

World Day of Prayer for Peace

Work for peace. We are living in a time of many wars and the call for peace must be shouted. Peace sometimes gives the impression of being quiet, but it is never quiet, peace is always proactive and dynamic.

Pope Francis

The pope's message for the 2023 World Day of Peace is titled "No one can be saved alone: Combatting COVID-19 together, embarking together on paths of peace." [LVI World Day of Peace 2023 - No one can be saved alone. Combatting Covid-19 together, embarking together on paths of peace | Francis \(vatican.va\)](https://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francis/messages/peace/encyclicals/2023/05/20230513_wdp2023_en.html)

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COP27 and the Environmental Crises

The planet is at crisis point in many areas

The first thing we need to do is to accept the state of devastation that the planet has reached, and the extreme urgency of the situation. Have a look at the links below if you're not convinced.

The environmental crises are emergencies - climate change; pollution of land, waters, air, and soil; loss of biodiversity; destruction of the land; pandemics; superbugs and so on. In an emergency it is right and proper to take emergency action. Governments, our political and religious leaders, the super-rich and those in power are not doing this. They are tweaking things so that they can continue as usual.

People are calling for strong action, and governments have every right and duty to take emergency measures. There should be a UK National Government to take the measures needed, without party politics interfering.

Mitigation must be the priority

It's vitally important that nothing distracts Governments from focusing on mitigation as the priority. That is, stopping emitting greenhouse gasses, taking out the ones already in the atmosphere, and storing what we can. Otherwise, we are continuing to be mopping up without turning off the tap; we are continuing to make things worse and worse, causing more and more resources to be needed for adaptation, loss and damage in the future.

Loss and damage finance should be used for sustainable projects, practices, and materials, putting the natural environment first. And developing green energy should be part of the loss and damage package.



An Ecological Conversion

Pope Francis, in his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, has called for an ecological conversion in each one of us. An ecological conversion means realising that everything we do (or neglect to do) may have an impact on the natural environment, and therefore it means we are required to look at everything we do to see if it is in harmony with nature. I wonder how many people are doing that.

We need an ecological conversion in our attitude to the economy, in our attitude to other life forms and in our activities and interests. In other words, in everything we do.

The best way of bringing about an ecological conversion is by taking an action/s that puts us on the path of conversion. Each time we do the right thing, it becomes easier to do. Each time we act out our environmental ethics, we become more ecologically converted.

Considered action is one side of ecological conversion. The other is the opposite - *not* doing what we know to be wrong or unhelpful. Giving up our destructive or polluting interests and indulgences for the sake of the planet.

Few people are prepared to suffer, but suffering may, I think *will*, be forced on us. Let's meet it half-way and willingly make sacrifices that will mean less suffering in the long term.

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**LAUDATO SI'
MOVEMENT**

formerly Global Catholic Climate Movement



COP27

One positive agreement that came out of COP27 is that 150 countries have signed the global methane pledge to slash methane emissions by 30% by 2030. But if policies are not put into action, this is just more promises to quieten public concern. And it does not go far enough.

An apparent positive agreement is the Loss and Damage Assistance fund, but there is little money in the fund so far, and lots of things need to be worked out and agreed on. I think that governments have agreed to this fund because by promising to deal with the symptoms rather than the cause, they have taken the focus off stopping and reversing climate change.

The most depressing result of COP27 is that there is no agreement to phase out fossil fuels and no agreement to phase out animal farming, the world's greatest cause of habitat destruction and wildlife loss. Big Meat is ploughing money into public persuasion and greenwashing. The fossil fuel industry is doing likewise to ensure it also continues. Governments know the situation. They chose to look away. They chose to continue to subsidise oil and gas companies and livestock farmers.

So how do we proceed now?

Humans began the path to environmental destruction when they took up the practice of agriculture. Staying in one place, taking over the land, changing it from a natural environment to an unnatural one, and driving off every other life form from it, was the beginning of the end.

