

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin September 2019

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

AMAZONIAN FIRES

Hugh Dowson writes (25/08/2019): Thank you, Bishop Arnold, for your CBCEW public statement on Friday (also published on social media – Twitter and Facebook) echoing "the deep concern of the Latin American Bishops about the seriousness of this tragedy, which is not only of local impact but of planetary proportions" <http://www.cbcew.org.uk/statement-from-bishop-john-arnold-regarding-the-current-amazonian-fires/>

The petition to the Westminster Parliament to "demand the EU & UN sanction Brazil to halt increased deforestation of the Amazon" has now achieved the 100,000 signatures needed to "be considered for debate in Parliament" <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/266638>

A colleague notes: "Sanctions are a first step but the rich countries need to put money into protecting the Amazon and work with Bolsonaro, objectionable though he may be, to take multinational responsibility for it. If we claim to all rely on the rainforest for our survival we have to act jointly to protect it. I wish the Synod for the Amazon had been scheduled to take place there and not in the Vatican."

Another adds: "Brazil is not the only area, there is forest being burned in Bolivia and nothing to do with Bolsonaro. This is due to farmers cashing in on the meat market. The biggest single thing we can do as ordinary people is eat less meat, especially cheaper meat that goes into burgers." <https://www.sciencealert.com/it-s-not-just-brazil-s-amazon-bolivia-s-vital-forests-are-on-fire-too>

Meanwhile the Brazilian army has been deployed to Rondonia and other Brazilian States: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-49456789>

From *The Observer* today: "The fires in the world's largest rainforest have triggered a global outcry and are dominating the G7 meeting in Biarritz in southern France." <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/aug/25/g7-cant-turn-blind-eye-to-amazon-ecocide-forest-fires-indigenous-tribes>

BISHOPS OF LATIN AMERICA: IF AMAZON SUFFERS, THE WORLD SUFFERS

23/08/2019: The Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM) have expressed their deep concern for destructive fires burning the world's forests. The "seriousness" of the fires currently raging in Alaska, Siberia, Greenland, the Canary Islands, and "in particular, the Amazon" is not only local, say the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is "of planetary proportions." The Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, has been burning for more than two weeks.

Pope Francis, who has made the fight for the rights of indigenous peoples a focal point of his pontificate, has called for an October Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian region. In a statement released on 22 August, the Bishops write that the "tremendous natural tragedy" destroying the Amazon has turned what was previously a hopeful upcoming Synod, into one of "deep sorrow". Referring to a Preparatory Document for the upcoming Synod, the Bishops write that the Amazon rainforest, so "rich" in biodiversity, is "of vital importance to the planet". This "deep crisis", reads the Synod Document, was "triggered by a prolonged human intervention, where a 'culture of waste' predominates".

In quoting Pope Francis, they ask that all those who occupy positions of responsibility be "custodians of creation, of God's design inscribed in nature, guardians of the other, of the environment" and to "not allow the signs of destruction and death accompany the path of this in our world". Because "if the Amazon suffers, the world suffers". <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/37741>

VIEWPOINT: THE AMAZON NEEDS US NOW

Mary Colwell 23/08/2019: The Amazon is burning. The images sear into our hearts as we watch millions of years of wondrous forest succumb to flames, fanned by greed and political ambition. Within the inferno countless millions of unique life forms are being destroyed - monkeys, birds, reptiles, insects and plant life are no more, and the flames surge ever onwards. This great forest, 55 million square kilometres, regulates the world's climate, produces one third of the fresh water entering the oceans and is a living, breathing temple to diversity and beauty. Many have already fought and died to protect the trees, the creatures of the rainforest and the peoples who live there.

The Amazon needs us now, starting today, to kneel and pray for its protection and then to stand up and protest at its destruction. The forest relies on us to demand that justice is done. Now is the time for the Catholic Church, which has an immense influence over the whole Amazonian basin, to extend a hand to politicians, local peoples and conservationists and together square up to the powers that are destroying our planet. It must be done with urgency because the actual survival of the Amazon is at stake. It depends more than ever on a formidable alliance between people with a passion to save the earth and a worldwide, powerful and compassionate religion.

"The sky is angry and is crying because we are destroying the planet," said Pope Francis when he visited the Amazon last year. We are all weeping with anger, fears and helplessness. Forces are acting today that see nothing but financial gain from this sparkling blue planet we are privileged to call home. Every single one of us has a moral duty to act and hold truth to power, to project the image of a destroyed rainforest to every corner of the earth and decry the forces that have brought us to this. Pope Francis called the Amazon rainforest, "the heart of the church." Within the smoking ruins of a once holy temple to God's grandeur, let our prayers rise up with the smoke and mingle with the ash. Hope is found in the deepest, darkest hours and we are living through that right now.

BBC Newsnight report - www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWLVVs_6_MY
Curlew Media - www.curlewmedia.com

NATIONAL JUSTICE & PEACE NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Ellen Teague 28/08/2019: "The great tragedy of our time is that xenophobia is mainstream and Christianity has to resist that", a leading black theologian told the annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN). Professor Anthony Reddie, a Birmingham-based scholar in the practice of Black Theology in grassroots communities, suggested, "We need to tell a new story about ourselves as British people, and not one focused on the imagined glories of the past." His talk to more than 200 participants, wearing a tee-shirt, *'Black History is British History'*, highlighted issues of identity, history and culture. It prompted discussion about how we live together in a manner which recognises the needs of those at the bottom and on the margins of British society, and how the Christian Churches help that to happen. Professor Reddie warned about the narrow factional nationalism of Brexit – his latest book is: *Theologising Brexit: A Liberationist and Postcolonial Critique* – and felt Churches have a role to play in transcending boundaries and borders that are being put in place. "The people who are likely to suffer most after 31 October will be the poor" he warned.

The conference theme was, *'Forgotten People, Forgotten Places: Being Church on the Margins'*, and former MP John Battle, Chair of Leeds Justice and Peace Commission, chaired the weekend in Derbyshire. He highlighted beacon churches that are inclusive with a lively panel discussion involving a church community at Hodge Hill in Birmingham and another at Sunderland Minster. Participants were delighted to hear of Hodge Hill's outreach to the local community as "street connectors", accompanying isolated and vulnerable people and holding open events outside the church and in green spaces, sharing food and friendship. Sunderland Minster has a mission of hospitality to welcome refugees and Revd Chris Howson, an Anglican priest who works closely with the sanctuary-seeking community in Sunderland and is also a university chaplain, urged us to "build kingdom communities" locally as well as support justice and peace internationally. His book, *'A Just Church: 21st century Liberation Theology in Action'* aims to help Christians evolve their own way of demonstrating the relevance of Church in today's contexts, such as widespread poverty, militarism and the climate crisis.

Speaker Revd Dr Deirdre Brower Latz, Principal at Nazarene Theological College in Manchester, also gave examples of "faithful, active churches" which reach out to people on the margins. A key feature is hospitality, but in addition she mentioned church projects offering woodworking, self-esteem classes with prostitutes, and English language initiatives with refugees. She herself has worked with her neighbours to improve the locality and people's well-being.

Pope Francis is a huge inspiration for positive action, having called for "a Church which is poor and for the poor", said John Battle. And it is a Church which tackles structural injustice as well as offering charity. He quoted St Oscar Romero at the end of the Conference: "We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest."

At the conference Mass, Fr Peter Scally SJ, of the Catholic Chaplaincy of Manchester University, lamented that, despite the leadership of Pope Francis, the mission of Justice and Peace is sidelined in the Church in Britain. The example he gave was of the Archdiocese of St Andrew in Scotland that "got rid of its J&P post", but, in England and Wales, the dioceses of Brentwood, Portsmouth, Shrewsbury and Wrexham are amongst those that have also dispensed with J&P fieldworker posts in recent years. His view that J&P voices are pushed to the margins in the Church received nods of agreement around the hall.

Beautiful liturgies throughout the weekend were led by Colette Joyce, parish catechist in Hounslow parish, Westminster Diocese. The opening and concluding hymn of the conference was *'Love Each Other'* by Graham Kendrick. Another favourite was *'The one who does justice will live in the Lord'* by Sheena Field. In the final liturgy participants were asked to move to the margins of the room, but gradually move towards the centre and eventually sit down again as various issues were listed. One was 'being in trouble with the Church for your J&P work'!

