

The e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly by the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to [anneoc980@hotmail.com](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com)

## TAKING THE LONG VIEW: PAT GAFFNEY REFLECTS ON 30 YEARS WITH PAX CHRISTI UK

**Source:** Pax Christi 6 March 2019

Pat Gaffney retires this month as the General Secretary of Pax Christi UK this year. She has written the following reflection covering her nearly 30 years in that role:

1 April 1990: the day my contract with Pax Christi began. 29 years on, I am still here (how did that happen?) but preparing to move on and create space for some new thought and energy. This article takes a long view of our work over this period, of changes within the global and domestic arenas, and in technology. Our movement has undertaken so many challenges with a spirit of ingenuity, flexibility and faithful persistence to Gospel peacemaking.

1990 was a good time to come on board. Talk was of a Peace Dividend. With the Cold War behind us, new opportunities were unfolding for economic and social growth. Spending on defence would decline and investment in arms conversion would follow. The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp had helped to get rid of cruise missiles. Pax Christi's valiant East-West group, coordinated by Peggy Attlee, having worked towards one Europe, was prepared for the new challenges of creating a common home. In the summer of 1990 our British section of Pax Christi hosted in Clifton Diocese an international 'route' for young people, with the theme, *Let's build a Europe of Peace*. Sadly, many of those hopes crashed on 2 August when Iraq invaded Kuwait and what was to become protracted war in the Gulf and Middle East began. Goodbye peace dividend.

As a 'new' person four months into the job, the prospect of sliding into war was daunting! Thankfully, friends in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Christian CND, the National Peace Council (NPC) and Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) were ready to create common plans. Could we de-escalate the tension by urging our Government to prevent a full military response from the USA? Setting up communication systems was key. Pax Christi at that time had one temperamental computer, an old but sturdy Adler typewriter, and a photocopier. My first big purchase was a FAX machine - essential for getting out press notices, sharing drafts of leaflets, sending letters to Government and so forth. By Spring 1991 we had established the Christian Coalition for Peace in the Gulf and a 'Call for Action' supported by church leaders, religious communities and groups around the country. In response to military attacks and then years of sanctions against Iraq, weekly vigils were held nationwide. The NPC ran a conference that became a springboard for much joint work, including the creation of the Peace Education Network (PEN) and a more focused response to the UK's arms trade to the region - in particular that of British Aerospace.

Meanwhile, we kept a watching brief on developments around Trident. Peace activists and theologians reflected on the morality of nuclear weapons. Support for the annual Ash Wednesday witness grew, moving beyond London to Liverpool, Cambridge and Scotland. We organised a Christian lobby of Parliament on Trident and produced resources for the 50th anniversary of Hiroshima to revive awareness and campaigning.

Through our international links, and in partnership with the Catholic Institute for International Relations, CAAT, and TAPOL, an organisation promoting human rights in Indonesia, we became a member of the Stop the Hawks: No Arms to Indonesia Coalition, opposing the UK's role in supplying arms that were used to terrorise the people of East Timor. We supported nonviolent action against British Aerospace, including the BAE Ploughshares in 1993 and the Seeds of Hope Ploughshares women in 1996. We held a joint lobby of Parliament, vigils and campaign events. Around the country members engaged in solidarity actions with students from East Timor. Our then president, Bishop Victor Guazzelli, gave great support to all of this work. In 1996 I visited East Timor and was able to experience the deep meaning of solidarity: sharing accounts of these UK peace actions and bringing home stories of hope and nonviolent resistance by the East Timorese. Hosting the Pax Christi International Council in London in 1997, we invited Fr Domingos Soares to come from East Timor and receive the Cardinal Alfrink Peace Award, along with Maria de Lourdes Martins Cruz, in recognition of their work for peace.

If the start of the 90s brought hopes of a peace dividend, 1998 brought hope for Northern Ireland with the Good Friday Agreement. Pax Christi's Northern Ireland group had been working for years in partnership with Pax Christi Ireland and others - building bridges, creating volunteering opportunities, speaking out about the abuse of human rights and more. Fresh approaches to 'winning the peace' were called for and we organised a conference in 1998 on the theme *Reconciliation and the Healing of Memories* and in 2001 *Northern Ireland: Reconciling a Divided Community*.

Formation in peace and nonviolence has always been a priority for Pax Christi with support from the Christian Peace Education Fund, established in 1982. We co-founded and subsequently facilitated PEN, with its annual conferences all through the 1990s and early 2000s. We developed training within other institutions including the Missionary Institute London where we helped initiate an MA in applied theology: The Peace & Justice Mission Studies programme. We have run courses in active nonviolence with the Conference of Religious, students in pastoral ministry, prison chaplains, and St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation. Throughout the 90s we worked ecumenically with the Churches Peace Forum producing resources and workshops for the World Council of Churches' Programme to Overcome Violence. We contributed to the powerful training scheme arranged for the Jubilee Year 2000 by the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) and have co-hosted three annual conferences with NJPN on peace-related themes. This accumulated experience underpins our current work on nonviolence with the Vatican.

A constant in our outreach and education has been Peace Sunday. Since it began in 1967 Pax Christi has played a unique role in amplifying the World Peace Day message through homilies, prayers, discussion questions, children's activities, giving every parish in England and Wales the opportunity to celebrate the theme and deepen awareness of the peace teaching of the Church.

Writing now in the eighteenth year of the 'War on Terror', I recall work initiated in 2002 by theologians and members of Pax Christi who produced the *Declaration on the Morality and Legality of the War Against Iraq*. Gathering the public support of hundreds, including prominent church leaders, we were thrust into the limelight of national TV and press. That declaration helped to create a critical momentum around the country casting grave doubt on the war. We heard that Downing Street was fed up with these outspoken Christians. With CAAT and other Christian groups we launched the Called to Conversion message that, though called to be peacemakers, as a nation we sow the seeds of war. We devised petitions, tools, liturgies, which enabled groups to engage in arms-trade campaigning with various government departments over several years.

After years of global polarity which saw security framed almost exclusively in terms of military strength, we began to consolidate our approach. With the Fellowship of Reconciliation we produced *Security for the Common Good* - a document arguing the case for redirecting money away from military defence, nuclear deterrence, the arms trade, and towards investment in human, sustainable security. We became a key organiser of the annual Global Campaign on Military Spending, providing a dedicated website and popular campaign materials. These encouraged people to take to town centres, cafés, schools, government departments, and stimulate political debate by offering 'people's budgets' that prioritise education, health, climate change over military spending. With the Network for Christian Peace Organisations (NCPO) we developed this approach in several General Election briefings and, more recently, briefings on Trident and the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.

In 1999 Patriarch Michel Sabbah became Pax Christi's International President at our world assembly in the Middle East. Taking part in delegations and organising visits to Palestine opened new partnerships with Palestinian and Israeli peace groups. The Separation Wall was being built, along with other 'facts on the ground' that made daily life for Palestinians impossible and enshrined the illegal occupation of Palestine. Our support for the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (which led to several members becoming volunteers), campaigns such as People need Bridges not Walls, and the Week of Prayer for Palestine and Israel, have allowed us to become a voice for our partners and engage in education and advocacy work. One gift of this partnership is the Pax Christi ICON of Peace, created in Jerusalem, presenting stories of peacemaking and reconciliation across time and many traditions. Since 2004 the ICON has been exhibited in British cathedrals, schools, prisons and parish churches - an inspiration for prayer throughout the '100 Days of Peace' surrounding the 2012 Olympics, and at the 2018 Eucharistic Congress.

Through the great communication shift - websites, Facebook, Twitter, online shopping, e-newsletters - our message today reaches a much wider national and international community. Providing sound alternative news, advocacy tools, accessible education resources, notice of events and campaigns, reports about the work of members - this has become a priority for us. At the same time we produce high quality 'paper' resources, from study packs to seasonal reflections, assemblies for schools, Peace People stories, postcards that celebrate women peacemakers or spread the message, No More War, Let's Build Peace. Let's not forget internal developments, the move to Hendon in 1998, several changes in staffing, new systems for data-management and accounting. The unfailing support of our President, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, our members and volunteers - all contribute to the wonderful service that our small staff team offers to the Church and the peace movement.

