

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin May 2026

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 articles and diary dates to: anneoc980@hotmail.com

MORAL EXCOMMUNICATION & THE PROGRESSIVE LEFT

JON SWALES April 26, 2026 *Grace+Truth* Guest writer

Grace+Truth
FAITH, TRANSFORMATION & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Something feels fractured in the UK right now. There is a new hardness in the air. You can feel it on the streets, hear it in conversations, see it in our politics. For immigrants, refugees, Muslims, and people of colour, it can feel like the ground is shifting beneath their feet. Phrases like “send them back” and “stop the boats” are not just political slogans—they carry fear. They tell people they are unwanted.

Let me be clear: racism has no place here. Hatred wrapped in patriotism is still hatred. White nationalism is not a phantom invented by the media; it is real, and when race becomes the basis for belonging, exclusion, and fear, it must be resisted. When people are reduced to problems, when race becomes a weapon of exclusion, something deeply poisonous is taking root.

Progressive extremism

But extremism is not only found on one side. There is also an authoritarian instinct on parts of the activist left—a politics less interested in persuasion than in moral purity, where disagreement is treated as contamination. Some forms of progressive politics can become coercive, where dissent is shamed rather than debated, and complexity is flattened into slogans.

Neither tribe offers healing. And here is the real danger.

Those who came out to support UKIP, holding crosses and banners, may leave convinced not that they were challenged, but that they were persecuted. If every person there is simply labelled a Nazi, if they are treated as beyond redemption, mocked rather than engaged, dehumanised rather than challenged, it does not produce repentance. It produces hardening.

People who feel cancelled rarely become softer. They become angrier. More suspicious. More convinced they are the only ones telling the truth. Rejection becomes fuel. Shame becomes radicalisation.

Creating moral monsters

This is not to excuse genuine racism or extremism. It is to recognise how polarisation works. If we turn every anxious, frustrated, working-class person into a moral monster, we should not be surprised when resentment deepens and movements grow stronger.

And much of that anxiety is not born in ideology first, but in lived hardship.

The cost of living crisis has hit poorer communities hardest. Rising rent, food prices, heating bills, insecure work, closed services, stretched GP surgeries, disappearing opportunities—many people feel like they are drowning while being told everything is fine. They feel forgotten by Westminster, patronised by the middle classes, and spoken about rather than listened to.

They feel they have no voice.

Struggling communities

So when they see government money spent on hotels for asylum seekers while their own children wait for housing, when they see struggling high streets and communities already under pressure, it lands not as policy but as insult. Hotels are what posh people use for holidays; for others, they symbolise a system that somehow has resources for everyone except them.

Some of this perception is unfair. Some of it is manipulated by politicians and media. But much of it is rooted in real pain. If people believe nobody hears them, they will eventually shout. And if nobody listens, they will follow whoever does.

Moral excommunication

For some, fears around immigration are also tangled with anxieties about cultural change, religious identity, and what they perceive as the growing influence of Islam in public life. Some speak—often clumsily and sometimes unfairly—about fears of cultural displacement, changing neighbourhoods, and social cohesion. These fears should not be dismissed with sneering contempt. They need engagement, challenge, honesty, and sometimes correction—but not instant moral excommunication.

If we want honesty, we also have to tell the truth about why trust has collapsed.

The scandal of grooming gangs hangs heavily over this country. For many ordinary people, it is not simply a news story but a wound—a sense that vulnerable girls were failed for decades, and that institutions looked away.

There remains a deep public perception—and in some cases documented institutional failure—that fear of accusations of racism contributed to silence, hesitation, and failures to protect vulnerable girls. That is devastating. When the vulnerable are not protected because institutions are afraid of political consequences, something has gone terribly wrong.

To name that is not racism. It is a demand for justice.

Truth not scapegoating

But neither should those crimes be used to condemn entire communities, particularly Muslims or Pakistani communities as a whole. Collective blame is lazy and dangerous. Justice requires truth, not scapegoating.

This weekend in Leeds, I saw some of this fracture up close.

There were around fifty people supporting UKIP, some holding crosses, some holding banners saying “Stop the Boats.” Opposite them were perhaps one hundred and fifty counter-protesters shouting, screaming, calling them Nazis. The loudest among them were carrying communist flags—the hammer and sickle held high.

Another authoritarianism

Now, anyone who has followed my writing knows I am no defender of unrestrained capitalism. I have written enough about greed, exploitation, and the way money can become a god that devours the poor.

But communism? The hammer and sickle does not make me think of liberation. It makes me think of Stalin, gulags, forced labour camps, thought police, and crushed dissent. It is strange to watch people denounce authoritarianism while waving symbols of another kind of authoritarianism.

Some shouted at the police too—officers simply trying to keep the peace and protect the democratic right to protest. They were mocked, told to get a proper job, treated as though standing between two angry crowds made them the enemy. Maybe I need to be careful. I’m sure not everyone there was aggressive. Many were likely there because they genuinely oppose racism and fear what they see rising. But what I witnessed, at least in part, felt more like rage than peace.

Another gathering

And then, not far away, there was another gathering—people choosing welcome, hospitality, inclusion. They were calmer. Less interested in shouting, more interested in witness. I did not hear abuse there. Just presence.

That stayed with me.

Because the Church should be different.

Jesus called disciples from very different worlds. Simon the Zealot, shaped by revolutionary fire. Matthew the tax collector, seen by many as a collaborator with empire. Fishermen, doubters, the impulsive, the broken. He did not build a movement of ideological clones. He gathered unlikely people around himself.

The centre was not agreement on every political question. The centre was Jesus. That matters now.

The same table

The Church must be a place where people who disagree on immigration policy, economics, borders, and national identity can still kneel at the same table. Not because truth does not matter, but because Christ is bigger than our tribes.

We do not need churches baptised into left-wing purity culture or right-wing nationalism. There is also a temptation to confuse Christianity with national identity—to turn faith into a defence of tribe, border, and nostalgia, rather than the cruciform way of Jesus.

We need Christ.

Serious conversations

Can we defend the dignity of refugees and migrants while also allowing serious conversation about borders, responsibility, and what makes communities flourish? Can we oppose racism without turning everyone we disagree with into a monster?

Can we recognise that some fears are rooted in prejudice, and others in economic abandonment, institutional failure, social fragmentation, and political distrust?

Because inclusion also has to be tested. If inclusion only includes people who think exactly like us, it is not inclusion at all. It is just another tribe.

Something better

We are becoming a people who shout before we listen. Politics has become performance. Outrage has become its own religion. We need something better.

Conviction *without* contempt.

Justice *without* self-righteousness.

Welcome *without* naivety.

Borders *without* hatred.

Compassion *without* condescension.

