us by this crisis. I recall many years ago being told, and I hope this is true, that in China they write the word CRISIS using two characters. The first is DANGER and the second is OPPORTUNITY. I like that thought.

The title, Let Us Dream, comes from the Old Testament: "What I hear at this moment is similar to what Isaiah hears God saying through him: 'Come let us talk this over. Let us dare to dream'" The book was written during the course of last year, from the first disruptions of the pandemic before Easter to the end of summer. The book is laid out using the See -Judge - Act method, although Pope Francis prefers contemplate - discern- propose. In addition to the Prologue there are three chapters, A Time to See, A Time to Choose and A Time to Act.

The first chapter makes the situation facing the world very clear. We are living through a crisis caused by mankind. Francis reminds us that God created the world and "it was good". The crisis we have is a social crisis. There are other 'pandemics'. The pandemic of climate change, the pandemic of inequality and the pandemic of poverty. We can never go back to what was before. He tells us that his Encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* is not an environmental encyclical but a social one, and he calls us to adopt an 'Integral Ecology'. What I particularly enjoyed throughout this book is Pope Francis' deeply personal insights, recollections of events which were meaningful for him and those times and events which have influenced his thinking.

These personal insights are fascinating and underpin a number of ideas and ways of working described in A Time to Choose. It is quite brilliant. Here Francis discusses different courses of actions and the process of discernment. He goes into detail about why he favours the Synodal method for looking at ways forward. He moves us from the polarised positions we often take, contradictions, where I am right and you are wrong, to what Francis calls contrapositions. Here he discusses how the Synodal method, open to the Holy Spirit, allows opponents to walk forward together, and frequently find solutions which could not be foreseen.

He discusses in some detail the Synod on the Family and the Synod on the Amazon. Here he points out that sometimes the media reports are misleading because the media expectations are built on favouring one position or another. The Synod method is not about

winning or losing but allowing each participant to be open to the Holy Spirit.

The third chapter, A Time to Act, begins with a reminder that we are all a 'people'. A concept which has been lost in the individualism of the market economy where so many are left behind and discarded. We need to remember our shared dignity. 'It is God's love and closeness that confer dignity'.

Pope Francis discusses what it means to be a people. He also discusses the present development of populism or neo-liberal ideas and shows us where these have failed, and therefore the urgent need to find better ways. He tells us that societies need to be organised, not in thrall to the economy which needs to grow and consume more and more, creating the 'throwaway culture' and the 'pile of filth', but at the service of all.

He talks about the three 'Ls', Land, Lodging and Labour which should be made available to all. Somewhere to produce food, somewhere to live and somewhere to work. The dignity of labour has been forgotten in the development of free markets where workers are expendable, and slave labour and child labour flourishes.

There is so much more. Pope Francis consistently tells us that we must follow the principles contained in Catholic Social Teaching, the Common Good and the universal destination of goods, Solidarity, Subsidiarity. Pope Francis also suggests we should consider some radical ideas such as the Universal Basic Income. This will go far in conferring dignity on those who are carers, mothers raising a family and others. I will offer one final quote:

"By making the integration of the poor and the care for our environment central to society's goals, we can generate work while humanizing our surroundings. By providing a universal basic income, we can free and enable people to work for the community in a dignified way. By adopting more intensive permaculture methods for growing food, we can regenerate the natural world, create work and biodiversity, and live better."

Let Us Dream is a most important book. It is easy to read. Its message is one for our times today. I hope and pray that this short article has done justice to Pope Francis' message. There is a time to See what is happening, what has been happening over the past decades. There is a time to contemplate and discern, and this leads to a Time to Act. Please, read Let Us Dream and then begin to act for a better future for the whole world and all its peoples.

Phil Mayland
February 4th 2021.

Israel must work with Palestinian authorities to make Covid vaccines accessible to Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza

Thursday, January 21st, 2021 @ 9:56 am



Final Communique of the 2021 Holy Land Co-ordination

The Bishops of the Holy Land Co-ordination, an international annual pilgrimage to the Holy Land, have released a final communique having met remotely this year due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The Bishops engaged in a number of online sessions from 16 – 21 January to examine the realities and challenges facing not just the Christians but all the people of the region.