The words and gestures of Pope Francis affirm our work and encourage us to be even bolder in future. The arms trade is ever more aggressive. Technologies are shifting to the dangerous world of automation, drone warfare and killer robots. Financial investments still support the weapons' industry and unjust structures in Israel and Palestine. Our young people are increasingly vulnerable to knife and gun violence. We face these challenges in our national context and, through the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, work with the Vatican to address the deep roots of violence, to forge a new moral teaching and practice. The potential of the Church to be a model and a powerhouse for active nonviolence is immense. Our task is to build a community of peace people who will help release this power.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36656>

## ASH WEDNESDAY 2019: VIGIL FOR PEACE AT MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

**Ellen Teague** 6 March 2019

More than 100 Christians braved freezing rain in Whitehall today to take part in the annual Ash Wednesday procession and prayer vigil outside the Ministry of Defence (MoD). They called for the UK government to get rid of its nuclear weapons and support the International Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. They prayed for a conversion of hearts and minds away from nuclear war preparations and the 'waste' of resources that entails.

Organised by Pax Christi, Christian CND and the London Catholic Worker, participants included members of the National J&P Network and Westminster J&P, J&P Religious Links, Columbans and Assumption Sisters, and a number of peace campaigners from as far afield as Southampton and Chesterfield. Japanese Buddhist monks and nuns from the Battersea Peace Temple also took part. This was the 37th year of the vigil. "We are living in fragile times with several nuclear states - such as India and Pakistan - in standoffs," said Pat Gaffney, the outgoing Pax Christi General Secretary, "and this prompts us to be vigilant and determined to pressure our own government to take a moral lead and support the Treaty banning nuclear weapons". Her successor, Theresa Alessandro was there too, and other Pax Christi stalwarts such as Bruce Kent, Valerie Flessati and Holly Ball.

At a liturgy in Embankment Gardens, ashes were blessed by Westminster priest Joe Ryan, the Chair of Westminster Justice and Peace, and distributed "as a sign of repentance" before the group processed to the MoD, led by Pat Gaffney. Other clergy present included Fr Rob Esdaille of Arundel and Brighton Diocese and Fr Gerry McFlynn of the Irish Chaplaincy in London. Participants tied purple and black ribbons to the MoD railings. The ribbons represented the countries that have signed the Nuclear Ban Treaty and those who have yet to support the Treaty.

The group then processed to the front of the MoD and wrote *REPENT* with ashes on a piece of sackcloth. One of the readings said: 'Possession of nuclear weapons is now unequivocally condemned by Pope Francis and many other Christian and religious leaders. Yet our nation holds them ready, a threat of unspeakable humanitarian crimes to be done on our behalf; and cannot think beyond outdated cold war deterrence policy. Are we ourselves thus enslaved by nuclear weapons, possessed by them, in so many ways?

"What a profound way to spend Ash Wednesday," reflected a Methodist Presbyter who attended, "joining the Ash Wednesday Christian Witness and Resistance against the MoD's preparations for the deployment of weapons of mass destruction".

Similar events were held - also in the rain and described as 'rain-soaked resistance' - in Liverpool and at Faslane Naval base near Helensburgh in Scotland. Faslane is the base of the UK's nuclear-armed submarines and Trident nuclear weapons.

See [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36662>

## FRIENDSHIP IS THE ANSWER TO HATRED AND VIOLENCE

16 March 2019 *Grace and Truth* Guest writer **Dave Andrews**

When I was last in Christchurch, I went to the Masjid Al Noor mosque. I sat at the back on a chair with the older believers during their Friday prayers. It was these believers who were specially targeted and systematically slaughtered by Brenton Tarrant this week. At the time of writing, I do not know if my friend, Hajj Ibrahim Abdelhalim, the Imam of the Linwood Mosque, is alive or dead.

NZ Prime Minister, Jacinda Adern, was appalled at what she called 'an extraordinary and unprecedented act of violence'. She went on to say: "Many of those who will have been directly affected by this shooting may be migrants to New Zealand, they may even be refugees here. They have chosen to make New Zealand their home, and it is their home. They are us. The person who has perpetuated this violence against us is not. They have no place in New Zealand."

And now we know the NZ Prime Minister was right. The perpetrator was not a New Zealander. He is an Australian. 'One of us'. And if there is any doubt Brenton Tarrant is 'One of us', one of those in the highest office in Australia leapt to his defence. Shortly after the attack Australian Senator Fraser Anning was quick to blame the victims: "As always, ... the media will rush to claim that the causes of today's shootings lie with the gun laws or those who hold nationalist views, but this is all clichéd nonsense. The real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration programme which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place."

We Australians must admit there has always been a strain of intolerance and violence lurking just beneath the surface of our civilisation. These have erupted in breathtaking acts of bigotry and brutality from time to time – whether its killing Aboriginal peoples to take their land, killing Chinese labourers to stop them 'taking our gold' or killing Muslims for daring to immigrate to 'our country'.

We need to acknowledge our propensity for intolerance and our proclivity for violence, and the fact that, given those factors, we cannot continue to sow seeds of animosity without reaping atrocities, such as this, committed by the extremists among us. It is not enough to condemn the attacks, we need to deal with the underlying attitudes in our culture that aid and abet these attacks. How can we deal with our propensity for intolerance and our proclivity for violence?

After the Holocaust, the Jews did a study of Germans, whom they called 'Righteous Gentiles', who effectively resisted the intolerance and violence unleashed under the Nazis. They found that these resisters had three characteristics in common that made the difference:

1. They were brought up in families that nurtured their emotional capacity for empathy towards others, or what we call 'love'.
2. They were taught at school and/or church to have an intellectual commitment to the rights of others, what we call 'justice'.
3. They all knew Jews personally, not as abstractions, but as flesh and blood people, as colleagues, relatives and 'friends'.

Security may track threats. Police may arrest perpetrators. But there is no quick fix. No short cut. If we want to create a culture in our country that resists the current Islamophobia, we need to encourage everybody we know, in every way we can, to develop their emotional capacity for empathy towards Muslims, their intellectual commitment to the rights of Muslims, and their personal relationships with Muslim friends.

• **Dave Andrews** is an Australian community activist, theologian and author.

<https://gracetruth.blog/2019/03/16/friendship-is-the-answer-to-hatred-and-violence-by-dave-andrews/>

• *Grace and Truth* is the blog of Jon Kuhrt who has worked with people affected by homelessness for 25 years. He is a former CEO of West London Mission and now a government adviser specialising in how faith and community groups address rough sleeping.

## STATEMENT ON THE CHRIST CHURCH TERROR ATTACKS AGAINST MUSLIMS

Glasgow in Scotland and Christchurch in New Zealand are linked by the fact that each contains a cathedral built to an identical design. Christ Church Cathedral and St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow were built to identical plans.

Christian hearts and Muslim hearts are made to the same design as one another. Today we weep for all those who are victims of terror and intimidation. Sadly, we are joined together in being broken-hearted at the news of the callous attacks against Muslim communities in Christ Church.

Christians follow teachings which encourage them to welcome strangers. There is no anti-immigrant rhetoric that can be called Christian. Any attack on people at worship diminishes us all. Any attack on people at worship is an attack on civilization. Any attack on people because they are of the Muslim faith is utterly wrong.

My love and prayers go to the Muslim communities directly affected by this tragedy and to our own Muslim friends in Glasgow. There is only one God and the God whom we all worship has compassion on all who mourn.

**Kelvin Holdsworth** Provost of St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, 15 March 2019

**SOLIDARITY:** Up to 1,000 people of all faiths and none, gathered in Finsbury Park to show their solidarity with the victims of today's Christchurch Mosques terror attack. There was a minute's silence, speeches and prayers - all promising to stand up to racism in all its forms - Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Speakers include local councillors, Imams, Christian clergy, a rabbi, leaders of human rights groups and opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn.

## DR ANNA ROWLANDS COMMENTS ON SHAMIMA BEGUM CASE

20 February 2019: In a message on Twitter today, Dr Anna Rowlands, the St Hilda Associate Professor of Catholic Social Thought and Practice at Durham University, flags up a piece she has written for *Church Times* about the case of the London teenager Shamima Begum, who ran away from home to Syria with friends at the age of 15, four years ago, to live in the Islamic State - and now is appealing to come home with her newborn baby, who sadly died in the camp. Dr Rowlands writes: "I wrote this blog piece on Shamima Begum before knowing Home Office decision to move in direction of de-citizenship. I suggest such a move places us on wrong side of history of force and therefore distances us from a politics of both justice and restoration."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36576>

## SHAMIMA BEGUM AND THE POSSIBILITY OF RESTORATION

19 February 2019: In the hours after the news broke that a *Times* journalist had located Shamima Begum in a refugee camp in Syria, I found it surprisingly and shamefully hard to settle on a view. More than a decade working alongside refugees should have made it easy, as should the fact that Ms Begum had left as a child, convinced in her immaturity and perhaps narcissism of a powerful theo-political story of jihadi life. But, in truth, I felt a range of conflicting emotions.

