

*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)*

### CONFLICT IN THE HOLY LAND

**24 October 2023 Fr Rob Esdaile writes:** I invite you to spend 10 minutes prayerfully reading this letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem (who has already offered himself as a hostage in exchange for the Jewish women and children held by Hamas). It is a profound reflection on the Gospel, as well as a courageous message to those who have power in both Israel and Palestine. It lights a candle of hope amidst so much darkness. We are all invited to join with the Church around the world in prayer and fasting for peace this Friday.

### LETTER FROM THE LATIN PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

We are going through one of the most difficult and painful periods in our recent times and history. For over two weeks now, we have been inundated with images of horrors, which have reawakened ancient traumas, opened new wounds, and made pain, frustration and anger explode within all of us. Much seems to speak of death and endless hatred. So many 'whys' overlap in our minds, adding to our sense of bewilderment.

The whole world views this Holy Land of ours as a place that is a constant cause of wars and divisions. That is precisely why it was good that a few days ago, the whole world joined us with a day of prayer and fasting for peace. It was a beautiful view of the Holy Land and an important moment of unity with our Church. And that view is still there. Next October 27th, the Pope has called for a second day of prayer and fasting, so that our intercession may continue. It will be a day that we will celebrate with conviction. It is perhaps the main thing we Christians can do at this time: pray, do penance, intercede. For this, we thank the Holy Father from the bottom of our hearts.

In all this uproar where the deafening noise of the bombs is mixed with the many voices of sorrow and the many conflicting feelings, I feel the need to share with you a word that has its origin in the Gospel of Jesus. That is the starting point which we set out from, and return to, time and time again: a word from the Gospel to help us live this tragic moment by uniting our feelings with those of Jesus.

Looking to Jesus, of course, does not mean feeling exempt from the duty to speak, to denounce, to call out, as well as to console and encourage. As we heard in last Sunday's Gospel, it is necessary to render "to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." (Matt. 22:21). Looking to God, we therefore want, first of all, to render to Caesar what is his.

My conscience and moral duty require me to state clearly that what happened on October 7th in southern Israel is in no way permissible and we cannot but condemn it. There is no reason for such an atrocity. Yes, we have a duty to state this and to denounce it. The use of violence is not compatible with the Gospel, and it does not lead to peace. The life of every human person has equal dignity before God, who created us all in His image.

The same conscience, however, with a great burden on my heart, leads me to state with equal clarity today that this new cycle of violence has brought to Gaza over five thousand deaths, including many women and children, tens of thousands of wounded, neighbourhoods razed to the ground, lack of medicine, lack of water and of basic necessities for over two million people. These are tragedies that cannot be understood and which we have a duty to denounce and condemn unreservedly. The continuous heavy bombardment that has been pounding Gaza for days will only cause more death and destruction and will only increase hatred and resentment. It will not solve any problem, but rather create new ones. It is time to stop this war, this senseless violence.

It is only by ending decades of occupation and its tragic consequences, as well as giving a clear and secure national perspective to the Palestinian people that a serious peace process can begin. Unless this problem is solved at its root, there will never be the stability we all hope for. The tragedy of these days must lead us all, religious, political, civil society, international community, to a more serious commitment in this regard than what has been done so far. This is the only way to avoid other tragedies like the one we are experiencing now. We owe it to the many victims of these days and to those of years past. We do not have the right to leave this task to others.

Yet, I cannot live this extremely painful time without looking upward, without looking to Christ, without the faith that enlightens my view and yours on what we are experiencing, without turning our thoughts to God. We need a Word to accompany us, to comfort and encourage us. We need it like the air we breathe.

“I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have tribulations, but take courage, I have conquered the world.” (Jn. 16:33).

We find ourselves on the eve of Jesus’ Passion. He addresses these words to His disciples, who will shortly be tossed about, as if in a storm, before His death. They will panic, scatter and flee, like sheep without a shepherd.

Yet, this last word of Jesus is an encouragement. He does not say that He shall win, but that He has already won. Even in the turmoil to come, the disciples will be able to have peace. This is not a matter of theoretical irenic peace, nor of resignation to the fact that the world is evil, and we can do nothing to change it. Instead it is about having the assurance that precisely within all this evil, Jesus has already won. Despite the evil ravaging the world, Jesus has achieved a victory, and established a new reality, a new order, which after the resurrection will be assumed by the disciples who were reborn in the Spirit.

It was on the cross that Jesus won: not with weapons, not with political power, not by great means, nor by imposing himself. The peace He speaks of has nothing to do with victory over others. He won the world by loving it. It is true that a new reality and a new order begin on the cross. The order and the reality of the one who gives his life out of love. With the Resurrection and the gift of the Spirit, that reality and that order belong to His disciples. To us. God’s answer to the question of why the righteous suffer, is not an explanation, but a Presence. It is Christ on the cross.

It is on this that we stake our faith today. Jesus in that verse rightly speaks of courage. Such peace, such love, require great courage.

To have the courage of love and peace here, today, means not allowing hatred, revenge, anger and pain to occupy all the space of our hearts, of our speech, of our thinking. It means making a personal commitment to justice, being able to affirm and denounce the painful truth of injustice and evil that surrounds us, without letting it pollute our relationships. It means being committed, being convinced that it is still worthwhile to do all we can for peace, justice, equality and reconciliation. Our speech must not be about death and closed doors. On the contrary, our words must be creative, lifegiving, they must give perspective and open horizons.

It takes courage to be able to demand justice without spreading hatred. It takes courage to ask for mercy, to reject oppression, to promote equality without demanding uniformity, while remaining free. It takes courage today, even in our diocese and our communities, to maintain unity, to feel united to one another, even in the diversity of our opinions, sensitivities and visions.

I want, and we want, to be part of this new order inaugurated by Christ. We want to ask God for that courage. We want to be victorious over the world, taking upon ourselves that same Cross, which is also ours, made of pain and love, of truth and fear, of injustice and gift, of cries and forgiveness.

I pray for us all, and in particular for the small community of Gaza, which is suffering most of all. In particular, our thoughts go out to the 18 brothers and sisters who perished recently, and to their families whom we know personally. Their pain is great, and yet with every passing day, I realize that they are at peace. They are scared, shaken, upset, but with peace in their hearts. We are all with them, in prayer and concrete solidarity, thanking them for their beautiful witness.

Finally, let us pray for all innocent victims. The suffering of the innocent before God has a precious and redemptive value because it is united with the redemptive suffering of Christ. May their suffering bring peace ever closer!

We are approaching the solemnity of the Queen of Palestine, the patroness of our diocese. The shrine was erected during another time of war, and was chosen as a special place to pray for peace. In these days we will once again re-consecrate our Church and our land to the Queen of Palestine! I ask all churches around the world to join the Holy Father and to join us in prayer, and in the search for justice and peace.

We will not be able to gather all together this year, because the situation does not allow it. But I am sure that the whole diocese will be united on that day in prayer and in solidarity for peace, not worldly peace, but the peace which Christ gives us.