Workshops covered a wide range of issues, from 'Christianity, Poverty and Politics in an Age of Austerity' to 'Women's Voices on the Margins' to 'Becoming an inclusive Church: Disability'. CAFOD led a workshop on 'Re-imagine our Common Home and listen to vulnerable yet resilient communities'. One workshop was youth-led and focused on young people's hopes for the Church and their place in it. "Young people want to learn more about their faith and about the Bible but in a fun way" said one. "We want an active community, not just a place where you go for Sunday Mass" said another. The conference children's group used the story of the ten lepers as a way in to considering "forgotten" people in today's world. They organised a collection for Care4Calais, remembering refugees living in limbo in Northern France, and sang a song, *'Come be a kingdom maker'*. The youth group looked at people on the margins through the Beatitudes and discussed such topics as the difference between being a peacekeeper and a peacemaker.

The *'Just Fair'* hosted 23 organisations including York Ecumenical J&P, Medaille Trust, Missio, Pax Christi, SVP, Columban JPIC and Catholic Women's Ordination. Fairtrade, Palestinian and eco-friendly goods were on sale, plus information and opportunities for action ranging from challenging last week's illegal demolitions of Palestinian homes in south east Jerusalem to supporting Shared Interest to signing up to become a member of the NJPN. J&P groups, religious orders, and caring groups mingled over a glass of wine – fairly traded of course! In line with NJPN's eco-commitment, the conference was largely vegetarian, and the use of re-usable mugs was encouraged.

This 41st NJPN Conference was organised in collaboration with Church Action on Poverty (CAP), which is undertaking a three-year project to challenge the Churches about where they put their resources. Anne Peacey, chair of NJPN welcomed the ecumenical nature of the conference and thanked the out-going and in-coming NJPN administrators Ann Kelly and Geoff Thompson for its smooth running. She also welcomed the link with CAP.

<https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference-reports/conference-news-release-26-july-2019/>

Church Action on Poverty has a new set of resources *'Poverty and Justice'* for churches to explore the relationship between faith and action for justice. The resources are based on the pastoral cycle and take people through the process of experience, analysis, reflection, action and evaluation. Contact Sarah Purcell at Church Action on Poverty for more information. E-mail: SaraHD@church-poverty.org.uk Website: www.church-poverty.org.uk/poorchurch

CAP will be running a training day in the Autumn for people who want to run the course in their parish. Leeds Justice and Peace Commission has run successful pilots of the workshops with excellent feedback from church members.

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY IN THE UK

May Bulman Social Affairs Correspondent *The Independent* 7/09/2019

The number of children living in absolute poverty across the UK has increased by 200,000 a year – to a total of 3.7 million. New government data shows that while the rate of absolute child poverty had been falling since 2012, it is now rising again.

Campaigners said the main drivers of the increase were cuts to benefits and tax credits, which have hit working families with more than two children particularly hard. The figures show that among children in poverty there has now been a rise in those who live in working families – up from 69% to 72% in a year.

There has also been an increase in the risk of poverty for children in larger families, with the number of households with three or more children up from 33% in 2012 to 43%. Overall, across the whole population, 100,000 more people are living in absolute poverty, with the figure now standing at 12.5 million.

Research carried out for the Child Poverty Action Group to coincide with the publication of the figures found that the 4-year freeze on children's benefits alone would lead to average losses of £240 per year for families with children.

Alison Graham, chief executive of the charity, said: "Despite high employment, today's figures reveal that 70% of children living under the poverty line have at least one parent in work. That is not an economy that is working for everyone. The increase in child poverty in working families was widely anticipated and could have been avoided. But the government chose not to, missing another opportunity to do the right thing for children and families despite the fact that the freeze had already achieved its planned savings. At this critical point in the UK's history, we need to step back and ask what kind of country do we want for our children."

Campbell Robb, chief executive of the independent Joseph Rowntree Foundation, said the figures were "unacceptable" and branded poverty a "scar on our nation's conscience ... Families are looking to the government to immediately address problems of low pay, high rents and a weakened social security system. Child poverty can be solved if given the attention it needs."

A study by the Resolution Foundation last month found that child poverty risked hitting a record high by 2023-24 unless the government implements substantial changes to universal credit and other benefits.

The UN's special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights warned in November that policies and drastic cuts to social support were entrenching high levels of poverty, and that Brexit was exacerbating the problem.*

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/child-poverty-absolute-uk-housing-crisis-costs-austerity-conservatives-a8843381.html>

* See NW NJPN E Bulletin December 2018 pages 3-8 for details of the UN's special rapporteur's report:

<https://jpsnewsbury.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/nw-njpn-justice-and-peace-e-bulletin-december-2018.pdf>

END HUNGER UK WEEK OF ACTION 11-18 OCTOBER 2019

Annie Connolly, End Hunger UK Community Campaigner, Church Action on Poverty writes:

Calling all those on the frontline of food poverty! Join us during the End Hunger UK Week of Action 2019. We will be raising awareness of hunger in the UK, and telling the government that they must take action to ensure that everyone has enough money to afford good food, and that no one goes to bed hungry.

Church Action on Poverty is a lead partner in the End Hunger coalition, and we urge you to be part of the Week of Action if you can! We will be providing lots of support and resources for anyone who wants to get involved. You can take part by... arranging a meeting with your MP or organising an event locally any time during the Week of Action; coming to London for a Day of Action on Wednesday 16 October – or both!

On the Day of Action, people on the frontline of food poverty – those with lived experience, volunteers providing food aid, those involved in campaigning - will be coming together to share stories, learn new skills, watch (and maybe sing with!) the End Hunger UK Foodbank Choir, and go to the Houses of Parliament to meet MPs. You are the experts – let's make sure that your voices are heard.

Sign up here: <http://endhungeruk.org/weekofaction2019/>

If you have any questions, contact me at annie@church-poverty.org.uk

WE NEED KNITTERS AND CROCHETERS!

Calling all those skilled with knitting needles and crochet hooks – take action to fight food poverty! Over the End Hunger UK Week of Action 2019, people on the frontline of food poverty from all around the UK will be meeting their MPs, either in their local areas, or down in Parliament for the Day of Action on Wednesday 16th October. We will be raising awareness of End Hunger UK's goal – a government commitment to halving household food insecurity by 2025 – and asking MPs to take action on our behalf.

To make sure they remember us, we want to leave each MP with a little gift – a knitted (or crocheted) foodstuff! Not everyone has the skills to make their own unfortunately, so we need the yarn-talented among you to make as many carrots and Cornish pasties and anything else you can think of as possible and send them to us. We will send them on to campaigners who need them. Please could you leave a strand of wool so that we can tie on a label or attach it to a ribbon to make bunting.

You can find lots of free patterns online – details at this link: <http://endhungeruk.org/weekofaction2019/knitfood/>

Please send your woolly fruit and veg by Friday 27th September to Annie at:

End Hunger UK, c/o Church Action on Poverty, 28 Sandpiper Court, Water's Edge Business Park, Modwen Road, Salford M5 3EZ

Please email us to let us know if you are going to get busy with those needles, so we can get an idea of how many will be coming our way! It would be fantastic if we got lots extra so that we could make some bunting to take with us when we go to Westminster on the 16th of October.

WORLD WEEK FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL 15 - 22 September 2019

Theme: *Humanity and equality in God's creation.* A week of education, prayer and action for peace in Palestine & Israel, initiated by the World Council of Churches. During this week which includes the International Day of Prayer for Peace on 21 September, church organisations, congregations, and people of faith are encouraged to bear a common witness by participating in worship services, educational events, and acts of support in favour of peace and justice for Israelis and Palestinians.
<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/world-week-of-peace-in-palestine-and-israel>

The ongoing conflict and injustice in Palestine and Israel has created victims from all communities. This situation affects the future for everyone in the region, denies the equal human dignity of all people, and in all aspects of God's creation. Though we are all created equally in God's image, the military occupation and its discriminatory practices and impacts on entire Palestinian communities is an obstacle to the fullness of life for all in God's creation.

"Just as we affirm the right of the State of Israel to exist and Jewish people's right to self-determination, so do we assert the equal right of Palestinian people to the realisation of their rights to self-determination in a viable state on the territories occupied since 1967, and with Jerusalem as a shared city for two peoples and three faiths. Just as we categorically denounce anti-semitism as sin against God and humanity, so do we reject discrimination, marginalisation, collective punishment and violence against Palestinian people on the basis of ethnicity, race or religion also as sin against God and humanity."

