

# NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin mid April 2023

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](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com)

## HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

**Jo Siedlecka of Independent Catholic News writes:** Dear Readers - This week ICN is being brought to you from a pilgrimage in the Holy Land. Deacon Patrick van der Vorst, who writes Gospel in Art each day, is leading our group. Fr Charles Soyombo is celebrating our daily Masses. Samir, a Christian Palestinian is our guide. Liz Simpson, Giovanni Marseglia and Ben Ybarra are leading music during our liturgies. Each day I'll try to bring you a short report on our trip - and Deacon Patrick's homilies.

### Day One - Bethlehem - 11 April

Our first day has been really memorable. It began at the Shepherds Fields just outside Bethlehem - the site where - according to tradition - the Shepherds watching their flocks were told the incredible news of the birth of Jesus by an angel. There's a beautiful cave chapel there and several small chapels, looked after by the Franciscans. Our open air Mass held under a canopy was accompanied by some beautiful singing and playing. Blackbirds and sparrows joined in with the music.

From here we were taken by coach to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem - the oldest site continuously used as a place of worship in Christianity - built over a network of caves, by the Emperor Constantine in 326 - 339, and rebuilt and embellished many times through the centuries. Samir told us some of the history of this complex ancient site which is shared by Catholic, Armenian, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, Ethiopian and Syriac churches. There are many beautiful icons and candelabras. The church's interior walls feature medieval golden mosaics. We venerated the site where Jesus was born, in the Nativity cave marked with a silver star.

After a delicious lunch at the Olive Tree restaurant in Bethlehem, we were taken to Jerusalem, where we visited Ein Karem, the birthplace of St John the Baptist and the Visitation Church which honours the visit paid by Our Lady to Elizabeth. This is where, according to tradition, Mary recited her song of praise, the Magnificat.

This morning the weather was quite murky and damp - but by the afternoon the sun had come out. As we walked home we met several stray cats - I resisted the temptation to bring one back to the hotel - but was quite glad to see an animal shelter on our way back to our bus.

The atmosphere in our hotel is sociable. Among the other guests there is an Ethiopian Coptic group, some Orthodox Christians from Ukraine, a Romanian group and some visitors from America. While we have just celebrated Easter Sunday - many of these churches are still in Holy Week. The Jewish people have two more days of Passover to celebrate - while the Muslim community here have nine days before Ramadan ends.

Tomorrow we have a very early start and busy schedule - so I will leave you here. We will be putting more pictures on the ICN Facebook page - and publishing Deacon Patrick's homilies each day.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46939>

**Homily Text: Shepherds Fields, Bethlehem - [www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46940](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46940)**

*Deacon Patrick van der Vorst gave the following homily today, 11 April 2023, at Shepherds Fields, Bethlehem, on the first day of our pilgrimage to the Holy Land.*

**Isaiah 9:1**

**Luke 2:1-14**

The Gospel reading ends with those glorious words that we say each Sunday during Mass: Glory to God in the Highest, Gloria in excelsis deo!

This is probably one of the most widespread sentences that has been used throughout our Liturgies and our music in our 2000 year history as a church...

The Gospel of Luke tells us that these words were sung by the angels as they appeared to the shepherds. And where did all this happen? Right here! The Angelic announcement of Christ's birth happened exactly in these fields. What a beautiful place to be to start our pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

As we start our trip to the sacred sites where our Lord Jesus Christ lived, worked, ministered, preached, we are the very spot where Salvation history started: the angels announcing that Christ was born.

So what exactly did these angels say?

The very first words they said was: 'do not be afraid'. And we can well imagine the shepherds would have been terrified to have angels appear to them. But those words, like all words in the Sacred Scripture are also addressed to us. So God's first words, through the intermediary of the angels to us are: 'Do not be afraid'. Why would God's very first words to us when he sent his only son into the world be: 'Do not be afraid'? Because he knows that we ARE afraid. We are afraid to give ourselves fully to him. We always hold back.

- We let God into our lives - partly.
- We let him be in control - sometimes.
- We let God do his work inside us - at times.
- We let him love us - when it suits us.

So here is God telling us at the start of our pilgrimage: Do not be afraid. Just put yourselves fully into his hands.... And all will be ok....

The second thing the angels tell the shepherds is: 'You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger'. In that small, short sentence we find the whole of our salvation history. Because on the one hand the swaddling clothes and the manger are indeed the instruments we associate with the birth of Christ... BUT ..... BUT these also foretell already the death of Christ too: the swaddling clothes foretell that one day Jesus will be wrapped in linens inside the tomb; the wood of the manger foretells the wood of the cross...

The beauty with Scripture is that nothing is left to chance. Luke when he wrote today's Gospel knew what he was doing. Luke wrote his Gospel around 80-85AD, so some 50 years after Christ died. So he knew very well that the birth of Christ would lead up to his death and Resurrection. So as a good writer does, he sows and scatters seeds throughout his Gospel telling us about what is to come later in his Gospel... And tomorrow's mass we will celebrate at the Domains Flevit Church where Jesus wept just before his Passion...

Today we find ourselves at the beginning of Christ's life; tomorrow at the very end of his life.

Sarah made this very beautiful mass booklet to accompany us during this trip. I would encourage you to use this booklet not just to follow the readings when we have mass, but look at it from time to time during the day too and let the readings sit with you and penetrate your soul ...and so also look closely at today's first reading. It is a wonderful reading to meditate upon.

The prophet Isaiah tells us that a child will be born for us and his light will shine into the world. But as we find ourselves here in the agricultural setting of Shepherds' Fields, the stand out image Isiah uses is maybe that of a 'yoke'. This tells us exactly why the Messiah would come into our world. Most of Isaiah's listeners at the time (about 800 years before Christ) were involved in farming or fishing, so the image of a yoke must have appealed to them; probably less so today, in our age of industrialised agriculture. Nevertheless, it is easy enough to work with this image. A yoke keeps two oxen together as they plough the fields, to prepare for a new season of crop planting.

And with a yoke, the two oxen have to work together. The stronger ox leads the weaker ox, working their way through the fields and life, ploughing one row at a time, towards completing their task. And that is why Jesus came into the world: to help us carry our yoke, our worries, our burdens, so that together Him and you, can plough the fields of your lives, working towards a great harvest together.

The farmers in these fields around us would have used yokes. And these poor farmers and shepherds are exactly the people to whom God announced the greatest event in the history of our world. When we deal with the poor we may send some money or compassion; when God deals with the poor, he sends them angels!... angels singing Gloria in excelsis Deo!