With sincere prayers for all,

+Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem  
<https://www.lpj.org/posts/letter-to-the-entire-diocese.html>

**READ: A report from Positive News — Bridging the divide: 12 groups working for Israel-Palestine peace:**  
<https://www.positive.news/world/groups-working-for-israel-palestine-peace/>

## OPINION: DANIEL BARENBOIM SAYS "OUR MESSAGE MUST BE STRONGER THAN EVER"

**13 October 2023:** The current events in Israel and Gaza have deeply shocked us all. There is no justification for Hamas' barbaric terrorist acts against civilians, including children and babies. We must acknowledge this, and pause. But then the next step is, of course, the question of: what now? Do we now surrender to this terrible violence and let our striving for peace "die" - or do we continue to insist that there must and can be peace?

I am convinced that we have to move on and keep the larger context of the conflict in mind. Our musicians of the West-Eastern Divan, our students in the Barenboim-Said Academy are almost all directly affected. Many of the musicians live in the region, the others have many ties to their homeland. This strengthens my conviction that there can only be one solution to this conflict: one on the basis of humanism, justice and equality - and without armed force and occupation.

Our message of peace must be louder than ever. The greatest danger is that all the people who so ardently desire peace will be drowned out by extremists and violence. But any analysis, any moral equation we might draw up, must have as its core this basic understanding: there are people on both sides. Humanity is universal and the recognition of this truth on both sides is the only way. The suffering of innocent people on either side is absolutely unbearable. The images of the devastating terrorist attacks by Hamas break our hearts. Our reaction clearly shows: the willingness to empathise with the situation of others is essential. Of course, and especially now, one must also allow for fear, despair and anger - but the moment this leads us to deny each other humanity, we are lost. Every single person can make a difference and pass something on. This is how we change things on a small scale. On a large scale, it is up to politics.

We have to offer other perspectives to those who are attracted to extremism. After all, it is usually people who are completely without prospects, who are desperate, who devote themselves to murderous or extremist ideologies, who find a home there. Education and information are equally essential, because there are so many positions based on absolute misinformation.

To reiterate quite clearly: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not a political conflict between two states over borders, water, oil or other resources. It is a deeply human conflict between two peoples who have known suffering and persecution. The persecution of the Jewish people over 20 centuries culminated in the Nazi ideology that murdered six million Jews. The Jewish people cherished a dream; a land of their own, a homeland for all Jews in what is now Palestine. But from this dream followed a deeply problematic, because fundamentally false, assumption: a land without a people for a people without a land. In reality, however, the Jewish population of Palestine during the First World War was only 9%. 91% of the population was therefore not Jewish, but Palestinian, grown over centuries. The country could hardly be called a "land without a people" and the Palestinian population saw no reason to give up their own land. The conflict was thus inevitable, and since its beginning the fronts have only hardened further over generations. I am convinced: the Israelis will have security when the Palestinians can feel hope, that is, justice. Both sides must recognise their enemies as human beings and try to empathise with their point of view, their pain and their hardship. Israelis must also accept that the occupation of Palestine is incompatible with this.

For my understanding of this more than 70-year-old conflict, my friendship with Edward Said is the key experience. We found in each other a counterpart who can take us further and help us to see the supposed other more clearly and understand him better. We have recognised and found each other in our common humanity. For me, our joint work with the West-Eastern Divan, which finds its logical continuation and perhaps even its culmination in the Barenboim-Said Academy, is probably the most important activity of my life.

In the current situation, we naturally ask ourselves about the significance of our joint work in both the orchestra and the academy. It may seem little - but the mere fact that Arab and Israeli musicians share a podium at every concert and make music together, that is of immense value to us. Over the years, through this commonality of music-making, but also through our countless, sometimes heated discussions, we have learned to better understand the supposed other, to approach them and to find common ground in our humanity and in music. We start and end all discussions, no matter how controversial, with the fundamental understanding that we are all equal human beings who deserve peace, freedom and happiness.

This may sound naïve, but it is not: for it is this understanding that seems to be completely lost in the conflict on both sides today. Our experience shows that this message has reached many people in the region and around the world. We must, want and will continue to believe that music can bring us closer together in our humanity.

<https://west-eastern-divan.org/our-message-must-be-stronger-than-ever>

• The **WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ORCHESTRA** was founded in 1999 by Jewish conductor Daniel Barenboim and Palestinian American academic Edward Said to promote understanding between Israelis and Palestinians and pave the way for a peaceful & fair solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. <https://www.barenboimsaid.de/en/about/history/founding-vision>

• **CONCERT** Sat 11 Nov, 7.30pm Queen Elizabeth Hall Southbank Michael Barenboim & West-Eastern Divan Ensemble <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/classical-music/michael-barenboim-west-eastern-divan-ensemble>

## **DARKNESS CANNOT DRIVE OUT DARKNESS**

**Jon Kuhrt 15 October 2023**

Ever since I was at University, I have witnessed the anger and hatred that surrounds and underpins the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Nowhere in the world is there a deeper well of polarised bitterness and recriminatory violence.

From Jewish friends I have learnt more about the reality of Anti-Semitism, its very recent impact on their families and the on-going existential threat they feel as a people. It's a threat which I think that few of us can truly understand. But from within the left-leaning political circles in which I have generally moved, I have heard a very different narrative: of sympathy towards the poverty and suffering of Palestinians and anger towards the military power and 'apartheid' policies of Israel.

### **Dark and desperate**

This week the situation is more dark and desperate than ever. The terrorism of Hamas militants led to the death of more than 1300 Jewish civilians, including women, children and babies. As Jonathan Freedland wrote in *The Guardian*:

"In the 75-year history of the state of Israel, 7 October 2023 stands as its darkest day...  
The Jewish people is small, just 16 million across the world. This week each of us is just one or two degrees of separation from heartbreak."<sup>1</sup>

In response, Israel has bombed Gaza and killed more than 2,300 Palestinians – and this appears to be just the start. Their instructions for millions of people to re-locate from Northern Gaza has been condemned by the UN.

### **Israel's 9/11**

It is significant that many have referred to this as 'Israel's 9/11'. In terms of death toll, the last week has already been significantly more bloody than the attacks in the US in 2001. But the lessons learnt from America's response to 9/11 are critically relevant because they were an utter disaster in terms of global security. The invasion of Iraq was the worst example. The path of enforcing 'regime change' and retaliatory invasions has not made the world a safer place in the 22 years since. It has heightened tensions, fuelled grievances and left many countries in a state of anarchy.

### **A different path**

I am not a pacifist. I believe that forms of military response are needed, such as in Ukraine. But what would have happened if George W. Bush had sought a different path after 9/11? If he had taken a moral lead and used the US's resources to increase understanding, reduce injustice, promote democracy and strengthen international relations? Retaliation and vengeance simply brings more darkness. Every bomb dropped on Gaza, every father or mother who dies creates children who will also seek revenge for their deaths. In *Strength to Love*, Martin Luther King wrote:

"Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction...The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

### **Roman oppression**

Every day I read the Hebrew scriptures, or what Christians call 'The Old Testament' as part of my daily readings. You cannot grow in understanding of the Christian faith without engaging with the Jewish context in which it was birthed.

Jesus was a Jewish rabbi who lived and died under the oppression of Roman occupation. It was a time when the existential threat to Israel was a daily reality. In this context, religious groups such as the Pharisees and Sadducees worked in contrasting way to maintain their influence. Others, like the Essenes, removed themselves into separatist communities.

But groups like the zealots hated compromise with their oppressors and fought a murderous guerilla war against their Roman rulers. No doubt they would have seen themselves as 'freedom fighters' and the imperial forces of Rome as the real 'terrorists'.