And a Church brave enough to keep Jesus at the centre, while the world tears itself apart around the edges.

<https://gracetruth.blog/2026/04/26/moral-excommunicati-on-the-progressive-left-by-jon-swales/>

• **Rev'd Jon Swales** is an ordained C of E Priest who heads up **Lighthouse** a fresh expression of church for adults battered and bruised by the storms of life. <https://www.lighthousewestyorkshire.org.uk/>

Jon is also a prophetic theologian, poet and climate activist. Discover more and follow the links here:

<https://www.cruciformjustice.com/about-5>

See the **Cruciform Justice** website here – 'A Jesus & Justice Shaped Blog from Rev'd Jon Swales & Friends':

<https://www.cruciformjustice.com/>

Find out more about the **Mission, Theology and Ministry on the Margins** course which Jon leads here:

<https://www.lighthousewestyorkshire.org.uk/lsmt>

POEMS

Poems by Jon Swales are featured regularly in this bulletin. These are now available in two volumes: *Let Me Be the Kind Who Weeps: Poems for a Wounded World* and *East of Eden: Poems on Vocation for a Wounded World*, both £15 incl p&p. All proceeds support Lighthouse. Order here: <https://www.lighthousewestyorkshire.org.uk/books>

SEMINAR

Jon will also be leading a seminar at the Hope into Action conference on 20 May 2026 **Rooted: Homelessness Ends in Community** <https://www.hopeintoaction.org.uk/conference2026>

• **Jon Kuhrt** publishes the **Grace and Truth** blog. He has worked with people affected by homelessness for over 30 years. He is a former government adviser on how faith groups address rough sleeping and is now CEO of Hope into Action.

Related post: *Reclaiming social justice from toxic identity politics – Grace + Truth* - by Jon Kuhrt

<https://gracetruth.blog/2025/03/01/reclaiming-social-justice-from-the-toxic-pit-of-identity-politics/>

DIOCESE OF LEEDS J&P COMMISSION ENDORSES JOINT CHRISTIAN LETTER DEPLORING UKIP MARCH IN LEEDS

24 April 2026: "As Christians we believe in God's love for everyone, shown to us in Jesus Christ. Because of this we reject the use of Christian language and imagery in any racist context. We note the march on 25th April in Leeds, and we wish to make it clear that UKIP do not speak for us or for the Christian faith of which we are a part.

Jesus said: *'Love your neighbour as you love yourself'* (Matthew 22.39; Mark 12.31; Luke 10.27)
And: *'Do to others what you would like them to do to you'* (Matthew 7.12; Luke 6. 31).

When asked who our neighbour is, Jesus makes it clear that he does not mean the person who is closest to us in ethnicity – in fact, the person he chooses as an example of a neighbour in the parable of the Good Samaritan is a Samaritan – that is, someone who was distrusted and regarded as inferior and impure by most of the society of Jesus' time. (Luke 10.29 – 37)

Our calling as Christians is to love and to learn from all God's people: celebrating the beauty and dignity of every human being, with a special bias for anyone whose beauty and dignity is contested through ignorance, pride, prejudice, racism, hatred.

We believe that God is on the side of people who are marginalised and oppressed, and that if we turn away from or persecute those people we turn away from God. In our context, we believe this means that we have a God-given duty to stand up for people of all faiths and none who are victims of racism. This is particularly the case when victimisation is being justified using Christian language."

Please join us resisting UKIP's divisive exclusive politics. Please join us in praying for unity and peace for our Leeds communities, recognising the evils of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and all racism, and calling out racism in your everyday life whenever you can.

As Freeman of Leeds Nelson Mandela said, 'To be free is to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others' (*Long Walk to Freedom*). We know that there are many problems facing our city, problems with housing, employment and pay. As Christians committed to the Kingdom of God we are passionate about addressing these problems. But blaming people of different religions or races for those problems makes them harder to solve. We need to be united so that we can make our city everything it should be.

Loving God, make us channels of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us bring love. Where there is suspicion, let us bring faith. Where there is fear, let us bring hope. Where there is division, let us bring unity. Amen.

<https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Statement-From-Christians-in-Leeds-1.pdf>

<https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/2026/04/24/24-apr-jp-commission-endorses-joint-christian-letter-deploring-ukip-march-in-leeds/>

BISHOPS INVITE ALL PEOPLE TO WORK FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE AND ASK CATHOLICS TO JOIN THEM IN 'REDOUBLING' PRAYERS

Source: CBCEW April 25, 2026: The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales met at the English College's Convento Palazzola just outside Rome from 18-23 April for a one-day plenary assembly and week-long ongoing formation as Pope Leo XIV followed his Apostolic Journey through Africa to its conclusion.

They issued the following statement as a sign of solidarity with the Holy Father, asking for Catholics to pray with them for an enduring peace with justice in the world's conflict zones:

"We stand in solidarity with the Holy Father in his sustained witness and unshakeable commitment to the Gospel of Peace. We embrace our responsibility to act as bridge-builders and peacemakers and call upon the faithful, whom we serve in the dioceses of England and Wales, to join us in redoubling our prayers and advocacy for peace and justice. We pray that the leaders of all peoples at war open their minds and hearts to the dialogue and encounter necessary to attain a peace which disarms and endures.

"Hope is central to our Christian faith. In Eastertide, we are reminded that we are called to build a future sustained by the Risen Christ. As Pope Leo said in Equatorial Guinea¹: 'There is hunger for a future imbued with hope that is capable of engendering a new sense of justice and producing fruits of peace and fraternity. This is not an unknown future that we must passively await, but rather one that we ourselves are called to build with God's grace'."

¹Homily of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (Mongomo), Wednesday, April 22, 2026.

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishops-invite-all-people-to-work-for-peace-and-justice-and-ask-catholics-to-join-them-in-redoubling-prayers/>

ONLINE STUDY SERIES FROM SABEEL-KAIROS: SEEKING A JUST PEACE FOR PALESTINE

Kairos II: A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide Online study series with Sabeel-Kairos UK

We are using the study guide recently released by Christian organisations in the US - The Palestine Justice Network (PJN) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR), and Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA) to unpack the message of the Kairos II document and how it can inform us in our advocacy work as we campaign for justice and peace for Palestinians.

We have been delighted to have so many people join us for the first 2 sessions of the online study and even more have watched the recording afterwards. Session 3 (26th April) will be available on catch-up shortly.

Week 1 looked at our cultural assumptions and were challenged by Rifat Kassis about the importance of Christians globally studying the Kairos II document and its call to the international church to take action for Palestinians human rights.

Week 2 studied *The Reality: Genocide, Colonization, and Ethnic Cleansing*, there was a lot of heavy content which Lynn McAllister sensitively covered, which set the scene for Week 3.

