

Canonisation of 'San Romero' - Church event of 2018

On Sunday October 14th in Rome, Pope Francis canonised Archbishop Romero, together with Pope Paul VI and five others. Officially he became St Oscar Arnulfo Romero. However, since few people were aware of his middle name, he's mostly known as St Oscar Romero or, in Latin America, simply 'San Romero'.



Pope Francis greeting Angelita Morales

Francis in St Peter's Square on that fine October morning. Members of our Justice and Peace network were there in force – the visible backbone of the British presence. Altogether, over 75,000 pilgrims crowded into the Square and down the Via della Conciliazione for this very special occasion - which

truly celebrated Vatican II
through the canonisations of

both Pope Paul VI, its implementor, and Archbishop Romero, its first martyr. In El Salvador it was still only 2.00am when the ceremony in Rome began; but all-night vigils took place at the Cathedral in San Salvador and elsewhere in order to take part in the joyful and emotional proclamation of El Salvador's first-ever saint.

On the following morning there was a special Audience with Pope Francis for the Romero pilgrims. It provided the most memorable moment of the year when, at the close of his remarks, Pope Francis said there was just one person he wished to single out at this Romero canonisation to be thanked as representative of the People of God in El Salvador. To the delight and surprise of everyone present he didn't name a Cardinal, Bishop or Monsignor. Instead he called up to the podium from the crowd below Angelita Morales, a simple Salvadoran woman who had served as Romero's assistant throughout his episcopal life - but who was now living in poverty in a San Salvador slum. It was a moving moment and many of us had tears in our eyes at Pope Francis' gesture. It was a beautifully fitting conclusion to the canonisation weekend in Rome.

In November, here in Britain, there was a national thanksgiving mass in Southwark's St George's Cathedral; and two weeks later, an ecumenical Evensong in Westminster Abbey to honour our new Saint. There were special celebrations too right across Britain.

Now it is not a question of admiring St Oscar Romero but of imitating him in his courageous commitment to the poor, through living a faith that does justice in our own country in the 21st century. That is exactly why we elected him as Patron Saint of our NJPN.

St Oscar Romero - Pray for Us.

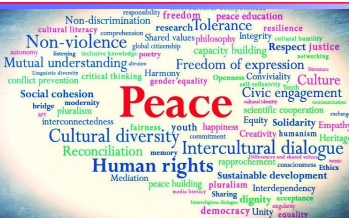
Julian Filochowski

His beatification and canonisation underlined Romero as a self-effacing, prayerful man with a deep spirituality and a special gift from God as a preacher, who was filled with apostolic courage in his ministry as archbishop. Romero loved God and he loved the poor. He lived out the Church's 'option for the poor' in the simplicity of his personal life, in his preaching and his pastoral action - where he spoke the truth about the plight of El Salvador's poor and became their advocate. He was a priest of authentic holiness, wise discernment and apostolic courage. It's not difficult to canonise a person who loves the poor; much more problematic for one who defends the poor against those who exploit them and trample on their human rights.

2015 saw Romero beatified, recognised as a martyr killed "out of hatred of the faith". But it was not hatred of a credal statement or an abstract faith. It's difficult to believe but Romero's assassination was planned, financed and carried out, whilst he was saying Mass, by Catholics - out of hatred of a faith that does justice, hatred of the pastoral practice that the Church embraced at Vatican II. Many obstacles had been placed blocking the road to Romero's canonisation; but in a deliberate way Pope Francis "unblocked" Romero's cause and publicly lamented the slanders and mistrust that had been sown in the upper echelons of the Church after Romero's death, which he described as Romero's ongoing martyrdom.

