

The e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly within the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com

CHURCH LEADERS CONCERNED BY INCREASING CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN HOLY LAND

1/02/2023 **Source: Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem**

The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem issued the following statement today, entitled: **Second Statement Regarding the Increasing Cycle of Violence in the Holy Land.**

"We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, are saddened by the latest escalation of violence in the Holy Land.

On Sunday night, February 26th, dozens of Israeli settlers rampaged through the Palestinian town of Huwara near Nablus, killing a man, injuring dozens of people with metal rods and tear gas, and torching scores of buildings and cars. This took place as a retaliation after a Palestinian gunman killed two Israeli settlers near the same town—an act itself in response to the killing of eleven Palestinians in Nablus the week before.

This recent escalation came during and following the conclusion of a rare meeting between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Aqaba, Jordan, in which Israel promised to halt settlement expansion in the Palestinian areas, and to stop, along with the Palestinians, a spiralling and senseless escalation.

These painful developments make it ever more necessary not only to immediately de-escalate tensions in words and deeds, but also to find a more lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with international resolutions and legitimacy.

With all people of good will, we pray to the Lord for peace and justice in our beloved Holy Land, where all have been tormented by this painful, long-term conflict."

The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem

LINK: Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem: www.lpi.org/
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46653>

WILD PEACE

28/02/2023 **Heather Kiernan writes:** Early yesterday morning, dozens of Israeli settlers set homes and cars ablaze in the northern town of Huwara in the occupied West Bank targeting a town where two Israeli brothers had been killed. More than 350 Palestinians were injured, most suffering from tear gas inhalation.

In 1994 the greatest Israeli poet, Yehuda Amichai was asked to read from his work at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremonies in Oslo for Yasir Arafat, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel.

Amichai chose his poem "Wild Peace."

When asked why he chose this poem he said: "I wrote this poem more than 20 years ago, before the first peace treaty with Egypt. At that time peace was only a vision.

History has taught us that life is too short to wait for natural peace. Nature has to be helped and protected like wildflowers.

That is what the leaders of the two nations are doing now with great courage."

WILD PEACE

*Not the peace of a cease-fire,
not even the vision of the wolf and the lamb,
but rather
as in the heart when the excitement is over
and you can talk only about a great weariness.*

*I know that I know how to kill,
that makes me an adult.
And my son plays with a toy gun that knows
how to open and close its eyes and say Mama.*

*A peace
without the big noise of beating swords into ploughshares,
without words, without
the thud of the heavy rubber stamp: let it be
light, floating, like lazy white foam.
A little rest for the wounds—
who speaks of healing?
(And the howl of the orphans is passed
from one generation
to the next, as in a relay race:
the baton never falls.)*

*Let it come
like wildflowers,
suddenly, because the field
must have it: wildpeace.*

Yehuda Amichai

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE: ONE YEAR AFTER THE RUSSIAN INVASION

“Let us look at all those civilians whose killing was considered ‘collateral damage.’ Let us ask the victims themselves. Let us think of the refugees and displaced... the mothers who lost their children, and the boys and girls maimed or deprived of their childhood. Let us hear the true stories...look at reality through their eyes...In this way, we will be able to grasp the abyss of evil at the heart of war. Nor will it trouble us to be deemed naive for choosing peace.” – Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 2020, par. 261.

One year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Pax Christi International expresses our deep concern for countless victims of a war that has led to death, injury, displacement, trauma, and ecological harm. This war has generated almost 6 million internally displaced persons and 8 million refugees; killed more than 7,200 civilians including over 400 children and hundreds of thousands of soldiers; and caused generational trauma.

The war of aggression against Ukraine has clearly demonstrated that no international authority exists with sufficient wisdom to effectively address the root causes or with adequate means to have prevented Russia’s brutal invasion. International law provides every sovereign nation with the right to self-defence. In a world of highly destructive weapons, armed self-defence may trigger an escalation to extremes that can even lead to a nuclear war.

For this reason, Pax Christi International urgently calls on the international community to immediately facilitate diplomatic initiatives, to restore the international order and the territorial integrity of Ukraine. We plead with Russia and Ukraine to enter negotiations directly, on neutral ground, and with a mutually agreeable mediator.

Insufficient investment in developing and scaling up proven effective nonviolent strategies for defence, including civilian based defence, has created the impression that self-defence is always armed. Many Ukrainians are demonstrating clearly and with great courage, however, that nonviolent defence can be very effective and could be much more readily available with significant investment in resources, training, and research.

Pax Christi International calls on the international community to invest in developing nonviolent strategies for defence and just peace.

As a human rights and peace movement, Pax Christi International advocates for the right of conscientious objection for soldiers and civilians on both sides of the conflict. We call for sufficient independence for media, political opposition parties, and civil society in Russia; we highly value the many forms of nonviolent resistance to the war by Russian society; and we support all Russians who protest against the war, risking arrest and imprisonment.

This war also shows the immorality of the possession of nuclear weapons and the urgent need for nuclear abolition. President Putin’s threat to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine reminded the world that a single nuclear bomb detonated could create a humanitarian disaster of unparalleled proportions. A full-scale nuclear war would spell the end of human civilization as we know it.

Pax Christi International calls on all States to delegitimize these weapons and strengthen the legal norm against their use by signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Pax Christi International also urges a Human Security approach in Europe and in the world. Russia should be included, as well as Belarus and Ukraine, in a broader security concept based on trust building and collective security, oriented by a just peace framework. A Human Security approach also recognizes with UN SCR1325 that peace and security efforts will be more sustainable if women take part in the prevention of violence, the delivery of relief, trauma healing, and recovery efforts for lasting peace.

The need for people-to-people peace processes that involve dialogue between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, including women and youth, are important to the prevention and transformation of violent conflict. Pax Christi International supports initiatives that allow contact, cooperation, and healing.

Pax Christi International is a movement for reconciliation and active nonviolence, founded at the end of the Second World War with a deep belief in the possibility of just peace. We are painfully aware that war is not limited to Ukraine; that violence is endemic in many corners of the world; that a new logic of peace and nonviolence is urgently needed.

We call on Pax Christi members and all people of good will to pray and to mobilize for peace, urging States to address the relationship between human security, care for creation, human dignity, and sustainable peace and to advocate urgently for dialogue.

