NJPN E-Bulletin 7th January 2024



(Image courtesy of embeddedfaith.org)

"Let us leave behind our divisions and unite our forces ... and with God's help, let us emerge from the dark night of environmental devastation in order to turn our common future into the dawn of a new and radiant day."

(Pope Francis - COP28)

Dear Friends,

A Happy New Year to you all! I hope your Christmas was a happy one, and that 2024 will be a healthy one! In our area there seems to have been a lot of people with this '100 day cough', and I must admit that listening to Carols being sung, interspersed with bouts of coughing at our late Mass on Christmas Eve, made me yearn for the bad old days when masks were compulsory!

As you can imagine, we have a packed edition this weekend after a few weeks without. I have tried to keep everything current and relevant. Our Action of the Week is around Peace Sunday, which is next weekend. There are also plenty of articles on the climate.

Exciting news! Our next newsletter will be winging its way to you by post in the couple of weeks if you are a member/subscriber. In with it will be our Conference Booking Form (hasn't that come around quickly!). In the next few days the Booking Form will also appear on our website, and due to complaints about how hard our previous form was to fill in online, we have

changed the format. There will be two options to choose from - the first is a Word Document that you need to download to your PC/Laptop, fill it in, and then email it back to us; the second is that we are trialling a Microsoft Form, which we hope will make life easier. All we ask is that you don't do both! Just fill in one or the other. Please also be aware that there are a limited number of spaces this year at present. When this Conference was booked a couple of years ago, we were given 130 spaces - and The Hayes have informed us that they are fully booked now that weekend. Once we have filled those spaces anyone else will need to go on a waiting list until The Hayes are in a position to release some more rooms, should they receive any cancellations. If you are planning on coming, please book early.

The next e-bulletin will be out around the weekend of the 21st January, and any articles/events you want shared will need to be with me by Friday 19th.

God bless

Sharon

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ACTION OF THE WEEK



PEACE SUNDAY 14TH JANUARY 2024

Pax Christi writes: -

Every year, with the support of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, England and Wales, we promote Peace Sunday as a way of observing the World Day of Peace.

Peace Sunday 2024 is Sunday 14th January and the theme chosen by Pope Francis is 'Artificial Intelligence and Peace'. You can read a full

copy of his message for the World Day of Peace here:

Pope Francis Message for World Day of Peace 2024

We have produced a number of resources to help churches and groups mark the day, all of which you can download by clicking on the links below. We have also produced a prayer card specifically for the day which you can order through our shop.

For further info on Peace Sunday or any of our resources, please contact us on info@paxchristi.org.uk

As our Action of the Week we are asking you to promote Peace Sunday in your parishes. Look at the resources available on the Pax Christi website.

Has your Priest advertised a retiring collection for Peace Sunday? If not, maybe ask why. If your parish is not having a monetary collection, maybe pass on the Bidding Prayers from the resources, or order a few of the Prayer Cards.

Thank you!

NEWS AND COMMENT

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

Explaining Integral Ecology

Integral Ecology is one of those phrases that gets banded about a lot in the circles that I move in...but I am ashamed to say I have never really understood what it means properly! Jane Lavery, of the Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology Team, wrote an article on it through Independent Catholic News, which can be read here.

Action - Join the No Faith in Fossil Fuels Lent Vigil

Christian Climate Action writes: - The No Faith in Fossil Fuels Lent Vigil is a ten day event set to take place in Westminster – home of the UK Parliament. Christians from across the country will gather together from Ash Wednesday, holding a vigil across ten days, day and night.

The vigil will be launched with an Ash Wednesday Church Service at St Johns Church, Waterloo and brought to a close with a service outside Downing Street.

When? Vigil starts Feb 14th at 3:30pm, Runs for 10 days, ending on the 24th Feb at 3pm.

Where? Carriage Gate, outside Parliament, Westminster, London.

Why? Around the world creation is crying out. Heatwaves, fires, droughts and floods are becoming more frequent, wrecking lives, land, and livelihoods. Meanwhile, the biggest polluters who have caused this crisis make vast profits from fossil fuels. As creation groans, the poorest, who have done the least to cause the problem, are paying the price.

Visit their website for more information here.

Newsletter - Green Christian No. 236

A mix of informative events, campaigns and activities. Read it here.

Event - Webinar: Winning a Fossil Free Future - Monday 22nd January. 7pm - 8.30pm

Global Justice Now writes: - While the UN climate conference declaration talked about the need to "transition away from fossil fuels", the final text was littered with loopholes. Yet the conference also saw a parallel effort gain traction, with fossil fuel producer Colombia becoming the latest country to call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. With so much money and so many vested interests involved, winning the end of the fossil fuel era isn't going to be easy, but there's no way out of the accelerating climate crisis without it. The international campaign for a Fossil Fuel Treaty is naming the problem and building momentum towards a global exit plan from fossil fuels which is both rapid and fair.