Ms Begum's story tells us that the myth of easy stories and black-and-white answers rarely fits the globalised world we now live in, and seemingly finds us ill-prepared to respond well.

Ms Begum herself exists in overlapping spheres: a refugee, hovering on the brink of a permanent exile and statelessness, and a jihadi who has supported an abhorrent murderous regime. She was a child lured via online propaganda to a part of the world she knew little of, but has become an adult and a young mother whose own children have now themselves become victims of the war that she entered. This story is defined by a logic of entanglement. The many layers of entanglement — of citizenship and terror, of childhood and motherhood, of a refusal to repent and extreme vulnerability, of one state's responsibilities and obligations with another's — mean that there is no easy narrative of innocence that we can reach for in this case.

Ms Begum's life has become entangled with that of a murderous regime, and she is now living in a refugee camp in the care of, and receiving material resources from, a community in northern Syria which has itself suffered unimaginable horror. This, in itself, is a rather extraordinary act of hospitality which we ought at least to note, as we claim the moral high ground.

But Ms Begum has asked something of us, and we are obliged to respond. We are responsible for answering well. For this reason, this story now centres as much on who we are and the obligations that we bear as it does on who Ms Begum and her child are. What obligations do we bear for our own citizens, including when they err in the most serious way? What are our obligations to law — in this case, when asked from a faith perspective, both natural and international law? Who do we ourselves become if we render Ms Begum and her baby stateless? What responsibilities do we bear to other states? Surely we ourselves ought not to mirror as a nation the narcissism of the individual who will not accept that our actions have moral consequences.

In addition to the bare fact of Ms Begum's and her child's vulnerability, there are also bare political and juridical facts. To deprive someone of statehood is to enact one of the most cruel powers in the arsenal that the liberal state possesses, and, in doing so, in a case like this, we place ourselves outside of the conventions that govern international law. This is not simply about the question who we are as Christians or a Christian nation, but who we are as members of an international community of law and reason.

But there are distinct questions of Christian living evoked by this case, too. Living in a globalised world and facing new dilemmas for which we feel ill-equipped does not weaken the Christian call to practise both love and justice. In social-media responses to this story, much has been made of the need to exercise mercy and justice in balanced measure — to provide protection and safeguard life, but to test and examine and ensure that any crime, and its mitigation, are addressed.

Reading such responses, my mind turned back to some recent work that I had been doing on the French Jewish-Christian mystic and political thinker Simone Weil. In an essay on *The Iliad* as a poem written out of a refugee imagination, Weil writes of the need to trace in any account of love and justice the "history of force". Weil writes that only those who have confronted the history of force can truly witness to a gospel of love and justice.

For Weil, we are required to adopt a commitment, as part of the exercise of love and justice, to addressing the truth of violence and loss. To prioritise and not to pass over this truth-telling: to tell of the death and the needless loss that have been borne by the victims. But, in the end, Weil instructs us, telling the truth about the history of force is not likely to justify a further cycle of exclusion and loss, but to intensify the obligation we bear to witness to a counter-narrative: to interrupt the logic of war for an interval, and speak into its violence and horror the language of hospitality. There may be no immediate promise of justice, but in the abyss of war the humanity of hospitality stands in the immediate moment as its proxy. This proxy for justice is what we perhaps owe to Ms Begum right now: an interval of care, and the promise of both a kind of justice and a form of love to come, whose shape we will have to figure out.

The answer is, then, in the end, presumably uncomfortable, but simple: we do not have an acceptable moral reason to exclude Ms Begum; and, positively expressed, we have an obligation if we are not to be changed ourselves at the hands of the twisted ideologues of our age, to witness to a belief in the possibility of a restoration beyond the brokenness and narcissism that risk, if we are not very careful, shaping both sides of this story.

[www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/22-february/comment/opinion/shamima-begum-and-the-possibility-of-restoration](http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/22-february/comment/opinion/shamima-begum-and-the-possibility-of-restoration)

• **Dr Anna Rowlands** is St Hilda Associate Professor of Catholic Social Thought and Practice in the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University. Following [@AnnaRowlands1](https://twitter.com/AnnaRowlands1)

## SALFORD: BISHOP ARNOLD'S PASTORAL LETTER FOR LENT FOCUSES ON ENVIRONMENT

The Right Reverend John Arnold, Bishop of Salford issued the following letter at the weekend, to be read in all parishes on the weekend of 2nd and 3rd March 2019:

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Season of Lent begins in just a few days and calls us to reflect on our Faith and to make resolutions about how we might put our Faith into action in more practical ways. Often this invites us to private reflection about personal routines of prayer, fasting and alms-giving. I would ask that this year we look beyond personal lives, to our role within our wider communities and to the voice of the Church in our world.

In preparation for Lent this year I am writing to you about a very urgent matter about which I think most of us are at least aware but we have not yet recognised the need to make a practical response. I speak about Climate Change and our care for the environment of our planet. We have been fortunate, thus far, in experiencing only relatively minor evidence of Climate Change in the United Kingdom. But even here we have experienced freak weather conditions which are clear evidence of changes to our climate. We have had unprecedented floods which have destroyed homes and livelihoods, seasonal changes and the so-called Beast from the East. Elsewhere in our world severe and long term droughts, floods, rising sea-levels and extreme record-breaking temperatures are clear evidence of the damage that our actions and our way of life are inflicting on our world. These have affected millions of people, most often in the poorest countries of the world and people who have done least to damage our environment.

This is not a problem that we can just leave to governments to remedy. They must certainly play their part and we must pray that the recent Conferences in Paris and Poland have done something to unite nations in a common endeavour. But Pope Francis tells us that we are all required, every one of us, to make changes to our lives and begin to repair the damage before matters become irreversible. I am sure that a growing number of people are aware of these problems but all too many of us are not engaging in those practical actions which are required in order to make the essential difference.

You might well ask why the Bishop is speaking to us about Climate Change when we are gathered for Mass on Sunday. I am writing because Pope Francis is leading the way in calling us to be aware of what we have done to our world and the certainty that, without immediate and sustained action, we will inflict irreparable damage on our planet which will adversely affect the lives of our children and our children's children. This is most certainly a matter which is rooted in our Faith. Creation is God's gift to us and we are called to be stewards of creation. But for all too long we have exploited our world and its resources, often in ignorance as to the consequences, having no regard for the impact of our actions. But now we are coming to understand what we have done and we have time to correct the damage, if we act quickly.

A great deal of difference can be made through a number of small actions in our personal lives. To name a few: We can shop more carefully, particularly choosing local produce, so saving the expensive transportation costs and use of fuel. We can cut the temperature on our central heating (perhaps wearing a pullover around our home). We can walk more and use less petrol, using public transport more regularly. We can turn lights off in unused rooms, hang washing out to dry rather than using energy-expensive drying machines. We can reduce the waste we make and recycle more. These may seem almost trivial but they are significant ways where we can make an impact for the good. We show the goodness of our faith by our actions.

We can also spread the word among family and friends so that everyone comes to understand their role and their responsibilities. I would like to challenge every parish in this Diocese to form a group concerned with giving advice and making practical responses. I invite every parish to watch "*Global Healing*" as an introduction to practical ways of helping to heal our planet. I challenge this Diocese to take the lead in Pope Francis' call to healing our planet. Let's make the Diocese of Salford a flagship for ways to heal and care for our common home. We are beginning a major environmental project in the grounds of Wardley Hall and, since this is such an important matter, I have also written a letter to all our schools asking our young people to find ways to involve their school communities in our efforts.

I would always like to think that, as the Bishop of the Diocese, I can always encourage and express hope. I believe that, thanks to the advances of science, we have discovered the reasons for Climate Change and we still have time to correct our ways. We know that we have caused the extinction of thousands of species. We are changing the seasons by our destruction of the rain forests and we have plundered our natural resources for profit. We have caused the melting of the icecaps, the severe droughts, the freak storms, the variations of the seasons upon which agriculture and food production depend. We have caused people in coastal regions to lose their livelihoods through rising sea levels. But, with our commitment and our common participation, we can slow the destruction of the environment and begin to correct our mistakes. There is still time but unless we achieve significant progress in the next 12 years, our scientists are certain that our future generations will suffer life changing consequences with no means of turning the clock back.

