

*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)*

### **PROFESSOR IAN LINDEN: PALESTINE: IS IT TOO LATE FOR TWO STATES?**

1/8/2025: At the United Nations General Assembly in September, three members of the G7 are set to recognise the State of Palestine joining the 147 of the 193 UN member states who already recognise a Palestinian State. The UK's own announcement of support on 29 July was influenced both by France and by pressure from the Parliamentary Labour Party as well as Labour's own members. Canada followed suit. Japan might be next. Italy under Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, with the largest amount of trade with Israel of all the European countries, says it is too early.

Keir Starmer was careful to make the shift in policy towards Palestine a whole Cabinet decision. But there was a touch of the Hebrew saying *chai b'seret*, (lives in a movie i.e. unrealistic optimism) in the official British statement. The UK will recognise Palestine "unless the Israeli government takes substantive steps to end the appalling situation in Gaza, agrees to a ceasefire and commits to a long-term, sustainable peace, reviving the prospect of a Two State Solution". Benjamin Netanyahu is more likely to bomb the Damascus Road than experience a Pauline conversion to the solution he has always rejected.

In the real world the necessary conditions for Palestinian statehood no longer exist. Since 1967, Jewish settlement on the West Bank, now violent and encouraged by religious extremists in government, has been rising inexorably. Israel is unlikely to meet UK terms for reversing the decision to recognise a Palestinian State. Britain lacks 'leverage', or as Donald Trump put it "doesn't matter", though the announcement did have some impact. It also evoked outrage in Israel.

Trump and the US State Department repeated the refrain that Britain was "rewarding Hamas" whilst Netanyahu denounced the UK Government's announcement as "terrorist appeasement". These are well-crafted, resonant slogans aimed mainly at the Israeli public of whom over 75% want a ceasefire and a sustainable peace. And the British Prime Minister has repeatedly demanded that Hamas release the hostages whilst also saying that Hamas should play no part in a future Palestinian State. The Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney said much the same in his recent announcement.

American policy positions knock on to allies such as the UK, Australia and to a lesser degree the EU. Germany for understandable reasons has been highly supportive of Israel. France, and the British Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, has gone beyond asserting Israel's right to self-defence to roundly condemning IDF's actions and stopping export licenses for parts to Israeli jets, helicopters and drones. As antisemitic incidents increase nationally, popular protest is closely monitored for hate speech. Whilst the language and tone of Western governments' support for Israel has shifted markedly, American military support notably has not been withdrawn.

But Britain carries an historic responsibility for the origins of the conflict. The then British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour sent his letter to Lord Rothschild, President of the British Zionist Federation, in November 1917 at the height of World War I. HMG viewed "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people with favour". The word 'State' was missing. What the Balfour declaration meant by Palestine was vague but the population at the time is usually estimated at 85,000 Jews and some 300,000 Arabs. Concerning the latter "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine". A fudge.

Britain was given League of Nations mandatory authority over Palestine in April 1920 at a conference in San Remo, Italy, to carve up the remains of the Ottoman Empire. And by 1946 there were 100,000 British troops in the area. Britain was exhausted, bankrupt, short of food and under pressure from USA. Irgun terrorist militia, led by Menachem Begin, Israel's (later the 3rd first Likud Prime Minister), inflicted significant casualties, 90 were killed in the bombing of the King David Hotel which housed the mandatory authority. Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister Clement Attlee himself were initially opposed to a Jewish State as a possible danger to the UK's political and economic interests in the Middle East.

By late 1947 a brutal Arab-Jewish war was breaking out in Palestine. Led by David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, the Jewish settler community, the Yishuv, more than held their own thanks to their foresighted preparations for war, an ample arms supply from the West, plus support from Stalin, and superior strategy. On the 29th November 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz (Land of)-Israel. Israel declared its Independence on 14 May 1948. Minutes later the USA and Soviet Union recognised the new State. Bevin wanted to think about it and took until January 1949 to follow suit. Predictably Independence inaugurated a new phase of the war with Arab states involved, military setbacks, and massacres on both sides. It resulted in the expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians, many believing they would return. They call it Naqba (the disaster). In Jaffa and Haifa British troops were left as onlookers.

The rest is history. But history repeats itself. Some five million Palestinians are refugees today. Not just Putin's war in Ukraine but Netanyahu's destruction and killing in Gaza, his spurious explanations, are normalizing the abandonment by States of moral restraints in war. We are back to Might is Right with the American government adding to the instability.

Only Trump can exert effective pressure on Netanyahu to stop the starvation and killing of Palestinians. But he seems worryingly reluctant to do so. Starmer does seem to have achieved some influence over him. This may prove more important than his clear intention to return to the Labour Party's commitment to see the Palestinians' right to self-determination made real within a State of their own. And that intention should be rewarded with the return to the Labour fold of numbers of Muslim voters.

<https://www.ianlinden.com/latest-blogs/palestine-is-it-too-late-for-two-states>

- 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.

#### **PROFESSOR IAN LINDEN: NAMING THE HORROR IN GAZA**

24/7/2025: Protests from authoritative sources at the horror in Gaza are growing. A number of professors in genocide and holocaust studies, a handful Jewish, are now condemning as genocide the conduct of Netanyahu's government and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). There has been reluctance to do so. The majority have not come to this conclusion.

The memory of the Holocaust plays a unique role in Jewish and Western consciousness. It became a constitutive element of Zionism, a rationale for the State of Israel's policies towards Palestinians. There has been disbelief that a State, treated by the West as its outpost in the Middle East, could countenance and undertake ethnic cleansing using methods accused of being genocidal.

The legal bar for genocide in international law, beyond war crimes and crimes against humanity, is very high: clear intention, no other plausible explanation for actions whose sole purpose is Genocide.

The 15 July New York Times, carries an essay by Dr. Omer Bartov, an Israeli-American Professor of Holocaust Studies at Brown University, Rhode Island. Professor Bartov was a Company commander in the 1973 Yom Kippur war. Brown University is amongst the top ten, Ivy League, universities in the USA. He describes how he came to the "inescapable conclusion" that "Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians". He cannot be dismissed off-hand.

Bartov expresses concern for the future of Israel and the Palestinians and fears wider consequences of what is now happening in Gaza and the West Bank for the "culture of Holocaust commemoration and the politics of memory, education, and scholarship". He emphasises the importance of Holocaust museums as "models for the representations of other genocides". This reminded me of moving encounters between Holocaust survivors and survivors of the Rwandan genocide in the National Holocaust Centre and Museum, Beth Shalom, near Laxton in Nottinghamshire, a centre founded by two Christians. Bartov fears that the Holocaust, because of manipulation by the Jewish State, will lose its universal importance for humanity and become an ethnically "specific pre-occupation". Such worries do not seem out of place.

Not just Putin's war in Ukraine but Netanyahu's destruction and killing in Gaza, their spurious explanations, are normalizing the abandonment by States of moral restraints in war and the weakening of respect for international law. Attacks on the UN, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the sanctioning of their officials, are authoritarian tactics.