Join us for the launch of Global Justice Now's new UK-wide campaign for a Fossil Fuel Treaty. Our speakers will discuss the international fight against fossil fuels, the hows and whys of the treaty itself, and crucially, how you can help make the treaty happen from wherever you are in the UK.

Sign up here.

We have no time to contrast biodiversity loss

Vatican News report on a study on the impact of climate change and biodiversity loss done by University College London, which found that organisms' populations could decline abruptly rather than gradually, leaving us with very little time to respond.

Alex Pigot, author of the study, is quoted as saying: - "According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), at 2°C of warming we will be at risk of losing more than 20% of the species on the planet",

The full article is available to read here.

Brazil lawmakers approve using green fund to pave road through Amazon rainforest

This is an interesting article that I picked up through Climate Home News. They write: - The lower house of Brazil's Congress has approved a bill to relax environmental licensing to pave a highway cutting through the heart of the Amazon that scientists say will threaten the future of the world's largest tropical rainforest.

The ministry, however, argues that the paving of BR319 would turn the road into the world's "most sustainable highway" and would allow easier access for police patrols to monitor and prevent deforestation."

Rather concerning, though, is that those in power in Brazil seem to be using conservation funds to finance the highway which were donated to Brazil, such as the \$1.3 billion Amazon Fund backed by the U.S. and European allies.

Sila Mesquita is civil society's representative on the Amazon Fund committee. She said the fund "is meant to keep the forest, to maintain its biodiversity and to fight climate change. I don't see its resources being used for paving".

Read the full text here.

'We can't afford to wait:' a Cornish town faces climate threat head-on

This article was reported in The Guardian some weeks ago, but with the ongoing threat of flooding in many areas around the UK, what is projected as happening in Bude by 2050 could potentially happen in other areas around the coastline of our Isles.

The Guardian writes: - Earlier this year the north Cornwall town received a profound shock when it was presented with a visualisation created by the Environment Agency of the impact of rising sea levels on Bude.

It left little doubt about the seriousness of the threat and made it clear that global heating-induced sea level rises will push the community into full-scale retreat.

It then goes onto report about how they have set up the Bude Climate Partnership to meet this threat head-on, and due to their strength and ambition have won it £2million from the national lottery climate action fund.

Read about the how they have gone about things, and the work that they have put in, through <u>The Guardian.</u>

Worried about pesticides in your food - download 'The Dirty Dozen'

The Pesticide Action Network UK writes: - Concerned about pesticide residues in your food? Our list of the 'dirtiest' fruit and vegetables reveals the produce most likely to contain cocktails of multiple pesticides. The Dirty Dozen is based on PAN UK analysis of the UK government's pesticide residue testing programme and the latest leaflet reveals the fruit and vegetables most likely to contain more than one pesticide in 2022 (the most recent year for which data is available).

Looking beyond these twelve 'worst offenders' the data reveals that the prevalence of pesticide cocktails in our food appears to be rising, with this year's results the worst since PAN UK began its analysis in 2018. Specifically:

- Since 2018, the percentage of all food tested containing multiple pesticide residues has never exceeded 32.5%, but this year jumped to 39%.
- The total percentage of fruit and vegetables containing multiple pesticides residues has never exceeded 48%, but this year rose to 53%.

- Apples containing multiple pesticide residues has increased from 44% in 2018 to 60% in 2019 to 72% this year (apples were not tested in other years).
- Spinach containing multiple pesticide residues has increased from 57% in 2019 to 73% this year (spinach was not tested in other years).

Download The Dirty Dozen here.

Just as upsetting to me was the claim that 50% of wine contains residues of multiple pesticides. Read that article here.

Newsletter - The Food Wrap

Wrap bring you 'the latest sustainable food and drink news'. I was originally going to share the article on The Courtauld Commitment which shows progress against targets for food, water and greenhouse gas emissions across the food and drink sectors. However, there are other interesting articles in their newsletter, including the report from the WWF "What's in Store for the Planet: the impact of UK shopping baskets on climate and nature 2023."

Browse through the newsletter here.

How your diocese or organisation could grow more trees with help from The Woodland Trust

Bright Now have written this blog in which there is a video which explains how the Diocese of Leeds have worked with the Woodland Trust to identify areas of their glebe land which are suitable for growing trees, and how this has been achieved with very little cost to the diocese.

Have a look here.