And in our determination and endeavours, let us remember that we are not walking alone. The gift of the Spirit ensures that we have the strength to do what is right. There is no doubt that we face a human catastrophe but by our determination we can heal the damage, mend our planet and "care for our common home" for future generations.

"Stay with us, Lord, on our journey"

Yours devotedly, John Arnold Bishop of Salford

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36646>

See also: *Global Healing - Our Common Home* [www.ourcommonhome.co.uk/](http://www.ourcommonhome.co.uk/)

## COLUMBAN COMPETITION: 'FACING UP TO CLIMATE CHANGE'

22 March 2019: Anna Joy Marshall (15) of St Mary's Catholic High School, Chesterfield, won the recent print competition for young journalists on *'The Challenge of Climate Change'*.

Our world is incredible. Scientists say that for every disease, there is a natural cure somewhere on the planet. There are thousands of natural resources like wood, edible plants and fuels. Everything we need can be found on earth. Scientists who study cosmology and biology are so often overwhelmed by how seemingly perfect our world is. People have had whole revelations looking at how complex, purposeful and beautiful our world is. So many people rely on our world as their livelihood. But so many of us take it for granted. With climate change looming over us, it's time to change that.

The UN 2009 Global Assessment Report said in low-income areas such as the Middle East and North Africa, 20-40 per cent of summers would have highly unusual heat extremes, affecting food production as well as health.

When we think of climate change, we think of heat, extreme weather and rising sea-levels. The problem seems manageable when we can go home, put on the air conditioning or wrap up warm and safe at home. One of the real issues with climate change is how much it deepens the scar between rich and poor. Low income countries carry 13 per cent of the global exposure to tropical storms but 81 percent of the risk of being killed by one. Climate change highlights the issues of injustice just as much as it destroys natural habitats and wildlife - maybe even more so.

Climate change cannot be a separate issue to social justice because it is both a cause and result of social injustice. People are affected all around the world. So often, the people it affects are the marginalised and the poorest. A term that often comes up is a climate refugee. By 2050, there could be up to 200 million people displaced by rising global temperature according to the International Organisation on Migration. People have to leave behind homes, jobs and sometimes families to escape flooding, extreme weather and drought.

Why is there flooding, extreme weather and drought? Because of climate change. Why is the climate changing? Because so many of us are trapped in an indulgent, consumerist lifestyle. Many of us are complacent even when people all around the world are suffering. Critical thinking is a key that can help us challenge ourselves and others. It could be the first step to us resolving the issue of climate change. It is more important than ever in the world today.

Yet combating climate change is not something we have to face alone. I believe action and spirituality sit together. I was in a workshop by a Columban Missionary and he said, "Prayer and action work together." Spirituality is like the roots of a tree and action is the leaves inspired by God.

So much in the Catholic faith comes down to the creation story. We believe God is the omnibenevolent, omniscient and omnipresent creator. God created humans and God loves us, and God created the world. In Genesis 1, the Bible says God gives us dominion over all of creation. God has created us in *Imago Dei*, breathed life into us giving us a soul. The soul is the part that connects us to God, the part inside of us that shares God's love with us and allows us to share it with others.

To put our beliefs into action, last year in November my sister and I held a Social Action day for young people. Two of the workshops were about climate change and care for creation. One young person on the day commented, "It's made me aware of how in need our world is for our respect." This reflects the teachings of the Old Testament. We have a responsibility to care for creation. We have been given stewardship. However, so often this stewardship is forgotten in our world, according to the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015), "amid the noise and distractions of an information overload."

Looking inwards instead of outwards makes us think that all we are responsible for is ourselves, even when the world is so big around us. We lose the awe and wonder we all used to have for the world when we were little. In Mathew 14, Jesus says, "For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Maybe this awe and wonder, hand in hand with respect, is a window into God's Kingdom, and maybe when it comes to all issues today, including climate change, we need to open our eyes to the dignity of our beautiful world and every single person in it.

Religious people have the foundations of protecting the environment written into their very history. Along with religious people, climate change has also inspired millions of non-religious people to action. In a way, the issue of climate change is unifying people into looking after our world. In 1 John 4:16, it says, "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."

Love is working. There is something special in the solidarity found in caring together for our common home, something I would describe as holy in the way Pope Francis described holiness in *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018): "We are called to be contemplatives even in the midst of action, and to grow in holiness by responsibly and generously carrying out our proper mission."

Finally, there is a hunger in young people for doing good things. I believe it is hunger in all people, and some might even say it is the work of the Holy Spirit. I was inspired when I saw this recently through a member of my school. A year eight boy had started a petition to get rid of plastic bottles in our school cafeteria. He had at the end of the petition over 200 signatures from other young people. All the time, people like this boy are seeing the way we are living is not good enough. We have to have the hope and courage to change.

**Link:** <https://columbans.co.uk/climate-change-competition-2019-and-the-winners-are>  
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36765>

## COLUMBAN COMPETITION: 'CLIMATE MONSTERS'

Jessy Oreoluwa Sodimu (15), of Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, Warrington was runner up in the Columban Young Journalists Competition 2019 (print) for his article on Climate Change.

We have all been gifted with some things in life - some more than others. But one undeniable gift we all received is "Our Sister, Mother Earth" (Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*). As stated in 1 Peter 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms".

So, the question is; why have we exploited the gift of Our Sister and Mother for selfish desires? Why have we not been faithful stewards of God's magnificent creation? Why do we keep harming her and polluting her and causing climate change, even though all she wants is to keep us safe and wrapped in her gentle and comforting arms?

Constantly observed by scientists, climate change can be referred to as, the changes in global weather patterns, which can be worsened by global warming; caused by the emission of greenhouse gases through human activity. The greenhouse effect works, as greenhouse gases such as CO<sub>2</sub>, absorb the heat energy from the sun's infra-red radiation as it attempts to leave Earth's atmosphere, causing an increase in the average global temperatures.

According to researchers at the Global Carbon Project and National Geographic website, worldwide we have recently dumped 41.5 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, and we even dare to eradicate swaths of trees half the size of England on an annual basis, therefore not only worsening the problem but inevitably devastating nature's equilibrium and "we have no such right" (Pope Francis).

The recklessness of our actions have led on to bigger and more aggravating effects on the environment, wildlife and even our own health, but the problem is that we are too blind to even acknowledge any of it. Researchers have found a strong correlation between climate change, depression, anxiety, stress and suicide, which have greatly damaged the UK. The WWF agrees that climate change has greatly impacted places such as the Amazon, Arctic, Coastal East Africa, and Eastern Himalayas, meaning that we are responsible for damaging some of the world's most beautiful natural landscapes. Also, the IPCC says that a 1.5°C average temperature rise may put 20-30% of species at risk of extinction, and such may include Tigers, Asian Rhinos, African Elephants, Polar Bears and Adélie Penguins. So would it take household pets, being at risk of extinction for people to start caring about the topic and take action?

In January 2014, when I was 10 years old, as Italy was facing recession, my parents decided that moving back to our home country Nigeria in Africa for about three years rather than staying in Italy would be a great idea for me and my siblings. On arrival there, it wasn't long till I noticed the stark differences between climates and the effects of climate change on Nigeria. Due to its climatic conditions, Nigeria suffers from long seasons of drought, Harmattan or dust storms, heatwaves and flash floods.

As there were several periods of drought, it meant that water in the houses often ran out, and as a result, people were often compelled to go and get their water supply from external sources, as global warming was evaporating lots of our water supplies and putting Nigeria under water stress. Which meant that people were forced to carry massive buckets of water, which could weigh up to 30 pounds which often lead to unbearable amounts of pain through the entire body, all under 100°F. We were forced to travel unbelievable distances, in the most horrendous of circumstances for the sole reason that nearby water sources weren't taxed, and shut down by government officials. Regardless, in those situations, I could have still called myself lucky, as my parents were able to afford better-living conditions than the average Nigerian child, who in most cases would be unable to get the indispensable access to water, food and electricity.

Still, I remember getting so upset about the situation, which made me question, why the situations in Nigeria and Italy were complete contrasts to each other and why such a topic was rarely discussed. Luckily, I had a teacher who felt sorry for me and told me that climate change and global warming had serious and devastating impacts on the water cycle and told me that everybody, including I, were at fault for this issue, as everybody had forgotten Pope Francis' words "We must never forget that the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone".

