

(Image courtesy of [Missionary Society of St. Columban, Australia](#))

“Let there be nothing among you that can divide you.”

(St. Ignatius of Antioch)

Dear Friends,

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity runs between the 18th and the 25th January, and looking at our broken world now, more than ever and despite our divisions, we need to stand together. For peace, for the planet, and if we want to achieve justice.

Talking of coming together, our Action of the Week is for the Group that you belong to sign an urgent letter to party leaders asking them to take action to address the climate and nature crisis. Please take part through the link below.

Apologies, but there was a bit of a hiccup in the design of the Booking Form for Conference, so the Newsletters, with the forms, were posted out later than expected. If you haven't received yours already, it will drop through your door sometime this week. If you are planning on attending our

Conference, you can now book through our [website](#), using either the downloadable Word document, or the Microsoft Form. Payments will still need to be made manually, though, through either a Bank Transfer, or by Cheque. We are really looking forward to seeing many of you again.

This weekend we have a shorter E-bulletin than normal due to the fact that I have been under the weather for a few days. I would be interested to hear whether people would be interested in receiving one of this size in future with maybe just a couple of main topics in News and Comment. My son always tells me this is far too long!

All being well, I will be preparing the next E-bulletin around the 3rd/4th February, so news of any events, or articles, will need to be with me by Friday 2nd February.

Wishing you well for the next two weeks,

Sharon

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13. **27th January** Pax Christi
14. **27th January** Arundel and Brighton Justice and Peace Assembly 2024
15. 11th February - Church Action on Poverty Sunday
16. 14th February - Ash Wednesday Walk of Witness, Liverpool
17. 17th February - Closing date for Columbans Schools Competition
18. 24th February - NJPN Networking Day
19. 7th March - Empowered: Hope in Action's Annual Conference
20. 17th/24th April/1st May - School for Synodality online workshops
21. 11th May - NJPN AGM
22. 25th May - Catholic Association for Racial Justice 40th Anniversary Event
23. 19th - 21st July NJPN Conference

