



Autumn 2025

# Justice & Peace

News from the National Justice & Peace Network

## A Just Peace — NJPN Conference 2025 Statement

*Christianity stands or falls with its revolutionary protest against violence, arbitrariness and pride of power and with its plea for the weak. Christians are doing too little to make these points clear rather than too much, Christendom adjusts itself far too easily to worship of power. Christians should give more offence, shock the world far more, than they are doing now. Christians should take a stronger stand in favour of the weak, rather than considering first the possible right of the strong..*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



THROWING OPEN THE DOORS  
TO CHILDREN LIVING IN  
POVERTY IN THE UK

Thursday 18th September

7.30pm—9pm

(Via Zoom)

~

POST-CONFERENCE CATCH  
UP

Thursday 30th October

7.30pm (online)

Contact  
[admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)  
to book your place.

### A Just Peace

Peace with Justice: The Path We Must Walk Together: In a world scarred by conflict, inequality, and ecological crisis, peace can no longer be treated as an abstract ideal or a distant hope. The call for 'A Just Peace' rings out as a moral imperative—an active, collective journey toward a society rooted in dignity, truth, and compassion. As participants at the 2025 National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) Conference so powerfully affirmed: we don't just want peace—we want 'A Just Peace'. This distinction matters. Peace without justice is silence born of oppression; it is stability maintained through fear and exclusion. 'A Just Peace', by contrast, is built on the foundations of human dignity, the common good, and the recognition that no one can flourish while others are denied the basic conditions of life. As one NJPN participant observed, "Peace is the dignity of every person that is being eroded by war."

A New Narrative: From Silence to Solidarity: The NJPN conference this year, themed "Towards a Just Peace – Challenging the Inevitability of Violence," served as a timely reminder that violence—whether military, structural, or environmental—is neither

natural nor inevitable. From street-level vigils to international advocacy, peace-making is a conscious choice that demands courage, creativity, and community. Sr. Katrina Alton of Pax Christi reminded us that Gospel nonviolence is not passivity, but the radical power of love in action. It is standing firm in truth, even as the world around us is consumed by cycles of revenge and militarisation.

Participants were urged to "tip the scales in favour of peace" by crafting a new narrative—one built not on division, fear, and nationalism, but on the shared values of justice, inclusion, presence and hope. Joanna Frew of Rethinking Security challenged us to rethink what "security" really means in today's world. True peace will never come from bigger weapons or fortified borders, but from addressing root causes like poverty, ecological degradation, and systemic injustice.

Encounter, Inclusion, and Active Hope: At the heart of this journey toward A Just Peace lies the practice of encounter, harnessing the power of being present with each other. Listening—genuinely, humbly, and across lines of difference—was a theme that resonated across the conference floor. We were reminded that dialogue is not weakness, but



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strength; not a distraction from justice, but a pathway toward it. This is the kind of radical openness that Jesus modelled and that we are now called to emulate.

Ann Farr's plea was simple yet profound: "Do what is right to restore human dignity and put the common good of people as our top priority." And that work begins with each of us. We must, as Anne Peacey (NJPN Chair) put it, "reflect – rethink – refocus." The invitation is not to wait for perfect conditions, but to act with moral clarity even when afraid. As we were reminded, "change not only can start with me, it *must* start with me."

From Words to Action: The Power of Us: This is not the peace of slogans. It is the peace of hard decisions and risky love. It is the peace that dares

to confront the arms trade, to dismantle racism, and to challenge unjust economic systems. It is the peace that understands climate justice as inseparable from human justice—that a livable planet is not optional, but essential for any sustainable peace. There is no peace without justice!

Our NJPN statement captures this urgency: "The current approach to peace is not working for most... We need a new and different way. A radical peace to mirror our radical hope." And that way begins with us: ordinary people stepping into the gaps, being present, speaking truth, and building bridges. We were reminded that "we must prepare for peace," not simply wait for it to arrive.