After those three years of stay in Nigeria, and the financial recession in Italy coming to a halt, my family and I decided to go back for the winter season. On the way back all I was able to think about were the days back when I was 7-years old and winter was my favourite season. I would think about, all the snow-angels, snowmen and even snow-fights I had with my brothers on that sparkling, massive white blanket of fairy dust. As I arrived and days went by without any sign of snow, I reassured myself that the white snow fairy would come late this year - but it never did. At that realisation, my heart sunk beneath the ground and tears rolled out of my eyes as I couldn't believe that climate change had won this battle. It felt almost as if all the magic and wonder from childhood fairy tales were torn to shreds and burned to ashes. That was the first time I saw climate change in its truest form.

In those moments, with the Pope's words echoing inside my mind, I told myself that the monster we know as climate change, must and will be stopped; using our collective gifts and talents to help climate believers worldwide and pressure the government to put laws against greenhouse emissions and most importantly pressure ourselves to use renewable energy, recycling and gardening to treat and respect Our Beloved Sister and Mother Earth, the way she should be treated.

**Link:** <https://columbans.co.uk/climate-change-competition-2019-and-the-winners-are>  
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36768>

# RELIGIOUS LEADERS FROM USA AND SOUTH AFRICA ISSUE PILGRIMAGE STATEMENT ON ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

## **I. Who we are and why we came:**

a. We came to Israel and Palestine, as disciples of the Risen Christ who said “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.*” (Luke 4:18-19)

b. We came on a religious pilgrimage as a joint delegation of leaders from historic black denominations of the National Council of Churches (NCC) in the United States of America, and heads of South African church denominations of the South African Council of Churches (SACC)

c. We came as representatives of African American communities; as descendants of those who survived slavery, Jim Crow and who work now to dismantle the new Jim Crow of mass incarceration and militarization of police in our communities; and we came as representatives of the South African people who lived through the indignity of over 300 years of dehumanising dispossession, colonialism, segregation and apartheid.

d. We came to visit Israel and the Palestinian Territories in the hope of meeting Israeli and Palestinian citizens. We came seeking to better understand the realities on the ground, particularly related to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (East Jerusalem, West Bank, and the Gaza Strip)

e. We came as people with a shared history of racial segregation, victims of injustice, people who have been dehumanised and marginalised. We came as people who stand against racism, against anti-Semitism, against Islamophobia.

f. We came as people standing on the side of justice and equality for all.

## **II. What we have seen and heard:**

a. We visited Yad Vashem the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, and we remembered and learned even more about the extent of the horrific industrialisation and technological design that Hitler led in an effort to exterminate the Jewish people.

b. We heard the Jewish perspective that proposes a continuum from the biblical lands of Israel taken from the Canaanites, and the present-day political State of Israel.

c. We shared a Bible study with a Jewish Rabbi and came to more deeply appreciate the hundreds of years of rabbinical scholarship that provide fresh insights for us into the scriptures and their bearing on the current issues in the Israeli religious communities.

d. We visited Palestinian communities and homes where people are not allowed to have freedom of movement or self-determination.

e. We visited a refugee camp of displaced persons who still hold the keys to their homes that were confiscated over 70 years ago. We met and heard stories of men, women and children who have themselves or whose family members have been victims of state-sanctioned violence in the form of detention, interrogation, tear-gassed, beatings, forced confessions and death.

f. We met with families who are fighting to keep their homes from being taken for Jewish settlements and developments.

g. We heard the stories of how Palestinians within the occupied territory of the Gaza Strip must contend with a perpetual blockade, the excessive use of force by Israel to subjugate the people in collective punishment of whole population and the debilitating confinement that renders Gaza as one big densely populated prison.

h. We heard of the acute shortage of fuel and electricity, seriously affecting daily life and the provision of especially health services in Gaza; and the heavily polluted and undrinkable water, aggravating child mortality rates.

i. We heard of the impact of fateful cuts by the Trump Administration, on humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Authority, and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) that supports Palestinian refugees.

j. We saw the patterns that seem to have been borrowed and perfected from other previous oppressive regimes:

i. The ever-present physical walls that wall in Palestinians in a political wall reminiscent of the Berlin Wall.

ii. Roads built through occupied Palestinian villages, on which Palestinians are not permitted to drive; and homes and families divided by walls and barriers.

iii. The heavy militarization of the West Bank, reminiscent of the military occupation of Namibia by apartheid South Africa.

iv. The laws of segregation that allow one thing for the Jewish people and another for the Palestinians; we saw evidence of forced removals; homes abandoned, olive trees uprooted or confiscated and taken over, shops and businesses bolted with doors welded to close out any commercial activities.

k. We are overawed by the resolve in the hopeless of hope, of the ordinary Palestinians who live a grinding and dehumanising existence.



l. We heard and appreciated how the leaders of the Palestinian Authority had made a conscious decision to forgo armed solutions to the conflict and pray that this will be responded to in kind.

m. We felt the thick density of Israeli fear that begets hatred and the support for draconian security measures; and the Palestinian fear that gives rise to a paradoxical combination of despair and hopeful resolve in a grinding and dehumanising existence.

n. We realise that there is little or no space for the Palestinian story to be heard by the ordinary Israelis; and for the Israeli story to be heard by ordinary Palestinians.

o. We met with church leaders and heard the cry of the Christian churches for our ecumenical presence with them – “Do not forget us!” “Pray with and for us!”

p. We saw and heard both Jewish and Palestinian champions of a just peace that makes for positive loving and a secure future for both peoples.

q. We saw international observers who are the assurance that peace for the people of Palestine and Israel is a global concern.

a. As Christian pastors and leaders of denominations and the ecumenical movement we are humbled by the recognition that the shrinking community of indigenous Christian church communities of Palestine and Israel are the continuous presence of the church whose mission evangelised the rest of us in the world, and without whom we wouldn't have the salvation we have in Jesus Christ who was born at Bethlehem and was crucified and resurrected at Jerusalem.

b. Jerusalem is at the heart of these matters made even more critical by the prospect of it becoming Israel's official capital; and rather than a city of the blessing of all peoples.

c. Yet, even so, we depart this place of our pilgrimage and of deep religious significance, with heavy hearts, and with a forlorn sense that unless something is done by the people of faith for the peace of Jerusalem, the conflict will be the painful heritage of many future generations.

### **III. Therefore, as we depart, here we stand:**

#### **1. In the face of these observations:**

a. We are dismayed at the conditions in which Palestinian communities live, and our hearts cry out to God over the prospect that this political standoff of which both Palestinians and Israelis have become prisoners may last long into the future.

b. We are shocked at what appears to be an unstoppable gobbling up of Palestinian lands to almost render the proposed two-state solution unworkable.

c. We support a two-state solution in which a safe and secure State of Israel will reside next to a safe, secure, viable, and contiguous State of Palestine.

d. We are cut up by the misery in which poor families in Palestine have to survive; especially those holed up in refugee camps, with only the original key and their ownership papers to clutch on to. We call for the return of refugees and exiles.

e. We are saddened by the increasing hardening of the hearts of the Israeli powers that be, to the prospect of a just peace with security and dignity for all.

f. We are disheartened by the patent divisions among the Palestinian political leaders that make it almost impossible for them to come to a common position and vision of the way to justice, peace and security for all.

g. We hope for elections soon in the Palestinian Territories and that these will be peaceful and without disputes, in order to enhance the unity of the Palestinian people and their positions on a peaceful and prosperous future for all.

h. We commit to doing all we can as faith leaders to promote a fair understanding of the painful reality of the situation in this place.

i. We commit to reach out to the Jewish and Moslem communities we can reach, to discuss these challenges and seek the path of healing that is our calling in the Lord.

j. We pray for a dispensation that will transform the fear that breeds a wall disposition into the openness that multiplies opportunities for justice for all.

k. We call for a greater presence of international observers as a ministry of presence.

l. We appeal for tour groups to the Holy Land to make a conscious point of touring both Israel and Palestine.

m. We appeal for partnerships of congregations around the world with the congregations of Palestine and Israel, to promote linkages and intensify the ministry of presence.

n. We pray that the impending Israeli elections will result in a government devoted to pursuing peace negotiations and a two-state solution that will provide for a viable, contiguous Palestinian State and a secure Israel.

o. We pray for the soonest arrival of the day when Jerusalem will be the capital of both a Palestinian and an Israeli State at peace with one another, for a blessing for all Abrahamic faiths.

p. We commit to continuing on this journey together, to work alongside the oppressed Palestinian people, to advocating in our own countries among our governments for actions and policies that will help lead to a resolution of the conflict.

q. We pray for an end of weapons sales and proliferation to all sides in the conflict and, indeed, to the entire region.

r. We recognize the Kairos nature of this moment – where something has to be done to resolve the conflict, failing which, all will stand judged! The different narratives notwithstanding, the justice, equality and human rights issues cry out for attention.

