

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

WHEN WE WAGE WAR, WE TURN AGAINST GOD AND DESTROY THE ORDER OF HIS CREATION

Bishop John Arnold September 15, 2026

Bishop John Arnold, Lead Bishop for Environmental Issues for the Bishops' Conference, has issued a statement halfway through the *Season of Creation* highlighting how the world's violent conflicts are impacting on our common home. Bishop Arnold also reminds us that we all have a part to play: "We must never assume that changing our own hearts and our own behaviour will have no impact."



Statement

As we move into the second half of the *Season of Creation*, I would like to ask Catholics in England and Wales to intensify their focus on the Holy Father's theme "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Is 2:4). In his message for the *World Day of Prayer for Creation*, Pope Leo asked us to work unrelentingly for peace and to end the cycle of violence that destroys our common home. I commend his message to all of you [read here]. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/pope-leos-message-for-the-world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation-2026/>

At the very beginning of Holy Scripture, we are given the story of creation. The way our earth is ordered is willed by God and reflects God's beauty and goodness. At the end of each day, we read: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." When we wage war, we turn against God and destroy the whole order of His creation. As Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato si*: "War always does grave harm to the environment and to the cultural riches of peoples".

Each month, the cycle of violence in our world seems to become ever-more intense. Deaths in armed conflicts are at their highest levels for a generation.

As Pope Leo explains, whole eco systems are affected by war. Nature is wantonly destroyed to gain tactical advantage in battle. Innocent victims of war who are destitute, starving, displaced and homeless are no longer able to cultivate their environment sustainably but have to take what they can in order to keep alive. Bio-diversity is destroyed in war, and animal populations have been driven to the brink of extinction by armed conflict. In some countries, forests which were once teeming with birds and other wildlife are now silent as a result of the ecological destruction caused by war. Even water resources, the prime requirement for life, are used as a weapon of war.

Not all wars are wars between nations or between political groups vying for power within a country. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis wrote about how states had failed to prevent organised crime, violence, the drug trade and human trafficking. Criminal gangs wage violent war on and within their own communities. Unsurprisingly, they have no respect for the environment either. Often working with corrupt business interests, they illegally harvest vital environmental resources, especially forests. Such illegal forms of logging are linked to a significant proportion of all forest destruction in the world today. Along with the forests, whole eco-systems are destroyed and local climates affected as a result.

Nevertheless, you might ask "what can I do in the face of such violent destruction of people and nature, often many thousands of miles away?".

In the first place, we should consider how our own behaviour in the West might contribute to these problems, whether it be through the abuse of drugs or the purchase of timber products from unethical sources.

But lasting change requires more than this. In his message for the *World Day of Creation*, Pope Leo notes that war "is not only a political failure, but also a moral and spiritual one. Rooted in distorted desires and the misuse of human freedom and power, war stands as a counter-witness to the Gospel of peace."

Pope Leo continually asks us to promote peace and to “disarm” in every context in which we live: this includes where there is tension or conflict within our own communities within England and Wales.

We should think carefully about how we can respond to the season of creation by caring for the natural environment as co-workers with God so that the earth can provide a home in which all can flourish. Action is important at the political level too. At the end of the Second World War, many people, including visionary Christians, worked tirelessly to build international institutions that would promote peace. I call upon politicians in our country to redouble their efforts to make such international organisations effective again, both in building peace and, also, in protecting our common home.

As Pope Leo wrote recently in his encyclical *Magnifica humanitas*: “International organizations, particularly the United Nations, are essential instruments for promoting a civilisation of love, for they can foster dialogue among nations and promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the integral development of peoples, the protection of the most vulnerable, disarmament and the care of creation.”

So, we must pray for our politicians, that they will rise to the challenges which face us.

We must never assume that changing our own hearts and our own behaviour will have no impact. Also, in *Magnifica humanitas*, Pope Leo used an ecological metaphor from Tolkein: “It is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till.”

Ultimately, love for God, love for neighbour and love for God’s creation support and nourish each other. If we are to truly be peacemakers and sincerely respect the natural environment, we need to be continually attentive to our relationship with God.

With this in mind, I would like to commend two prayers that we could pray frequently. The first is a prayer for peace proposed by Pope St. John XXIII. The second is part of a prayer for our earth proposed by Pope Francis.

A prayer for peace

Let us, then, pray with all fervour for this peace which our divine Redeemer came to bring us. May He banish from the souls of men whatever might endanger peace. May He transform all men and women into witnesses of truth, justice and brotherly love. May He illumine with His light the minds of rulers, so that, besides caring for the proper material welfare of their peoples, they may also guarantee them the fairest gift of peace.

Finally, may Christ inflame the desires of all men and women to break through the barriers which divide them, to strengthen the bonds of mutual love, to learn to understand one another, and to pardon those who have done them wrong. Through His power and inspiration may all peoples welcome each other to their hearts as brothers, and may the peace they long for ever flower and ever reign among them.

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole 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 peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

St. Francis of Assisi, who saw the horrors of war and came to love God’s creation, pray for us.

Our Lady, Queen of Peace, pray for us.

Bishop John Arnold

Lead Bishop for Environmental Issues

Bishop of Salford

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/war-turns-against-god-and-destroys-order-of-creation/>



WEBINAR: MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS, ADDRESSING THE RISE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Earlier this year Pope Leo released his first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, addressing the rise of Artificial Intelligence and the need for technology to serve human dignity and the common good rather than driving inequality or replacing human conscience.

The Catholic Union will be holding a webinar on Monday 19 October at 6.00pm to explore how AI can enhance human experience rather than lessen it. Chaired by Catherine Pepinster, well known journalist, attendees will hear from Fr Michael Baggot (Associate Professor of Bioethics at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum), Andrea Cabanas (Chair of Catholics in Tech) and Sam Monaghan (Chief Executive of Methodist Homes Association).

This webinar will draw on the practical applications of the encyclical. Those wishing to register for the webinar please email info@catholicunion.org.uk and a zoom link will be provided. Booking is essential.

POPE LEO CALLS FOR AI TO BE AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE

Source: Vatican Media September 21, 2026

In a world marked by conflict and division, the development of artificial intelligence must be guided by wisdom and charity so that technological progress may serve the dignity of every person and strengthen the bonds that unite the human family.

This is the message at the heart of Pope Leo XIV's words to participants in the first edition of AI4Peace, an international symposium dedicated to the opportunities and challenges posed by artificial intelligence in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, the protection of human rights and global governance.