Peace as a Verb: Peace is not a passive state—it is a verb. It is something we must do, together, day by day. In this Jubilee Year, we are called to be "pilgrims of hope," choosing not despair but determined action in solidarity with the poor, the displaced, the excluded, and the earth itself. 'A Just Peace' is not easy. It may require us to cross lines, break silence, and leave comfort behind. Peace is about building big tables, not big walls. As people of faith and conscience, it is the only peace worth striving for. Let us be clear: we will not settle for less. Not now. Not ever. Because peace is the power of us—and the world needs that power, NOW, more than ever.

**Brian O' Toole (NJPN Exec)**

**August 2, 2025**



*Children's poster presented at the final liturgy of the NJPN 2025 Conference*

## **George White: A Newcomer to the NJPN Conference**

I have never attended a NJPN conference before; I arrived alone and was unsure what to expect. A little nervous about the weekend, I had a cheeky look through the participant list and was glad to see several names I recognised.

Amongst the names were a few I remembered from a CAFOD trip in 2015 to Paris for COP 21. However, in 2015, I was Georgia White and looked a little different to what I do today having now lived as George White for 8 years. I didn't need to be nervous; everyone was so welcoming. There was an air of generosity and integrity amongst the participants which was felt by all, but especially by me as someone who had never been here before.

Like many people, I was a little disappointed to hear that the former Archbishop of Canterbury had to cancel his visit to the conference due to ill health on the day. But the off-the-cuff session with Sr MaryAnne Francalanza and Sr Katrina Alton was

simply inspirational and set the tone for the whole conference. I've always believed in the power of storytelling, and this was some of the best I have ever seen. The poignant question posed by the conversation, 'what breaks your heart the most?' The conference was littered with powerful encounters of dialogue, action and subsequently, change. It was a wonderful evening catching up with old and new friends prior to starting Saturday's work.

On the Saturday, I was privileged to join the panel exploring 'just peace' with chair James Trewby, Sr Katrina Alton, Andrew Jackson and Bokani Tshdizu. Our panel was wonderfully diverse with many stories exploring community and what connects us, even though we have many different backgrounds to discuss. I was reminded that we must try and afford ourselves the dignity we fight



for in others and take breaks where necessary. This is where having a good community helps take the pressure off.

I was privileged to join the incredible wealth of volunteers delivering deep and impactful workshops. Yet another session guided by openness, encounter and compassion. I felt truly at peace for the entire weekend, very settled and grounded through the worship, community and sessions. Having been aware of the National Justice and Peace Network for quite some time, I now know first hand what a truly wonderful group of people sit at the heart of trying to make the world a better place by truly putting their faith into action. I will be on the look out for more opportunities to join in, by becoming a member, searching for more communities and hopefully returning to conference! **George White**



*From left to right: Bokani Tshidzu, Sr Katrina Alton, Andrew Jackson, George White, James Trewby:*

*Photograph courtesy of Brian O'Toole*

## Habemus Papam! (and he is an Augustinian!)

The death of our much-loved Pope Francis, and the subsequent electing in of Robert Prevost, Pope Leo XIV was over 100 days ago now. Robert Prevost was a surprise to most of us, and it was a particularly exciting time for the Augustinians.

Sr. Margaret Atkins shares with us...

What was it like for us fellow-Augustinians, when the name of Robert Prevost was announced as the new pope? I don't think I shall ever forget the moment - stuck in a traffic jam on the M6, desperately trying to get a news channel on the mobile phone we had been using as a Satnav, and unable to work out how to turn on the sound!

Fr Robert Prevost was Prior General of the Augustinian Friars for twelve years. We know his brothers in England well, as members of our own Religious family. Two or three of our own Sisters have met him. Suddenly, the papacy felt very close to home, something not only of joy and peace, but a part of

normal life. One of our Sisters wrote: "When I watched the Cardinals come up to make their vow of secrecy at the beginning of the Conclave, there were two faces that had my interest. One was Cardinal Stephen Brislin of South Africa whom I had met at different celebrations. The other was Cardinal Robert Prevost whom I had met at a week-long meeting of the Augustinian Federation of Africa in Durban South Africa in January 2002. I had been part of the team that prepared the welcome for the Prior Provincials and Friars in Africa, and delegates from several other religious congregations working in Africa who followed the Rule of St Augustine. We had a week of fraternal exchange and formation in Augustinian Spirituality in an atmosphere of Augustinian friendship.

