

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

PEACE NEWS

SUNDAY 6 AND WEDNESDAY 9 AUGUST REMEMBERING HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

Pax Christi write: on 6 and 9 August events will take place around the country remembering the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Details of events in Bradford, Abingdon, St. Albans, Romford and online can be found in the calendar section of our website here: paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/events-calendar/
For additional events see the CND website: cnduk.org/

On 9 August Pax Christi Merseyside will be running a stall outside Liverpool Anglican Cathedral from 12.30pm to 2.30 pm. In London, there will be a Pax Christi vigil and stall outside Westminster Cathedral from 11.00am to 1.00pm on both Sunday 6 and Wednesday 9 August.

At Coventry Cathedral on Sunday 6 at 2pm there is an event with music, poetry and the opportunity to make peace cranes where representatives of the Japanese community will be present along with a representative from the Embassy of Japan. You can reserve a place at the event here: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hiroshima-day-2023-in-coventry-cathedral-tickets-636544721397

We have updated our 'Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki' flyer and you can download a copy here: tinyurl.com/bdfjzdxj

HIROSHIMA MAYOR TO URGE WORLD LEADERS TO SPURN NUCLEAR DETERRENCE THEORY

28 July 2023: The mayor of Hiroshima plans to urge world leaders to reject the theory of nuclear deterrence at an upcoming event to mark the 78th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city. At a news conference on Friday, Mayor Matsui Kazumi presented the outline of the peace declaration he will read out at the August 6 ceremony. In the declaration, the mayor looks back on the Hiroshima Vision on nuclear disarmament, which was issued at this year's Group of Seven summit in May.

Matsui is to note that the Hiroshima Vision espoused the view that nuclear weapons should, as long as they exist, only be utilized for defensive purposes. He will urge world leaders to acknowledge that the theory of nuclear deterrence is no longer logical in light of a political leader's recent threats to use nuclear arms. He will ask them to face reality and reject the theory of nuclear deterrence. The mayor says he will call on the Japanese government to sign and join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and to take part as an observer at the signatories' conference of the treaty to be held in November.

Matsui also plans to strongly urge the government to do more to support atomic bomb survivors.

The mayor told reporters on Friday that this year's peace declaration is drawing more attention than in years past, following the G7 summit in Hiroshima. He added he wants the declaration to be a strong appeal for peace from the atomic-bombed city.

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20230728_36/

'OPPENHEIMER' FILM

Christopher Nolan's biopic 'Oppenheimer' was released last weekend and is filling cinemas across the country. Telling the story of physicist J Robert Oppenheimer, the 'father of the Atomic Bomb', the film has received top reviews.

Coming as it does in the weeks leading up to the anniversaries of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and with an important conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in Vienna next week, the film is another opportunity to communicate the risks and horrors of nuclear weapons.

If you are thinking of seeing the film, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has a very helpful webpage and campaign action pack on the film here:

www.icanw.org/oppenheimer_facts_myths_nuclear_weapons

'THE MISTAKE': A PLAY BY MICHAEL MEARS - AUTUMN TOUR

Michael Mear's play 'The Mistake' is a powerful drama that interweaves the stories of a young woman in war-time Hiroshima, a brilliant Hungarian scientist, and the American pilot who flew the plane that dropped the bomb.

THE MISTAKE could come under the category of 'political theatre' with a small P - but the play is even-handed and fair and tries to look at all sides involved; though in the end, there is no question that the play's sympathies lie with the victims of war. In performance THE MISTAKE has proved to be a compelling, moving and deeply thought-provoking experience. May the 'mistake' that was unleashed in 1945 never occur again."

Michael is seeking additional funding to support the tour having been refused an Arts Council grant. If you are interested in supporting the play, there is a crowd-funder page here: www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/the-mistake---uk-tour-of-an-urgent-new-play Michael writes: "To tour a play like this, with two actors and one stage manager, plus hiring a van and booking accommodation and paying numerous other costs, is not cheap. THE MISTAKE tour this autumn is budgeted at around £42,000. Projected income from guaranteed fees and box-office estimates comes to around £15,000. Leaving a shortfall of £27,000. This shortfall is what I was applying to the Arts Council for - not a huge sum in the greater scheme of things. As I have no intention of cancelling the tour and letting so many people and venues down, I will cover that shortfall from my own savings.

I passionately believe in live theatre, and in taking exciting, vibrant small-scale theatre productions to audiences around the UK - meeting those audiences, talking to them afterwards, getting their feedback, giving them a chance to engage, ask questions and offer reflections. Theatre has been my life, I love it deeply, and I believe in the experience of people gathering together in a room to share a powerful story - there is nothing like it. Also, I passionately believe that the catastrophes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not sufficiently well-known, nor the stories of those who suffered the appalling consequences of the first two atomic bombs in 1945. Having a Japanese performer with me to enact those stories was a vital part of the project from the beginning. First Emiko Ishii, in Edinburgh and London, and now Riko Nakazono on the UK tour, have beautifully and movingly embodied the stories of some of those who suffered.

Of course, I realised that an Arts Council grant was not necessarily going to be forthcoming, but so many people told me how impressive the tour was - travelling to so many parts of the country, and into schools and non-theatre venues - and how important and urgent the play and its subject matter is at this time of great instability in the world - that a grant would surely be offered. THE MISTAKE is also tried and tested - witness the press reviews and audience feedback in Edinburgh and London earlier this year. By the way - the Edinburgh and London runs were paid for out of my own funds plus crowdfunding and supporters' donations from a previous appeal. I was unpaid throughout, but made sure my colleagues were paid. Similarly now, with the Arts Council's decision, I will once again be unpaid - but I will ensure my colleagues are paid and that all other costs are met.

Tour dates

The play is touring the UK in 28 venues in September and October - details of all the tour dates on Michael Mears' website: michaelmears.org/tour-dates-for-the-mistake/

North West dates: Tues 12 September, 7.30pm Chester, Wesley Church Centre, St John Street, CH1 1DA

Tues 19 September, 7.30 Lancaster, Gregson Community & Arts Centre 33-35 Moorgate, LA1 3PY

THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 'NO FAITH IN WAR DAY' - A PAX CHRISTI PEACE WALK

Starting with a short service at 10.30 am at St Anne's Church, London, E16 3DR (meet at 10.00am) we will walk to the ExCeL Centre, pausing to pray at different points along the way before joining other Faith Groups for a day of prayer and events.

9 AUGUST 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EXECUTION OF FRANZ JÄGERSTÄTTER

On Wednesday 9 August, it will be 80 years since the execution in Germany in 1943 of Franz Jägerstätter, the young Austrian farmer and Christian who resisted the Nazis and refused to fight for Germany in World War II. On 9 August itself, Pax Christi will be holding their annual service commemorating his life and witness in the Crypt at Westminster Cathedral at 6.30pm and all are welcome to join us.

For resources on Franz Jägerstätter, and in particular '*Franz Jägerstätter: Christian and Martyr*' co-published by the Diocese of Linz, Austria and Pax Christi, visit the shop area of our website: paxchristi.org.uk/product-category/bl-franz-jagerstatter/

MONDAY 11 SEPTEMBER SILENT CANDLELIT VIGIL, 7-8PM ON THE EVE OF THE DSEI ARMS FAIR

Meeting at 6.15pm at Royal Victoria DLR Station, Pax Christi supporters will walk to the ExCeL Centre for a Silent Vigil on the eve of the opening of the DSEI Arms Fair. If you are able to join us, please bring candles in jars/lanterns.