Week 3 covered the theme of *Steadfast Faith and Sumud* facilitated by SKUK trustee Gerald Conyngnam.

Kairos II is significant... because it is not just a theological or political document. It is a confessional document of faith, written at a time when silence itself becomes a sin and faith failure. It insists on a central truth... Faith cannot be neutral in the face of systematic injustice. And I do not exaggerate if I say that this is the most profound statement, you find it in the document. Faith cannot be neutral in the face of systematic injustice as we are facing right now. This is why the document is so important to study.'

Rifat Kassis

General coordinator of Kairos Palestine

Email Claire advocacy@sabeel-kairos.org.uk for the links to catch up on previous weeks.

Register here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/7Ci8e38LR9Kq1mjVL5fS3A#/registration>

Final dates for the series: Sundays at 4pm – May 10, 31

DAVID GOODBOURN LECTURE 2026 - PALESTINE-ISRAEL: A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND 14 May 2026, 7-9pm via Zoom

In the midst of violence and suffering in the Holy Land, we hear from Fr David Neuhaus, South African born Israeli Jesuit, and a prominent voice for justice and peace. <https://ctbi.org.uk/event/david-goodbourn-lecture-2026/> Fr David is the only Jesuit with Israeli citizenship and has a unique perspective to offer on the present conflict. Chair Rt.Revd Rachel Treweek, The Bishop of Gloucester. Bishop Rachel is one of the leading Church of England voices on Israel-Palestine at the present time. Please register to attend:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/6417582023325/WN_qYhF5pHHQJ--SIJKMhUmnA#/registration

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE 5 MAY 2026

The National Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse takes place every year on the fifth Tuesday of Easter.

Theme

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10) The theme for this year's Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse looks at the scourge of domestic abuse which causes pain and fear that prevent its victims from living the life Jesus came to bring.

Immediately before the much-loved part of this verse from the Gospel of John, we hear Jesus's words: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." This is how abuse feels to those who experience it – their dignity and value as a unique child of God is stripped away and destroyed.

The physical danger domestic abuse presents to life is clear. A woman is murdered by a partner or ex-partner every five days in the UK. Between three and 10 women die by suicide each week due to domestic abuse. Abusers can also perpetrate spiritual and coercive abuse, disrupting their victims' relationships with God and the Church. This can lead victims – adults and children – to feel guilt and shame that push them away from the support that the Church has to offer.

At its best, the Church can – and should – be a safe haven where support is available for victims and survivors so that they can live life without fear and begin to experience the life in abundance Jesus came to bring. This hope is what we pray for this year.

Resources

The resources offered for this year build on those for 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. Here you will find suggestions and notes to help priests with homilies for the day itself, on Tuesday, 5 May, or the Sunday before. We also have Prayers of the Faithful. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/national-day-of-prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-2026/>

BISHOP APPEALS FOR PEACE ON THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF SUDAN CONFLICT

Source: **The Catholic Network** April 17, 2026

The conflict in Sudan has reached its third anniversary, having begun on 15 April 2023. It continues to exact a devastating toll on the country and its people. It has led to one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, with reports estimating that around 12 million people have been displaced and some 150,000 killed.

Bishop Paul Swarbrick, Lead Bishop for Africa for the Conference of Bishops (England and Wales) said: "I urge Catholics in England and Wales to pray for peace and also call on the UK Government not to lose sight of this ongoing crisis. I am aware, through my links with the Church in Sudan and with Catholic charities working in the region that there is a fear that the conflict risks being overlooked by the international community." He continued: "The United Kingdom is 'penholder' for Sudan at the United Nations Security Council, and I hope it will use that position to promote continued diplomatic engagement and to support a peaceful resolution of this conflict."

"These less widely reported conflicts must not be ignored, we must remember the words of Proverbs 31:8: 'Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute.' I would like to affirm the words of Pope Leo XVI who said last Sunday, 'I renew my heartfelt appeal to the warring parties to silence their weapons and begin, without preconditions, a sincere dialogue aimed at ending this fratricidal war as soon as possible.' Concluding his appeal, Bishop Swarbrick said: "The people of Sudan are owed peace. Let us not forget them. Let us continue to pray, to speak out, and to act in solidarity, so that hope may prevail over suffering."

<https://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk/16257>

CAFOD PRAYER FOR SUDAN

*Listen to us, Lord,
hear our prayers as we cry out to you.
Comfort and sustain your people.
Open the paths of peace.*

*At this time of conflict in Sudan,
we pray for those
who have been forced to flee their homes
and search for safety.
Open the paths of peace, Lord.*

*We pray for those
who face hunger and disease,
who have lost friends and family,
who endure in this time of crisis.
Open the paths of peace, Lord.*

*We pray for those
who are working tirelessly
to support our sisters and brothers
as famine looms and violence persists.
Open the paths of peace, Lord.*

*Guide us to stand alongside one another
and through our prayers and actions,
keep the people of Sudan
always in our hearts.
Amen.*

CAFOD SUDAN CRISIS APPEAL

Support families who have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict and are now facing yet another crisis – hunger.

<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/prayer-resources/prayer-for-sudan?form=sudanprogramme>

FAREWELL TO EVERYTHING GREEN by Eiman Abbas El-Nour

*I stretch my hand to reach you
Come closer
I feel you near
I smell your sweetness
My heartbeats are painfully racing
Is it because my brain is running?
Ah! How cruel are the moments
When they are filled with thorns
My roses are dead
My gardenia breathed its last kiss in the air
And succumbed to its fate
Even the resilient cactus
Went
Scared to live alone in the vast emptiness
I am trying to talk to you like I used to
When the evening creeps in with a smile
When I couldn't tell from your giggly eyes
If you needed a drink
Do you hear me now?
Or the sounds of war have
Deafened you forever
Maybe if I read my calming verse
And curse the devil
A thousand times
I open my eyes
To find all this the union of all my nightmares.*

Eiman Abbas El-Nour is Associate Professor in English Literature at Neelain University and Ahfad University. She is also Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge. She specialises in teaching African Literature and her main research themes include African women's writing, Sudanese literature and Sudanese orality.

from a Pax Christi International resource booklet - more here:
https://paxchristi.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/World-Week-of-Prayer-for-Peace-in-Sudan_2026_Booklet.pdf

SUDAN'S WAR ON WOMEN: THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEED OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT QUADRUPLES AS ABUSE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS BECOMES THE BLUEPRINT OF WAR, THREE YEARS ON.

Press Release April 14, 2026

As the war in Sudan enters its fourth year with sexual violence as one of its most defining features, UN Women calls for the protection of all women and girls, accountability for all perpetrators, and a major scale-up in funding for women-led front-line response.