"His Holiness Pope Leo XIV sends cordial good wishes to all gathered for the AI4Peace, Global Biennial Symposium & International Conference," the message states, expressing the Pope's hope that the discussions will contribute "to a renewed and widespread commitment to placing technological innovation at the service of the common good."

The message was read by Fr Andrea Ciucci, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy for Life, during the symposium at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.

Pope Leo situates the discussion on artificial intelligence within a world experiencing conflict and division. In such a context, he says, technological development requires not only technical expertise but also a vision "inspired by wisdom and charity". The aim, he stresses, should be to ensure that technological progress "may serve the dignity of every person and strengthen the bonds that unite the human family."

The Pope then refers to his Encyclical *Magnifica humanitas*, recalling that God's "plan of mercy continues to unfold throughout history today" and "becomes a compass in the digital era for living our lives according to the Gospel" (No. 230).

Pope Leo encourages participants to examine ways in which artificial intelligence can contribute to peace when its development and use are guided by concern for the good of others. He invites them in particular to explore how AI can "foster dialogue, reconciliation and solidarity among peoples", helping to transform the fruits of technological innovation into "instruments of peace".

The first meeting of AI4Peace - Global Biennial Symposium & International Conference opened on Monday at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. The meeting brings together experts and researchers to examine the role of artificial intelligence in relation to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, human rights and governance.

The Pope concludes his message entrusting the participants' work to the hope that it will produce lasting results, "With the assurance of his prayers that their efforts will bear lasting fruit."

LINK: *Magnifica humanitas*: www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/encyclicals/documents/20260515-magnifica-humanitas.html
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/55918>

EMBRACE THE MIDDLE EAST STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO UK SANCTIONS ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

8 September, 2026: Amidst increasing violence from Israeli settlers and the huge expansion of illegal settlements, Embrace the Middle East welcomes the announcement from the UK Government to sanction goods and services from the West Bank settlements. For too long, the British Government has wrung its hands and issued statements, but without action they are meaningless.



We welcome the Foreign Secretary's statement aligning itself to the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion of July 2024 that not only settlements, but Israel's occupation of Palestine as a whole is illegal. Along with other countries, the UK must take steps to prevent anything that aids and supports the illegal occupation, along with avoiding any trade and investment relations that helps maintain this illegal situation.

As a founding member of the Just Peace Coalition, Embrace the Middle East will work with our coalition partners to assess the implementation and impact of these measures, hold the UK Government to account and continue to press for further action. Whilst this is a welcome step to address Israel's illegal occupation, the UK Government must also urgently suspend the UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement and all arms sales until it ends its illegal occupation and respects Palestinian human rights.

<https://justpeacecoalition.com/>

<https://embraceme.org/>

Advocating for the rights of Palestinians, challenging the actions of the Israeli government, and standing firmly against antisemitism in the UK are often presented as being at odds. Our Patron and friend, the Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester, invites us to hold a "both-and" perspective: to challenge the actions of the Israeli government while also standing firmly against antisemitism here in the UK. In the reflection *Oranges and Lemons* below, she sets this out with clarity and compassion. At Embrace, we are committed to this approach. We are extremely grateful for Bishop Rachel's involvement with our work and for her wise and brave words.

Bishop Rachel writes: Just over a year ago in May 2025, I was once again visiting Israel-Palestine, primarily to show solidarity with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and to continue listening deeply to the voices of people in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. My thought-piece from that visit can be found here: *Shining a light and magnifying a whisper* <https://gloucester.anglican.org/2025/shining-a-light-and-magnifying-a-whisper/>

As I look back, I continue to reflect on the themes I first wrote about in July 2024. yet since then, the situation across the Middle East has worsened, and the devastating war with Iran and the conflict across the region, has resulted in a continued muffling of the voices and lives of Palestinians who are still under occupation and yet who seem to be barely visible on the political canvas. **See:** *Israel-Palestine July 2024: Identity, Separation, Power and Trauma* <https://gloucester.anglican.org/2024/israel-palestine-july-2024-identity-separation-power-and-trauma/>

Oranges and Lemons by Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Patron Embrace the Middle East

Introduction by Jamie Eyre, CEO Embrace the Middle East:

In a time of growing polarisation, there are many pitfalls before us. For some, it can feel easier to stay silent than to speak into complex and contested issues. For others, speaking strongly on one side of a debate can give the impression that other important concerns are being overlooked.

Bishop Rachel writes: Eight months after my visit in May 2025, I returned in January 2026 for a further visit alongside two episcopal colleagues. Amid the pain of Palestinian communities living in constant fear and torment, there were gold threads of goodness in relationship, worship, shared food, and the beauty of landscape, even with the endless violent invasion by settlers, and the devastation of olive fields and livestock.

One joyful memory is of our visit to Nablus and the delight of picking lemons after the Sunday service in the Anglican church of St Philip. Those lemons of both beauty and bitterness seemed deeply symbolic of their context. But there were orange trees too, and I was reminded of that childhood nursery rhyme 'oranges and lemons' perhaps not least because before becoming Bishop of Gloucester I lived in the City of London where my husband was a parish priest, and we enjoyed the varied church bells of the City, to which the nursery rhyme refers. Perhaps too the rhyme came to mind because of its dark narrative relating to justice.

As I reflect on that phrase of ‘oranges and lemons’ it resonates with my deep disturbance at our inability to hold different things together in tension at the same time – things that might seemingly be different, even opposite. Why is it that we have become a people of ‘either-or’ and rejected the ethos of ‘both-and’? Why can we not condemn the actions of this government of Israel regarding Palestine, and at the same time condemn antisemitism in the UK? The two things are entirely different and should not be conflated or cancel each other out. Jews in the UK are not responsible for the actions and decisions of a foreign government and we need to be extremely careful not to create false dichotomies.

Amazingly, one of the lemons from Nablus was presented to King Charles by my friend and colleague, the Bishop of Norwich. I was thinking of that when with Bishop Graham at the recent State Opening of Parliament. In the King’s Speech it was good and right to hear the clear condemnation of antisemitism on our streets. We have seen abhorrent attacks on Jews and synagogues, and it is appalling that Jewish neighbours and friends are living in such fear. It is right to shine a spotlight on this situation and to stand against it vehemently.