There will be a full programme of events, actions, petitions, letters etc that can be used both for those able to get to London and for your local area. Please watch our website and see www.quaker-roots.org.uk/events/ and stopthearmsfair.org.uk/events/dsei-arrives-12-15-september-2023/ for further details.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has previously expressed his opposition to the hosting of the fair in London and you can sign a petition to him asking him to make good on that opposition here: www.change.org/p/stop-one-of-the-world-s-largest-arms-fairs-from-being-held-in-london

Please let Pax Christi know if you are planning to attend. If you are, you might also want to check the Green and Black Cross website for up to date information on supporting yourself when attending a demonstration: greenandblackcross.org/guides/#Supporting_Yourself

12-15 SEPTEMBER STOP THE ARMS FAIR

The Defence and Security Equipment (DSEI) Arms Fair returns to the ExCeL Centre in London this year from 12-15 September. Supported by the Ministry of Defence and the UK Government's Defence and Security Exports Unit, the publicity for the event says that this will be the largest fair in its 24-year history and will feature over 2800 defence and security suppliers. It is described as the premier event of its kind in bringing governments, the armed forces and the arms industry together.

In reality, of course, the event's purpose is to market deadly weapons and military technology to representatives of states some of which have committed war crimes and human rights violations.

The fair takes place every two years and is where over 1000+ arms companies meet with 30,000 visitors. These visitors include delegations from the worst human rights abusing countries including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Turkey among others. They hobnob with UK Ministers and Government officials, with dodgy arms deals in mind!

STOP THE ARMS FAIR is planning to resist the fair. Dates for your diary:

4-11 September 2023: the week before the arms fair, disrupt the setup!

12-15 September 2023: telling the arms dealers no during the week itself!

You can find out more via www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk or email resistDSEI@protonmail.com

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE (CAAT) is offering small grants to help those who wish to organise events vs. the fair or who need support getting to the events (e.g. disabled travel). You can apply for funding – deadline 13th August. <https://caat.org.uk/events/dsei-stop-the-arms-fair/>

21 SEPT - 2 OCT CATHOLIC DAYS OF NONVIOLENCE: "BLESSED ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING NONVIOLENCE"

- Pray/Reflect on the Vow of Nonviolence alone or in your parish community on 2 October, International Day of Nonviolence.

- Act: Send a message of hope and solidarity to nonviolent peacemakers.

- Learn: About the work of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative <https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/>

More ideas and resources on Pax Christi's website: www.paxchristi.org.uk/resources/nonviolence-in-action/

16-23 SEPTEMBER WORLD WEEK FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL

2023 World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, 16-23 September *"No place to lay my head"*

The World Council of Churches (WCC) invites people and churches all over the world to pray, advocate, and stand in solidarity with people in the Holy Land during the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel.

While commemorating 75 years of Nakba (catastrophe) of the Palestinian people since 1948, the preparatory committee for this year's materials questioned the injustice in all this for the family and chose the Bible verse Matthew 8:20 to lay down the issue as presented by Jesus Christ: *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."*

<https://www.oikoumene.org/events/world-week-for-peace-in-palestine-and-israel>

PAX CHRISTI RESOURCES FOR WORLD WEEK FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL

Pax Christi has produced a card to encourage us to 'learn, pray and act'. One side has the prayer, *'Among the Rubble'* by Jan Sutch Pickard and the other side some useful resources and ideas for action you can take. You can download the prayer card here: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine/world-week-for-peace-in-pi/>

During this week, which includes the **International Day of Prayer for Peace on 21 September**, church organizations, congregations, and people of faith are encouraged to bear a common witness by participating in worship services, educational events, and acts of support in favour of peace and justice for Palestinians and Israelis.

WCC RESOURCES: <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/materials-for-world-week-for-peace-in-palestine-and-israel-16-23-september-2023>

"KEYS: A TROUBLED INHERITANCE" - THE BALFOUR PROJECT ANNOUNCE THE LAUNCH OF A NEW PODCAST

"KEYS: A Troubled Inheritance" is devised, produced and narrated by journalist and broadcaster Mike Joseph.

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, September 6, as we embark on a journey that delves into the profound connections between two momentous catastrophes. This captivating podcast traces a relentless quest to unravel a Holocaust inheritance, leading us down a path that uncovers a Nakba inheritance. The stories intertwine, revealing the question: Can both legacies truly be heard and understood by all involved in the Israel-Palestine impasse?

Prepare to be moved as personal testimonies, letters, and memories from survivors and those who perished are brought to life in this gripping audio series, skilfully dramatised and narrated by, Mike Joseph, a veteran journalist and BBC broadcaster.

"We know that bringing the Holocaust and the Nakba together will incense many people. But we don't keep them separate. This series – Keys - narrates both the Holocaust and the Nakba. We don't have the choice, we inherited them both."

To ensure maximum accessibility, episodes of "KEYS: A Troubled Inheritance" will be available for streaming on our website <https://balfourproject.org/> as well as popular platforms such as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Audible, and wherever else you may listen to your podcasts. Here's an exclusive sneak preview — the official trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IStLdyjAPOE>

Prepare to embark on an emotionally charged and thought-provoking exploration as "KEYS: A Troubled Inheritance" podcast unlocks the past and present connections between these legacies. Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to be part of a journey that brings understanding and dialogue to the forefront.
The Balfour Project Team.

SABEEL-KAIROS NEWS

Listen again: recent talks on Palestine

We were delighted to host Daoud Nassar from the Tent of Nations recently in the UK, and he spoke at many events around the country. If you missed the chance to hear him live, we are pleased to offer you chance to listen again to two of his talks:

Bloomsbury Baptist Church: Sunday 28 May, morning service – *We Refuse to be Enemies*:

https://www.bloomsbury.org.uk/we-refuse-to-be-enemies/?fbclid=IwAR3XuEarl6BZ_DxuZlOMWdentL3jU8k2GOll8gip4vaM4MPT_1iEt7_etD8

Friends of St Andrew's Jerusalem and Tiberias event: Daoud Nassar – Tent of Nations, Bethlehem – YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O5rSEWPemE>

HOPE IN PALESTINE: A FOUR-PART SERIES FROM SABEEL-KAIROS

Following the great feedback we received last year for our Advent Series on Apartheid, this year we are putting together a new 4 part online series looking at hope.

These events will take place on the first Sunday of each month from September-December, from 7-8:15pm, and will feature a Palestinian speaker (or two), Q+A/discussion, and accompanying study guide. We will be focusing on the theme of hope, including who we put our hope in, what we hope for, how we can help sustain hope in these dark times.

Please save the dates now, and we will be sending out more information soon! <https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/>

PAX CHRISTI AGM - REMAINING FAITHFUL TO THE PEACE MOVEMENT

Jo Siedlecka 18 June 2023: Archbishop Malcom McMahon of Liverpool, President of Pax Christi England and Wales, encouraged members at their AGM in London on Saturday to "remain faithful to Christ's teaching and to the peace movement." He complimented the staff and executive for work on such issues as the war in Ukraine and added that "it's so important that we keep going and don't give up."

Representatives of the National Justice and Peace Network, Christian CND, Sisters of St Joseph of Peace and Columbans joined individual members hearing him remember Bruce Kent who died a year ago and was "much loved" and dedicated to supporting Pax Christi's work.

In the Chair's Report, Ann Farr lamented the refusal of UK government to turn from nuclear weapons and indeed bringing back US weapons to the UK. She highlighted speaking out against violations of international law in the Holy Land, and spotlighting arms trading. She called for new members to join Pax Christi at a time of its recovery from the impact of Covid, and welcomed Andrew Jackson who became the new Chief Executive Officer in late 2022. A message from secretary general of Pax Christi International, Martha Inés Romero, offered best wishes for a "fruitful assembly".