**2. In Conclusion:** Based on our own histories and struggles as South Africans and African Americans, we are keenly aware of the need to preserve the option of utilising economic pressure as a means of bringing recalcitrant dominant forces to the negotiating table. As disciples of the One who died that we all may have life, "and have it abundantly"; we seek to stand in the gap between justice and injustice. We seek to stand in response to the One whose character is to hear the cry of the oppressed.

However, we recognise that many of us have been uninformed, and others of us been quite aware of the grim situation in this land, and we have been silent and turned a blind eye. We admit that silence in the face of injustice is complicity. Indeed, there were many Christians that were silent and closed their ears against the sound of the deadly apartheid jackboot in the lives of South African blacks. There were whole communities of Christians who not only condoned the untold dehumanisation of people through slavery, but who thrived on that evil, and their slavery-sourced head-start has become the silent normal of today's social and economic landscape of the world. Communities and neighbourhoods in Europe were silent and complicit to the horror of the Holocaust.

We shall not and cannot be silent, for as the Lord says through Isaiah: *"He saw that there was no one, and was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm brought him victory, and his righteousness upheld him."* Isaiah 59:16 (NRSV)

We raise our collective hand to be the extension of that arm, through which God's salvation and righteousness shall be realised even in this troubled land, and "proclaim the year of the Lord's favour!"

**Statement plus list of participants:** <http://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/group-pilgrimage-statement-on-israel-and-palestine/>

## CYCLONE APPEAL: FAITH LEADERS URGE GENEROUS RESPONSE

**Disasters Emergency Committee** 24 March 2019

UK faith leaders - including Bishop Declan Lang (Chair of the International Affairs Department of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales), Dr Rowan Williams, (former Archbishop of Canterbury), and Abdul Qayyum (Chief Imam of the East London Mosque, which serves Britain's largest Muslim community) - have urged Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths and none to support the Disasters Emergency Committee's Cyclone Idai Appeal to help those affected in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

The cyclone has left a trail of destruction, killing hundreds of people and affecting an estimated 2.6 million people across the three southern African countries. Houses, bridges and roads have been ripped apart and much agricultural land is completely submerged. More than 750 people are confirmed dead and 400,000 have lost their homes.

The British public donated £8 million to the appeal in its first day, the first £2 million of which was match-funded by the UK government. Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales have made personal donations. The faith-based charities CAFOD, Christian Aid, Islamic Relief, Tearfund and World Vision UK, which are among the 14 leading UK aid agency members of the DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee), are also calling on local churches, mosques and faith communities to support the appeal which launched on 21 March.

Dr Rowan Williams, Chair of Christian Aid, said: "At a time of increasing disasters across the globe, it has never been more important for humanity to come together to support the most vulnerable. There is no better way of countering the rising climate of hatred and intolerance than a gesture of kindness to a stranger in need on the other side of the world."

Bishop Declan Lang said: "Just as Pope Francis calls for prayer and action for the families whose lives have been devastated, I ask Catholics across England and Wales to support the DEC appeal and keep the people affected by this tragedy in their prayers."

**Visit** [www.dec.org.uk](http://www.dec.org.uk)

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36777>

## BRUCE KENT URGES BISHOPS TO CONDEMN TRIDENT REPLACEMENT PLANS

13 March 2019: Bruce Kent, vice-president of Pax Christi and CND, has called on the Catholic bishops of England and Wales to condemn publicly the Trident replacement plans. In an interview for *The Tablet* with Ruth Gledhill and Liz Dodd, filmed at the 27th Ash Wednesday Witness last week at the Ministry of Defence, for the start of Lent, Mr Kent said: "It's a time of penance, and prayer. And here is the most awful thing in the world, weapons that can destroy whole cities and thousands of people."

**Read on here:** [www.thetablet.co.uk/news/11480/bruce-kent-calls-on-catholic-bishops-to-condemn-trident-replacement](http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/11480/bruce-kent-calls-on-catholic-bishops-to-condemn-trident-replacement)

## YEMEN: CALL TO END ARMS SALES

**Campaign Against Arms Trade** 26 March 2019 (Updated 27 March 2019)

Today - 26 March - marks four years since the start of the Saudi-led bombardment of Yemen. In that time, over 60,000 people have been killed by war. Many more have died as a result of the humanitarian crisis, described by the UN as the worst in the world.

The Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, has defended UK arms sales to the Saudi regime.

Since the bombing of Yemen began in March 2015, the UK has licensed £4.7 billion worth of arms to the Saudi regime, including: £2.7 billion worth of ML10 licences (Aircraft, helicopters, drones)  
£1.9 billion worth of ML4 licences (Grenades, bombs, missiles, countermeasures)

A recent report from Mwatana for Human Rights, a Yemeni based human rights group, has linked UK-made bombs to attacks on civilian infrastructure.

Andrew Smith of Campaign Against Arms Trade says: "The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is the worst in the world. Tens of thousands of people have been killed. No matter how bad the situation has become, Jeremy Hunt and his colleagues have put arms company profits ahead of the rights and lives of Yemeni people. This terrible war would not be possible without the political and military support of arms dealing governments like the UK. As the war enters its fifth year it has only become more urgent that they do the right thing, and finally end the arms sales."

The legality of UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen will be reviewed by the Court of Appeal in London from 9-11 April. This follows a case brought by Campaign Against Arms Trade.

## CAMPAIGNERS TO PROTEST AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY NUCLEAR WEAPONS THANKSGIVING SERVICE

**Source: CND/CCND/ICN** 27 March 2019

Peace campaigners have expressed their shock at the news that Westminster Abbey is planning to host a service to mark 50 years of the UK's nuclear weapons system. The official invitation describes the event as a 'National Service of Thanksgiving to mark 50 years of the Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD)'. There is at least one Trident submarine at sea at any one time, with each carrying sufficient nuclear warheads to bring about catastrophic damage to many cities and impact the climate in a way which would affect the entire world. A planned revamp of the arsenal is going to cost £205 billion.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Christian CND, Pax Christi and other groups say they will hold protests at Westminster Abbey if the service goes ahead. Kate Hudson, CND general secretary, said: "It's morally repugnant that a service of thanksgiving for Britain's nuclear weapons system is due to be held at Westminster Abbey. This sends out a terrible message to the world about our country. It says that here in Britain we celebrate weapons - in a place of worship - that can kill millions of people. If the Defence Secretary doesn't cancel this service, we call on the Church authorities to step in to stop it." She pledged: "CND will hold protests at Westminster Abbey on the day of the service if this celebration of nuclear weapons goes ahead."

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson told Parliament on Monday 25 March: "In this, the 50th year of the continuous at sea nuclear deterrent, the MOD is proud to continue to protect the security and stability not only of our nation, but of our allies. I will be attending the commemoration service at Westminster Abbey on 3 May, and I hope that many colleagues from both sides of the House will also be able to commemorate this important milestone."

Christian CND said in a statement: "We believe nuclear weapons are contrary to the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. We regret this anniversary and wish that it had not been reached. The decision to host this service in Westminster Abbey is, we believe, contrary to the motion passed by the Church of England General Synod in July 2018. That motion says that 'nuclear weapons, through their indiscriminate and destructive potential, present a distinct category of weaponry that requires Christians to work tirelessly for their elimination across the world.'

Christian CND urges supporters to pray "not only that those involved in the planning of the service would have a change of heart, but also that the UK would disarm its nuclear weapons in the near future. Pray also that the Church of England Synod motion would unite Anglicans in seeking this end."

Christian CND is coordinating the following statement which has already been signed by Anglican clergy opposed to the service.