### **Costly love**

And it was into this political turbulence that Jesus emerges, a carpenter turned rabbi from the obscure northern town of Nazareth. And at the heart of his message is grace: the deep and costly love of God which can bring healing, forgiveness and break cycles of retribution:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you". (Matthew 5:43)

Jesus' words both challenged and fulfilled the Hebrew scriptures. Like a tiny bit of yeast works in dough, a small act of grace can transform conflict and bitterness in incredible and miraculous ways.

This can be both personal *and* political – the Civil Rights movement in the US and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa are examples.

### **Future suffering**

I want to stand with my Jewish friends in the shatteringly terrible events of the last week and condemn the violence of Hamas. But standing with is not to affirm a similarly murderous counter-aggression.

The Christian challenge is to bear witness to both grace and truth. And the truth is that more violence only guarantees further suffering for future generations. In Desmond Tutu's words, there really is *No Future Without Forgiveness*.

### **Choice**

This week I unexpectedly bumped into someone with whom I have had significant conflict and a difficult relationship for over a year. After the initial shock of seeing each other, we had a choice: did we ignore each other and simply retrench into the state of conflict we have been in? Or could we make steps to talk and rebuild some understanding?

We both chose the latter and sat and talked together. It did not mean easy forgiveness or simple reconciliation – but it has given us something to build on.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the most intractable and complex imaginable. But more than ever, I believe in the relevance of the Jewish rabbi who taught these words in a time of violent political oppression:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.  
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.  
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/13/pogrom-israel-angel-of-death-gaza-hamas-jews>

<https://gracetruth.blog/2023/10/15/darkness-cannot-drive-out-darkness/>

- Jon Kuhrt has worked with people affected by homelessness for 30 years. He is a former government adviser on how faith groups address rough sleeping and is now CEO of Hope into Action.

## **PRAYER VIGIL FOR PALESTINE AND ISRAEL IN COVENTRY CATHEDRAL**

### **Ann Farr 29 October 2023**

Last Wednesday night, about 170 people gathered in a semi-circle at the back of Coventry Cathedral, looking outwards, through the beautifully engraved, glass West Screen, towards the Ruins. The old and the new Cathedrals joined by a canopy that links the destruction of war to the new life of resurrection.

We were there for a Prayer Vigil for Palestine and Israel, in which prayers were to be offered from many faith traditions. We would stand with all who are suffering, and bring their plight before God and one another, each according to their own tradition and belief.

We looked out on the darkness and torrential rain and onto the Global Candle-stand in the centre of our circle. A gift from Kiel, it was designed by students in Europe to mark the victims of the 2005 Seven-Seven bombings in London. There are individual candle holders for each of the victims and four for the perpetrators of the bombing. It is a symbol of the Cathedral's enduring commitment to sharing together in building community. Kiel was also heavily bombed during the Second World War and has been twinned with Coventry since 1947.

Prayers from different faith traditions were interspersed with profound silences and poignant words and music sung by a small group of the Cathedral Choir. The lighting of candles throughout was deeply moving, the lights multiplying as signs of both our distress and hope for peace with justice for all those in the Holy Land.

The Dean of Coventry Cathedral, The Very Reverend John Witcombe began the Vigil by welcoming everyone and ensuring that everyone felt comfortable to be in this space, able to contribute according to their beliefs and maintain their own integrity.

The Rev Mary Gregory, read the opening prayer:

### **PRAYER OF THE MOTHERS**

by Rabbi Tamar Elad Appelbaum and Sheikha Ibtisam Mahamid (Translated by Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie)

God of Life

Who heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds

May it be your will to hear the prayer of mothers.

For you did not create us to kill each other

Nor to live in fear, anger or hatred in your world

But rather you have created us so we can grant permission to one another  
to sanctify Your name of Life, your name of Peace in this world.

For these things I weep, my eye, my eye runs down with water

For our children crying at nights,

For parents holding their children with despair and darkness in their hearts

For a gate that is closing and who will open it while day has not yet dawned.

And with my tears and prayers which I pray

And with the tears of all women who deeply feel the pain of these difficult days I raise my hands to you

Please God have mercy on us

Hear our voice that we shall not despair

That we shall see life in each other,

That we shall have mercy for each other,

That we shall have pity on each other,

That we shall hope for each other

And we shall write our lives in the book of Life

For your sake God of Life

Let us choose Life.

For you are Peace, your world is Peace and all that is yours is Peace

And so shall be your will and let us say Amen.

Ann Farr, Pax Christi England and Wales, contributed a prayer of Pope Francis:

God of Peace, hear our prayer.

God of Justice come to our aid.

Grant us peace, teach us peace, guide our steps in the way of peace.

Open our eyes and hearts and give us the courage to say, 'Never Again War.'

Instil in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love,

You created us and you call us to live as sisters and brothers.

Make us sensitive to the pleas of those who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace  
and our trepidation into confident trust.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope so that peace will triumph at last

and may the words 'division', 'hatred' and 'war' be banished from the heart of every man and woman,  
so that there will be Shalom, Peace, Salaam.

The Rev Su McClellan ended the Vigil with the Universal Prayer for Peace

### **WORLD PEACE PRAYER**

Lead us from death to life,

from falsehood to truth;

lead us from despair to hope,

from fear to trust;

lead us from hate to love,

from war to peace.

Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

Providing a space where those of all faiths and none feel welcome to come together at such a painful time is a significant achievement and thanks go to the staff of the Cathedral for enabling and leading this so creatively and sensitively.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/48357>

## “THE DELUGE AND THE TREE”

**Heather Kiernan writes:** I fear that the ongoing destruction of Gaza has a clear aim — raze it to the ground so that people don't have a place to live sparking a new Nakba. Nearly half of Gaza's population of 2.2 million are Palestinians and their descendants who fled or were expelled from their homes after the creation of Israel 75 years ago.

For as long as the Palestinians have endured occupation and oppression — first under the British in the 1920-30s, then by the Israeli state after 1948—they have produced writers and poets who have articulated not only humiliation and despair, but also resistance and the hope of liberation. Israel's most famous military commander of the 20th century, Moshe Dayan, once said of the great Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan that one of her poems was enough to create ten Palestinian resistance fighters. Tuqan's poem, 'The Deluge and the Tree,' is an overarching metaphor for Palestine and the Nakba. As the “deluge” and “hurricane” of war assault the tree, it nevertheless stands steadfast, and its roots remain alive and growing. The Palestinians are drawn back to this mother tree, which is lush with green leaves growing abundantly in the sun. They are like birds that return home to claim their rightful patrimony; indeed, the last line of the poem is “The birds shall return.”

### “THE DELUGE AND THE TREE” ~ Fadwa Tuqan

When the hurricane swirled and spread its deluge  
of dark evil  
onto the good green land  
'they' gloated. The western skies  
reverberated with joyous accounts:  
'The Tree has fallen!  
The great trunk is smashed! The hurricane leaves no life in the Tree!'

Had the Tree really fallen?  
Never! Not with our red streams flowing forever,  
not while the wine of our thorn limbs  
fed the thirsty roots,  
Arab roots alive  
tunnelling deep, deep, into the land!

When the Tree rises up, the branches  
shall flourish green and fresh in the sun  
the laughter of the Tree shall leaf  
beneath the sun  
and birds shall return  
Undoubtedly, the birds shall return.  
The birds shall return.