The UK is not immune to the zeitgeist. The recent proscription of Palestine Action under the 2000 Terrorism Act raised eyebrows as well as questions. The legality of proscription is determined by judges. No jury who might, as in past cases, acquit for criminal damage needed. No national consensus on the matter. And protest against the proscription is de facto criminalized with many arrests, with implications for any organisations whose members take to the streets or undertake direct action for a cause.

Severe damage to property meant to "influence government" or "intimidate", falls within the expansive scope of the Act designed to protect national security. Palestine Action activists allegedly used a converted fire-extinguisher to spray red paint onto the turbines of two Voyager refuelling aircraft at an estimated cost of £7 million. A judge decided this fell under the 2000 Act. But the obvious threat is the failure of security at RAF Brize Norton whose management should be called to account.

Israel's sophisticated propaganda and lobbying by AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) have contributed to Western governments' failure to curb the IDF's conduct. And American policy positions knock on to allies such as the UK, Australia and to a lesser degree the EU. Germany for understandable reasons has been highly supportive of Israel though France, and UK Foreign Minister, David Lammy, have been willing to go beyond asserting Israel's right to self-defence to roundly condemning IDF's actions. As antisemitic incidents increase nationally, popular protest is closely monitored for hate speech. Whilst the language and tone of Western governments' support for Israel has shifted markedly, American military support notably has not been withdrawn.

Until recently Christian leaders' reactions to Israel's actions, with the exception of the World Council of Churches, were mainly limited to encouraging reconciliation whilst expressing compassion for the people of Gaza. Jon Sobrino, the Basque Jesuit theologian, in the 1980s called Salvadorians a 'crucified people'. On 22 July Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, echoed his religious language: "He [Christ] is there crucified in the wounded, buried under the rubble and yet present in every act of mercy". After a tank shell hit Holy Family church in Gaza causing three deaths and several injuries, Pope Leo called again for an end to the "barbarity of this war".

The respected Catholic weekly, *The Tablet* of 5 July published a detailed article denouncing the IDF and Israeli government by peace negotiator and former priest, Oliver McTernan. But its title Israel's Existential Choice played into Israel's propaganda that it is fighting for its very existence. The Hamas massacre of 7 October was a barbarous response to repression but neither the belligerent nor less bellicose wings of Hamas represent, if the words have any meaning, an existential threat to Israel. The IDF, with its US military support, could and did reduce Gaza to rubble and successfully waged war on multiple fronts: in Lebanon, Yemen, Iran and Syria.

McTernan touched on the deliberate starvation of Palestinians trapped in Gaza 'while we argue over the niceties of whether or not it is right to use the word 'genocide'. Understandable frustration, but in international law States have to intervene to prevent Genocide. Hence President Bill Clinton's careful avoidance of the term during the Rwandan Genocide.

On 15 July at the General Synod in UK, Anglican Archbishop Hosam Naoum of Jerusalem described the US-Israeli Humanitarian Foundation's four feeding centres, open one hour a day, deathtraps for the hungry, as reminiscent of the Hunger Games movies. Hundreds of well-run UN distribution points around the besieged territory were banned by Israel. Gangs now steal food deliveries.

In December 2023, the South African government filed an 'Application of the Convention of the Prevention of Genocide' in the UN's Hague International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel – strongly supported by civil society groups. The International Criminal Court (ICC) later issued warrants for the arrest of Netanyahu, Yoav Gallant, Minister of Defense, and a Hamas Commander, Mohammad Deif. The UK says it would do so despite strident opposition from the USA which is not a member. And on 23 July, a Brussels court ordered the Flemish authorities to block components for Merkava tanks being shipped from Antwerp to Israel and banned further such exports - four NGOs filed the case.

Bloggers only have words at their disposal carrying at best the modest might of reason and emotion. Two lines taken from a South African poet, Umar Willis, come to mind. "Let the skies belong to the birds again. Not to the metal wings of death".

Naming the horror in Gaza raises several questions: of language, morality, justice and law. Notwithstanding, States appalled at further 'unacceptable' or 'intolerable' acts must urgently impose more effective sanctions on Israel. Hard-won restraints on the savagery of war, and much more, is at stake.

<https://www.ianlinden.com/latest-blogs/naming-the-horror-in-gaza>

### **PAX CHRISTI CONDEMNS GOVERNMENT DECISION TO PROSCRIBE PALESTINE ACTION AS TERRORIST ORGANISATION**

27/7/2025: Pax Christi UK has issued this statement today: 'We join our friends and colleagues in the peace movement in condemning the Government's decision to proscribe Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation. The decision follows the group's recent action at RAF Brize Norton when members are accused of breaking into the base and spraying red paint over two military planes. As others have said, there is a long and proud history in the peace movement of direct action at military bases and arms companies. In 1996, we supported the Seeds of Hope Ploughshare action in which three women 'disarmed' a Hawk Aircraft at Warton BAe factory. The issues there were similar. Charged with causing criminal damage the women pleaded not guilty on the grounds that they had not committed a crime but were 'acting to prevent British Aerospace and the British Government from aiding and abetting genocide'. The three plus one other were found not guilty at a trial in Liverpool.

'There seems to have been no suggestion at all at the time that the Seeds of Hope action was somehow terrorism. Our belief is that no reasonable person would consider the direct action of Palestine Action to be terrorism either. It was quite simply nonviolent protest aimed at drawing attention to the Government's complicity in a genocide in Gaza as it allows planes of the type that were damaged to be used to support Israel's bombing and military action.

As Declassified UK have reported, the Government's decision on Palestine Action merely adds to the suspicion that the Government is succumbing to intense lobbying on the part of arms manufacturers who are demanding that action is taken against what everyone knows to be legitimate protest.' <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52699>  
**See:** [www.declassifieduk.org/israeli-arms-firm-lobbied-home-office-on-palestine-action-court-case/](http://www.declassifieduk.org/israeli-arms-firm-lobbied-home-office-on-palestine-action-court-case/)  
**Write to your MP:** <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/palestine-action-briefing/>  
**or sign the Palestine Solidarity Campaign petition:** [www.palestinecampaign.eaction.org.uk/NoProscription](http://www.palestinecampaign.eaction.org.uk/NoProscription)

## **CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY AND PEACE**

5/7/2025 **Pat Gaffney, Vice President of Pax Christi, Executive of Catholic Nonviolence Initiative writes:**

For three days over the past week I have taken part in nonviolent protests and gatherings related to what is happening in Gaza. Now, with many others, if I do something as simple as wearing a badge or carrying a placard, I could be charged under anti-terrorism legislation.

If we are not watchful, we could lose more democratic freedom and the right to act in conscience against wars, injustice and unjust laws.

On Wednesday, I took part in the weekly Women in Black vigil at the Edith Cavell statue near Trafalgar Square. Women have been gathering here weekly for more than 20 years, challenging the culture of militarism, violence and war in a silent vigil, with some women handing out leaflets about the theme each week. On Wednesday it was our frustration at the silence of the media on Gaza and Palestine as the US, Israel and Iran decide if there is to be another war! We called out our complicity as a nation through the arms and military training we 'sell' to Israel and our governments silence in taking any meaningful action to stop the total destruction of Gaza. While we sometimes engage in difficult conversations we have never been prevented from holding our vigil.