2. Palestine/Gaza/Israel (includes **Events** and Actions)

Event - Israel/Palestine: In Search of Truth and Justice - Tuesday 9th

January: 5pm - 8pm (Webinar either online or in-person at 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD)

The Balfour Project write: - For those who are looking for a deeper context and to gain more clarity about the current nightmare in Israel and Palestine, we are privileged to host Dr Peter Shambrook (Balfour Project Trustee), who has recently published a major work on the background of Britain's involvement in the conflict in his new book Policy of Deceit. Britain and Palestine, 1914 - 1939. He will be joined by guest speakers Sir Vincent Fean (Trustee) and Mike Scott-Baumann (Chair of the Executive Committee) from the Balfour Project.

Sign up here

Rabbis for Human Rights support beleaguered communities in the West Bank

<u>Independent Catholic News</u> report on the work that Rabbis for Human Rights have been doing in helping the Palestinian Communities in the Occupied Territories.

Event - Jerusalem and Gaza: Taking stock with Daniel Seidemann - Tuesday 16th January: 3pm

The Balfour Project write: Daniel Seidemann has lived in Jerusalem since 1973. He has been a member of the Israeli Bar Association since 1987. Since 1991, he has specialized in the geopolitics of contemporary Jerusalem, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the city.

Danny and his colleagues founded, Terrestrial Jerusalem, and are frequently consulted by senior decision-makers and governmental bodies on matters pertaining to both unfolding developments in Jerusalem and the broader issues relating to a permanent status agreement. He has also been conducting ongoing discussions on Jerusalem issues within the Arab world, and with Christian faith communities and diaspora Jewish communities. He has participated in numerous Jerusalem-related projects, colloquia and track-two deliberations.

For more information and to sign up, <u>click here</u>.

UN laments dehumanisation of Palestinians

Vatican News relays details of the United Nations report which highlights mass arbitrary arrests, detentions and reported torture by Israeli forces in the West Bank.

Also, UNICEF said this year has been the deadliest year on record for children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with conflict-related violence reaching unprecedented levels. 83 children had been killed in the twelve weeks leading up to the end of December.

The full article is available through Vatican News.

A Letter From the Holy Land

The Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) shared this poignant letter by Joseph Hazboun (regional director for CNEWA-Pontifical Mission's Jerusalem office) before Christmas, but I felt it needed to be read if you haven't done so already.

Despite the conflict, Joseph shares that 'now is the time for us to show our faith in the Gospel, stand tall, draw strength from our rooted faith, from our certainties and beliefs, so we can spread courage and hope.'

The full article can be read through their website.

Post on Twitter (X) from Ex-Ambassador Craig Murray

This was shared on X in mid-December by Jonathan Cook, who is a writer/journalist. I was so disturbed by the words that Craig Murray wrote that I copied it into a letter I sent to our MP - and as expected, no reply was received.

The feed read: - 'Yesterday I attended a session called by Palestine at the United Nations in Geneva. Over 120 states attended. While the formal session consisted of statements of national position with few surprises, I was able to discuss with a large number of delegates in the corridors why the Genocide Convention has not been activated, triggering a reference to the International Court of Justice.

'The answer is now clear to me. It is not that people are worried that a claim of genocide will not be successful at the International Court of Justice. It is

that everybody is quite sure it will succeed. There is no respectable argument that this is not a genocide...

'The problem is that once the ICJ has determined that this is a genocide, it follows that not only are Netanyahu and hundreds of senior Israeli officials and military personally liable, but it is absolutely plain that "Genocide Joe" Biden, Sunak and members of their administrations are also criminally liable for complicity, having provided military support for the genocide.

'The International Criminal Court cannot ignore a judgment of genocide from the International Court of Justice and will have no choice but to issue arrest warrants.' Text Ends.

I have no words...

3. Senior church and charity leaders call for urgent action on rising UK and world poverty

Church Action on Poverty writes: - Today (Friday) senior Christian leaders - including the General Secretary of Churches Together in England, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and senior leaders of development agencies Christian Aid, CAFOD and Tearfund - have joined us in calling for urgent political action on poverty.

The joint statement is a clear demonstration of solidarity. The signatories state:

"We are united in our belief that the human cost of failing to take action now is too big and too damaging to ignore."

Signatories are calling on political leaders to set out clear plans to eradicate extreme poverty and halve overall poverty by 2030, in the UK.

"We know that poverty is not inevitable – it's a consequence of political choices and priorities."

Stef Benstead, a trustee of Church Action on Poverty, said:

"According to the prophets, poverty occurred because there was injustice and a failure by the leaders of the country to enact policies that guaranteed a minimum living standard for everyone."

Read the full statement.

4. Map of countries that criminalise LGBT people

Human Dignity Trust writes: - In 65 countries, there are laws which criminalise lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, fuelling stigma, legitimising prejudice and encouraging violence. Additionally, in 12 of these countries, there are jurisdictions where the death penalty is either imposed or considered a legal possibility.