New York/Port Sudan, April 14, 2026 — Sexual violence continues to surge across Sudan, with the number of women and girls requiring support after experiencing gender-based violence nearly doubling in two years and quadrupling since the start of the war three years ago, according to a new *Gender Alert: The Impact of the War in Sudan on Women and Girls*, published today by UN Women.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2026/04/gender-alert-three-years-of-war-sudanese-women-on-the-frontlines-of-humanitarian-and-local-peacebuilding-efforts>

The analysis draws on evidence from 85 women-led organizations operating across Sudan, including on the frontlines of the war in Darfur and Kordofan. Two-thirds of women front-line responders reported a significant increase in sexual violence in 2025, and half reported further escalation in 2026, according to new survey data featured in the alert.

"Women and girls are being raped and killed in their homes. The use of sexual violence has been embedded in the blueprint of Sudan's war", said Anna Mutavati, UN Women Regional Director for East and Southern Africa.

More than 4.3 million women and girls are now displaced inside Sudan, whilst 17.1 million require humanitarian assistance in 2026. Yet for many, especially in active conflict areas, there is limited or no access to food, shelter, or medical care. More than two-thirds of women working for women-led organizations on the front lines of the humanitarian response witnessed a significant increase in a lack of access to basic essential services in 2025.

All violations designed to inflict terror, humiliation and control over women and girls are compounded by blockades and ongoing instability and are being carried out with widespread impunity. "Ending this war means ending the impunity that sustains it and recognizing that there can be no peace whilst sexual violence remains one of its most calculated and cruellest tactics", said Mutavati.

Women-led organizations assessed in the alert are reaching nearly 20 million people in need across Sudan. In conditions that are increasingly incompatible with basic survival, they are providing food to families, medical care and psychosocial support to survivors of sexual violence, mediating local conflicts, negotiating humanitarian access in places where formal systems have collapsed and international actors cannot reach.

Almost all (99 per cent) of surveyed women-led organizations in Sudan report implementation challenges linked to funding shortages, impediments caused by authorities, and insecurity. Some 85 per cent of surveyed women-led organizations in Sudan report being affected by funding reductions or cuts in 2025. Women working on the front lines face threats and targeted attacks, with one in five surveyed women working for women-led organizations having reported receiving threats. There has been no meaningful participation of Sudanese woman as negotiators in official peace talks over the past three years.

UN Women is on the ground in Sudan delivering life-saving support to women and girls, including protection services, psychosocial support and essential supplies. UN Women calls for the protection of civilians and the full, safe, and meaningful inclusion of women in humanitarian response, including direct support for women-led efforts. UN Women calls for accountability for perpetrators, access to justice for victims and survivors, and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes and decision-making.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2026/04/sudans-war-on-women-the-number-of-people-in-need-of-sexual-violence-support-quadruples-as-abuse-of-women-and-girls-becomes-the-blueprint-of-war-three-years-on>

Explore the latest analysis, data, and updates: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/in-focus/sudan>

• *UN Women is the UN organization for gender equality delivering programmes, policies and standards that uphold women's human rights and ensure that every woman and girl lives up to her full potential.*

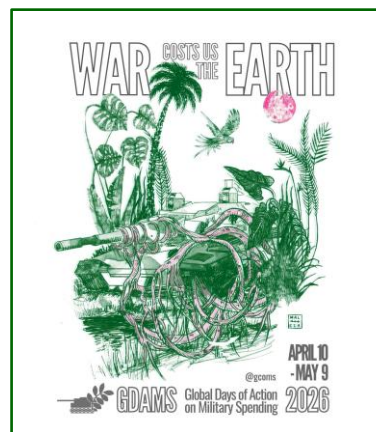
<https://www.unwomen.org/en>

GLOBAL DAYS OF ACTION ON MILITARY SPENDING APRIL 10 – MAY 9

PAX CHRISTI ENGLAND AND WALES is supporting this year's Global Days of Action on Military Spending and have signed the international GDAMS appeal.

The appeal challenges the narrative that increases in military spending increase our security and calls on Governments to: 'undertake major reductions to their military expenditure and redirect those funds to social and environmental sectors, tackling the global challenges of our time and funding human security'.

The global security landscape has deteriorated massively in recent years: the number of wars and violent armed conflicts active today is the highest since the end of World War II, erupting across the world and drawing in an unprecedented number of states and actors. From Gaza and the West Bank, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to Ukraine, Venezuela, Iran, and beyond, levels of violence, civilian suffering, and violations of international law have reached heinous heights, including the commission of genocide.



This surge in conflict and violence is neither accidental nor inevitable, it reflects a broader resurgence of imperialism and militarization, spearheaded by the United States, in which brute force, military might and coercion have become dominant tools of international relations. Powerful states and regional actors continue to fuel wars – not only through direct intervention but also through extensive arms transfers, strategic alliances and geopolitical competition – prioritizing narrow interests over human security and peace.

You can read the appeal in full here:

https://demilitarize.org/media_news/gdams-2026-appeal-a-call-to-action-against-global-militarization/

And the corresponding UK appeal here: <https://demilitarize.org.uk/global-days-of-action-on-military-spending-gdams-2026-appeal-from-gcoms-uk/>

INTERNATIONAL CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS' DAY - MAY 15

Every year on May 15 we remember conscientious objectors, both past and present. Around the world many people are imprisoned or forced to flee their home countries for refusing to join the armed forces. On May 15 we stand in solidarity with them, as well as celebrating the memory of those throughout history who have resisted conscription. There will be ceremonies around the country. You can find all the details on the Peace Pledge Union website. <https://www.ppu.org.uk/international-conscientious-objectors-day-may-15th>

NATIONAL CEREMONY - LONDON

This annual event in Tavistock Square (1-2pm) features speeches and music in front of the conscientious objectors' memorial stone, followed by a reading of COs' names from across history. Flowers will be laid on the memorial stone, followed by a minute's silence.

Speakers include: Emma Sangster from ForcesWatch <https://www.forceswatch.net/>

Michael Elstub from Veterans for Peace <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/>

FRANZ JÄGERSTÄTTER

And if you are in or around London on Sunday 17 May, you can hear one of Pax Christi UK's Vice Presidents Valerie Flessati talking about the life and witness of Franz Jägerstätter, executed in Austria for his refusal to fight for Hitler. 12.30 pm, Cana Café, Farm St Church, 114 Mount Street W1K 3AH

<https://www.ppu.org.uk/international-conscientious-objectors-day-may-15th>

Join us at events in May around the country honouring the courage of those who refuse to fight wars.

Manchester International Conscientious Objectors Day Commemoration

in the Peace Garden, Lincoln Square, Manchester on Friday 15 May at 12 noon.

