

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin May 2020

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

A VIRTUAL PRIEST'S REFLECTION ON AN ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY

Fr Robin Gibbons 31/3/2020

Locked down in my home, the rhythm of my days has gone back to the training I received as Benedictine, a monastic type existence of quiet, prayer, lectio divina, work and recreation. There is an Athonite streak in this, as my icons glitter in the light of the lamps at times of prayer, and loving the eastern tradition of the Jesus Prayer, it becomes a friend when my eyes are tired from reading and my memory needs a bit of freedom, its cadences and rhythm helps me greatly. Then there is a Carthusian flavour, the sense of that long walk for exercise, which they take each week, and my garden as a place for manual work, with a pinch of the Cistercian love of the Mother of God and simpler things! It is amazing how the spiritual traditions can come together to help us at a time like this, unique in our lives and, I sincerely pray, not to be often repeated.

Yet into my mind this day comes the sense of truly being a priest, on the 31st March 1979, I was ordained in St Michaels Abbey Farnborough, with a good number of family and friends celebrating with the monastic community and myself. So today, 41 years on, my celebration is distinctly different from any other anniversary. Today I am alone, except for those anchoritic companions of each day, my two lovely cats.

Instead of celebrating the Eucharist, I am on a Eucharistic fast, instead of being with people, I remain in solitude. I could, as priests have been given permission to do this, celebrate on my own, but though I remain bi-ritual, my own community does not have the tradition of worship 'performed' alone. The Byzantine Divine Liturgy is very much a full, complete participation by priest, deacon and people, each having their own distinct ministries. Why not celebrate a Latin Rite Mass you might ask? I can and am allowed to, but my heart this day wants to savour a different experience, that long Holy Saturday experience we are all going through, of abstinence from my normal ministerial work with others, so that I can go, albeit reluctantly at times, deeper into a spiritual place I have not often known recently, the depths and the darkness of having the props taken away.

This anniversary is very much that of the virtual priest, all I can do is write, pray, get on with ministering in a virtual world, but it has its power too.

It is this sense that a contemplative side of all our calling as praying people, lies in the knowledge and understanding that prayer reaches out (as the old advert puts it) 'to parts others cannot reach'. It enhances and perhaps clarifies our call to worship as a people, with the contrast as an individual person who ministers alone in prayer through the Spirit. I take comfort in the icon of the Transfiguration, where Jesus alone, because his physical companions have fallen asleep, becomes caught up in the Divine World, where he is transfigured into his glorious body, a world Peter alone sees but does not understand. This is very much the world of our prayer, in it and by it we are transformed and surrounded by the intercession of our companions, our saints, the ones we feel close to. It reaches out because it transcends space and time to the listening space of God, who then answers us in various and different ways, which this time is helping us discover anew.

We must not forget the transformative gift of the Holy Spirit, for at Baptism and Confirmation the Spirit sealed us, and marked us into being as children of the Living God, but for those of us who have answered the call of the Church to take up the ministry of the ordained, that ritual of our Ordination was also a mark of anointing and sealing, as those now gifted by the Spirit for the particular roles of teaching, preaching and celebrating the liturgy and sacraments but above all the Eucharist. This time of exile in our new aloneness, is making us change and look at our patterns of prayer and faith, for me at any rate it is a stripping down to the essence of who and what I am as human and as priest, but I do really sense that in this lonely place, the virtual ministry of a priest is powerful stuff! The ministry of the true sacrifice of a contrite heart is acceptable to God more than ever before, that too brings me very much into closer contact with the BVM, for whom, as so many priests have, I maintain a deep affection and special need as intercessor and sister on my journey.

So my reflection on this anniversary is one of gratitude for what has been, and in the 'now' a sense that more than ever, the Good Shepherd is with us all, daily, hourly, always with us. If anything this anniversary has brought me closer to all those I have cause to be grateful for, who have gone before me but whose presence I can catch a glimpse of, close by, yet out of sight! I think too of the saints associated with this day, the Orthodox Saint Maria of Paris, who died in 1945 in the execution chambers of Ravensbruck, and that nurturing metaphysical priest and poet of the Anglican tradition, John Donne. May they intercede for me in a special way!

In the week before my Mother died, when I was muttering about some family problem that was annoying me, and how alone I felt at that point, she said; 'Robin, your loved ones are always with you, they are there always!' I knew then to whom she was referring and as one of her last gifts it helped me understand her own death better, that those who have gone from us, now surround us with a deeper and everlasting love.

May God bless you all who take time to read this, and may the blessing of the Lord be upon us and all we love today, tomorrow, and unto the ages of ages!

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39253>

REFLECTIONS ON LIVING IN LOCKDOWN: SHOPPING

*Church Action on Poverty trustee **Stef Benstead** shares reflections on how the Coronavirus outbreak is affecting her life, as someone with disabilities who is used to being on a low income. In the first post of the series, she talks about shopping:*

As someone with chronic illness, the lockdown imposed on society makes relatively little difference to me socially. My life was already a moderate version of what we now have. Practically, the major impact for me is shopping. I used to buy online and arrange delivery for when my assistant would be in to put shopping away. Now I can't do that. Because I use a mobility scooter, I was able to access one of the early morning supermarket slots recently, but I'm not usually up at that time. By the end of the shopping I was feeling really quite ill, and I still had to queue through the checkout, get home and put everything away. I went back to bed for several hours and still feel slightly ill three days later.

The shopping itself was a bizarre feeling: all the most important products had large empty spaces behind them on the shelves, and by the time I found the paracetamol and the soap there were no paracetamol-only tablets (I got some with caffeine, which I didn't notice until I got home) and the only soap was handwash and three luxury bars. I've read that the issue isn't stockpiling, but that people are buying more from supermarkets rather than cafes, restaurants etc; all the people doing as we're told and going shopping less often are therefore buying more with each shop; and the just-in-time, money-saving approach of the capitalist supply chain simply can't cope with a slight change in demand. But the solution isn't to turn to delivery services. 30% of individuals used online grocery shopping in 2019 but it made up less than 10% of grocery sales. Yet some 12 million people, or 20% of the country, are disabled, and right now everyone with limited mobility, high susceptibility, high risk of complications, current coronavirus symptoms or sole responsibility for young children needs 100% of their grocery shopping to be online. Care workers, both social care, social work and healthcare should also be getting deliveries to reduce their role in transmission, given their high exposure. Yet the only people to whom the government guarantees access are the 1.5 million extremely vulnerable. That's well over 10 million people being utterly failed.

But getting delivery slots to disabled people isn't enough. Healthy people need to eat and wash too! If disabled people need to go shopping at 8am to get paracetamol and soap, how are the healthy people who are also struggling to get delivery slots manage? We won't control the spread of the virus if healthy people can't wash, and there will be excessive suffering if the most basic drug, paracetamol, isn't available. Our healthy population is about to discover why getting paracetamol on prescription, rather than only 32 tablets at a time, can make such a difference – because the last thing you want to do (and right now should do!) is to go out to the chemist to get more paracetamol when you have a raging temperature and debilitating pain. The just-in-time supply chain doesn't work. We urgently need much more rapid transport of food, hygiene and health products around the country for everyone. Not just the 1.5 million extremely vulnerable, not just the 12 million disabled, not just the over-70s, but everyone. Because everyone needs food and healthcare. <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/reflections-on-living-in-lockdown-shopping/>

REFLECTIONS ON LIVING IN LOCKDOWN: MONEY

*In the second post of the series, **Stef Benstead** talks about money:*

I've learned to live on relatively little money, around £145/week for living costs. It's basically a case of only buying clothes when an old item wears out (I have clothes over 10 years old that I still wear regularly) and not eating out or going to a café. I also don't have a TV license or streaming account, my mobile is £5/month, and I don't have a car. There are probably other areas that I'm so used to that I don't even notice the gap between my spending and that of my peers. But a key one is the support of my family, who paid for my last two holidays and various bits of home improvements that they won't let me pay them back for.

I'm very fortunate to be in a benefits group that gets twice as much money as the typical jobseeker. People deemed either fit for work or too sick to work yet capable of 'work-related activity' got only £73/week (now £94 because of coronavirus), a level that is below the destitution threshold of £70/week once the need to top-up rent and council tax is factored in. By comparison, the state pension is £168.60/week, and single working-age adults are deemed to need £200/week to have a socially acceptable level of inclusion in society. Fortunately for me, the government is not carrying out any assessments or reassessments of benefits for three months, so I'm not going to be reduced to destitution in the immediate future. This is less good for people who are on benefits that don't match their level of illness, who can't get assessed and placed in a higher award group. Other people are able to get up to 80% of their income, up to around £24,000. Whether this is enough depends upon the cost of housing, so some people will get more than they need whilst others get less. This is inefficient. It's also a major administrative cost for the government and leaves workers vulnerable to the good will of employers, for many of whom it is sufficiently easy to hire as to make keeping workers on at this time an unnecessary cost. There is a very simple way around this: a means-tested income replacement. This could be made even easier by applying the means-test through the tax system, by including the benefit in tax calculations. The benefit should be made up of a livings cost element (£150-200/week) plus housing costs up to the 50th percentile in the equivalent private rent. This simple measure wouldn't pay excess money to people who don't need it, nor leave the poorest people under-supported. Many people who have been used to a higher income will have savings they can utilise now that the very rainy day is here, whilst others may be able to remortgage their house to free up some up money. Many people who are used to a lower income would be better off, and may even be able to get out from some debt whilst buying what they need to safeguard their, and our country's, health. It's a very simple approach that helps everyone, including the government.