The Human Dignity Trust exists to change this. We're the only organisation working globally to support strategic litigation to challenge laws that persecute people on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Have a look at the map, and the work of the Human Dignity Trust.

5. Sudan's 'forgotten' war and the immense suffering of its people

Vatican News report on the fact that despite the fact that there have been over 12,000 deaths in Sudan, and around 7 million displaced people this year, the conflict, which has been ongoing for around eight and a half months, is 'far from the cares of the world'. The UN emergency relief chief has described the crisis in Sudan as "One of the worst humanitarian nightmares in recent history".

More details are available through Vatican News.

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)

6. Debt Justice Highlights of 2023

Details of the five key campaigns that they were involved in last year. Read it here.

7. EAPPI UK and Ireland December 2023

The Ecumenical Accompaniers Programme for Palestine and Israel give us eyewitness reports and ways in which you can join in. <u>Find it here.</u>

8. Joint Public Issues Team December 2023

An interesting read, covering caring for creation, poverty, human rights, and youth issues. Please read it <u>here.</u>

9. Columban Missionaries Britain December 2023

The latest updates from the Columbans. Available to read here.

10. Top 10 Operation Noah Moments of 2023

Celebrating their successes with this very positive <u>newsletter</u>.

11. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Lots of resources and events. Read it here.

12. Biofuelwatch December 2023

Updates on campaigns and policies. Available here.

EVENTS (in chronological order where applicable)

13. 14th January- 11am and 1.30pm - Liverpool Archdiocese Justice and Peace Commission

Peace Sunday Mass (11am at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool) and

Lecture: - Andrew Jackson, CEO of Pax Christi England and Wales, will speak on 'The challenges of non-violence in 2024: being non-violent in a violent world.(1.30pm in the Gibberd Room).

For more information contact p.guidi@rcaol.org.uk

14. 15th January - 12.45pm - 2pm - Southern Dioceses Environment Group

Feedback from COP 28

15. 24th January, 31st January, 7th February - 7pm - 8.45pm - School for Synodality

Conversations in the Spirit: a Series of Three Workshops (you need to attend all three).

16. 26th - 28th January - Christians Aware Annual Conference - Hinsley Hall, Leeds

17. 11th February - Church Action on Poverty Sunday Details here

18. 17th February 2024 - Closing Date for Columbans Schools Media Competition

More details available here.

19. 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

20. 7th March - Hope into Action's Annual Conference 'Empowered': taking place at Kingsgate Church, Peterborough

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 Booking Forms will be sent out or be on the website shortly.

Actions

24. NJPN are STILL looking for a new Treasurer

Do you know of anyone with financial experience that would be willing to take on the role of Treasurer, following the sad passing of ours? Please share with your parishes/organisations, and if anyone is interested, please email me at admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk. Thank you.

25. Will you stand alongside the women who make our clothes? Eight ways take action today.

Labour behind the Label have provided a list of eight ways that you can stand in solidarity with those women who make our clothes, and have written about how important activism is.

See what you can do to help here.

26. Help defend our right to boycott

Palestine Solidarity Campaign write: - The government's toxic 'anti-boycott bill' will have its 3rd reading in the House of Commons on Wednesday, where MPs will vote on whether it should progress towards becoming law. NOW is the time to put pressure on parliamentarians to oppose this dangerous bill. Will you help defend our right to boycott by taking 2 minutes to email your MP today?

You can also join us protesting outside parliament on Wednesday 10th Jan at 5pm.

Write to your MP here.

The Last Word

27. A Prayer for the Feast of Epiphany

- by Cameron Bellm

I wonder sometimes

If one of the stars that lit Abraham's night

Was the one that led the Magi to Jesus.

A dark canvas speckled by the most generous brush—

What an improbable promise to an old man.

But our God has never been daunted by the unlikely, the impossible.

What a sight for the Magi, too,

A baby resting on hay, his cries mingled with braying and bleating.

I like to think they heard in those everyday sounds a holy chorus,

Saw in that noisy tableau a Creator serenaded by His creation,

All of it embodied, enfleshed—

All of it good.

And when we've left our gifts for this implausible King,

May we, like the Magi, go home by another way—

Having encountered the holy,

May we protect it, guard it,

Trail its light behind us wherever we go.

A sacred arc transposed from heaven to earth.

May we ourselves become the star,

Leading the way to Emmanuel.

Amen.

28. 10 Eco-Friendly New Year's Resolutions

How could we have the first edition of the New Year without a mention of Resolutions! (and I won't tell you how many I have broken so far...)

The Eden Project have shared ten ways that you can do your bit to help the Earth, as well as yourself. Sometimes it is the simplest things that can have the most effect.

See what you can do through this link.

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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

Registered Office: - NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX Telephone Numbers: - 020 7901 4864 and 07365 838535

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