...and so from this very place, 2023 year ago, the shepherds went on their way to find baby Jesus in the manger in Bethlehem... our next stop after this mass, the Nativity Church of Bethlehem.

## HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE - DAY TWO

**Jo Siedlecka** 12 April 2023: As I write this article, there's a wild thunderstorm rumbling away here in Bethlehem. There have been several massive thunderclaps and the rain is bucketing down. But it's been a wonderful day and we are all safely indoors in this beautiful hotel. It all looked so pleasant out there this early this morning. After breakfast and prayers we went by coach to a large family-run shop selling locally-made olive wood carvings, jewellery, art and ceramics. The perfect place to stock up on presents.

From here we drove into Jerusalem. Our guide gave us a brief history of this city which is over 5,000 years old and seen countless rulers rise and fall. He pointed out the distinction between East and West Jerusalem - the more prosperous west side inhabited by the Jewish population while the shabbier east side is home to the Arabs. He said: "There are different buses, different schools, different hospitals for Arabs and Jews. Sadly, everything is divided."

Our first destination was the Mount of Olives, where we visited the little Chapel of the Ascension. Many pilgrims knelt to venerate a mark on a stone, said to be a footprint left by Jesus as he ascended to heaven. There were several groups from Ethiopia wearing colourful robes. From here we visited the Pater Noster Church built on the place where Jesus is said to have taught the Our Father prayer to the disciples. The Lord's Prayer appears on more than 140 different languages around the church. Our guide recited the Our Father for us in Aramaic - the language Jesus spoke.

Our next destination was the Dominus Flevit Church - the place where Jesus stood when he wept over Jerusalem, overlooking the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem and the Garden of Gethsemane - visible through a tear-shaped window behind the altar. During construction of the sanctuary archaeologists uncovered artefacts dating back to the Canaanite period as well as tombs from the Second Temple and Byzantine era.

Fr Charles Soyombo was our celebrant. Liz Simpson, Giovanni Marseglia and Ben Ybarra again led the music beautifully. In his homily, Deacon Patrick van der Vorst gave a very moving homily reflecting on Jesus' suffering during that last night before his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane - see link here: [www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46945](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46945)

After Mass our guide Samir showed us the panoramic view of Jerusalem seen from the church garden. We noticed dark clouds roiling in on the horizon. As we began walking down Mount Zion, passing the Garden of Gethsemane - torrential rain began to pour down. By the time we reached the Church of All Nations, we were all pretty drenched - so we decided to head back to Bethlehem where Samir took us to an excellent restaurant for a late lunch.

This afternoon a group of us visited Banksy's Walled-Off Hotel - which boasts the 'worst view in the world' - of the concrete barrier which separates Israel from the Palestinian territories. Full of surprises - it's a comfortable hotel, art gallery, museum and witty protest all in one. There's lovely photo of Pope Francis praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. We have an early start tomorrow - catching up on things we missed today as well as following our original programme - so I'll save Banksy's hotel for another day. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46946>

## HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE: DAY THREE

**Jo Siedlecka** 13 April 2023: The torrential rain and thunder continued last night and this morning - but this did not stop our intrepid group of pilgrims from continuing on our program - armed with umbrellas and some fluorescent pink plastic ponchos.

Our morning in Jerusalem began with Mass at the Church of St Anne on the site of the house where the parents of Our Lady lived. A cave under the church is said to be the place where she was born. Fr Charles was the main celebrant. Deacon Patrick gave a very thoughtful homily. **See:** [www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46951](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46951)

From here we walked the Stations of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa - sheltering in shops doorways together with pilgrims from many other countries. This is a route that has been followed by pilgrims for many centuries. In the past it would have taken many months to reach here from somewhere like London - so a couple of hours in the rain wasn't so hard. Our destination - the Church of the Holy Sepulchre - contains two of the most sacred Christian sites - the place where Jesus was crucified and the empty tomb where he was buried and resurrected. Founded by the Emperor Constantine, the church was consecrated in 335, demolished and rebuilt several times.

**Read more here:** <https://custodia.org/en/sanctuaries/basilica-holy-sepulchre>

This evening we were visited by Fr Mamdouh Abusada, director of the School of Joy, the first school in Bethlehem for children with learning difficulties. Before the school was established there were no facilities for these children. They sometimes ended up neglected or abandoned. At the School the children get support and training and most importantly - lots of love - to enable them to discover their full potential and live their lives fully.

**Read more about the School here:** [www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/school-of-joy](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/school-of-joy)

Tomorrow we are setting off for the Judean Wilderness. After Mass in Jericho - the oldest inhabited city in the world and a visit to Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, we're going to the Dead Sea - where some of us plan to float and get covered in rejuvenating mud...

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46952>

**Homily Text: St Anne's Church, Jerusalem - <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46951>**

*Rev Patrick van der Vorst delivered this homily on 13 April 2023 at the Mass of the Resurrection, to our pilgrim group in St Anne's Church, in Jerusalem.*

**Colossians 3: 1-4**

**John 20: 1-9**

At yesterday's mass we found ourselves on the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem. Today we are in the very heart of Jerusalem, a holy city for Christians, Jews and Muslims.

And the Church of Saint Anne reflects this myriad of influences and overlaps of all three religions.

The Roman built a pagan temple on this very site. Then followed a Byzantine basilica in the 5th century, which then was destroyed under Persian rule in the 6th century, to make way for a crusader Church built in 1131. Then that church came briefly under Islamic rule, etc... What this juxtaposition of cultures, religions and influences shows, is that there is always a need for close inter religious dialogue.

Are our three Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) different? Yes, sure they are. But there are a whole load of overlaps too and things we share in common.

So why are you and I here today, as Catholics?

The short answer is simple: we are here because we believe in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The long answer however is more complex. Each of us will have our own private responses to why we are here... because we all have our own, individual relationship with Christ... And yes, that is what it is all about, about having that private personal friendship with him. But we are not alone in our faith and we cannot live our faith alone. Through our faith we are linked to the community of the Church. And this is what we celebrate here today being in Jerusalem. We are part of this wonderful vast Christian community which finds its very roots in the Resurrection of Christ.

We are part of our two thousand year-old Church who thorough all generations, places and time, has displayed and continues to display quiet, persistent, generous, beautiful daily heroics through all of you, far away from the radar of the media who often gives our Catholic Church a bad press. For two thousand years ordinary people have in the name of Christ:

Loved

Forgiven

Fed the hungry

Cared for the sick

Look after the poor...