— WCC Executive Committee public statement on Ecumenical Accompaniment for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel, May 2019.

It is the ecumenical movement's calling and appeal to seek peace in the land of Christ's birth – a peace that is founded on justice, rather than on violence, bloodshed and exclusion by one against the other, or the perpetual imposition of military occupation and control of an entire people. This theme should concern all Christians and people of good will in every part of the world, in a time of increasing racism, xenophobia, stigmatisation and exclusion driven by populist politics. Indeed, through this theme, the aim is to inspire and revive concern for the human dignity of all people equally, regardless of ethnic, religious or political differences, and the struggle for the realisation of the equal and inalienable human rights of all.

In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the unfulfilled search for sustainable peace based on the recognition of the inalienable human rights of all people in the region, this theme has a special immediacy.

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness/peace-building-cf/concept-note-for-2019-world-week-for-peace-in-palestine-and-israel-wwppi/>

See also: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine/world-week-for-peace-in-pi/>

WRITINGS ON THE WALL: Palestinians tell in their own words of life under Israeli Apartheid

Paperback edition by Thomas Suarez 30 June 2019 ISBN-13: 9781911072409 Skyscraper Publications

The voices of ordinary civilians experiencing the effects of war are often lost in the cacophony of claim and counterclaim by parties in a conflict. This book preserves the testimonies of ordinary Palestinians pasted up on the bare concrete of Israel's illegal Wall, which is designed to disrupt Palestinian lives and appropriate Palestinian land. They have been collected and translated by the Sumud Story House project of Bethlehem's Arab Educational Institute. Each oral history occupies a single page, yet each conveys the fear, the hopes, the resolve, the humility of Palestinians under a brutal military occupation, and their unwavering determination to realise a better future for their children.

NEW BOOK: *A STATE AT ANY COST – The Life of David Ben-Gurion*

By Tom Segev, trans. Haim Watzman Published by *Head of Zeus* 804pp

"David Ben-Gurion always knew that force would be necessary to make Israel a reality," says reviewer Anshel Pfeffer. In as early as 1919 Ben-Gurion, father of the Jewish nation, wrote: "Everyone sees the difficulty of relations between Jews and Arabs. But not everyone sees that there is no solution. There is an abyss and nothing can fill that abyss. We want Palestine to be ours as a nation. The Arabs want it to be theirs as a nation. I don't know what Arab would agree to Palestine belonging to the Jews."

Pfeffer writes, "some Zionist leaders hoped that an accord with local Arabs could be achieved. Ben-Gurion knew it was a pipe dream. From the moment the Second World War ended, he devoted all his attention to building what would become the mighty Israel Defence Force. *A State at Any Cost* is the story of a hard-headed pragmatic and ruthless politician, told without sentimentality or nostalgia. It serves as a key to understanding today's Israel, which is still very much Ben-Gurion's creation."

NEW EDUCATION PACK ON PEACEBUILDING IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Quakers in Britain are launching a new education pack to help young people learn about the impact of conflict and examine stories of peace-building in Palestine and Israel. Aimed for use with 14 to 18-year-olds, *Razor Wire & Olive Branches* draws on eyewitness accounts of human rights monitors, known as ecumenical accompaniers, to explore the conflict through the lives of those affected by it. With cross-curricular connections, the pack contains more than 80 activities and resources. It features Israeli and Palestinian voices, from the young refugee who says "dance is my resistance", to the Women in Black who inspired a global movement. Produced in partnership with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, UK & Ireland (EAPPI) it adopts EAPPI's policy of 'principled impartiality'. This means the resource is not about taking sides but rather focuses on the themes of human rights, international law and nonviolence.

Ellis Brooks is Peace Education Coordinator for Quakers in Britain, who also train and manage the human rights monitors for British and Irish churches and church agencies. The monitors' experience is distilled into this resource pack. Ellis Brooks said: "This resource is about peace and hope. The conflict in Palestine and Israel is not easy in any sense, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be explored in the classroom. Teaching controversial issues provides valuable opportunities for young people to gain knowledge and understanding of issues, critically evaluate their own attitudes, consider different viewpoints and resolve conflicts. *Razor Wire & Olive Branches* seeks to strengthen values of empathy and respect and help young people develop as active global citizens. Young people bring empathy, creativity and sense of fairness to the issue, and those are the ingredients of peace-building the world needs, whether in Jerusalem or London."

Get your copy from www.quaker.org.uk/teaching <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/37385>

NO FAITH IN WAR: Pax Christi Press Statement for the DSEI Protest Day

** Release dates 3 August, 22 August, and on the Day of Action 3 September **

In advance of a massive arms fair, diverse faith groups will gather at the ExCel Centre, London, on Tuesday 3 September to declare with a united voice that they have "No Faith in War". Between 10-13 September, the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) arms fair will take place at the Excel centre, East London. This is Europe's largest Arms Fair and people representing a huge range of faith communities will come together to strongly declare their objection to the weapons trade. Members of Pax Christi, the Catholic movement for peace, will be there in numbers.

Most world faiths share in common a deep sense of the value of peace in the world: a peace which is achieved not by the use of weapons or threats of violence but by dialogue, respect for universal human dignity and human rights, and just social structures. Pope Francis says that Christians must ask "why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society? Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply for money: money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood. In the face of this shameful and culpable silence, it is our duty to confront the problem and to stop the arms trade."

The arms trade represents business interests being given greater status than the lives of human beings. Our government has continued to support the sale of weapons for profit despite the certain knowledge that these weapons will be used for example by the Saudi Arabian government to kill Yemeni civilians. This structure of violence is challenged by people of faith who do not accept that violent means truly resolve conflicts.

Organising for the "No Faith in War" day began over a year ago and will be bigger than previous years. The creative, active plans build on the experience of previous years. Expect testimony from people whose communities have been destroyed by conflict fuelled by arms deals. Expect processions, rituals and symbols drawn from a variety of traditions. Pax Christi members are organising a procession using an adapted Stations of the Cross liturgy. There will be life and energy as participants model what it is to work together to make the world a better place.

A woman who attended her first No Faith in War day last time commented, 'I felt apprehensive. I wasn't sure what to expect. But everyone was so welcoming. The atmosphere of being with like-minded people who want peace was really wonderful and affirming.'

The UK government invites official delegations to attend DSEI. The list will not be published until closer to the time. In 2017, 56 official delegations were invited. These included Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Bahrain, Turkey, UAE and Colombia. Other countries will have been invited by the event organisers. Despite a recent ban in arms sales to Saudi Arabia, the country has been invited to DSEI 2019. Public polling taken at the time of DSEI 2017 found that 76% of the UK opposes arms exports to human rights abusing regimes. It also found that 63% oppose government promotion of arms to countries that are not democracies. More polling will be done ahead of DSEI 2019.

DSEI moves on to Japan in November. Faced with the arrival of arms dealers in the Asia-Pacific region, Caesar D'Mello of the Pax Christi Asia-Pacific Facilitation Committee said, 'Tensions and hostility in this region have kept on deepening, ...the vicious cycle that is the Arms Race, played out in the 'domains' of land, sea, air, space and cyberspace, keeps on fuelling the bellicosity between states. A world that is desperately hungry for peace and dignity will not achieve this by arms and warfare, by militarising a region, by asserting "might is right", but by consistent and persistent efforts, hand in hand with organisations such as the United Nations and other bodies, to seek peaceful ways to consider the roots of conflict to resolve it ... and through confidence building initiatives increase trust in one another...'