<https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/reflections-on-living-in-lockdown-money/>

• **Stef Benstead's book** *Second Class Citizens: The treatment of disabled people in austerity Britain* is available from the Centre for Welfare Reform.

DON'T QUARANTINE YOURSELF FROM LIVING TODAY

John Pavlovitz 1/4/2020: This morning I had one of those bittersweet moments you get as a parent from time to time: you see your children transforming in front of you. I walked downstairs and saw my ten-year old daughter sitting on the couch and the change in her took my breath away, as if she'd grown a couple of inches overnight. I could swear her face looked more mature than the little girl I'd tucked in eight hours earlier, in ways that only I was close enough to notice. She is becoming a young woman and in a photograph flash there on the stairs I saw it. It reminded me that despite being housebound and despite so much of our ordinary routine being interrupted, and despite the current normal feeling anything but normal—life is still happening and I need to be present for it. She is still my daughter and I'm still her daddy, and we are living out our story in real time. Our family is not paused in any of the ways that matter: we're still loving and learning and laughing and crying and sharing.

It's easy in days like this so filled with worries about what's coming, to believe that we're all in some holding pattern right now: a massive waiting room where we're busying ourselves and biding our time, until this nightmare fog clears and we can resume living again. It's tempting to imagine everything is on hold right now until someone gives us the all clear to move. But if we do that, if we keep all our attention on when this crisis will end, we'll miss our lives currently unfolding, we'll miss a million infinitesimal holy moments that we will never get again; the place where we are being invited to live right now. We will sacrifice the present we have in our hands, on the altar of the future that we're waiting on. In these days we can dwell so much on what is taken away, that we miss what we've been given:

We're getting time with our children that we'd never get any other way; time to sit with them and not be hurrying from task to task and quickly into the car for the next breathless drop off. We can linger with them and really see them and notice how they're changing.

We're getting time with our spouses and partners and siblings; days where we can stop and have a meal in the middle of the day or steal away for coffee late at night; a chance to have conversations that sink deeper than the surface small talk we often default to and into the depths of our hopes and fears.

We're getting white space we'd never otherwise get, and we can fill that time with beautiful, joyous, life-affirming acts: we can pick up the guitar again or resume writing the book we'd shelved or break out the business we dreamed of launching. We can text friends who we've lost touch with, check on our neighbours, and connect with people on social media to make sure everyone feels a little less alone. We can exercise and eat well and care for ourselves and rest, in ways we might neglect when our calendars are again filled and our agendas are again bursting to overflow.

Yes, these days are disorienting and inconvenient but they aren't uneventful days. Life is happening all around you right now. Your children are growing at lightning speed. Your relationships are waiting for you to be present. Your mind is still free to create and plan and dream. Your gifts are still fully accessible and you can still wield them all. You and everyone around you is getting a day older, and so there should be urgency that rises up in you to make sure you spend it well. The terrifying reality of this season is realizing how fragile life is and how quickly it can dissolve. If there's anything good found in seeing so many leave this place with such velocity and randomness, it can be that we make sure we don't procrastinate living another minute more.

There will be a day when you can do all the things you normally do, and there will a trade off: you won't be able to do what you can do today. You'll have that day but you won't ever get this one again, and it would be a tragedy if you wasted it, waiting to be released by someone else. You are inconvenienced and redirected, but you aren't stopped. You are physically separated from people but you are connected in ways that transcend geography. You are frustrated and tired and worried, but you are alive and that's a pretty important detail to miss.

As much as you can, stay home and stay safe in this quarantine, but as much as you can, keep living while you do. Do what you are able to do, cultivate gratitude, be present, show compassion. This day isn't a place to wait, it's still a place to live.

<https://johnpavlovitz.com/2020/04/01/dont-quarantine-yourself-from-life/>

For One who is Exhausted, a Blessing (excerpt)

*You have travelled too fast over false ground;
Now your soul has come, to take you back.
Take refuge in your senses, open up
To all the small miracles you rushed through.
Become inclined to watch the way of rain
When it falls slow and free.
Imitate the habit of twilight,
Taking time to open the well of colour
That fostered the brightness of day.
Draw alongside the silence of stone
Until its calmness can claim you.
Be excessively gentle with yourself.*

John O'Donohue Published December 22, 2017

Resurrection Light

*Risen Christ,
when darkness overwhelms us
may your dawn beckon.
When fear paralyses us
may your touch release us.
When grief torments us
may your peace enfold us.
When memories haunt us
may your presence heal us.
When justice fails us
may your anger ignite us.
When apathy stagnates us
may your challenge renew us.*

Annabel Shilson-Thomas/CAFOD

LOVE IN A TIME OF PLAGUE

9/4/2020: It is not easy to talk about faith in the middle of a pandemic, observes **Gemma Simmonds CJ** as she considers the ways in which people turn to God at a time of crisis. 'The compassion, or suffering alongside, of Jesus amid the scandal of our suffering becomes the strength and wisdom of the faith-filled person.' This compassion is most visible over the Easter Triduum, and it calls us all to conversion through the prayer, service and remembrance that Pope Francis commends to us.

In Albert Camus' novel *The Plague*, a Jesuit called Paneloux preaches two sermons. He preaches the first one to a cathedral packed full of desperate people, terrified by the onset of bubonic plague in their town into turning to God for the first time in years. The sermon begins: 'Brothers and sisters, we are suffering. Brothers and sisters, we are getting what we deserve.' This appalling holocaust, he tells them, is God's way of teaching people how dependent they are on divine help, how arrogant to presume that they can do without faith. The pandemic is God's punishment for sins, aimed at bringing the townspeople back to the obedience and service that they owe. Similar suggestions were heard in the first years of the AIDS pandemic and are being voiced now.[i] The sermon leaves unanswered the questions such an approach begs about a God who calls us to heel through sending us horrifying illness. Paneloux's words fit neatly into a theological system but show little awareness or concern for the human cost of suffering. But the preacher is about to learn a harsh lesson. Being a good Jesuit, he volunteers to nurse the dying, and is at hand when the little son of the town's judge dies in agony. The book's hero, a doctor and an unbeliever, had been present at the first sermon. He looks over the child's bed to the priest and says: 'This one, at least, was innocent.'

Paneloux preaches a second sermon in the aftermath of the boy's death. The cathedral is less full. God has delivered no quick rescue package, so the bereaved plague survivors have turned to other securities. The priest's certainties are shattered, his neat theologising lying in ruins before the brutal experience of innocent suffering. His previous explanations ring hollow, even to his own ears. He can no longer preach a God who chooses to visit the sins of the world on a child. So, with humility and resignation, he preaches a mysterious God whose ways are not ours, and who permits suffering for reasons at which we cannot guess. The only answer is patience, submission and faith in God's ultimate mercy. Shortly afterwards, Paneloux himself becomes ill and dies. He may have caught the plague, but his symptoms are ambiguous, and his death certificate reads: 'Cause of death in doubt'. The doubt within him overwhelms him and he cannot live with it.

Preaching or writing about faith in a time of pandemic presents a unique challenge. The risk lies in sounding either smugly banal or judgmental. The hard facts of what is happening around us resist the comforts of soft religiosity. A sermon could take the approach current in parts of the media, seeking to assign blame, or at least responsibility: if only the government/the Chinese/the World Health Organisation/the medical establishment had warned us, had acted more quickly. This is the apocalypse that the climate change lobby warned us about; if only we had listened. It's the fault of big business, or a mysterious enemy, or whichever political system or ethnic group we happen to dislike and fear the most. Such secular sermons are falling on eager ears in some quarters, but they do little to help us come to philosophical or theological terms with suffering.

What sort of a sermon might we have preached or wanted to hear in the aftermath of 9/11, at a memorial service for the Nazi Holocaust, or at the funeral of a beloved child? A person in search of faith might want a sermon that makes sense of the big questions: if God is all-loving, how can so much evil and suffering take place? If God is all-powerful, why does God not act to prevent it? A person trying to hold on to their faith might hope to reconcile their image of the loving protector and saviour with the cruel realities of life. Believers often find themselves arguing on God's behalf, seeking to explain or even justify this One in whom they believe and trust, but whose ways are strange, not only to those who don't believe, but also, and sometimes more painfully, to those who do.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of a God who hides in mystery (Isaiah 45:15). God is a hidden God, a God rendered incomprehensible by the scandal of human suffering. Psalm 91, in contrast, speaks of a God who rescues and saves us from deadly plague, from our enemies and from any threat of violence or danger. The psalmist is honest about the human predicament, but there is a corresponding confidence that God will act and come to the rescue. But history tells us otherwise. There was no rescue in Auschwitz, in the killing fields of Cambodia, or for the murdered children whose deaths regularly haunt our newspapers. There has been no rescue so far for the thousands dying of Covid-19.