Yet, whilst a spotlight is rightly shone on the heinous antisemitism which insidiously prevails in this country, I am deeply perturbed that people are seemingly discouraged from also shining a spotlight of scrutiny on the heinous actions of the Israeli government meted out on the Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, not least for fear of being accused of fanning antisemitism into flame. This is not a zero-sum space, and it is not incompatible to shine a spotlight on both of these issues at the same time.

Until recently, the spotlights on the atrocities of the government of Israel in Gaza and the West Bank seemed to have been switched off, or at best were merely flickering, not only because of the focus on the war with Iran but also because of the appalling anti-Jewish behaviour in our communities in the UK. We must be bold in inhabiting the landscape of ‘both-and’ rather than ‘either-or’. I believe this only becomes possible when we choose to act on the imperative to stand up for the God-given human dignity of every child, young person and adult.

Loving your neighbour

As a Christian, I take very seriously the call of Christ to love my neighbour as myself – indeed it is rooted in the Jewish teachings of the Torah. In Luke’s gospel, when the lawyer asks Jesus, ‘who is my neighbour?’, the answer is not an ‘either-or’ (Luke 10:25-37). In the UK, those of all faiths and no faith are all equally my neighbour. In Israel and Palestine, the Israeli Jew and the Palestinian Christian and Muslim should also be seen and treated as equal neighbours. Incidentally, it is unfortunate that Jesus Christ’s parable in Luke ch.10 has become known as the story of the *good Samaritan*, with the implication being that Samaritans were inherently bad.

Poignantly, in the vicinity of Nablus where we picked the lemons, there is a Samaritan community and it was heartening to see and hear of the ‘both-and’ work of the charity ‘Seeds’ which brings together young people of different faiths – Muslim, Christian and Samaritan – as they model what it is to create spaces of encounter across difference.

Living by the Law

The system of international law that has emerged since the second world war has sought to uphold human rights and human dignity for everyone, but this is rendered meaningless unless governments are held accountable and international law is universally upheld.

In a rules-based order, the UK government needs to ensure that the full force of our law is brought to bear to protect all those on our streets attacked for their faith and identity, and also to bring perpetrators of such hate crime to justice. At the same time, we need to be clear with the government of Israel that the repeated rhetoric of operating under a rules-based order is empty when the rules of international law are applied selectively such that the Palestinian people are diminished, unprotected, attacked, killed and vilified.

The brutal attacks unleashed on Southern Israel by Hamas on 7 October 2023 in which people were hideously killed, tortured, maimed and taken hostage, are to be unreservedly condemned, but not placed under a spotlight which then leaves the unjust treatment and suffering of the Palestinian people ignored, excused and kept hidden in the dark. Again, this is not an ‘either-or’ but a ‘both-and.’ Yet, there can only ever be ‘both-and’ when all people in Israel and occupied Palestine are afforded equal human dignity.

The statement signed on 22 May 2026

I was very glad to finally see a spotlight shone on Palestine in the strong statement (22 May 2026) signed by the UK government alongside the leaders of numerous countries affirming that *'the situation in the West Bank has deteriorated significantly. Settler violence is at unprecedented levels. The policies and practices of the Israeli government, including a further entrenchment of Israeli control, are undermining stability and prospects for a two-state solution.'*

This week, the Israeli government is due to open the tender process for new settlements to be built in what is known as the E1 area. This will divide the West Bank in two and effectively put an end to any viable existence for a State of Palestine.

The 22 May statement not only opposes the E1 settlement development but also states clearly that it is a *'serious breach of international law'* and that there will be *'legal and reputational consequences of participating in settlement construction'* and that businesses *'should not bid for construction tenders for E1 or any other settlement developments.'*

There is a strong call to the government of Israel to *'end its expansion of settlements and administrative powers'*, and the statement strongly opposes those *'including members of the Israeli government, who argue for annexation and forcible displacement of the Palestinian population.'* There is nothing 'both-and' about the actions and intent of the Israeli government.

Standing in the 'both-and' place

I do not know whether the two-state solution of 'both-and' remains a viable way forward, but I am inspired and encouraged by those who stand in the 'both-and' place – People such as 'Rabbis for Human Rights' who, whilst not agreeing with every perspective of their Palestinian neighbours, stand with them in solidarity for just treatment and their rights to their land. It has also been a privilege to engage with the organisation, 'Breaking the Silence' – ex-soldiers who once served in the Israeli Military and who now shine a spotlight on the horrors, including those they have been forced to participate in, across the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Many of these ex-military men and women are passionate about Israel and their Jewish faith, but they are also passionate about the equal dignity of Palestinians, and they courageously speak out and act.

The dark ending of the nursery rhyme

If you are familiar with the verses of the childhood song 'oranges and lemons' you will recognise it as quite a dark nursery rhyme, with a narrative of debt and punishment in the shadow of what was once Newgate Prison adjacent to the old criminal courtrooms situated on Old Bailey in London (where the Central Criminal Court now stands). The bells of Old Bailey would have been those of the church of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate. It is possible that the final words of the rhyme refer to the executions by hanging which took place outside the prison: *'Here comes the candle to light you to bed, here comes the chopper to chop off your head...'*

There is something strangely chilling and apt about those words as I think of those oranges and lemons growing in occupied Palestine. In the West Bank, I have repeatedly heard Palestinians use the language of strangulation as more and more people are forced into ever smaller and restricted areas, bound by endless checkpoints, and where people's liberty and dignity are diminished. Furthermore, we are hearing evermore of the hardship and inhumane existence in Gaza as people are continuing to be forced into restricted areas of land, and life feels more like a death sentence.

Those final words of the nursery rhyme are also frighteningly apt given the March 2026 ruling of the Knesset to instigate the death penalty for those guilty of terrorism. The wording is such that if this law comes into effect, it will only be applied to Palestinians. Death will be by hanging.

Conclusion

As the very existence of Palestine is terrifyingly threatened by the E1 development, seemingly unfolding under the cover of darkness as the spotlight continues to shine almost exclusively on the awful war with Iran, and the separate but awful rise of antisemitism in the UK, we must hold our Government to account, not only regarding the latter but also in ensuring that the threats they have outlined in the statement of 22 May 2026 will not prove to be empty.

I am committed to keeping a spotlight on the suffering and oppression in Palestine (The West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem) and standing alongside our Christian and Muslim brothers and sisters; just as I am committed to keeping a spotlight on the anti-Jewish hatred in the UK, and standing alongside our Jewish brothers and sisters here. The Christian imperative is for us to seek to be good neighbours to all – and to act and speak for equal human dignity for all. There is no place for 'either-or', only 'both-and'.