Later that same day 385 MPs voted to 'proscribe' the nonviolent direct action group Palestine Action in effect criminalising legitimate protest. The focus for their actions over several years have been companies involved in providing arms and military support to Israel and the specific 'trigger' for this new legal action was PAs attempt to disarm two Airbus Voyagers with red paint and crowbars.

PA were in an on-going legal challenge to this proscription, were in the High Court on Friday trying to stop the ban coming into force at midnight. For more than five hours, hundreds gathered to support them, representing a cross-section of age, interest, and ethnicity. We heard speakers from human rights groups and from medical workers returned from Gaza, all affirming the need to take action to stop the destruction of Gaza and from activists. A friend and I stood in silence facing the road so that people could see why we were there. Gabriel's placard read: 'Support Nonviolence. Support Palestine Action. Oppose Genocide'. Mine had a message from Pope Francis: 'We ask for peace for this world subjected to arms dealers, who profit from the blood of men, women and children.'

Sadly, they failed and have become the first protest group to be banned under the Terrorism Act 2000 and the ban came into force at midnight. The ban also means that others who support PA, wearing a badge or carrying a placard with their name for instance, will also be 'proscribed' and potentially face a 14 year prison sentence.

In anticipation of this, a brave group of people planned a silent action in Parliament Square today, in front of Gandhi's statue. Their intention was to nonviolently break the new ban, to cross the line as it were. Their message: 'I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.' After about 20 minutes of silent presence, at least 10 police vans arrived to begin the arrests of more than 20 people. I would say mostly women, one of whom was an 83 year-old retired Anglican priest, another a climate activist, another a former staff member of Peace News. I was in a support role, monitoring the arrests and trying to keep track of where they were being taken.

While I feel sure many of the police dislike this new role they have been given by the Home Secretary, aware that most protest groups campaigning on war and Gaza are nonviolent, they are bound by this law - unless brave enough to refuse and act in conscience. What a total waste of their time too - there are many laws already in place to deal with protest.

And what about the rest of us? We still march, sign petitions, write letters, divest our savings, fundraise for humanitarian aid, hold prayer vigils - and we must keep doing all of these things. But we are in new territory. As Christian campaigners where will we place ourselves in protecting democracy, the rights of the vulnerable, in upholding freedom of speech, and the rights of conscience?

Are we trained in the tools of nonviolence that could equip us to analyse, discern, plan for and act for change? I am reminded of the words of the Lutheran pastor Martin Neimöller, during the Second World War: First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out-because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out-because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out-because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me-and there was no one left to speak for me.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52755>

## THE KALENDS OF AUGUST

1/8/2025 **Heather Kiernan writes:** Nadera Raied Mushtha is a poet and writer who was born and raised in the Shujaiya neighbourhood of Gaza City. In the fall of 2023, she started her third year in the English Language Education Department at Islamic University where she was, like Dina Suhail Al-Ejl, a student of Dr. Refaat Alareer. In a recent article she wrote: "Before the war, all the schools and universities were alive with the energy of students and teachers. Now, many of those buildings have been reduced to rubble. The last day students attended school was Thursday, 5 October 2023. That day became a tragic dividing line between normalcy and chaos, between life and death.

This was supposed to be the year of my graduation, the year I would stand among friends and colleagues, wearing caps and gowns on our university's stage. But everything has changed. Many of our classmates have been killed, one after another, and our university stage was burned down and turned into a shelter. They replaced graduating students with tents, they replaced the songs of celebration with the sounds of the death.

Despite the horror, we students of Gaza still hold our pens like weapons of truth. We write, we learn, we dream. Our schools may be reduced to rubble, but our will is stronger than any bomb."

## WHEN THE WAR ENDS

~Nadera Raied Mushtha

When the war ends,  
I will paint the city's walls  
With all the colors we forgot.  
In every chest, I will plant quiet,  
In every garden — an olive tree  
to remember us forever.

When the war ends,  
I will buy fifty-two thousand roses  
And lay one on each martyr's grave  
And on every corner of every street.

I will hang our martyrs' photos  
On a long, white tail of light  
From the north to the south.  
With a brush dipped in star light  
I'll write their names in the sky.

I will paint yellow sunflowers  
Over the gray bullet holes  
That hold our memories.

I will sing songs to the sea of our land  
And teach the mornings how to find us.

I will wash sorrow  
From the broken tiles of the city's streets.  
I will lift the scorched stones,  
The shards of shattered windows,  
The dust that once lined a child's bookshelf  
To find scraps of paper, names in looping script  
smudged with blood,  
The last words of those who never came home.

I will turn every scream  
Into a laugh.  
I will draw smiles  
With fingers dipped in light  
On mouths that forgot how.

To the tents, we will say:  
Farewell,  
No more shelter, no more waiting.  
The wind will no longer whisper through your threads,  
Nor will the cold fold us into your arms  
We are not coming back.

And to Gaza, we will say:  
Hello,  
O warmth of the soul,  
We have returned.  
Did you long for us?

## GAZA EXHIBITION COMES TO THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

**Heather Kiernan writes:** A week today--Saturday August 10--my dear friend Peter Kennard's new exhibition GAZA will open to the public. His images have become synonymous with political activism for 50 years and has inspired many of today's younger politically-aware artists. The Guardian have called him 'Britain's most important political artist.'

Exhibitions have been cancelled, artists have been cancelled who are seen to be in support of Palestine. I hope my friends in Scotland together with those planning to come to Edinburgh for the Festival, will make it a point to come to the Palestine Museum in Dundas Street to see what promises to be one of the most talked about events in this year's Festival.

Gaza is a series of prints made using a variety of mediums, including photomontage, double-exposed photographs, drawing, and paint, in response to the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Kennard's work aims to reveal the context and complexities of the situation, rather than simply depicting the horrors of war. Through his art, Kennard seeks to highlight the complicity of Western governments and their active support for Israel, encouraging viewers to think critically about the situation.

*"A horrific genocide is now taking place on the civilian population in Gaza, the children, women, and men, who are being starved, bombed, and shot. As an artist, I feel impelled to try and make images that will allow the general public to think about the massacre taking place, while the world's political leaders look on or openly support the genocide by sending weapons to Israel." — Peter Kennard*

*Tidying up old files, I came across this challenging article. Sadly, it still seems relevant today – Editor.*

**REFLECTION: LOVING THE STRANGER Angela Godfrey-Goldstein 23/12/2019**

Destructive policies, actions, and statements are all over the news these days. While this dismays and deeply disturbs many of us, maybe it is useful to try to see the glass half full.