... and whilst this is not something of course solely done by Christians, it is nevertheless something to be very proud of and something we do well.

As a church we have been at the forefront of education (learning people to read and write), with literally hundreds of thousands of schools all over the world. We have been at the forefront of healthcare with again hundreds of thousands of hospitals across the globe. We are still the largest AIDS care providers on the world..

Also think of all the saints from ordinary backgrounds who have helped inspired the world:

A wife and widow: Saint Monica, A soldier and warrior: Saint Ignatius of Loyola, A sailor: Saint Brendan, A baker: Saint Honorius of Amiens, A computer programmer : Saint Carlo Acutis.

We are at the forefront of social justice, fighting so many injustices throughout the world. We celebrate the sanctity of life, we want to protect nature, we encourage creativity, etc..

Why am I saying all this? Just because we should celebrate that we are part of this incredibly rich texture of the community of our Church...

And we do all this with a great sense of urgency..... and this sense of urgency is coming so beautifully in our Gospel reading today:

Mary of Magdala RAN to Simon Peter and the other disciple. Peter and the other disciple RAN to the tomb...

When do we run? We run because there is something urgent to do. We run because we are patient to see things for ourselves. That is exactly why the three protagonists of our Gospel Mary Magdalene, Peter and the disciple ran: they were impatient to see what had happened and then impatient to share the good news.

Do we share their sense of urgency?

This sense of urgency is very much highlighted in our Easter liturgies. As you know we are now in the Easter octave, that begins on Easter Sunday and ends with the following Sunday: if we were back home in London, we would be following the normal readings of the Easter Octave week, and every day we would read a different account of the Resurrection story, a different aspect. But ALL those readings share this same sense of urgency of the early Church, an urgency to share the good news.

That is also why there are no readings of the Old Testament during Eastertide (the 50 days after Easter, between Easter and Pentecost), as we want to accentuate this sense of urgency, this forward-looking, the future building of the Church. Many readings are of the Acts of the Apostles, as we want to act, we want to do things, move forward, look ahead at what needs doing.

But that doesn't come without challenges! Think of Jerusalem here and the many challenges it faced over the years. Founded in the 4th millennium before Christ, Jerusalem has seen so many challenges in its history. The city was:

besieged twenty-three times,  
completely destroyed twice,  
attacked fifty-two times  
and reconquered 44 times.

Somehow Jerusalem has always picked herself up, rose again and always rebuilt herself.

The same goes for our spiritual lives. We can feel we are under attack at times, we are at a loss, but we pick ourselves up and move forward.

But yes, faith is a challenge. And what the Church asks from us is immense; the bar is set high.

What we have to always bear in mind however is that whilst the Church is extreme in its demands it is extreme in its forgiveness too. Better to be part of such a Church, than be part of a church which would set bar lower, but then also be less forgiving.

And this brings us to the core of our Christian faith: forgiveness. I don't think it would be unfair to say that most other ancient or contemporary religions place forgiveness at the very heart of their faith. Many would even hold an eye-for-an-eye mentality. But for us, Christ came for the forgiveness of sins. He walked this very road outside the church we find ourselves in, carrying the cross, so that we may be forgiven. And he asks of us to do the same.

But forgiving takes practise. It is not something we do occasionally. We must do it every day. If you want to become a gardener, you don't become one merely by reading books or online articles, or talking about it. You became a gardener by lifting up a spade, plant seeds, weed, trim, etc... The more gardening we do, the better gardeners we are. The more forgiving we do, the better Christians we will be.

That is why I want to personally pray here on this very site for our societies in the West. They are largely societies where Christianity is less and less present... the danger is that when that happens... forgiveness will soon fade away too...

## HOPE WHISPERS – AN EASTER POEM

*Hope whispers my name,  
And speaks to my soul.  
'Rest a while,  
I have a healing balm and will tend your wounds.'*

*I counter,  
'But have you seen the pain,  
The poison runs deep,  
The beasts run wild.'*

*And hope speaks,  
And addresses my wounded heart,  
'Indeed, I know.  
The night is darkest just before dawn.*

*On cursed tree,  
Through whip and nail,  
The evil of empire, & the sickness of sin  
sinned against me.  
Alone in pain. I breathed my last.*

*Downcast I spoke  
'The beast has won.  
As hope lies silent in the grave.  
In the book of life evil will have the last word'*

*And hope rejoiced and laughed and sang,  
A song of healing love,  
'My beloved one, this is not true,  
The grave did not win.  
I was raised to life.  
Evil does not have the last word.  
Love wins'*

*And I wept,  
And he wiped the tears from my face.  
Hope embraced me in his love,  
I beheld his face,  
We danced  
He is making all things new.*

**- Rev'd Jon Swales 2023**

An audio recording of this poem with a soundtrack by Chris Sayburn can be found here:

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1894040/12620841>

A podcast journey of prayer with a focus on the climate and ecological emergency based around Rev'd Jon Swales' book **'26 Prayers for the Climate and Ecological Emergency'**

Download as a pdf here: <https://atyourservice.arocha.org/en/26-prayers-for-the-climate-and-ecological-emergency/>

Or listen here: <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/lament-hope-prayers-teaching-for-justice-and-peace/id1597456994>

## AN EASTER MESSAGE FROM GREEN CHRISTIAN TRUSTEE, PAUL BODENHAM:

The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. (Romans 8.19)

They're familiar words, and a challenge to us at any time of year. But it's at Easter that they truly come alive. Christ is risen and we stand to inherit his glory, not just for our own benefit but for the liberation of all life.

This Holy Week, the government halved Air Passenger Duty on internal flights on the pretext of levelling up the country. A licence may be issued any day now for the Rosebank oil and gas field, which analysis has shown would blow the entire UK carbon budget. One could go on.

Despite all evidence to the contrary there is hope, thanks to Easter. In our faith the story always goes further than the tragedy of our policy failures. The triumph is won. That's not denial or make-believe; it is the only sanity for our times.

We wish you a happy, and enduring, Easter. Paul Bodenham

## FAITH IN FASHION? CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON UNSUSTAINABLE CLOTHING PRACTICES

**Green Christian Zoom meeting** Wednesday 3 May 7pm

Faith in fashion? Christian perspectives on unsustainable clothing practices with Prof Tim Cooper

Few sermons are given on clothing, yet the fact that it is among the most unsustainable industry sectors has implications for everyone who buys and wears clothes. Tim will explore the evidence that the clothing industry is unsustainable and consider the ethical decisions and uncertainties that Christians face.