A much-repeated story tells of a man who falls over a deep precipice. Hurling down to his doom, he grabs onto an overhanging branch and swings over the abyss. In his terror he calls out, 'Is there anyone up there who can help me?' God replies, 'Yes, I'm here'. 'Is that God?' calls the man. 'Yes', replies God. 'Will you help me?' 'Certainly', says God, 'but you need to trust me and do what I say'. The man makes desperate promises to trust, repent, go to church every Sunday for evermore if only God will rescue him. 'Good', says God, 'I'll rescue you. Now... let go of the branch.' There is a long pause, and the man shouts, 'Is there anyone else up there?'

God invites us: 'Turn to me and be saved, for I am God. There is no other.' (Is 45:22) This God is the only one we've got. We might want a God we understand better, or who is more predictable, but God is God, there is no other. We cannot change God, so our only hope is to change ourselves and our perspective on God if we want some insight into human suffering. In general, religiously oriented people hold one of two approaches to it. These have been called the meaning context and the support context.[ii] The meaning context presumes that God is the direct cause of suffering and causes it for a specific reason. We try to see our suffering from God's perspective in order to understand it and therefore cope with it better.

Dr Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, the pioneer of pastoral work among the dying, noticed five stages in the process of dealing with mortal illness: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. [iii] In the meaning context, we expect God to take our suffering away or mitigate it. If this is not forthcoming, we at least pray that God will reveal the reason for sending it, so that we can suffer with a sense of meaning and coherence. Many people cannot believe in God precisely because they make these attempts to understand suffering and are devastated when they fail.

In the support context, people are not asking 'Why, God?' but, 'Help me, God'. The assumption is that God can and will give strength in suffering. The foundation of faith here is an experienced relationship with God, encountered both as creator and sustainer of the universe and as one who remains utterly other and mysterious. The resolution of suffering comes from the conviction that God is with us. God-with-us is made visible in Christ who hangs on the cross with us, whose body is in agony every day in the bodies of suffering children, women and men. The ability to experience oneness with the suffering Christ allows us to perceive what is potentially faith-threatening as faith-integrating.

Jesus's followers don't suffer less than others. His own mother had her heart pierced with the sword of sorrow. If we needed a palpable reminder that being a Christian doesn't make suffering lighter, or significantly easier, we need only look to Italy, where priests who ministered to those suffering from the virus have been struck down themselves and elderly nuns in their care homes have died in their dozens. St Paul exclaims: 'I have been crucified with Christ', but he goes on to say, 'Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me.' (Gal 2:20)

This union with Jesus crucified and risen is the goal of the Christian life. In him we see embodied the support context approach to suffering. Despite his pleas in Gethsemane, his suffering is neither removed nor mitigated, but he receives strength for what is to come. Like any human being faced with the fear and agony of suffering, Jesus begs to be relieved of it, but implicit in his prayer, beyond the question why, is the question how? How can I bear this? The answer is given clearly: through loving union with his God and Father. As soon as Jesus takes this to heart, we see a transformation. From then on, nothing can shake that union. When he stands before Pilate, Herod and the Sanhedrin, when he is denied by his closest friend, paraded in front of his enemies, nailed to a cross, his resolution is unshakable. He is even able to share the consolation of union that he received in the garden with a man hanging beside him: 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise'. (Lk 23:43)

Another Jesuit recently stood, not in a cathedral but in the eerie emptiness of St Peter's Square, a lonely figure under the driving rain, as he prayed for a world stricken by a pandemic and a country brought to its knees. Solitary though he looked, Pope Francis emphasised the closeness of Jesus to the world's pain, the commonality of suffering and the vital need of solidarity in such times,

We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are all in the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. We are all in this boat... together. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying 'We are perishing' (Mk 4:38), so we too have realized that [...] we can only do this together. [iv] Unlike Père Paneloux, he doesn't begin by telling us that we are being punished, but he does call on us to be honest in our scrutiny of the lives that many of us lived pre-corona.

The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities.

As the days of isolation go by and we become more accustomed to living without the distractions and resources that were second nature to us, we find ourselves vulnerable to our circumstances and to the impulses embedded in our own inner world. The 'stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos' fall away in the silence of isolation and we are confronted by our addiction to immediate satisfactions and our indifference to others. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick.

These are challenging words, but they are a wake-up call rather than a reproach. Pope Francis reminds us that our suffering is integrated within our faith not by insights into God's reasons, which remain mysterious and unknown, but by the assurance of God's strength. The compassion, or suffering alongside, of Jesus amid the scandal of our suffering becomes the strength and wisdom of the faith-filled person. Union is the most powerful answer to our questions at such a time: union with God and with one another. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: 'That they may all be one' (Jn 17:21)

In an interview just published, he takes up this theme again.[v] He speaks of another literary priest, the character of Cardinal Federigo Borromeo in Alessandro Manzoni's *The Betrothed*, which centres on the Milan plague of 1630. He describes the cardinal as a hero, but adds, 'Yet in one of the chapters he goes to greet a village but with the window of his carriage closed to protect himself. This did not go down well with the people. The people of God need their pastor to be close to them, not to overprotect himself. [...] The creativity of the Christian needs to show forth in opening up new horizons, opening windows, opening transcendence toward God and toward people, and in creating new ways of being at home.'

This opening up of new horizons includes being open to people who have up till now remained 'other' to us, 'Go down into the underground, and pass from the hyper-virtual, fleshless world to the suffering flesh of the poor. This is the conversion we have to undergo. And if we don't start there, there will be no conversion.'

All intellectual attempts to reconcile God and suffering flounder when we deal with events like the Covid-19 pandemic. No rational argument can provide a satisfactory answer to the question of why it has come upon us. The insights of scripture point to God as unknowable but also at work in us through the power of the Spirit, giving the power for our inner self to grow strong. [vi] Christ continues to be crucified in and by the world. If there is an approach, rather than an answer, to the problem of the plague, Pope Francis tells us that it is found through conversion based on reconnection with our real surroundings, coherence in our beliefs and genuine love of one another. St Ignatius's *Contemplation for Attaining Love*, he points out, is based on remembering. Suffering can become a route to union when we re-member, reconnecting and reuniting ourselves in love with Jesus, the crucified and Risen Saviour, and with our crucified brothers and sisters.

• **Gemma Simmonds CJ is Director of the Religious Life Institute at the Margaret Beaufort Institute in Cambridge.**

[i] See <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/03/09/israel-rabbi-coronavirus-pride-parade-gay-god-divine-punishment-covid19-meir-mazuz/> and <https://www.irishpost.com/news/dup-councillor-blames-gay-marriage-abortion-coronavirus-reap-sow-182766>

[ii] For an excellent treatment of this see Richard Hauser, *Finding God in Troubled Times* (Loyola University Press, 2003).

[iii] Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their Own Families* (Scribner, 2014).

[iv] This and following references are to Pope Francis' *Urbi et Orbi* blessing, 27 March 2020

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200327_omelia-epidemia.html

[v] Pope Francis Interview with Austen Ivereigh: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/time-great-uncertainty>

[vi] Ephesians 3:16.

<https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/love-time-plague>

PAX CHRISTI: AN EASTER MESSAGE FROM THE TENT OF NATIONS, OUTSIDE BETHLEHEM.

Dear Sisters and Brothers, I hope my message to you finds you well and in good health during these uncertain times as Covid-19 paves its way rapidly across our communities and societies affecting our daily lives, altering social, political and economic structures, and introducing fear and panic amongst all.

It is of big importance to stand together in the spirit of solidarity these days, to support, encourage and look out for one another as we all go through this dark tunnel. Apart from the continuous political, social, and economic pressures we are facing in Palestine, Covid-19 has recently found its way to the city of Bethlehem and managed to spread out to various cities in Palestine. Bethlehem as an example, has been under lockdown for a month now following the declaration of state of emergency as soon as the first Covid-19 case was detected, which required people to remain indoors, introduced limitations on movement, and caused for public spaces to immediately shut down in order to stop the virus from spreading out.

At this time, going from Bethlehem to the Tent of Nations is not as easy since most roads are closed, and people are not permitted to move freely. In addition to that, all our short-term and long-term volunteers as well as many visiting groups who were planning to come in March, April and in the next following months had to cancel, which will also affect us economically. Currently, there is a lot that needs to be done on the farm from planting to ploughing, which we could not also carry out and had to postpone due to the current situation.

In such depressing times, we shall find our comfort and strength in our Lord by welcoming Him into our hearts, minds and souls. During this Holy Week, we shall commemorate the unconditional love that has been sent to us by God through Jesus Christ. On Holy Thursday, we shall remember the sign of love and humility as Jesus Christ washed the feet of His disciples before the Last Supper. On Good Friday, we shall remember Jesus Christ's passion, crucifixion, sacrifice, and death for the sins of mankind offering us a new beginning. Many had thought that the cross was the end of the story, including the disciples of Jesus, and that all hopes had died with Jesus on the cross. However, the cross was not the end, it was the path to resurrection and into a new life where death was not the final word. It is the proclamation of Jesus Christ's victory over death, in which we commemorate and celebrate on Easter Sunday.