Earlier this month as I visited the Central Criminal Court of Old Bailey, I walked past Holy Sepulchre church, named after the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem – the holy Christian site of Christ's hope-filled empty tomb. When those bells ring out in London may they do so for justice and dignity for all people – in London and across the UK, and in Palestine and Israel, and beyond.

Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester June 2026

This blog was first published on the Diocese of Gloucester website. <https://gloucester.anglican.org/>

HOLY LAND: RABBIS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PREPARE VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH OLIVE HARVEST

Source: Rabbis for Human Rights September 25, 2026

Rabbis for Human Rights say: "We are more prepared for this harvest than ever before ...Though we wish we didn't have to be there at all."

"As a child," shared Adam, our Palestinian Director of Field Operations in the Occupied West Bank, "I remember the joy of the Olive Harvest in Hizma; it was a full-day family affair: working, drinking, tea, and celebrating a successful day's work with makluba... " His memory reminded our whole team just how much we shouldn't have to do what we're preparing to do.



The fact that it is our staff, internationals, and Israeli volunteers picking olives instead of Palestinian families in many places across the Occupied West Bank is a testament, first and foremost, to the failure of the Israeli state to uphold its commitments to democracy, justice, and security for all under its rule. It is a testament to a new perverted Judaism that "builds up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity." (Micah 3:10) It is a reminder of just how far we are from the prophetic vision that "every family shall sit under its own vine and fig tree, with no one to disturb them." (Micah 4:4) Yet our belief that such a reality is possible is what drives the work we do. It is what drives us to organize a three-day intensive workshop for our staff in Beit Jala.

At the Talitha Kumi Educational Center over 20 staff members reviewed the protocols and priorities guiding our work in the field, including:

- Palestinian-led decision-making; our solidarity and partnership with Palestinian farmers is built on mutual trust. We arrive only at sites where we have been invited and act as guests should in the presence of their host.
- Our steadfast commitment to non-violence and de-escalation.
- Maintaining the physical safety and mental well-being of our Palestinian partners, staff, and volunteers.

Legal specialists from the Human Rights Defenders Fund guided us through scenarios we may encounter in the field and in exercising our rights. Drama games allowed veteran activists and harvesters to share their wisdom with newcomers in an earnest yet playful way. Rabbi Kobi Weiss explicated the religious significance of our work, tying it to a long history of Jewish social justice, and speaking to the significance of this moment in Jewish history. Dr. Solomon and field medic Khaled taught first-aid protocols, including CPR, wound treatment, and when to call an ambulance.

In one session, staff were invited to express the ultimate purpose of their activism. These are the answers, the "why" carrying us into the olive groves come mid-October:

- "To fight for the freedom and dignity of my people."
- "To practice a Judaism that pursues Justice and loves the neighbor."
- "To combat the violence in the West Bank with non-violence."

Support Rabbis for Human Rights: www.rhr.org.il/en/donate/

Protect the Olive Harvest: https://causematch.com/olive_harvest_26

Volunteer to help with the harvest You are invited to the Olive Harvest. Picking begins in the olive groves in under a month. Palestinian farmers are requesting your presence. This harvest, communities across the West Bank have asked us to stand with them in the groves, and over 350 international volunteers have already signed up. Volunteers can sign up to accompany farmers any day from Sunday through Friday, from October 16th through the end of November, so the picking can happen safely. Add your name to receive the details as they come together: harvest days, transportation, and logistics [HERE](https://preview.mailerlite.io/forms/2534265/195502666756916881/share)
<https://preview.mailerlite.io/forms/2534265/195502666756916881/share>

Volunteers are signing up from all over the world. Palestinian farmers will not be alone this harvest season. This week, Acting CEO Anton Goodman met with the Australian Ambassador to Israel, Neil Hawkins, to discuss the importance of protecting the Olive Harvest in Palestinian communities.

Or come on a Winter Solidarity Visit. Together, let's show that solidarity knows no borders: Join Achvat Amim and Rabbis for Human Rights this Winter! From December 17 to January 5, embark on a transformative 20-day program: the Winter Solidarity Visit. This unique opportunity is a collaboration between Rabbis for Human Rights and Solidarity of Nations - Achvat Amim. It combines solidarity presence, immersive Jewish learning with Israeli organizations and activists, and volunteer work focused on supporting communities in Palestine facing the threat of displacement due to state and settler violence. This program is ideal for those passionate about justice, human rights, and community empowerment.

See: www.achvatamim.org/winter-solidarity.html
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/55945>

POPE LEO XIV: 'THE CRY OF DISPLACED CHILDREN RISES TO GOD'

September 15, 2026: "The cry of displaced children rises to God today," Pope Leo said in his Message for the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which the Church observes on September 27th. The Pope's message was released today by the Holy See Press Office.

This year's day features the theme "Even just one of these children," from the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Pope Leo XIV began his Message by insisting that the title "Even just one of these children," draws our attention to the minors directly involved in the experience of migration and flight, to the care owed to them, and to the Lord's promise that "whoever receives one such child in my name receives Me" (Mk 9:37)

The Holy Father recalled that minors are the most vulnerable group within the global movements of migration and observed the suffering of migrant children does not end with their relocation. He remembered very young children who have lost parents, brothers, sisters and friends, and who have witnessed unspeakable acts of violence; others who have been separated from their families for long periods; and minors, even if making the journey together with their parents, exposed to extreme and traumatic conditions.

"Finally," he continued, "we cannot forget the tragic situation of those separated from their parents because of repatriation." The Pope also deplored the many deaths along migration routes; trafficking and exploitation; the recruitment of minors for use in armed conflicts; sexual violence; forced marriages; and the atrocities they have suffered or witnessed during their travels.

"Their dignity," he said, "is trampled upon in countless ways." Yet, amid so much darkness, Pope Leo expressed gratitude to the many individuals, families, civil institutions, and ecclesial communities who "choose not to pass by on the other side" and instead offer solidarity. Before this tragic reality, the Pope noted his thoughts turn to the words of Jesus that profoundly challenge our consciences: "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me." The Pope said it is not a question of numbers or statistics. "The Gospel," he recalled, "invites us not to calculate: *even one*. Every child, every human being, possesses an infinite dignity."