## THE DSEI ARMS FAIR 12-15 SEPTEMBER 2023

Pax Christi members joined many others praying and protesting outside the Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEI) Arms Fair in London recently. Participants have declared the 'Fair' as the 'best ever' with vast amounts of money changing hands, as lethal weapons were bought and sold.

This year's Fair broke all records according to the organisers 'in terms of overall attendance, number of visitors, and international delegations. Attendee numbers were up by 23% compared to DSEI 2019. The event hosted more than 1,500 exhibitors, with over 250 of those exhibiting for the first time, while our online industry buyer and supplier networking tool, MeetMe, enabled over 3,200 connections, and facilitated over 1,300 meetings throughout the busy show floor.' <https://www.dsei.co.uk/news/dsei-2023-breaks-records>

The Fair included everything: bullets, 'crowd control' instruments like tear gas, every possible weapon available and the means of using them, tanks, drones, planes etc. 'Battle Tested' weapons were being sold by Israel, who are now using those, and new bombs, to kill the Palestinians in Gaza. All of the 'sales' at this Arms Fair are intended for use against people and are often sold, despite restrictions, to countries engaged in human rights abuses, some of whom had been invited, by the UK Government, to attend.

**WATCH** a brief look at what was going on inside the Arms Fair including an interview with Women in Black peace protesters Sheila Trigg and Pat Gaffney who were part of a silent vigil just off Trafalgar Square against the Fair. Also featured are members of the military and companies promoting the latest technology for warfare:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPs54HGnGcU>

## NOVEMBER NEWS FROM CAFOD LANCASTER

Dear Friends, Thank you for everything you did to support our Family Fast Day appeal in your parish last month. Arranging the parish collections, speaking at Mass and gathering together for soup lunches, walks and other fundraising events are testimony to your love for our sisters and brothers. Together, we are supporting local experts like Dr Nasha in Pakistan to get help to families and communities when they need it most.

<https://cafod.org.uk/give/appeals/harvest-appeal>

We join Pope Francis' urgent call for peace and an end to the violence in Israel and Gaza. We are deeply saddened to hear from our partner at Caritas Jerusalem that a staff member along with her child and husband were killed when the hall adjacent to the St Porphyrios Church in Gaza was struck on 19 October. Her sister and two children were also killed. You can read more here about our work in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and Israel.

<https://cafod.org.uk/news/emergencies-news/israeli-palestinian-crisis-how-you-can-help>

You can also find information about our Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal: <https://cafod.org.uk/news/emergencies-news/israeli-palestinian-crisis-how-you-can-help?form=israelipalestiniancrisis> our prayers for peace: <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/prayer-resources/middle-east-peace-prayer> and our invitation to email the Foreign Secretary: <https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/136932/action/1>

### WORLD GIFTS

Do look out for your World Gifts catalogues, arriving in the first week of November. Please do let parishioners know that the catalogues are available and that they can also purchase gifts online at <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk>.

### TALKS AND EVENTS

#### CAFOD's Annual Memorial Mass – online or in person Thursday 2 November, 12:05pm

This year we are delighted that Bishop Stephen Wright, our new Chair of Trustees, will be presiding at our annual Memorial Mass. Where: The Cathedral Church of St Mary, Clayton Street West, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5HH.

**Our Book of Remembrance** will be blessed and we will remember all CAFOD supporters, benefactors and volunteers who have died. If you would like to add a name to the Book of Remembrance, you can do so here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/give/remembrance-giving/book-of-remembrance>

**The Mass will be livestreamed** and you will be able to join by visiting Memorial Mass on the day:

<https://cafod.org.uk/give/remembrance-giving/november-memorial-mass>

#### FAITH IN ACTION ONLINE EVENT: Saturday 18 November — Join us online from 10.30am to 2.30pm

- Be part of a live link-up with CAFOD's partners in Bolivia
- Look ahead to the upcoming UN COP28 climate talks
- Find out what happened when we took our Fix the Food System campaign to the World Bank in Morocco
- Learn about our plans for working with the Catholic Community during next year's General Election
- Be part of the community of CAFOD campaigners across the country!

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-in-action-fighting-for-a-better-world-with-cafod-tickets-706636638207>

#### LOOKING BACK TO A YEAR WITH CHALLENGES AND JOYS Wednesday 22 November 7pm-8pm

Join us to hear from CAFOD Director Christine Allen and CAFOD trustees about CAFOD's challenges, joys and achievements of the past year and about our hopes for the future. <https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/annual-review2023>

#### WHAT WE NEED TO HAPPEN AT COP28: Thursday 23 November, 7pm

Join us to hear from CAFOD partners and experts as we look ahead to COP28 and discuss what action we need to see at the UN climate talks. <https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/COP28>

#### CHRISTMAS FUN RUN Wednesday 27th December

There are in-person events in Liverpool and Bollington (near Macclesfield), as well as an opportunity to take part wherever you are! Please share this amazing event in your Parish newsletter or Facebook page and maybe you could get a team of budding runners from your community to meet on the 27<sup>th</sup> <https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/sponsored-challenge-events/run-for-cafod/christmas-fun-run>

*Patrick & Emma* CAFOD in Lancaster

Tel: 07920 565454 (Patrick) or 07769 931373 (Emma) Email: [lancaster@cafod.org.uk](mailto:lancaster@cafod.org.uk)



## SHARE POPE FRANCIS' COP28 MESSAGE WITH YOUR MP

**Pope Francis warns that the climate disasters we're experiencing show the world is approaching "breaking point"**

Pope Francis has written a new message calling for world leaders to tackle the climate crisis and make the most of the upcoming COP28 climate summit. The Pope says the climate disasters we've seen in recent times show we're approaching "breaking point". He warns we're running out of time to prevent even more tragic damage for communities that have contributed least to causing the crisis. With COP28 just a month away, it's crucial MPs hear about the Pope's message.

The Pope says in his message, called *Laudate Deum*, that leaders attending the COP28 talks must put the interests of our global family first in the negotiations. He warns that people in communities on the frontline of the climate crisis will suffer the consequences if decision-makers fail to do so.

CAFOD has produced a summary of the Pope's message for MPs, and why we're asking you to share this summary with your MP, as one of their constituents.

### **What are the key messages of Laudate Deum?**

Laudate Deum is an urgent call to tackle the climate crisis, recognising that time is running out. And irreversible damage has already been done.

In this letter Pope Francis states that the climate crisis is real and cannot be denied. It is caused by human activity.

But the pope cautions against seeking only technological solutions, noting that although we have more and more tools to manipulate the world, we are still failing to protect the environment from destruction. The more we seek to increase power for its own sake, the less we use our power to protect life. As he states, "Not every increase in power represents progress for humanity." (#24)

At the same time, he says, economic powers are not interested in solving the problem, because they want "the greatest profit possible at minimum cost" (13). This pursuit of the greatest profit possible at minimum cost makes caring for our common home impossible.

We need political change on a national and international level. While Pope Francis states that individual actions and efforts to minimise waste are important, he also recognises that they are not enough. We are called to continue to transform society through our individual, family and community actions, but also to call on those in power to take urgent action.

Pope Francis is clear that we all have a role to play, putting pressure the sources of power and demanding change. He calls us all to be involved and particularly urges that COP28, the next round of important UN negotiations on climate change, needs to be a historic event, with binding forms of energy transition. For the sake of the future of our children we must take action.