"We remain resolutely committed to supporting our sisters and brothers in the homeland of Christ," they write. "Over the past week we have been privileged and moved to hear from Christians across the West Bank, Gaza and Israel about their mission, resilience and witness in these unprecedented circumstances." The bishops acknowledge that there is less cause for optimism at the present time than at any time in recent history.

At a time of political change they call on Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to recommit to direct negotiations to achieve peace.

They implore the governments and political leaders of their home countries to work 'actively' towards this end by "supporting dialogue between all sides, upholding international law, and reaffirming the plurality of Jerusalem, given its unique significance for Jews, Christians and Muslims."

Covid Vaccinations for Palestinians

The communique calls on the international community to "hold Israel accountable for its moral, legal and humanitarian responsibility to make Covid-19 vaccines accessible for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and encourage cooperation by the Palestinian Authority, heeding Pope Francis' message that 'in the face of a challenge that knows no borders, we cannot erect walls.'"

Models of Charity

The bishops, rightly, draw inspiration from the Church-run schools, clinics, hospitals and social projects serving the wider community:

“While many of our own countries continue to face severe hardship amid the pandemic, we have a profound responsibility to support our fellow Christians in the Holy Land. Church schools, clinics, hospitals and other social projects including the work of Caritas, while under severe pressure, are models of charity, justice, and peace. These Christian institutions are vital in bringing together people from many different backgrounds to serve the common good of all.”

Pilgrimages and Support

The communique concludes by looking to the future and a time when pilgrims can re-connect with and support the “Living Stones” – the Christians of the Holy Land.

“The Christian community, though small, is an important guarantor of social cohesion and a bearer of hope for a better future. We eagerly await a time when Christians from across the world can once again make pilgrimages to the Holy Land to witness and support this first-hand. Until that point, we encourage our communities to provide any assistance that may be possible and hold all the region’s peoples in our prayers.”

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem supports the Church and Christian people across the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem – which includes Cyprus, Jordan and the Holy Land. Visit its website to support the work.

Full Text

This is the first time we have been prevented from meeting physically in the Holy Land. Yet we remain resolutely committed to supporting our sisters and brothers in the homeland of Christ. Over the past week we have been privileged and moved to hear from Christians across the West Bank, Gaza and Israel about their mission, resilience and witness in these unprecedented circumstances.

Through our dialogue, it has become painfully clear that there is today less cause for optimism than at any time in recent history.

The health challenges of Covid-19, felt by the entire world, are compounded by conflict, occupation and blockade.

The absence of international pilgrims has exacerbated widespread economic hardship, increased levels of unemployment and pushed many more families into poverty.

The lack of political progress, along with relentless expansion of illegal settlements and the impact of

Israel’s Nation-State law, continues to erode any prospect of a peaceful two-state solution.

Now is a critical moment for us all to strengthen our expression of solidarity with the people of the Holy Land “not as a vague sentiment but as a ‘firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good’”. [1]

We stress the importance of the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships recommitting to direct negotiations. We call upon our own governments and political leaders urgently to renew their active participation in the search for a just peace, supporting dialogue between all sides, upholding international law, and reaffirming the plurality of Jerusalem, given its unique significance for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Furthermore, the international community must hold Israel accountable for its moral, legal and humanitarian responsibility to make Covid-19 vaccines accessible for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and encourage cooperation by the Palestinian Authority, heeding Pope Francis’ message that “in the face of a challenge that knows no borders, we cannot erect walls.” [2]

While many of our own countries continue to face severe hardship amid the pandemic, we have a profound responsibility to support our fellow Christians in the Holy Land. Church schools, clinics, hospitals and other social projects including the work of Caritas, while under severe pressure, are models of charity, justice, and peace. These Christian institutions are vital in bringing together people from many different backgrounds to serve the common good of all.

The Christian community, though small, is an important guarantor of social cohesion and a bearer of hope for a better future. We eagerly await a time when Christians from across the world can once again make pilgrimages to the Holy Land to witness and support this first-hand. Until that point, we encourage our communities to provide any assistance that may be possible and hold all the region’s peoples in our prayers.