"Before every migrant child," he underscored, "we are called to make an act of humanity and faith, for we are able to welcome and encounter the Lord." Sadly, the Pope lamented, migrant children are more easily ignored, because they lack adults capable of protecting and supporting them. For this reason, he insisted, "It is necessary to intervene in their countries of origin in order to remove the causes that compel them to flee, while at the same time offering protection and welcome in the countries of transit and destination."

“The cry of displaced children rises to God today, just as did the cry heard in the Book of Exodus,” he said, noting, “We cannot remain indifferent, nor can we become accustomed to such suffering.” Meanwhile, in our personal lives, he said, we are “to open our eyes and heart to a profound listening to his or her story, fears and dreams, overcoming that detachment which reduces the human person to a statistic that does not directly concern us.”

“It is an invitation,” the Pope urged, “to recognize the dignity of each child, even before considering the condition of being a ‘migrant,’ and to safeguard his or her fundamental rights: the right to life, education and a standard of living that enables full physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.”

In the life of the Church, he said that we are called “to transform welcoming from an abstract concept” into “a stable pastoral practice.” The Holy Father said we cannot simply delegate this task to institutes or associations endowed with a particular charism. “Before the concrete faces that confront us in daily life,” the Holy Father exhorted, “the entire Christian community is called to regard these children as its own sons and daughters, and to engage with the concrete story of each one of them.”

Christian communities, he said, should be encouraged to promote the integration of refugees and migrants and to value them as full members of the ecclesial family. “Even just one of these children, within the horizon of the different religions,” he next observed, “reminds us that the vulnerability of the young knows no religious boundaries and unites us in a shared humanitarian and spiritual responsibility.”

He emphasized that this becomes fertile ground for a concrete interreligious dialogue, in which believers, drawing upon their own sense of transcendence, cooperate in weaving networks of protection. “Faith communities,” he stated, “are called to create spaces in which every boy and every girl is respected and valued in his or her own cultural identity, thereby preventing the risk of radicalization by extremist groups.

“Even just one of these children, in the context of civil institutions,” he continued, “calls us to reaffirm the principle of the best interests of the child.” Calling on public and private institutions, which “are bound to prioritise the protection and dignity of every single child and adolescent”, the Pope said, “This requires the adoption of effective legal instruments of protection, the promotion of family reunification, and the prevention of the trauma caused by separation.”

“An urgent change of perspective is needed,” he said: “The focus of the debate must shift from the mere management of migration to the full and immediate protection of human rights, adopting ‘a coordinated, supportive and effective response, capable of guaranteeing protection, welcome and genuine opportunities for integration to those who migrate.’”

Pope Leo XIV concluded by praying, “Let us entrust migrant and refugee children to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary who, together with Saint Joseph and the child Jesus experienced the cruelty of Herod’s violence and the tragedy of exile in Egypt. May she accompany their steps and help our communities to become living and credible signs of the Gospel.”

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/pope-leo-xiv-the-cry-of-displaced-children-rises-to-god/>

JRS UK ANNUAL LECTURE:

DAME RACHEL DE SOUZA CALLS FOR GREATER PROTECTION OF CHILDREN SEEKING ASYLUM

September 25, 2026

The Children’s Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has called for greater protection of refugee and asylum-seeking children in the inaugural Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) UK Annual Lecture.

Speaking to an audience at the Aula Magna (Great Hall) at the London Jesuit Centre, Dame Rachel challenged policymakers and the wider public to look beyond increasingly polarised rhetoric around migration and recognise the human reality at the heart of the debate.

“It is easy, from a distance, to talk about asylum seekers as strangers. It is much harder, and much more important, to remember that we are talking about children.”

Drawing on her experiences as Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel spoke about children who have experienced violence, exploitation and trafficking on their journeys to the UK, and raised particular concerns about young people whose ages are disputed by the authorities.

She said that, in the latest six months of data available to her, 1,897 people had been assessed as adults, with 442 of those decisions subsequently overturned and hundreds more still pending. The consequences can include children being placed in immigration detention or adult accommodation. "I do not believe there is such a thing as 'basically an adult', or 'nearly an adult' or 'old enough where it's less of an issue'. A child is a child."

Dame Rachel also called for honesty in public debate about migration, arguing that supporting refugees does not mean ignoring questions around integration and social cohesion. "We cannot live by lies. We have a duty to what is good, and what is true."

Her appeal was also personal. Dame Rachel revealed that her own mother had been a refugee child, taken in by nuns in Bavaria in 1945 before later moving to England to reunite with family. "They understood the need to protect her. They saw a little girl and they loved her."

Reflecting on what the treatment of refugee children says about Britain as a society, Dame Rachel said: "I believe firmly that the nation that fails to value childhood fails to value anything at all. It fails to value itself. It fails to value its own future."

She concluded the lecture by returning to "The Stranger's Case", the appeal attributed to William Shakespeare and spoken through the character of St Thomas More, which asks how we would wish to be treated if forced from our homeland and dependent upon the welcome of strangers. "Let us always live in truth. Truth about the children we help. Truth about what they need. Truth about who they are. And truth about the moral requirement to support them." "Let us never forget the stranger's case."

Jesuit Refugee Service UK is a work of the Jesuits in Britain, accompanying, serving and advocating for refugees and other forcibly displaced people. You can find out more about their work here: <https://www.jrsuk.net/>

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY ONE BODY, MANY PARTS 27 SEPTEMBER 2026

This year, churches across the UK are invited to celebrate Disability Awareness Sunday under the theme "One Body, Many Parts", drawing on 1 Corinthians 12:12–27. The passage reminds us that, just as a body is made up of many different parts, each person has a valued and important place within the Body of Christ.

<https://manchestermethodists.org.uk/disability-awareness-sunday-2026-one-body-many-parts/>

REFLECTION BY RT REV PAUL HENDRICKS, AUXILIARY BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK

During last year's Jubilee in Rome, in a conference on the theology of disability, I heard the following testimony from a deaf lady who is an active volunteer in her parish in England.

Although her Parish Priest couldn't sign himself, he was keen to help her, so he would give her an advanced copy of his homily every week. This was despite the fact that up until then he hadn't written out his homilies at all. He became more interested and encouraged the choir to learn how to do the signs for the Alleluia.

This caught the interest of the children, and they wanted to learn more. It ended with the lady going into the primary school and gradually introducing the children to sign language. The results of this, over time, were quite extraordinary. The children became much more engaged with the Mass and with the Bible. Their understanding increased dramatically, through discussion of the meaning behind many of the signs, and the reason why those signs took the form that they did.