Leaders around the world have gained power by relying on fear-mongering, hate-filled incitement, supremacy, and an encircling of the wagons in a laager or ghetto mentality while undermining both democracy and the world order established post-World War II. Such subversion of critical agencies such as the United Nations, international law, organs of accountability, or basic civil rights forces us to choose the reality in which we function. We can either go with the masses down the dangerous road to full-fledged fascism, apartheid, and dictatorship, or we can step back and choose differently and fight for human values.

That freedom of choice is a blessing many do not enjoy, but for those of us who believe firmly in the spiritual way – whether via the wisdom of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism or other religious doctrines valuing truth, love, freedom, goodness, empathy, caring (especially for the weak or The Other) and the sacred, holistic nature of life - this is a period in which to reclaim those values. Humanity and the God-given environment, Mother Earth and the universe(s), which have been willed to us as treasured gifts, aren't geared for war, for killing or deliberate destruction. If they were, I suspect we'd be immune to Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and our planet would be in less crisis.

As my late friend Kirsten Zaat Sjolander said in her thesis connecting human rights with neuroscience: "In my human rights ontological research for my Ph.D., I have identified biological markers (drivers) that determine a community's success or otherwise. I propose that they underpin human rights in both theory and practice. They are a strong sense of personal autonomy tempered by a strong commitment to co-operation, reciprocity, fairness, empathy, and generosity. Communities that implement these innate biological drivers through an equally strong sense of individual responsibility and ongoing social sanctioning (i.e. robust accountability measures) thrive. Communities that do not simply die out in the interests of the survival of the species more broadly."

This view confirms that there's really only one successful *modus vivendi* available to us in life, as all major spiritual leaders have preached: via the heart. We must work on ourselves and within our communities to commit to seeing the other as ourselves, to dealing with the stranger with full humanity and caring. Otherwise, we doom ourselves in the long-term to a life barely worth living: as prisoners to fear and as people whose fear will create an ever-more fearful, dystopian reality. And we doom our planet, which can't sustain increasingly destructive wars, consumerism, wanton population explosion, and levels of greed which impoverish the majority while creating grotesque wealth for that 1%.

This means cultivating personal and highly aware freedom. To overcome our innate tendencies to automatic, robotic, conditioned response or unquestioning "obedience" to those who would dominate us.

To lift our spirits, consciously, so we may fight back effectively, and with full awareness, we need to seek that free centre, choosing not to remain passive or servile. We need to be more deeply responsive to our own needs and – equally – those of our entire communities. And to respond to those needs in more ways than simply "liking" a Facebook post, voting in elections, or avoiding discussion of the elephants in the room, with our heads ostrich-like in the sand.

It seems helpful to understand this place of choice: either we renege on our own human agency and fall in line with those whose self-interest neither cares for, nor sees, the plight of others – be they African Americans, Palestinians, Kurds, Yemeni children facing starvation or Latin American children forced into cages – or we stand up together for those ancient, human values of democracy, of community, and higher values. Each one of us impacts reality, alone or in communities. Once the heart is locked, loaded, and ready to go, we are more likely to experience blessings for ourselves and our neighbours, despite thorns on the path of humility and service.

Let us pray: O Lord, grant me the loving power of your enlightenment and natural wisdom so that my choices fall easily into line with your teachings. May my heart and understanding extend with love to all those within my sphere, even my "enemies." And may I have the awareness that while others have their own lessons to learn from their experiences (and so I beware of falling into the trap of self-righteousness or superiority), we all have the power to transcend and heal those in need of the blessings of love and common caring, including and starting with ourselves.

● *Angela Godfrey-Goldstein, director of Jahalin Solidarity, a Palestinian non-profit she founded in order to support Jahalin Bedouin refugees, especially as to their forcible displacement, and to advocate against the Israeli Occupation. She was for many years Action Advocacy Officer with ICAHD - The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, and Advocacy Officer for Grassroots Jerusalem, having previously been an environmental activist in Sinai, Egypt, where she lived for four years. Together with Eid abu Khamis Jahalin she was a Rebuilding Alliance 2018 Peacemaker awardee.*



## **NJPN CONFERENCE 2025: “WE CAN TIP THE SCALES IN FAVOUR OF PEACE”**

This year’s annual National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) Conference on 25-27 July in Derbyshire, took the theme: ‘Towards a Just Peace – Challenging the Inevitability of Violence.’ In the final session on Sunday led by Brian O’Toole, Director of the Presentation Interprovincial Justice Desk, he suggested that “we must build a new narrative, based on the common good and common sense,” and that “we can tip the scales in favour of peace.”

Among the 160 participants, who shared this view of prophetic peacemaking, were Justice and Peace representatives from 17 dioceses in England and Wales, Justice and Peace Scotland, and religious orders, including Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ), Srs of St Joseph of Peace (CSJP), Presentation Sisters, and Mary Ward Loreto UK. Organisations running stalls included CAFOD, Catholic Social Action Network, Laudato Si Movement, Archbishop Romero Trust, Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology and Christians Aware. Peace groups included Pax Christi, Christian CND, and Peace Pledge Union. Petitions were signed on tackling international debt, dismantling nuclear weapons and the Big Bank Switch towards greener banking.

The 47th annual conference opened on Friday evening with a Litany of Peace by Dan Shutte with the chorus ‘Let us be your peace,’ led by Sheena, Anna, Eleanor and Andrew Marshall. Then Anne Peacey, the NJPN Chair, introduced the conference as an opportunity “to commit to becoming peacemakers in our troubled world.” She said, “we thank God for the witness of Pope Francis and now Pope Leo.”

Gospel Nonviolence was explained in an opening dialogue between Sr MaryAnne Francalanza FCJ, of the Centre for Faith and Ecological Justice in North London, and Sr Katrina Alton CSJP, the National Chaplain to Pax Christi England and Wales. Katrina said Jesus’ way is a way that combines a rejection of violence and a focus instead on the power of love and truth in action for justice, peace and integrity of creation. Katrina told of her experience at a protest vigil at an arms fair at the Excel Centre in London where, as she knelt in prayer, a delegate whispered in her ear, “I fear you are right.” She pointed out how most casualties in modern warfare are civilians and that combatants are young people.

At a panel discussion on ‘Just Peace’ on Saturday morning, chaired by James Trewby of the Columbans, Andrew Jackson, CEO of Pax Christi England and Wales, highlighted the “deep spirituality in a commitment to nonviolence”. Bokani Tshidzu of Operation Noah spoke of her commitment to fly less and reduce her carbon footprint to try and protect “our beautiful world.” She felt, “we must do more in the community – such as vigils, street protests, being active in our churches,” to build peace. She asked, “are we doing enough on racial climate justice?”

Speaking during the conference Mass, celebrated by Westminster priest Fr Joe Ryan, Ann Farr of Pax Christi International called for a Just Peace for Gaza. Particular concern for Gaza was expressed in a public ‘Red Line for Gaza’ where many participants wearing red lined up for a photo to urge decision-makers to end the killing of children in Gaza. In messages written on red paper, they joined thousands in similar protests across the world, a striking symbol of how many red lines Israel and its Western backers have crossed. The creation of mass starvation of Palestinians by deliberately blocking food deliveries and shooting unarmed civilians at distribution points was singled out for condemnation.