Notes: Available for interview: Matt Harbage, matthew.harbage@london.anglican.org 07746 444179
Theresa Alessandro, Director of Pax Christi coordinator@paxchristi.org.uk 07882788124
Website: <https://www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk/join-in/> Email: faith@stopthearmsfair.org.uk
Facebook page: [No Faith in War 2019](#) Twitter accounts: [@CAATuk](#) [@StopTheArmsFair](#)

NUCLEAR WEAPON BAN TREATY

08/07/2019: The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) voted to adopt the Luxembourg Declaration which calls on countries to sign the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, as well as urging them to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. <https://www.osce.org/parliamentary-assembly/425090>

A new resource from the Network of Christian Peace Organisations – timely as the US and Russia withdraw from the INF Treaty. All the more important that we work to get our Government to the table to support the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty. <http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FebFinal2019NCPOBanBriefing-1.pdf>

Background: The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) - also known as the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty - was agreed by the United Nations in July 2017 when 122 states voted in its favour. It is a landmark international agreement that would see nuclear weapons outlawed in the same way as chemical and biological weapons have been previously. There are two stages to states joining the Treaty. They sign formally in New York before completing their domestic processes for ratification, which vary from state to state. The Treaty will come into force once it has been ratified by 50 states, although it will only be binding on those which have completed the ratification process. The Treaty is the result of years of campaigning by organisations, highlighting the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In December 2017 the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work on the nuclear weapon ban. A number of Network of Christian Peace Organisations (NCPO) members are part of ICAN.

Who is on board and what more needs to be done?

At the time of writing there are 70 signatories to the Treaty, 20 of which have completed the ratification process. Many of those completing ratification are smaller states, but often with a history of opposing nuclear weapons, such as the Marshall Islands, with first-hand experience of the devastating impact of nuclear weapons. Other states which have completed ratification include Austria, New Zealand and Mexico. One of the first states to ratify the Treaty was the Holy See. This leadership from the Vatican followed supportive statements from Pope Francis during the negotiations in New York. Unfortunately none of the nuclear armed states have decided to engage with the TPNW at any stage. The UK Government did not attend the negotiations and has said that it has no intention of signing the Treaty.

What you can do

- Read the Treaty and be informed! Use this briefing and the web-links below to keep yourself up-to-date on the progress of TPNW
- Offer to write an article for your Church newspaper or local newsletter to let people know how deeply faith communities are involved in supporting the TPNW
- Use dates such as 6 March – Ash Wednesday, Hiroshima Day and Nagasaki Day in August, 20 September (anniversary of first signatories to the Treaty), 10 December (anniversary of ICAN receiving the Nobel Peace Prize) to publicise the need for the Treaty
- Arrange a meeting through your local church or Churches Together, inviting your MP along to discuss how she/he sees this issue. Is it on their Agenda at all? What is their understanding of the Treaty? What are their concerns about the Treaty? Would they be willing to write to the FCO/PM to encourage the UK government to sign?
- Explore how the Don't Bank on the Bomb Campaign can be used to encourage churches, pension funds, Religious Congregations and others to investigate whether or not their investments support the "testing, production, manufacture" of nuclear weapons. This could begin a process of dialogue leading to change and if needed, divestment. www.dontbankonthebomb.com
- Urge your local authority/council to support the TPNW. Manchester City Council, with the support of Mayors for Peace, has set a great example as part of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities project. More here: <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/>
- Sign the Christian CND Petition urging the UK Government to sign and ratify the Treaty <http://christiancnd.org.uk/petition/>

The Catholic Church and the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

Use this 2-page sheet plus information from the organisations listed to keep yourself and others up-to-date with the issue. <http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/3Catholic-Church-Nuclear-Weapons-Ban-VF-ed-1.pdf>

WELSH CAMPAIGNERS CALL PUBLIC BODIES TO DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

31/07/2019: An open letter from organisations representing tens of thousands of Welsh residents and campaigners has called on the public sector in Wales to stop investing in fossil fuel companies.

Organisations including Friends of the Earth Cymru, CAFOD, and Oxfam Cymru want pension funds to commit to ethical investment policies - and for Wales to be a globally responsible nation in taking action to tackle climate change.

The letter, signed by organisations including - Friends of the Earth Cymru, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, CAFOD, Oxfam Cymru, UNISON Cymru, and NUS UK - urges Local Authority Pension Funds, the new Wales Pension Partnership, the Assembly Member Pension Scheme and the Welsh Government pension fund to commit to ethical investment policies which do not include any fossil fuel firms. "It is the poorest people, both here in Wales and globally, that are least responsible and yet most affected by climate change," explains the open letter. "We must divest from fossil fuels now to help support more vulnerable countries where people are already experiencing the frontline impacts of climate change."

This call comes just weeks after the largest-ever environmental lobby of Parliament which saw over 300 MPs meet with 12,000 constituents, including over 1,500 CAFOD campaigners, who called for urgent action to tackle climate change.

Therese Warwick, CAFOD's representative in Wales, said: "There's a connection between global temperature records being broken nearly every year and news that coal is in freefall: it's the realisation that we can't continue to burn fossil fuels without irreversibly damaging the planet and condemning millions to poverty. The Church is leading the way in the fight for climate justice. Under Pope Francis's leadership on climate change, we have seen hundreds of thousands of Catholics sign petitions and take to the streets in protest. Church financial action has seen more than 3,500 churches divesting from fossil fuels and switching to renewable energy. Welsh public bodies must make the right decision now and stop investing in companies that are major contributors to the climate emergency - not just for the future of Wales, but the world."

Friends of the Earth Cymru spokesperson Bleddyn Lake said: "If you invest money in a business you are supporting them. The record temperatures across Europe over the last week are just the latest reminder that climate change is happening here and now. The public sector in Wales must stop funding the companies responsible for the climate crisis."

Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, said: "In the past month we have seen the pace of progress to tackling climate change gather speed here in Wales; from Welsh council's voting to divest from fossil fuels to local people taking direct action to highlight the serious threat to our health and planet as we experience some of the hottest days of the year so far across Europe. Decision-makers in Wales need to be taking immediate action and one strategic commitment they can make to contributing to a globally responsible Wales is by making the right financial decision for the well-being of our future generations."

Find out more at: <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Latest-campaigns>
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/37591>

STOP AID MONEY GOING TO FOSSIL FUELS

01/08/ 2019: CAFOD is campaigning on many fronts to stop UK aid money from funding fossil fuels. Last month 12,000 campaigners gathered at Westminster to lobby MPs to take urgent action on climate change. With over 400 school students taking part in *The Time is Now* rally, BBC's *Newsround* came along to interview one school on the day.

José Batista Afonso, a land rights lawyer and human rights defender working in the Brazilian Amazon, was one of the speakers at *The Time is Now* on the importance of defending our common home.

To read the latest CAFOD reports from around the UK, reflections, blogs, videos and advice on further campaign actions, visit: <https://reply.cafod.net/121B-6E3QM-15OOWT8S8C/cr.aspx>
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/37595>

SEASON OF CREATION 1 September to 4 October 2019

1 September is the World Day of Prayer for Creation, established by Pope Francis. The Season of Creation or Creation Time runs from 1 September to 4 October 2019. The theme this year is *The Web of Life*. <http://seasonofcreation.org/about/>

How do we as individuals and as parish communities mark this season? Well, there are a number of things we can do as individuals. We can use this day (1 September) or this Season to actually begin to take those simple actions we have been meaning to. Begin to take the bus, or walk, instead of the car. If we have to drive, to work for example, can we car share? Give someone a lift or accept a lift and do the same when we attend Mass. Begin to reduce our meat eating. Spend some time with nature, perhaps visiting your local park. Take a look at a flower; really look and think about the structure, the petals, smell the perfume, and wonder at the differences between plants and flowers, yet in a way they are all the same. Think about the cycle of life and death in nature and ponder the magnificence of Creation and so the Creator.

As a parish, can we arrange to have bidding prayers each week during Mass? Can we arrange a special Liturgy? There is an excellent vigil for Creation on the CAFOD website: <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/World-Day-of-Prayer>

- Can you arrange to study the papal Encyclical '*Laudato Si'*' during this time? CAFOD has produced a guide to *Laudato Si'*: <https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/26269/190854/version/4/Laudato%20Si%20study%20guide-qidw-%20leaders%20notes-%20final.pdf> as have the Columbans: <https://columbans.co.uk/news/laudato-si-columban-study-and-action-guide/>
- Can your parish explore the possibility of becoming a *Live Simply Parish*? <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/How-to-Campaign/Livesimply-award>
- Can you arrange to show the '*Global Healing*' film? Download at: <https://www.ourcommonhome.co.uk/download>

These are just some ideas which we have used in our parish of Holy Trinity, Newcastle under Lyme. They are not meant to be prescriptive. Indeed, I hope that we will hear or read about other ideas which we can use in the future.