In May 2018, it was announced that Romero's canonisation would take place in Rome on October 14th when the Synod of Bishops would be there discussing issues relating to Young People in the Church. Some 150 people signed up with the Romero Trust for tickets to the canonisation ceremony, including over 30 priests and bishops who concelebrated with Pope

Pilgrimage to El Salvador November 2019 The Romero Trust is organising its fourth pilgrimage to El Salvador to visit the places associated with St Oscar Romero and the martyrs of El Salvador. Departure is 6 November arriving back in Britain on 19 November. It will be led by Clare Dixon and Julian Filochowski and will be accompanied by Bishop John Rawsthorne. The all-inclusive cost is £1895. Further details are available and bookings can be arranged through the pilgrimage organiser, Anthony Coles, at arctc@btinternet.com.



Christ... teaches that every human being without exception even the enemy, is in a very realistic sense, our neighbour. This implies that we react to those who stand against us in a radically new way, a way that refuses all means that diminish, violate or destroy them, but which, on the contrary, tries to overcome the evil that separates us.

*Hildegard Goss-Mayr
In 'Prayers for Peacemakers'
Ed. Valerie Flessati
Kevin Mayhew Publishers 1988*

41st Annual Justice & Peace Conference

Forgotten People
Forgotten Places

BEING CHURCH ON THE MARGINS

26–28 July 2019

**The Hayes Conference Centre
Swanwick, Derbyshire**

www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

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Speaking Personally: Ellen Teague

Where do you think your commitment to justice and peace comes from?

Growing up, I was sensitised by my parents showing compassion to people in need. My father often brought a lonely person home for Christmas Day lunch. My mother lamented poverty amidst food waste and what Pope Francis has called our “throw-away culture”. My husband Gerry introduced me to work in Africa in the 1980s, which provided direct experience of extreme poverty and the Church’s wonderful missionary outreach. Interest in environmental justice was sparked at this time, amidst concerns about desertification and changing rainfall patterns.

Upon return to the UK, my recognition of structural injustice was rooted in a talk by Brian Davies of CAFOD, about the Church’s Social Teaching. I then worked with the Development Education team at CAFOD for eight years and met such inspirational Church figures as Dom Helder Camara. Being the CAFOD campaign coordinator for the ‘Renewing the Earth’ campaign introduced me to the seminal work of Columban Sean McDonagh on creation theology. I became a Columban co-worker in their Justice, Peace and Ecology team in Britain, and am daily inspired by Columban work around the world - from reconciliation work in Korea, to reforestation in Pakistan, to supporting migrants at the US/Mexico border, to divestment from fossil fuels.

What for you are the most important areas of concern today?

The Climate Crisis, Biodiversity Loss, Extractive Industries, Migration and Militarism top my list. But it’s the connection between these issues, which Pope Francis underlined in *Laudato Si’*, that are crucial. The call to listen to “the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor” prompts me to support Pacific islanders losing low-lying atolls to the ocean, and communities in the Philippines destroyed by large-scale mining. I join inspirational Pax Christi friends Pat Gaffney, Valerie Flessati and Bruce Kent at the Ministry of Defence every Ash Wednesday to lament Britain’s expenditure on nuclear weapons and arms trading.

I am increasingly aware of the forces that undermine justice and peace. Back in the 80s I thought that once people learnt about the causes of suffering and the links with faith they would transform behaviour. In this new century we see clearly how the corporate world is unwilling to sacrifice financial benefit from such things as rainforest destruction and conflict minerals. Sustainability and Peace are not serious goals for everyone. “Another world is possible” say grassroots social movements and we must be faithful witnesses to that.

What sustains you in your commitment?

Climate campaigners such as Filipino Yeb Sano – whom I met at the Paris Climate talks in 2015 - inspire me, walking from the Vatican to Katowice in December to lobby 2018 climate talks. And campaigners from CAFOD and the Global Catholic Climate Movement who urged world leaders to uphold targets in the Paris Agreement for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century. Young Catholics called for more focus on long-term planning for sustainable living.

What are your hopes for a Church like ours for the 21st century?