“The Russian invasion of Ukraine is inflicting untold suffering on the Ukrainian people, with profound global implications. The prospects for peace keep diminishing. The chances of further escalation and bloodshed keep growing. I fear the world is not sleepwalking into a wider war. I fear it is doing so with its eyes wide open.” – UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres (6 February 2023)

“If we want to reap the harvest of peace and justice in the future, we will have to sow seeds of nonviolence here and now, in the present.” – Mairead Maguire | Irish Peace Activist and Nobel Peace Laureate

OPINION: ONE YEAR ON FROM RUSSIA’S INVASION OF UKRAINE, UNCERTAINTY NOW LOOMS FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES HERE IN THE UK

24/02/2023 **Joseph Kelly writes:** Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began a year ago this week, was an extraordinary and unexpected event that has changed the world. In the biggest European conflict seen since the Second World War, Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine and sent thousands fleeing for basement bunkers and their country’s borders. No-one – least of all Russia’s Vladimir Putin – thought the conflict would turn into a protracted catastrophe but one year on the toll of human suffering on both sides has been appalling.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has verified a total of 8,006 civilian deaths as of 15th February. Of them, 487 were children. Furthermore, 13,287 people were reported to have been injured. However, the OHCHR has specified that the real numbers could be far higher as many reports of alleged individual civilian casualties in certain locations are still pending corroboration.

On the other side, in its daily intelligence briefing last Friday the UK Ministry of Defence said the Russian armed forces and private military contractors fighting alongside them as paramilitary forces have lost 40,000 to 60,000 troops and suffered up to 200,000 casualties, which includes troops killed or wounded in action.

For Ukrainian families there have been tough choices to be made between standing with one’s country or fleeing to safety. It’s estimated that more than eight million Ukrainians have already been displaced by the conflict, of which the vast majority (82%) are women and children. Some 1.5 million have fled to neighbouring Poland, and the latest UN data also indicates that there are more than one million Ukrainian refugees in Germany.

So far, the United Kingdom has received just 162,000, who’ve arrived via two special visa routes – the Ukraine family scheme (where they join family members already here) and the Ukraine Sponsorship scheme (where a sponsor agrees to house them for at least six months). The UK government puts the figure higher – with so far 65,900 family scheme visas issued, and 153,600 sponsors – but this leaves still the UK way short on compassion compared to its European neighbours.

There is also a growing concern that the majority of the current sponsors were those who came forward at the outset of the scheme, and very few new volunteers have come on board. With the first helpers now coming to the end of their six months’ government support period, the future of the 153,600 Ukrainian families they’ve been supporting has become worryingly uncertain. Many sponsors have complained that the government’s £350 a month grant falls way short of the reality of housing and supporting a Ukrainian family, especially given soaring food and energy prices and a very uncertain economy.

It is estimated that most sponsors have spent around £2,000 setting up accommodation and vital basic facilities for the families they’ve sponsored. Few seem to have thought too clearly about what would be involved, and the impact of having a full additional family on your property. Complaints about having to buy beds, clothing, fridges and heaters have been common in the media, but it seems hard to imagine how sponsors thought it might be otherwise.

For its part the government has been very astute in not referring to the monthly £350 grant as support, but rather a ‘thank you’ payment – something which should have flagged up a warning to sponsors that the amount was not going to cover the actual costs of housing and supporting a vulnerable family.

Many UK charities working in this area warned at the outset that the problem with this scheme was not just going to be the cost to the sponsors, but the need for all aspects of support for the families to extend way beyond the six months period set by the government. In many respects the belief that you can enter a strange country, learn a language, apply for jobs, find a home of your own and be on your way in half a year was absurd, and certainly comes from a category of people who have the skills and privilege to achieve such things, but no sense of the reality for the rest of us.

To be fair to the Ukrainians, many have been absolutely outstanding in the way they have reshaped and rebuilt their lives here in the UK and have transitioned from refugee status to stable UK taxpayer in such a short period of time. That said, it is estimated that more 100,000 people may now be in immediate danger of becoming homeless as sponsors weigh up the viability or not of continuing their support for the Ukrainian refugee families.

The government's forward plan dropped the responsibility for finding alternative accommodation onto local authorities, who are already warning that 'rematching' families is proving very difficult. According to the District Councils Network, which represents many local rural authorities, just 10% of original sponsors who came forward are wanting to continue their support. When you consider that the UK already has more than one million households on the homes waiting list, the outlook for the Ukrainian families we initially welcomed looks uncertain to say the least.

The latest official figures have revealed that 4,295 Ukrainian households already facing homelessness have needed help from their local council, and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Ending Homelessness has warned that this figure only comes from 72% of English local authorities, so is only a partial picture of the reality facing these families. The APPG has also called on the Government to "learn lessons from recent humanitarian crises and bring forward a new strategy for refugee integration and resettlement, to allow for a better co-ordinated response in the future". They added: "We believe no Ukrainian who has found refuge in the UK after fleeing the devastating conflict at home should experience homelessness and be left without a safe place to live here."

Matt Downie, the chief executive at homeless charity Crisis, said: "Although the visa schemes introduced by the Government have provided a lifeline for many refugees, it is incredibly concerning to hear that over 4,000 are now at risk of homelessness due to issues surrounding funding and financial support. What's more, the severe shortage of affordable housing across the country has restricted their ability to move on into settled housing and rebuild their lives – an issue which is affecting far too many people in the UK as living costs continue to rise.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has announced a new support package of more than £650 million for those fleeing the war in Ukraine. The package includes an extension of payments to those hosting Ukrainians through the homes for Ukraine scheme, and funding to help Ukrainian refugees move into their own homes, but the concern remains that these interventions are insufficient.

In many ways, the needs of Ukrainian refugee families have been clouded by wider controversies and prejudices about 'the stranger in our midst', and the government has been deeply culpable in this. The intemperate and ill-considered remarks by some leading government figures have done little to encourage consideration and care for refugees of all circumstances, and in many cases have actually fuelled public division and hardened discrimination. But maybe that has been the intention?

Whether it's telling foodbank users to 'upskill', the public to eat turnips, or glee at the thought of refugees departing by the planeload, there seems little in this present government's outlook that is likely to help the refugee families who've fled the terrible war in Ukraine. A year on from the outset of the conflict the UK has demonstrated a shameful reluctance to take its share of the responsibility for the human cost of the war, whilst politicians continue to fall over themselves to demonstrate their support for the supply of lethal weapons and munitions. One can't help but get the all too familiar impression that war is as much an opportunity for some, as it is a dreadful tragedy for others.

The reality for the Ukrainian refugee families here in the UK is that – like most migrants and refugees over the years – they're largely on their own, and their difficulties mirror the wider crisis across the country, as rising costs drive ever more UK families into instability. It's a particularly sad and tragic fact that an historic 'island and empire' mentality has often led successive British governments to view incomers as a problem rather than a potential asset. It has conditioned fiscal policy and warped public prejudice towards our fellow human beings, and it really has no place in a modern humanitarian democracy.