Actions

24. Say no to Twickenham Arms Fair

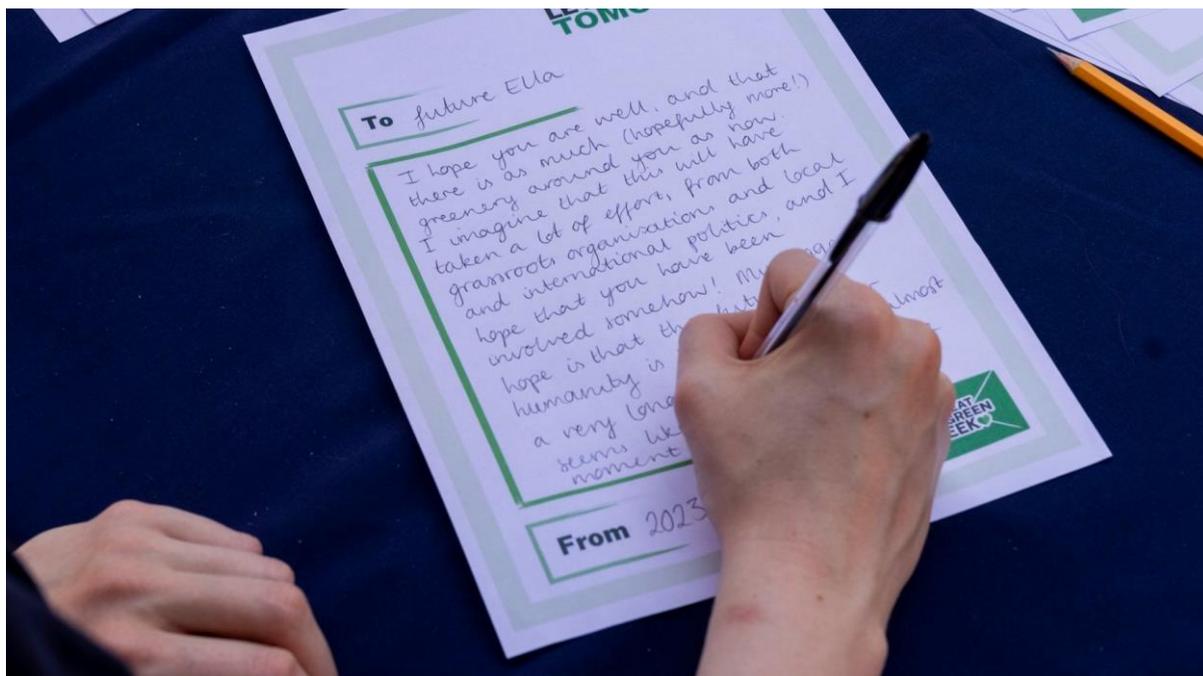
The Last Word

25. Resources for Lent
26. Gardening for wildlife in January

See below for: -

**Note on Data Protection
About these E-Bulletins
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***** ACTION OF THE WEEK *****



(credit: Vicki Couchman and The Climate Coalition)

THE CLIMATE COALITION COMMUNITY OPEN LETTER

The Climate Coalition writes:

ADD YOUR COMMUNITY'S VOICE TO OUR LETTER TO PARTY LEADERS

Protecting the things we love from the worst impacts of climate change is too important for division and delay. We need urgent action.

As we head into an election year, we need to show all politicians, political parties and candidates that people up and down the country support urgent action to address the climate and nature crises.

We're asking local groups and organisations all over the country to

sign up to this letter. Each group that signs up represents people organising and acting for positive change in their own communities.

Add your community's voice to this letter to party leaders, and help us demonstrate the breadth and depth of the public mandate for action.

Read the Letter in full here, speak to your Group, and then fill in the form.

Thank you!

NEWS AND COMMENT

1. Climate and Environment (includes **Actions** and **Events**)

Action - Urgent vote against new Oil and Gas licences



#Stop Rosebank writes: - Parliament is about to debate the controversial Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill and we need as many MPs there as possible to vote against new oil and gas expansion.

The new proposed legislation would require the UK regulator to hold annual licensing rounds for new oil and gas projects, at a time when we are already close to hitting the 1.5C threshold to limit the worst impacts of the climate crisis. This bill would lock in a huge expansion of new oil and gas

production for decades to come, against all scientific advice.

Please write to your MP to ask them to attend the debate on Monday 22nd January 2024 and speak out against this terrible legislation. The UK parliament must vote NOT to expand new oil and gas production during a climate crisis.

Event - How do we make the climate crisis a priority election issue?

*****Please note - this takes place on Tuesday 23rd January at 7pm*****

The Archdiocese of Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission are holding a Forum on Tuesday and invite you to take part via Zoom. Book your place [here](#).

P.S. Don't forget 'Winning a Fossil Free Future' which was advertised in the last e-bulletin and which takes place on Monday 22nd January at 7pm.

UK 'used to be a leader on climate', lament European lawmakers

According to an article published in [The Guardian](#) yesterday (20th), since Brexit the UK are falling behind in environmental protections. The EU has done more than us in putting things in place, such as banning harmful pesticides and substances, taxing carbon emissions on imported goods, regulating batteries, and cleaning the air.

Various MEP's are quoted in the report. What I would like to know is what has happened to the huge amount of money that the Government said we would save through coming out of the EU....

Event - We Make Tomorrow

The Climate Justice Coalition have their Conference on the 28th January, more details of which are available [here](#). They write: - *The climate crisis will define politics and economics throughout this century, impacting working people in every way.*

From fast rising prices to food shortages, industrial change to floods and fires. The transition is underway but led by corporate interests at the expense of workers. Now more than ever we need to build workers' power, to both halt industrial pollution and win a transition that is worker-led and fair.