I am very happy with the vision of Church presented by Pope Francis. The mission of redemption of the world is not separated from justice in society and healing Planet Earth’s wounds, inflicted by an exploitative human industrial system. My own outreach tends to be with lay-led J&P groups. I have seen excellent parish initiatives as an assessor for the Livesimply Parish Award, now achieved by 50 parishes. An increasing number of dioceses are developing environmental policies and celebrating Creation Time. Thriving outward-looking parish communities and Catholic schools which work for justice, peace and appreciation of the natural world is a key hope.

The Church continues to educate and bridge power gaps that oppress the vulnerable outside the parish model too, such as Catholic People’s Weeks. More resources to Justice and Peace work and for outreach to young people is vital. Young Catholics have a passion for Justice and Peace, and there should be more outlets in the Church for that commitment to be nourished.

Ellen is a London-based Catholic journalist who writes and campaigns on Justice, Peace and Ecology issues. Married with three sons, she is a member of the JPIC team of the Columban Missionary Society in Britain.



A New Beginning at NJPN

It's Goodbye from Me...



By the time you read this, I will have retired as Administrator of NJPN, a post I have held since 2008. This has been a rewarding and fascinating 11 years, giving the opportunity to meet and work with so many inspiring and dedicated people. I am sure I will still be involved and look forward to coming to the conference as a participant...

Ann Kelly, NJPN Administrator (retired)

And It's Hello from Geoff...

I'm from Preston in Lancashire. An active member of St Wilfrid's, the Jesuit Parish in Preston, which has an active Faith and Justice Group for which I act as the CAFOD link. I am a member of the Lay Community of St Benedict, for whom I work a few hours a week doing the finance and taking bookings for events. I have a passion for Palestine and in recent years have joined the JAI olive picking programme in the Bethlehem area each October. I assist with the Metanoia Project's homeless drop in at my church.



Geoff Thompson, NJPN Administrator

All Change in 2019...

This year several longstanding workers in our Network will be leaving their posts...



Pat Gaffney retires as General Secretary of Pax Christi in March 2019. At the helm since 1990, Pat has steered Pax Christi into the mainstream of the Church, where it is respected for its authenticity and effectiveness. Versatile, creative, and painstaking, Pat is always one step ahead, connecting global issues of militarism with grassroots action, whether by developing Peace Sunday in parishes, leading national events such as the Ash Wednesday service at the MOD, workshops on peace spirituality and nonviolence, or commenting in the Catholic press. Pat will be missed across the peace movement for her largely unacknowledged work for the Global Week of Action on Military Spending, the faith presence at arms trade fairs, the Week of Prayer for Peace in Palestine and Israel, the Network of Christian Peace Organisations and many other initiatives. For your immeasurable contribution and personal warmth, thank you so much Pat!

Valerie Flessati

See Pat's 'Speaking Personally' interview from 2015 at: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/speaking-personally/speaking-personally-pat-gaffney-general-secretary-of-pax-christi/>. She will be succeeded by Theresa Alessandro.

Chris Bain retires as Director of CAFOD in the spring after 15 years.

Chris championed the campaigns work at CAFOD, tackling the root causes of global poverty, injustice and inequality.

Chris has visited CAFOD's humanitarian, long-term development and climate change focused work around the world, seeing how we respond quickly and effectively to events like Typhoon Haiyan.

Chris has been key in leading CAFOD's work with both Caritas Internationalis, the confederation of over 160 members to support the poorest communities and CIDSE, Catholic development agencies in Europe and North America working on global justice.

Maria Elena Arana

He will be replaced by **Christine Allen**, formerly of Progressio and currently at Christian Aid. See her 'Speaking Personally' interview at: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/speaking-personally/speaking-personally-christine-allen/>



Barbara Kentish retired at the end of December as Fieldworker for Westminster diocesan Justice & Peace Commission.

Acting as a great 'double act' with Fr Joe Ryan, the Commission's Chairperson, Barbara always kept the diocese abreast of local and global justice and peace developments across the diocese and further afield. Her energy and deep commitment to the cause brought out the best in others, and she steered a strong team

of supporters to ensure a strong profile for justice and peace efforts at parish level and beyond. Her determined work most recently to bring public attention to the plight of refugees in Calais, alongside all her day to day work, in combination with Pax Christi, CAFOD and others, will set a high standard for her successor to follow. Thankfully, Barbara intends merely to retire from her paid job, but will remain active in so many of the causes that she, and all J&P people, hold dear and we, in the diocese, look forward to many more years of working together!