On Sunday, Joanna Frew of Rethinking Security – a network of organisations, academics and activists working together for security based on justice, cooperation and sustainability – explored what real security looks like today. She suggested root causes of global insecurity, such as the climate crisis and extreme poverty, should be addressed. An alternative vision of security should be considered, based on Gospel values of loving enemies, welcoming the stranger and Earth care as stewards of creation, for “there is no security without a viable planet.”

Workshop contributors include Richard Solly of Jesuit Missions and Ellen Teague of the Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology Team who explored links between violence and environmental problems. Bokani Tshidzu of Operation Noah looked at ‘Investing in Peace through Climate Action.’ Quakers in Britain explored how local interfaith and intercommunal relations in Britain are impacted by international conflicts.

The Pax Christi International Icon was available in the prayer room for anyone to sit with over the weekend.

In this Jubilee Year 2025, the NJPN invited all to join them as ‘pilgrims of hope’.

<https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference-2025/njpn-conference-2025-we-can-tip-the-scales-in-favour-of-peace/>

**Link:**

**Videos from the conference available at:**

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4HAuivOZMEXP59V6429gmpA8DEhaV\\_f6](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4HAuivOZMEXP59V6429gmpA8DEhaV_f6)

## **JAPAN'S CATHOLIC BISHOPS APPEAL FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO BE ABOLISHED THIS YEAR**

Shortly before the US bombed Iran's nuclear facilities (22 June), the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan urged the international community to abolish nuclear weapons completely this year. They said: "Having experienced the destructive power of nuclear weapons, we have a responsibility as valuable witnesses to continue to advocate for the abolition of nuclear weapons." (Resolution for Peace: On the 50th Anniversary of the End of the War).

As we mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, the only bishops from a country to have suffered atomic bombings in war, carry deeply engraved in our hearts the heavy history and pain that atomic bomb survivors and citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have suffered, and hereby declare our strong commitment to the abolition of nuclear weapons. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, many lives were lost in the atomic bombings of 1945, and many people still live with the suffering and aftereffects of the bombings. This tragedy must not be repeated.

The existence of nuclear weapons is a serious threat to all life, as it degrades the dignity of human beings and the world that God created to be very good. The damage caused by fallout and the widespread environmental destruction caused by nuclear explosions have an enormous negative impact on global ecosystems. Furthermore, we must not forget the existence of victims related to nuclear testing and uranium mining, the "Global Hibakusha" [hibakusha=atomic victims] who force us to take a broader view of atomic survivors. Therefore, the development, testing, production, possession and use of nuclear weapons are ethically impermissible.

The concept of nuclear deterrence is not only an ineffective means of resolving conflicts, but it also plunges the world into a "security dilemma" that in reality pushes the world toward the brink of nuclear war. We cannot tolerate this kind of thinking. We respect the spirit of the Constitution of Japan that rejects the threat of force as a means of settling disputes between nations and have worked toward the realization of coexistence through peaceful dialogue. The use of nuclear weapons as a means of intimidation in any conflict situation should never be tolerated under international law and norms.

As followers of the gospel of Christ, we strongly urge the complete abolition of nuclear weapons in order to achieve peace through dialogue and to protect the life and dignity of all people. We bishops commit ourselves to do the following: We will continue to convey the reality of the atomic bombings to the world and declare the inhumanity of nuclear weapons; We will stand in solidarity with domestic and international movements for the abolition of nuclear weapons and promote actions to achieve this goal; We will support the principles of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and urge the Japan government to ratify it as soon as possible; We will pass on the philosophy of peace to the next generation through peace education and awareness-raising activities.

The world should be able to choose peace without nuclear weapons. We call on everyone who wants the abolition of nuclear weapons. Let us pray and do our utmost to maintain our relationship with God, with people and with nature, and to realize a peaceful society, not through nuclear weapons that threaten all life, but through the practice of God's love that honors all life.

**Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan** 17/6/2025 <https://www.cbci.catholic.jp/2025/06/20/32800/>

### **On 6 August 2024 Heather Kiernan wrote:**

Seventy-nine years ago today, an atomic bomb nicknamed Little Boy was detonated 580 meters above Hiroshima, Japan's seventh-largest city. According to the World Nuclear Association, the explosion was equivalent to 14,500 metric tons of TNT exploding, which sent a pulse of thermal energy rippling across the city. The pulse flattened 13 square kilometres of the city. Almost one-quarter of the population of Hiroshima died immediately. Another quarter died of the effects of radiation poisoning and cancer in the months that followed.

Black shadows of humans and objects were found scattered across the sidewalks and buildings of Hiroshima in the wake of the atomic blast. It's hard to fathom that these shadows likely encapsulated each person's last moments, similar to the ashen casts of ancient volcano victims preserved at Pompeii. In this poem by Daniel Berrigan, he refers to a shadow thought to be of a person who was sitting at the entrance of Hiroshima Branch of Sumitomo Bank when the atomic bomb was dropped. It is also known as the Human Shadow of Death or simply the Blast Shadow.

### **SHADOW ON THE ROCK**

At Hiroshima there's a museum  
and outside that museum there's a rock,  
and on that rock there's a shadow.  
That shadow is all that remains  
of the human being who stood there on August 6, 1945  
when the nuclear age began.

In the most real sense of the word,  
that is the choice before us.  
We shall either end war and the nuclear arms race now  
in this generation,  
or we will become Shadows On the Rock.  
**Daniel Berrigan, S.J.**



## **BISHOPS' CONFERENCE WELCOMES NEWS THAT POPE LEO WILL DECLARE ST JOHN HENRY NEWMAN A 'DOCTOR' OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**Source: Catholic Bishops' Conference England and Wales 31/7/ 2025**

Pope Leo XIV will officially declare Saint John Henry Newman, the most recently canonised saint from England and Wales, the 38th Doctor of the Church. In a statement from the Holy See Press Office, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, said that Pope Leo XIV has "confirmed the affirmative opinion of the Plenary Session of Cardinals and Bishops, Members of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, regarding the title of Doctor of the Universal Church, which will soon be conferred on Saint John Henry Newman."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Bishops' Conference, said: "I am delighted and thrilled that Pope Leo has today announced that he will declare St John Henry Newman to be a 'Doctor of the Church'.

"This request has been before the Holy See for some time, having received declarations of support from many different parts of the world and, of particular importance, from the Bishops of the Church of England.

"This recognition that the writings of St John Henry Newman are a true expression of the faith of the Church is of huge encouragement to all who appreciate not only his great learning but also his heroic sanctity in following the call of God in his journey of faith, which he described as 'heart speaking unto heart'.

"This moment brings back vivid memories of the Papal Visit in 2010 of Pope Benedict XVI to these countries when he declared the beatification of John Henry Newman. That moment now reaches its fulfilment and gives great joy to all who strive to follow Christ today."