• **Joseph Kelly** is a Catholic writer and political theologian

<https://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk/one-year-on-from-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-uncertainly-now-looms-for-ukrainian-refugees-here-in-uk/>

ONLINE PRAYER FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE

Church and Peace invites you to pray for peace in Ukraine. Together with the Fellowship of Reconciliation (England and Scotland), Cymdeithos y Cymod (FoR Wales) and the Methodist Peace Fellowship, we meet on Fridays at 7:30pm (London)/ 8:30pm (CET)/ 9:30pm (Kyiv)/ 10:30pm (Moscow) on Zoom.

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckduCogD4uG9AngQGoHRbDdannig3_o89D

Church and Peace is the European ecumenical peace church network of communities, training centres, peace organisations and peace service agencies. It is a meeting place and a forum for dialogue, it offers its members and friends a space for reflection and is a catalyst for common initiatives and projects, standing for a mosaic of peace church witness and is a face of the Church.

<https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/2022/03/online-prayer-for-peace-in-ukraine/>

'UKRAINE 2022' – PRINTS BY POLITICAL PHOTOMONTAGE ARTIST PETER KENNARD

'Ukraine 2022' are six limited edition prints by Peter Kennard, made in collaboration with the Richard Saltoun Gallery and The Royal College of Art, where Kennard is Professor of Political Art.

Throughout the war Red Cross teams have been continuously working around the clock to get critical care to those who need it most. With ongoing violence, an enormous number of people urgently need help right now.

100% of the proceeds go to the Red Cross Emergency Ukraine Appeal. Prints are still available, almost £10,000 has been raised so far.

Link to buy prints: <https://www.richardsaltoun.com/viewing-room/40-ukraine-2022-by-peter-kennard/>

Peter Kennard writes: "The Ukraine flag is now lodged deep in my memory. Daily, film of thousands of women and children fleeing merciless bombing through piles of rubble has a grip on my consciousness. How as an artist do I picture the horror of war in Ukraine? It's impossible. How to show the level of Putin's murderous cruelty? Impossible.

These prints are my visceral response to daily atrocity, they are not an analysis of geo-politics leading up to war. What's not impossible for me is to make marks becoming figures, walking, standing running in front of their flag. The flag doesn't change, it's resilient, it's now a symbol of resistance. The prints don't look away but they can't look directly. They are made to raise money for the Red Cross in Ukraine, to express solidarity with people whose lives are being destroyed. Each print sold is a tiny fragment towards helping people live through and then reconstruct their shattered lives."

"With a career spanning almost 50 years, Peter Kennard is without doubt Britain's most important political artist and its leading practitioner of photomontage. His adoption of the medium in the late 1960s restored an association with radical politics, and drew inspiration from the anti-Nazi montages of John Heartfield in the 1930s. Many of Kennard's images are now themselves icons of the medium, defining the tenor of protest in recent times and informing the visual culture of conflict and crisis in modern history." – **Richard Slocombe, Imperial War Museum**

"There is a photomontage by the great political artist Peter Kennard that gets straight to the point. It shows a pair of elderly hands clutching a knife and fork in an attempt to cut a grimy coin on a plate of meagre pennies. The causal connections between hunger, poverty, debt, capital and survival are all fused in an instant, along with the pitiful conditions of old age. Once seen, the montage is hard to forget. Kennard never lets up – how could he (how could you?) when there is so much horror and injustice.

Few artists have done so much with the unique virtue of montage... art cannot change the world but while Kennard is still working, there is at least hope." – **Laura Cumming, The Observer**

BOOK: PETER KENNARD *VISUAL DISSENT*, PUBLISHED BY PLUTO PRESS

This fully illustrated anthology showcases key images from Peter Kennard's work as Britain's foremost political artist over the last fifty years.

The book centres around Kennard's images, photomontages and illustrations from protests, year by year, which provoked public outrage; including Israel/Palestine protests, anti-nuclear protests, responses to austerity, climate destruction, and more. Each image is accompanied by captions detailing not only the events in question, but Kennard's approach to the work, including the genesis of the images and the techniques employed.

Ultimately, the book highlights Kennard's extraordinary contribution to political art in the twenty-first century.

Signed copies available here: <https://www.peterkennard.com/shop/peter-kennard-visual-dissent>

For a fascinating analysis of Peter Kennard's vision and political significance read here:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57bee37b3e00becdf8f74a83/t/62a0ae8d1cf0b41931d002be/1654697615264/reviews_2022_resize.pdf

ONLINE LENTEN MEDITATIONS ON THE PAX CHRISTI ICON OF RECONCILIATION

During Lent - join our online meditations on the Pax Christi Icon of Reconciliation. Every Wednesday, 7.00-7.45 pm. We will reflect one of the stories and pray for a particular conflict or war.

Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEKceCrgDIsE9HflpiHPzIRHeRdgrfVztCy/success?user_id=zUS4l2grRHCjBP0tlugmlw&timezone_id=Europe%2FLondon

IAN LINDEN: PUTIN'S WAR & SOUTH AFRICA

28/02/2023: Two weeks ago, a Russian frigate docked in South Africa's Simon's Town naval base near Cape Town. Admiral Nikolai Evmenov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian navy and his crew were not there for a swim with the penguins nearby but to lead a joint naval exercise off Durban and Richard's Bay. The exercise involves the South African Defense Force (SADF) and the naval forces of the People's Liberation Army of China. Evmenov's ship carries the Zircon hypersonic cruise missile, Putin's pride and joy.

The Mayor of Cape Town, Major Geordin Hill-Lewis, a member of the Democratic Alliance, expressed sentiments common to Western Governments and many observers: "All freedom-loving people around the world should rightly be outraged at the South African government's indefensible position and the moral position in this conflict. So, while the Russian ship is here and has been allowed here by the national state, it is certainly not welcome in the Mother City." Naledi Pandor, South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, at first condemned the Russia's full invasion of Ukraine but then back-tracked under pressure from her President, Cyril Ramaphosa.

South Africa's policy towards Russia is not exceptional. Over 40% of African States have been abstaining from UN votes against Russian aggression in Ukraine. But South Africa, as a member of BRICS a loose association of Brazil, Russia, India and China, is the most significant.

Is there any more to say? Yes, even though there is always the risk that explanation will be interpreted as condoning. Why does President Cyril Ramaphosa - head of the Student Christian Movement at school, celebrated leader of the South African National Union of Mineworkers, legally trained, the adroit negotiator who facilitated the deal with President F.W. De Klerk that brought Mandela to power, and a successful businessman - keep this sort of company?