Andrew Jackson and Joan Sharples reported on the July 2022 National Justice and Peace Network Conference which 23 Pax Christi members attended and the commemorations of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear attacks in August. On Peace Sunday 2023 not only did members promote Pope Francis' message in parishes, but Masses for peace were celebrated at the cathedrals of Southwark, Birmingham, Middlesbrough, Lancaster and Liverpool. Ash Wednesday saw a national online witness with Christian CND.

In Liverpool, members processed to the Town Hall, asking that Liverpool should become a Nuclear Ban City. Pax Christi joined colleagues in the Network of Christian Peace Organisations in signing and delivering a letter to the Foreign Secretary urging the UK Government to engage more effectively with the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The 60th anniversary of '*Pacem in Terris*' was marked, alongside CAFOD.

The Administration and Finance Manager, Fausta Valentine, reported that 12 percent of Pax Christi's income is from January's Peace Sunday and 20 dioceses out of 22 in England and Wales contributed. Valerie Flessati was thanked for producing Peace Sunday materials. Further income is from legacy gifts, grants and other donations. It was much appreciated that some schools and parishes purchased crosses from Bethlehem for their leavers and Confirmation groups. Nonviolence prayer cards have also been popular as gifts for young people.

Aisling Griffin, Pax Christi's Schools and Youth Education Officer, visited 15 schools across seven dioceses during the year, reaching around 1,500 young people. There was a Faith in Action Day with schools in Northampton Diocese, a Peace Day with an academy in Birmingham and a Confirmation Retreat in a London parish. She joined the Columbans, Religious of the Assumption and Million Minutes to run a lunchtime activity at the Flame Conference of the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation in March and produced four Peace Education e-bulletins. In April Aisling joined colleagues from Quakers in Britain and ForcesWatch to represent the Peace Education Network on a stall at the National Education Union's annual conference in Harrogate. Pax Christi also took part with other faith organisations in 'The Big One' climate protest weekend in London, raising the inter-connectedness of climate change and conflict. The Pax Christi website offers extensive resources on peace education.

After the formalities of the AGM, Archbishop McMahon presented Pax Christi Peace Awards 2023 to four UK peacemakers: Sally Reynolds, Jennifer Rowlands, Janette Harper and Martin Birdseye. Each received a medal created by Natasha Ratcliffe and is called the P.E.A.C.E. (Please Engage All Communities on Earth) medal. On one side it has the image of a person's face with a bird carrying a sprig of foliage. On the reverse is the tree of life.

Sally Reynolds was a founder member of the Abingdon Peace Group in the 1980s and has organised events and campaigning actions over four decades. She said, "thank you for thinking of me and for all your work to encourage a culture of peace."

Jennifer Rowlands is currently Head of Religious Studies at Bellerive Catholic College, Liverpool and is a longstanding member of Pax Christi. She said, "I see peace education as an incredibly important part of my work as a teacher."

Janette Harper is active with Pax Christi Liverpool, organising speakers, film nights, petitions and letters to MPs and running stalls. She has campaigned for Liverpool to become a nuclear free zone. She ensures the Liverpool group works with Liverpool Friends of Palestine to send cards to Palestinian Parishes as an act of solidarity.

Martin Birdseye is a longstanding member of Pax Christi and a dedicated campaigner with Christian CND. He created and disseminated 'The Nuclear Morality Flowchart' which helps people decide where they stand on nuclear weapons and to make national decision makers more accountable.

The AGM was held at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church in Shaftsbury Avenue. Around 25 people attended in person and another 28 took part online. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/47401>
You can read a full report of the AGM here: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/egm/>
LINK: Morality of Nuclear Deterrent: www.nuclearmorality.com

FAITH MUSEUM TO OPEN IN THE NORTH EAST ON 7 OCTOBER

The Faith Museum, telling the story of faith in Britain over 6,000 years, opens to the public in Auckland Castle, on 7 October. It is housed in the 14th century wing of the castle and an adjoining 21st century extension. The museum has been developed over ten years, funded by a £12.4 million grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and is part of The Auckland Project, in Bishops Auckland, with historic buildings, gardens, galleries and a heritage railway. The Project says the museum "does not seek to force a definition of faith but rather invites visitors to consider how people across history have described and demonstrated it" and all visitors are welcome, whether they identify as religious, spiritual, or neither.

Artefacts include the Gainford Stone, a rock of carved prehistoric art; the Roman Binchester Ring with Christian symbols – on display for the first time, after being excavated in 2014 from the Roman Fort Vinovium, just one mile away from the museum; the 13th-century Bodelian Bowl, a bronze vessel inscribed with the name of Joseph, son of Rabbi Yechiel, a famous scripture scholar of Paris; a copy of William Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament from 1536, and a set of 20th-century prayer beads owned by Lord Headley, believed to be the first Briton to have legitimately completed the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Guardian reports that a campaign has been launched to bring a 16th-century tapestry commissioned by Henry VIII from Spain to be the centrepiece of the museum. It depicts Saint Paul directing the burning of "the heathen books" and is "effectively the birth certificate of the Church of England", according to the curator.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/23/new-museum-faith-england-hopes-buy-henry-viii-tapestry-spain>

Religion Media Centre: <https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/morning-news-bulletin/religion-news-25-july-2023/>

JUSTICE AND PEACE NETWORK “IS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER BEFORE”

25 July 2023: “Our Network is needed more than ever before,” a former MP and Minister of State at the Foreign Office told last weekend’s annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales. In a talk entitled, ‘Advocacy and Faith Action’, Sir John Battle, an NJPN patron and activist with Leeds Justice and Peace, said, “we need to shift from charitable action to challenging the causes of injustice in line with the preferential option for the poor.”

The 45th annual conference addressed issues crucial to the common good and the well-being of the natural world, with a particular focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Commitments at the end included lobbying politicians and leaders in general, involving the Bishops’ Conference, to remind the UK government of its promises in terms of the SDG goals. “No new oil, coal and gas” was another call and a promise to live more simply as individuals and in our communities.

“Work for justice is part of preaching the Gospel.” Christine Allen, Executive Director of CAFOD said in her presentation. Christine works closely with partners around the world, putting the SDGs into practice. A video was played of partner Caritas Brazil, which was founded by Dom Helder Camara, which embraces the SDG principle of ‘leave no one behind’. Caritas Brazil works to tackle social injustice and defend indigenous populations, “who are the primary guardians of forests and rivers,” and promotes the rights of nature as well as human rights. Christine also gave examples of CAFOD’s work with partners in drought-stricken Marsabit, Northern Kenya and in DR Congo with victims of sexual violence in the context of conflict. All of this was applauded by participants.

In another presentation, Brian O’Toole, Director of the Presentation Sisters Justice Desk for Ireland and England, said the International Presentation Association is committed “to respond to ‘the cry of the Earth and to people kept poor’ and it is doing this by embracing the SDGs in a human rights framework, addressing such issues as women and children, care of creation and indigenous peoples.”

The 2023 NJPN conference gathered Justice and Peace campaigners from across England and Wales, taking the theme: ‘Sustainability? Survival or Shutdown’. It was held on 21-23 July in Derbyshire, with around 150 participants. Justice and Peace activists from 16 dioceses and from National Justice and Peace Scotland, priests from three missionary societies and six orders of religious sisters joined representatives of CAFOD, CSAN, CARJ, Missio, Pax Christi England and Wales, SVP, Archbishop Romero Trust and the *Laudato Si’* Movement to highlight social justice issues, structural injustice, climate change, conflict, and migration. The weekend included a screening of ‘The Letter’ film. It follows the stories of front-line environmental champions from around the world, each of whom is facing the effects of our planetary crisis, as they come into dialogue with each other and

Pope Francis and build new bonds to face the future with hope. A ‘Just Fair’ hosted more than 20 stalls, including Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Justice for Palestine, and Global Justice Now. Ecumenical partners included Christians Aware, Christian Climate Action, Green Christian and Church Action on Poverty.