They produce a very interesting newsletter, which is not available on their website. It is well worth signing up to, though. You can do so through this [link](#).

Leaders at Davos must address 'loss and damage' funding to help climate hit communities

Christian Aid 'is urging the UK Foreign Secretary and the UK Chancellor to use high-level talks at Davos to scale up international commitments to support the world's most vulnerable communities to repair the damage from climate breakdown.'

Read what Christian Aid's Mariana Paoli, Head of Global Policy and Advocacy, says [here](#).

Action - The Big Plastic Count - 11th - 17th March

The plastic waste crisis isn't going away, so The Big Plastic Count is back.

The Big Plastic Count Team writes: - *In 2022, a quarter of a million people from households, schools, businesses and communities across the country made The Big Plastic Count the biggest ever investigation into UK household plastic waste. By counting your plastic waste for 1 week, you helped us to reveal a shocking truth: that the UK throws away 2 billion pieces of plastic every week, only 12% of which is recycled.*

In 2024, governments will be negotiating a Global Plastics Treaty that could finally phase out plastic production for good. And so, we're doing The Big Plastic Count again - this time we'll be using the results to convince UK ministers to lead the way at these talks and push for a really strong treaty.

It's a massive opportunity, but we have to act fast...and we need your help!

[Register here](#).

Azerbaijan appoints fossil fuel execs and scandal-hit officials to all-male Cop29 committee

[Climate Home News](#) (an American site) reports on the planned COP29, and it is not looking good so far for the next one.

The headline obviously grabs you, but when you go into the article, it has put an additional line on there that says: - *Update: Three days after this article was published, the government of Azerbaijan added 12 women and two men to the committee. They did not comment on the reason for the change.* I will lead you to draw your own conclusions about the potential of COP29, which will be taking place in November 2024).

2. Palestine/Gaza/Israel (includes an Action, Event and a Newsletter)

As we have passed the 100 days since hostilities began, a selection of articles about the conflict.

From Toine van Teeffelen, friend and Pax Christi partner in Bethlehem (19/01/24)

The Israeli army and West Bank settlers are not separate entities.

My taxi driver moves his flat hand under and against his chin. That seems to have a double meaning: the water is rising to his lips, and he is being strangled.

I talk to the driver about the severe economic decline and the restrictions on freedom of movement in the West Bank in the shadow of the horrors of Gaza. Traveling between West Bank cities is still problematic due to the many checkpoints characterized by often long waiting times, systematic humiliations, and brutal behavior by the Israeli army and settlers.

What stands out in the international news is how much Western governments make a distinction between violent behavior by settlers and by the army in the West Bank.

In itself, it is helpful that plans are circulating, not yet implemented, to deny violent settlers visas when visiting Western countries. A few days ago, an Australian foreign minister visited and said to be "deeply concerned" about the aggressive behavior of settlers in the West Bank.

But the army and the settlers are more than ever an inseparable whole, and that is not acknowledged.

In the Hebron area, for example, Palestinians suddenly see their settler neighbors in military uniforms exhibiting the same threats and violence as before without uniforms.

A well-known nonviolent Palestinian activist in Hebron, Issa Amro, says that after October 7, he was handcuffed, blindfolded, beaten, and threatened by settler-soldiers for ten hours. "I thought they would kill me. It was the worst experience of my life. I know what to do with soldiers, even when they are fanatic. But settlers in uniform are impossible."

About 5,500 residents of Israeli settlements were recruited into special military units, so-called regional or territorial battalions, after October 7.

These units are supposed to guard the areas around the settlements. A special unit was even formed around the so-called hilltop youth, infamous for years for their violence towards the Palestinian population.

The army has distributed about 7,000 weapons to these battalions and not only that. Israeli settlers who do not serve in the army also receive a significant number of those thousands of weapons. They often live in so-called outposts that need to be secured because they are part of the mentioned territorial units. The fact that these outposts are settlements that are even illegal in Israel apparently does not matter.