Is bamboo really more sustainable than cotton? Should we focus more on increasing the life span of garments or their recyclability? Is fashion rooted in pride? Can Christians justify buying new items when second-hand stores are overflowing?

Register here: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrdeyqrz8rHdG8dvXllcQU7yx\\_qk\\_FbDHd#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrdeyqrz8rHdG8dvXllcQU7yx_qk_FbDHd#/registration)

## GREEN CHRISTIAN: ON THE RADIO

"The government has simply failed to lead, has failed to govern, on this issue."

Green Christian trustee, Paul Bodenham, was recently interviewed by United Christian Broadcasters about the recent Climate Change Committee's report.

**Listen to Paul's 7.54 minute interview here:** [https://timbre-player.sharp-stream.com/embed/item/afbc3b03-7967-4420-9607-cb705723e62d?layout=legacy&custom\\_theme=65](https://timbre-player.sharp-stream.com/embed/item/afbc3b03-7967-4420-9607-cb705723e62d?layout=legacy&custom_theme=65)

## CLIMATE CHANGE – STARTING ALL OVER AGAIN

The United Nations gets the world together every year to tackle climate change. They have had 27 meetings and they have failed to agree on the best course of action. We need, at least, a non-proliferation treaty for fossil fuels. At the disappointing COP27 the fossil fuel provision was watered down with oil and gas still not specifically mentioned.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has just released its latest report - 8 years of scientific research results. The UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres has said that "Humanity is on thin ice – and that ice is melting fast". It's time to review the situation.

### **So, we need to start all over again.**

The climate is changing. It's getting hotter and people are dying. We need to stop it getting any hotter by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. We all know that, don't we? But we don't do enough about it, nor quickly enough.

Why? It's a bit like smoking. The NHS have posters saying "Quitting smoking is one of the best things you will ever do for your health". But smokers carry on smoking.

We need to begin with the end in mind.

In his book "*How to Avoid a Climate Disaster*", Bill Gates says "humans need to stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere." "[Net] zero is what we need to aim for." And, as Greta Thunberg says, this is an emergency that is not being treated as an emergency. Political activity is, as is often the case, too little too late. It feels as though there is a reluctance to act.

This is called 'wilful blindness' and occurs as a result of FEAR, and that fear is paralysing. "What is needed right now simply seems to be too uncomfortable, unpopular and unprofitable." (Greta Thunberg). So, somehow, we need to face up to our fear, name it and shame it.

### **What on earth can we do?**

#### **Let's start with ourselves.**

**As Individuals**, we appear to be going about our daily business as though nothing is happening. We still drive our cars to work or drop off the kids to school. We still want to fly off to overseas destinations for holidays or go on cruises. We still shop till we drop, often buying more than we need. We still eat more meat than is good for us or for the environment.

We need to re-think what we are doing and why we are doing it. Above all, we need to act together as communities, parishes, groups of all sorts. Acting as individuals becomes rather dispiriting after a while. We need each other to gain moral support.

**Locally**, many Councils have declared a Climate Emergency, but of the 409 Councils, 101 have not done so (24%). And declaring a Climate Emergency does not necessarily mean that the Council is taking it seriously. We need to get involved.

**Nationally**, the UK has done a lot, possibly more than most other countries, but all the active groups want the Government to do more and act more quickly.

One of the most comprehensive lists of things for them to do is on the Climate Coalition's website at <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/campaign-asks-2022> where they outline their plan for climate, people and nature that is secure, fair and green. They spell out in some detail what they want the Government to do and the progress so far.



In particular, there is a **Climate and Ecology private member's Bill** going through Parliament, which reached its report stage in the House of Lords in January 2023. Whilst Lord Redesdale continues to advance the Ecology Bill, the need for an intertwined climate and nature strategy remains as important as ever, and the CE Bill campaign group, Zero Hour, have plans to fight for the full CE Bill when it returns to the Commons. <https://www.zerohour.uk/bill/>

**Each and every one of us, needs to write to our MP**, go to see him/her, ask questions, ask for action. It only takes a few minutes and the more letters and emails our MP gets, the more they understand that constituents want them to act. The Climate Coalition <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/> says that writing to our MP is a quick and simple way for us to get our voice heard and they provide a tool to do this; or we can go to <https://www.writetothem.com/> (we don't need to know who our MP is beforehand). Let's tell our own MP to champion action on the climate crisis and tell him/her to urge the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Chancellor to prioritise this issue in 2023 and beyond and to support the Climate and Ecology Bill in particular.

The future is in our own hands. Don't let us be wilfully blind. Again, quoting Greta Thunberg, "Humans are very adaptable: we can still fix this. But the opportunity to so will not last for long."

It is worth reading through (or watching the 7-min video) of the UN Secretary General's remarks on launching the IPCC report here for quotes when writing to your MP: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2023-03-20/secretary-generals-video-message-for-press-conference-launch-the-synthesis-report-of-the-intergovernmental-panel-climate-change>

**"We must start today.** We have no more excuses." (Greta Thunberg)

And finally, significant events in 2023:

**Extinction Rebellion's The Big One** Parliament Square 21-24 April 2023

**Laudato Si' week** 22-29 May 2023

**Climate Coalition's Great Big Green Week** 10-18 June 2023

**UN Climate Change Conference COP28** 30 November - 12 December 2023 in the United Arab Emirates.

**Let's get involved!**

**Brian Austin, for the LSIUK (Laudato Si UK) Animators Writing Group** (reprinted with permission from Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission)

### **UK AID: UK GOVERNMENT IS ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL, CHRISTIAN AID WARNS**

9/04/2023: Responding to government figures that confirm the UK is spending more than three times the amount of aid money used to alleviate poverty in Africa on asylum seekers and refugees in the UK, Chief of UK Advocacy at Christian Aid Sophie Powell said: "Today's figures provide a further stark reminder that this is a government robbing Peter to pay Paul. As clear as day, the UK's already depleted aid pot continues to be raided by other government departments. We must reject the false choice between responding at home and fulfilling the UK's responsibilities to the world's most in need. We need a government that will release new resources, not just by restoring the aid budget but also by getting private creditors such as the big banks to cancel the debt of countries on the frontline of these crises."

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) provisional statistics report on how UK aid was spent in 2022 can be found here: [www.gov.uk/guidance/statistics-on-international-development](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/statistics-on-international-development) This annual publication provides an overview of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend in calendar year 2022 and has revealed that the UK is spending more UK aid in the UK on refugee costs than in both Africa and Asia.