Bishop Declan Lang
England and Wales (Chair of the Holy Land Coordination)
Bishop Udo Bentz - Germany
Archbishop Stephen Brislin - South Africa
Bishop Christopher Chessun - Church of England
Bishop Michel Dubost - France
Bishop Felix Gmur - Switzerland
Bishop Nicholas Hudson - England and Wales
Archbishop Patrick Kelly - England and Wales
Bishop William Kenney - England and Wales
Bishop Alan McGuckian - Ireland
Bishop David Malloy - United States of America
Bishop William Nolan - Scotland
Bishop Raymond Poisson - Canada
Bishop Noel Treanor - Ireland
Archbishop Joan Enric Vives i Sicilia - Spain

[1] Pope Francis, World Day of Peace 2021

[2] Pope Francis, Urbi et Orbi 2020



Never Again War! Nuclear Weapons are now illegal

Pax Christi in England and Wales, along with many of our partners, celebrates the entry into force of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons [TPNW] on 22nd January 2021.

The TPNW was originally negotiated, and successfully campaigned for, at the UN by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons [ICAN] in December 2016. It is the first international pact outlawing the development, testing, possession and use of nuclear weapons. In October 2020, it was ratified by 50 states, reaching threshold for bringing the treaty into international law.

Decades of campaigning by Pax Christi members, with activists from all over the world, have achieved what many said was impossible: the banning of nuclear weapons. In the UK, from Molesworth to Aldermaston, Greenham to Faslane Pax Christi members, with other faith groups, have stood in silent prayer and witness, marched and blockaded and while lying locked on or glued to each other in the mud have been hooted at by drivers, insulted and been told to 'get a job'. Many have been arrested for their participation in these nonviolent actions.

Since 1983, Pax Christi has held an annual Ash Wednesday witness outside the Ministry of Defence, to repent of the sin of nuclear weapons and to mourn the people who have suffered because of them. As part of the liturgy, members have marked the walls of the Ministry of Defence with blessed charcoal, which has sometimes led to arrest. In front of judges they have explained, over and over, that their faith forbids them from standing by and doing nothing. COVID 19 means that we shall be unable to be present in London this year but we shall meet on zoom to repent and to renew our commitment to the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

In his latest encyclical, Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis casts strong doubts on the concept of the Just War, calling instead for, 'Never again war!' (p65) He writes, 'With the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger.'

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and President of Pax Christi England and Wales, has signed a statement from Pax Christi International in support of the treaty. Other signatories include bishops from all over the world, including Japan, the Philippines and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Bishops of England Wales and Scotland have issued their own statement, urging the UK to abandon its nuclear arsenal, adding, 'The resources spent on manufacturing, maintaining and upgrading these weapons of mass destruction, should be reinvested to alleviate the suffering of the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society, for the Common Good of all peoples.'

Don't Bank on The Bomb, says, 'there is a growing understanding that financing is a form of prohibited assistance in developing nuclear weapons.' Pax Christi, as part of an interfaith working group, produced the report, 'Investing in Change',

<https://moneyleftofnukes.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/banks-pensions-and-nuclear-weapons.pdf>

which can be used to challenge pension providers and banks to divest from nuclear weapons. For instance the Dutch pension fund APB divested from nuclear weapons, seeing them as illegal weapons alongside mines and cluster bombs. Many see this form of resistance as one of the most effective for the future as financial institutions start to see investing in nuclear weapons as too risky.

<https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/50thratification/>

Pax Christi will be joining the member groups of the Christian Coalition of Peace Organisations (NCPO) in a Thanksgiving Service at 11.30am on Friday 22nd January. This service will end with the ringing of the Peace Bell at Coventry Cathedral and the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation.

Pax Christi's website has a large selection of resources for information and ideas for action that can be taken to strengthen support and asking the UK Government to sign and ratify the Treaty. We are asking members: to pray for a nuclear free world; to put posters in their windows; to lobby their local Councils and Councillors to commit to be Nuclear Free Local Authorities; to ask Mayors to sign up to 'Mayors for Peace'; to arrange a virtual meeting with MPs and ask them to sign Early Day Motion 1072 and to sign the online petitions to our own government and to the nine nuclear weapons countries.