In any case, there is an enormous number of weapons in circulation in Israel. Since October 7, more than 250,000 new applications for firearm permits have been made in Israel, which is more than the total of the past 20 years.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), there have been 431 attacks on Palestinians by settlers in the West Bank since October 7. In almost half of the cases, the settlers were accompanied by soldiers, or the latter actively supported them.

The violence and threats of the settlers are not just randomly violent but intended to expel people, individually or collectively. In the last few months, about 30 Bedouin communities have been expelled from large areas of land in the West Bank, which then become accessible for Israeli colonization.

The scenario that is now looming: If the water rises to the lips of the Palestinians in the West Bank, and there are new outbreaks of violence, the settlers may seize the opportunity for a new Nakba or expulsion of Palestinian residents.

Sources:

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-17/ty-article-magazine/.premium/israels-army-drafted-thousands-of-settlers-accounts-of-their-violence-are-piling-up/0000018d-12e7-d260-aded-b7efddbe0000>

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-06/ty-article/.premium/thats-life-and-death-arming-israeli-civilians-is-a-terrible-security-policy/0000018c-40a5-db23-ad9f-68fd78bd0000>

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-95>

Bishop Christopher calls for ceasefire 'to end appalling suffering' in Gaza

The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, has spoken of the dire situation facing Christians and others following a pastoral visit to Jerusalem and the West Bank during the 14 - 18 January.

According to the Diocese of Southwark website: - *During this time, he met with Bishop Hosam, the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem as well as priests from Nazareth, Jerusalem and Ramallah.*

[Read his report and download photos from his visit through this link.](#)

'None of the children has winter clothes'

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports on the situation with Mena and her four children (including two with disabilities) who are living in a makeshift tent in Al Quds Open University in Gaza.

Their Flash Update #97 reports on the situation as it stood on the 19th January. [You can read it here.](#)

Christians hope to make their presence felt in Gaza protests

[Church Times](#) report on what motivated the activists who turned up on the streets to protest last Saturday *'in support of Palestine, calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and solidarity with Jewish anti-war advocates.'*

They quote Fr. Martin Newell as saying: - *"I think it's really important that this conflict is not seen as Jews against Muslims. Firstly, there are Christian Palestinians; and also it's not a religious conflict in that sense: it's about fundamental issues of justice and oppression and violence and war."*

Click on the link above to read the article.

An Israeli Jesuit priest on the war in Gaza, Jewish-Catholic relations and the future of the two-state solution

This interesting article is available to read through [America Magazine.](#)

Newsletter - Year End Balfour Project Newsletter 2023

The Balfour Project sum up their year and what they have been doing, with various links to their statements and webinars. [Read it here.](#)

Action - Join the boycott of Barclays

Many years ago I worked for Barclays, and I was very shocked when a valued colleague resigned over the bank's stance on South Africa. At that time I wasn't at all politically motivated, and had no clue what was going on there.

Fast forward to now, and it does not surprise me to read what Palestine Solidarity Campaign have written in a recent email: - *Barclays is bankrolling Israel's genocidal assault on Palestinians in Gaza. The bank invests over £1 billion in companies supplying weapons and military technology to Israel, which are used in its attacks on Palestinians. Over the past weeks, thousands of people have joined protests outside Barclays branches to call on the bank to end its complicity. But the bank isn't listening.*

So today, we're calling on you to take the first step to boycott Barclays. If you're a Barclays customer, we're asking you to pledge today to close your account on 9 February 2024 using our pledge form in this [link](#).

If you're not a Barclays customer, we're asking you to write to the bank to tell it you won't use any Barclays services. Find out how by clicking [here](#).

*The PSC stress that to have the most effect, it has to be a co-ordinated effort - **SO PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE YOUR ACCOUNT OR WRITE TO THEM UNTIL THE 9TH FEBRUARY.***

Event - Post-Conflict Gaza: Construction or Reconstruction

Wednesday 24th January at 3pm UK time

The Balfour Project is putting on this webinar with Charlie Bird OBE in conversation with Andrew Whitley.

