



***“I believe that true evangelisation
is born of love and desire: a love for all people and a
desire that they come to know the love of Christ and the
blessings of living in his kingdom.”***

Annie O'Connor 2016

Dear Friends,

Beautiful words above, taken from the writings of Annie O'Connor, and put together by her Mum, Anne, for the Advent Reflections used on the NJPN website. It made me think that, really, the work that everyone does for the NJPN is borne out of love and desire to help our fellow human beings, as well as to protect our ailing planet. Surely the doing of all of that is the best form of true evangelisation. Leading by example.

I love Gaudete Sunday - a time to celebrate and look forward to the light that is about to enter our world; a lift to the quiet, reflective time that begins Advent. In a dark and tragic world, it is nice to hear of the positive things that are going on in communities all around the country, and indeed the world. Many thanks to so many of you who make such a difference, either through getting involved, or donating in some way.

This will be the last e-bulletin before Christmas, so I will take this opportunity to wish all of you a Happy and Blessed Christmas - and may we all pray for a better, safer, 2021. Our next edition will be out at the beginning of January.

Don't forget, if you have something you particularly want shared, send it to ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org.uk.

Blessings to you all,

Editor

Please note we are still using a temporary postal address due to the closure of the Eccleston Square office:

Geoff Thompson, NJPN, c/o CAFOD Lancaster Volunteer Centre, St Walburge's Centre, St Walburge's Gardens, Preston PR2 2QJ.

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***** ACTION OF THE WEEK *****

Is Modern Slavery a Big Problem?

The simple answer is "yes".

RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation) held an Awareness-Raising Webinar this week, which covered it's mission, health and prevention, the power of stories and harnessing the power of social media and technology. It also showed how many Groups are working to tackle the issue. The recording of this Webinar is not on their website yet, but should be soon. In the meantime, our Action this week is to check out the [RENATE website](#), and subscribe to their [newsletter](#).

NEWS AND COMMENT

1. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is a crime against humanity. That's legal speak for one of the worst crimes out there!

Victims can be any age, race or gender. Some don't even understand that they have been exploited or are entitled to help or support.

You can make a huge difference by knowing the signs of possible exploitation and how to report it. Details of how to spot exploitation can be

found on the [Medaille Trust website](#). There are also real-life stories about the people that the Medaille Trust are helping, and how they came to be in the position that they did. [Read them here](#).

Anti-Slavery International are also working to end slavery. Details of their work is available [here](#).

They are running a campaign to Help Protect Victims of Slavery in the UK, many of whom are beaten, raped and enslaved - and then sent to Detention Centres. To add your name to the e-petition, click [here](#).

The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery was marked on the 2nd December. Vatican News has an article about the focus of the day, and about what can be done to sort out the root causes. [Click here to read](#).

2. Human Rights Day 10th December 2020

Human Rights Day is annually celebrated on 10 December. It marks the date when the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – a milestone document that proclaims the inalienable rights of everyone regardless of color, race, religion, sex, property, birth, language or status.

For the annual observance this year, the UN proposed “Recover Better – Stand Up for Human Rights” as the theme. It relates to the ongoing Covid-19 health crisis, focusing on the importance of building back better by ensuring that Human Rights are at the centre of recovery efforts.

The Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič reflects on the Church's role in promoting respect for the inalienable human rights of all in an interview with [Vatican News](#).

On the flip side of this, in Pakistan, Christians and other religious minorities, as well as vulnerable and defenceless people, have been called to observe a "Black Day for Human Rights" across Pakistan on the same day in protest against the increasing number of violence and violations of their inalienable rights. Read about this from [Vatican News here](#).

3. Latest NJPN Columns in The Universe

4th December: - Fr. Rob Esdaile (Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton) 'A Time for Eccentrics'

Advent is an eccentric time. I don't necessarily mean 'odd' (though the way our culture has stuffed a season of restraint, pregnant anticipation and hope with Yuletide feasting is definitely quite contrary). I mean it's focus lies beyond itself. It points both to the future (Christ will come again) and the past (his birth at Bethlehem) to provoke an encounter in the present. And, as with those mechanical systems which operate outside their natural centre of gravity, there is something inherently unsettling in that. A good living of this season draws us beyond habitual orbits.

John the Baptist is the Advent figure par excellence and undeniably eccentric in both senses of the word. Decidedly odd (all camel skins, locusts and wild honey) and a bit too 'shouty' for our tastes, he also points beyond the here and now. He is the voice crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare a way for the Lord!' (Mk 1.1-8) and 'the witness to speak for the light' (Jn 1.6-8).

A leader whose narrative was not about himself: that would be a refreshing prospect! A figure both indicating a way forward and inviting the whole community to unite in making straight the crooked paths: that is surely what

we need if we are to 'build back better' post-pandemic. But if we want that to happen in the political space, then we need prophetic voices in the Church space, too. We need to allow ourselves to be eccentric in the truest sense. Our focus also must be beyond ourselves, our centre of gravity outside our own immediate orbit, fixed on God's Kingdom and the sharing of God's mercy.