Of the 12 workshops, Columban Missionaries explored responses to people seeking asylum in the UK in the light of the Illegal Immigration Bill. Westminster J&P introduced materials for bring the Season of Creation into the life of parishes and schools. Other workshops included, ‘Farming in the Future’, ‘How can we answer Pope Francis’s call to live more simply’, and ‘Being peacemakers in time of war’.

The conference chair was Anne Peacey of Hallam Diocese, vice chair of NJPN. The Conference Mass was celebrated by Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, Chair of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission, accompanied by Columban Fr Ed O’Connell. Fr Dominic highlighted the Hope that Justice and Peace work brings. He talked about “the huge amount of good work going on”, singling out support for asylum seekers and people in need of food banks and advocacy on decarbonisation, “but we need more”. He called for more integration with local Catholic communities. The Liturgy was led by the Lay Community of St Benedict, and involved children’s contribution of artwork, and hymns with a strong theme of social and environmental justice.

Two long-time supporters of NJPN who died very recently were remembered at the Mass – Brian Davies, former Head of Education at CAFOD, and Mike Clarke, former NJPN Treasurer.

Fr Joshrom Isaac Kureethadam of the Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development sent a video message to the conference urging participants to promote the SDGs and the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform. “May justice and peace embrace so that the life of all can flourish,” he said. Tomas Insua of the *Laudato Si’* Movement in Assisi said in a second video message that, “the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth are deeply connected, and I hope this gathering motivates action for our common home, particularly during the Season of Creation in the Autumn.”

Almost eight years have passed since the international community agreed to take bold and transformative steps to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a UN plan to end poverty while protecting the planet. Yet, only about 12% of SDG goals are on track to be achieved by 2030. The international UN SDG Summit, in September 2023, must mobilise the political commitment and breakthroughs our world desperately needs. The NJPN conference showed how people of faith can support that process. The overall message of the conference was one of Hope. Participants were urged to bring hope by advocating back in their dioceses for the political will to take human rights and sustainability more seriously. www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

AS WE ENTER A CRITICAL STAGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, MORAL CONCERNS WILL NEED TO BECOME URGENT ACTIONS

Joseph Kelly 28 July 2023

Whatever your views on the seriousness or otherwise of the global climate emergency, it became official yesterday that July 2023 has been the hottest month on record, and possibly the hottest in the past 120,000 years.

The new global mean temperature – the overall reading if you could stick a thermometer at every location on Earth – was confirmed by scientists at the European Copernicus Climate Change Service and World Meteorological Organisation as 16.95 Celsius (62.5F), giving scientists enough data to declare a record even before the month ends.

Reacting to the news, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres – never a man to avoid an alarming metaphor – declared bluntly that “the era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived! Climate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning,” said Guterres.

The stark July figures come after a string of June records that were also broken, and give substantial credence to the view that our planet is heading for an irreversible catastrophe if we don't take immediate action to reduce the accumulation of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

No one seems to be able to anticipate what the consequences of unprecedented global warming will be. We can assume that the extremes of weather we're currently witnessing will not only become more regular, but more intense. We can make a few speculative predictions about what will happen if glaciers continue to melt and sea levels continue to rise, but there has never been such an accumulation of greenhouse gases in human evolution, so we are in truly uncharted waters.

In the face of such potentially catastrophic changes, it seems absurd that there are still those who seek to deny the impact of recent human activity on the lifeblood of our planet, but the 'discourse of climate delay' has been one of the most significant factors in legislators dragging their heels on remedial action. Many speak in negative terms of the 'politicisation' of the weather, and this is a neat device to prevent discussion and action in the face of an increasingly self-evident existential crisis.

One only has to look at the prevarications and indifference of many politicians to climate issues to see that it's unlikely that even the recent extreme weather events are going to change minds about the need for urgent action.

Unfortunately, the oil and gas industries are the largest contributors to global warming, and making changes to this infrastructure is a virtually impossible challenge as it involves industrialised nations dictating restrictions to developing countries that have no intention of slacking off in their drive and determination to attain what the rest of the planet has enjoyed for decades.

For the planet to have the slightest chance of hitting the climate limitation goals set by numerous COP and other summits, nations heavily dependent on coal – such as China (65% of power generated by coal), India (73%) and South Africa (89%) – would need to phase out their use of fossil fuels more than twice as fast as any historical power transition. This simply isn't a politically-feasible trajectory – there are moral and ethical obstructions to wealthy nations imposing restrictions on their poorer neighbours, and the immense profits being made by the global fossil fuel industry (£3 trillion in 2022) offer no incentives to reduce fossil fuel output and develop alternative energy generation systems.

This was in clear sight just last week when the energy ministers of the world's 20 richest countries (G20) met in India's tourist state of Goa for their latest strategy meeting but came away without any consensus on cutting down fossil fuel usage, due mainly to sharply diverging opinions of the degree of linkage between fuel emissions and global warming.

With just over a month to go until the main G20 summit in September and four months to the COP28 UN climate summit in Dubai, geopolitical progress has been grindingly slow, to the extent that G numbers and summit expectations have become all but meaningless to an increasingly terrified general public.

To make matters worse, governments that aren't showing any inclination to reduce the world's annual 38.6 billion tons of CO2 emissions seem content to push the task onto the individual citizen – as if switching off your TV standby, slapping a solar panel on the shed roof or buying the odd LED lightbulb is going to solve the global climate crisis. In

fact, this strategy only serves to deepen the crisis, as people come to believe that such trivial measures are sufficient to solve the problem.

For its part, our Catholic Church has a long history (reaching back to the Hexameron) of voicing its philosophical concerns about our treatment of the planet. Back in the fourth century Bishop Basil of Caesarea (St Basil the Great) wrote a series of influential homilies on the Six Days of Creation which resonate remarkably with the recent news events driving our present climate debate:

“The essence of fire is necessary for the world, not only in the economy of earthly produce, but for the completion of the universe; for it would be imperfect if the most powerful and the most vital of its elements were lacking.

Now fire and water are hostile to and destructive of each other. Fire, if it is the stronger, destroys water, and water, if in greater abundance, destroys fire.

As, therefore, it was necessary to avoid an open struggle between these elements, so as not to bring about the dissolution of the universe by the total disappearance of one or the other, the sovereign Disposer created such a quantity of water that in spite of constant diminution from the effects of fire, it could last until the time fixed for the destruction of the world.”

(Hexameron, III, On the Firmament)

In recent decades, much of the developing body of Catholic social teaching has swung heavily towards engagement with environmentalism and the stewardship of creation. Unfortunately, many modern day Catholic texts also have a tendency towards the descriptive rather than the mobilising – with the Church feeling its role is to define and advise on the problem at hand, but stop short of suggesting specific courses of action. For instance, Pope Francis’ groundbreaking encyclical *Laudato Si’* makes it abundantly clear that we have a moral responsibility to act to prevent further degradation of God’s creation, and urgent action is needed, but there the advice ends. It is left to the wider Catholic community to discern the best course of action.

One area where some positive action has taken place is in the divestment (disposal of investments or assets for moral, political or other reasons) being made by Catholic dioceses across England and Wales. At the beginning of 2020 the dioceses of Middlesbrough and Lancaster became the first Catholic dioceses to divest from fossil fuel and to date 11 of the 22 Catholic dioceses of England & Wales have followed suit, along with a large number of Catholic religious orders and associations, including the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England & Wales.

Such decisions have importance and influence because divesting in fossil fuel companies effectively and symbolically removes the unwritten ‘social licence’ that the industry has to extract oil, gas and coal.

The UK charity Operation Noah, which campaigns for faith groups to divest, describes this ‘social licence’ as the assumption that investments endorse the activities they are invested in such that they are generally accepted as good and desirable. Divestment, therefore, is not only a sensible and moral action, but carries the implication that the rejected product or industry is not operating for the common good.