### **Only the third English 'Doctor of the Church'**

Joining Cardinal Nichols in welcoming the announcement, the Most Reverend Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham and Vice President of the Bishops' Conference, said:

"Together with the Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory, I am immensely grateful to Pope Leo for declaring St John Henry Newman as a Doctor of the Church. Cardinal Newman is only the third Englishman to be afforded this title, after St Bede the Venerable and St Anselm of Canterbury, for the historic and abiding impact of his teaching on the universal Church.

"It is remarkable that his writings, first as an Anglican and then as a Roman Catholic, but considered as one entire corpus of written work, have led to him being declared a Doctor of the Church."

September 2025 marks the 15th anniversary of St John Henry Newman's Beatification in Cofton Park, Birmingham in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI. The theme for the historic Papal visit was inspired by the words Newman chose as his motto, *Cor ad cor loquitur*, which translates to 'Heart speaks to heart'.

Archbishop Longley welcomed Pope Benedict at the Beatification Mass, and explains the importance of his motto: "His motto *Cor ad cor loquitur* – Heart speaks to heart - is a key to understanding the influence of St John Henry's teaching, communicated to us at the deepest level of our being.

A 'Doctor of the Church' is a man or woman of great holiness and learning whose teaching and wisdom not only resonated with their own contemporaries, but still illuminates, instructs and inspires today. The Church gives them the title 'Doctor', from the Latin 'docere', meaning 'to teach', in recognition of the eminent contribution to our knowledge of the faith – spiritually, intellectually or morally.

A globally-celebrated intellectual heavyweight, Saint John Henry Newman was deeply engaged in the theological and philosophical issues of the time, and his teaching and legacy endures to this day. Born in 1801, he was ordained as a priest for the Church of England and soon became the leader of the Oxford Movement before converting to Catholicism in 1845. When he died at the age of 89, more than 15,000 people lined the streets of Birmingham for his funeral.

In welcoming the announcement, Oratorian priest Father Ignatius Harrison.C.O. Co-Actor of the Newman Cause, offered his praise and thanks to God: "The Fathers and Brothers of the Birmingham Oratory give praise and thanks to God that the Holy Father Pope Leo has today confirmed that the title 'Doctor of the Church' will soon be bestowed on St John Henry Cardinal Newman, founder of the Oratory in England. Newman's wisdom and spiritual vision will now be of even greater relevance to the universal Church and indeed to all people of good will who seek God's truth."

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/pope-leo-to-declare-st-john-henry-newman-a-doctor-of-the-church/>  
**St John Henry Newman – Doctor of Church:** <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/newman-doctor-of-the-church/>

## **FAITH MINISTER VISITS CARITAS SALFORD**

**Source: Catholic Bishops' Conference England and Wales 29/7/2025**

Through its policy and advocacy work, Caritas Salford calls for meaningful change to tackle poverty and inequality, helping people transform their lives with dignity. A key part of this work involves engaging with decision-makers to share insights from the charity's services and the lived experiences of those it supports.

As part of these efforts, Caritas Salford was pleased to welcome Lord Khan of Burnley, Minister for Faith, Communities and Resettlement, who visited to find out more about the charity and its work supporting people from Greater Manchester and Lancashire. During his visit to the Cornerstone centre<sup>1</sup>, Lord Khan witnessed first-hand Caritas Salford's role as a faith-based organisation that offers a warm welcome to people from all backgrounds who are experiencing poverty, homelessness, disadvantage, or displacement. This includes the charity's homelessness services<sup>2</sup> and Aspire Education service<sup>3</sup>, which supports refugees and migrants. Caritas Salford highlighted the crucial role of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in helping people integrate positively into life in the UK and in preparing them for further education and employment.

Lord Khan met with an ESOL student who has gone on to volunteer in the classes, providing peer support. The student shared how the welcoming community of the ESOL classes and the opportunity to learn English had been a key factor in his growth in skills and confidence. It was also an opportunity to emphasise to Lord Khan the growing demand for English language lessons and the need for increased funding for high-quality provision, to ensure that more people have the opportunity to gain the language, skills and confidence needed to help them thrive in their new communities.

During his visit, Lord Khan also spent time with people experiencing homelessness. He witnessed some of the activities that support individuals in transforming their lives when they access the warm and welcoming environment that Caritas Salford strives to create within its services.

The visit concluded with a meeting between Lord Khan, Bishop John Arnold, the Bishop of Salford, and Caritas Salford's Director, Patrick O'Dowd. Together, they reflected on the importance of faith organisations in providing spaces of welcome and advocating for meaningful change.

Patrick O'Dowd commented: "As well as providing a wide range of community and outreach services across Greater Manchester and Lancashire which support people to change their lives with dignity, a large part of our work is striving to address and change the issues, policies and other systems and process that drive them into those challenging situations in the first place. We're really grateful to Lord Khan for his time and for coming along to hear more about our work and our recommendations for how lives could be improved for those people from our communities whose lives are significantly affected by poverty, displacement, homelessness and disadvantage. It was great to discuss ideas and thoughts on a range of subjects and that he was so interested in our suggestions to help people we work alongside. We look forward to continuing to engage with Lord Khan and others in national and local Government to hopefully bring about positive, life-altering change."

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/service/cornerstone-centre/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/how-we-help/housing-homelessness/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/service/aspire-education/>

**Find out more about Caritas Salford's policy and advocacy work:** <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/about/policy-and-advocacy/>  
<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/faith-minister-visits-caritas-salford/>

## **SEASON OF CREATION 2025: 'PEACE WITH CREATION'**

Then, the Season of Creation 2025 will take place from 1st September to 4th October. The theme for this year is 'Peace with Creation,' which emphasizes the need for humanity to restore its relationship with the environment. Various activities, including themed services and prayer sessions, will be organized during this period to encourage participation and reflection on creation care. This is a good time to start preparing. There are so many opportunities to show love for our neighbours and for God's creation. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52707>

## **A NEW MASS FOR OUR COMMON HOME**

On July 3, 2025, the Vatican made a historic announcement: the introduction of a new Mass "For the Care of Creation" (Missa pro custodia creationis) into the Roman Missal. This marks the first time the Church formally includes a liturgical prayer focused on creation as part of its public worship.

But this moment is about more than a new set of prayers. It represents a bold spiritual milestone — a clear sign that caring for our common home is not merely an environmental issue, but a deeply moral and faith-centered calling. <https://laudatosimovement.org/news/a-new-mass-for-our-common-home/>

**See also: Pope celebrates first Mass for Care of Creation** <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52785>

## POPE RELEASES MESSAGE FOR CREATION DAY

**Source: Vatican Media** 2/7/2025: In his Message for the 10th World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, Pope Leo XIV quotes extensively from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si'*, denouncing environmental and social injustice and noting that God's creation is not intended to be a battleground for vital resources.