We need to go back to the 1960s and early 1970s to the days of the ANC's then lackluster struggle against the apartheid regime when the Soviet Bloc were almost the ANC's only supporters. The South African Communist Party and its leaders were an integral and influential part of the ANC and seem to have had relatively high immunity to infiltration by BOSS (Bureau of State Security). The Soviet Union provided funds. From 1987-1988, Cuba and East Germany fought the apartheid army to a standstill and forced their retreat within Angola. The contrast with the policies of the Western powers could not have been more different.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher meeting with the Press during the 1987 Vancouver Commonwealth Conference, refusing to support sanctions advocated by the anti-apartheid movement, described the ANC threat to 'target' British companies in South Africa as showing 'what a typical terrorist organisation it is'. When, in May 1990, her Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, sought £1 million to fund UNHCR repatriation of South African refugees, she categorically refused saying she would never give money to any organisation that practised violence. Forthright and undiplomatic but not out of step with the hostility of British FCO policy towards the ANC.

US governments were no less hostile. Reagan adamantly opposed sanctions for years until Congress forced his hand in 1986. That July the New York Times reported credible suspicions that US satellite intelligence was being shared with the apartheid regime. This may have been behind the large-scale slaughter of Namibian nationalist guerrillas, SWAPO entering South African-occupied Namibia from Angola.

British policy aimed to split off a supposedly 'nationalist' section of the ANC from the communists. When that failed, virtuously pushing for Mandela's release in the late 1980s, Britain stood by whilst members of the European Economic Community (EEC) dabbled with the idea of supporting the - violent - Zulu Nationalist movement Inkatha to divide the black vote in the 1994 elections. All of the southern African liberation movements were viewed by Western governments through the prism of the Cold War. Only the Nordics responded with a supportive position seeing the future danger of the ANC beholden solely to the communist world.

The most notable was Sweden which began funding the external movement of the ANC from 1977, and from 1982 under the leader of the Social Democrats, Olof Palme, increasingly funded what they called the 'home-front component', the ANC's internal movement. It may have cost the Swedish Prime Minister his life. In 1986 at the height of the repression in South Africa, Palme was assassinated by an unknown assailant in the street outside a Stockholm cinema. Funding was managed clandestinely from the Swedish Legation in Pretoria under the resourceful direction on Birgitta Karlstrom Dorph, the Legation's head, using the Churches and civil society organisations such as the trades unions as intermediaries. Is it too much to imagine that Sweden's non-alignment in the Cold War and support for the ANC, versus Western governments' opposition, impressed Ramaphosa?

Shortly after the inauguration of the new government in 1994, South Africa joined the non-aligned movement and, from Mandela through the Presidency of Thabo Mbeki, made peaceful resolution of conflicts a foreign policy goal.

South Africa's government has a sovereign right to adopt neutrality especially when the dominant narrative is that the world faces a re-run of the Cold War - at a much higher temperature. But joint exercises with Russia during Putin's imperialist war does not look much like neutrality. The ruling ANC would argue that they conduct naval exercises with other countries such as France. But they should not be oblivious to the timing of such exercises nor heedless of the abhorrence in which most UN member States hold Putin's Russia.

True, neutral States have never consistently managed punctilious even-handed treatment of the two sides in a conflict. Nor is neutrality necessarily for all seasons as Finland and Sweden, now seeking membership of NATO, have shown. But hundreds didn't die and thousands suffer in the anti-apartheid struggle to give succour and propaganda opportunities to brutal autocracies. Their sacrifice was to bring about a non-racial democratic South Africa.

To read on see: <https://www.ianlinden.com/latest-blogs/putins-war-south-africa>

- Professor Ian Linden is Visiting Professor at St Mary's University, Strawberry Hill, London. A past director of the Catholic Institute for International Relations, he was awarded a CMG for his work for human rights in 2000. He has also been an adviser on Europe and Justice and Peace issues to the Department of International Affairs of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. Ian chairs a new charity for After-school schooling in Beirut for Syrian refugees and Lebanese kids in danger of dropping out partnering with CARITAS Lebanon and work on board of Las Casas Institute in Oxford with Richard Finn OP. His latest book was Global Catholicism published by Hurst in 2009.

CAFOD NEWS FROM LANCASTER DIOCESE

Emma Nolan and Patrick Gardner, Community Participation Coordinators – Lancaster Diocese write:

As we make our Lenten journey towards Easter, we notice the lengthening of days of days. We're reminded that Spring, the Season of Hope, is just around the corner.

We thank you for all you are doing to highlight Family Fast Day in your parish. Donations to Family Fast Day help fund our work around the world, keep essential programmes running and help our Church network respond to emergencies quickly. For most parishes the collections are this weekend. Thank you for highlighting these however you're able to.

Thank you also for everything you have done as a volunteer in support of the people of Turkey and Syria. Hearts have been moved with compassion and we are truly grateful for every single effort and prayer that has been made and offered for those affected. Our most recent news can be found on our news page: <https://cafod.org.uk/news>

"It is heart-breaking that this disaster has hit people who have already suffered so much. The impact has been catastrophic and will be felt in the country for years to come.", says Hombeline Dulière, CAFOD's Programme Manager for Syria Crisis Response.

The Big Lent Walk

This Lent CAFOD, the official aid agency of the Catholic Church, is setting an inspiring challenge to help raise money to fight global poverty. The challenge is simple – walk 200km over 40 days, while raising money for families impacted by the climate crisis. How and when people walk the 5km a day is up to them, but it can be done alone, with friends, family or with a school. Every £1 raised for the Big Lent Walk will help CAFOD support families in their efforts to respond to the impact that the crisis is having in their communities and across the world.

Families CAFOD support include Dristy and her Mum Rupali in Bangladesh. Together, they are protecting nature and livelihoods, building seed beds and planting palm trees to protect crops from flooding and cyclones. Rupali has a powerful message on her desire to help others around her, she says: "It's not right if I always have food on my table, yet my neighbour barely has anything to eat. I will stay well, I will keep my environment well, and I need to fight to help the people who are around me too. When they are all in a good place, the entire village will be in a good place."

Any money raised can make a huge difference to people's lives. Sign up here: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/>

Follow the progress of St Peter's parish in Lytham as a team of parishioners: Chris, Daisy, Kathy, Gretta, Lise, Anne, Trish, Pat, Sue and resident super stepper Fr. Peter, take on the Big Lent Walk this Lent. See the link here: <https://cafod.enthuse.com/pf/stpeterslytham>

Check out the plans that CAFOD volunteers in Dorset have for a community Big Lent Walk here: <https://blog.cafod.org.uk/2023/02/24/cafod-dorset-deanery-community-big-lent-walk/>

CAFOD in Lancaster Tel: 07769 931373 (Emma) or 07920 565454 (Patrick) Email: lancaster@cafod.org.uk

PAX CHRISTI REFLECTION ON ANNIVERSARY OF GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

2/02/2023

Fr Gerry McFlynn, Project Manager of the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas, and a Vice-President of Pax Christi, writes in *Just Peace*, the Pax Christi England and Wales newsletter:

Anniversaries can be important. They provide an opportunity to re-evaluate a situation and take stock of progress. Twenty-five years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (sometimes referred to as the Belfast Agreement), is a good time to review the most significant political event in recent Irish history.