PEACE PLEDGE UNION CONFERENCE & AGM 2026

Saturday 16 May 2026 10:30 am - 4:30 pm

Join us for an engaging day of discussion, talks, and socialising with other PPU members.

<https://www.ppu.org.uk/civicrm/event/info%3Fid%3D547%26reset%3D1>

'COUNTING ALL THOSE WHO REFUSE TO FIGHT' - Online Event

Sunday 17 May 2026 7:00 pm

Join an international online event on Sunday 17 May at 7pm (UK time) exploring the experiences of those who refuse to fight in war and how they can be supported.

<https://www.ppu.org.uk/civicrm/event/info%3Fid%3D552%26reset%3D1>

MAY 15 ANNIVERSARY OF THE NAKBA

Pax Christi England and Wales: Wednesday 15 May will be the 78th anniversary of the Nakba (Catastrophe) a reminder of the tragic events of 1948 when Palestinian people lost their homes, their land and their way of life. On that day, we invite you to light a candle and take time in silence, individually, in groups, communities, parishes, to pray for peace in the Holy Land. Please let us know of anything you do that day and send us photos so that we can let our friends and partners in the Holy Land know. <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>

A PRAYER FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*Christ, Prince of Peace,
hear our prayer and lament,
for our suffering sisters and brothers.
Our hearts are heavy as we witness lives torn apart,
as we see the faces of frightened children
and hear the pleas of those without water or food.*

*We pray for the dead and the grieving,
for the injured and the afraid.
We pray for courage and perseverance,
for those working for healing and to bring aid.
We pray for world leaders,
that they may strive for a just and lasting peace.*

*God of new beginnings,
in your ways are compassion and hope.
Open our hearts to dialogue and understanding.
Lead us all to answer your call
to become peacemakers
today, and all the days of our life. Amen..*

[https://cafod.org.uk/pray/prayer-resources/
prayer-for-israelis-and-palestinians](https://cafod.org.uk/pray/prayer-resources/prayer-for-israelis-and-palestinians)

PRAYER FOR PEACE OF POPE SAINT JOHN XXIII

*Lord Jesus Christ,
who are called the Prince of Peace,
who are yourself our peace and reconciliation,
who so often said,
"Peace to you,"
grant us peace.*

*Make all men and women witnesses of truth,
justice, and brotherly love.
Banish from their hearts whatever might
endanger peace.*

*Enlighten our rulers that they may guarantee
and defend the great gift of peace.*

*May all peoples of the earth become as brothers
and sisters.*

*May longed-for peace blossom forth
and reign always over us all. Amen.*

[https://www.cbcew.org.uk/plenary-resolution-
apr-26-peace-statement](https://www.cbcew.org.uk/plenary-resolution-apr-26-peace-statement)

REFUGEE WEEK 15-21 JUNE 2026

Refugee Week 2026 marks 75 years since the Refugee Convention – a landmark agreement affirming that those forced to flee deserve protection, dignity, and hope. For 75 years, it has provided the legal foundation that has saved millions of lives.

Theme of Refugee Week 2026: Courage

The word courage comes from the Latin *cor*, meaning "heart." Inspired by the lives and experiences of people seeking sanctuary, Refugee Week 2026 invites us to explore the theme of Courage.

For refugees around the world, courage is often a daily necessity. It is the courage to face unknown journeys, learn new languages, navigate unfamiliar systems, or simply to wake up each morning and step into an uncertain world. At a time when some seek to divide and blame, Refugee Week 2026 calls us to come together and share the courage to welcome, to stand for what we believe in, and to celebrate culture and community – to be joyful, imagine new possibilities, dream, heal, and connect. Through art, stories, and community, we celebrate the courage that lives within us all – and how connection helps it grow.

Simple Acts

Courage isn't always loud or bold. It can be found in simple acts: opening your door to a neighbour, trying new food, reading a book, or watching a film that changes your view of the world. It can be speaking up, asking for help, sharing your story – or simply having the courage to be yourself. Simple Acts are everyday actions we can all do to stand with refugees and make new connections in our communities. Whether you build your own event or activity around a Simple Act, or simply take part during Refugee Week, you'll be part of a movement of people everywhere taking small steps to create a big change.

'Have a Courageous Conversation' is one of nine Simple Acts you can do for Refugee Week. Courageous conversations are where we speak from the heart, stand up for our shared values, and listen not just to respond, but to truly build understanding. When we listen deeply with genuine attention and curiosity, we create space for new ideas and perspectives. By being present and open, we can discover that beneath our different experiences and languages, there is common ground that unites all of us.

Ways to act simply:

- 1.) Have conversations that build bridges instead of walls
- 2.) Find ways to speak our truth while making space for others to speak theirs
- 3.) Trust that through heartfelt conversation, we can grow in understanding and connection

Follow the Simple Acts countdown each week: <https://refugeeweek.org/simple-acts/>

Drawing on kindness

From sharing a meal to having a chat, a simple act can go a long way to make someone feel welcome. That's the message of this year's Refugee Week campaign, brought to life by beloved illustrator Quentin Blake who has created a series of cartoons highlighting nine actions anyone can take to stand in solidarity with refugees. You can use the illustrations to:

- Design your own promotional materials using our public marketing folder
- Share online on your website or with our social media toolkit
- Order printed materials such as posters and postcards
- Download pre-designed digital assets from the Refugee Week Shop

Please follow these guidelines:

- Include the credit: Refugee Week Illustration © Quentin Blake
- Do not modify or alter the artwork
- If you would like to adapt the illustrations, please contact Refugee Week first



Download illustrations (free) and also suggestions for the weeks leading up to and including Refugee Week:

<https://refugeeweek.org/simple-acts/>

Download resources here: <https://refugeeweek.org/take-part/resources/>

CHANGE BEGINS — ONE CONVERSATION, ONE CHILD, ONE MOMENT AT A TIME

From a post on Facebook April 18, 2026: "I was at a restaurant today — just quietly eating my meal. As a Muslim, I'm used to being aware of my surroundings, but this time, I was simply minding my own business, enjoying a moment to myself. At the table next to me sat a dad with his two little girls. They were full of life — the kind of curiosity that turns everything into a question. They noticed everything: the menu, the people, the sounds around them. It was honestly beautiful to watch, the way their minds worked so openly, so freely. Then one of them looked over at me and asked, "Daddy, why is she wearing that?"

For a split second, I froze. Not out of fear exactly, but out of uncertainty. You never really know how those moments are going to go. You brace yourself without even realizing it — for discomfort, for awkwardness, sometimes even for judgment. But his response... it caught me off guard in the best possible way. Without hesitation, without embarrassment, he gently said, "There are different religions, cultures, and languages. We have to learn about them."