Native and indigenous peoples are the only ones who are living in a way that the planet can cope with. They should inherit what's left of the world. The sheer numbers of the rest of us civilised peoples are more than the world can cope with, feed or house.

But if we transition from animal agriculture (meat, dairy, eggs, fish) to organic arable farming, we will be able to turn the clock back a great extent. There will then be land enough to feed the human population and to rewild, plus we'll be reducing pollution and emissions. Most importantly, then we will be giving ourselves time to develop green technologies that will offer solutions. But the best solution is to live a far more primitive way of life.

We humans have become able to defy the controls that nature uses to keep a balance of species. We are out of balance. Are we out of control, or can we make the changes that will be forced on us eventually?

The state of the planet

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/27/world-close-to-irreversible-climate-breakdown-warn-major-studies>

<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2020-06-08/collapse-of-civilisation-is-the-most-likely-outcome-top-climate-scientists/>

<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/07/climate-change-earth-too-hot-for-humans.html>

Virginia Bell, Laudato Si' Animators UK



A word from the North East

In 2021 the word of the year was 'unprecedented'. The word of 2022 was, according to the Collins Dictionary, 'permacrisis'. Permacrisis seems to mean lurching from one unresolved crisis into another: climate, pandemic, war, cost of living, energy, mental health, hospital waiting lists, railway strikes, Harry and the monarchy... It is a dizzying experience which challenges hope and resilience. Of all the English regions, here in the North East we are last, least and losing: we are the poorest, sickest and most disabled, with the lowest employment rate and the highest child poverty. The most critical part of the crisis is right here.

Inequality is another crisis baked into our system. It makes no sense to talk of the UK being the 5th

wealthiest country in the world. If we take away the wealthiest 1% of households, our wealth is reduced by 25%. Take away the wealthiest 10% and it is reduced by half. That doesn't leave much for the remaining 90% of our population.

The 2021 National Census revealed another 'crisis' for Christians - the number of people identifying as Christian is now less than half of the UK population. The 'nominals' finally admitted that Christianity is not so important to them. We now have a better measure of the indifference to religion in our nation.

We Christians have just celebrated Christmas, a feast that means God is NOT indifferent to us. "The Word became flesh and lived among us." In His eyes we are all equal in dignity and worth. Our message is that whatever crisis you are going through, God is with you always.

To members of NJPN: "Thank you" for your total lack of indifference.

Paul Southgate



Honeybees Do Not Help Wild Bees



Bees play an essential role in the world. They pollinate flowers to allow fruits and vegetables to grow. They also work as a bio

indicator, showing us changes in our environment. Unfortunately, bees are mostly recognized for their products: honey, beeswax and so on, while we forget how important they are for us. Albert Einstein is reported to have said that if all bees suddenly vanished from the planet, all people on earth would only have four years left to live. That is an exaggeration, but human nutrition would certainly suffer, and so would the planet.

Since 1900, the UK has lost 13 species of bee, and a further 35 are considered under threat of extinction (Salt of the Earth). Also, over 700 North American bee species are now at risk, and 40 percent of invertebrate pollinators face extinction (Friends of the Earth). The decline in populations is thought to be because of changes in land use, which have led to habitat loss. Other issues affecting bees include disease, pesticides, pollution, and climate change.

Some of the best ways to help bees are to go organic, to plant flowers, to rewild and to preserve natural wild areas, *not* to keep domestic bees.

The World Wildlife Fund recommends *eating less honey* as the best way of helping bee populations.

Ecological scientist Prof. Jeff Ollerton says that it would be a mistake to attempt to reverse the decline of wild pollinators such as bumblebees, hoverflies, and butterflies by encouraging honeybees. "If honeybees become the central focus of such strategies (and funding), due to confusion in the minds of the public, MPs, policy makers, businesses, the media and other influential bodies, then wild pollinators would lose out." 1* 2* 3*

What has happened in China should be a strong warning

The introduction of European honeybees in China has led to the transmission of many contagious diseases that have devastated local bee populations, which in turn has increased the use of pesticides, making a vicious circle of destruction.