- 9 % of UK ODA in 2022 was spent on in-donor refugee costs (£3.7bn). This is an increase of 250% (£2.6bn) between 2021 and 2022 and 487% (£3.1bn) from 2020 to 2022
- The UK spent £3.7 billion of the ODA budget on in-donor refugee costs in 2022 compared to £2,047 million spent by the FCDO bilaterally in both Africa and Asia.
- FCDO spend to Africa decreased by £256 million and to Asia by £134 million, as part of FCDO's overall budget
- Spend to Europe increased by £249 million (an increase of 405%) due to our increased spend in Ukraine.
- The Home Office spent £2,397million of ODA in 2022, an increase of £1,356 million (130.2%).
- The FCDO accounted for 59.8% of UK ODA in 2022, compared to 71.6% in 2021. This is the smallest share of UK ODA reported for FCDO and the first time it's fallen below 70%.
- The total ODA spend for 2022 was £12.8bn, equating to 0.5% GNI. Had the UK met their commitment to 0.7% GNI, the total ODA would have been approximately £17.5 billion. This equates to a cut of £4.7 billion.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46927>



## BALFOUR PROJECT NEWS

13/04/2023 Sir Vincent Fean, Vice Chair, Balfour Project writes:

The 18 minute Balfour Project film “**Britain in Palestine, 1917-48**” was shown recently to an international audience, thanks to the Palestine Museum US. **Here is the link to see the film:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOJqLTc6RkU>

**and here is the link to the discussion which followed the screening:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkUmh9mdkDk&ab\\_channel=PalestineMuseumUS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkUmh9mdkDk&ab_channel=PalestineMuseumUS) Historian John McHugo - a fellow trustee of the Balfour Project charity - and I took questions.

Separately, below is the summary of a talk I gave recently making the case for immediate UK recognition of the state of Palestine (the British Government having recognised Israel in 1950). Our charity will continue to advocate recognition of Palestine - we believe doing so can change UK policy for the better.

### **Why the British Government must recognise the state of Palestine**

Recognition of the state of Palestine alongside Israel is not the only thing our Government should do – but it is the right thing to do, and the sooner, the better. It’s a political decision, with moral, legal and political implications.

#### **Moral**

There is a moral issue, of right and wrong. And a very specific British historic responsibility, from before the 1917 Balfour Declaration, through the British Mandate up to 1948, when we abandoned Palestine to chaos and war, and up to the present day. Britain contributed greatly to the mess we now see: military occupation, dispossession, systematic oppression and despair contributing to futile violence. Our country has a lot to answer for, and doesn’t like answering.

The case for equal rights for all living between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River is both incontestable and much contested – wrongly but successfully contested hitherto.

There’s a job to be done explaining exactly what was done in our collective name in the first half of the last century – and why we have a moral duty to try harder than most to improve matters. The Balfour Project tries to help do that job, through our website, our regular webinars, our Peace Advocacy Fellowship programme and our annual conference. We shed light on a dark corner of our imperial history, seek to raise awareness and constructive activism among the young, and advocate UK policy change where we see the need.

There is an unanswerable moral case for treating two peoples equally – Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. Right now, we don’t. Recognition of the right to self-determination of both peoples is a moral imperative. It means parity of esteem for two distinct peoples bound to live side by side until the end of time.

#### **Legal**

In 2011 the UK Government of David Cameron concluded that Palestine – ie the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – met the criteria for recognition as a state, “subject to the Occupation”. The issue has not been revisited since then, but I believe the same conclusion would be reached today. It is a political decision whether to recognise Palestine under Occupation. About two thirds of the member states of the UN – 138 – have done so.

What difference would UK recognition make?

Recognition changes our own mindset, our attitude, rather than changing the situation on the ground. I underline the issue of parity of esteem for two peoples. But beyond that, there are legal effects of recognition.

Consider UK PM Johnson’s letter of April 2021 to Conservative Friends of Israel. First, it praises the International Criminal Court, which the UK helped to found. But then it condemns the Court’s decision to launch an investigation into alleged war crimes by Palestinians and Israelis in Israel and Gaza. Mr Johnson contends – wrongly – that because Palestine is not a state, the Court has no locus, no competence to investigate. He also argues that the investigation looks like an attempt to do down a friend and ally of the UK – Israel. He was wrong on both counts, but UK recognition of Palestine would mean that his first contention could never be repeated.

Last December our Government voted against a Palestinian proposal at the UN General Assembly to ask two questions of the International Court of Justice – one being whether the 56 year-old occupation of the OPT is legal, and the other seeking confirmation of the status of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, all of which are illegal under international law. Had the UK recognised the state of Palestine, it is a safe assumption that our Government would not have opposed this Palestinian request, which our Government deems “inappropriate”.

There are legal benefits to Palestine from recognition, and limitations on UK policy imposed by recognition – constraints I regard as right and proper. Recognition confers certain rights and responsibilities on the state being recognised. One of the rights is to take its full place in the community of nations. One of the responsibilities is the duty of the recognised state to respect the international treaties and conventions which it signs and ratifies.

I argue – though this is a political more than a legal point – that recognising Palestine would enable the UK to exert more pressure on Palestine for much-needed democratic renewal. All Palestine’s political representatives are time-expired.

### **Political**

In November 2011 Foreign Secretary William Hague said: “We reserve the right to recognise a Palestinian state bilaterally at a moment of our choosing and when it can best help bring about peace”. That remains the official position of our Government in 2023. I say “Do it now”.

Our Government refers instead to the prospect of negotiations between Israel and the PLO – but this is just not real, and should be called out, as the Balfour Project tried to do in our letter to The Times of 28 March. Mr Netanyahu has no intention of negotiating with the PLO over final status issues. This is public knowledge – it says in the Israeli Government’s policy platform that Israel owns Judea and Samaria, otherwise known as the West Bank. If so, there is nothing to negotiate about. So the UK putting the concept of negotiations as a precondition for recognition of Palestine is a thinly disguised way of saying “never”. But our Government can’t say “never”, because that would contradict its support for the two-state solution, which remains UK/ EU /Biden policy.