That was it. Simple. Honest. Respectful. Then he went a step further. He told them about a time he had lived abroad, how he learned to speak Spanish, and how much it meant to him to experience a culture different from his own. He talked about it like it was something special — something worth understanding, not something to question or fear. The girls listened, just as curious as before, but now with a sense of wonder instead of confusion.

And I just sat there, quietly smiling behind my plate, letting that moment sink in. Because this — this is how it starts. Not with big speeches. Not with forced lessons. But with small, everyday moments where curiosity is met with kindness instead of correction. Where questions aren't shut down, but guided toward understanding. It's in these tiny exchanges that something bigger takes root.

Kids don't come into this world with prejudice in their hearts. They come with open minds, ready to learn whatever we place in front of them. And in that moment, that father chose to give them something good — something that builds bridges instead of walls. He didn't make it awkward. He didn't ignore the question. He didn't turn it into something uncomfortable. He turned it into a lesson in empathy.

And it mattered more than he'll probably ever know. Because while I went in there just to eat a meal, I left carrying a quiet sense of hope. A reminder that there are parents out there raising their children to be kind, to be open, to be thoughtful about the world around them.

Moments like that stay with you. They remind you that even in a world that can sometimes feel divided, there are still people choosing to lead with understanding. And that's where change begins — one conversation, one child, one moment at a time."

THE GOD WHO SINGS: MUSIC AND COSMIC RECONCILIATION

James Gordon Reid Haveloch-Jones April 28, 2026

*To speak of creation as music is to marry physics and theology with awe:
the cosmos is the score for God's ongoing song.*

"The morning stars sang together and the heavenly beings of God shouted with joy." (Job 38:7).

Before light in creation, there was sound: the symphony of atoms and molecules vibrating and dancing to the rhythm and beat of Abba (Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6), the composition of the enigmatic 'I Am' (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58). If Christ is Word made flesh, the universe is music made visible, each electron a note on the Composer's score of creation. Yet our modern and fallen world hums (and often shouts!) with dissonance, spiritually deaf to the harmony that underlines existence. To speak of creation as music is to marry physics and theology with awe: the cosmos itself is the score for God's ongoing song.

The Psalms in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) are a gift to the Church from our parent tradition, those of the Jewish faith. The Psalter has become, essentially, the hymnal of the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions. As the psalmist writes, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when kindred dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1). God longs to inscribe a deep shalom on the hearts of his children, and for there to be unity among them.

Each year on St. Cecilia's Day, Westminster Cathedral Choir, Westminster Abbey Choir, and St. Paul's Cathedral Choir gather to sing Vespers. There is a somewhat magical quality about singing God's praises together, which enables denominations divided by doctrinal differences to glimpse the eschatological unity that God longs for his people. It might only be an evensong, but it is certainly a foretaste of heaven.

Across the Abrahamic traditions, the Muslim muezzin chants the call to prayer from the minaret of the mosque. Anyone who has heard this sound will know its haunting resonance. Muslims believe that reciting the Qur'an vocalising the words is essentially sounding the divine, a kind of vocal calligraphy tracing divine speech. The muezzin chants to God, the Westminster Cathedral chorister sings polyphony to God, and the Jewish cantor recites the Torah to God. The instinct behind the act is the same: humankind longing to be heard by the One who first spoke creation into being. As the Lord promises in the Hebrew Bible, "through you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Pope Leo affirmed this universal blessing in his recent visit to our Islamic cousins in Lebanon, emphasising the importance of peace and respectful coexistence with other Abrahamic traditions on God's earth.

And God, the Creator of the universe whom we now meet intimately in the person of Jesus is the God Who Sings. "He will rejoice over you with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17). The Hebrew word here is *rann*, which is perhaps better translated as 'shouting in jubilation'.

In the ancient Near East, deities did not sing; they commanded or destroyed. Zephaniah's poetic and captivating image of the God Who Sings is therefore radically countercultural, implying that creation itself is sung with delight and profound gladness.

In Zephaniah's third chapter, there is a turning point where God uses song as a form of cosmic healing: fear becomes joy, and exile becomes homecoming. Thus, every act of ecological attention becomes an attempt to tune our lives back to the pitch of divine joy and to engage in cosmic healing. We, as God's people, join Zephaniah's vision of a God who restores both people and land through song. A powerful contemporary articulation of this is the new ecumenical project with Kew Gardens which is an initiative seeking to deepen the Church's theological engagement with the climate crisis.

In Genesis, the blessing that God bestows on Abraham and his family is not a private possession but the extension of divine creativity. God's generosity resonating outward into the world. Music becomes one of its most striking media: a form of blessing that crosses boundaries, restores dignity, and gathers what has been scattered. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of harmonisation, draws this blessing into human history, tuning discordant lives toward communion.

In a time of global crisis, we cannot ignore Pope Francis' prophetic words from 2014: "Even today, after the second failure of another world war, perhaps one can speak of a third war, one fought piecemeal, with crimes, massacres, destruction." Against such dissonance, human singing whether psalm, hymn, or call to prayer becomes a small echo of the creative delight with which God first sang the world into being.

In these fragile days, we pray for the peace of the Holy Land and for the Spirit of harmonisation to breathe blessing where violence has torn the fabric of hope. Psalm 122:1-4 invites us to seek peace and unity in pilgrimage and worship "Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together".

In an age marked by fracture, noise, and what Pope Francis called a "war fought piecemeal," the Christian vocation is not to shout out the world but to live attuned to a deeper music: the song of the Holy Spirit.

If creation is sung into being and sustained by divine joy, then our task is to become people who listen for that melody and embody it in the ordinary patterns of our lives. Harmony, in this sense, is not naïve optimism, rather it is a disciplined posture: choosing patience and hope over the cynicism that corrodes public life. The Spirit of harmonisation continues to work within and between us, drawing disparate lives into a shared resonance.

To pray for the peace of the Holy Land, to bless rather than curse, to care for the earth and for one another: these are acts of resistance against the world’s dissonance. They are the notes by which we join the great song of reconciliation that God is still singing over creation.

<https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/god-who-sings-music-cosmic-reconciliation/>

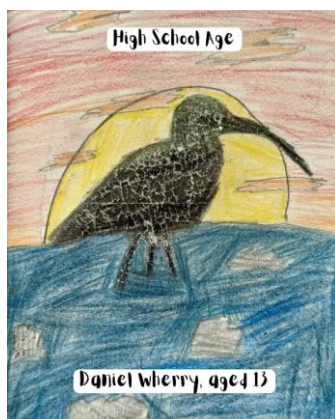
- James Gordon Reid Haveloch-Jones is an educational consultant, applied theologian, and author of an Amazon Top 50 Study Skills bestseller. He is an Honorary Associate Fellow of St George’s House, Windsor Castle, and a trustee of the Heythrop Association at the University of London. His work has also appeared in *the Church Times*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *Premier Christianity*, *Independent Catholic News*, and is featured in *the National Justice and Peace Network*. Internationally he has written for *BuddistdoorGlobal* and is featured in *Instituto Humanitas Unisinos*. Visit his website: www.jamesgordonreid.co.uk

WORLD CURLEW DAY (April 21) ART COMPETITION WINNERS

Here are the winners of our World Curlew Day Art Competition! We had so many beautiful entries, it was hard for our judge, Ellen Bradley to pick! But here they are:

18+ category : Kevin Harber (right)

Inspired by an illustration by Jessica Holm in the book *Curlew Moon*. This sculpture is carved from reclaimed wood (oak) detailed with a pyrography pen, mounted on a driftwood base.