The politics of Northern Ireland have always been volatile. The current political stalemate has yet to be resolved with the elected Assembly not having functioned now for almost a year.

The 'feel good' factor which people had been getting used to following the Agreement, has had a rude awakening with the onset of Brexit and corresponding difficulties over the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The Protocol, in particular, has become the trigger for an outpouring of the resentment and disenchantment felt by a section of the community which sees it as a further erosion of their British political heritage and benefiting the nationalist community at their expense.

There have been two significant changes since the Good Friday Agreement: firstly, the demographic change - with the nationalist population now the majority and secondly, the rise of Sinn Fein, which is now the largest political party in Northern Ireland with the serious ambition of exercising government in the Republic in the near future.

Whatever political progress has been made since the signing of the Agreement, the reality is that it has not been matched by progress at grassroots community level. Attitudinal surveys carried out since have consistently revealed that the gulf between the two communities is as wide as ever. One indication of this is the fact that more 'peace walls', segregating the two communities at interface areas in Belfast, have been built (rather than removed) since the Agreement.

Political progress at ministerial level needs to be underpinned by political initiatives at grass-root community level if there is to be real trust, respect and true reconciliation. Northern Ireland still has a disaffected and alienated community, a divided Christianity, much distrust and prejudice, all posing the greatest challenge to everything we understand by terms like peace, justice and reconciliation. A major source of grievance is the economic and social deprivation felt by both communities.

Northern Ireland has one of the highest unemployment rates and some of the poorest housing conditions in the UK. Thanks to the inactivity of the Assembly, combined with a lack of funding from central government, the NHS and the education system are on their knees.

There can be little hope of building on the terms of the Agreement without radical measures to address this situation. The Agreement was never intended to be a resolution of the conflict but rather a road map towards transforming conflict through commitment to the implementation of certain arrangements. In this, it represents an important template for dealing with other conflicts.

But political templates are one thing; healing hearts and minds another. And this applies to every conflict situation. In some ways Northern Ireland has come a long way since the Good Friday Agreement: the bombings and shootings have gone and a generation has grown up without much experience of past turmoil. However, there is still much work to be done. If we have learned anything during the past twenty-five years, it is surely that the work of peace is never truly finished and has to be constantly worked at.

As the Primate of All Ireland, Eamon Martin, put it recently: 'Sadly, twenty-five years on, the trauma and hurt of those horrific years remain substantially unhealed. Wounds within, and between, our communities remain open - wounds of body, mind, spirit and heart - and the legacy of suffering continues to fuel mistrust'.

It is greatly to be hoped that in reviewing the Agreement, politicians, church people and all those involved, will commit to redoubling their efforts so that by the time the next generation comes to review the Agreement, both the political landscape and the everyday life of the people of Northern Ireland will have changed for the better.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46659>

OSCAR ROMERO MASS

Oscar Romero Mass followed by talk “Responding to the Cry of the Poor Today” at 7:00pm on Thursday 23rd March 2023, in Saint Edmund of Canterbury church, 62 Oxford Road, Waterloo, L22 8QF.

Refreshments afterwards, and talk by PEGGY HEALY.

Outside of El Salvador, the Archdiocese of Liverpool is the only place to hold a Mass to mark the martyrdom of Archbishop Romero every year since his assassination. This is the 43rd anniversary mass to be held.

About the speaker:

Peggy has deep and broad experience of community service, of advocacy and policy work on human rights in Latin America and globally. For more than two decades, Peggy worked as a Maryknoll missionary sister in the United States and in Central America, where she was a close colleague and friend of the members of her congregation who were martyred in El Salvador. After working as a specialist paediatric nurse practitioner among poor, marginalised communities in Nicaragua throughout the repression and civil conflicts which raged across Central America, Peggy returned to health work in the South Bronx.

<http://www.romerotrue.org.uk/news/romero-week-2023>

Liverpool Archdiocese Networking and information session for volunteers & staff in asylum work

to bring together all the work that is going on across the archdiocese to support refugees **Wed 29 Mar 2023 18.30**

Who is it for? From anyone who wants to help, but are unsure how to volunteers/ workers who can share experiences and services with others

Speakers include: Seana Roberts, Manager, **Merseyside Refugee Support Network** (connection with Asylum Link, St Annes); Margaret Roche, Manager, **SHARe Knowsley** (Supporting and Asylum seekers and Refugees); Yevheniia Siryk, Project Officer - **Homes for Ukraine** (St John of God Hospitaller Services); Jason Ward, **Family Refugee Support Project** (connected with Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Liverpool)

Register here: https://Archdiocese_network_4_vols_staff_supporting_refugees.eventbrite.com

CHURCH OF ENGLAND CLERGY LEAD CHRISTIAN CLIMATE ACTION IN ASH WEDNESDAY CALL TO CUT THE TIES WITH WEST CUMBRIA COAL MINE

Extinction Rebellion 22/02/2023

Today vicars and other Christians protested outside the Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle offices of Ward Hadaway, lawyers for West Cumbria Mining Limited, and the London headquarters of Javelin Global Commodities, which has an exclusive marketing and offtake agreement with West Cumbria Mining. They are calling on both companies to “cut the ties” with the proposed new coal mine in Cumbria. The protesters held banners with the message ‘Coal is killing humanity’ and delivered letters asking the organisations to end their involvement with West Cumbria Mining. The Christians took part in the actions as part of the group Christian Climate Action [1].

In London, Rev Vanessa Elston and Rev Helen Burnett also held a service of lament outside the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities calling for the planning permission for the mine to be overturned. During the service, crosses were marked on people’s foreheads, using both traditional ashes and coal dust. 22nd April is Ash Wednesday, an ancient holy day in the Christian church calendar which marks the beginning of Lent. An ash cross is often drawn on people’s foreheads as a sign of repentance.

The new mine was approved in December 2022 by Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, following a planning inquiry Friends of the Earth [2] and South Lakes Action Against Climate Change [3] have launched legal challenges to the Secretary of State’s decision.