They write: - *From 2010 to November 2018 Charles Bird, OBE, was a Teaching Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV), University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK, and was Course Tutor for the Certificate and Advanced Certificate in Terrorism Studies.*

Between 1986 and 2010 he was a member of HM Diplomatic Service, specialising in the Middle East, conflict, post-conflict, terrorism and counter-terrorism issues. Postings included to the UAE (1988–92) with involvement in Desert Storm, Belgrade (1992–93) during the war in former Yugoslavia, Macedonia (1999) for the Kosovo crisis, Greece and Nigeria.

During tours in the UK, his jobs included Deputy Head of Middle East Department, Head of South Asia Department, and leading the project that resulted in the formation of the interdepartmental (FCO, MoD, DfID) Stabilisation Unit, which co-ordinates the UK Government's post conflict reconstruction work in, amongst other places, Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2003 he was seconded back to the military and was on the staff of the General Officer Commanding 1st (UK) Armoured Division in Iraq, both during and for several months after the invasion.

Between 2004–2008 he was on secondment to the MoD working on issues related to counter-terrorism.

[Register for the webinar here.](#)

Israel faces genocide charges at the International Court of Justice

This news, through ICN, is now over a week old, but it includes links to the public hearings at The Hague, and to the Application itself. [Read/watch it here.](#)

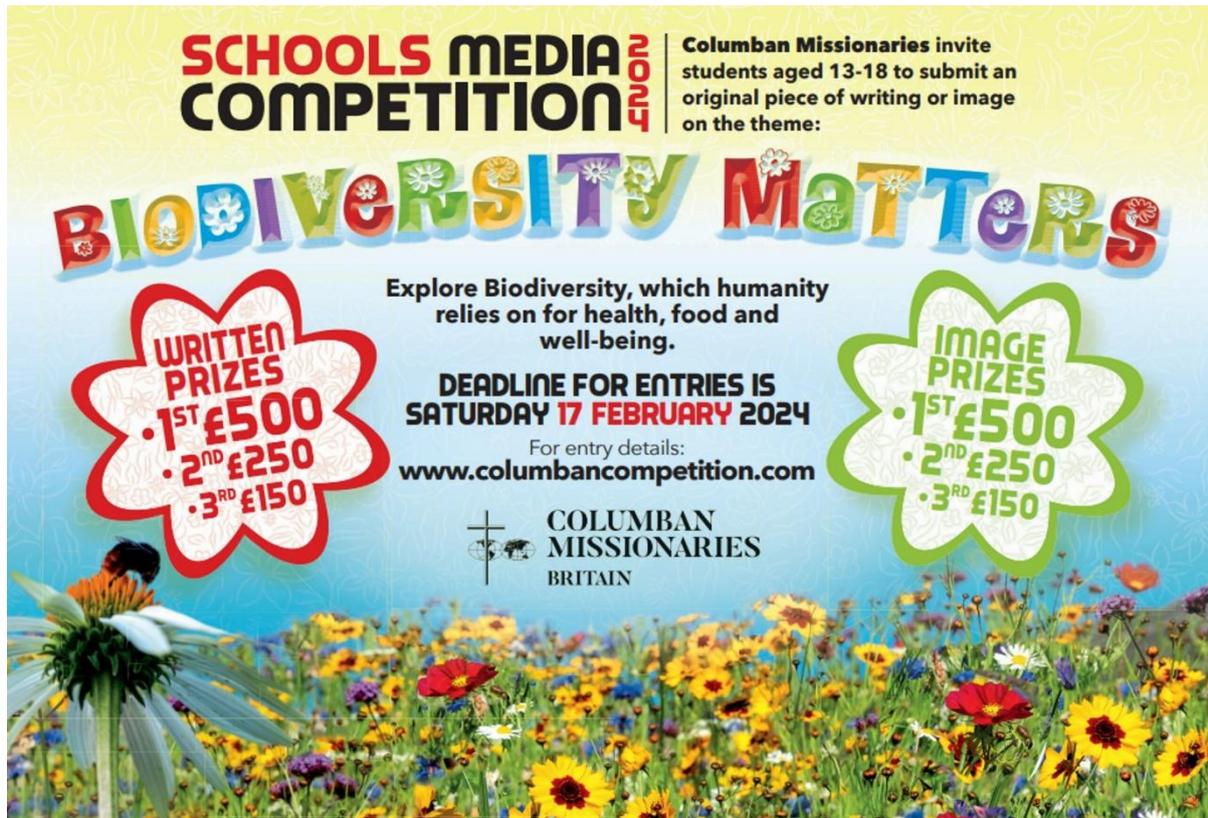
A few days prior to that, again through [ICN](#), Toine van Teeffelen has written about this initiative, brought about by South Africa.