We often talk about making churches more accessible, as though we're doing deaf people and those with disabilities a favour. What we don't realise is how much they can contribute to the life and spirituality of the community. This is one reason why Pope Francis said, years ago, that the Church must be for everyone, or else it's for no one.

<https://mailchi.mp/b546b7766721/disability-awareness-sunday?e=66c901b8f3>

CONSUMER CHURCH OR COMMUNITY CHURCH?

Jon Kuhrt September 25, 2026

Consumerism is one of the curses of our age. And the church is not immune to it.



People can easily go along to church for years and just be stuck in receive mode. They can judge the quality of the music, assess how engaging the sermon was, or how much their kids enjoyed the children's groups. And when their experience does not match their expectations, they can up and leave and go to another church. And in Christian circles, there are plenty of ways this can be dressed up as a spiritual decision: 'We believe God is calling us elsewhere for the coming season.' That kind of thing will generally get nods of spiritual affirmation.

And now of course, there is no shortage of Christian resources available to consume by yourself without leaving the house: the best sermons, the most brilliant worship music and the deepest contemplative prayer are all available on the internet. And you don't even need to negotiate the annoying people at your church! Except you do. Those 'annoying people' are more important to your soul than any of the most brilliant sermons you can listen to by yourself. You need others. Following Jesus cannot be done in isolation: Christianity is not an individual spiritual self-help programme. And you do not grow just by consuming certain religious experiences.

The Christian faith is about following the Way of Jesus. Discipleship is about learning to do this in community. Jesus does not call us to be religious consumers but calls us to build authentic community. His Way calls us to give, serve and connect with others different to us rather than be a consumer of religion:

Consumer Christianity

*What can I get from this church?
How well are my needs served?
What is the quality of my experience?*
Creates a passive experience
Discipleship through listening
Inward looking with 'people like us'

Community Christianity

*What can I give?
How can I serve?
How is my connection with others?*
Encourages active engagement
Discipleship through doing
Outward mission and embracing diversity

The organisation I work for, Hope into Action, works closely with churches to house and support people who have been homeless. We believe passionately in what the local church can do to offer friendship and community. We are hosting a special online gathering on Tuesday 29 September which is open to anyone who wants to explore these themes. We have two brilliant speakers who are on the frontline of local church leadership with people on the margins – and both have previously contributed to Grace + Truth:

Jon Swales MBE, leader of the Lighthouse Community in Leeds and runs the Mission, Theology & Ministry for the Margins course. <https://www.lighthousewestyorkshire.org.uk/>

(Jon Swales will read his powerful poem *The Gospel of the Wild Messiah* at the event)

<https://www.cruciformjustice.com/post/the-gospel-of-the-wild-messiah>

And Alan Carson, associate pastor of Belfast City Vineyard, CEO of Storehouse and Hope into Action Belfast.

<https://www.belfastcityvineyard.com/> <https://storehousebelfast.com/>

We will consider together the pressures facing the modern-day church and pray together for the church across the UK to see growth, breakthrough and authenticity. Come be encouraged, inspired and invigorated to help your home church be less 'passive observers' and more 'essential contributors' to the outworking of our faith.

Please see here for all information: Tuesday 29 September – Prayer and Fasting Day | Hope into Action UK

<https://www.hopeintoaction.org.uk/prayer-and-fasting-day-september>

Read Jon Kuhrt's article in full here: https://gracetruth.blog/2026/09/25/consumer-christianity-or-community-christianity/?jetpack_skip_subscription_popup

• **Jon Kuhrt** 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

<https://www.hopeintoaction.org.uk/>

THE GOSPEL OF THE WILD MESSIAH

He did not come robed in safety.
He did not come crowned in gold.
He came with dust on his sandals,
blood in his future,
and fire in his bones.

Not to keep the peace—
but to break it open.

The penniless preacher
from Nazareth
walks towards the pain,
kneels where no king kneels,
calls friends what the world calls
waste.

The mission of the wild messiah is
madness to the market and
mercy to the margins.

Here is a man.
Exiled flesh.
Olive skin cracked like parched
land.
No one hugs lepers.
But he does.
No ritual.
Just reach.

Let the church be like this—
touching what others avoid.
Body of Christ,
move your hands.

Here is a man.
Dropped through a broken roof.
They say his legs are cursed,
but Jesus says,
"Friend."
Forgiveness before healing.
Wholeness before walking.

Let the church be like this—
tearing open ceilings
so mercy can get in.

Here is a man.
Sworn to Caesar.
A soldier's posture,
a servant's pain.
Faith speaks from strange lips.
Jesus listens.

Heals.

Let the church be like this—
wide-lunged enough
to breathe in
foreign hope.

Here is a woman.
Tears on feet,
perfume in air,
shame in the room.
They call her sinner.
He calls her forgiven.

Let the church be like this—
welcoming the shamed
Less pointing.
More tears.
Less tally.

Here is a man.
Naked in tombs.
Self-harm scrawled across skin.
Unclean,
unkempt,
unloved.
Jesus asks one thing:
What's your name?
And the demons
tremble.

Let the church be like this—
naming the silenced,
holding the haunted.

Here is a woman.
Twelve years of blood.
Invisible in a crowd.
She dares a touch—
and it stops him.
He says:
"Daughter."
A word that heals
more than wounds.

Let the church be like this—
interruptible.
Alive to power
in the unnoticed.

Here is a man.
Short in stature,
tall in corruption.
Collaboration money
stacked in a crooked house.

Jesus invites himself in.
No lecture.
Just presence.
And something changes.

Let the church be like this—
hosting grace
before repentance,
feasting with the fallen.

Here is a man.
Blind and begging.
Shouting louder
than the crowd's comfort.
Jesus halts.
Sees what others pass by.
And lets light in.

Let the church be like this—
attentive
to inconvenient cries.

This is not a clean gospel.
It smells of spit and soil,
rupture and resistance.
It weeps in alleyways
and whispers beside beds.
It eats with the wrong people
and sings in the dark.

The kingdom is not far.
It is falling
like a tear
from the face of God.

And still
he walks.
Still
he calls.
Still
he touches the untouchable
and invites the forgotten home.

Let the church be like this.
Let us be
wounded,
wild,
and faithful.

Amen.
And amen again.