**See:** <http://christiancnd.org.uk/clergy-statement-on-westminster-abbey-service/> who is opposed to the service.

Successive Popes have spoken out against nuclear weapons for many years. On 26 September 2018, the Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, made the following statement at a high-level meeting at the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly to mark the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons: "The world is not safer with nuclear weapons; it is more dangerous. A policy that relies on the possession of nuclear weapons, is contradictory to the spirit and purpose of the United Nations because nuclear weapons cannot create for us a stable and secure world, and because peace and international stability cannot be founded on mutually assured destruction or on the threat of total annihilation."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36798>

## AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED NEWS

### Will you sponsor Fr Richard?

Fr Richard Howard from the Diocese of Salford is undertaking an Olympic distance triathlon to support Christians in Egypt through Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). He'll be swimming 1.5 Km, cycling 40km and running 10 km in Southport on 19 May. You can sponsor him online at: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/frrichardstriathlon> or by card or cheque through the NW Office of ACN 01524 388739; [nw.office@acnuk.org](mailto:nw.office@acnuk.org).

If you would like a poster, some flyers or a sponsor sheet for your parish, please contact Ruth at ACN NW. Thank you and please keep Fr Richard in your prayers!

### ACN Retreat Days for the Suffering Church

This year Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) will be offering four day-long retreats in the NW. These days will include Holy Mass, information sessions about the issues faced by Christians in other parts of the world, private and guided prayer, a chance to send messages to struggling Christians elsewhere in the world and more.

The days run from 10am until 4pm. Participants are asked to bring a packed lunch, but drinks and biscuits will be provided. The cost is £15 per person. Spaces are limited, so please book in advance: ACN NW: 01524 388739 [nw.office@acnuk.org](mailto:nw.office@acnuk.org).

### Dates and Venues

Salford Cathedral Saturday 25 May  
Sandymount House of Prayer, Liverpool Saturday 8 June  
Our Lady & St Michael's, Workington Saturday 22 June  
Lancaster Cathedral Saturday 5 October

We would love to see you there; bring a friend! Please pray for suffering and persecuted Christian communities in our world today.

Dr Caroline Hull

NW Manager Aid to the Church in Need TEL +44 (0)1524 62023 | MOB 07815 538425 [caroline.hull@acnuk.org](mailto:caroline.hull@acnuk.org) | [www.acnuk.org](http://www.acnuk.org)

## GIVING UP MY CLOTHES FOR LENT

**Fr Rob Esdaile** - My latest scribbblings in the *Universe* ...

I was attracted by an e-mail I got some weeks ago inviting me to take up the 'Six Items Challenge'. It came from the campaign group, 'Labour Behind the Label', which works to protect workers' rights in the global garments industry. They invited me to limit my wardrobe to just six items of outer clothing for six weeks, beginning on Ash Wednesday. How about that for a Lenten exercise?

It caused me a gentle smile. Would anyone notice a statute of limitations applied to my clerical wardrobe?! However, I have duly limited my attire for the duration. Two jumpers (charcoal and brown), navy chinos, grey trousers and two shirts (grey and light blue) comprise my 'Spring Collection'. One of the shirts gets left to soak each night before an early morning rinse.

It stands to make some useful sponsorship (see [everydayhero.co.uk/event/six-items-challenge-2019](http://everydayhero.co.uk/event/six-items-challenge-2019)) for a good cause. Labour Behind The Label was, for instance, instrumental in getting compensation for workers and adoption of the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety after the 2013 Rana Plaza disaster, when a factory complex collapsed, killing 1,136 garment workers. Perhaps more importantly, I hope it will be a talking-point in the parish and beyond (even if the conversation is along the lines of: "Father Rob has lost the plot again!"). It does at least raise the question: What's the point of putting oneself to that inconvenience? It's not exactly world-shaking, is it, for me to drop out of the 'fast fashion' sector that I had never entered? (Like many men, I wear clothes until told that they are worn out ... but unlike many men, there's no Significant Other to pass judgement on my outfits.)

Above all, I'm experiencing it as an exercise in raising awareness – both that of others and, above all, my own. I choose to be conscious of the hands that stitched my clothes, perhaps for only a few pence, in poor conditions, with neither union representation nor even the right to toilet breaks. I already try to shop ethically, but this 'fast' is changing me. I no longer take for granted the not-very-natty weeds that I wear day in and day out. And I hope that that awareness might be contagious.

Thank you to whichever sister or brother (probably a sister) cut the cloth, sewed the seams, stitched the buttons, added the label, packed the garment. I am grateful – and I affirm your right to a decent wage, decent conditions and a decent life for your kids.

**To find out more about Labour Behind The Label see:** [www.labourbehindthelabel.org](http://www.labourbehindthelabel.org)

## CAFOD QUIZ NIGHTS IN ELLESMERE PORT

**Tony Walsh reports:** Our final quiz of the present series went off with a bang and 60 people turned up for a very enjoyable evening. What made it more pleasing was the fact that we raised £344 for Cafod's new *Hands On* campaign in Magdalena Medio region in Colombia. That took our total for the series to £20015 and this is the most we have raised since we started the quizzes 20 years ago. It was greatly helped by a £500 cheque from the Catenians donated by one of our regular quiz attendees who is the local president.

## MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL TO MARK 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF PETERLOO MASSACRE

Mancunians will mark the 200th anniversary of one of the darkest days in British political history when artists from more than 20 countries gather for this year's Manchester International Festival. The city will host the world premier of a two-part commission to honour the bicentenary of Peterloo – the 1819 massacre that saw 18 people killed when government troops charged into a crowd of pro-democracy protesters.

*The Anvil: An Elogy for Peterloo* will see a new work by composer Emily Howard and poet Michael Symmons Roberts, performed by 40 musicians the BBC Philharmonic, the BBC Singers and three Hallé choirs. Emily Howard said it has been "such a privilege" to create a work of art to remember Peterloo. "Many people in Manchester know about Peterloo, but most people here and beyond don't know what happened. This was such a landmark in history and to create a work of art that can raise awareness of it is wonderful."

ANU, one of Europe's most daring theatre companies, will also take to the streets for a day-long series of immersive performances inspired by the stories of those who died in the massacre at St Peter's Field.

Other works at the festival include *Tree*, which will take audiences on a thrilling journey in search of the soul and spirit of contemporary South Africa. Created by Idris Elba, whose album *Mi Mandela* provides the soundtrack, and Kwame Kwei-Armah, the new Artistic Director of London's Young Vic, this major world-premiere production takes place in the round within Upper Campfield Market Hall, one of Manchester's most atmospheric spaces.

The full line-up for the 18-day biennial festival includes the filmmaker David Lynch, with his largest UK exhibition of visual art to date, and Maxine Peake. Artists previously announced include Yoko Ono, who will open the festival with a message of peace to the world, Idris Elba and Kwame Kwei-Armah, and Skepta. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the bed protests Ono and John Lennon made in the name of peace.

<https://inews.co.uk/culture/manchester-international-festival-peterloo-yoko-ono-idris-elba-david-lynch-arts-culture/amp/>

The **Manchester International Festival** runs from Thursday 4 July to Sunday 21 July – more info: <https://mif.co.uk>

## POWERFUL AND PERSONAL PETERLOO NOVEL TO COINCIDE WITH THE 200 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Legend Press are delighted to announce the acquisition of World rights for *The Song of Peterloo* by Carolyn O'Brien.

The novel will be published on 1st August 2019, to coincide with the 200 year anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre on 16th August 2019.

Manchester 1819: Prices are high and wages are low, but as the poor become poorer, the rich are alarmed by their calls for reform. Mill-worker Nancy Kay struggles to support her ailing mother and sensitive son. Desperate to provide for them, she is inspired to join the growing agitation. But, as she risks everything to attend a great assembly on St Peter's Field, Nancy is unaware the day will go down in history, not as a triumph but as tragedy; the Peterloo massacre.

This is one woman's story of belief in change, pieced together by her family and friends and the two men who share her momentous summer. A story of hope, and sacrifice, and above all, courage.

Lauren Parsons, Commissioning Editor of Legend Press comments: 'We are thrilled to acquire this intensely emotive and powerful novel by Carolyn O'Brien. The novel shines a light on this now infamous massacre, which is now alarmingly politically relevant today.'

Carolyn O'Brien was born in South Manchester, and lives in the nearby market town of Altrincham with her husband and two children. Carolyn works part-time as a consultant lawyer, as well as writing. Follow Carolyn on Twitter [@CarolynManc](https://twitter.com/CarolynManc)

## MAKING CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING LESS SECRET

Independent Catholic News recently highlighted a book available in Kindle edition. *Seeking Justice in the World* is designed to deal head-on with one of the doors which have kept CST in the cupboard for so long. A clue is in its subtitle *Summaries of Papal Justice Encyclicals*. The summaries are short, their language is chalk to papal cheese (simpler!), they use bullet point lists, and they have explanations and background information from the author.