As the Church prepares to mark the Tenth World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on 1 September 2025, Pope Leo XIV's message urges Christians and all people of goodwill to recognise the urgent need for environmental and social justice in a world increasingly scarred by climate change, conflict, and inequality. Entitled *Seeds of Peace and Hope* and released on 2 July, the Pope's message resonates with the spirit of the ongoing Jubilee Year, calling the faithful to embrace their role as "pilgrims of hope" and stewards of God's creation. Echoing the prophetic words of Isaiah, Pope Leo invites the global community to envision a transformation of today's "arid and parched desert" into "a fruitful field." This biblical vision, he explains, is not a poetic metaphor but an urgent call to action in the face of alarming ecological and human crises.

Quoting extensively from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* in the year of its 10th anniversary, he writes, "Injustice, violations of international law and the rights of peoples, grave inequalities, and the greed that fuels them are spawning deforestation, pollution, and the loss of biodiversity." Linking environmental destruction to the exploitation of the poor and marginalized, he highlights the disproportionate suffering of indigenous communities and the widening gap between rich and poor as hallmarks of a system that treats nature as a commodity rather than a common home. He laments the fact that nature itself has become "a bargaining chip," subjected to policies and practices that prioritize profit over people and the planet. From agricultural lands riddled with landmines to conflicts over water and raw materials, Pope Leo paints a sobering picture of a creation "turned into a battleground" for control and domination. These wounds, he says, are "the effect of sin," a betrayal of the biblical command not to dominate creation, but to "till and keep" it, a call to cultivate and preserve the Earth through a relationship of care and responsibility.

The Pope's message reaffirms the Church's commitment to an "integral ecology," a concept at the heart of *Laudato Si'*. Environmental justice, the Holy Father affirms, is not an abstract or secondary concern but a "duty born of faith." "For believers," he writes, "the universe reflects the face of Jesus Christ, in whom all things were created and redeemed." In this light, caring for the planet becomes not only an ecological necessity but also a profoundly spiritual and moral vocation.

Encouraging concrete action, Pope Leo calls for perseverance and love in sowing "seeds of justice" that will, in time, bear the fruits of peace. He cites the Borgo *Laudato Si'* project at Castel Gandolfo as a tangible example of how education and community life rooted in ecological values can shape a just and hopeful future. "This may take years," the Pope acknowledges, "but years that involve an entire ecosystem made up of continuity, fidelity, cooperation and love." Concluding his message with a prayer for the outpouring of God's Spirit, Pope Leo XVI invokes the hope of the risen Christ as the guiding light for a world longing for healing. "May *Laudato Si'* continue to inspire us," he writes, "and may integral ecology be increasingly accepted as the right path to follow."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52736>

### **Seeds of Peace and Hope:**

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2025/07/02/250702e.html>

## **'HOPE FOR OUR COMMON HOME' PILGRIMAGE 25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025**

This September the Columban Missionaries in Britain, in collaboration with the *Laudato Si'* Centre in the Diocese of Salford, are hosting 'Hope for Our Common Home' to celebrate the Jubilee year. The day will involve winners of the 2025 Columban Schools competition. <https://columbans.co.uk/social-action/16397/hope-for-our-common-home/>

The Columbans in Britain are proud to be partnering with the *Laudato Si'* Centre at Wardley Hall, Salford, to host a special pilgrimage. Taking place during the Season of Creation, on the 25th September 2025, the pilgrimage is a powerful opportunity for participants to live out their faith through action, prayer and communion with one another and with creation.

'Hope for Our Common Home' serves as a thank you to the Diocese of Salford, where Columban Missionaries are currently preaching the Annual Mission Appeal in many of its parishes. It is a gesture of appreciation for the welcome and hospitality that our Mission Appeals Team have encountered during their visits, as well as a token of thanks for the prayers and generous financial contributions made to the Columbans. Stephen Awre, Mission Office Administrator for the Columbans in Britain is helping to organise the pilgrimage. He explains, "The diocese of Salford has been extremely generous in their response to our Annual Mission Appeal this year. Donations made to the Columbans will help to make a real difference to those living on the margins of life and will continue to fund activities in areas of education, pastoral care, peacebuilding, interfaith dialogue and environmental action."

This year's pilgrimage is a public and prayerful expression of our concern for the environment, echoing 'the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor', as highlighted in Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2025. By coming together in this physical act of pilgrimage, we bear witness to our responsibility to care for, and protect, creation.

Along the nine-mile route from the *Laudato Si'* Centre at Wardley Hall to Salford Cathedral's Temporary Church, pilgrims will engage with pressing environmental challenges of our time, such as biodiversity loss and the climate crisis. These issues will be explored through the lens of faith, highlighting their impact on vulnerable communities around the world. We will hear from Columban missionaries journeying alongside those most affected by environmental degradation, who will offer insights into the realities faced by these communities. We will call to mind these people as we walk and pray for an end to human destructive behaviours that negatively impact the Earth and for reconciliation with our Creator.

### **Why a Pilgrimage?**

In *Laudato Si'*, the late Pope Francis asked us to "hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor". Before his death in April 2025, in celebration of the Jubilee Year 2025, he also called us to be 'Pilgrims of Hope'. 'Hope for Our Common Home' is our response to this call.

"Being a pilgrim isn't just about travelling physically, it's about moving spiritually towards greater compassion, justice and care for others, especially the Earth and those most affected by injustice" explains James Trewby, Columban Justice Peace and Ecology Co-ordinator in Britain who, alongside Stephen, is also working to organise the pilgrimage. He adds, "Our pilgrimage gives participants the opportunity to embody Pope Francis' vision of a Church that goes out to the peripheries and encourages them to step out of the everyday and explore deeper relationships with God, creation and with one another too."

This is not the first time the Columbans have walked in faith together. During *Laudato Si'* Week in May 2023 we led a successful pilgrimage along the Columban Way in Cornwall, a heritage route inspired by St. Columban, our missionary namesake, who journeyed far and wide to share the Gospel. That pilgrimage brought together Columban supporters, young people, clergy, religious and lay members of the Church from all walks of life. Stephen explains, "Our pilgrimage through Cornwall taught us how deeply people desire to connect faith with action, and how powerful it is to walk together in prayer and purpose. As co-organisers of this year's pilgrimage, we've drawn upon those experiences to shape a journey through Salford that invites people to be Pilgrims of Hope."

### **The Columbans' Partnership with The *Laudato Si'* Centre**

The *Laudato Si'* Centre, based at Wardley Hall in the Diocese of Salford, is a pioneering hub for ecological education, practical action and spiritual reflection inspired by *Laudato Si'*. Its mission is to empower individuals, parishes and schools to live out their faith through care for our common home.

The Columbans in Britain have a close and valued relationship with the *Laudato Si'* Centre, partnering on events, workshops, liturgies and awareness-raising initiatives that put Catholic social teaching into practice. This pilgrimage is the latest expression of that partnership, offering a space for prayer, dialogue and ecological witness.

Emily Cahill, Environment and Learning Officer for the *Laudato Si'* Centre, said: "This is such an exciting opportunity to celebrate the Season of Creation in this Jubilee Year with this fantastic pilgrimage experience with the Columban Missionaries in Britain." She adds, "From the earliest beginnings of Jubilee tradition, care for creation has been an integral part of the Holy Year and so it is with great joy that we announce this wonderful opportunity to reconnect and rediscover our call to be loving stewards of God's creation."