— Rev'd Jon Swales

Read: <https://www.cruciformjustice.com/post/the-gospel-of-the-wild-messiah>

Listen: <https://lamentandhope.buzzsprout.com/1894040/episodes/17455826-the-gospel-of-the-wild-messiah>

THE DESERT AND THE POLIS: LONELINESS AS SPIRITUAL CRISIS AND POLITICAL FAILURE

Louisa Collyer-Hamlin 21/04/2026

The Catholic Union is holding a webinar on 15 October for young Catholics focusing on loneliness as spiritual crisis and political failure.

The panel will include Professor Anna Rowlands, holder of the St Hilda Chair in Catholic Social Thought and Practice, a political theologian who works at the interface of political and social theory and Christian theology and Father John Church OP, the Promotor of Dominican Young Adults. The event will be chaired by Dr Karen Singarayer, Vice Chair of the Catholic Union and moderated by Tong Wu, an active young member of the Catholic Union.

Tong Wu, moderator of the webinar, says: "16-29-year-olds are twice as likely as those over 70 to experience chronic loneliness, and loneliness has been associated with higher rates of depression, stroke, heart disease, and dementia. The growing epidemic of loneliness calls for political, pastoral and theological reflection".

The webinar is aimed primarily at students, graduates, and young professionals. The Catholic Union wants to offer participants the opportunity to have a conversation that takes loneliness seriously as both a spiritual condition and a structural one.

Professor Peter Hindmarsh, Chair of the Catholic Union Charitable Trust, says: "There is much to unpick about loneliness as a spiritual crisis and political failure. We are looking forward to the webinar and hope that many younger Catholics participate".

The webinar will take place at 6.00pm on Thursday 15 October on Zoom. Those wishing to register should email info@catholicunion.org.uk to reserve their place.

Please share with your networks.

https://catholicunion.org.uk/2026/04/the-desert-and-the-polis-loneliness-as-spiritual-crisis-and-political-failure/?mc_cid=200d72b553&mc_eid=66c901b8f3

ELIMINATING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Leela Ramdeen September 26, 2026

September 26, is the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. UN Secretary General António Guterres urges: "Let us act with urgency and courage and build a safer, more peaceful world for present and future generations...The only sure way to eliminate the threat posed by nuclear weapons is to eliminate the weapons themselves."

Inter alia, this day "provides an occasion for the world community to reaffirm its commitment to global nuclear disarmament as a priority...Achieving global nuclear disarmament is the highest disarmament priority of the United Nations... today an estimated 12,187 nuclear weapons remain. Countries possessing such weapons have well-funded, long-term plans to modernise their nuclear arsenals.

"More than half of the world's population still lives in countries that either have such weapons or are members of nuclear alliances. While the number of deployed nuclear weapons has appreciably declined since the height of the Cold War, not one nuclear weapon has been physically destroyed pursuant to a treaty. In addition, no nuclear disarmament negotiations are currently underway. Meanwhile, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence persists as an element in the security policies of all possessor states and many of their allies" (UN). The horror of the Second World War, "culminating in the nuclear blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, brought home the need to address the nuclear issue."

The UN Secretary General's disarmament agenda, "Securing our Common Future," launched on May 24, 2018, "focuses on disarmament as a critical tool to maintain international peace and security, uphold the principles of humanity, protect civilians, promote sustainable development, and prevent and end armed conflict. The agenda outlines "a set of practical measures across the entire range of disarmament issues, including weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms and future weapon technologies."

Countries are spending trillions of dollars on weapons of mass destruction while many of their citizens go hungry. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) reminds us that "nuclear weapons are the most inhumane and indiscriminate weapons ever created. That is why it is time to end them, before they end us."

ICAN, a coalition of NGOs in more than 100 countries, promotes adherence to and implementation of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

ICAN states: "Combined, Russia, USA, China, France, UK, India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea possess an estimated 12,187 nuclear weapons, most of which are many times more powerful than the nuclear weapon dropped on Hiroshima. Thirty-two other states are also part of the problem, with six nations hosting nuclear weapons (Italy, Türkiye, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Belarus), and a further 28 endorsing their use."

The total nuclear warheads owned by Russia and the USA "count for nearly 90 per cent of nuclear weapons in the world."

Nuclear weapons "have catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences that span decades and cross generations; they breed fear and mistrust among nations, as some governments can threaten to wipe out entire cities in a heartbeat; the high cost of their production, maintenance and modernisation diverts public funds from healthcare, education, disaster relief and other vital services" (ICAN).

We should heed the words of Dr George Wald, Nobel Prize winner and anti-war figure: "Nuclear weapons offer us nothing but a balance of terror, and a balance of terror is still terror."

A 2025 editorial in the British Medical Journal, entitled: 'Ending nuclear weapons, before they end us', warns: "A worldwide nuclear arms race is underway. Deployed nuclear weapons are increasing again...The world desperately needs leaders...to freeze their arsenals, end the modernisation and development of new, more dangerous nuclear weapons, and ensure that new technology such as artificial intelligence can never trigger the launch of nuclear weapons."

In June 2026, the Vatican Publishing House released a new book by Pope Leo XIV entitled *Disarmed and Disarming: Peace Is a Gift*. He says: "Peace is built through disarmament, not nuclear weapons."

He quotes singer-songwriter and poet Bob Dylan, who wrote, figuratively, "addressing the atomic bomb, in one of his poetic compositions: 'I hate you cause yer man-made and man-owned an' man-handled'. Today, the Church humbly brings a question to everyone's attention: Must the human species continue to inhabit the Earth? The combination of the cyber domain and global rearmament impels one to seriously ask this question." But, as Christians, he urges us to "look to the future with hope...May God guide us on paths of non-violence. May believers and people of good will never stop working as builders of peace. May every person make peace his or her life's cause."

- Leela Ramdeen is Consultant of Trinidad & Tobago Catholic Commission for Social Justice & Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ccsjtt Instagram: ammrccatholic Twitter: @ammrccatholic1
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/55951>

CAFOD HARVEST FAST DAY 2 OCTOBER 2026

This year the focus is on northern Zimbabwe, where drought has left communities facing severe food and water shortages. Twelve-year-old Tayla told us she often arrived at school hungry and tired after fetching water for her family. Without enough to eat and drink, she struggled to concentrate and feared she would fall behind in her studies. <https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/parishes/support-harvest-family-fast-day-in-your-parish>

A message from Fergus Conmee, CAFOD's Director of International.