The Global Fossil Fuel Divestment Commitments Database, which monitors such activity, reveals that globally faith-based organisations account for 35.8% of the \$40.51 trillion value of institutions that have divested and this figure is now expected to increase significantly in the light of recent global climate events.

Unpicking unethical elements from often complex investment portfolios can be a difficult and time-consuming process but faith communities have become tired of trying to create changes from within, and the level of funds now falling away from the big fossil fuel companies should be acknowledged as a moment of moral reckoning for other investors, and for governments.

For the individual Catholic, such direct and influential action isn’t possible, but we have strength in numbers and can play our part in persuading those with the power to make changes to do so for the good of our planet, and to leave something of worth to future generations. We have spent a long time reading encyclicals and hearing how we must be good stewards of the earth, but when climate ‘warming’ has become climate ‘boiling’ the time has come to stop talking – and start taking action!

<https://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk/as-we-enter-critical-stage-of-climate-change-moral-concerns-will-need-to-become-urgent-actions-says-joseph-kelly/>

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

A REFLECTION ON WORLD YOUTH DAY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Peter Coughlan 16 July 2023

Hundreds of thousands of young people from Europe, but also young people from many other parts of the world will be heading for Lisbon to celebrate World Youth Day (WYD) in the first week of August. Pope Francis will join them there from the 2nd to the 6th. The motto chosen by the pope for this day is taken from Luke's Gospel: "Mary arose and went with haste" (Lk 1:39): hastening to prepare for the journey to Lisbon is what the young people will be doing too.

Although WYDs have been celebrated every year since they were inaugurated, there have been 15 WYDs - actually celebrated together with the pope of the time - since John Paul II held the first world youth day in Rome, 1985. The most recent was held in Panama, January 2019. A significant aspect of that event with the pope is that it linked the synodality theme central to this pontificate with the focus on youth so close to Pope Francis' heart. Panama came half-way between Synod on Youth, held in Rome in October 2018, and Francis' publication of his response to that Synod, his apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit - Christ Lives*, in March 2019. This rich document remains one of the best yet published by a pope in regard to young people.

On 14th July this year Francis sent a video message of encouragement: "Any young person who goes to WYD goes because, deep down, he or she has the thirst to participate, to share, to tell their experience and receive the experience of others".

A new feature in Lisbon this year will be what are being called "*Rise Up Encounters*" - that "rise up" being taken from the words of Jesus to the dead son of the widow of Nain in the Gospel of Luke (7:14), "Young man, rise up". Rise Up Encounters, which will take place in churches and other spaces near the pilgrim reception areas in Lisbon, offer a new model for the WYD catechesis sessions that are an integral part of the world youth days: they challenge the young people to reflect on major themes spotlighted in the pontificate of Pope Francis. In Lisbon they will focus on integral ecology, social friendship, and mercy.

If integral ecology - and the environment in general - had not already been among the topics chosen for reflection and prayer in Lisbon this year, the young people would already be talking about it. Recent experiences of searing heat around the globe will have brought it to their minds. It is a topic that, willy-nilly, has forced itself on to the world's attention over recent months and - in a particular way - since early this month: on the 3rd, 4th, and 6th of July it was on average hotter across the world than it has ever been in the course of human history.

'Ever been' - they are words that easily slip through our minds as just another item in daily news bulletins before our attention turns back to whatever else we were doing. They are, however, words that are extremely significant for young people who still have the next 50 or 60 years of life before them. Younger generations are, for the most part, very sensitive to news about climate change and global warming. After all, it will touch them, their lives, their families, their future far more intensely and directly than those whose lives are already more than half over!

The young people converging on Lisbon are aware that Pope Francis - through his 2015 *Laudato Si'* encyclical, and repeatedly since that time - has been at the forefront of those world leaders who have called for effective international action to combat climate change and global warming through adaptation and mitigation.

Although Lisbon in early August is usually warm, with average temperatures around 28 to 29 degrees Celsius and occasionally moving up into the mid-30s, it is partly refreshed by breezes coming in from the Atlantic. However, many of the young people taking part in the WYD will be coming in from other parts of Europe, where temperatures in countries such as Spain, Italy, and Greece - and other areas too - have been climbing in recent weeks into the early and even mid-40s Celsius, triggering heat warnings from regional authorities.

This echoed the sweltering heatwave that swept Spain, Portugal and Morocco in April this year, where temperatures surged 20 degrees Celsius higher than normal across large parts of the western Mediterranean. And this mention of the Mediterranean reminds us that most of the heat stored near the surface of the Earth is not in the atmosphere but in the oceans: so far this year many parts of the world's oceans have registered record temperatures.

The reality is that extreme heat, especially when accompanied by high humidity, is dangerous: in fact, it can be a killer. Somewhat unexpectedly, this heat can often enough be associated with widely differing results - wildfires such as those in Greece, and even the storms and flooding experienced days ago in northern Italy. Recent years offer evidence that only too often countries are not sufficiently prepared for such heat or for the levels of variability that climate extremes are beginning to show.

Young people will also be heading to Portugal from countries far away, where the experience of heat and its consequences considerably exceed those seen in Europe. In a weekly briefing in April, the highly-regarded CarbonBrief reported the startling finding that one in two people globally faced all-time record-breaking heat in the past 10 years!

A recent example is Texas, where a crushing heatwave recently pushed the heat index - which combines temperature and humidity - to 48 degrees Celsius. In India, on the other side of the world, blistering heatwaves in the mid-40 degrees Celsius in June combined with high humidity to cause numerous deaths in Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere, especially among the poor who often not only have to keep working in the heat in order to make a living but also suffer from lack of food, potable water and medicine.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, sponsored by the United Nations, has - in a series of reports since it was established in 1988 - made abundantly clear that it is above all the build-up of atmospheric CO2 levels (CO2 and certain other gases) caused by the burning of fossil fuels that are responsible for the rise in global warming, especially since the 1950s. They have established that 350 parts per million (ppm) of these gases in the atmosphere is the uppermost safe limit for these gas concentrations if our planet's climate system is to maintain a balance that allows as much heat to escape our planet as it retains. That limit of 350ppm was passed in 1986. Today that figure has risen to 419.3ppm and it continues to rise. If further extreme heat and other serious consequences of climate change are to be avoided we need to return to 350ppm or below.

Laudato Si' is the normal way we refer to Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment and social care because its opening words are taken from Saint Francis of Assisi's beautiful Canticle of the Sun. However, *Care for Our Common Home* was its actual title and as young people gather with the pope Saint Francis' care for all living things, care for our common home, will be on their minds.

In the video message referred to above the pope encouraged youth to prepare themselves with enthusiasm but also "to put hope in that ... have hope". Hope - hope and joy have been words associated with Pope Francis since the beginning of his pontificate. It is in a spirit of hope, not a climate anxiety associated with despair, that Christians are called to confront climate change and the rising heat that is coming with it. This hope is not naïve optimism, but central to the Christian faith that springs from the awareness that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, the Word made flesh. It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the gift of his Spirit that we have this hope.

As the Pope flies to Fatima on Saturday, 5th August, just 75 miles or so from Lisbon, his prayers and the prayers of the young people asking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary - who hastened to help her cousin as the theme of this youth day reminds us - will no doubt include the war in Ukraine alongside the climate crisis and many other challenges facing our world. As always, Pope Francis looks forward in a positive spirit and, above all, with Spirit-given hope.

As he said in *Laudato Si'*, "all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning ... No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts" (LS, 205). That is a message that the young people in Lisbon and across the world need to hear if they, with us, are to commit themselves to engage the challenges we are all called upon to face.