I don’t know if the two-state solution is alive or dead, but I do know that it’s not my job to decide either way. It’s not Britain’s job, either. UK recognition of the state of Palestine now is a logical step for a Government that believes in two states, as our Government says it does. There is no doubt that the two-state solution is in danger – just read the Israeli Government policy platform, just see what successive Israeli Governments have done and are doing on the ground. It’s all very well documented by brave Palestinian and Israeli human rights defenders like Al Haq and Breaking the Silence. Anybody who wants to know, knows.

The UK has done much harm in what is now Palestine and Israel. Today, it is harmful to see the reality and to pretend it is something different. Let’s do no more harm.

Our Government has endorsed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the option of a state. It is not for me to foreclose on any option available to the Palestinian people to exercise that acknowledged right. It’s their call, not mine.

UK Government recognition of Palestine alongside Israel would be a step forward in the direction of Palestinian self-determination. Recognition puts Palestinians in a stronger place morally, legally and politically. Recognition of Palestine makes it that much harder for the recognising state to ignore human rights abuses by the occupying power – and, indeed, human rights abuses committed by the state under occupation. That’s implicit in recognition, but it’s real.

Experience tells us that it is very hard to persuade Western Governments to warn of specific consequences – political or economic – for Israel’s settlement project, the 15-year closure of Gaza etc. In those circumstances, which will not readily change with a change of Government here in the UK, validation of that second state and parity of esteem for both peoples are steps worth encouraging – not to the exclusion of other calls, other campaigns, other messages, but as a priority, precisely because it is attainable, and will be an advance on where we are now.

### **Conclusion**

We all need hope – the hope that our action, however small, can help improve people’s lives. Let’s not underestimate our own ability to effect change. Let’s not underestimate the ability of our own country to influence others. The UK has a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, and exerts real influence there. We need to repair our relations with our European neighbours, which is happening, bit by bit. We need to strengthen our political dialogue with Commonwealth countries which have not yet recognised Palestine, like Australia and New Zealand. There’s a lot to do. But it can be done, with well-directed effort.

• **Click here to access the video and audio of the recent talk *The United States and Palestine: stranded between promise and performance***

<https://balfourproject.org/the-United-nations-and-palestine-stranded-between-promise-and-performance-with-richard-falk-john-dugard-and-michael-lynk/>

• **Click here to register for our future events:** <https://balfourproject.org/future-events/>

## PAX CHRISTI: E NEWS APRIL 2023

**Our Lent Reflections now available online.** If you missed any of our Lent Reflections on the Icon of Peace or would like to watch and listen again then all five are now available on our YouTube Channel here: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7rnnv2AhpTKMBs5Q3IuCZ1Mt8308fAQga>

### **PCEW Chair Ann Farr visit to the Holy Land**

Ann Farr, Chair of PCEW, was a member of the Pax Christi International delegation to the Holy Land. Thirteen members from six countries took part in a visit that enabled them to reconnect with Pax Christi partners, see, first-hand, the facts on the ground, meet with religious leaders, activists, NGO, and UN representatives, and most importantly, to hear from those whose daily lives are affected by the Israeli occupation. You can read their Witness Testimony on our website here: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>

During the visit the delegation met with the family of Shireen Abu Akleh, the Palestinian Journalist who was killed by an Israeli military sniper a year ago on May 11th. The family have continually asked for Justice for Shireen and none has been forthcoming. Her anniversary is very close to the 75th anniversary of the Nakba – the Palestinian Catastrophe. To mark both these anniversaries, we encourage you to:

- tell her story: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/12/7/they-silenced-her-the-fight-for-justice-for-shireen-abu-akleh>
- send messages of solidarity and prayer to Shireen's family via her family member in our Pax Christi Partners in Bethlehem [aei@p-ol.com](mailto:aei@p-ol.com)
- include prayers and hold silent vigils for justice and an end to the occupation
- contact your Elected Representatives to ask that the killing of Shireen by a member of the Israeli military, as has been well documented, is publicly acknowledged by your Government and that the perpetrator is charged
- Join us outside the BBC, Portland Place W1A, London as we join others on Saturday, May 13, 12-4pm, at the Palestine Solidarity Campaign event 'NAKBA 75 – National Protest: Free Palestine – End Apartheid' as Palestinians commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Nakba, the process of ethnic cleansing, colonisation and dispossession that saw over 750,000 Palestinians driven into exile and more than 500 towns and villages wiped from the map. <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/events/nakba-75-national-protest/>

### **New blog posts from Paul McGowan and Andrew Jackson**

Read the latest blogs on the Members Blog section of our website where Paul McGowan writes on the lies and distortions around the war between Russia and Ukraine and our new Chief Executive, Andrew Jackson looks back at Gary Lineker's now famous tweet and reminds us just how much language matters. <https://paxchristi.org.uk/members-blog-2023/>

### **Pax Christi at the NEU Conference, Harrogate**

In the first week of April, Aisling, our Schools and Youth Education Worker, joined colleagues from the Quaker Peace Education team and ForcesWatch to represent the Peace Education Network on a stall at the National Education Union's Annual Conference. The team were able to talk to teachers about peace education, signpost resources and discuss issues facing teachers today, including military engagement in schools.

If you are interested in our work with schools and young people you can read about our resources here on our website: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/>

### **THE VOCATION OF A PEACEMAKER: JIM FOREST**

“Peacemakers are everywhere -- the parent sorting out a dispute within his or her family, the parish council member finding a solution to a conflict that might tear a parish to shreds, the priest hearing confessions who helps a penitent experience God's mercy, the missionary who helps awaken faith in another and points the way to baptism, the volunteer who lives a life of hospitality in a neighbourhood others avoid, the driver who responds to dangerous actions on the highway with a prayer rather than a gesture of hatred... We could spend the rest of our lives noting acts of peacemaking.”

- extract from a talk given by Jim Forest at St Tikhon's Monastery in June 2003.

Read more here: <https://incommunion.org/2023/03/27/the-vocation-of-a-peacemaker-by-jim-forest/>

A short biography of peace activist Jim Forest: <https://incommunion.org/2004/10/14/jim-forest-bio/>

## PACEM IN TERRIS: A TIMELY BUT NEGLECTED ENCYCLICAL

**Source: Vatican News** 11/04/2023: "Men nowadays are becoming more and more convinced that any disputes which may arise between nations must be resolved by negotiation and agreement, and not by recourse to arms." Sixty years ago today, Saint Pope John XXIII, as his life was drawing to an end, shared his encyclical *Pacem in terris*, on peace in the world, as a contribution toward the first steps towards disarmament and détente.