Despite the gravity and urgency of the situation we face, Pope Francis reminds us that we must continue to hope, because to "say there is nothing to hope for... would mean exposing humanity, especially the poorest, to the worst impacts of climate change." (#54)

<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/laudate-deum-explained>

Pope Francis has called for political leaders at the COP28 talks to prevent the climate crisis from causing even greater tragedies for communities that have contributed least to causing it. Will you ask your MP to act on the Pope's call? We've set up an easy way for you to share the summary with your MP, so please take two minutes to send them an email via our website.

[https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/137965/action/1?j=494407&sfmc\\_sub=28663678&l=52\\_HTML&u=7717644&mid=50009474&jb=277&utm\\_source=the%20catholic%20agency%20for%20overseas%20development%20\(cafod\)&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=R126465+CAM+Email+Subject+line+B-+COP28+Pope+Francis+Action+-+20231030&utm\\_term=Main+Button+-+Pope+Francis+Laudate+Deum+COP28+Action](https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/137965/action/1?j=494407&sfmc_sub=28663678&l=52_HTML&u=7717644&mid=50009474&jb=277&utm_source=the%20catholic%20agency%20for%20overseas%20development%20(cafod)&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=R126465+CAM+Email+Subject+line+B-+COP28+Pope+Francis+Action+-+20231030&utm_term=Main+Button+-+Pope+Francis+Laudate+Deum+COP28+Action)

**Read the CAFOD Parliamentary Briefing here:**

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/vy3axnuecuwj/7zK8L340cRkuqDOSgX3546/8d06ef63418c71f35330e5a79b75c9d9/Laudate\\_Deum\\_parliamentary\\_briefing\\_-\\_CAFOD\\_SCIAF\\_CBCEW\\_-\\_October\\_2023\\_1.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/vy3axnuecuwj/7zK8L340cRkuqDOSgX3546/8d06ef63418c71f35330e5a79b75c9d9/Laudate_Deum_parliamentary_briefing_-_CAFOD_SCIAF_CBCEW_-_October_2023_1.pdf)

Let's pray that leaders will take the action we need at COP28. **The CAFOD Campaigns Team**

## THE GREEN POPE: FRANCIS & THE ETHIC OF RESPONSIBILITY

Ian Linden 25 October 2023

We have become accustomed to warnings that TV news reports from war zones may be disturbing. They usually are distressing. But so are reports on the consequences of climate change. And they come without such warnings despite the dire implications of further global warming.

On 4 October, St. Francis of Assisi's feast day, Pope Francis published *Laudato Deum* "Praise God... for all his creatures" - words taken from the song St. Francis composed in 1224 celebrating the unity of creation and his place in it. Eight years had passed since Pope Francis published his encyclical *Laudato Si*, (Praise Be) addressed to 'every person living on this planet' about "care for our common home". *Laudato Deum* is addressed to "all the people of Good Will". It is brief and, avoiding Vaticanese, employs relatively accessible language about the climate crisis. It is itself a warning and, unlike a formal encyclical, explicitly a call to action.

"I have realised that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing breaking point", the Pope writes, citing the irreversible nature of changes such as the melting of polar ice which could not be reversed for hundreds of years. "Regrettably, the climate crisis is not exactly a matter that interests the great economic powers, whose concern is with the greatest profit possible at minimal cost and in the shortest amount of time". This is the Pope's forthright verdict. He pointedly mentions that the USA has double the amount of carbon emissions per head of China.

Francis establishes the link between fires, droughts, floods and hurricanes and the accelerating increase in greenhouse gas emissions, refuting the evidence-deniers. Unusually for a papal document he draws on authoritative scientific sources, notably the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to prove that their increased incidence and severity is caused by human actions.

But he also takes his analysis much deeper. The Pope sees our current predicament growing out of what he calls the 'technocratic paradigm', doubling-down on his critique of this mindset in *Laudato Si*. "Deep down it consists in thinking as if reality, goodness and truth automatically flow from technological and economic power as such". When human beings behave as if they are "autonomous, omnipotent and limitless" and "claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies".

Hugely increased power, enabled by technological developments, lies in hands which 'cannot claim to have a sound ethics, a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint'. The 'ethical decadence of real power', Francis believes, disguises itself by clever marketing and fake information. The world has become "an object of exploitation, unbridled use and unlimited ambition".

Instead, he explains, "we are part of nature, included in it, and thus in constant interaction with it", a perception he acknowledges still cherished by many indigenous peoples. Francis shares the traditional Judaeo-Christian belief in the unique and central value of the human being; but he recognises the need today for what he calls a "situated anthropocentrism" in an "integral ecology" (*Laudato Si*) meaning that "human life is incomprehensible and unsustainable without other creatures".

All well and good the liberal secular world might say but what is the practical application of these ideas and insights? How might they be brought down to earth and take shape in Governments' plans? These questions, which are also often strictures, to a great degree misunderstand the nature of religious discourse. The Pope is using his position and authority as head of a global Church with 1.3 billion members to sound an alarm, to arouse people to expect, to demand, effective action from governments, and to change themselves. We are a very long way from the world of Rishi Sunak's seven bins for sorting rubbish - though Francis is not squeamish about condemning the way our rubbish is dumped in the developing world.

His discussion of obstacles in the way of coordinated international action, like his intention to attend COP28 in Dubai this November, just announced this week, demonstrates his goal of provoking urgent action in the world of practical politics. For a papal communication *Laudato Deum* is detailed and crystal clear. There are sections on the progress and failures arising from the COP series and even what to expect from COP28. The Pope also writes about the need for some means of enforcing multilateral agreements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the general weakness of international politics in problem-solving. He will certainly be promoting a Loss and Damage Fund to mitigate the ravages of climate change on the vulnerable countries of the global South.

Francis' vision, shaped by his experience in Latin America of effective change coming from below upwards, may seem utopian. He holds up the international treaty on antipersonnel mines as one example of effective NGO advocacy. But

this is much honoured in the breach. Today a global civil society as an equal, benign and responsible player in international relations, curbing the prevarication and corruption of governments, seems like an ever-receding mirage. Governments' - tragic - nationalism and short-sighted version of national interest, their de facto rejection of the global common good – which Francis has written about elsewhere - is no less damaging than the 'technocratic paradigm' which accompanies it.

A few days ago, Greta Thunberg was dragged away from a peaceful demonstration in London outside a meeting between fossil-fuel executives and government ministers. Her arrest highlights both the power, cynicism and irresponsibility of governments and the responsibility, idealism and weakness of young people's peaceful protest. They are deeply anxious about their future - anxiety caused, at least, in part by the pusillanimity and inaction of governments.

Religious bodies and organisations are doing their best to broadcast Francis' writings on social media, and their best has got better in recent years. But we want to be diverted from frightening news. In the face of the horrific massacre in Israel of more than 1,400 Jews and the abduction of some 200 hostages, precipitating a grave crisis in the Middle East, anger was directed at the BBC. What word should have been used to describe the perpetrators of these horrors? We seem unable to hold the big picture in mind for long, whether the causes of violent extremism and war, and how to counter them, or the causes of climate change and how to mitigate them. And if in pain and anger we give up on universal values, justice and human dignity, what ethical resources remain to solve our greatest problems of global scope?