In the meantime, says the pope, "we come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast. In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God ... Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope" (LS, 244).

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/47599>

POPE SENDS MESSAGES OF SUPPORT TO THOSE AFFECTED BY FIRES AND STORMS

Source: Vatican News 28 July 2023

Pope Francis sent two messages today, Friday 28 July, in which he expresses his solidarity and spiritual closeness to citizens in Greece and Italy who are dealing with destruction caused by severe storms and widespread wildfires hitting the nations. He also thanks the emergency workers who have come to help them.

The Pope writes that he hopes that "the risks to our common home, exacerbated by the present climate crisis, will spur all people to renew their efforts to care for the gift of creation, for the sake of future generations."

Read in full here: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/47687>

IAN LINDEN: THE ILLEGAL 'ILLEGAL MIGRATION ACT'

Professor Ian Linden 18 July 2023

The Court of Appeal ruled on 29 June that Rwanda was not a 'safe third country' and deporting asylum seekers there was unlawful. Given this judgement the drafters of the Illegal Migration Act might be complimented on their foresight in the wording of the bill's title.

The Act has been called unworkable, 'morally unacceptable' (Bishop Paul McAleenan) and 'amounting to an asylum ban' (the UNHCR). Its contents in their lack of human empathy could have been generated by AI. In the words of the Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service, Sarah Teather, to "deny sanctuary to people who need it based on their mode of arrival is grotesquely cruel".

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has declared he will achieve what he calls his five 'people's priorities'. The fifth reads: "We will pass new laws to stop small boats, making sure that if you come to this country illegally, you are detained and swiftly removed".

Last year some 90% of the boat people who reached the UK sought asylum. By the beginning of this year only 3% of them have received an initial decision from the Home Office. More than 135,000 asylum applicants were awaiting a decision, many of them in hotels paid for out of the UK aid budget; 89,000 of them had been waiting for more than six months.

This is the context within which the Prime Minister has chosen to back this bad bill. Is he serious?

Sunak excuses the draconian contents of the Illegal Migration Act on grounds of compassion. 56 people, 11 of them children, are known to have drowned trying to cross the Channel since 2018. He argues that the people smugglers' business model will collapse if would-be migrants believe they will be sent to Rwanda. If there were a well-funded special unit in the National Criminal Agency (NCA) dedicated to the arrest of these criminal gangs, if there were adequate accessible safe and legal routes for asylum seekers to get here, his compassion argument might carry conviction. If migration policy is compassion driven, why has the Conservative Party in the Commons voted down Lords amendments to the bill containing such provisions?

The Conservatives believe that their bill is a direct response to the democratic will, or, at least, the will of voters in the Red Wall constituencies who want to see an end to small boat crossings. And Kent County Council as well as Dover genuinely are overwhelmed because so few councils around the country are willing to 'burden-share' (and most of these are Labour Councils) - a microcosm of the European Union's predicament.

But just how popular is the Illegal Migration Act? How many people are thinking this harsh action is not our idea of British values?

In the House of Lords we were hearing voices speaking for another, kinder Britain: Lord Dubs, who before the Second World War was brought to Britain on the kindertransport, concerned for the needs and protection of unaccompanied children. Then there was Baroness Mobarik, who aged six accompanied her family from Pakistan to Glasgow, speaking alongside David Walker, the Anglican Bishop of Manchester against government attempts to weaken limits on the detention of immigrant children and pregnant women. Isn't the welcoming of Ukrainian refugees, in which we take pride, more in keeping with what we want Britain to be?

The under-appreciated Upper House of Parliament - without veto power - is doing its job, holding government to account, scrutinising its legislation and trying to make the bill less bad. Between 27 April and 10 July, peers worked on 20 pertinent, important and compassionate amendments. A large cross-Party group outvoted the Conservative peers on each of the amendments and sent the bill back to the Commons. (There had also been also 16 Conservatives in the Commons who denounced aspects of the bill and abstained during its initial readings - including former Home Secretary and Prime Minister, Theresa May.)

In the Commons, the Government rejected the Lords' amendments but did make small concessions agreeing not to weaken limits on the length of detention and removing retrospective provisions which would have made the bill operative from its introduction by the Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, on 7 March 2023. The bill was sent back to the House of Lords, and on July 12 they accepted the rejection of their amendments. After deliberations the Lords returned the bill to the Commons with nine revised amendments - including two proposed by Tory peers. These sophisticated strokes in the Palace of Westminster 'ping-pong' were immediately and casually dismissed by the Immigration Minister, Robert Jenrick, who said the Government did not plan to make any further concessions.

The Government, with only a few days left, badly wants to get its legislation through Parliament before the summer recess. For this reason, the House of Lords has a small amount of leverage though it is improbable the Government will change the Act in any meaningful way. Parliamentary Acts of 1911 and 1949, together with unwritten constitutional convention, dictate that the unelected House of Lords should not block legislation by the elected House of Commons – especially measures promised in an Election Manifesto. No such pledge on migration was in the 2019 Tory manifesto. Sunak persists in alleging that he is fulfilling a ‘people’s pledge’ responding to public opinion. The peers have done all they are entitled to do within constitutional convention to make this bill humane.

The Conservative majority in the Commons means we will be saddled with this deeply unpleasant legislation. The Act enables the Government to interpret international human rights treaties and refugee conventions in ways not consistent with the UK’s obligations. The Government’s excuse for this shabby populism is a variation on Margaret Thatcher’s ‘there is no alternative’, alleging that the Act’s many critics do not offer any alternative. Consistent with our current politics of empty promises and brazen untruths, this is a lie.

There is a broad consensus amongst Churches and religious communities, NGOs, refugee organisations, as well as in the House of Lords on what needs to be done, starting with the creation of new safe and legal routes and serious investment in putting the criminal gangs behind bars. One of the Lords’ amendments - proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and garnering not a single Tory vote - was a call for a UK-led strategic ten-year multi-lateral plan for handling immigration compassionately whilst countering the impact of conflict and climate change on sender countries. The Labour Party acting as a government-in-waiting has produced a strategic package of proposals consonant with the Archbishop’s call. His amendment was amongst those voted down in the Commons.

The boat people who pay the people smugglers are desperate and aware of the risks. Nothing is quickly going to stop the small boats. Nor will the Rwanda threat, least of all if the Supreme Court agrees with the Court of Appeal’s judgement. Opinion polls suggest many voters now believe only a new Government, a new and competent Home Secretary and a reformed Home Office can reduce the number of small boats and deal humanely with refugees entitled to this country’s protection.

www.ianlinden.com/latest-blogs/the-illegal-illegal-migration-act

• **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.

JRS PROTESTS AS 'ANTI-HUMAN' ILLEGAL MIGRATION BILL BECOMES LAW

Source: Jesuit Refugee Services 18 July 2023

The Illegal Migration Bill is set to become law after the government won a final series of votes in the House of Lords. In a late-night debate, peers rejected attempts to reinsert time limits on child detention and modern slavery protections. The bill will now go for royal assent and become law.

The Jesuit Refugee Service said in a statement: "The passing of the so-called Illegal Migration Bill by parliament is outrageous. This Bill represents a ban on claiming asylum. It contravenes the Refugee Convention and is wantonly cruel. It will mean men, women, and children are incarcerated on a massive scale. It will leave hundreds and thousands in limbo for years on end. It will strip modern slavery survivors of protections and empower traffickers. And it has been forced through parliament at breakneck speed, avoiding scrutiny wherever possible.

"This Bill is anti-refugee, it is anti-human. At its passage, we are angry, and we are sorrowful. And we have not given up. We will continue to stand in solidarity with refugees as our government attacks them. The Illegal Migration Bill must be overturned."