Phil Mayland Birmingham Justice & Peace Commission Newsletter Summer 2019 www.birminghamjandp.org.uk reprinted with thanks

Learn more about *LiveSimply* at: www.cafod.org.uk/livesimply

See also: Exeter parish becomes 50th in country to be awarded *LiveSimply* status <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/374741>

• **St Alban's J&P Group Macclesfield** this year are focusing on *The Web of Life - Biodiversity as God's blessing*. A series of events have been organised in churches and around the area starting on Sun 1 September *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation* with a prayer service 5pm at St Michael's Church, Market Place SK10 1DY. Other events include: Sun 8 – a Reflective Ramble 2pm; Sun 22 – a Cycle Ride & Picnic 11.30am; Fri 4 October – Celebrate the end of the Season of Creation and St Francis' Feast Day with a prayer service 7pm at St Alban's Church, Chester Road, SK11 8JD.

Full details plus a useful prayer leaflet with a reflection/action idea for each day from Bernadette Bailey 07831 647928 dwbailey@btopenworld.com

FAITH, CLIMATE & FOOD

21 September 12-4pm St Cuthbert's Church, 4 Langley Close, Liverpool L12 0NB

Join the Faith & Climate Network for a family friendly, multi faith gathering full of ideas and action.

- Faith action & sharing for climate friendly food solutions
- Activities including making planters for food growing
- Share your faith, food & climate friendly ideas, actions and inspirations
- Vegan Lunch (Local, Organic, Animal Friendly)

Free event but booking essential – book through Eventbrite.co.uk – simply search Faith, Climate & Food or phone Faiths4Change on 0151 705 2111

Our previous partnership event during Interfaith Week 2018 focused on energy and was hosted by Wirral Deen Centre, Birkenhead where over 40 friends from different faith communities and partner organisations received a warm welcome and introduction to Islam's approach to climate change from Imam Mushtaq. We shared ideas, contacts, actions and inspiration + a delicious lunch.

This year's Faith & Climate Network partnership event focuses on food. It's a family friendly, multi faith event and Reverend Laura will offer us a warm welcome and an introduction to the actions St Cuthbert's have taken on their journey to put caring for the environment at the centre of their church life. St Cuthbert's is the first silver awarded Eco Church in the Diocese of Liverpool.

We hope you will be able to attend, please share the invitation - all are welcome. The event will include a practical workshop with all the tools and materials provided - making wooden planters / raised beds for growing food, herbs & flowers. We'll provide a tasty vegan lunch (Local Organic Animal Friendly) and there will be lots of hands on activities for all ages plus soapbox presentations..

Soapbox presentations are 5 minute informal sharing opportunities - share your passion for sustainable food whether it's an idea, something you / your faith community is already doing, a campaign, prayer or food for thought ... it can be anything that links food and the environment in its widest sense. All ages welcome to present too!

So far we have 5 soap box presentations including:

- Animal farming & eating less meat
- One nation on a plate
- *Laudato Si* (Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment) - food & land focused
- Drought resistant crops campaign
- Composting - food for the earth

We have space for more ... do get in touch if you're interested. Annie Merry <annie@faiths4change.org.uk>

ST WINEFRIDE'S IN NESTON CELEBRATE THEIR GREAT GENERATION

Gemma McCann 23/07/2019

Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that GREAT generation. Let your greatness blossom.

- Nelson Mandela

The pupils, staff and community of St. Winefride's Catholic Primary School are that GREAT generation and their greatness is certainly blossoming for all to see.

Children and staff, together with Chester Zoo, are working to raise awareness of the need to protect their environment and native species of animals, birds and insects through a topic that they have entitled 'Seeds of Change'.

Through the project, which is rooted in the National Curriculum, aiming to develop age appropriate skills and knowledge, the children are being educated and encouraged to appreciate, understand and care for their environment, local and global. Staff are using the children's natural curiosity to enrich their knowledge, understanding and language, empowering the children to realise that they can make a difference.

The staff at the school have sourced and organised a variety of wonderful resources, to personalise the curriculum for their children - fully immersing the children into understanding more about the world in which they live and facilitating the children into taking ownership for their future and the future of generations to come. A variety of good quality tests enriched the children's learning and empowered them to want to make a difference and they certainly are bringing about positive change.

Behind the face of the school of St Winefride's lies a 'Wonder Garden'. A garden full of life, charm and beauty. To commence the project, the children were asked to create their own garden of wonder. With their brilliant imaginations and creativity, they included many magical and some materialistic features.

After learning about our environment and the life within it, the children were asked to create their wonder garden once again. This time they were very different. The meaningful learning from the project was reflected in the children's creations. Their gardens mirrored the 'Wonder' garden that St Winefride's is fortunate to have hidden behind the face of the school - trees, open wide space, woodland full of mini-beasts and wildflowers. Bird boxes, bird feeders, wellington planters, bee gardens all of which the children have contributed to their wonder garden.

The children at St Winefride's school are 'Seeds of Change' and the changes that they are making are changes for them and for future generations. They have become 'Stewards of Creation' and the school are proud of them and what they have achieved, but more importantly, the children are proud of themselves and are fully invested in protecting their future.

In contrast to their local environment, the pupils have learnt about the illegal wildlife trade of birds in Indonesia. Some of these songbirds are in danger of becoming critically endangered and the children have become more aware of this problem and educated families and friends about it.

To celebrate all the children's hard work, a celebration of the 'Seeds of Change' project evening was held at St Winefride's. Parents, carers, parishioners, governors, teachers from other Primary schools, members of the local community and representatives from Ignite and Chester Zoo were proudly guided by students to view their work and talk to them and staff about what they have experienced and how they have grown throughout the project. The children confidently articulated how it has impacted upon how they view and behave towards the local environment and beyond. It is evident how much the children have grown in knowledge, understanding and empathy towards their planet.

"I really enjoyed our 'Seeds of Change' topic as it helped me to understand a lot more about the environment that I didn't know before. Because of this, I now understand that we need to look after our planet, otherwise, in the future, things could be very different. I am one tiny seed and I can make a difference and that's exactly what I intend to do." - Alex, Year 5 Pupil

AUSTRALIAN BISHOP: 'MIGRANTS BRING ENERGY TO OUR COUNTRY'

23/08/2019: Introducing the Week of Migrants and Refugees, which the Australian Catholic Church celebrate from 19 to 25 August, Bishop Vincent Long, OFM Conv, from the Australian Bishops' Conference, said: "Migrants and refugees always bring energy and dynamism to a new country. If today we Australians are what we are and who we are today, a dynamic, young prosperous country - it is thanks to the love of freedom and the love of fundamental human values on the part of our 'new' Australians."

The theme of the week, proposed by Pope Francis, is: "It is not just about migrants".

Mgr Long, the Australian Bishops' Delegate for Migrants and Refugees, spoke with heart, humour and a political edge about arriving in Australia as a Vietnamese refugee boat person, himself. He said: "We, the Vietnamese boat people, have been generously accepted to this country, and since then we have contributed by doing good. Most of us are well settled and doing our bit for the country, with their various commercial activities. Furthermore, we are making our presence felt even in the Australian Church too."

"Despite the 'final solution' that the former senator Fraser Anning proposed in Parliament last year, we are here to stay," Bishop Long said, referring to comments made by the former Queensland senator in August 2018, who had proposed a return to "a white Australia."

"I wonder where would we be without the vibrant faith and strong community spirit of migrants and refugees. We therefore honour the legacy of this great country not by excessive protectionism, rather we make it great by our concern and care for asylum-seekers and refugees and migrants in the spirit of compassion and solidarity which has marked the history of this nation", concluded Mgr Long.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/374741>

US ARCHBISHOP URGES END TO 'DIVISIVE, DISRESPECTFUL SPEECH'

02/08/ 2019: In his first public statement since his installation, the new Catholic Archbishop of Washington - Archbishop Wilton Gregory - has called for an end to "divisive, disrespectful speech" and accused President Trump of "diminishing our national life" in his recent tweets.

The Archbishop's comments were published in the *Catholic Standard* - the official weekly newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington DC.