High School: Daniel Wherry, aged 13
 Primary School: Páidí Ó Ruairc, aged 7
 Highly commended: Jonah Butler, aged 10 & Jack Butler aged 11

Thank you to everyone who entered!

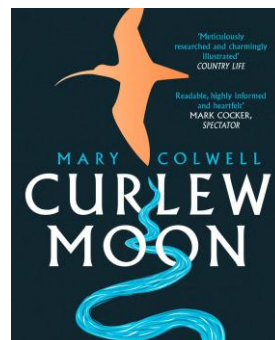
<https://www.curlewaction.org/>

Mary Colwell, Founder & Director, Curlew Action, writes:

April 28, 2026_“It was 10 years ago that I walked 500 miles for Curlews, and *Curlew Moon* was the result. It was and continues to be quite a journey. The road ahead is always half hidden. Like any pilgrimage, we keep going no matter what the path is like.

I started World Curlew Day because all species of curlew, not just the Eurasian, are so worth celebrating. They are such lyrical birds that capture our imaginations, everywhere. They also have a huge story to tell us, as they nest on the ground and fly across oceans and continents, they send messages about how we are treating the earth. Curlews are calling and we must listen to them. World Curlew Day is a collective turning to the cry of the Curlew.”

- Mary Colwell is the Director of Curlew Action and is a writer, TV and radio producer and conservationist, whose massive walk across the breadth of the UK in 2016 helped raise the profile of the Curlew, and led her to write the greatly influential *Curlew Moon* (a must-read for any Curlew fan!). Mary founded Curlew Action in late-2019 after a series of talks, meetings and forums among experts discussing what was most needed to rescue the rapidly declining UK Curlew population. Mary loves long distance walking, camping, reading and cycling, as well as wildlife and storytelling, and it is her passion for telling the story of the curlew that has helped launch it into the public consciousness in the past few years. In addition to *Curlew Moon*, she is the author of *John Muir: The Scotsman Who Saved America’s Wild Places*; *Beak, Tooth and Claw: Living with Predators in Britain*; and *The Gathering Place: A Winter Pilgrimage Through Changing Times*.



ONLINE WEBINAR – HOW TO TALK ABOUT HOMES AND IMMIGRATION: 1-2pm Wednesday 10 June 2026

To build a society in which we all can thrive, we need to make sure everyone has a decent and affordable home. This means changes like building more social homes, reforming private renting, and improving the quality of homes.

When the conversation about homes becomes focused on immigration, it can divert us from the wider conversation the housing sector wants and needs to have about the root causes of the housing crisis – and the systemic changes that would help to increase the availability of decent and affordable homes.

In 2025, FrameWorks UK undertook original qualitative research, supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Nationwide Foundation and Shelter, to understand how communicators who are pressing for more decent and affordable homes can best focus the conversation on improving our housing system.

Join us to find out more, in a useful webinar that will:

- help you to understand how people think about homes and immigration, and what that means for your communications
- share how to frame communications in ways that tap into more collective and systemic thinking
- offer practical guidance and examples to apply to your work.

This webinar will benefit anyone who writes and talks about decent and affordable homes in the UK. It will last for one hour, including a 40 minute presentation plus time for questions and answers. www.jrf.org.uk

Register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9017719470897/WN_YADc8_jxQGmdx7KjxZ7emg?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Joseph%20Rowntree%20Foundation&utm_id=6433588_270426_Event_Talking%20about%20homes%20and%20immigration&utm_campaign=6433588_270426_Event_Talking%20about%20homes%20and%20immigration&dm_i=7ADY,3TW6S,1RPCZS,A80RS,1,0,0,0#/registration

MOTHER OF 18 YEAR OLD WHO WAS MURDERED IN 2005 SHARES MOVING MESSAGE WITH WIRRAL STUDENTS

Source: The Catholic Network April 24, 2026

Dr Gee Walker MBE, the mother of Anthony Walker, who was murdered in a racially motivated attack in 2005, visited St Mary's Catholic College in Wallasey, Wirral, to deliver a powerful talk to the school's Year 9 students. Alongside Anthony Walker Foundation's education lead, Catherina Quinn, Dr Walker shared the history, importance and ongoing work of the foundation that she established a year after the death of her son.

Speaking to 200 students, the presentation began with Anthony's story, as Dr Walker spoke movingly about her son's childhood and the dreams he had for his future before he was tragically murdered aged 18. in a racially-motivated, unprovoked axe attack on July 29th, 2005, in Huyton, Merseyside. His killers were convicted and jailed for life.

Dr Walker then went on to share her own personal journey and how she navigated coming to terms with the loss of her son by drawing on the message of Philippians 4:13 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'. Dr Walker spoke about finding strength, hope and purpose in the face of adversity, and her firm belief in forgiveness. This, she explained, has shaped the work she now does.

St Mary's students were deeply moved by Dr Gee Walker's visit, with many staying behind after the talk to meet her personally, ask thoughtful questions and express their gratitude for sharing such important messages. Year 9 student, Lennon, said: "The talk was very heartfelt. We could feel the true emotion in what Gee Walker was saying. It was a pleasure to meet such an inspirational person." Another student, Orla, added: "It was emotional and moving to hear someone's story and powerful message in a way that us young people understand."

Through her work with the Anthony Walker Foundation, Dr Walker encourages communities to come together to create positive change by challenging racism, promoting equality and educating young people about the impact of hate crime.

Assistant headteacher at St Mary's Catholic College, Mrs Michelle Wilson, said: "It was a privilege to welcome Dr Walker and Catherina from the Anthony Walker Foundation to St Mary's. Their presentation was truly inspirational, and we know their messages of forgiveness, resilience, and hope will stay with our pupils for years to come."