According to the South China Morning Post, 12-6-2017, "an estimated 80 percent of China's native Honeybee population has been lost since the introduction of European honeybees in the 19th century".

Honeybees do not help wild bees

Wild bees are dying out at a frightening rate. Domestic bees do not help. On the contrary,

honeybees threaten wild bee populations. They can cause disruption and spread diseases and they compete with wild bees for natural resources.

The more we depend on domesticated honeybees, the greater the risk to wild pollinators. And wild pollinators are essential. Should they die out, and a disease decimate the honeybee population, we will be in serious trouble.

Native bees are often better pollinators than honeybees. Honeybees are less or much less efficient than wild, native bees at pollinating tomatoes, eggplants, pumpkins, watermelons, blueberries, cranberries, peppers, melons, cherries, and other plants.

Domestic Bees

Honeybees are like livestock, not wildlife. They are domesticated, selectively bred and hybridised. Honey is sold to make money, not to help bees.

Bees are now subject to intensive farming.

They are not treated naturally but are made to perform according to the farmer's profit-motivated wishes. The treatments they undergo cause them welfare problems.

Bees make combs out of wax to contain their eggs and to store pollen and honey. They have to visit 30 million flowers to produce just one pound of wax. When beekeepers take the wax, they are damaging or destroying the bees home system.

Suffering

Bees are flown around the world according to demand. In one case in 2022, nearly 5 million bees died when Delta transported them to Georgia, USA. They died from starvation and being baked alive on the airport tarmac.

People often disregard bees as barely conscious creatures. But bees have a functioning nervous system that enables them to feel suffering and pleasure.

They are mainly exploited for the extraction of honey, of which millions of pounds are sold every year. To produce a single teaspoon of honey, it takes twelve worker bees an entire lifetime. Bees have to collect nectar from two million flowers to make one pound of honey. They labour for countless hours on the production of this sweet substance to feed their young and for their own future nourishment. Humans take the honey for their own use and replace it with sugar water that is unfit to sufficiently nourish the bees.

Continued on page 4



ROMERO WEEK 2023

Responding to the Cry of the Poor Today

The inspiration of St Oscar Romero and the Martyrs of El Salvador



Saturday, 25 March at 11am

An ecumenical service to mark the 43rd anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Romero at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 4JJ
Speaker **Maria Exall** — President of the TUC

18—24 March

Speaker tour of **Birmingham, Canterbury, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, and Liverpool**

Speaker Peggy Healy

— close friend and colleague of the Sisters martyred in El Salvador in 1980, former Maryknoll Sister



Full information at romerotrust.org.uk
Email romerotrust@gmail.com

Registered charity number 1110069



Romero Week Events 2023

Guest Speaker **Peggy Healy**
Responding to the Cry of the Poor Today
18th March **Cardiff**
20th March **Birmingham**
21st March **Leeds**
22nd March **Glasgow**
23rd March **Liverpool**
24th March **Canterbury**

11am Saturday 25th March National Ecumenical Service at **St Martin in the Fields**, London - address delivered by **Maria Exall** - President of the TUC

Also: **8th July CAFOD Romero Trust Pilgrimage to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne**

Further details on website www.romerotrust.org.uk

Friday 24th March 2023 17.30-18.30

A public lecture hosted by **Campion Hall & the Laudato Si' Research Institute**



Dr Jan Graffius

Oscar Romero: The Witness of Relics

Since 2007, Janet Graffius has been working in El Salvador conserving and displaying the relics of Archbishop Oscar Romero, and of the Jesuits and their associates who were murdered in 1989. Her work, at times harrowing, has thrown up some extraordinary insights into the life and death of

Romero, and many others who lost their lives to the death squads in that brutal civil war. In this lecture, hear how curatorial and conservation techniques have given these extraordinary artefacts a voice, revealing some hitherto unknown insights into the last seconds of Romero's life.

Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College, Oxford,

Queen bees may have their wings or legs cut off. Semen for artificial insemination is obtained by crushing the heads of drones. It is then injected into the Queen.

Bees are subservient to the wishes of the keeper at all times. They may be killed when the honey is harvested because it's cheaper than feeding the bees throughout the winter. The stressful conditions inherent in factory farming weaken the bees' immune systems, making them more susceptible to disease, which they then may pass on to wild bees.

Honey is an unnecessary food and can be replaced by plant-based items. Furthermore, any medicinal qualities it may have can be substituted by herbal medicines.

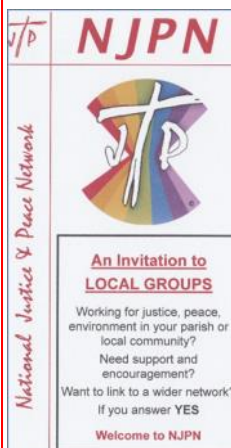
Honeybees do not help wild bees

- 1* www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/think-of-honeybees-as-livestock-not-wildlife-argue-experts
- 2* theconversation.com/keeping-honeybees-doesnt-save-bees-or-the-environment-102931
- 3* www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/mar/27/honey-trap-is-there-a-downside-to-the-boom-in-beekeeping?utm_term=.624589b35cf1b9ede69c360301ec13f5&utm_campaign=GreenLight&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight_email

Virginia Bell, Laudato Si' Animators UK

NJPN Membership for Groups

Did you know that membership of NJPN is open to local groups as well as individuals? NJPN is a grassroots organisation, so we want to support people working for justice, peace or care of creation whether in their parish or local community. Membership of NJPN links you to a wider network, providing opportunities to meet with others for mutual support, to share ideas and experience, hear inspirational speakers and be kept up to date with campaigns of national agencies. It also supports the work of NJPN so we can keep providing those opportunities.



We now have an **application form for local groups** available from the Membership Support Co-ordinator at membership@justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact the office (or download from the website).

BECOME A MEMBER OF NJPN

Membership is open to local groups, families and individuals. Individual Subscription only £25 a year (but you are welcome to give more!) Low Income £15
Download a membership form from the website, contact the office or Ann Kelly, Membership Development, membership@justice-and-peace.org.uk

Can Tax Be Neighbourly?

When I became Chair of Church Action for Tax Justice (CATJ - part of the bigger JustMoney Movement) at the beginning of 2020 I found myself having two sorts of conversation about tax. The first was openly antagonistic: tax is basically theft by the Government from our personal resources; the second, a sort of resignation: you have to pay it. There's nothing much you can do about it, is there? That all changed in the Autumn of last year when a mini-Financial Statement from the new incumbents at Numbers 10 and 11 Downing Street sent markets into a spiral and commentators into a tizzy. Suddenly tax rates were headline news. This also coincided with a growth of interest in a wealth tax, proposed for the highest-worth individuals, and CATJ's public campaigning for this, in alliance with other tax organisations.

What CATJ wants to promote, apart from raising awareness of how our tax structures can be reformed, is a narrative that sees tax as a fundamentally good thing and our ability to pay it as something to celebrate. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Tax is the price we pay for civilisation" and while we might want to define 'civilisation' it is clear that we live in a very complex world of inter-relationships between neighbourhood, nation and global interests and needs which have outstripped our capacity as individuals to address through charity or philanthropy. Indeed, our attempts at governance at such levels often result in deficiencies for many and call for formal reform and reconfiguration. So taxation, and the resources it generates, is a communal way of dealing with that challenge. Taxation provides healthcare and education for citizens and many other facilities like roads, transport and fire services. It supports protection for income when we fall on hard times and ensures a measure of dignity in old age and care for children. It also makes possible the existence of a structure of law and standards that protects our property, our transactions and ensures we are not poisoned when we eat out!