In response to a question about his reaction to the controversy over President Trump's tweets on some members of Congress, deploring Baltimore and related matters, the Archbishop said: "In my brief time in Washington, I have been doing a lot of listening and learning. I have promised to try to preach the Gospel, tell the truth and attempt to heal wounds in the body of Christ and our broader community. I have stressed that I am a pastor and fellow disciple of Jesus, not a political leader. There are, however, sometimes, when a pastor and a disciple of Jesus is called to speak out to defend the dignity of all God's children. I fear that recent public comments by our President and others and the responses they have generated, have deepened divisions and diminished our national life. In particular, I join my brother Archbishop William Lori in sadness and deep regret for the ways our Maryland neighbours in Baltimore have been denigrated in recent public attacks.

Our faith teaches us that respect for people of every race, religion, gender, ethnicity and background are requirements of fundamental human dignity and basic decency. This includes newcomers to our country, people who have differing political views and people who may be different from us. Comments which dismiss, demean or demonise any of God's children are destructive of the common good and a denial of our national pledge of "liberty and justice for all."

When asked, what can we do about this kind of rhetoric or divisions the Archbishop responded: "I have recently met with leaders of the Knights of Columbus and many lay ecclesial movements in the Archdiocese. We discussed what we can do together to advance our Gospel mission. I encouraged them and their members to seek to promote respect for all, the common good and humble dialogue in a time of growing and destructive divisions. This request builds on the good work and outstanding service of the Knights and these exemplary lay movements in our family of faith and our Washington community. I asked their help in lifting up and defending the dignity of every person, promoting respect, civility and principled discussion of what unites us and where we may differ. We all need to reject racism, disrespect or brutality in speech and action.

I believe the recent pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops on racism, "*Open Wide Our Hearts*" which points out that racism occurs when we ignore "the fundamental truth that, because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God. When this truth is ignored, the consequence is prejudice and fear of the other, and-all too often-hatred."

I want to share this appeal with all of the faithful of this local Church and with our neighbours in this community we share. We must all take responsibility to reject language that ridicules, condemns, or vilifies another person because of their race, religion, gender, age, culture or ethnic background. Such discourse has no place on the lips of those who confess Christ or who claim to be civilised members of society. Speech that vilifies or denigrates another is a violation of the humanity of the speaker and those to whom it is directed - and deprives each of us of our God-given dignity. We must reclaim, reshape and refocus the national conversation on how we protect and promote the lives and dignity of all, especially, the least of these." (Matthew 25)

As an American, a Christian, a Catholic pastor, I pray that our President, other national leaders and all Americans will do all we can to respect the dignity of all God's children and nothing to further divide our nation. The growing plague of offence and disrespect in speech and actions must end."

● Archbishop Gregory is the only African-American archbishop in the United States. He was named by Pope Francis on 4 April and installed on 21 May 2019. www.indcatholicnews.com/news/37608

'HAVE WE NO DECENCY' - Response to President Trump from Washington National Cathedral

03/08/ 2019: Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington; The Very Rev Randolph Marshall Hollerith, Dean of Washington National Cathedral and The Rev Canon Kelly Brown Douglas, Canon Theologian of Washington National Cathedral issued the following statement:

The escalation of racialised rhetoric from the President of the United States has evoked responses from all sides of the political spectrum. On one side, African American leaders have led the way in rightfully expressing outrage. On the other, those aligned with the President seek to downplay the racial overtones of his attacks, or remain silent.

As faith leaders who serve at Washington National Cathedral - the sacred space where America gathers at moments of national significance - we feel compelled to ask: After two years of President Trump's words and actions, when will Americans have enough?

As Americans, we have had such moments before, and as a people we have acted. Events of the last week call to mind a similarly dark period in our history: "Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness. ... You have done enough. Have you no sense of decency?"

That was US Army attorney Joseph Welch on June 9, 1954, when he confronted Senator Joseph McCarthy before a live television audience, effectively ending McCarthy's notorious hold on the nation. Until then, under the guise of ridding the country of Communist infiltration, McCarthy had free rein to say and do whatever he wished. With unbridled speech, he stoked the fears of an anxious nation with lies; destroyed the careers of countless Americans; and bullied into submissive silence anyone who dared criticise him. In retrospect, it's clear that Welch's question was directed less toward McCarthy and more to the nation as a whole. Had Americans had enough? Where was our sense of decency?

We have come to accept a level of insult and abuse in political discourse that violates each person's sacred identity as a child of God. We have come to accept as normal a steady stream of language and accusations coming from the highest office in the land that plays to racist elements in society.

This week, President Trump crossed another threshold. Not only did he insult a leader in the fight for racial justice and equality for all persons; not only did he savage the nations from which immigrants to this country have come; but now he has condemned the residents of an entire American city. Where will he go from here?

Make no mistake about it, words matter. And, Mr. Trump's words are dangerous. These words are more than a "dog-whistle." When such violent dehumanising words come from the President of the United States, they are a clarion call, and give cover, to white supremacists who consider people of colour a sub-human "infestation" in America. They serve as a call to action from those people to keep America great by ridding it of such infestation. Violent words lead to violent actions.

When does silence become complicity? What will it take for us all to say, with one voice, that we have had enough? The question is less about the president's sense of decency, but of ours.

As leaders of faith who believe in the sacredness of every single human being, the time for silence is over. We must boldly stand witness against the bigotry, hatred, intolerance, and xenophobia that is hurled at us, especially when it comes from the highest offices of this nation. We must say that this will not be tolerated. To stay silent in the face of such rhetoric is for us to tacitly condone the violence of these words. We are compelled to take every opportunity to oppose the indecency and dehumanisation that is racism, whether it comes to us through words or actions.

There is another moment in our history worth recalling. On January 21, 2017, Washington National Cathedral hosted an interfaith national prayer service, a sacred tradition to honour the peaceful transfer of political power. We prayed for the President and his young Administration to have "wisdom and grace in the exercise of their duties that they may serve all people of this nation, and promote the dignity and freedom of every person." That remains our prayer today for us all.

www.indcatholicnews.com/news/37612

THE CORROSIVE AND MALIGNANT DANGER OF REMAINING SILENT ABOUT RACISM

Adam Taylor, Sojourners 01/08/2019

Words matter. Words have the power to hurt or to heal, divide or to unite, to shed truth or to spread falsehood. Words matter, particularly when you are the President of the United States and possess both a bully pulpit and a magnified microphone.

Demaneing and denigrating his opponents is nothing new for President Trump, but he crossed into ever more alarming and dangerous territory this past week when he sought to demonise and dehumanise an entire city with his tweet storm assault on Congressman Elijah Cummings, calling his district in West Baltimore a "dangerous and filthy place" and a "disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess." This is not the first time Trump has used references to rats, vermin, and infestation. As Ben Zimmer documented in *Politico*, Trump has attacked Rep. John Lewis' Atlanta district, called it "crime infested," has said that Democrats want "illegal immigrants, no matter how bad they may be, to pour into our country," and has said that sanctuary cities involve a "ridiculous, crime infested & breeding concept." He has also said that we have an "infestation of MS-13 gangs in certain parts of our country."

Yet, Trump has offered no serious plans or prescriptions for how to improve blighted and struggling neighbourhoods or communities such as West Baltimore — only to exploit their struggles to promote his own dystopian, fear-mongering agenda. And indeed, the brutal irony is that to the extent there are struggling neighbourhoods in Baltimore, they are largely a result of more than a century of racist and unjust policies explicitly designed to segregate and marginalise people of colour.

Read the article in full: <https://sojo.net/articles/corrosive-and-malignant-danger-remaining-silent-about-racism>

TEXAS WALMART SHOOTING SUSPECT 'WROTE HATE-FILLED RACIST MANIFESTO' BEFORE MASSACRE

The suspect of the Texas massacre that left at least 20 dead reportedly posted a hate-filled racist online manifesto shortly before the murderous attack. It spoke of an 'invasion' of Latino immigrants to the US. Tweets on the account praised President Trump and in particular his efforts to build a wall along the US-Mexico border. The police are treating the attack as a hate crime. As many as 3000 people were shopping at the time during the busy Saturday morning (3 September). The mall is about 5 miles from the main border checkpoint with Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The manifesto spoke of the 'Hispanic invasion of Texas' and also voiced support for the suspect in the Christchurch mosque shooting, in which 51 people were killed in two consecutive attacks in March. <https://metro.co.uk/2019/08/04/texas-walmart-shooter-trump-fan-wrote-hate-filled-racist-manifesto-massacre-10514631/>

"GUN VIOLENCE MUST END NOW:" WCC STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH USA CHURCHES

05/08/ 2019: The World Council of Churches (WCC) is standing in solidarity with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and WCC member churches in the USA as they demand an end to gun violence, racist rhetoric, and white supremacy.