St Mary's Catholic College is a proud member of Holy Family Catholic Multi Academy Trust (HFCMAT), which comprises nine schools, including two secondary and seven primary, across Wirral and Cheshire. CEO of HFCMAT, Mr Andy Moor, commented: "It was an honour to have such an inspirational figure like Dr Gee Walker meet with our students and hear the genuine responses they had to the important messages she shared. The work of the Anthony Walker Foundation is incredibly important, and its local roots made this visit especially meaningful. Thank you to the staff at St Mary's for organising such a valuable event for students."

<https://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk/16350>

DIARY

APRIL 10 – MAY 9

GLOBAL DAYS OF ACTION ON MILITARY SPENDING https://demilitarize.org/media_news/gdams-2026-appeal-a-call-to-action-against-global-militarization/

MAY

1-3/4 Craft Weekend Boarbank Hall, Grange-over-sands, Cumbria. For more information or booking, email margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk. Website: www.boarbankhall.org.uk

5 The National Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse takes place every year on the fifth Tuesday of Easter.

See page 6: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/national-day-of-prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-2026/>

9-14/16 Two Wings and Some Prayers Boarbank Hall, Grange-over-sands, Cumbria (see above for info)

10 Online Study Series from Sabeel-Kairos: Seeking a Just Peace for Palestine 4pm. Register here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/7Ci8e38LR9Kq1mjVL5fS3A#/registration>

10-16 Christian Aid Week <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

11 Curlew Conversations Free online event 6:30-7:30 pm. Presentations from two conservationists followed by Q&A <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/curlew-conversations-conservation-tickets-1986157075278>

14 Merseyside Pax Christi meeting 2-4 pm at Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool. L1 3BT New members welcome. Contact Jan Harper 07591082195 janharper20211@outlook.com

14 David Goodbourn Lecture 2026 - Palestine-Israel: A Catholic Perspective 7-9pm via Zoom. Churches Together in Britain & Ireland. Fr David Neuhaus, South African born Israeli Jesuit. Register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/6417582023325/WN_qYhF5pHHQJ-SIJKMhUmnA#/registration

15 International Conscientious Objectors' Day <https://www.ppu.org.uk/international-conscientious-objectors-day-may-15th>

15 Manchester International Conscientious Objectors Day Commemoration 12 noon Peace Garden, Lincoln Sq.

15 Anniversary of the Nakba Pax Christi England and Wales: paxchristi.org.uk

16 NJPN 'Shining the light in an All Night Vigil' online. Contact: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

17-24 Laudato Si' Week <https://laudatosiweek.org/>

24-21 Feast of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter <https://paxchristi.org.uk/product-category/bl-franz-jagerstatter/>

25 Catholic Association for Racial Justice - 40th Anniversary Year. Amigo Hall – St Georges Cathedral, Southwark. Speakers on Travellers, Caste discrimination, Migrants and Citizens of colour, Black Vocations, 'Love the Stranger' (CBCEW), discussion of the Racial Justice Agenda for Change. Mass (in Cathedral). <https://www.carj.org.uk/>

31 Online Study Series from Sabeel-Kairos: Seeking a Just Peace for Palestine 4pm. Register here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/7Ci8e38LR9Kq1mjVL5fS3A#/registration>

JUNE

5 World Environment Day <https://www.un.org/en/observances/environment-day>

6-14 Great Big Green Week www.greatbiggreenweek.com

15 Nature-Friendly Farming Free online event with Martin Lines (Farmer and CEO of the Nature Friendly Farming Network) 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm. Talk + Q&A. Get tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nature-friendly-farming-tickets-1986764341628>

15 and 16 Chester Green Weekend <https://participatenow.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/climate-emergency/stories/chester-green-weekend-2025-a-celebration-of-sustainability>

15–21 Refugee Week 2026 <https://refugeeweek.org/theme-refugee-week-2026-courage/>

20 World Refugee Day <https://www.unhcr.org/get-involved/take-action/world-refugee-day>

JULY

17 Day of Reflection at the Laudato Si' Centre with CAFOD 9.45am-3pm. Focus on the interconnected issues of Debt, Climate Change and Food Justice. We will be joined by CAFOD's Head of Region for Africa; Kayode Akintola, who will share his experience and knowledge of working with communities impacted by the above challenges. The day will finish with an outdoor Mass in the forest, led by Fr Paul Smith. Places are limited and we do have a number of bookings already. Please email me using this link if you would like to join us: kkeen@cafod.org.uk

24-26th 'Just Talk' NJPN Conference at Swanwick NB Bookings after May 15th incur booking surcharge <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/> – see the following page

- 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 or contact ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org 020 7901 4864
- Read the SPRING issue of **MOUTHPEACE** the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-north-west/spring-mouthpeace-2026/>
- See also the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com

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

JULY 24 -26 JUST TALK 48TH ANNUAL NJPN CONFERENCE at The Hayes Conference Centre Swanwick Derbyshire DE55 1AU

Words do matter, the language we use reflects our attitude and our ignorance. With negative language around racism, refugees, asylum seekers and many 'others', reinforcing stereotypes, what do we hear and to whom do we listen? Who decides what makes the headlines as media platforms seek to influence opinion and behaviour?

Our 2024 conference considered what would a 'Just Politics' look like and how might this be achieved. We were challenged to work for change in our society, building relationships within and across communities, empowering groups and individuals to engage with the political process, highlighting our hopes, dreams and needs, in line with Catholic Social Teaching.

In 2025 we were reminded that a 'Just Peace' demands more than the absence of war; it insists on justice, dignity, and inclusion for all and, as people of faith, we were offered an alternative model, built through deep listening, courageous dialogue and collective action rooted in love, committing to a radical hope that serves the common good.

A constant thread running throughout these conferences was that we grow as individuals and communities only through the kinds of relationships that we build with each other and our world. We were asked to listen deeply, to respond, to disagree respectfully, to engage in difficult conversations and were challenged to create a culture of encounter.

Conference 2026 'Just Talk' will focus on dialogue and relationship building, initiating these difficult conversations and how they can be used to build up justice, peace and human dignity, rather than to dehumanise and divide, inflame tensions and stoke conflict. In a world of disinformation, sound bites and echo chambers, the conference will explore how we promote genuine communication and encounter through areas such as the media, arts, education, diplomacy and political engagement led always by the Spirit of Truth.

In celebrating 60 years of *Nostra Aetate* Pope Leo XIV said the document "opened our eyes to a simple yet profound principle: dialogue is not a tactic or a tool, but it's a way of life – a journey of the heart that transforms everyone involved, the one who listens and the one who speaks." (*Walking Together in Hope*: 28 October 2025)

Anne Peacey Chair NJPN (taken from NJPN Spring Newsletter)

Read the Spring Newsletter: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/newsletters/spring-2026-njpn-newsletter/>

Bookings for the Conference:

<https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference-2026/njpn-2026-conference-booking-details/>

NB Bookings made after Friday May 15th incur a £20 late booking charge