You can look at tax as part of the scaffolding that is instrumental in the creation of the human home on earth. It plays a part in a wider economy that also includes, in close relationship, wages and welfare. Interestingly the origin of the word 'economics' comes from the Greek which means the 'care of the hearth or household'. We could ask then, if our economic system is not working at that level then is it really working at all? Recent reports have endorsed CATJ's decision to campaign for a tax on wealth. Our experience of Covid as individuals showed that even if we were told we were in the same storm we were not in the same boat. The Equality Trust tells us that there has been 'an



explosion of billionaire wealth' in Britain at the expense of the rest of society. Billionaires have seen a growth in wealth of some £120 billion, but millions of citizens at the other end of the scale are terrified at the rising cost of living.

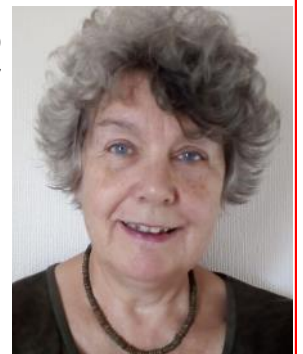
When CATJ talks about 'justice' in tax we often mean equalising the tax rates on earned and unearned income or taking another look at levels of Council Tax that can result in someone in a very ordinary house in the North-East paying more than the owner of a multi-million property in London. But we also understand 'justice' in the sense of 'righteousness' and what contributes to the good, not just of the individual, but to the community; to the neighbour, as the Old Testament helpfully describes it.

This demands that we come to economic decision-making as a society with a primary understanding that all we possess is 'gift' and given for human flourishing, plus a definite commitment to ensure that neighbourliness is constructed, supported and protected by the structures we create for living with each other. The economics of the free society established in the wake of slavery in Egypt insisted on a belief in abundance and not scarcity, a desire for closer relationship with the other rather than a distancing in geography or status, an understanding that security of livelihood means a critical approach to acquisitiveness and an active interference on indebtedness. What we see at the moment is a 'predatory economy' as Walter Brueggemann puts it, with human lives and choices restricted and deformed as mere 'collateral' in the workings of the accepted economic framework.

CATJ is working to change that and we want you to join us in that task. Register to support us here at <https://justmoney.org.uk/speak-out/church-action-for-tax-justice/> sign up for our newsletter and join our campaigning for a wealth tax. We are happy to be invited to share our concerns with your networks, parishes and groups.

Do get in touch.

Sue Richardson



The title of the conference is '**Sustainability? Survival or Shutdown**' and within this we hope to address issues crucial to the common good and the well-being of all creation.

Echoing the words of Pope Francis, all issues are interconnected, as well as environment and especially the impact of climate change, we must consider the need for just and peaceful conflict resolution, economic justice, and stability.

A key issue identified at Conference 2022 was the need for truth and integrity in political and social engagement, good governance in all seats of power, local, national, and global.

Downloadable writable PDF booking form on www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/

This is a selection of dates. Find more on the Rolling Calendar and Year Planner on our website www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

DIARY

 Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

FEBRUARY

4 National Cafod Online Meeting with speaker from Bangladesh



8 Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking: Bakhita Day



ST JOSEPHINE BAKHITA
Stem: 1807 Darfur, Sudan. Died: 8 February 1947 (Italy)

12 Racial Justice Sunday
www.carj.org.uk

19 Church Action on Poverty Sunday:
www.church-poverty.org.uk,
 0161 872 9294



20 World Day of Social Justice:
www.un.org/en/observances/social-justice-day/

25 NJPN Networking Day
The Cost of Living Crisis: living vs existing on Zoom
www.justice-and-peace.org.uk,
 0207 901 4864