Today, as we go through this difficult time facing hopeless situations, we should always remember that we are the people of hope; we are the people of the resurrection, we need to stand up, wash away this victim mentality, renew our strength, and become again the 'salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world'.

Dear friends, the dark clouds of Good Friday brought showers of rain watering the ground. They brought hope and new life in preparation for the LIGHT on the day of resurrection. This is the good news of the resurrection.

HE is not here for HE is risen! Happy Easter. Stay safe and healthy,

Daoud Nassar & Family*

* NOTE: The family's farm is surrounded by five illegal Israeli settlements and they suffer frequent physical violence and the destruction of their trees and crops. At the gates to their land a stone says, 'We refuse to be enemies.'

POPE FRANCIS CALLS FOR CONSIDERATION OF 'UNIVERSAL BASIC WAGE'

13/4/2020 **Source: Vatican News:** In a letter to community organizations on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic response, dated Easter Sunday, 12 April 2020, Pope Francis has called for the consideration of a Universal Basic Wage "that would ensure and concretely achieve the ideal, at once so human and so Christian, of no worker without rights." The letter is addressed to World Popular Movements, some of whom he met with when in Bolivia during an Apostolic Visit in 2015 and in the Vatican the following year. "Now, in the midst of this pandemic, I think of you in a special way and wish to express my closeness to you," he writes.

The Pope's message comes at a time in which the pandemic is devastating the health and lives of so many, putting millions of jobs on the line and undermining local and world economies. In it, he expresses encouragement and solidarity with those Movements who aim to bring change to global systems and structures that exclude a multitude of workers. Acknowledging that their work hardly ever receives the recognition it deserves, Pope Francis notes: "You do not resign yourselves to complaining: you roll up your sleeves and keep working for your families, your communities, and the common good. Your resilience helps me, challenges me, and teaches me a great deal."

He goes on to mention all those people suffering far from the eyes of the world: especially the women, "who multiply loaves of bread in soup kitchens: two onions and a package of rice make up a delicious stew for hundreds of children." The sick and the elderly, "they never appear in the news," he says, "nor do small farmers and their families who work hard to produce healthy food without destroying nature, without hoarding, without exploiting people's needs. He highlights how difficult it is for those who live in poverty and for the homeless "to stay at home." In addition, he mentions the difficulty "for migrants, those who are deprived of freedom, and those in rehabilitation from an addiction."

The Pope expresses his hope that this may prove to be a moment of change. "Now more than ever, persons, communities and peoples must be put at the centre, united to heal, to care and to share," he says. "Street vendors, recyclers, carnival workers, small farmers, construction workers, seamstresses, the different kinds of caregivers: you who are informal, working on your own or in the grassroots economy, you have no steady income to get you through this hard time ... and the lockdowns are becoming unbearable. This may be the time to consider a universal basic wage which would acknowledge and dignify the noble, essential tasks you carry out. It would ensure and concretely achieve the ideal, at once so human and so Christian, of no worker without rights."

He points to the need to reflect on "life after the pandemic". Its grave consequences are already being felt. This calls for an integral human development that is based on "the central role and initiative of the people in all their diversity, as well as on universal access to those three Ts that you defend: Trabajo (work), Techo (housing), and Tierra (land and food). The Pope concludes with the hope that our sleepy consciences will be shaken, giving way to a "humanist and ecological conversion that puts an end to the idolatry of money and places human life and dignity at the centre." "Our civilization - so competitive, so individualistic, with its frenetic rhythms of production and consumption, its extravagant luxuries, its disproportionate profits for just a few - needs to downshift, take stock, and renew itself", he says.

Read in full: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39353>

PLIGHT OF VULNERABLE MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES DURING PANDEMIC

25/3/2020: Bishop Paul McAleenan has called on the government and Catholic community to ensure that vulnerable migrants and refugees are not overlooked in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic: "In supporting the Government's recommendations to curtail the spread of COVID-19 the Church keeps in mind migrants and refugees. We must never forget that they are included among the vulnerable."

Staying at home will lower one's chances of infection. Therefore the requirement placed on some migrants and refugees to report at immigration centres or police stations should be suspended and those held in detention centres while their cases are explored should be released. Nor should we forget at this time casual workers and those who rely on frequent income to keep their accommodation. They must be included in supportive economic packages to prevent destitution and homelessness. Catholic charities are doing all they can to provide support for migrants, refugees and others in need in the present crisis. Through prayer and through contributions to these charities the Catholic community and all people of goodwill can offer help to those who need it. We are encouraged to protect ourselves and others. I ask those who, through policy and through charity can make a difference to the lives of others, not to neglect the well-being of migrants and refugees when thinking about COVID-19."

Cecilia Taylor-Camara, Senior Advisor for Migration and Refugee Policy at the Catholic Bishops' Conference added: "We are particularly concerned about the lack of emergency accommodation for people to self-isolate and socially distance themselves. Many undocumented migrants and people who have been refused asylum have nowhere to go, leaving them at extraordinary risk and undermining efforts to prevent transmission. Those same people will also struggle to access healthcare and may be unclear about whether they can seek help from the NHS. At the same time it is important not to forget refugees in other parts of the world, many who are facing this crisis in overcrowded conditions with little access to healthcare at all."

Donate online: Jesuit Refugee Service www.jrsuk.net/donate/

National Emergencies Trust <https://donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/national-emergencies-trust-coronavirus-appeal>

UNHCR COVID-19 Appeal <https://donate.unhcr.org/gb/coronavirus-emergency/~my-donation>

See also: JRS calls for local authorities to protect homeless migrants during pandemic www.jrsuk.net/news/jesuit-refugee-service-uk-calls-for-local-authorities-to-protect-homeless-migrants-during-pandemic/

MIGRANT WORKERS FACE GREATER RISK OF COVID-19

Source: Global Justice Now 26/3/2020: Migrant workers are disproportionately at risk of COVID-19, because of worse access to health care and poor working conditions warns human rights group.

The Geneva Council for Rights and Liberties, has written to the World Health Organisation (WHO) raising its concerns and urging that action is taken to address the disparity in the way migrant workers are treated. In the letter to the WHO, they say: "We have looked at several major global sporting and cultural events, which are taking place over the coming 12 months. While many utilise existing facilities, such as the FA Cup, Tour De France and Formula One, a small number require significant new infrastructure such as the Olympics and Expo. Tokyo 2020 has already faced substantial criticism over its treatment of migrant workers. Expo 2020, which will take place in the United Arab Emirates, follows a similar pattern of being heavily reliant on migrant labour, but has not been called out for the poor practices and discriminatory treatment of migrant workers."

The Group point out that migrant workers in the UAE have few rights and poor access to health care, which is vital to successfully fighting this terrible disease. They urge the WHO to encourage the United Arab Emirates to take into account the health and safety of the thousands of persons working on the preparation of the facilities for the Expo 2020 in Dubai.

The letter continues, "... responding to the COVID-19 pandemic requires good access to health care, including migrant workers in the Emirate, the majority of whom are from Asian countries, as the risk of a pandemic spreads worldwide. Migrant workers in the UAE and elsewhere represent a vulnerable group with limited access to healthcare and poor living conditions including in cramped, overcrowded or substandard accommodation. We believe that they should not be treated differently to other groups and more needs to be done to protect them from the risk of infection from Coronavirus. This will require urgent action to stop the ongoing work, especially when it takes place in overcrowded complexes where the infection is easily spread."

The Group also calls for effective monitoring and screening of workers moving between countries or between jobs. "If workers are forced to move location, region or country for financial or health care reasons, this is likely to mitigate against global efforts to stop the spread of the Coronavirus."

Earlier today the Prime Minister of Japan, confirmed that the Tokyo Olympics have been postponed for 12 months.

Expo 2020 Dubai, issued such a statement last Wednesday, after a meeting with participating countries to consult on the impact of the Coronavirus on their preparations without including any indication of measures taken to protect workers or stop construction work temporarily. The UAE is working on the construction of a site that extends over an area of 4.4 square kilometres, as the headquarters of the Expo, in which 192 countries will participate, to be opened on 20 October 2020 and continue until 10 April 2021. Work continues at the facilities of the Expo, even though the UAE witnessed two deaths from the Coronavirus, in addition to 14 cases of the epidemic, which prompted the state to take extensive precautionary measures to stop government institutions being disrupted and to prevent travel, but the measures taken did not include workers and the construction sector that depends on foreign arrivals.

The Geneva Council reiterates that respect for human rights in accordance with international standards such as the "United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights" obliges the UAE to take immediate measures regarding worker protection. Moreover, the UAE has a poor record regarding workers' rights, as migrant construction workers face exploitation, and the state adopts a sponsorship system that links migrant workers to their employers and can be tried for "absconding" and punished with fines, imprisonment, and deportation if they leave the employer.