When a much-loved religious leader in Rome, with an old man's sense of time running out, made his alarm call on 4 October, we most probably didn't hear his message either from the pulpit or from the mass media. So, neither were we likely to be disturbed by it. We were free to concentrate instead on how to get home during the railway drivers' strike.

<https://www.ianlinden.com/latest-blogs/the-green-pope-francis-the-ethic-of-responsibility>

• **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.

## **COLUMBANS SCHOOLS COMPETITION: 'BIODIVERSITY MATTERS'**

The Columban Missionaries in Britain and Ireland Schools Media Competition 2023-2024: '*Biodiversity Matters*' is aimed at students aged between 13-18 years old who are invited to explore Biodiversity – the richness of life forms on Earth and which humanity relies on for health, food and well-being – in writing and images that highlight people, communities and/or organisations trying to build a sustainable future. Pope Francis has told us that "because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God ... We have no such right" (*Laudato Si'* #33)

In his role as Columban Justice and Peace Education Worker in Britain, James Trewby visits young people in schools and sixth forms and runs workshops, retreats and assemblies to promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation. He says: " In a world of increasing globalisation and environmental degradation, management of biological diversity is one of the most important and critical challenges facing humankind today. The Columbans are keen to nurture the student voice and provide an opportunity for young people to engage with this issue."

**Closing date 17 February 2024.** Winners will be announced on Columban media on 21 March 2024, the International Day of Forests. Two separate competitions will be judged, one for students in Ireland and one for students in Britain with cash prizes for the winning entrants and the first prize is an impressive £500 or 500 euros! High-profile judges from the world of journalism have been secured, who write for the Irish News, The Irish Times, The Tablet and Independent Catholic News. Also, Catholic experts on environmental protection and education, including Columban eco-theologian Fr Sean McDonagh, Mary Colwell and Jane Mellett. Winning entries will be published in the Columbans' Far East magazine, Vocation for Justice newsletter, Columban websites in Ireland and Britain, Columban social media and in other Catholic media.

Schools will find the Columban Competition website a useful resource. It includes information on the theme, examples of Church work on Biodiversity, Catholic Social Teaching on the theme of Biodiversity and information about inspirational Catholics working on the issue. There are also details on submission of entries and a helpful FAQ page. The website provides material suitable for students, teachers and parents. [www.columbancompetition.com/](http://www.columbancompetition.com/)

## **CATHOLIC UNION AND CSAN CALL FOR JEREMY HUNT TO MAKE BENEFIT CHANGES IN AUTUMN STATEMENT**

**17 October 2023:** The Catholic Union and Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) have called for children and families to be the focus of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on Wednesday 22nd November. The two groups have called on the Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, to consider changes to the benefit system to help families with the cost of living. These include increasing the rate of child benefit, scraping the two-child cap on Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits, and lifting the High Income Child Benefit Charge. In their joint representation to the Treasury, they focus on lifting the two-child cap on benefits. The policy, introduced in 2017, limits the childcare element of Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits to the first two children. It has been strongly opposed by the Catholic Church and charities since its introduction. The groups highlight the latest assessment of the two-child cap, published by the University of York, which found that the policy had "a negative impact on people's mental health, increasing stress and anxiety, and harming their well-being, with knock-on effects on children's opportunities and wellbeing." They also highlight first-hand experience from CSAN members, including Caritas Salford.

"The increase in the cost of living has stress tested our benefits system, and it has been found wanting for many families," said Catholic Union Director Nigel Parker. "The impact of decisions made over the past 10 years are beginning to be seen first-hand, especially in relation to support for children. At a time when so many families are struggling, it is important that the Church continues to speak out on policies such as the two-child cap. We are pleased to have made this joint submission with CSAN as we continue our work to make the tax and benefit system fairer for families."

His remarks were supported by CSAN Chief Executive, Raymond Friel OBE who said that the Chancellor needed to implement measures that would enable families to flourish. "At a time of growing economic strain on families, Caritas Social Action Network and the Catholic Union of Great Britain, in line with the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales Department of Social Justice's statement on the Cost of Living crisis in Autumn 2022, are steadfast in our commitment to advocating for vulnerable children and families," said Mr Friel. "Through our joint submission, we call on the Chancellor to keep children and families at the forefront of the Autumn Statement 2023, urging the government to lift the two-child cap and implement fairer benefit systems that will work to alleviate child poverty and help families to flourish in this time of crisis."

More information on the Autumn Statement can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/autumn-statement-2023-date-confirmed>

More information about the Catholic Union can be found here: <https://catholicunion.org.uk/>

More information about CSAN can be found here: <https://www.csan.org.uk/>

A copy of the Catholic Union and CSAN submission to HM Treasury can be found at the end of this article: <https://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk/catholic-union-and-csan-call-for-jeremy-hunt-to-make-benefit-changes-in-autumn-statement/>

## **HOUSING JUSTICE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF CEO KATHY MOHAN OBE IN APRIL 2024**

Christian homelessness charity, Housing Justice, has announced that their CEO Kathy Mohan OBE will retire in April, after seven years of inspirational leadership. Kathy's tenure has seen Housing Justice grow significantly in its impact and influence on homelessness in England and Wales. Since her appointment in 2017, the organisation has supported more than 1,000 people to move on from homelessness across a diverse range of programmes while becoming an increasingly important voice to government, and the housing and homelessness sector.

Kathy worked tirelessly during the pandemic and played a significant role on the Advisory Panel to the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community, as well as advising the Government's 'Everybody In' programme which brought rough sleepers in off the streets and into single room accommodation. In October 2020, Kathy received an OBE in the Covid Honours for 'Services to Vulnerable People During the Pandemic'.

Kathy said: "It has been a privilege to serve Housing Justice and I am grateful to everyone who has helped us to grow our work supporting churches to address local housing need. We have built excellent relationships with supporters and stakeholders (including our funders) across the homelessness sector. Our team in Wales has grown from one part-time member of staff to 15; and we have had great success in attracting funding into the winter night shelter network to help shelters move from communal to single-room accommodation where possible. I am proud of all that the team has achieved."

Housing Justice Chair, the Rt Rev Rob Wickham said: "Kathy has been, quite simply, an outstanding CEO of Housing Justice. As a team player, her work has shaped and developed our charity into a robust and prophetic force for good. Kathy has brought both financial stability and sustainability to Housing Justice while growing a committed and talented staff team. Kathy's enthusiasm and joy speaks of her love and passion for this work. Her eye for detail and opportunity speaks of her determination, not for her benefit, but the flourishing of some of the most marginalised people in England and Wales." We are now recruiting for Kathy's replacement so if you or anyone in your networks are interested in finding out more about the role or applying for it, you can find out more here: <https://housingjustice.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3d437118ea21496ac51e914b6&id=46e57af44f&e=5a57c482ae>

## MICHAEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON SJ, RIP

**Clare Dixon, co-chair of the Archbishop Romero Trust, former Head of Region - Latin America at CAFOD, writes:**

Fr Michael Campbell-Johnson, known to many as simply 'C-J', died on the evening of Thursday 12th October at the Jesuit retirement home in Boscombe, Bournemouth, at the age of 92.