The doctrine of a 'just war' was finished, and with great realism, the Pope from Bergamo warned of the risks of the new and powerful nuclear weapons. Sixty years later, that text is still relevant but sadly unheeded. Today we seem to have lost a full realization of how devastating a nuclear war would be - an understanding that was vitally present to those who were alive in April 1963. Today, the world is torn apart by dozens of forgotten conflicts, and a terrible war that began with Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues in the very heart of Christian Europe. The culture of non-violence is struggling to find its place, while many people seem to consider even the words 'negotiation' or 'talks' to be almost blasphemous. Even the idea of strengthening a world political authority capable of fostering the peaceful resolution of international disputes has given way to scepticism. Diplomacy appears muted, while war and an insane arms race are seen as inevitable.

And yet, despite this bleak picture, the principles listed by Pope John in *Pacem in terris*, continue not only to challenge consciences but are put into practice daily by those who do not surrender to the inevitability of hatred, violence, prevarication, and war. They are witnessed by those 'artisans of peace' who today undertake their missions in Ukraine and in so many other parts of the world, often putting their lives at risk. They are witnessed to by all those who take seriously the words that Pope Francis spoke in the nunciature in Kinshasa when meeting the victims of unspeakable violence: "To say 'no' to violence it is not enough to avoid acts of violence. We also need to eliminate the roots of violence, greed, envy, and, above all, resentment." One must have "the courage to disarm the heart."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46941>

**Pacem in Terris:** [www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963\\_pacem.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html)

**Background:** *Pacem in terris* appeared at one of the most dangerous points in the Cold War, the post-Second World War stand-off between the United States and the Soviet Union, and their respective allies. The encyclical was issued months after the Cuban missile crisis, sparked by the Soviet construction of nuclear missile sites on the island within striking range of the U.S. On Oct. 22, 1962, John F. Kennedy — America's first Catholic president — announced a naval blockade of Cuba in response. In an address to the nation, Kennedy said: "It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union."

On Oct. 25, John XXIII, who had opened the Second Vatican Council two weeks earlier, addressed the crisis in a radio broadcast. "We beg all governments not to remain deaf to this cry of humanity," he said in French, the premiere language of diplomacy. "That they do all that is in their power to save peace. They will thus spare the world from the horrors of a war whose terrifying consequences no one can predict. That they continue discussions, as this loyal and open behaviour has great value as a witness of everyone's conscience and before history. Promoting, favouring, accepting conversations, at all levels and in any time, is a rule of wisdom and prudence which attracts the blessings of heaven and earth."

The pope's intervention was reported prominently by Pravda, the Soviet Communist Party's official newspaper. Shortly afterward, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed to dismantle the Cuban missile sites (in return for then secret concessions from President Kennedy). The crisis was the closest the world had come to all-out nuclear war. While disaster was averted, the Cold War would continue for almost 30 years and arguably still hangs over world affairs today.

Over almost 15,000 words, John XXIII set out what he believed to be the conditions of a lasting global peace, against the background of what he called the "signs of the times." The encyclical had four main sections: "order between men," "relations between individuals and the public authorities," "relations between states," and "the relationship of men and of political communities with the world community." Some passages read as if they could have been written today, given the nuclear threats accompanying Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

*Pacem in terris* received arguably the best reception of any 20th-century encyclical. It was published in full by the *New York Times*, while the *Washington Post* said that the encyclical "is not just the voice of an old priest, nor just that of an ancient Church; it is the voice of the conscience of the world." In his 2013 speech, Francis highlighted John XXIII's radicalism, his vision of peace not simply as the cessation of warfare but as a far-reaching transformation of human affairs. "*Pacem in terris* draws a line that goes from the peace to be built in the hearts of men to reviewing our model of development and of action at all levels so that our world may become a world of peace," he observed. "I ask myself, are we willing to accept this invitation?" John XXIII's appeal is no less challenging today than it was 60 years ago.

<https://www.pillaratholic.com/p/pacem-in-terris-at-60-a-brief-guide>

## ONLINE FILM LAUNCH EVENT: "ARMS SALES TO DICTATORS, DISPLACEMENT, AND MILITARISED BORDERS"

Join London Campaign Against Arms Trade for a launch of their new film on the UK government and the UK arms industry's involvement in and around the Syrian Civil war. **Venue: Online Date: Monday 24 April Time: 18:30-20:00**

The film critically tracks the UK government's issuing of chemical licences to companies selling to Bashar al Assad, who would go on to gas Syrians. It then examines arms sales to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whose border guards shoot at and kill Syrians trying to flee and is accused of ethnic cleansing of the Kurdish population. Finally, it looks at how the UK chooses to support a policy of militarised borders in Lebanon and Jordan which has made it even harder for Syrians to escape. We will show the film and then have a panel of speakers (tbc) who will talk about the issues raised in the film. There will be time for questions.

**Free event, sign up here:** [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YEc\\_xQ9SFOCQr07GgzmEg](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YEc_xQ9SFOCQr07GgzmEg)

## GOOD FRIDAY TURNS BLACK

11/04/2023 **Felipe D'Avillez and John Pontifex**

More than 35 people in Nigeria's Middle Belt died on Good Friday when gunmen opened fire at a camp for internally displaced people. In a message sent to Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), Father Remigius Ihyula from Makurdi diocese said: "Fulani [herdsmen] came to an IDP camp to kill these innocent souls."

Reports from the region, in Benue State, stated that the suspected herdsmen "invaded" the compound of a primary school, where the IDPs were camping, and began shooting indiscriminately, leaving nearly 40 people seriously injured. Of those killed, local reports claimed the vast majority were women. Father Ihyula said: "The [place] is well known and used as a haven for people from neighbouring settlements such as Udei, who, from time to time, come to the school to sleep [or] stay due to fear and insecurity in their villages.

"Beside the school is the house of Zaki Bernard Shawa, who also lost two children in the attack, while in front of the school is the Makurdi-Lafia highway with a police checkpoint." Mr Shawa, district head of Nyiev, the area where the attack took place, was quoted in local reports saying: "Some of [those who were killed] were shot right in their rooms, while they were sleeping, and others, including two of my children, were caught running and killed." According to Father Ihyula, the attackers destroyed property including vehicles.

Makurdi diocese alone has 2 million IDPs – most of them Christian – spread across seven camps. Father Ihyula told ACN that most of the IDPs used to be self-sufficient but now rely entirely on hand-outs. The camps lack basic equipment, such as beds, with the vast majority of IDPs having to sleep on the floor.