War on Gaza: The West's military action against the Houthis is doomed to fail

The Balfour Project have shared this article by Richard Burden, dated the 13th January. He talks about the situation in Yemen and says: - *The action by the US and UK has all the hallmarks of a policy driven more by the mantra that 'something must be done' than by clear strategic thinking about what that 'something' should be.*

[Read it in full through this link.](#)

3. Columban Schools Media Competition



We are just under a month away from the closing date for this competition. If your child's school is interested in taking part, or you think they might be, please forward on the details, which are available [here](#).

Newsletters/Reports

(please note that any events advertised in individual newsletters will not necessarily be also advertised in our Events section unless specifically requested by the organisation)

4. Transform Trade January 2023

Trade Matters magazine for the start of the year, with lots of interesting articles in it. [Available here](#).

5. Joint Public Issues Team January 2024

An interesting read, and in particular there are pointers towards engaging in the upcoming elections. Read it through this [link](#).

6. NW NJPN E-Bulletin January 2024

Anne O'Connor has put together a really good mix of articles, including the lead one being about the situation in Yemen and the US/UK attacks. Also, a very good read on Mr Bates v. The Post Office. You can read it through the [NJPN website](#).

7. Embrace Magazine Winter Edition

Considering the situation in the Middle East, this makes for a very positive read, with lots of stories and photographs. [Click here to read it](#).

8. Caritas Diocese of Plymouth January 2024

If you live in the Diocese of Plymouth you will be interested in the work that the Caritas team are doing down there. [Read it here](#).

9. Campaign Against Arms Trade

Information and various dates of protests available here.

EVENTS (in chronological order where applicable)

10. 22nd January - 1.30pm to 4.30pm - Pax Christi/CAAT

Join a protest outside Twickenham Arms Fair.

11. 24th January - 11am - Lancashire Citizens UK

Community Organising in Lancashire: Catholic Social Teaching.

Guest Speakers: -

Sir John Battle, Leeds Citizens

Fr Chris Hughes, Hexham Diocese and Tyne and Wear Citizens.

Gerry Flannigan, Caritas Shrewsbury, Greater Manchester Citizens.

12. 26th - 28th January - Christians Aware

Annual Conference - Hinsley Hall, Leeds

13. 27th January - 7pm - Pax Christi USA

Building a World without Nuclear Weapons: An Urgent Imperative

14. 27th January - 10am - 1.30pm - Arundel and Brighton Justice and Peace Assembly

Safe at home; safe in our communities

15. 11th February - Church Action on Poverty Sunday

Details here

**16. 14th February - Merseyside Pax Christi
Ash Wednesday Walk of Witness for Peace, Repentance and Reconciliation.**

Assemble from 1.15pm on steps of St Luke's 'bombed out church' at the top of Bold St, Liverpool L1 2TR. The walk starts at 1.30pm, with Stations of the Cross at the Statue of Reconciliation, in Church St (where ashes will be distributed) Lord St and the Town Hall. We walk in support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and for peace in Ukraine /Russia, Palestine/Israel and in our City.