Please join us in these activities to free the world of nuclear weapons.





New Wineskins
An online service
for
Church Action on
Poverty Sunday
6pm, 21 February
2021



LENT 2021 - Walk for Water



Walk for Water is the only Lent challenge you need: 10,000 steps a day - done your way. Every day. For 40 days.

Give, act and pray to ensure people on the margins are fully involved as we journey together. We live in tough times. The pandemic continues to highlight the inequalities that sweep too many people into poverty. But we have also been reminded of the values that matter most: mutuality, compassion and community. As we journey forward together, we have the chance to do things differently. If we are to build a society in which everyone can live a full life, free from poverty, we must ensure the voices of people who are struggling to make ends meet are heard.

Go the distance this Lent and help to end water poverty.

Visit the CAFOD Website, watch the video of Abdella, and sign up.

Join people around the UK in prayer, giving and action at this special online event for Church Action on Poverty Sunday, hosted by Church Action on Poverty North East and Sunderland Minster.

Once you've joined, we'll send you a welcome pack with free green shoelaces and a challenge diary. If you raise £200, we'll also send you a free CAFOD neck warmer as an extra thank you! Abdella is 23 and he has big dreams. He dreams of starting a small business. He dreams of starting a family. He dreams of having his own home. He dreams of the day he won't have to walk ten hours to get water.

Share a vision for a society founded on compassion and justice, where all people are able to exercise dignity, agency and power. We will share together in worship and prayer. People will share their stories of poverty and speaking truth to power.

Abdella lives in Afar, Ethiopia – one of the hottest places on earth. Like hundreds of people in the area, he spends most of the day walking to get water for his family to drink. He knows that if there was water near his home, his family wouldn't have to worry any more about getting enough to stay alive. And he could start on the dreams he has for the rest of his life.

[Sign up to Walk for Water](#)

We'll hear from decision-makers in the North East about how we can all work together to loosen the grip of poverty. And you'll learn how you can be part of the movement tackling poverty through giving, action and prayer.

Family Fast Day

<https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/>

[Family Fast Day](#) is Friday 26 February 2021.

This Lent in lockdown, you and your parish can help transform lives!

Abdella has to walk ten hours a day to find water to keep his family alive. By sharing Abdella's story with your parish at livestream Masses, in the e-bulletin and via social media, you can raise life-changing funds.

- Share our short talk
- Download the short talk.
- Get involved with your parish.



Use our resources and guides to join in with your parish this [Family Fast Day](#), either online or in church.

You can donate online, or by text message or put your donation into an envelope. Please remember to Gift Aid your donation. Thank You.



Reclaim our Common Home.

We have a Petition to the Prime Minister:
Urge the Prime Minister to put people hardest hit at the heart of COP26 climate talks
This year, the UK will host the largest gathering of world leaders ever to take place on British soil: the 'COP26' climate talks.

As Prime Minister, Boris Johnson must push world leaders to show the ambition we need to keep temperature rises below the disastrous 1.5-degree threshold. This means that all countries must play their part. Wealthy nations, who bear the greatest responsibility for the crisis, need to step up.

With the eyes of the world on the UK, we must urge the Prime Minister to make sure communities hardest hit by the climate emergency are listened to at COP26. Sign the petition now Urge the Prime Minister to put people hardest hit at the heart of COP26 climate talks | CAFOD (e-activist.com) The petition reads:

Dear Prime Minister,
COP26 will be one of the most important summits of the century. The conference must put us on track to end a climate emergency which is having a devastating impact on the world and hitting poorest communities the hardest. As host to this crucial meeting, we urge you to make sure world leaders show the ambition needed to stop temperatures rising beyond a disastrous 1.5 degrees, with each country committing to do its fair share. And we urge you to put the people worst affected by the crisis – those who have done least to contribute to the problem – at the heart of the talks.

The Bathhula Care Trust was setup to help the poor, needy and destitute persons, without any discrimination of caste, creed, or religion, in many areas of their need, with special emphasis on Health and Education in India.