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up has acknowledged that 220 million tonnes of greenhouse gases would be released from the coal extracted over the mine’s lifetime [4]. Leading scientists have condemned the new coal mine [5]. In 2021 UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on governments and private companies to take steps to cancel all global coal projects in the pipeline and end the deadly addiction to coal [6].

Rev’d Vanessa Elston said: “Granting permission for the West Cumbria coal mine when the world needs to be reducing carbon emissions at speed, is a failure of leadership. How can we have any credibility on the world stage, in trying to get China and the US to take action on the climate crisis, if we are building a new coal mine? Christians need to speak out about against decisions like this.”

Mark Francis, who took part in the London protest said: “Javelin Global Commodities have been instrumental in securing permission for the mine and will be creating untold suffering for climate vulnerable people across the globe when they sell the output of the mine because the coal that they sell will drive the climate crisis. An essential part of my Christian faith is loving my brothers and sisters across the world who will be harmed by this and that is why I am here protesting.”

Anne Blair-Vincent, who took part in the Newcastle protest, said: “West Cumbria Mining are putting profit before people and Ward Hadaway is helping them do this and making money from it. We could be leading the world towards a brighter future by investing in renewable energy but instead we are setting an example of greed and hypocrisy by opening a new coal mine. As a Christian I have to speak out about the harm that this will do and also pray for all those involved to have a change of heart.”

Rev’d Jon Swales MBE, who took part in the Leeds protest, said: “The science is clear. Fossil fuels are killing us. Unless things change dramatically, we face a future of mass starvation, mass migration and societal collapse. Our government and private corporations, backed by financial and legal institutions, are putting the foot on the accelerator of climate breakdown by investing in new gas, oil and coal projects. For the sake of justice and a liveable future this must stop.”

Rev’d Helen Burnett said: “As the granddaughter of a ‘Little Mester’ from Sheffield I know the importance of the coal and steel industry in the history of this nation but now future generations will face the climate changing consequences of extracting and burning coal. Just as the steel industry of Sheffield made my home town proud, so now investment in solid, renewable, sustainable green jobs could bring a new pride to Cumbria and Whitehaven. I repent my part in damaging God’s creation and the harm that is causing already, I want to call upon this government to set aside personal gain, listen to the science, listen to the people and retract permission for the West Cumbria Coal Mine, replacing it with a green new deal for Cumbria. That would be in the true spirit of Lenten repentance – a turning away from evil decisions towards decisions that show the love of God.”

Today’s protests are part of a series of ‘Cut the Ties’ actions” which launched in November 2022 simultaneously at 13 sites across London. The campaign targets a web of organisations propping up the fossil fuel economy.

Extinction Rebellion is inviting everyone to Westminster from 21 April 2023 to demand a fair society and a citizen-led end to the fossil fuel era. Find out more about The Big One.

Ends

Sources:

- [1] <https://christianclimateaction.org>
- [2] <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate/legal-challenge-filed-over-cumbrian-coal-mine>
- [3] <https://slacc.org.uk/cumbria-coal-mine/>
- [4] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1122625/22-12-07_Whitehaven_-_Decision_Letter_and_IR.pdf
- [5] <https://www.sciencemediacentre.org/expert-reaction-to-cumbrian-coalmine-decision/>
- [6] <https://unfccc.int/news/un-chief-calls-for-immediate-global-action-to-phase-out-coal>

<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/2023/02/22/church-of-england-clergy-lead-christian-climate-action-in-ash-wednesday-call-to-cut-the-ties-with-west-cumbria-coal-mine/>

See also a report from Christian Climate Action:

Annette James, who took part in the protest at Manchester said: "Climate change and extreme weather events now impacting UK communities are accelerated by the burning of coal. The opening of a new mine here sends the wrong message to countries like India, Australia and China who figure large in global coal extraction. The legal argument that Co2 emissions from the combustion of coal need play no part in deciding whether a coal mine meets UK climate targets awaits a Supreme Court decision later this year. Mr Gove's decision not to await the outcome is morally bankrupt"

Today's protests are part of a series of 'Cut the Ties' actions, which target a web of organisations propping up the fossil fuel economy. These actions are taking place in the run up to The Big One - a protest happening in Westminster 21-24 April 2023, to demand a fair society and a citizen-led end to the fossil fuel era. Christian Climate Action is inviting everyone to The Big One protest.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46605>

COUNTING THE COST

This new Christian Aid study identifies the year's 10 costliest extreme events influenced by the climate crisis - each caused more than \$3 billion in damage. The Report also examines 10 other extreme events that caused massive human and environmental damage, mostly in the poorest countries. The ten most financially costly events all had an impact of \$3 billion or more. Most of these estimates are based only on insured losses, meaning the true financial costs are likely to be even higher, while the human costs are often uncounted.

In this report, you'll find: The 10 costliest extreme events influenced by the climate crisis in 2022 - which each caused more than \$3 billion in damage; 10 other extreme events that caused massive human and environmental damage, mostly in the poorest countries. Christian Aid calling on world leaders to decide how the loss and damage fund agreed at COP27 will be managed, and how to get money flowing into it.

While this report focuses on financial costs, which are usually higher in richer countries because they have higher property values and can afford insurance, some of the most devastating extreme weather events in 2022 hit poorer nations, which have contributed little to causing the climate crisis and have the fewest buffers with which to withstand shocks.

Download the full report <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/counting-the-cost-2022.pdf>

TEN YEARS ON, THE PAPACY OF FRANCIS REMAINS A RADICAL WORK IN PROGRESS

2/02/2023 **Joseph Kelly writes:**

In just over a week's time, Pope Francis will be marking ten years since the day he was elected as bishop of Rome. When he arrived in the 'Eternal City' for that fateful conclave, Jorge Mario Bergoglio was only carrying a small briefcase, and had already booked his return ticket to Argentina. But it was not to be; when the announcement was made that he had been elected pontiff, many thought that his choice of name – Francis – was to honour St Francis Xavier, the co-founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), the Order to which the new pontiff belonged.

History has recorded a different story – during the election in the Sistine Chapel, Cardinal Claudio Hummes, archbishop emeritus of São Paulo, Brazil, and prefect emeritus of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy, is said to have congratulated the newly elected pope and urged him, "Don't forget the poor!" Those words struck Cardinal Bergoglio, who immediately thought of Francis of Assisi, known to be a patron of peacemakers and patron of the care of creation.

Adopting the theological persona and attributes of Francis of Assisi is an overwhelming model for any man to seek to imitate, but the work and writings of Pope Francis across the past decade have confirmed his commitment to the vision of his namesake. It's a decade that certainly hasn't been without its controversies and divisions, though much has been the fruit of searches for resolutions to problems that were already hanging heavy over the Church and the papacy when Francis arrived.