Sarah Teather, JRS UK's Director, said: "The Illegal Migration Bill drags any sense of the UK's moral leadership on the world stage headlong into a gutter of hate. In it, we have abandoned the principle of refugee protection, and denied that we have a duty to anyone else in the world. We haven't even done this to achieve any useful end, but revelled in sheer performative cruelty. I am particularly horrified that Parliament has decided to revert to wholesale incarceration of children in the immigration system, a practice I was instrumental in outlawing when in Government.

"At JRS UK, we shall continue to oppose this despicable piece of legislation and call on politicians from all parties to overturn it at the earliest opportunity."

When the Bill was first proposed, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said it amounted to an effective "asylum ban" - which would prevent people fleeing war and persecution from seeking refuge. "The effect of the bill would be to deny protection to many asylum seekers in need of safety and protection, and even deny them the opportunity to put forward their case." This is because under the bill a legal duty would be imposed on the Home Secretary to remove "as soon as reasonably practicable" anyone who arrives on a small boat - and to do so without hearing their asylum claim. The so-called "duty to remove" would take legal precedence over an individual's right to claim asylum.

The UNHCR argued this would be "a clear breach of the Refugee Convention" and "would undermine a long-standing, humanitarian tradition of which the British people are rightly proud."

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk warned: "In addition to raising very serious legal concerns from the international perspective, this Bill sets a worrying precedent for dismantling asylum-related obligations that other countries, including in Europe, may be tempted to follow, with a potentially adverse effect on the international refugee and human rights protection system as a whole."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/47613>

ASYLUM SEEKERS FACE EXTREME HARDSHIP

New research published today (17th July) by NACCOM shows that people who are refused asylum in the UK, in many cases unjustly, can face extreme hardship, including destitution, homelessness and declining physical and mental health, following a negative decision on their asylum claim.

The research report – **Refused? Experiences following a negative asylum decision** – has been designed, led and delivered by NACCOM's volunteer Community Researchers, Anum Ahmed, Geo, Kas, Nico, Afshan, and previously, J.A., who all have lived experience of destitution and immigration control. It draws on 27 in-depth interviews with service users in the NACCOM network and contains powerful qualitative findings that explore the devastating personal impact and trauma that can follow a negative asylum decision. The report also outlines the systemic and practical barriers that people face, which can prevent them from going on to resolve their immigration status after an initial refusal.

It provides a vital insight into the human impact of poor and ineffective asylum decision-making and processes at a time when the Government is facing mounting pressure and scrutiny about its handling of the asylum system.

Nico, a Community Researcher, said: "It is vital that our voices, as people with lived experience, are heard and considered when policy is made which impacts the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. This research provides that voice and demonstrates the urgent need for change to the asylum system."

Bridget Young, NACCOM's Director, explained: "The process for claiming asylum in the UK is complex and open to injustice on many levels. Although more than half of asylum applications made in the UK in recent years have resulted in the granting of refugee status, not everybody is given the protection they are entitled to on a first attempt. This can be for a variety of reasons, such as complications with evidence, restricted access to legal advice, or problems engaging with Home Office systems."

The report comes at a time when tens of thousands more people could face homelessness and destitution if the Government's 'Illegal Migration Bill' passes – a move that would see the claims of refugees arriving by so-called 'irregular' routes deemed as 'inadmissible' – effectively banning them from claiming asylum before they've had a chance to make their case.

Bridget continued: "It's vitally important that we understand how people cope after receiving a negative decision, and what can be done to ensure they are best supported, to meet their immediate needs but also to resolve their immigration status. This is of particular concern as the Government forges ahead with the Illegal Migration Bill, which looks set to put thousands more people claiming asylum at risk of destitution and homelessness, and the trauma, hardship and indignity that entails."

<https://naccom.org.uk/new-report-refused-experiences-following-a-negative-asylum-decision/>

Read a 10-page summary here: <https://naccom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EMBARGOED-17.7.23-Executive-Summary-NACCOM-Refused-report-FINAL-with-cover.pdf>

Read the full 60-page report here: <https://naccom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EMBARGOED-17.7.23-NACCOM-Refused-Experiences-following-a-negative-asylum-decision-FINAL.pdf>

LIVERPOOL SCHOOL LAUNCHES DEDICATED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM

Ellie Adshead 11 July 2023: The Academy of St Francis of Assisi (ASFA) has formed its own mental health impact team in a bid to offer continuous support for the whole school community. Recognising the needs of students following the pandemic, Mrs Abigail Huthwaite, head of performing arts and senior mental health lead at the academy, developed the initiative together with other members of the senior leadership team.

The mental health impact team (MHIT) is made up of qualified practitioners, including mental health first aiders, an emotional literacy support assistant, emotion coach Sarah Brooks and school counsellor Ray Loftus. The team has a range of experience in emotional wellbeing and mental health for mild to moderate needs in children and young people. They work directly within the school offering a range of interventions and work with families and their child to determine the best course of action if they need support.

But it is not just the staff who are involved, students in Year 9 and Year 11 have volunteered to become mental health ambassadors and mental health mentors. The students have received vital training to deliver assemblies and podcasts, and 1:1 peer support. Furthermore, the ambassadors have launched a podcast called *'The Assisi Way'* which discusses a variety of topics related to mental health and wellbeing, as well as interviews with fellow students and industry professionals. Regular updates from the MHIT, ambassadors and mentors are also detailed in a half termly newsletter to parents and guardians. As part of the initiative, the academy recently held a drop-down day around the theme of respect. 'St Francis Respects' day provided students with a deeper learning experience and enabled them to understand more about the importance of respect in different situations and settings. Further drop-down days are planned around kindness and culture.

Speaking about the MHIT, Mrs Huthwaite said: "As a trained mental health first aider I am equipped to spot signs of poor mental health and able to signpost people to receive the best support. Here at ASFA, we identified that post-pandemic our students may need some additional help as they navigate life back to 'normality'. Together with other qualified practitioners we are able to offer bespoke support to our students who are all from different walks of life." Mrs Huthwaite added: "The response so far has been incredible and the interest from students to become ambassadors or mentors has been phenomenal. I'm so proud of the work that is taking place and what we have in the pipeline is really exciting."

Year 9 student, Jess said "One thing that I value most about our school is the support surrounding mental health. I know this first hand as I have had support for my mental health. I now understand how important it is to talk about mental health and wellbeing but also, to look after it every single day. Because of this, I wanted to become a mental health mentor, which involves working with Year 7 students of a lunchtime. We have had training so that we feel able enough to help students but most importantly, to listen to them and direct them to the adults in school if they need or want more support."

Headteacher, Ms Jo Leech commented: "Mental health and wellbeing is an incredibly important conversation we should be having in all schools right now. Thanks to Mrs Huthwaite and the MHIT, we can offer students first class advice and support which they can access at any time. As an academy, we pride ourselves on our strong vision of ambition and aspiration for all and, first and foremost, this starts with recognising the importance of good mental health."

ASFA is a coeducational joint-faith Roman Catholic and Church of England academy in Kensington, Liverpool, and is part of the All Saints Multi Academy Trust.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/47560>

LINKS: ASFA: <https://asfaonline.org/> **All Saints Multi Academy Trust:** www.allsaintsmat.org

'DEBILITATING' EFFECTS OF PANDEMIC LINGER ON FOR BRITAIN'S YOUNG

Young people have been "disastrously" affected by the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, according to two pieces of research that show happiness and confidence has plunged to an all-time low. Both studies detail the wide-ranging ways in which young people continue to suffer. The hardships include poorer mental and physical health, as well as extensive learning loss that experts say will undoubtedly affect their futures.

Ndidi Okezie, the chief executive of the charity UK Youth, said "today's young people are facing a series of immense challenges that cannot be underestimated," she said. "The lingering effects of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis are having a profound impact on young people's education, mental wellbeing, their financial security and indeed their confidence in the future."