The Trust works for up-lifting the living conditions of poor people-socially and economically oppressed and mentally ill. As a result many people rebuilt their families, improved their financial status, brought happiness into the lives of Children, Leprosy patients, Old Age People, Widows and other adversely challenged people.

Since 2010, The Bathhula Care Trust has been giving monthly financial assistance to people suffering with leprosy and those who are very poor and in need, (known as our Monthly Pension Scheme.) Click on the link to go to our Monthly Pension Scheme page.

Building Homes for members of a Leper Colony

The Leprosy Patients are shunned by society and forced to live separately. So they live in Leper Colony with nothing more than huts made from branches and leaves. The Trust was supporting these families by providing roof sheets, designed to go on their roofs to provide water proofing. However, every day was great challenge for them to live in huts without even basic facilities.

Thus the Trust has built 14 houses with RCC roof in leprosy colony for Leprosy Patients and their families. Now these families are having better living in their houses. The Trust is supporting these families by providing financial assistance for their Monthly Ration, Medical and their children Education.

Providing Relief to Victims of Covid-19



The Covid-19 pandemic has created a dreadful crisis around the world. Sufferers from Covid-19 in developed countries will have easier access to medical care and have measures put in place to help families financially. However, in developing countries the poor simply do not have that support system in



place. If they cannot work due to illness, their income is often reduced to nil and typically they are in a situation where they cannot feed themselves or their families.



The Batthula Care Trust and its generous supporters were able, with the help of some kind volunteers, to travel to areas in need so as to distribute much needed food and clean drinking water. Food distribution took place for almost 30 days including cooked food to at least 100 families.



We sincerely thank everyone who contributed to this humanitarian project and although we would always like to do more, together we made a real difference.

In the recent months we have supported a number of people for their medical expenses without which they would have been in great difficulties. The Trust was able to step in to assist these families.

My sincere thanks to you all for your genuine support and prayers. I am very grateful to Mr & Mrs Vaughan for their continued support to the charitable work of the Batthula Care Trust.

To see more about the trust and how to donate please follow this link <https://bit.ly/3dtj2ZT>



Living in the Plastic age

<https://www.rotarygbi.org/magazine/>

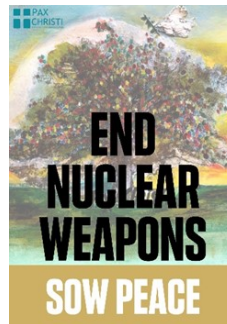
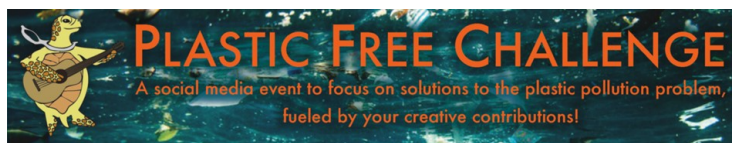
The current edition of the Rotary Magazine contains a number of articles about plastic pollution.



EndPlasticSoup is a Rotary movement, started in the Netherlands which is changing the conversation about the environment and which has captured the imaginations of many.

Find out more endplasticsoup.nl/en/

On page 12 of the magazine the highlight the dangers of single-use plastic. If you remember in our February 2020 newsletter well encouraged you and your parish to try a Plastic Free Lent. How did you do? Are you doing it again this year? plasticfreechallenge.org



Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons:

22nd January

Pope Francis has been a leading voice in condemning nuclear deterrence and the Holy See was among the first 50 states to sign the treaty.

Pax Christi is a member of The Network of Christian Peace

'The Treaty was negotiated at the United Nations in 2017 and supported by 122 states. It will enter into legal force on 22 January 2021, banning nuclear weapons under international law.

Actions:

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/nuclear-ban-treaty-2021/>

If you have a contribution you would like included in the **June 2021** newsletter please send it by Email for consideration to:

The Administrator, J&P Commission.

Email: bham.jandp@gmail.com

June 2021 Edition:

Last date for copy **31st May 2021**

The views expressed in this newsletter are the view of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission or the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham.

www.birminghamjandp.org.uk
Birmingham J&P @BhamJandP