The first thing I remember about Fr Prevost was his love and dedication to the people of Peru whom he had had to leave to take up the role of Prior General



of the Order. He was a quiet, humble man who was kind and supportive.

We met him again several years later when he returned to visit the friars in his second term as Prior General. Had I known at the time that one day he would be Pope Leo XIV I would have taken more careful notes of the details of his visits and made sure I had some good photos!

When his name was announced it was so strange to see a Pope whom I knew personally. I was very excited but also filled with peace and hope."

A Friar friend, who preached our own Community retreat recently, sent us his homily for the occasion. He described his emotions on hearing the news: "Joy, excitement and hope, because I know this man, and I believe that in choosing him the assembled cardinals in the Conclave have given a great gift to the Church."

Then he added:

"In the past, when the Prior General was coming, great preparations were made, but with

Bob, things were much more low-key. He is an ordinary man with an extraordinary sense of people. He is a gentle man but never afraid to deal with problems. He is a wise and highly intelligent man who displays great humility and simplicity. And, very importantly, he has a great sense of humour - he's going to need it."

In Cardinal Prevost, the Cardinals have chosen a man with deep roots in three continents, and strong Augustinian connections to the other three, capable of dialogue in many languages, deeply loved and respected by all who know him, with rich experience as a pastor, leader, decision-maker, teacher and preacher. His choice of name shows his vision, awareness, at a time when the world faces even more 'new things' than in time of Leo XIII. His commitment to the marginalised is steeped in lived experience. His passion for mission is written in his life-story. Journalist love to read papal elections as politics, but God continues to confound them. The Holy Spirit is clearly at work in the Church:

Deo gratias!

**Sr. Margaret Atkins, OSA**

**1st September - 4th October - Season of Creation**

Download a Celebration Guide from [www.seasonofcreation.org](http://www.seasonofcreation.org)

**1st October - Raising Hope Conference - celebrating 10 years of Laudato Si'.**

[Register through <http://register.through.raisinghope.earth/conference/>](http://register.through.raisinghope.earth/conference/)

More details around creation-themed events from:

[www.laudatosimovement.org](http://www.laudatosimovement.org)

**20th September - Caritas Social Action Network**

**Jubilee for Social Justice, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral**

Mass at 12noon, followed by lunch, reflections, exhibition  
For more information or to book:

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jubilee-for-social-justice-tickets-1374429849679](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jubilee-for-social-justice-tickets-1374429849679)

**18th September at 7.30pm- Throwing Open the Doors to Children Living in Poverty in the UK**

**NJPN Online Meeting.**

Email [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk) to register for the evening.

(also, if you attended our Conference, please come to our Post-Conference Catch-Up evening on Thursday 30th October at 7.30pm. Please use the same email to register your interest.

**3 October - CAFOD Family Fast Day:**

[www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)

**4th-10th October 2025.: Celebrating Creation**

Time to explore how to live out Laudato Si' fully in our personal lives and within the Church. Talks, discussions, art, liturgy, gardening, walks. All welcome.

Email [margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk](mailto:margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk)

**Become a Member:**

Membership is open to local groups, families and individuals. Individual Subscription only £25 a year (but you are welcome to give more!) Low Income £15. Download a membership form from the website or contact the Membership Co-ordinator, Ann Kelly...[membership@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:membership@justice-and-peace.org.uk)

**DONATE TO NJPN: Online** via our website. **By cheque** payable to NJPN. **BACS** to NJPN Sort Code:16-31-15 Account No: 10089516, put your name and Donation in the reference field. To make a regular donation by **Standing Order**, contact the Administrator or download the Membership Form on the website.

**The National Justice & Peace Network** welcomes all who share a vision of a world in which people live in peace and harmony, where our common humanity is respected and all are able to contribute freely to the common good. NJPN seeks to encourage work for justice and peace by promoting communication and shared action between members, supporters and partners.

***This newsletter is produced three times a year by the Network***

***The views expressed are not necessarily those of the National Justice and Peace Network.***

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