Maggie Beirne

Christian Responses to Poverty: Community not Charity

At the start of November 2018, Church Action on Poverty and our partners at 'Life on the Breadline' held a



National Poverty Consultation in Manchester, drawing together many people in the churches who are involved in tackling poverty and injustice. At an opening panel on 'Church of the Poor', campaigner **Stef Benstead** shared these thoughts on Christian responses to poverty.

Eight years of government cutbacks have caused a return of destitution in the UK. Increasing numbers of people are unable to afford housing, food, hygiene products, electricity and heating. In response, food banks have become a major institution, but government cuts to charitable grants mean that the rest of the charitable sector is falling under the weight of need.

How should Christians respond to austerity? Should we be calling on Christians to step up and take direct responsibility for community and the ending of poverty? Is there any role for the State in ending poverty, and if there is do Christians play any part in achieving State action?

In God's plans for Israel, he made provision for both charity and dignity. The laws on redemption saw land, possessions and wealth restored to poor people as of right; the laws on gleaning and servitude meant that there was always decent work available to poor people, again as of right. These laws – to be created and maintained by the State – ensured dignity for all people. The State bears a God-given responsibility for basic rights and dignity of people under its rule. Direct charity by individuals does not let the State off the hook, because charity does not provide the basic dignity that God expects for all people.

But State provision does not let individuals off the hook for direct charity either. God still required his people as individuals to give generously to those in need.

The reason for this is two-fold. Firstly, the State can provide access to all that people need, but the people who most need it will tend to go unseen by the State, because they are not accessing support. There will always be a need for Christians to seek those who otherwise go unseen. Even better would be for Christians to already be there, to be friends before a crisis comes.

Secondly, we are social animals. We have needs that go beyond the physical and material. The State can't provide this, because true friendships are based on people choosing to spend time together.

Christians must be doing what Jesus did: leaving their wealth and privilege to live amongst the poor and needy, to be there when help is needed, to be charitable by being community. And Christians as a body should be working to see good government that provides access to decent houses and decent jobs, so that everyone has the opportunity to provide for themselves rather than being dependent on the chance good-will of the better-off.

This is an edited version of a blog at: <https://blog.church-poverty.org.uk/>

FEBRUARY

- 5-24 Climate Coalition Show the Love: theclimatecoalition.org
- 14 Fossil fuel divestment conference for Religious: London
james.buchanan@operationnoah.org; 07801 570 653
- 15 'Christian Mission Through Caring for Creation': Gloucester
greenchristian.org.uk/whats-on/; 0345 459 8460
- 16 North West London J&P Network meeting:
maggiebeime@googlemail.com
- 16 Bp Arnold on CAFOD trip to Sierra Leone and Liberia: Burnley
dioceseofsalford.org.uk/news/; 01282 721 701
- 17 Racial Justice Sunday: catholicchurch.org.uk; carj.org.uk
- 19 Monthly Prayer Vigil for Refugees: Home Office, London
londoncatholicworker.org; 020 8348 8212
- 20 World Day of Social Justice: un.org/en/events/socialjusticeday
- 23 Church & Peace: Peace is not a fairy-tale... Birmingham
 Contact Barbra Forbes: forbesbarbarae@yahoo.co.uk
- 23 Retreat: Blessed are those who Hunger and Thirst for Justice:
 Aylesford Friary: retreat@thefriars.org.uk; 01622 717 272
- 23 .. Introduction to Nonviolent Direct Action for climate change:
 London: christianclimateaction.wordpress.com
- 23-24 Building Solidarity for the Synod on the Amazon: Bath
 01225 464 234
- 25 Plastics and us: a relationship gone bad: London (evening)
mondediplofriends.org.uk; 07435 844 130
- 25-10 March Fairtrade Fortnight: fairtrade.org.uk; 020 7405 5942