Read in full here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jan/29/debilitating-effects-pandemic-young-people-uk-health-education-careers>

BRIAN DAVIES

22 July 2023

NJPN has announced: "It is with great sadness that we heard of the death of Brian Davies today. Our condolences go to his wife, Diane, and their family. May he rest in peace." #NJPN23

CAFOD adds: We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Brian Davies. For many years, Brian served as our Head of Development Education. In the role, Brian worked to further the causes of justice and peace and was an inspirational figure motivated by his faith and commitment to Catholic social teaching. Our prayers are with his family and all who had the honour of knowing him."

Others commented: "Brian offered me kindness, challenge, humour and knowledge and I shall miss him."

"A true mentor in my journey in understanding development issues and a rights-based approach."

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/cafod_we-were-deeply-saddened-to-learn-of-the-passing-activity-7089201308938686464-jN-7

Anne O'Connor adds: "Brian was a wonderfully gentle and empathetic person and a great support to me and many others. I looked forward to receiving his acknowledgement of the NW NJPN E Bulletin mailing each month, always with words of encouragement that meant so much to me, especially in the early days of the bulletin when I was finding my feet with a new venture after my involvement with my own diocese came to an abrupt and painful end. When my daughter Annie died in June 2020 and I took time off, Brian kept in close contact and assured me of his prayers and those of the people to whom he circulated the bulletins. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Here's a report from Ellen Teague written on 4 April 2017 celebrating recognition of Brian's commitment to Justice and Peace:

FORMER HEAD OF CAFOD EDUCATION BECOMES PAPAL KNIGHT

After two decades as Head of Development Education at CAFOD and many years of service to the Birmingham Archdiocese Justice and Peace Commission and to Interfaith Dialogue, Brian Davies, 83, was invested as a Knight of St Gregory on 2 April.

The investiture was conducted during a Mass at Brian's parish, Sacred Heart Church in Rugby, celebrated by Bishop William Kenney, auxiliary in Birmingham, and in the presence of Papal Knight William Ozanne and Papal Dame Nora Whelan. "We are drawing attention to the good things Brian has done with CAFOD and Justice and Peace", said Bishop Kenney, "and through these things God is shown to our world - that God's kingdom is among us". He said that one role of a papal knight is to defend the weak and oppressed against injustice, and Brian has already been doing that for many years. There were four concelebrants, including parish priest Fr Gerry Murray, and they stood in front of six beautiful 'Days of Creation' windows.

Brian and his wife Diane were also celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. The joyful mass was packed with family members, parish friends and longstanding colleagues with CAFOD and Justice and Peace. These included Julian Filochowski, former Director of CAFOD; Pat Gaffney, Director of Pax Christi; and theologian Mary Grey.

While at CAFOD Brian oversaw development education campaigns on such issues as '*Migrant labour in South Africa*', '*The causes of Africa's crisis*' and '*Renewing the Earth*'. He was keynote speaker at literally hundreds of conferences and day events - including many linked to the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales - focusing on the issues, the pastoral cycle process of Justice and Peace formation, and both Liberation and Creation theology. And he has edited several books on the Church's Social Teaching.

Recent campaigns on Food and Climate Change and education work around *Laudato Si'* were brought by him into his diocese and parish. Since 2003 the parish has had a series of talks each Autumn with Brian playing the leading role in securing speakers. Following three years on Vatican II, the theme of the tenth series in 2013 was its Spirituality. There were talks on Kingdom, Franciscan and Peace Spirituality with a contribution from Birmingham's Archbishop on Ecumenical Spirituality. A more recent theme has been the renewal of the Church being brought about by Pope Francis, whom Brian described as "an inspiration to all of us".

There are 18 papal knights in Birmingham Archdiocese and around 200 throughout England and Wales.

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32265>

DIARY – See also pages 1-4

AUGUST

6 Hiroshima Day <https://nationaltoday.com/hiroshima-day/>

SEPTEMBER

10 Education Sunday (Churches Together in England) The theme for 2023 is “The armour of light”. Resources: <https://cte.org.uk/educationsunday2023/>

17 Disability Awareness Sunday (Churches Together in England) Resource pack on 'The Unique Gifts God Gives Us' with a short video, a suggested service outline and free postcards available for everyone who attends.

If this is your first Disability Awareness Sunday, we recommend the initial resource based on the Luke chapter 5 'through the roof' theme which contains a full range of videos, key messages, children's and youth ideas, prayers, and much more: <https://throughtheroof.org/forchurches/disability-awareness-sunday/>

12 **The Mistake** An urgent new play about Hiroshima and the first atomic bomb by Michael Mears at the Wesley Church Centre St John Street, Chester, CH1 1DA at 7.30 pm. AVAILABLE FOR PERFORMANCE in 2023 and beyond, the play is suitable for audiences of 15+ years. It will appeal to anyone interested in history, politics, science, ethics, morality and peace studies. We also want to perform to school and college students. Contact: Michael Mears thehalfitalian@aol.com 07960 981857 <https://michaelmears.org/>

19 CAFOD/Justice and Peace group St Vincent's, Altrincham film screening '*The Letter*'. In 2015, Pope Francis published his environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*, a teaching document of the Catholic Church which is also a letter to all people on earth. The *Laudato Si'* Movement has made a film about the encyclical, called '*The Letter*', starring the Pope himself, together with representatives of the poor, youth, indigenous communities, and wildlife scientists. Join us in Westleigh at 7.30pm, to watch the film and reflect on its message. Everyone welcome. Light refreshments will be served in the break. It would be helpful if you could register your attendance online through Eventbrite, <https://eventbrite.co.uk>, but it isn't essential. If you would like any further information, or can offer to help with organisation, please contact the CAFOD/JP secretary, Alison Sharrock, alison@sharrock.org.uk 07906261107

19 CWDF Forum meeting, 7pm at The Unity Centre 17 Cuppin Street, Chester CH1 2BJ. This will take place a week later than usual to avoid clashing with the play *The Mistake*. Gill Miller will be giving us a talk on "*Dealing with Disease; the role of global institutions and local players*". www.chesterwdf.org.uk/events/

16-23 World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel '*No place to lay my head*' For more information and to download Pax Christi's action card see here: tinyurl.com/yztdevez

21 Catholic Nonviolence Days of Action (to 2 October) '*Blessed are the feet of those who bring nonviolence*' For more information and to download Pax Christi's action card see here: <https://tinyurl.com/mudmtyxv>

23 Sustainable Cheshire Festival in Grosvenor Park, Chester. This event is being organised by Eco Communities and Sustainable Cheshire. For full details of this and their other events, check their online “What's on” list: <https://sustainablecheshire.uk/whats-on/>

OCTOBER

3 Geographical Association lecture at 4:30pm in the Best Building, University of Chester Parkgate Campus.

Professor Tony Binns will talk on "*Resilience and Sustainability in a remote West African community: the case of Kayima, Sierra Leone*". Everyone is welcome. Tony is Emeritus Professor, School of Global Studies, University of Sussex; Emeritus Professor of Geography, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand; and Hon. Chief Manjawah of Sandor (Sierra Leone).

14 CWDF Forum meeting, 7pm at The Unity Centre 17 Cuppin Street, Chester CH1 2BJ. CWDF member Peter Spiers, and Philip Austin – coordinator of Northern Friends Peace Board – will talk on the subject of work for peace, with a specific focus on Quaker initiatives. The presentation will be followed by a small celebration of the 30 years of CWDF's activities.

● 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 020 7901 4864

● Read the SUMMER issue of *MOUTHPEACE* the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses <https://jpsshrewsbury.files.wordpress.com/2023/05/mouthpeace-summer-2023.pdf>

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