The author has good credentials. He is James Patrick Hynes and he has served on the St. Vincent de Paul Society's Social Justice Committee and the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales Social Welfare Committee and its World of Work Committee. He is a published author on other subjects and had career in teaching. He declares an interest in getting his message across by making this book copyright free for teaching and discussions.

In his introduction he pulls no punches. The early Church Fathers were as radical on the issue of private property as were, many centuries later, the Church's bêtes noires, the Marxists. The Church was lukewarm in its espousal of their radical message. So was it later when modern Popes placed the Gospel message in contemporary contexts in encyclicals from *Rerum Novarum* to *Laudato Si'*. He notes that Catholic Social Teaching is not well understood nor promoted by the clergy; small wonder it has been a "best kept secret."

There is more from the ICN at <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36771> a page which contains a link to Amazon UK for purchase at £3.76 for the Kindle edition. The book is also available in softback, but stocks seem very low.

**Review by S.Keith Taylor.**

## DIARY DATES

### APRIL

**5 Showing of film 'War School'** at Stockport Quaker Meeting House Cooper St, SK1 3DW at 6pm with refreshment break at 7.20 pm. 7.30 pm: speakers and discussion with Veterans for Peace, Child Soldiers, Peace Pathways, etc. The public and ever younger children are being groomed to collude in the increasing militarisation of UK society. Interweaving the powerful and moving testimonies of veterans of Britain's unbroken century of wars, *War School* challenges the myth of Britain's benign role in world affairs and asks if perpetual war is really what we want for future generations?

See <https://www.war.school/> and <https://www.facebook.com/warschool.film/> Organised by Stockport for Peace

**6 Pax Christi Liverpool** will be showing the film '*Of Gods and Men*' and leading a discussion /reflection in the light of the work of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, a project of Pax Christi. Linked to the journey of Holy Week and Easter. Cenacle Retreat House Tithe Barn Grove, Liverpool L15 6TW. 10am -4pm. Contact: Jan Harper [Jan Harper1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Jan.Harper1@yahoo.co.uk) 07746919915

**8 Christian Aid Lent Lunch** 12 noon – 1.30pm Community Hall, St Mary's, Handbridge, Chester CH1 2BN. The final lunch in the Lent 2019 series arranged by City Centre Churches Together. Please join us for a simple meal. £5 donation to Christian Aid: "Working to end poverty and injustice worldwide". 01244 375606

**9 Quiet Day** for everyone 10am-4 pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle, Tithebarn Grove, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool, L15 6TW. Input and time for individual quiet prayer and reflection. Cost £10. Tea & coffee provided. Bring your own lunch. For more information or to book: Tel 0151 722 2271 email: [winniecenacle@mail.com](mailto:winniecenacle@mail.com)

**12 Charity Concert** 7.30pm, St Columba's Hall, Newhall Road, Chester CH2 1SA Concert featuring two choirs, Cheshire Chord Company (female) and Chester Male Voice Choir raising money for Chifundo, Chester Cathedral Mission Group, Chester Women's Aid and Christian Aid North West. Tickets: £12.50 Adults £5 for under 18s. Phone 01244 371069

**April 13 to May 9: Global Days of Action on Military Spending 2019** <http://demilitarize.org/gdams-2019-april-13-may-9/> Peace and Development organisations estimate that with a 10% reduction per year and country of resources invested in the arms and defence sectors, the main goals set by the United Nations under the Agenda 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals could be achieved.

**27 Stop Arming Saudi Silent Vigil** 12.30 -1.30 at The Cross, Chester. All are welcome to join - please wear black if possible. Organised by Chester CND. Further information [chestercnd@gmail.com](mailto:chestercnd@gmail.com)

**27 Action Stop New Nuclear Preston** [CNDuk.org/events](http://CNDuk.org/events)

### MAY

**5 Conscientious Objectors' Day** [paxchristi.org.uk](http://paxchristi.org.uk)

**11 NJPN AGM & Open Networking Day** London 10.30am – 4pm [justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://justice-and-peace.org.uk)

**14 Quiet Day** 10am-4 pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle –see 9 April

**14 CWDF Forum** 6.45pm – 9.00pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street, Chester, CH1 2BN Speaker Shantele Janes on the work of CHAWREC – the Chester, Halton and Warrington Racial Equality Council. Followed by the CWDF AGM. Further information 01244 350323.

**18 and 19 Launch of CAFOD's new climate campaign, *Our Common Home***, at weekend Masses at Our Lady & St Edward's Catholic Church in Preston. Come and meet members of our Campaigns Team from Romero House in London and see how you could run the campaign in your parish. Details Patrick Gardner [pgardner@cafod.org.uk](mailto:pgardner@cafod.org.uk) 01772 733 310

**25 Stop Arming Saudi Silent Vigil** 12.30 -1.30 at The Cross, Chester. All are welcome to join - please wear black if possible. Organised by Chester CND. Further information [chestercnd@gmail.com](mailto:chestercnd@gmail.com)

**26 Quiet Day** 10am-4 pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle –see 9 April

### JUNE

**8 and 15 London/Manchester – please save the dates!** For the first time in years, we are holding two national gatherings for CAFOD volunteers in June, and we'd love you to attend one of them. It will be a chance to meet and hear from our new director, Christine Allen, as well as to explore our mission as we look to the future. More details soon.

**11 Quiet Day** 10am-4 pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle –see 9 April

**22 Quiet Day** 10am-4 pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle –see 9 April

**26 Climate Change Lobby.** We'll be gathering at Westminster to connect the poor to the powerful by sharing our concerns on climate change with leaders who can make a difference. Politicians will only increase their ambition if they see that we care. They will act if their constituents tell them that they want change. Further info:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate/Climate-lobby>

### JULY

**4-21 Manchester International Festival** <https://mif.co.uk>

**26-28 National Justice & Peace Conference 'Forgotten People, Forgotten Places: Being Church At The Margins'** - see page 15 below for details

## NJPN ANNUAL CONFERENCE: FORGOTTEN PEOPLE, FORGOTTEN PLACES

**National Justice and Peace Network** 26 March 2019

Pope Francis calls us to be 'a Church which is poor and for the poor'. For NJPN this means to be with those on the margins as equal partners, enabling them to find their own solutions to the issues they face.

Conference 2019 will work with Church Action on Poverty who are undertaking a three-year project to challenge the Churches about where they put their resources. It will hear from 'communities of praxis' who are already involved on the margins, and engage in social analysis and theological reflection from their perspective.

Join us in 2019 to explore mission, theological reflection and social action with people who have been pushed to the margins of society by poverty.

We will explore building Churches that:  
are interested in building the kingdom, not just growing the Church;  
listen to voices from the margins  
expect to be challenged and changed by our neighbours,  
put an emphasis on sharing food and hospitality;  
are hungry and thirsty for justice.

### **Speakers:**

**Revd Deirdre Brower Latz:** has worked as a pastor in urban/marginalised communities in Bristol and Manchester and lectures at the Nazarene Theological College in Manchester.

**Professor Anthony Reddie:** the leading scholar in the practice of Black Theology in grassroots communities of faithful practice.

We will also hear inspiring and challenging stories from Churches and groups that are living out the vision of a 'church of the poor' - being Church on the margins of our society.

### **Conference Chair:**

John Battle, former Labour MP, Chair of Leeds Justice & Peace Commission

### **Workshops:**

There will be workshops from a range of organisations and speakers, all looking creatively at how our churches can be more open to people on the margins.

### **Children and young people:**

Children and young people are a vital part of the NJPN conference. There will be a crèche for children under 5 and a programme of activities for 5-11-year-olds. 12-18-year-olds will explore the conference theme in an active and thought-provoking weekend. NJPN is committed to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable people. People of all ages and backgrounds are welcome and encouraged to attend conference. Our rates for children and people on low incomes are subsidised. We count on the generous donations of those who can afford a little extra to make that possible.

### **Booking Form:**

[www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Forgotten-People-Forgotten-Places-booking-form.pdf](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Forgotten-People-Forgotten-Places-booking-form.pdf)

National Justice & Peace Network, **Tel:** 020 7901 4864 **Email:** [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)  
[www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk) <https://justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference>

- Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News [www.indcatholicnews.com](http://www.indcatholicnews.com) an invaluable free resources for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles.
- Sign up for weekly e-bulletins from NJPN (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues) and resources at [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk) or contact [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk) 020 7901 4864

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