In a 4 August statement entitled "Gun Violence Must End Now," the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA called for prayers for those affected by the shootings and for the soul of the entire nation. "Once again, we commit ourselves to supporting measures that will reduce and prevent gun violence," the statement reads. "We are deeply discouraged by the awareness of the near certainty that our elected officials will not respond in any meaningful way to this violence, for they are collectively and shamefully within the captivity of the gun lobby."

Elected leaders are guilty of negligence and cowardice, the statement notes. "Incendiary language from leaders also must be boldly and consistently condemned and countered," the text reads. "Racist, inflammatory rhetoric must be replaced by words and deeds that create beloved communities, ones that embrace ethnic, racial, and religious diversity."

Read the statement in full: <http://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/gun-violence-must-end-now/>

Churches respond to violence in the USA, World Council of Churches press release 4 August, 2019

"We stand with our sisters and brothers in the US in these hours of grief and confusion," said WCC general secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, "and, along with our condolences, we join the urgent cries of churches and church people for real remedies to the gun violence there. We know that the issue of guns in the US borders on larger issues of violence, race, and political polarisation. It is not just a legislative issue, though it is also that. Churches have a key role to play in both education and advocacy." Legislative solutions in the US are often impeded by lobby groups, who cite rights guaranteed by the US Constitution's second amendment.

Jim Winkler, president and general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the USA, also commented on the shootings, stating, "there is no reason for anyone to own assault weapons which were created for use in war. There is widespread public support for requiring licenses to own guns, for a ban on assault weapons, and for background checks. The only reason elected officials refuse to take action in the face of desires of the voters is because they fear the power of the gun lobby. The combination of readily available weapons of mass destruction and a toxic white racist nationalist ideology is a recipe for disaster. If we cannot confront these two evils, far greater violence and social disruption awaits our nation."

Read the statement in full: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/churches-respond-to-violence-in-the-usa-2>

WHY TALKING IRRESPONSIBLY ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS IS DEADLY

John Pavlovitz 06/08/2019: I have mental illness. I've battled it fiercely for more than half my life. Over two decades ago, I began to realise I was different from many people (or at least I thought I was). I knew that that there was a despair that should come as a natural response when we experience trauma; when tragedy visits us or when we lose someone we love – when bad things happen.

I also knew that I was feeling something far more than this normal and momentary sadness. I had an emotional cloud that lingered, one that did not require evidence or some identifiable cause to show up. I knew that often, I could feel complete dread when all the objective data told me that I should be happy. I'd have those dark nights of the soul, where I became my own prosecuting attorney – brilliantly making the iron clad case for why my hopelessness was justified.

And as a Christian, I experienced the shame the church unknowingly piled upon me; the suggestion that if my prayer and faith were earnest enough, I'd feel better. I heard Christians talk about suicide victims as "only needing Jesus." The more I became aware of their ignorance and exposed to their insensitivity – the more closed off I became about the pain I was living with.

I also began to feel the isolation that mental illness generally brings, because unlike any other sickness, like a brain tumour or a physical disability or cancer where sympathy is often people's response – depression brings a stigma of judgment, an attitude of callousness. I began to do what so many people with mental illness do: I hid my hurt and pretended and I suffered in silence.

Many times I was so exhausted that I didn't have a desire to keep living – and no one knew. I was that good at faking it. If I'd have succumbed to my illness people would have been shocked; they would have never have known how far deep in the hole I was and they would have looked back for outward signs and have found little if any.

Most of the time when a severely depressed person dies from suicide: a musician or an actor, or a writer, people express their disbelief – except those of us who have mental illness. We totally get it.

One of the things you learn when you live with severe depression, is that everyone has a capacity for compassion, and even the most long-suffering people usually reach theirs well before you stop hurting. At some point your pain eclipses their ability to carry it and you realise that your despair is a problem – for them. This is where the performance begins. Because you don't particularly enjoy being you, you can empathise with those who seem to grow weary of being around you. You learn to read people's body language, to recognize their ambivalence, to sense their impatience, and you endeavour to play the part of someone else: someone who isn't depressed. And when you do, you don't even need to be all that convincing to sell it. People are usually more than happy to suspend disbelief in order to keep you in character. They'll play along because that storyline is far preferable to the one where someone around them is perpetually miserable without good reason.

Mental illness is not dependent on circumstances or objective data or an identifiable source. It is chemical it is wiring, and so it is not something we can be pep talked out of. A *sad* person can be cheered up. You can help them see reality, you can give them data, you can help them to put things correctly in perspective. When difficult seasons pass their sadness often does too. A *depressed* person can't be cheered up – they can only be temporarily distracted from their default despair.

This week I've seen people in the highest levels of leadership in our Government and our churches, recklessly invoke mental illness when talking about unfathomably brutal mass murders. I doubt these people realise what they're doing, the way they are further pushing already suffering people into the shadow places of shame and isolation, exponentially enlarging their fears, giving strength to their personal demons. I doubt they understand the wounds they are inflicting, or at least I hope they don't.

I and millions of people in America struggle with mental illness and have for years, sometimes decades – and we'd never consider violence toward anyone (perhaps except ourselves) and we'd certainly never walk into a mall or a church or a school and gun down strangers. To suggest a natural tether between depression and anxiety – and the violent execution of human beings, is to further ostracise and isolate people whose greatest enemy is their own heads, it is to ratify every fear they have about their own self-worth. All this irresponsible talk does is to forcing them further into the shadow places of their minds, and some may not make it out.

Using mentally ill people as a cheap scapegoat for senseless acts of violence or to wield it recklessly for political gain, is ignorant and it's dangerous and it can be deadly – not to anyone else but the person who is already pressed up hard against despair.

It's time we called out and condemned politicians and preachers and Presidents when they expose already vulnerable people to further damage, simply because they refuse to face their own culpability and their own failures, in creating a culture of irrational hatred and increasing gun violence. We need to treat mentally ill people with the same compassion and decency that we offer any person afflicted with a sickness that they did not invite and could not prevent. If not, that will be on our collective hands.

Note: If you have mental illness or you love or live with someone who does – you're not alone. Your sickness does not define you any more than cancer or heart disease defines someone afflicted by those things. Do not suffer in silence, and do not be ashamed of your injuries. Find people you can trust, people who understand, people who will help you get well. Be encouraged. <https://johnpavlovitz.com/2019/08/06/why-talking-irresponsibly-about-mental-illness-is-deadly/>

● John Pavlovitz is a writer, pastor, and activist from North Carolina. In the past four years his blog *Stuff That Needs To Be Said* has reached a diverse worldwide audience. John is committed to equality, diversity, and justice – both inside and outside faith communities.

DIARY DATES

SEPTEMBER

1 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

1-4 OCTOBER Creation Time www.columbans.co.uk/justice-and-peace-jpic-2/

2-13 Green Christian *On the Road Together* Manchester www.greenchristian.org.uk/events

3 *No Faith in War* Say no to the DSEI Arms Fair in London – a day hosted by a variety of faith groups opposing the Fair on the basis of their faith <http://www.faithjustice.org.uk/no-faith-in-war-september-2019/>

5 DSEI Arms Fair Excel Centre, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1XL www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk/

8 *Touched by a Suicide* Shropshire's 2nd Memorial Walk remembering those who died by suicide. Meeting at Priors Lodge Bottom car park at Priorslee Flash lake. 2-4pm. More info: Touchedbysuicide@mail.com 07522 921606. Wheelchair friendly.

10 Time Out Quiet Day 10am-4pm 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

10 CWDF Forum meeting 6.45-9pm The Unity Centre, Coppin St, Chester CH1 2BN. Professional photographer Jim Holmes will give an illustrated talk drawn from his various overseas commissions.