Dear Friends, Thank you for everything you are preparing to do to support Family Fast Day in your parish over the next two weeks—from organising the collection, to speaking at Mass and encouraging parishioners to give generously. Your time and commitment makes a real difference.

I have been meeting with our International Programme managers over the last week in London, where we have discussed the likely impact of the super El Niño - that you may have read about in the news.

<https://cafod.org.uk/news/emergencies-news/el-nino>

We are concerned about the impact of dangerous flooding and worsening drought caused by El Niño on the people and communities we work with in many countries and are already working with partners to find ways to limit the impacts. We know that next year it is likely that there will be a greater call on our emergency funds due to the changes in the weather because of the El Niño.

I know you will be sharing Tayla's story with your parish in your Family Fast Day talk at Masses in the next couple of weeks. Her story shows what preparing for drought can mean. In Zimbabwe, long-running drought left her hungry, exhausted from collecting water and struggling to learn. CAFOD's local partners worked with her community to build a solar-powered water system, bringing safe water to the village and school. It also helps the school grow vegetables for nutritious meals.

This practical support protects health, strengthens local food production and helps communities withstand drought. It is also why every Family Fast Day donation in parishes matters. Your parish's generosity this Harvest enables us to work with local partners now, helping communities prepare for the expected impacts of El Niño.

Thank you again for all that you do.

With warmest wishes,

Fergus Conmee Director of International Programmes

HOMELESSNESS SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER 2026

Housing Justice holds Homelessness Sunday on the Sunday before World Day Homeless each year (10 October this year). This year's theme is 'Community Cohesion.' See: <https://www.worldhomelessday.org/>

Our aim is to raise awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness among Churches and their congregations by asking Churches to run their own Homelessness Sunday Service, either on 4th October or on a more convenient date. Below you will find a range of resources to support you in doing this. We hope that by taking time to reflect on Homelessness Sunday, Church congregations will consider what they can do in their own community to alleviate homelessness, suffering and poverty. <https://housingjustice.org.uk/donate-or-get-involved/homelessness-sunday>

PRISONERS' SUNDAY - 11 OCTOBER 2026

Prisoners' Sunday is an opportunity to consider how we, as individuals, as a Church, and as communities, are serving our brothers and sisters affected by imprisonment.

Our prisons are in crisis. There are record numbers of people behind bars. Inspectors regularly report instances of vermin, violence, self-harm and people languishing in cells with nothing to do. At the same time, too many people are released with no home, no job, no family and no hope.

The ripple effects of this crisis are felt well beyond the prison walls. The lives of hundreds of thousands of families and children are affected as they, too, serve a hidden sentence. Having a mother, father, husband or wife in prison can have a devastating impact – more than half of families tell us they are struggling to afford the basics for themselves and their children.

This year, Prisoners' Sunday takes place on 11 October, but you can mark the occasion on a day that suits your parish calendar. Your support will help women and men in prison and their families to make a fresh start.

Pact - the national Catholic prison charity

As the leading Catholic charity in prisons, we have been helping people in need for more than 125 years. We support prisoners, their families and their children, offering them hope and the chance to turn their lives around. Our work at Pact draws on the values of our faith: dignity, solidarity, and subsidiarity. We believe that everyone can make a fresh start, whatever they may have done.

Last year, our dedicated staff and volunteers supported 565,000 prison visits and helped nearly 600 people with emergency welfare grants. Our work is a lifeline for many thousands of people struggling to stay afloat or to make a fresh start.

<https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/faith/events/prisoners-sunday/>

CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER 2026

The theme this year is 'A Just Church – Food, Faith and Fellowship'

On Church Action on Poverty Sunday, we give, act and pray together in our churches around the UK. We know that by doing so we can help to bring about a more just and compassionate society, where everyone can live life to the full, freed from poverty.

More than 75 churches took part during 2025. Thank you all! Could your church be involved this year?

<https://church-poverty.org.uk/food-faith-fellowship-stories/>

Sign up for resources: <https://give.church-poverty.org.uk/page/182451/subscribe/1?>

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8, 2026 — WHITE POPPIES FOR PEACE

White poppies are worn every year by thousands of people across the UK and beyond. They were first produced in 1933 in the aftermath of the First World War, by members of the Co-operative Women's Guild. Many of these women had lost family and friends in the First World War. They wanted to hold on to the key message of Remembrance Day, 'never again'.

More info: <https://www.ppu.org.uk/remembrance-white-poppies>

DIARY DATES

SEPTEMBER

30 Fashion Show "with an African twist" in support of Chifundo UK & Chanasa (Malawi) Hoole URC Church Hall, Hoole Road, Chester CH2 3NT. Doors open at 2pm, admission is £5 – Tickets from Susan Flynn 01244 381490 satflynn7@gmail.com book and collect at the door, limited numbers, good parking

OCTOBER

10 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

Church Action on Poverty Sunday: <https://give.church-poverty.org.uk/page/182451/subscribe/1?>

15 Loneliness: *The Desert and the Polis: Loneliness as Spiritual Crisis and Political Failure*. A webinar from The Catholic Union webinar aimed primarily at students, graduates, and young professionals at 6.00pm Speakers: Father John Church OP and Professor Anna Rowlands, Moderator Tong Wu, member of the Catholic Union, Chair Dr Karen Singarayer, Vice Chair of the Catholic Union. Reserve your place here: info@catholicunion.org.uk

17 "The Lotus Project - how Chanasa is making a difference for women and girls in Malawi" a series of presentations from 2:30 to 4pm, Hoole URC Church Hall, Hoole Road, Chester CH2 3NT

www.chanasachifundomalawi.org

19 Webinar: Magnifica Humanitas, Addressing the Rise of Artificial Intelligence to explore how AI can enhance human experience rather than lessen it. Chaired by Catherine Pepinster, well known journalist, attendees will hear from Fr Michael Baggot (Associate Professor of Bioethics at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum), Andrea Cabanas (Chair of Catholics in Tech) and Sam Monaghan (Chief Executive of Methodist Homes Association). 6.00pm Booking essential. Register at info@catholicunion.org.uk and a zoom link will be provided.

NOVEMBER

10 Northern Dioceses Environmental group meeting on Zoom 6.30 pm – **Environmental Developments at Ladyewell Shrine (near Preston)** with Dr Stephen Garsed. To join please contact: climate.ndeg@gmail.com

12 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

DECEMBER

10 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

- **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 AUTUMN issue of MOUTHPEACE the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses:** <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-north-west/autumn-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