Despite some positive reforms of the labour laws that the UAE has undertaken in recent years, foreign workers still face dangerous working conditions and failure to ensure their safety and prevent them from forming unions to claim their rights. The Group stressed that the UAE must ensure that human rights remain at the core of measures to prevent Coronavirus without discrimination, foremost among which is the safety of low-wage migrant workers who are at high risk of forced labour.

<http://genevacouncil.com/>

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39220>

GYPSIES, ROMA AND TRAVELLERS HARD HIT BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN ENGLAND AND WALES

1/1/2020: Father Dan Mason, National Catholic Chaplain for Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers for the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has called for solidarity with GRT communities during the COVID-19 pandemic: "Our sisters and brothers in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities are among those being hardest hit by the pandemic. Insecure accommodation and employment will leave many people particularly vulnerable.

"As our Bishops reminded us on Racial Justice Sunday these communities are at the heart of our Church. I hope that Catholics across England and Wales will continue to show solidarity at this difficult time through your prayers, parish initiatives and supporting charities through the National Emergencies Trust. I urge all those in the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Communities to keep yourselves safe by using the guidance available from the Traveller Movement. As a Church, we also call on the Government to ensure that no one is excluded from the emergency support being made available."

<https://zenit.org/articles/chaplain-gypsies-roma-and-travellers-hard-hit-by-covid-19-pandemic-in-england-and-wales/>

BISHOP JOINS CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO TACKLE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN PRISONS

30/3/2020: The Catholic Church has joined calls for the government to tackle the spread of COVID-19 in prisons by urgently releasing some people where it is safe to do. Lead Bishop for prisons Rt Rev Richard Moth said: 'The tens of thousands of women and men in our overcrowded prisons are at particular risk from this pandemic. They are no less deserving of safety and healthcare than anyone else in our society.'

It is very encouraging that ministers are considering releasing some people, to relieve pressure and protect the most vulnerable. Given the rate at which COVID-19 is spreading this should be done as soon as safely possible, particularly for older or unwell people, pregnant women and those who can be released on temporary licence without posing any risk to the wider public. Steps should also be taken to reduce the number of new custodial sentences at this time of crisis, reserving them for only the most serious offences.

For those who will remain in prison it is vitally important that the Ministry of Justice and the Prison Service continues extending access to phones and other opportunities from them to stay in touch with their families, now that visits have been suspended.

I understand that releasing people from custody will increase pressure on civil society, given that many will not have regular income or secure accommodation. Where possible I hope Catholics will support parish initiatives in response to the pandemic and contribute to charities through the National Emergencies Trust appeal.

Above all we pray for those in prison and everyone affected by this crisis.

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishop-joins-calls-on-government-to-tackle-spread-of-covid-19-in-prisons/>

PAX CHRISTI WELCOMES LIFE-SAVING INITIATIVES AND GLOBAL CEASEFIRE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

25/3/2020 **Theresa Alessandro director of Pax Christi writes:**

'In these difficult times, Pax Christi members are inspired by the drastic measures we are all prepared to take, in order to try and save the lives of the most vulnerable in our communities. We see bright glimpses of the gospel being truly lived. We endorse the call of Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, for a global ceasefire so that the world can focus instead on dealing with this new threat. We have been encouraged to see how readily British manufacturers can adapt their skills and machinery to producing ventilators. Now we can bear witness that it is possible for our industries to be diversified, when the political will is there.'

We welcome an additional hospital and have appreciated the irony of it being the London ExCel Centre - which usually hosts the huge DSEI Arms Fair - that is now being turned to this life-saving purpose. These events have renewed our hope for a world in which we might manufacture goods that support life, rather than weapons which destroy it. We might fund services, like healthcare and libraries, instead of sinking huge amounts of money into British nuclear weapons which have no power at all over a tiny, horrible virus. We could reduce the injustice and inequality which will now make a life and death difference to some.

We are keeping in our prayers all those whose lives are affected by coronavirus. When the restrictions are lifted, we pray too that we will be ready to live differently because of what we have seen and heard.'

Check out our website for prayer resources, and education resources that can work online too: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/>
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39212>

TIME TO WASH OUR HANDS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

3/4/2020 **Christian CND writes:** The UK, like the rest of the world, is in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Health threats like this have been listed as 'Tier 1' threats to national security for some time, as the government acknowledged it is a genuine threat to our way of life. Despite this fact, funding for nuclear weapons has vastly outstripping funding given to preparing for a pandemic. The threat of nuclear weapons from other states has not been listed as a top priority threat by the government. So why are we continuing to press ahead with the plans to replace Trident with a new generation of nuclear weapons as a cost of at least £205 billion?

The government must listen to the evidence regarding the threats we face. Their own assessment continually shows that it is pandemic health outbreaks, cyber attacks, climate change and terrorism which threaten us. None of these can be tackled with nuclear weapons. Our friends at CND have launched a new action for you to contact your MP and highlight these inconsistencies, calling for Trident to be scrapped and the money to be diverted to fighting real threats.

See also: Network of Christian Peace Organisations, which includes Pax Christi and Christian CND statement on Coronavirus ceasefire calls - <https://christiancnd.org.uk/2020/03/30/ncpo-statement-on-coronavirus-ceasefire-calls/>
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39275>

LINKS

Christian CND: <https://christiancnd.org.uk/>

Pax Christi: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/>

Contact your MP: www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-your-mp/

CHRISTIANITY AT A TIME OF SICKNESS

Tomáš Halík: Our world is sick. I'm not just referring to the coronavirus pandemic, but to the state of our civilisation, as revealed in this global phenomenon. In biblical terms: a sign of the times. At the beginning of this unusual period of Lent many of us thought that this epidemic would cause a sort of short-term blackout, a breakdown in the usual operation of society, one that we would ride out somehow, and then soon things would all return to the way they were. They won't. And it wouldn't turn out well if we tried. After this global experience, the world won't be the same as it was before, and it probably oughtn't to be.

It is natural at times of major calamities that we first concern ourselves with the material necessities for survival; but "one does not live by bread alone". The time has come to examine the deeper implications of this blow to the security of our world. The unavoidable process of globalisation would seem to have peaked: the global vulnerability of a global world is now plain to see.

What kind of challenge does this situation represent for Christianity and the church – one of the first "global players" – and for theology?

The church should be a "field hospital" as proposed by Pope Francis. The pope means by this metaphor that the church should not remain in splendid isolation from the world, but should break free of its boundaries and give help where people are physically, mentally, socially and spiritually afflicted. Yes, this is how the church can do penance for the wounds inflicted by its representatives quite recently on the most defenceless. But let us try to think more deeply about this metaphor – and put it into practice. If the church is to be a "hospital", it must, of course, offer the health, social and charitable care it has offered since the dawn of its history. But as a good hospital, the church must also fulfil other tasks. It has a diagnostic role to play (identifying the "signs of the times"), a preventive role (creating an "immune system" in a society in which the malignant viruses of fear, hatred, populism and nationalism are rife) and a convalescent role (overcoming the traumas of the past by forgiveness).

Before Easter last year, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris burned down, this year in Lent there are no services in hundreds of thousands of churches on several continents, nor in synagogues and mosques. As a priest and a theologian I reflect on those empty or closed churches as a sign and challenge from God.

Understanding the language of God in the events of our world requires the art of spiritual discernment, which in turn calls for contemplative detachment from our heightened emotions and our prejudices, as well as from the projections of our fears and desires. At moments of disaster, the "sleeping agents of a wicked, vengeful God" spread fear, and make religious capital out of it for themselves. Their vision of God has been grist to the mill of atheism for centuries. At a time of disasters I don't see God as an ill-tempered director, sitting comfortably backstage as the events of our world play out, but instead I look on him as a source of strength, operating in those who show solidarity and self-sacrificing love in such situations – yes, including those who have no "religious motivation" for their action. God is humble and discreet love.

But I can't help wondering whether the time of empty and closed churches is not some kind of cautionary vision of what might happen in the fairly near future: this is what it could look like in a few years' time in a large part of our world. Haven't we already had plenty of warning from the developments in many countries, where more and more churches, monasteries and priestly seminaries have been emptying and closing? Why have we been ascribing this development for so long to outside influences (the "secularist tsunami"), instead of realizing that another chapter in the history of Christianity is coming to a close, and it is time to prepare for a new one.

Maybe this time of empty church buildings symbolically exposes the churches' hidden emptiness and their possible future unless they make a serious attempt to show the world a completely different face of Christianity. We have thought too much about converting "the world" ("the rest"), and less about converting ourselves – not simply "improvement", but a radical change from a static "being Christians" to a dynamic "becoming Christians".

When the medieval church made excessive use of the interdict as a penalty, and those "general strikes" by the entire ecclesiastical machinery meant that church services were not held and sacraments were not administered, people started increasingly to seek a personal relationship with God, a "naked faith". Lay fraternities and mysticism proliferated. That upsurge of mysticism definitely helped pave the way for the Reformation – not only Luther's and Calvin's but also the Catholic reformation connected with the Jesuits and Spanish mysticism. Maybe discovery of contemplation could help complement the "synodal path" to a new reforming council.