There is longstanding animosity between nomadic herdsmen and farmers but the conflict has been made worse by automatic weapons from Libya flooding the black market. The situation has been aggravated by religious differences, as most Fulani are herdsmen and the majority of farmers in the region are Christian. There is a fear that the Fulani violence is being stoked by those who want to eliminate Christians from the region.

Nigeria is a priority country for Aid to the Church in Need which has provided pastoral and emergency support, focusing on the Middle Belt and elsewhere in the north of the country.

<https://acnuk.org/news/good-friday-turns-black/>

## TWO NEW VACANCIES AT CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY

### Your Local Pantry Development Workers

Do you share a vision of a UK where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty?

Do you want to be part of growing a movement that builds dignity, agency and hope?

We are looking for two people to work with our 'Your Local Pantry' programme to support Pantry development and support existing Pantries. You will work with potential new organisations to find appropriate Pantry partners; provide Pantry partners with support, advice and training to set up operationally successful Pantries within the 'Your Local Pantry' network and support existing Pantries to be sustainable, value-centred, member-led and positively impact members' lives.

We are advertising for two roles with a focus on different geographical areas. The Development worker (North) will focus on northern England (North East, North West and Yorkshire), Scotland, Northern Ireland and North Wales. The Development worker (South) will focus on southern England (London, South East and South West) and South Wales.

**Closing date:** Tuesday 2 May at 10:00am **Interviews:** Thursday 9 May and Friday 12 May

**Find out more and apply:** <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/ylpdevelopmentworker/>



## THE BIG ONE' - HUGE CLIMATE PROTEST PLANNED AT PARLIAMENT

**Source: Green Christian** 26/03/2023

Green Christian is joining forces with many other charities in supporting 'The Big One' climate protest, with a Christian service and pilgrimage to Westminster on Friday 21 April. Green Christian and Christian Climate Action are, "taking a stand against fossil fuel company greed and government inaction - which is fuelling both the cost-of-living crisis and the climate crisis."

The family-friendly protest continues over the weekend 21-24 April, ending at 6pm each day. Christian Climate Action is holding a prayer vigil throughout and organising different activities for public worship.

The protest will be as inclusive as possible, with churches, small groups, families, friendship groups, knitting circles and more. Many charities and organisations are involved, including CAFOD, Tearfund, Christian Aid, Young Christian Climate Network, Student Christian Movement, Operation Noah, A Rocha UK, Columban Justice Peace and Ecology, and the Iona Community.

Green Christian says: "The science is clear - the head of the UN said recently we are 'firmly on track towards an unliveable world'. The International Energy Agency has said there can be no new oil and gas development, yet our government is opening new oil, gas, and even coal mines. As Christians it is our job to care about this, to be prophetic, to call out our government's flagrant dereliction of duty and to demand action."

Christian Climate Action has been offered a number of church hall floors that people can sleep on for the event. And it has produced a prayer booklet for use before and during 'The Big One'. A service sheet for 21 April is available on the Green Christian website. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12tMTogUcjbwDcXQVCzVixnjGZ53uRjFn/view>

**Download prayers:** <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DsWNLbnsNs6TPF-TupYXZOVFUuLJORKp/view>

From 11am - Gathering at St John's Waterloo for Music and Worship  
12 noon - Christian service  
1pm - Pilgrimage to Parliament Square  
2pm - Prayers for the UK government and blessing on the protest at Westminster.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46832>

### LINKS

**Green Christian:** <https://greenchristian.org.uk/the-big-one/>

**Christian Climate Action:** <https://christianclimateaction.org/2022/10/22/the-big-one/>

## 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.

**Read more here:** <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46660>

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.

### Book NOW for NJPN Conference 21-23 July 2023

Download a writable PDF booking form on [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/)

## DIARY

### APRIL

**15 EAPPI Talk by Ann Wilson** at St Anne and St Bernard's parish rooms (7 Overbury St, L7 3HJ) at 10.00 am.

Ann Wilson (ex CAFOD employee in the Diocese of Salford) and previous chaplain of Loreto College, Manchester, returned from monitoring human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law in East Jerusalem and the West Bank in November 2022. She spent 3 months on the EAPPI programme <https://eappi.org/en/>, which is The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC-EAPPI). EAPPI takes internationals from all over the world and was formed in 2002 by the World Council of Churches based on an appeal from local church leaders to create an international presence in the area. It advocates for a just peace.

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

**22 'Earth Day Sustainability Fair'** at The Carriage Shed, City Place, City Road, Chester CH1 3DR (next to Chester railway station). The theme for Earth Day 2023 is *Invest in our Planet*. For the first time, to celebrate Earth Day 2023, Eco Communities are working with Small Streets Market, bringing lots of stalls to buy sustainably and locally, as well as finding out more information on sustainable living and local projects.

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

**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](mailto:marian37et@gmail.com)

**25 A reflection on the 60th anniversary of Pope St John XXIII's encyclical letter Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) with CAFOD & Pax Christi.** You can register for the event and find more details here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pope-st-john-xxiiis-letter-pacem-in-terris-60-years-on-tickets-604843702797>

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

### MAY

**13 April to 9 May: GDAMS 2023 -** <https://demilitarize.org.uk/gdams-2023-dates/>

**9 Chester World Development Forum AGM**, 7pm at The Unity Centre, Chester. Steve Hughes, the Chair of Chester Sustainability Forum, will give us an overview of the initiatives, campaigns and events currently happening or being developed by members of CSF.

11th May: Anniversary of the death of Shireen Abu Akleh

**13 NJPN AGM & Networking Day**, London (tbc) [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk) 0207 901 4864

**13 NAKBA 75 National Demonstration**, London organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/events/nakba-75-national-protest/>

**15-21 Christian Aid Week** [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk) 0207 620 4444

**15 Conscientious Objectors' Day** [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk) 0208 203 4884 [www.ppu.org.uk](http://www.ppu.org.uk) 020 7424 9444

**21-28 Laudato Si' Week** [www.laudatosimovement.org](http://www.laudatosimovement.org)

### JUNE

**5 World Environment Day** [www.worldenvironmentday.global](http://www.worldenvironmentday.global)

**18 Day for Life** [www.dayforlife.org](http://www.dayforlife.org)

**26 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture** [www.acatuk.org.uk](http://www.acatuk.org.uk) 01395 577 669 and

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/torture-victims-day/>

● Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News [www.indcatholicnews.com](http://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](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk) or contact [ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org](mailto:ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org) or [admin@justice-and-peace.org](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org) 020 7901 4864

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

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