On 13th March 2013 I had already been editing newspapers for a quarter of a century, and my life had already traversed six papacies - - Ven. Pius XII died when I was just three months old and St John XXIII when I was five; Paul VI and his teachings loomed heavy over my years as an altar server; Bl. John Paul I slipped past like a huge lost hope; my wife and I had our marriage blessed in Rome by John Paul II, and I had the great privilege of seeing Benedict XVI when he visited the UK in 2010.

During this time the changes in the Church have been immense. In particular the aspirations, events and outcomes of the Second Vatican Council consumed its residual generation, and brought unprecedented upheaval upon our Church, with Mass attendance plummeting and theology narrowing. Academics and historians will have to decipher eventually what really happened at Vatican II, but any attempt at analysis will ever be clouded by the moral and social upheavals that were already going on in society generally. It is ever assumed that the rapid loss of hundreds of thousands of faithful Catholics, and 100,000 clergy, in the immediate post-Vatican II period was a consequence of the Council, but frankly I think this exodus was far more a consequence of external social forces than any Vatican pronouncements.

Into this tumult came John Paul II, by all accounts the first pontiff of the media and popular culture age. His good looks, charming manner and unprecedented ability to translate even the most complex theological principles into something resembling common parlance made him hugely attractive to the world's press, and gave Catholic journalists in particular an endless stream of highly readable copy, and some of the best cover images imaginable – from sombreros to Koala bears. His encyclicals are amongst the most readable and influential in the Catholic lexicon. On the downside, even his deeply philosophical texts on the nature of the human person and his Theology of the Body did little to assuage growing divisions in the Church's response to issues of human sexual identity, and he did even less to address the catastrophe of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church.

In 2005, these problems were left largely to his successor, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who was at the time Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I recall that conclave vividly and it's no unfairness to say that, as the white smoke faded, the emergence of Joseph Ratzinger on the Vatican balcony wasn't met with overwhelming rapture. To journalists he was known as 'God's Rottweiler', from his uncompromising affirmations of Catholic doctrine, especially on key matters such as homosexuality, abortion and inter-faith relations. In Ratzinger's office, suspensions, notifications and censurings were commonplace – Leonardo Boff, Matthew Fox and Anthony de Mello were but a few who felt the cold wind of the Prefect's disdain when their theology strayed. Catholic newspapers and journals from around the world also passed daily through his office, and Joseph Ratzinger wasn't at all averse to offering 'advice and direction' if it was ever felt necessary. Thankfully, no such 'advice' ever came my way, which I'd like to file as a compliment rather than my in consequence!

For me the days of Pope Benedict's pontificate were spent trying to explain to my readers (and the wider secular media) – with due caution and responsibility – such unpopular ideas as the notion that homosexuality was "an intrinsic moral evil", no-one but Catholic can be saved, and all other Christian churches were not churches at all, but "ecclesial communities."

When it was announced that Pope Benedict XVI was to visit Britain in 2010, some degree of trepidation certainly hung in the air at the initial planning meetings I attended. It actually made organising some of the specifics quite difficult, as everyone tried to second-guess what might be acceptable, and what might offend. There were also quite a number of anti-Catholic protests taking place on the streets ahead of the visit, which further increased the anticipation.

In the event, from the moment he stepped from the plane at Edinburgh airport, to his departure from Birmingham three days later, the diminutive but charming person of the ex-Prefect of the CDF transformed utterly the nervous and troubled Catholic zeitgeist of the UK. After his departure for Rome so many remarked that it had seemed like a turning point in our Catholic fortunes. We were not to know that the heady darkness of unresolved crises was about to descend upon poor Benedict, who simply became overwhelmed, both physically and mentally, by the impossible burdens of his office. His resignation shocked the world, but I will ever be convinced that – without the burden that God asked Benedict to bear – there could have been no Francis.

Now 10 years into his papacy, the sheer struggle to reform and untangle the knots that have become our Church has also taken its toll on Pope Francis, but he remains determined to continue. We've seen a whirlwind of activity, foreign travel and reform – and an increasingly impressive written legacy is being accumulated also. At the heart of it all is the spirit of St Francis of Assisi, a drive for Gospel-based reform that has revealed a pontiff who is neither a conservative or liberal, but rather a radical. From the outset of his papacy Pope Francis has placed his 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)* at the centre of his mission – his vision is that our Church should take the fundamental tenets of the Gospel and evangelise to an increasingly secular world. In many respects, as he has said, "we are the disciples of Jesus", and "all else is secondary". This principle also lies at the heart of the synodal process that the Catholic world is navigating currently.

I recall that when Francis was first elected pope, the stories and the photographs were unprecedented – taking the coach with his cardinals, paying his hotel bill with his own credit card, his night time wanderings around the backstreets of Rome, eating pizza with the poor, and his nifty black Fiat 500. As the decade has rolled by the pictures have become more muted, but ever more significant – meetings now with world leaders, diplomats and other movers and shakers. Like St John Paul II, the writings and sayings of Francis have a popular appeal and style that often belies their contribution to the great body of Catholic theology. They've made easy and attractive copy for Catholic journalists and theologians, and have helped us greatly in explaining the nuances of our faith to the laity and to the wider public. In particular, his three encyclicals – *Fratelli Tutti*, *Laudato Si'* and *Lumen Fidei* – have synchronised Catholic teachings with some of the deepest human concerns of the moment, and have given Catholic teachings a fresh and timely relevance to global affairs.

Of course, any pope who includes shifting the balance between supremacy and synodality in his manifesto is going to have a bumpy ride, but Francis was expecting this and, as the years go by, his determination to pursue his Franciscan model of the Church seems to have strengthened rather than become diluted. As one Catholic journalist said this week "the longer he's gone on, the more he feels he needs to. This papacy remains a work in progress."

I would add that this particular papacy is on a road of reform, and whatever anyone may think, there's no reverse gear. Please do remember our Holy Father in your prayers over the coming week. Ad multos Annos, Francis.

<https://www.thecatholicdirectory.co.uk/places/ten-years-on-the-papacy-of-francis-remains-a-radical-work-in-progress/>

• **Joseph Kelly is a Catholic writer and theologian.**

NJPN ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Ellen Teague 2/02/2023

The National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) has announced that its annual conference will take the theme: '*Sustainability? Survival or Shutdown*'. Scheduled for 21-23 July in Derbyshire it will address issues crucial to the common good and the well-being of all creation, with a particular focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Echoing the words of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* that 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.

The Diocese of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission, CAFOD, Christians Aware and the Columban team for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation are on the organising group. Children and young people are welcome and have their own parallel programmes.