Maybe we should accept the present abstinence from religious services and the operation of the church as *kairos*, an opportunity to stop and engage in thorough reflection before God and with God. I am convinced the time has come to reflect on how to continue the path of reform, which Pope Francis says is necessary: not attempts to return to a world that no longer exists, or reliance just on external structural reforms, but instead a shift towards the heart of the Gospel, "a journey into the depths".

I can't see that a quick fix in the form of artificial substitutes, such as the broadcasting of masses, will be a good solution at this time when public worship is banned. A shift to "virtual piety", "remote communion", and kneeling in front of a TV screen is truly something odd. Maybe we should instead test the truth of Jesus's words: Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.

Did we really think that we could solve the lack of priests in Europe by importing “spare parts” for the church’s machinery from seemingly bottomless storehouses in Poland, Asia and Africa? Of course we must take seriously the proposals of the Amazonian synod, but we need at the same time to provide greater scope for the ministry of laypeople in the church; let us not forget that in many territories the church survived without clergy for entire centuries. Maybe this “state of emergency” is an indicator of the new face of the church, for which there is a historical precedent.

I am convinced that our Christian communities, parishes, congregations, church movements and monastic communities should seek to draw closer to the ideal that gave rise to the European universities: a community of pupils and teachers, a school of wisdom, in which truth is sought through free disputation and also profound contemplation. Such islands of spirituality and dialogue could be the source of a healing force for a sick world.

The day before the papal election, Cardinal Bergoglio quoted a passage from Revelation in which Jesus stands before the door and knocks. He added: Today Christ is knocking from inside the church and wants to get out. Maybe that is what he just did.

For years I have pondered on the well-known text of Friedrich Nietzsche’s about the “madman” (the fool who alone is permitted to speak the truth) proclaiming “the death of God”. That chapter ends with the madman coming to church to sing “Requiem aeternam deo” and asking: “What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchres of God?” I must admit that for a long time various forms of the church seemed to me like cold and opulent sepulchres of a dead god.

It looks as if many of our churches will be empty at Easter this year. We will read the gospel passages about the empty tomb somewhere else. If the emptiness of the churches is reminiscent of the empty tomb, let us not ignore the voice from above: “He is not here. He has risen. He has gone ahead of you to Galilee.” A question to stimulate meditation for this strange Easter: Where is the Galilee of today, where we can encounter the living Christ?

Sociological research indicates that in the world the number of “dwellers” (both those who fully identify with the traditional form of religion, and those who assert a dogmatic atheism) is falling, while there is an increase in the number of “seekers”. In addition, of course, there is a rise in the number of “apatheists” – people who couldn’t care less about religious issues or the traditional response to them. The main dividing line is no longer between those who consider themselves believers and those who consider themselves non-believers. There are “seekers” among believers (those for whom faith is not a “legacy”, but a “way”), and among “non-believers”, who reject the religious notions put forward to them by those around them, but nevertheless have a yearning for something to satisfy their thirst for meaning. I am convinced that the “Galilee of today”, where we must seek God, who has survived death, is the world of the seekers.

Liberation Theology taught us to seek Christ among people on the fringes of society. But it is also necessary to seek him among people marginalized within the church, among those “who don’t follow us”. If we want to connect with them as Jesus’ disciples, there are many things we must first abandon.

We must abandon many of our former notions about Christ. The Resurrected One is radically transformed by the experience of death. As we read in the Gospels, even his nearest and dearest did not recognise him. We don’t have to accept at all the news that surrounds us. We can persist in wanting to touch his wounds. Besides, where else will we be sure to encounter them than in the wounds of the world and the wounds of the church, in the wounds of the body that he took on himself?

We must abandon our proselytizing aims. We are not entering the world of the seekers to “convert” them as quickly as possible and squeeze them into the existing institutional and mental confines of our churches. Jesus also didn’t try to squeeze those “lost sheep of the house of Israel” back into the structures of the Judaism of his day. He knew that new wine must be poured into new wineskins.

We want to take new and old things from the treasure house of tradition that we have been entrusted with, and make them part of a dialogue with seekers, a dialogue in which we can and should learn from each other. We must learn to broaden radically the boundaries of our understanding of the church. It is no longer enough for us to magnanimously open a “court of the gentiles”. The Lord has already knocked “from within” and come out – and it is our job to seek him and follow him. Christ has passed through the door that we had locked out of fear of others. He has passed through the wall that we surrounded ourselves with. He has opened up a space whose breadth and depth has made us dizzy.

On the very threshold of its history, the early church of Jews and pagans experienced the destruction of the temple in which Jesus prayed and taught his disciples. The Jews of those days found a courageous and creative solution: they replaced the altar of the demolished temple with the Jewish family table, and the practice of sacrifice with the practice of private and communal prayer. They replaced burnt offerings and blood sacrifices with “lip sacrifice”: reflection, praise, and study of Scripture.

Around the same time, early Christianity, banished from the synagogue, sought a new identity of its own. On the ruins of traditions, Jews and Christians learnt anew to read the Law and the prophets and interpret them afresh. Aren’t we in a similar situation in our days?

When Rome fell on the threshold of the fifth century, there was an instant explanation from many quarters: the pagans saw it as punishment of the gods for the adoption of Christianity, while the Christians saw it as God's punishment on Rome, for continuing to be the whore of Babylon. St Augustine rejected both those interpretations: at that watershed moment, he developed his theology of the age-old battle between two opposing "cities": not of Christians and pagans, but of two "loves" dwelling in the human heart: the love of self, closed to transcendence (amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei) and love that gives of itself and thereby finds God (amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui). Doesn't this time of civilizational change call for a new theology of contemporary history and a new understanding of the church?

"We know where the church is, but we don't know where she isn't," the orthodox theologian Evdokimov taught. Maybe what the last Council said about catholicity and ecumenism needs to acquire a deeper content. It is time for a broader and deeper ecumenism, for a bolder "search for God in all things."

We can, of course, accept this Lent of empty and silent churches as simply a brief temporary measure soon to be forgotten. But we can also embrace it as kairos – an opportune moment "to put into deeper water" and seek a new identity for Christianity in a world which is being radically transformed before our eyes. The current pandemic is certainly not the only global threat facing our world now and in the future. Let us embrace the approaching Eastertide as a challenge to seek Christ anew. Let us not seek the Living among the dead. Let us seek him boldly and tenaciously, and let us not be taken aback if he appears to us as a foreigner. We will recognise him by his wounds, by his voice when he speaks to us intimately, by the Spirit that brings peace and banishes fear.

• **Tomáš Halík** (b. 1948) is a professor of sociology at Charles University, Prague, President of the Czech Christian Academy, and university chaplain. During the Communist regime he was active in the "underground church". He is a Templeton Prize laureate and holds an honorary doctorate from Oxford University.

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Samples:

Wednesday April 22: Today is Earth Day. The theme this year for its 50th anniversary is climate action. Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable. The Covid-19 pandemic has inspired some ideas for combining the two.

<https://www.earthday.org/11-actions-for-the-planet-during-a-pandemic/>

Sunday April 26: Creator God, who placed this planet and all its resources into our care, encourage those who now remind us of our responsibilities, both to you and future generations, to do all that is necessary, whatever the cost, to save this world that we call home, so our children and theirs might not look back, both in shame and anger, at what we, in denial, have failed to do. Amen.

Prayer by John Birch: <https://www.faithandworship.com>

Monday April 27: Today is the start of National Gardening Week. Did you know the UK's gardens cover a combined landmass that's bigger than the Lake District and Peak District put together? That's a huge area and means gardens can provide vital space for wildlife in a human-dominated landscape. During this time of social distancing, many people might have more time for gardening, albeit with less access to shops and garden centres.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2018/01/environmentally-friendly-gardening-10-top-tips/>

BOOK - CREATION WALK: THE AMAZING STORY OF A SMALL BLUE PLANET

Sometimes regarded as exclusive and polar opposite perspectives, Science and Scripture collaborate seamlessly to tell the Creation story in a new book by popular author Brian Grogan SJ. *Creation Walk: The Amazing Story of a Small Blue Planet* merges the insights of these distinct domains resulting in an enriching and holistic factual narrative through the prism of Christian faith. The book is presented in three sections: part one offers a brief background to the new story of creation which has emerged over the past century with the discovery of the expanding universe. Part two succinctly takes the reader through thirty stages of the development of the cosmos and of our Earth from the big bang to the present day. Part three applies the wisdom of these understandings and describes Nature as a recycling genius where everything is in process of becoming something else. Grogan calls this the 'dance of creation'.

This inspiring book reveals the divine orchestration of the Creation story in a dramatic, fresh and appealing way and is ideal for personal or group reflection. It may also be used as a guide to the Creation Walk experience at Knock, Co Mayo, in the West of Ireland.

Brian Grogan SJ is a former President of Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Dublin, and is Emeritus Associate Professor of Spirituality. A best-selling author, he has also written *God, You're Breaking My Heart*, *Finding God in a Leaf* and *I am Infinitely Loved*, all available from Messenger Publications.