27-12 March Fairtrade Fortnight
www.fairtrade.org.uk
 020 7440 7676



MARCH

3 CAFOD Lent Fast Day
www.cafod.org.uk 0207 733 7900



 World Day of Prayer
 England, Wales & Northern Ireland

4 World Day of Prayer: 'I have heard about your Faith': Prepared by the women of Taiwan 01892 541411 www.wwdp.org.uk



24 43rd Anniversary of the death of St Oscar Romero (see page 4)

APRIL

9 Easter Sunday



26 Chernobyl Day
un.org/en/observances/chernobyl-remembrance-day/un-action

MAY

13 NJPN AGM & Networking Day, London (tbc)
www.justice-and-peace.org.uk,
 0207 901 4864



15-21 Christian Aid Week
www.christianaid.org.uk, 0207 620 4444

15 Conscientious Objectors' Day
www.paxchristi.org.uk 0208 203 4884 www.ppu.org.uk
 020 7424 9444

21-28 Laudato Si' Week
www.laudatosimovement.org

JUNE

5 World Environment Day
www.worldenvironmentday.global

18 Day for Life+ www.dayforlife.org

26 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture:
www.acatuk.org.uk 01395 577 669 and un.org/en/observances/torture-victims-day/



Christian CND Zoom Prayer Meetings

www.christiancnd.org.uk

Thurs 2th Feb at 1pm
 Tues 14th Feb at 8pm
 Thurs 2th March at 1pm
 Tues 14th March at 8pm



Feb 22: Ash Wednesday Walk of Witness: Liverpool. Merseyside Pax Christi/CND gather 1145 at St Luke's bombed church.
 Contact janharper1@yahoo.co.uk
 Also Ash Wednesday Witness at MOD London



This Lent, challenge yourself and take on CAFOD's Big Lent Walk! Walk when and where you choose over 40 days, alone or with friends. Raise money to help people as they overcome poverty. Sign up here! walk.cafod.org.uk/

Future Conferences

21st-23rd July 2023 The Hayes Derbyshire
"Sustainability? Survival or Shutdown"
 Dates for 2024 July 19th-21st

National Justice and Peace Network Open Networking Days

February 25th on Zoom 10.45 for 11

The Cost of Living Crisis: living vs existing

booking link on NJPN website www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-meetings/

Saturday 13th May, at CAFOD, Romero House,
 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB (TBC)

10.30 for 10.45 – 4.00 www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-meetings/

Was Pope Benedict XVI, RIP, the Green Pope?

We hear in the World Day of Peace 2010 message, "If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation," showing the interconnectedness between God, human beings and the whole of creation, in the question; "Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change, desertification, the deterioration and loss of productivity in vast agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the increase of natural catastrophes and the deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions?"

DONATE TO NJPN: Online via our website. By cheque payable to NJPN. BACS to NJPN Sort Code:16-31-15 Account No: 10089516, put your name and Donation in the reference field. Caf donate on: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/8130#!/DonationDetails>. To make a regular donation by Standing Order, use your online banking or contact the Administrator or download the Membership Form on the website

If you have items for the NJPN ebulletin or Calendar please send them direct to Sharon:
ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org.uk



The National Justice & Peace Network welcomes all who share a vision of a world in which people live in peace and harmony, where our common humanity is respected and all are able to contribute freely to the common good. NJPN seeks to encourage work for justice and peace by promoting communication and shared action between members, supporters and partners.

This newsletter is produced three times a year by the Network.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of the National Justice and Peace Network.

Editorial Group: Sharon Chambers, Stephen Cooke, Ann Kelly, Anne O'Connor, Anne Peacey, Geoff Thompson.

NEXT ISSUE DATE

May 2023

COPY DATE

8th March 2023



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Help us in 2023 by signing up to support us for FREE on easyfundraising. You can raise donations for NJPN whenever you shop online with over 4,300 retailers: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/njpnnetwork/