Last Saturday's online meeting of the NJPN looked at '*Cost of Living Crisis - Living or Existing*'. Cardiff Diocese was among the dioceses responding locally with a fuel poverty campaign. Other dioceses represented included Arundel and Brighton, Birmingham, Brentwood, Cardiff, Clifton, Nottingham, Southwark and Westminster. Other groups present included Mill Hill Missionaries, Christians Aware, Catholic Association for Racial Justice and Pax Christi, who introduced their new Executive Director Andrew Jackson.

Detailed reports were heard from Hexham and Newcastle. Fr Chris Hughes, a priest of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese and active with Tyne and Wear Citizens, talked of the "current crisis", particularly the issue of in-work poverty. "We need to be attentive to the realities of people's lives," he said. The North-East has the highest levels of poverty in the country and around two-thirds of working-age adults in poverty live in a household where at least one adult is in work. He felt that paying the Living Wage is vital and called for every diocese and Catholic institution to do this, including payment to contractors. He said, "out of 22 dioceses of England and Wales, only four are accredited Living Wage employers - Westminster, Brentwood, Birmingham and Hexham & Newcastle - and we want more accredited Living Wage employers in our dioceses." He noted that most dioceses now have policies on the environment, but not on social justice and urged that a policy be developed and priority given to the Living Wage initiative.

Sara Bryson, Senior Community Organiser of Tyne and Wear Citizens, also deplored "wages being stagnant for a decade." She felt, "social mobility is non-existent; it's very hard to work your way out of poverty." She highlighted that 47% of under-fives live in poverty and felt a response "should be more than setting up warm hubs." She said: "let's focus more on Justice rather than Charity and let's get back to fighting the injustice rather than the charitable responses." Sara described it as "wonderful" to work with Hexham and Newcastle Diocese on various campaigns. The 'JUST CHANGE' campaign, for example, has helped pupils receiving Free School Meals to access unspent money, which can now be rolled over. The United Reformed Church is looking into whether churches could provide interest-free credit which might address the huge problem of families heavily in debt.

NJPN Chair Paul Southgate asked: "can we find champions of the Living Wage in our dioceses?" and "can we lobby our dioceses to have a policy on social justice?" NJPN supports the Living Wage Campaign.

Another speaker was Nalini Nathan of the Catholic Association for Racial Justice and General Secretary of the Conference of Religious, who gave a presentation, 'Ethnic minorities struggling to survive'. She highlighted that: "for ethnic minorities, the cost of living crisis might be considered as an equal added burden, in addition to unequal burdens." She reported that, 35.7% of ethnic minorities are likely to live in poverty compared with 17.2% of white people. Families from ethnic minorities are more likely to be homeless. She asked: What have you seen or heard in recent years about the UK government helping to reduce the poverty gap for ethnic minorities? What can you do to help change things?

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46660>

LINKS

Booking for NJPN Conference 21-23 July 2023: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/

J&P resources for Lent, produced by Anne O'Connor: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/resources/resources-for-lent-2023/

● Read the SPRING issue of *MOUTHPEACE* the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses <https://jpsshrewsbury.files.wordpress.com/2023/02/mouthpeace-spring-2023.pdf>

DIARY MARCH

LENTEN TALKS AT THE IRENAEUS CENTRE LIVERPOOL

Tuesdays 7,14, 21,28 March 7-9 pm Irenaeus Centre Great Georges St Liverpool L221RD To book email Jenny:
jenny@irenaeus.co.uk 0151 949 1199

8 International Women's Day #EmbraceEquity <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/2023Theme>

10 CAFOD Quiz in Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port starting at 7.30pm. As usual there will be a raffle with good prizes and entry is still only £3 - contact Tony Walsh 0151 355 6419

14 CWDF Forum meeting, 7pm at The Unity Centre. **Dr Rebecca Collins, Senior Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Chester, will give a talk on "Current Trends and Challenges in the Global Fashion Industry"**.

15 Green Christian Joy in Enough online workshop 7pm. Mark Dick will be talking about global democracy. More info: <https://joyinenough.org/2021/10/28/upcoming-events-and-talks/>

21 International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination <https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day>

22 World Water Day <https://www.worldwaterday.org/>

23 Oscar Romero Mass followed by talk by Peggy Healy "Responding to the Cry of the Poor Today" 7pm Saint Edmund of Canterbury church, 62 Oxford Road, Waterloo, L22 8QF. Refreshments afterwards (see p.9)

24 43rd Anniversary of death of St Oscar Romero <http://www.romerotrue.org.uk/>

25 Resisting Monopoly Capitalism Global Justice Now activist conference. Central London. Details and booking: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/resisting-monopoly-capitalism-tickets-511557300657>

29 Liverpool Archdiocese Networking and information session for volunteers & staff in asylum work at 18.30 (see p.9) Register here: https://Archdiocese_network_4_vols_staff_supporting_refugees.eventbrite.com

APRIL

14 Climate Justice Evening St. Mary's Centre, Handbridge, 7-9pm. Organised by Helen Pritchard, the representative at St Mary's and now a member of the Chester Christian Aid Group, with help from Katy Rowe and a CA staff member. Dr Richard Baker, an expert on climate science and climate justice and a Christian Aid volunteer speaker, will give a talk, followed by a group discussion. Refreshments provided. Christian Aid has been campaigning with others for some time on the issue of climate justice, and with some success - though it remains to be seen whether all the funds pledged by the richer countries at the recent COP27 meeting will be handed over to those poorer countries so hard hit by climate change.

20 Earth Day <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2023/>

21-24 THE BIG ONE Christian Climate Action protest <https://christianclimateaction.org/2022/10/22/the-big-one/>

22 'Sustainability Fair' at The Carriage Shed, City Place, City Road, Chester CH1 3DR (next to Chester railway station).

23 Climate Crisis Event Marple Hall School Hill Top Drive Hilltop Drive, Marple Stockport, SK6 6LB 1-5 pm. Key note speaker Dr Amanda Maycock (Associate Professor in Climate Dynamics) from the Priestly International Centre for Climate Leeds University. Also Nick Leslie from Stockport Council Climate Action Group ...Jonathan Atkinson from The Carbon COOP on retrofitting homes. Presentations from local school pupils ... Panel of CAM members answer our questions Plus stalls and art and writing competitions for school children. More details from marian37et@gmail.com

26 U N Chernobyl Day <https://www.un.org/en/observances/chernobyl-remembrance-day>

● Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resources for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles.

● **Sign up** for regular news and information from NJPN including **a new fortnightly e-bulletin with a comprehensive round-up of current events, campaigns, e-petitions and resources** (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues for NJPN North West) at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org or admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk 020 7901 4864

The views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of NJPN