13 CAFOD Quiz Night Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port Town Centre 7.30 pm. Admission: adults £3 children £1 which includes Fairtrade refreshments at the interval. All money raised will go to the CAFOD's new *Hands on Peace* building project in Magdalena Medio, Colombia. Contact Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419

14 NJPN Open Networking Day York www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-meetings/

14 Green Christian *On the Road Together* regional day conference in Manchester at The Dandelion Community, Woodhouse Park, Wythenshawe. Interactive workshops exploring the spiritual disciplines of Green Christian's Way of Life, and also *Joy in Enough*, its campaign for a new kind of economics as well as creating a banner. Time for lunch and time for worship, plus an opportunity to discuss "Where next?" People of all denominations and none are invited to attend. Booking essential, spaces limited: <https://greenchristian.org.uk/green-christian-on-the-road-together/>

14 Multi-cultural Fun Day Shrewsbury United Reformed Church, Coleham Head, SY3 7BJ 12-3.30pm. The Shrewsbury Inter-faith Forum invites you to the annual fun day to enjoy: Bhangra dancers, Footlights, Shropshire Ukulele Massive, faith room, Indian Food, Tea & cake and much more.

15-22 World Week of Peace in Palestine and Israel www.oikumene.org National Week of action, prayer and study in support of the World Council of Churches' annual initiative. This year's theme is *Investing in Young People*. Resources and info at: <http://tinyurl.com/UK-WWPPI>

16-23 The DSEI arms fair returns to London's Docklands – Pax Christi and other faith based organisations will be present on the *No Faith in War* day. More details to follow www.paxchristi.org.uk

19 Sabeel Kairos Group service during the Week of Prayer for Palestine and Israel. 9.45am Church of St Peter and St Paul, 61 Liverpool Road, Crosby, Liverpool, L23 5TE. Details: kathleen.zimak@gmail.com

20 Climate Strike Global Day of Action – adults are invited to connect with young climate strikers through the #FridaysforFuture platform or download *The Climate Resistance Handbook* for ideas for action and tips on spreading the word: <https://trainings.350.org/climate-esistance-handbook/>

21 Palestinian Brunch & Fundraising event 12.30pm St Helen's Catholic Church, 112 Alexandra Road, Crosby, L23 7TQ. Details: kathleen.zimak@gmail.com

21 World Peace Day an annual day of ceasefire and non-violence campaigns@peaceoneday.org 020 7456 9180. For 2019 #CyberNonViolence will be part of Peace One Day working with leading experts in child safety to measure and demonstrate a more peaceful digital world.

21 Faith, Climate & Food 12-4pm St Cuthbert's Church, 4 Langley Close, Liverpool L12 0NB. Join the Faith & Climate Network for a family friendly, multi faith gathering full of ideas and action. Free event but booking essential through Eventbrite.co.uk – simply search Faith, Climate & Food or phone Faiths4Change on 0151 705 2111

25 Liverpool Romero Lecture given by David McLoughlin of Newman University, Birmingham – *Prophetic Trajectories of Hope from San Salvador to Liverpool*: a celebration of the ministries of Oscar Romero, Austin Smith, Kevin Kelly and Tom Cullinan (1st anniversary of Fr Kevin Kelly) 6.30 for 6.45pm 001 Theatre in the Cornerstone, Hope University (Everton Campus) Liverpool L3 8DR and afterwards drinks to toast the Mersey Prophets! Preceded by Memorial Mass celebrated by Bishop John Rawsthorne 5.45pm in nearby St Francis Xavier's Church, Salisbury Street.

27 Climate Strike Global Day of Action – see info for 20 September

28 Time Out Quiet Day 10am-4pm 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

29 *Climate Crisis in Marple* 2.30-5.30pm Marple Sixth Form College, Buxton Lane, Marple, Stockport SK6 7QV. Guest speaker Dr Chris Jones from Tyndall Climate Research Centre at Manchester University. Free admission, stalls, art competition, displays. Organised by MESS (Marple, Mellor and Marple Bridge Energy Saving Strategy) www.marplemess.org.uk

OCTOBER

4 CAFOD Harvest Fast Day www.cafod.org.uk

5 Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) Retreat Day 10am-4pm Lancaster Cathedral. Please bring packed lunch, drinks and biscuits provided. Cost £15 per person. Spaces limited, book ACN NW: 01524 388739 nw.office@acnuk.org

8 Time Out Quiet Day 10am-4pm 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

10 World Mental Health Day <https://wfmh.global/world-mental-health-day-2019>

11 CAFOD Quiz Night Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port Town Centre 7.30 pm. Admission: adults £3 children £1 which includes Fairtrade refreshments at the interval. All money raised will go to the CAFOD's new *Hands on Peace* building project in Magdalena Medio, Colombia. Contact Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419

11-18 End Hunger UK Week of Action <http://endhungeruk.org/weekofaction2019/>

12 Imagining the Church of the Future with Diarmuid O'Murchu. ACTA Conference at King's House Conference Centre, King's Church, Sidney St, Manchester M1 7HB. Registration 10.15 for 11am start. Finish 4pm. Tea and coffee provided. Cost £20, under 25s free. To book go to www.acalltoaction.org.uk

13 Homeless Sunday www.housingjustice.org.uk

13-19 Prisons Week www.prisonsworld.org www.prisonadvice.org.uk

13-20 Week of Prayer for World Peace www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com

19 Charity Quiz at the Severn Suite, The Valley Hotel, Ironbridge, TF8 7DW. 6.45 for 7pm start. Tickets £15 including a hot buffet supper. Proceeds to Telford CAP Debt Centre. Tickets: 01952 670033/254194 or 07462 577566

20 World Mission Day Baptise and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/372867>

20-27 One World Week Climate Changes Everything: Now is the Time to Act <https://oneworldweek.org>

24-30 UN Disarmament Week <https://un.org/en/events/disarmamentweek>

26 Time Out Quiet Day 10am-4pm 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

NOVEMBER

1-2 Chester Palestine Conference Palestine: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. For further details contact: joseph.oneill777@gmail.com or lytmail@gmail.com

2 CAFOD Faith in Action Day: Love is Civic and Political: Our Faith and the Common Good Savio House, Ingersley Road, Bollington, Macclesfield SK10 1RW. 10-4 – Please bring vegetarian food to share. Book at cafod.org.uk/events or call 0303 303 3030

11 Banned books for peace: The Last Weapon and The Weapon Unsheathed by Theodora Wilson Wilson. Short film with Maxine Peake and talk by Paul Anderson. 7-9.30pm Cross St Unitarian Chapel, Manchester, M2 1WL. £6 (£4 concs). To book go to www.eventbrite.co.uk and find banned books for peace Manchester.

9 CAFOD Faith in Action Day: Love is Civic and Political: Our Faith and the Common Good Sandymount House of Prayer, 16 Burbo Bank Road, Blundellsands, Crosby, Liverpool L23 6TH. 10-4 – Soup and roll provided for lunch. Book at cafod.org.uk/events or call 0303 303 3030

12 Time Out Quiet Day 10am-4pm 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

12 CWDF Forum 6.45-9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin St, Chester CH1 2BN. More info: 01244 350323.

15 CAFOD Quiz Night Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port Town Centre 7.30 pm. Admission: adults £3 children £1 which includes Fairtrade refreshments at the interval. All money raised will go to the CAFOD's new *Hands on Peace* building project in Magdalena Medio, Colombia. Contact Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419

17 World Day of the Poor The hope of the poor shall not perish forever <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/37283>

22 The Determinants of Food Poverty – a feeding Liverpool event chaired by Bishop John Rawsthorne and Prof Hilary Russell 9am-1pm at LACE, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA. Details from Steve Atherton J&P Office 0151 522 1080 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

23 Time Out Quiet Day 10am-4pm 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

23 Advent Reflection Day starting at 10am Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre, Barden Lane, Burnley, BB10 1JD. Details: bea_foster@hotmail.com

A MESSAGE FROM NJPN: Dear Friends, We're sorry that we haven't been able to bring you any E-Bulletins in the past few months. There are discussions taking place about a way to send a monthly bulletin, so we'll try to keep you posted about that. In the meantime we'll be sharing information on our website www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/ and via Facebook and Twitter: [@NJandPNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/NJandPNetwork), so do follow us there. Below are links for other news sources which you may find helpful.

NEWS LINKS

NJPN continues to have a weekly column in *The Universe*, and some of these are uploaded onto our website.

Independent Catholic News <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/justice-peace-environment> Sign up to receive these daily.

World Council of Churches <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/>

UK Parliament News <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/>

- Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News 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 or contact admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk 020 7901 4864

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