**For more information contact Jan Harper
- janharper20211@outlook.com**

17. 17th February 2024 - Closing Date for Columbans Schools Media Competition

[More details available here.](#)

18. 24th February - NJPN Open Meeting via Zoom

**'Live or Let Die' - A call to care for the poor and for the earth
For more details and to register contact admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk**

19. 7th March - Hope into Action's Annual Conference

'Empowered': taking place at Kingsgate Church, Peterborough

20. 17th/24th April and 1st May - School for Synodality

[Conversations in the Spirit: a series of online workshops](#)

(new dates put on due to the January dates being oversubscribed)

21. 11th May - NJPN Annual General Meeting

Taking place at Romero House, London. For more information contact admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

22. 24th May - Catholic Association for Racial Justice - 40th Anniversary Year

The Event will be held at Amigo Hall – St Georges Cathedral, Southwark. It will include Speakers on Travellers, Caste discrimination, Migrants and Citizens of colour, Black Vocations (priesthood, female religious and the diaconate), 'Love the Stranger' (CBCEW) and a discussion of the Racial Justice Agenda for Change. The Event will end with Mass in Southwark Cathedral.

More details to follow.

23. 19th - 21st July - NJPN Annual Conference - 'Just Politics'

Taking place at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire
[Details and Booking Form available on the NJPN website.](#)

Actions

24. Say no to Twickenham Arms Fair

Palestine Solidarity Campaign write: - Take action to demand the Rugby Football Union revoke permission for arms fairs to use Twickenham Stadium.

Twickenham Stadium is due to host two events attended by a range of arms companies producing weapons and military technology being used by Israel in its ongoing devastating and illegal assault on Palestinians.

[Add your name to protest here.](#)

The Last Word

25. Lenten Resources

Anne O'Connor has produced some good resources for Lent. Please share with your parish or group.

[Download through the NJPN website.](#)

26. Gardening for wildlife this January

Dr Emma Gardner, Head of Environment in Salford Diocese, has created ten tips to create a space for wildlife in school and parish gardens - or gardens, patios and balconies at home.

Available to read through the [The Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton website](#).

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NEWS LINKS

Independent Catholic News

Find Justice and Peace stories at:

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/justice-peace-environment>

[Sign up](#) to receive these regularly.

Catholic Communications Network

Find news stories at www.catholicnews.org.uk

Latest Zenit Headlines [here](#)

Vatican News homepage: www.vaticannews.va

World Council of Churches

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/>

UK Parliament News

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/>

Follow us on Twitter: @NJandPNetwork

Follow us on Facebook: National Justice and Peace Network

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About these E-BULLETINS

The items above are emails received from around the Network which may be of interest to those involved in working for justice and peace.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of NJPN.

To **unsubscribe** from these mailings, email ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org with "unsubscribe" in the subject box. We also welcome your **feedback** at the same address.

Forwarding these emails: Please feel free to forward these emails on to your contacts – *but please remember to tell them to contact YOU if they want to unsubscribe!*

Urgent Actions:

We sometimes receive emails that need immediate action and cannot wait for the weekly bulletin. To receive these items email the same address with "**urgent actions**" in the subject box.

If you appreciate these bulletins, help to keep them coming by donating to NJPN:

Send cheques payable to NJPN to: NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX.

*Make a regular donation by **standing order**: Download standing order/membership forms from <http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/>*

(NJPN is a registered charity no: 1114947 Company no: 5036866)

If you shop online, you can support us at no extra cost to yourself by signing up with easyfundraising.org.uk, where lots of companies will make a donation to us when you shop online with them.

As a small charity NJPN relies on donations from its members and friends, as well as grants for specific work or projects, if you feel you are able to make a contribution you can either: make a bacs payment to our account: Sort code 16-31-15 account 10089516 reference Donation with your surname or our CAF donate

page: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/8130#!/DonationDetails>