Born in London into a comfortable upper-class family, as a young boy his earliest ambition was to be a priest, a commitment which never wavered. His brother Christopher recalled an early event in their childhood when his older sibling Michael decided to conduct the funeral service of the family's pet dog, where he officiated with due pomp and ritual. After an education at Jesuit prep school and Beaumont college he began his studies for the priesthood with the Society of Jesus in 1949, just before his eighteenth birthday.

Michael's Jesuit studies took him from the LSE to Paris and then to Mexico for theology studies where he was a contemporary of the Jesuit, Fernando Cardenal who went on to become Minister of Education in Nicaragua. From there he went on to further studies in Brazil and travelled widely across Latin America where he became involved in pastoral work and learned about the Jesuits' social justice outreach throughout the region. On completing his studies his first appointment took him to Guyana, part of the British Jesuit Province, where he became a Guyanese citizen and set up the Jesuit Social Institute there before being called to work for the Jesuits in Rome.

I first met Michael in the late 1970s, when he was already something of a legend. He was the highest-ranking English-born Jesuit - or as he would always insist of Scots heritage - based at that time in Rome at the Jesuit world HQ. Appointed in 1975 as Director of the Social Secretariat in the General Curia, he was at the right-hand of the great Jesuit Superior General, Pedro Arrupe, the man who inspired and led the Jesuits onto a new course: setting the promotion of social justice as the key priority of their work: an early commitment to the preferential option for the poor. During the years in Rome C-J was Fr Arrupe's envoy to support and encourage the development of Jesuit social justice institutes in Latin America, which included various encounters with the then Argentine Jesuit Provincial, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, during the challenging years of the military regime in that country.

In 1980, at the height of the tragic exodus of the "boat people" of Vietnam, Fr Arrupe charged Michael with taking forward a new Jesuit venture, setting up and leading the Jesuit Refugee Service as an adjunct to the Social Secretariat. The JRS became a key player in fighting for the rights and protection of refugees and the displaced and continues its life-saving mission in many situations of conflict across the world today. In 1984, with his duties in Rome accomplished, Michael was appointed to El Salvador to set up the JRS in Central America where countless thousands of refugees were fleeing from war and military repression across the region.

I recall being in awe of Michael from the very start: he struck an impressive figure, well over six feet tall: in his clerical suit he appeared the very essence of the well-born gentleman that he was. But that first impression was deceptive as Michael was rarely seen in his clericals, but rather sporting a sometimes torn and always worn-out shirt, baggy trousers and open-toed sandals. Never was he happier than when accompanying the poorest and most deprived communities, tending to their physical needs, providing protection and safety, as well as the spiritual dimension so fundamental to the lives of people in a country named after Christ the Saviour.

Michael set up the JRS HQ in a parish centre which had been abandoned since January 1979 after the army had murdered the parish priest, Octavio Ortiz, and four young catechists. Michael and his JRS team transformed a place of fear into one of sanctuary. He spent much of the 1980s running the JRS in El Salvador and encouraging outposts of the service in Colombia, Haiti and across Latin America.

He was aghast when, after just four years, the call came for him to become Provincial of the British Jesuits. He was never a bureaucrat and his transition to the Jesuit HQ on Farm Street, in the heart of Mayfair, felt to him like a cruel exile from his preferred setting, living among and ministering to the dispossessed, where he felt he could make a difference. Nevertheless, he used his time productively, dealing with the complex management and processes of change within the Jesuit Province, keeping up with family and friends and participating, somewhat controversially, at a Conservative Party conference debate on the theme of "Can a Christian be a Conservative". He also joined the Board of CAFOD which had been a constant supporter of his JRS work since its creation.

It was during his time as Provincial that six of his Jesuit brothers were murdered along with two women employees at the UCA - the Jesuit Central American University - on 16th November 1989. That night, in the midst of grief, Michael led a prayer vigil outside the El Salvador Embassy, just a short walk away from the Jesuit Provincial HQ in Mayfair. Fr Arrupe's vision for the Jesuits was never more relevant: "What does it mean to be a Jesuit today? To engage under the banner of the Cross in the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and the struggle for justice that faith itself demands. .... We will not work for the promotion of justice without paying the price".

It was with some relief, not only to Michael but perhaps also to some members of the British Province, when his 6-year term of office came to a close and he returned to El Salvador in 1993. After a decade of civil war the country needed to rebuild and Michael set to work transforming JRS into a new Jesuit Development Service adapting it to the need to reunify communities displaced by the conflict. He was a model of multi-tasking, teaching at the UCA, and taking over as pastor in the gang-plagued parish of San Antonio Abad. For a decade his parish house was my home on multiple visits to San Salvador.

Michael's parish house was an ancient, ramshackle, rat and feral pigeon-infested former farmhouse on an unpaved lane in an insalubrious part of town. His street address, as a happy coincidence, was Calle La Granjita, Little Farm Street, as far a cry away from its Mayfair namesake as can be imagined. Michael, alongside his appropriately named parish council, with vice-chair Rafael and secretary Gabriel, sought to build a community of solidarity within a country where the legacy of civil war, military repression and gang violence held sway. The parish centre was always alive with the laughter of children, alongside a parish clinic, training workshops and a playground used equally as a means of rehabilitating members of the local gang, the Mau Mau, and recreation for the children of the local primary school.

Michael reluctantly left El Salvador in the noughties when the British Province posted him to Barbados, to run the retirement home for the elderly Jesuits of Guyana and the Caribbean. His parish church of St Francis of Assisi, on the beach, was set among the five-star hotels and private mansions of the mega-rich. On occasion he had to craft his sermons very carefully for a mixed congregation which sometimes included Tony Blair and family. His time in Barbados completed Michael returned to London for several years and, in failing health, to the Jesuit care home in Boscombe.

Michael was a great admirer of Archbishop Romero and a close friend of the UCA Jesuit community who were murdered by the Salvadorean military in 1989 and his love of El Salvador and its people was passionate and enduring. He was a towering figure amongst his fellow-Jesuits in Latin America and further afield. I admired him enormously and am glad that he lived to see how his brother Jesuit, Pope Francis, placed social justice and the plight of refugees and migrants at the heart of his papacy.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/48346>

## REMEMBERING CYRIL TOWSE, RIP

Keith Taylor, long-time J&P activist from St Alban's, Macclesfield, has informed us that Cyril Towse died recently.

Cyril will be remembered with great affection by all who knew him in the local area and in the wider Shrewsbury diocese.

**Keith writes:** What a great man. I was so fond of him. I admired him. He was a great J&P worker in his parish and he also worked very effectively at diocesan level.

**Joan Sharples, former J&P Fieldworker for Shrewsbury Diocese, adds:** What I remember most about Cyril is his charm, courtesy and the smart formality of his attire - a conventional exterior that hid his deep passion for justice and his commitment to working for God's kingdom - a kingdom of justice and peace.

A member of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese of Shrewsbury for some years around the Millennium, he was unfailingly enthusiastic in the pursuit of its initiatives and supported and encouraged other members bringing out the best in them.

**Ann Wright, Chief Officer Just Drop In (Helping Young People find their feet) says:** Cyril was one of the first people I heard about when I first came to JDI 10 years ago and it was such a pleasure to meet him soon after. His work to support those with health issues to ensure their rights were upheld was very important in the early years of our charity.

He briefly returned to volunteering (I think) around 8 years ago and was still an inspiration and tremendous source of support for young people.