Creation Walk: The Amazing Story of a Small Blue Planet by Brian Grogan SJ is published in Ireland and the UK by Messenger Publications. Priced at €9.95/£8.95

Buy here: <https://www.messenger.ie/product/creation-walk-the-amazing-story-of-a-small-blue-planet/>

COLUMBAN COMPETITION 2020 - TACKLING OUR THROWAWAY CULTURE

First Prize Article: *Throwing away our throwaway culture* by Kit Bell

I think about our "throwaway culture" every day before bed, when I take off my makeup with a cotton pad. I have considered buying a reusable set, but I just never get round to it. It's alright, though - when I throw my cotton pads in the bin, they're gone, right? They aren't my problem anymore.

One of the biggest factors in our throwaway culture is the fact that we don't think about where our rubbish goes when we're done with it. As far as we know, it's out of our lives. It's as if we're babies with no object permanence, assuming rubbish disappears when it goes in the bin.

Imagine if, every time I used a cotton pad, it stayed in my bedroom, never getting taken away. Soon enough, my room would fill up. There wouldn't be space for me anymore. Just one or two tiny things every day adds up to a lot, and that's something we can't seem to grasp. That isn't surprising, seeing as our rubbish rarely stays our problem for long; it's cheaper for us to ship our rubbish to other countries, and make it their problem, than to bother disposing of it ourselves. Easy enough, when you have the money.

Money is another driver fuelling the consumer mind-set. We want everything cheaper, and so do companies. Why make a more expensive product that will only be purchased once, when you could reel your customers in with cheap disposables and low-quality items that keep them coming back for more?

It seems impossible to break out of this cycle of fast fashion, short-term items, and disposables. Clothes recycling initiatives offering vouchers might be enough to convince us - but then we just reinvest these in more unsustainable outfits, feeling good about the idea of our clothes serving those in greater need whilst ignoring the fact that we're flooding them with our excess. We donate to charity shops, unaware that if items aren't sold within a month, they're discarded anyway. Even our attempts to fight disposables with reusables is pointless if we don't focus on the sustainability of their production.

When asked for his opinion on the matter, Pope Francis offered a unique take: that our careless attitude toward things we no longer need has spread past material possessions. The way we treat those on the edge of our society is all the proof we need to see that he is right - the elderly, left to fade into an undignified end; those with disabilities, left to struggle until they can no longer cope; the homeless, left to scavenge for our cast-offs, as if we can offer nothing else. The invisibility of those we have no use for shows how much the consumer mindset has poisoned our humanity. We simply throw away people we think we don't need, whilst keeping those who promote this toxic ideal.

Toxicity is found not just in our attitudes, but in the products we cast aside. Think about the last time you walked past a nappy in the street, discarded hurriedly after use. The bacteria-ridden contents of these disposable nappies aren't washed away to be treated like adult waste, as would be the case with their cloth counterparts; instead, they're left to produce harmful gases in landfills, or fester in the street. Often, you'll walk by the same cast-off so many times that it becomes part of your everyday landscape. You might casually comment on how long it's been there, but you probably won't stop to imagine that this is the same case for the three billion others thrown into landfill each year in the UK. That's over 4,000 per child per year, compared to just 20 reusables overall.

The landfills we speak of are not on our land, of course. As mentioned earlier, the majority of our rubbish is shipped to developing countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, where disposal regulations aren't as strict. One of the key points made in *Laudato Si'* was that the poor are disproportionately affected by climate change, and by taking advantage of their need for money, we fill their land with our rubbish, allow their air to become polluted, and dirty the water they need to survive. This is not showing love to our neighbours. This is not caring for creation. This is an abuse of the power we hold in society, choosing to throw away people and land over cutting back on our extravagant lifestyles.

When we decide that we, as individuals, cannot change this, we ignore the plight of those this affects. We are not acting as the protective stewards that we were created to be. In writing his encyclical, Pope Francis draws on the knowledge of many countries to emphasise that once we are united, we can tackle this issue. Indifference and selfishness are the only true drivers of this throwaway culture - so maybe it's time for a change of heart.

Kit Bell is a pupil of All Saints Catholic School in Sheffield.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39200>

COLUMBAN COMPETITION 2020 - TACKLING OUR THROWAWAY CULTURE

Second Prize Article: *Are we really stewards of the earth or destroyers?* by Evelyn James

We are now living in a world where many people are exploiting the earth through ignorance, without paying any attention to their actions. Are we really stewards of the earth or destroyers; one may say?

The throwaway society we live in has been strongly influenced by consumerism. Pope Francis in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* urged that every living person on this planet should pay serious attention to environmental issues facing humanity. The Pope reprimanded that our home is beginning to look "more and more like an immense pile of filth" due to our consumerist mind-set, since we frequently discard items without any thought process.

The Book of Genesis states that God created us to be stewards of the earth and gave us responsibility to care for our planet and all species. Earth is a gift from God for all the world to share and it's our duty to protect the earth for future generations. However, we are in the process of completely destroying our 'common home' as we carelessly strip it of its resources. Even when we see the drastic effects of climate change, deforestation and many more concerns, some of us just can't seem to understand the seriousness of our actions, nor understand that it is the unprivileged communities that are suffering the most.

Pope Francis also highlighted that today's 'throwaway culture' is also reflected in our continual waste of food, stating that "food that is thrown away might as well have been stolen from the table of the poor, the hungry". There are one billion people underfed, two billion overfed and staggeringly, we still waste a third of all food produced. In the UK alone, 8.4 million people are struggling to afford to eat which is equivalent to the entire population of London. This tells us that food waste is not only affecting the world's poorest countries, but also highly developed countries like the UK.

In the UK alone we throw away a staggering 460,000 tonnes of bread a year - that's the equivalent of 177 million slices a week, according to a Tearfund paper on 'Waste'. This waste could be tackled if only we could be more mindful of how much we buy, and make sure we actually use rather than making it go to waste. If food waste were a country, it would be the world's third largest emitter of greenhouse gases, behind the US and China. Surely, this puts things into context for us, especially the amount of food we are unnecessarily wasting. Donating some of that extra food to your local food bank, rather than wasting, would be a way to demonstrate stewardship, as it is our duty to feed people in need.

We humans have also developed a habit of always fitting to the latest trends and, seemingly, we enjoy buying new items on a daily basis. Items of clothing can go out of fashion within a matter of weeks, leaving garments hibernating in our wardrobes for years until we just throw them out. The amount of energy put into creating that item is wasted, as well as the fossil fuels used to create that energy. All that is left is an unreasonable amount of greenhouse gases and the calamity of climate change.

Climate change negatively affects us all, but the poorest communities are the most vulnerable. By 2030 an estimated 120 million could be pushed into poverty and an estimated 600 million more people in Africa could face malnutrition as agricultural systems break down due to climate change impacts (Statistics from Actionaid). But even after modern day activists like Greta Thunberg, David Attenborough and Chief Raoni Metuktire speak out like modern day prophets, we continue with our lavish lifestyle. We have become indifferent to the many who suffer in our world, caught up in our own lifestyles. By buying fewer new things, we could reduce this scandal. We should be helping the poor out as we are all gifted with human dignity. This makes us all equal, as we are all made in the image and likeness of God (Imago Dei). As climate change attacks their dignity, due to our careless decisions, we are obliged to help our brothers and sisters living in poverty.

We take things for granted when actually there are many in the world who are less fortunate than us. It is about time we start being more thoughtful of them. But there is still hope for us! We can still be in control of our future and the future of our brothers and sisters.

As a practical step, we can all do something in our households to reduce our consumption of Earth's resources. We need to understand that even the smallest things can make a change. Donating some of your clothes to a local charity rather than sending them to a landfill, or turning the tap off when you brush your teeth will make a difference. We will be judged by God on our behaviour as stewards, so it is essential that we start making wiser decisions before time's up. It is important that we value and care for the environment because we only have one planet and we must conserve it. No matter who we are, each and every one of us can make change happen. We can all do our bit to help our planet as we take our step on the path to true stewardship. We have to start making changes right now, before it is too late as these things have and will affect not only us but also future generations. Many small changes can lead to a big change, in regards with our food, clothing and many more. All of us need to work together and faster, to put an end to our throwaway culture.

Evelyn James is a pupil of St Mark's Catholic School in Hounslow, London.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39222>

COLUMBAN COMPETITION 2020 - TACKLING OUR THROWAWAY CULTURE

Joint Third Prize Article: *Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Fire* by Gabriela Fanucci

When trying to put out the disaster of deforestation, plastic only fuelled the flames.

In 1959, a Swedish engineer inadvertently set in motion one of the most detrimental chain reactions of the last century. His invention of the plastic bag seemed to be the saviour of the forest, as it replaced paper bags. Evidently this was not the case. So, with intentions so virtuous, how did Thulin's innovation kindle such an environmental catastrophe?

To answer that question, it must be acknowledged that plastic had been around for many years prior. However, this was one of the first applications of what we now know as single use. From the invention of the material in the late 1800s... to the whole planet now tied neatly with a plastic bow, it is hard to determine the exact turning point of this resource. Somehow it has slowly advanced and multiplied, taking over the supermarket aisles and creeping into any industry possible.