### **Season of Creation: A Time to Act**

Taking place during the Season of Creation, this pilgrimage is part of a global movement of Christians who come together each year from the 1st September to 4th October to pray and act for our common home. The Columbans have long supported this season because it aligns with our commitment to protect and preserve biodiversity, and to stand with communities impacted by environmental degradation. Our missionary work in countries such as the Philippines, Peru, Pakistan and Fiji often places us in communities on the frontline of the climate crisis. We see first-hand the devastating impact of extractive industries, pollution, deforestation and water scarcity. We also witness the resilience and hope of communities who are working for change. 'Hope For Our Common Home' is a moment to walk in solidarity with the Earth and with those who defend it. It is a moment to declare, with our feet and our prayers, that another way is possible.

The pilgrimage will begin in the morning with a short prayer liturgy at the Laudato Si' Centre. Pilgrims will then commence the nine-mile walk to the cathedral site, stopping at various parishes enroute where there will be opportunities for discussion, group prayer and quiet reflection, as well as much-needed comfort breaks! We'll bring our pilgrimage to an end with a vibrant celebration of Mass at 6pm in Salford Cathedral's Temporary Church, an event which is open to all who wish to join!

Whether you are based in Salford or elsewhere, you are warmly invited to join this celebratory and prayerful experience. Pilgrimages are not just physical journeys; they are spiritual movements. Even if you're unable to join the walk in person, we invite you explore our virtual pilgrimage resources at your own pace.

**To find out more about the pilgrimage, and to register your interest, please contact:**

[laudatosi@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:laudatosi@dioceseofsalford.org.uk).

**Laudato Si' Centre:** <https://laudatosicentre.org.uk/>

### **A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH**

All powerful God,  
you are present in the universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.  
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.  
Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.  
Fill us with your peace, that we may  
live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.  
O God of the poor, help us to rescue  
the abandoned and forgotten of this Earth,  
so precious in your eyes.  
Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and  
destruction.  
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the Earth.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly united with  
every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.  
We thank you for being with us each day.  
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle, for justice,  
love and peace.  
Amen.

### **ADVANCE NOTICE: COP30 UN Climate Talks**

**This year's climate talks will be held in Belem, Brazil, 10-25 November.**

#### **Overview:**

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jun/27/cop30-10-things-we-learned-from-bonn-climate-talks>

#### **Campaigning with Jesuits:**

<https://jesuitmissions.org.uk/campaign/jesuits-for-climate-justice-faith-in-action-at-cop30/>

<https://jesuitmissions.org.uk/sb62-bonn-climate-conference-report-some-progress-but-much-more-needs-to-be-done/>

#### **Climate message from Global South Bishops on the road to COP30:**

<https://jesuitmissions.org.uk/jesuit-missions-welcomes-powerful-climate-message-from-global-south-bishops-on-the-road-to-cop30/>

#### **CIDSE:**

<https://www.cidse.org/2025/07/01/churches-of-the-global-south-call-for-climate-justice-resisting-false-solutions-and-standing-for-hope/>

CIDSE (Coopération internationale pour le développement et la solidarité) is an international family of Catholic social justice organisations. We work with global partners and allies to promote justice, harnessing the power of global solidarity to achieve transformational change for people and the planet. We challenge systemic injustice and its destructive impacts through connecting, mobilising, influencing and telling stories of change. We promote environmentally and socially just alternatives to allow everyone to thrive in our common home.

CIDSE's work promotes food sovereignty and land justice, addresses impunity and corporate power and explores the relationship between energy and extractivism, all the while striving for a model of sufficiency. We take a systemic approach to our thematic work, with a focus on human rights, decolonisation, feminism, climate and biodiversity justice, as well as on challenging prevailing economic and political systems and exploring alternatives. To make this happen we contribute to global movements and alliances of change, promote peoples' solutions and alternatives and advocate at the international level.

CIDSE brings together 18 member organisations (including CAFOD) from Europe and North America and its international secretariat is based in Brussels.



## DIARY

### AUGUST

**2 Disarm Now: Peace Witness Vigil.** 10.30am at South Gate Faslane. Disarm now is a Christian ecumenical gathering in united opposition to nuclear weapons and commemorating the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Read the thoughts of JPIT's Steve Huckelsby's on Faslane here: <https://jpit.uk/50-years-of-continuous-at-sea-deterrence-what-is-there-to-celebrate>

**6 Hiroshima and Nagasaki Flower Memorial. Chester Peace Group** will be holding their annual ceremony to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki meeting at 8pm in The Groves by the bandstand for readings, music and a period of silent reflection. If you wish, bring white flowers to drop from the bridge into the river.

**9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples** <https://www.un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day>

**12 International Youth Day** <https://www.un.org/en/observances/youth-day>

**18 – 22 St Augustine's Confessions** An introduction to St Augustine's classic spiritual autobiography. Boarbank Hall, Allithwaite, Grange Over Sands, Cumbria, LA11 7NH. Contact: Sr Margaret Atkins [margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk](mailto:margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk) or 015395-32288 All welcome

**22 International Day commemorating the victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief**  
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/religious-based-violence-victims-day>

**23 International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition**  
<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/slave-trade-remembrance>

### SEPTEMBER

#### Dates for your Diary – CAFOD HARVEST FAST DAY BRIEFINGS

**Kathryn Keenan writes:** Whether you are a new or experienced parish volunteer, we recommend that you attend one of our Fast Day Briefings to be inspired by hearing about our focus story this Harvest, CAFOD updates and to share your experiences of organising Fast Day collections in your parish.

**Tuesday 9th September 7-8.30pm – Online** - Register here [kkeenan@cafod.org.uk](mailto:kkeenan@cafod.org.uk)

Join my colleague Sylvester and me for this online briefing and hear from our guest speaker Fergus Conmee, CAFOD's Director of International Programmes.

**Tuesday 16th September 7-8.30pm – In Person** – Greater Manchester, location to be confirmed – Registration coming soon

An in person briefing led by me and my colleague Simon Holleron, CAFOD in Salford. I hope to be able to confirm the location with you very soon. An in-person briefing is a valuable opportunity to meet other CAFOD volunteers and to share experiences and ideas. It is also always a joy for me to be able to meet with you in person!

**Wednesday 17th September 7-8pm – Online** – Registration coming soon

This is our National Harvest Fast Day Briefing, open to volunteers across the country and will be led by my colleague Jenny Hayward-Jones from our Supporter Fundraising Team

#### Kathryn Keenan

Community Participation Coordinator

CAFOD in Shrewsbury Diocese and Birmingham Archdiocese (North)

Mobile/WhatsApp: 07920 232 936

● See current NJPN news here: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/news/>

● Sign up for regular news and information from NJPN (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) 020 7901 4864

● Read the SUMMER issue of **MOUTHPEACE** the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses: <https://jpshrewsbury.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/mouthpeace-summer-2025.pdf>

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