- Cyril's Requiem Mass will be at St Alban's at 12 noon Wednesday 15 November. The Mass will be live streamed with a recording available for two months.
- The next issue of *MouthPeace* will carry a more comprehensive tribute.

## THINKING FAITH AT BOARBANK HALL: TIME OUT FOR WORKING CATHOLICS - 2023-2024

**25 October 2023:** We are a group of professional Catholics who meet together on zoom and live retreats hosted by Sr Margaret Atkins, and Augustinian Sister at Boarbank Hall, Cumbria and Fr Richard Finn, a Dominican at Blackfriars, Oxford (and at times other Dominicans).

Our Thinking Faith summer weeks began for Catholic students and young professionals nearly 20 years ago. They have grown and developed into something that provides for that 'post-youth' group who are trying to live out their Catholic faith in responsible positions at work and also perhaps in their families. At the same time, a regular core of participants has developed, who meet at Boarbank for the residential summer week and keep in touch with zoom retreats in between.

We warmly welcome anyone who might enjoy either the zoom or the residential week to get in touch. You can just dip your toe in by joining either our Advent or our Lent retreat. If you are looking for friendly, fun but also serious and thoughtful support from fellow-Catholics in living out your faith in daily life, this could be for you. And you might get a week's break in Cumbria into the bargain!

For more information, contact Sr Margaret on [margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk](mailto:margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk), or visit our website: [www.boarbankhall.org.uk](http://www.boarbankhall.org.uk)

### THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMME:

**Advent Zoom Retreat:** 15-17 December 2023. Evening sessions only. Theme: *Comfort and Joy*

**Lent Zoom Retreat:** 8-10 March 2024. Evening sessions only. Theme: *Fasting and Feasting*

**Summer Residential:** Date 27th July - 3rd August 2024. Theme: *What Catholics Really Believe*

A week of prayer, study, conversation, walks and fun, exploring the basics of Catholic faith with the help of books by GK Chesterton and Fr Richard Conrad OP.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/48326>

### 'PRACTISING SYNODALITY' WEBINAR SERIES CONTINUES

**5 October 2023:** While the first Synod assembly of the 2021-24 Synod is taking place in Rome, the School for Synodality is hosting a series of webinars about how we can practise synodality at the local level. With speakers from both England and Wales and from across the world, we'll continue to explore what the practice of Synodality could look like in our own communities. Already we've heard from Dr Jessie Rogers (Dean of Faculty of Theology, St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth) who helped us explore what synodality is, and from Ciaran Beary (facilitation and leadership consultant, including for the UN) and Fr Kevin O'Driscoll (Parish Priest at Holy Family Catholic Church, Slough) who helped us explore power and trust.

Synodality, a cornerstone of Pope Francis's vision for the Church, emphasises dialogue, listening, and shared decision-making. The 'Practising Synodality' webinar series is designed to equip attendees with the knowledge and skills to integrate synodality into their everyday practices.

**9 October: *Best and worst practices - learning on the way*** – Fr Matthew Nunes and Fr Phillip Inch, co-moderators of the Archdiocese of Liverpool Synod

**16 October: *Discerning the signs of the times*** – Sarah Adams, Director for the Department of Adult Education and Evangelisation in the Diocese of Clifton and participant in the European Continental Assembly in spring 2023

**30 October: *The art of listening: hearing all the voices*** – Sr Ngozie (Sierra Leone), in partnership with CAFOD

**6 November: *Group discernment: how do we know it's the Holy Spirit?*** – Mauricio Lopez, Executive Secretary of CEAMA (Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon)

**13 November: *Moving to action*** – TBC

**20 November: *Becoming a synodal community*** – Professor Anna Rowlands, Office for Synod, Vatican and Durham University

Each webinar, held from 7.30-8.30 on Monday nights, includes an interview with the speaker and time for Q&A from those watching live. You can register for upcoming webinars, and watch those that have already taken place here: [www.schoolforsynodality.org.uk/practising-synodality-webinars](http://www.schoolforsynodality.org.uk/practising-synodality-webinars)

Read more about the School for Synodality: [www.SchoolforSynodality.org.uk](http://www.SchoolforSynodality.org.uk)

## DIARY

### NOVEMBER

**2 CAFOD Lancaster Diocese Annual Memorial Mass 12:05pm** – online or in person. Led by Bishop Stephen Wright, our new Chair of Trustees at the Cathedral Church of St Mary, Clayton Street West, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5HH. <https://cafod.org.uk/give/remembrance-giving/november-memorial-mass>

**6 'PRACTISING SYNODALITY' Webinar Series *Group discernment: how do we know it's the Holy Spirit?*** – Mauricio Lopez, Executive Secretary of CEAMA (Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon) . **You can register for upcoming webinars, and watch those that have already taken place here:** [www.schoolforsynodality.org.uk/practising-synodality-webinars](http://www.schoolforsynodality.org.uk/practising-synodality-webinars) (see p.15)

**13 'PRACTISING SYNODALITY' Webinar Series *Moving to action*** – TBC (see 6 November for details)

**20 'PRACTISING SYNODALITY' Webinar Series *Becoming a synodal community*** – Professor Anna Rowlands, Office for Synod, Vatican and Durham University (see 6 November for details)

**11 CONCERT 7.30pm** Queen Elizabeth Hall Southbank Michael Barenboim & West-Eastern Divan Ensemble (see p.3) <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/classical-music/michael-barenboim-west-eastern-divan-ensemble>

**17 CAFOD Quiz** in Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port starting at 7.30pm. see October 13

**18 Stockport Fairtrade Fair** 10 am – 4pm Stockport Guildhall 169 Wellington Road on A6 near Co- op shop SK1 3UA

**18 CAFOD FAITH IN ACTION ONLINE EVENT** Join us online from 10.30am to 2.30pm (see p.8)

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-in-action-fighting-for-a-better-world-with-cafod-tickets-706636638207>

**22 LOOKING BACK TO A YEAR WITH CHALLENGES AND JOYS 7pm-8pm** Join us to hear from CAFOD Director Christine Allen and CAFOD trustees about CAFOD's challenges, joys and achievements of the past year and about our hopes for the future. <https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/annual-review2023>

**28 WHAT WE NEED TO HAPPEN AT COP28: 7pm** Join us to hear from CAFOD partners and experts as we look ahead to COP28 and discuss what action we need to see at the UN climate talks. <https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/COP28>

### DECEMBER

**15-17 Thinking Faith Advent Zoom Retreat:** Evening sessions only. Theme: *Comfort and Joy For more information, contact Sr Margaret on [margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk](mailto:margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk), or visit our website: [www.boarbankhall.org.uk](http://www.boarbankhall.org.uk)*

**27 CHRISTMAS FUN RUN** There are in-person events in Liverpool and Bollington (near Macclesfield), as well as an opportunity to take part wherever you are! More info and sponsor forms here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/sponsored-challenge-events/run-for-cafod/christmas-fun-run>

**DON'T MISS THE LATEST NJPN E BULLETIN WITH A WEALTH OF ARTICLES AND INFO: Download here:**

<https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-ebulletins/njpn-e-bulletin-29th-october-2023/>

● **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.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk) 020 7901 4864

● **Read the AUTMN issue of *MOUTHPEACE* the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses** <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-north-west/autumn-mouthpeace-2023/>

● Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News [www.indcatholicnews.com](http://www.indcatholicnews.com) an invaluable free resource for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles.

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