When we hear the words 'single use plastic', our minds directly go to food packaging. Yes, it has played an integral role in protecting our ingredients' freshness and improving convenience for our snacking habits, but at what cost? The main cause for increase in plastic production is of course, packaging. In 2015 it made up 52% of all plastic thrown away and by now that number will be rocketing.

As the busyness of our days has increased, so has the demand for time-saving packaging. Many companies have had to adapt their products to keep up with the ever-growing pace of modern life. For example, cheese brands, such as Cathedral, have come out with singularly wrapped snack sized cheese blocks. It should evidently be known that no one has time for cutting cheese themselves anymore! Even the naturally sourced, protective exterior of some fruit and vegetables can't be found without unnecessary plastic covering of some sort. Many have noticed this error and taken a step back to buying loose items, although the prices are considerably higher. Agreed, the 21st century has transformed how we live daily but some aspects should have been left alone.

Another environment in which plastic is thriving is healthcare. You may think the only thing leaving a hospital is recovered patients, but they are in fact they are followed by dumpsters full of plastic waste. Over the last 30 years there has been a significant shift from metal instruments to disposable plastic ones. For example, scalpel handles, syringes and forceps are no longer comprised of a reusable metal, as the job of sterilising them has become too arduous and time consuming. Needless to say, items such as gloves and needles must be thrown away and replaced due to hygiene and the risk of contamination. However, other items can be disinfected and reused. According to the National Geographic, a hysterectomy can produce up to 20 pounds of waste, mostly consisting of plastic. It is at high speed in which actions must be taken to save a life and it is essential that the correct equipment is at the ready. Nevertheless, this could still be achieved with reusable instruments. In the matter of what can be done, it is unlike a restaurant, where we can simply boycott them for serving us a plastic straw. If you ever find yourself in an emergency and in desperate need for medical attention, I would not advise starting a plastic protest against the doctor trying to save you. Therefore, the suitable course of action would be to spread awareness and inform those in hospitals the damage they are contributing to.

As a society, we have acquired an 'out of sight, out of mind' perception when it comes to the waste we create. Once we have successfully fulfilled the challenging task of binning our rubbish, no more thought on it is spared. Your bin bag's final destination may be the inside of a landfill, yet its journey does not end there. Its contents will outlive all inhabitants of the earth by far and can leak toxic substances into surrounding habitats. Future repercussions are currently uncharted, however we do know that endlessly shovelling our waste products into the planet's crust cannot continue. A temporary solution like this is not sufficient for such an intensifying dilemma.

Almost every ecosystem has felt the impacts of the choices we make daily. From the havoc of uprooted rainforests once thriving with wildlife, to the depths of the oceans with damaged coral and filled with an abundance of unwanted artificial guests. Experts have predicted that the plastic floating around is set to outweigh fish by 2050. With every tree wrenched from the ground for palm oil or animal dying of a body full of plastic, we take a step further away from the role God gave us. Unless, in the unlikely case that stewardship means to ruin creation, we must begin to drastically change the way we utilise the planet. It is a blessing given to cherish and not a resource to mindlessly dispose of. So, can a hurtling train be reined in before it reaches a terminal velocity? Will the disastrous predictions for the future become a sealed fate?

To see any significant changes, we must alter our capital-driven mindsets to focus on the real importance and beauty of what is around us. The role of being a steward has been passed down to us all and we must treat it with the same importance as the jobs we are paid for. The responsibility of nurturing the earth cannot rest with a minority of its inhabitants; we must all share the obligation.

Gabriela Fanucci is a pupil at St Bede's Catholic School, Lytham St Annes.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39238>

COLUMBAN COMPETITION 2020 - TACKLING OUR THROWAWAY CULTURE

Joint Third Prize Article: 'I Only Feel Angry When I See Waste' by Maeve Ann Burrell

"I only feel angry when I see waste; when I see people throwing away things we could use."

These heartfelt words were spoken by St Teresa of Calcutta, one of the most renowned advocates of peace, selflessness and harmony, so we find it hard to believe that she could become angry. However, the issue of waste and 'throwaway culture' which is not only a flaw with the attitudes of individuals but with the fundamentals of society, has evidently evoked this emotion. We ask why the lives of the global community have become more about the materialistic idea of having than being a community at all. The answer is largely uncertain but with today's monumental influence from social media and other platforms, we inquire: how much choice do we really have?

It is plain to see that we live in a beautiful, fruitful world that provides for us all we need, so why is it that even as the most intelligent species, we seem to not only corrupt our planet but ourselves? Truly, most of us are not aware that such a wasteful and disposable lifestyle can be a direct threat to the creation we hold dear. As Christians, it is taught we must be caring stewards to God's creation, it seems selfish to ruin it for future generations by our constant impulsive need for the latest trends and then almost immediate loss of interest in the very same purchase. This is defined as consumerism. This environmentally toxic behaviour involves a blasé attitude or indifference to sustainability and the quality of materials used.

Laudato Si' challenges lack of awareness on these issues, stating that we cannot simply "brush this under the carpet" anymore. Unfortunately, culprits of this carpet brushing are social media or company advertising, highly influential forums that often give an airbrushed version of important details about the very framework in which we function, leading to a void between what we see and the real consequences of our actions. For instance, I doubt that you are aware that 300,000 tons of clothing goes to landfill in the UK per year, according to *The Times* newspaper. This is because we have been cultured to live in the short-term, purchasing items e.g. clothing without considering their longevity or impact upon the environment. As we have advanced as an economy, financial restrictions have become less of an issue for us in the UK. We have endured a shift from 'make, do and mend' to 'buy, bin, and move on' leading to my next point...

How we are influenced to treat the world is an evolution, which I realised when talking with my "untainted" younger brother, who at the tender age of seven alerted my mother that we should ensure we separate our plastic to save the turtles. Similarly, he became eager to support charities by donating old clothing/toys. It seemed strange that these were linked, but as a matter of fact, by reducing waste, we are helping others, an essential message outlined in Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment - caring for God's creation and caring for each other come hand in hand. How?

Suddenly, it occurred to me that my brother, being a youngster, had not been exposed nearly as much to the fast-paced lifestyle focused on having, but not necessarily keeping. We can ask a question of how society has developed to a place where we litter 24 billion items of plastic yearly, according to the Worldwide Fund for Nature; not only wasting a non-biodegradable product but not disposing of it responsibly. The evolution of throwaway culture arguably began when plastic started to be widely used in the 1960s. Products became less focused on quality and more on efficiency or price.

When it became the normality for both parents in a household to work, life was more stressful and it was essential to be able to make life more "efficient". The market then opened to reveal ready meals and packet mixes which involved extensive packaging. This was unknown as a problem at the time but the word 'disposable' was brought forth as an attractive selling point more than ever before. Modern society can also be blamed for an increasingly fast turnover of the next big thing to have via media influencers and celebrities. As research quickened and the quaternary industry expanded, subsequently so did the demand to keep up. People became more ambitious and seemingly materialistic with the popularity of new technologies. My eyes were opened upon speaking with my mother as she polished her shoes. She stated that as a young girl, her whole family would take exceptional care of their shoes, polishing and keeping them for years. Well, in this day and age it is probable that we do not even own some shoes long enough to polish them.

There are clearly some catastrophic effects of the throwaway culture but one of the most shocking is the effect on wildlife. It can take up to 450 years for some plastic bottles to degrade so, in this time, when there is not enough room for landfill plastic, much of this waste can be deposited in the ocean. By living a little more simply as suggested by Catholic Social Teaching, we can prevent a multitude of disasters for the environment. These include the deaths of huge numbers of marine life, water pollution, contaminated coastlines and many more which we, as Christians, realise are violations of respect for our delicate planet.

To conclude, I believe that the effects of the throwaway culture, although devastating, are also manageable. As a Christian community, we can reach further out to one another globally and follow the teaching of role models like Pope Francis and St Teresa of Calcutta. If slowly, but surely, we begin to reduce consumption, recycle and reuse rather than "repeatedly rubbish", it is possible to treat our world as it was intended once again.

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<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39252>

DIARY DATES

MAY

12-18 Christian Aid Week www.christianaid.org.uk

15 International Conscientious Objectors Day <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>

JUNE

15-21 Refugee Week <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

JULY

17-19 July 42nd Annual Justice and Peace Conference '2020 Vision – Action for Life on Earth' The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick. Five years on from *Laudato Si'* we are learning that ecological conversion is a matter of life and death. Decisions at United Nations summits in 2020 on both climate and biodiversity will be critical for salvaging a viable future. Join us in Conference 2020 as we make common cause to face the choices, changes and consequences confronting us.

Book here: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PDF-Booking-form-1-1.pdf>

We are continuing to take bookings at the present for the conference and have arranged the AGM for Sunday July 19 at 1.45 after the conference. We will continue to review the situation in light of any future guidance from the government or action by The Hayes Conference Centre.

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

- 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 regular news and information 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

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