MARCH

- 1 Women's World Day of Prayer prepared by women of Slovenia
wwdp.org.uk
- 3 Church Action on Poverty Sunday: 'Different Light'
church-poverty.org.uk; 0161 872 9294
- 6 Ash Wednesday witness against nuclear weapons: London
 and Liverpool: paxchristi.org.uk; 020 8203 4884
- 7 Las Casas Institute Lecture: Finding Christ in Prison...: Oxford:
blackfriars.ox.ac.uk
- 8 International Women's Day: internationalwomensday.com
 Pax Christi messages: paxchristi.org.uk; 020 8203 4884
- 8-10 Pathways to Peace: Anglican Pacifist Fellowship and others:
 Leeds: tilly@apf.org; 0794 272 595
- 9-10 CAAT Workshop preparing for DSEI 2019: London
caat.org.uk; 020 7281 0297
- 9-17 Science4Society Week: Science education activities:
s4s.org.uk; info@s4s.org.uk; 01524 812 073
- 12 Christian CND Embassies Walk:
christiancnd.org.uk; christians@cnd.org.uk; 020 7700 4200
- 15 CAFOD Lent Fast Day: cafod.org.uk/News/; 020 7733 7900

- 16 Birmingham Justice & Peace Lenten Retreat: Birmingham
birminghamjandp.org.uk; bhamjanp@gmail.com
- 16 Understanding Modern Slavery: Leeds: leedsjp.org.uk/events
- 18 Las Casas Institute Lecture: Future of the Humanities...:
 London: blackfriars.ox.ac.uk
- 20 Storytellers for Peace—theme 'Wise Fools': Worldwide
storytellersforpeace.com
- 21 Fly Kites not Drones: dronecampaignnetwork.org.uk;
dronecampaignnetwork@riseup.net
- 22 World Water Day: unwater.org/worldwaterday
- 23 International Peace Bureau Council Meeting: Paris:
 Observers welcome: Contact Bruce Kent: brucek@uk2.net
- 24 Anniversary of the death of St Oscar Romero:
romerotruster.org.uk; romerotruster@gmail.com
- 26-27 Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network Meeting: Crewe
aefjn.org.uk; aefjnuk@yahoo.co.uk
- 30 Green Day at Beverley: Beverley
greenchristian.org.uk/whats-on/; 0345 459 8460
- 30 Earth Hour: wwf.org.uk/earthhour

APRIL

- 6 Global Problems Need Global Solutions: London
unitingforpeace.com; vijay@vmpeace.org; 0131 446 9545
- 9 Pacifism and Nonviolence Discussion Group: London (evening)
SecondTuesday@groupmail.com; 020 7278 4474
- 21 Easter Sunday
- 26 Chernobyl Day: chernobyl-day.org/
- 27 Action: Stop New Nuclear: Preston: cnduk.org/events;
springaction2019@stopnewnuclear.org.uk
- 27 Rewilding: A Christian Perspective: Oxford
greenchristian.org.uk/whats-on/; 0345 459 8460
- 27-28 Commemoration, Conflict and Conscience Festival: Bristol
everydaylivesinwar.herts.ac.uk/ccf/

MAY

- 4 Living Simply and in Solidarity with the Poor: Winchester
cafodportsmouth.wordpress.com; 01252 329 385
- 11 **NJPN AGM & Open Networking Day: London**
- 11 Meditation and Hope Amid Climate Chaos: London
greenchristian.org.uk/whats-on/; 0345 459 8460
- 15 International Conscientious Objectors Day
paxchristi.org.uk 020 8203 4884: ppu.org.uk, 020 7424 9444
- 18 Pax Christi AGM: London
paxchristi.org.uk; 020 8203 4884

JUNE

- 26 Climate Coalition Climate Lobby: London

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

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

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

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