However, if we choose that trajectory we shall certainly be viewed by our neighbours as eccentric in the other sense. There is something odd about Christians who speak up and act up, not just observing the crooked ways but demanding change and working with the like-minded to achieve it.

There is something peculiar in those who embrace sufficiency in a world of excess – contenting themselves with 'wild honey and locusts' rather than the overprovisioned online shop. Some understand that here and now truth is not yet fully realised and that our pilgrimage, our struggle, must go on.

Yes, that is all a little strange – though not as strange as the prospect of Jesus Emmanuel, Divinity enfleshed in a new-born infant in a borrowed byre in Bethlehem. That truly is eccentric.

11th December - Henrietta Cullinan (Henrietta is a Peace Activist and a Writer)

'Clothing and Justice'

This week two retail giants, Debenhams, with stores in 240 high streets, and Arcadia Group, owner of Top Shop, have gone into administration, putting tens of thousands of shop workers, mostly women, at risk of losing their jobs.

While many are opposed to fast fashion, others still dream of a new outfit for every night out, even though these days there is never a night out.

Knowing this, fast fashion brand Pretty Little Things has been giving away cash prizes of up to £10,000 in order to lure back its customers. By its very

nature fast fashion depends on exploitation and wastefulness, with many clothes ending up in landfill.

I really enjoy clothes. I enjoy the sensation of different textures and colours. This lock down, I've found upcycling a rewarding pastime. Through mending and darning jeans in particular, I have learnt a lot about their construction. Supposedly workwear, they turn out to be not fit for purpose. The fabric is brittle and comes apart after just a few washes. The rivets and buttons make them unrecyclable. In contrast, a well-made cardigan can last as long as a building, unless it's attacked by moths.

In a time when I hardly step out of my pool sliders, clothes have acquired a new weightiness. Getting dressed to go out and meet a socially distanced friend, means taking care to be warm enough, and appear 'decent', as my grandmother would have said.

During Advent we're supposed to be getting ready. It is a custom, after all, in many cultures to buy new clothes for an important feast day. Clothing images feature strongly in an Isaiah reading from the Third Sunday of Advent. 'He has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice' [61:11].

In this image of bride and bride groom, adorned with ornaments and jewels, the garment in question represents perfect justice. Isaiah, a few chapters earlier, writes, 'Look, they are falling apart like a garment, the moth will eat them up' (50:9). Accusers with no case to answer are like a badly-made piece of clothing. This garment represents shame and emptiness.

Every fifty metres on my high street of boarded up shops there is someone hungry and begging. The council has forgotten the Christmas decorations. The high street giants need to read the signs of the times. In a time of injustice and inequality, we know their garments will fall apart.

Our thanks go to our friends at The Universe for supporting us. If you would like to take out a subscription to their newspaper, please follow [this link](#).

4. Climate/Environment Matters

Faith, Science and Youth Webinar - This took place on the 9th December, but if you missed it live, you can still catch up with it on [YouTube](#).

It was organized by the Vatican Covid19 commission and its partners. In this webinar, you will hear from H.E. Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, Prof. John Schellnhuber and Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim; an exchange on calls and expectations towards the Climate Ambition Summit, which was held on the 12th of December on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement. The aim of this webinar is thus to urge governments to raise ambition through a faith, science, youth voice.

To read a synopsis of the event, please go to [Vatican News](#).

A news report from Friends of the Earth received yesterday said:-

"We've won! The Prime Minister has announced that the UK will end public investment in new climate-wrecking oil and gas projects overseas. This is massive news. And you should be incredibly proud that you helped make it happen.

Throughout 2020, tens of thousands of you called on the government to stop the funding of fossil fuel projects abroad. And today (12th December 2020) – on a day that marks the 5-year anniversary of the signing of the historic Paris Agreement – your sustained pressure has paid off."

Good news indeed.

COP26 Coalition



The COP26 Coalition is a civil society coalition made of groups and individuals from a range of constituencies in Scotland and the rest of the UK, including trade unions, direct action networks, climate justice groups, environment and development NGOs, faith groups, students and youth, migrant and racial justice networks.

For those who don't know, COP26 is an international summit under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The United Kingdom will host the meeting, originally planned to take place in Glasgow in November 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic it has been postponed to November 2021.

COP26 Coalition has some great things going on that you can get involved in. To subscribe to their fortnightly newsletter, The Rising Clyde, which will send you details of everything, [click here](#).

Finally, Rev. Prof. Ioan Sauca, Interim General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, reflects on the fact that, five years after the Paris Agreement, *"we have a chance to carve out a decent future"*.

For the full article, go to the [WCC website](#).

5. Covid-19 and an action

It has not been a good week in regards to Covid-19 statistics in this country. Cases are very much on the increase, and we have all been asked to keep up with all of the measures that have been put in place. The good news is, for the UK at least, that the vaccinations have been started

(although many of us are concerned about the limited testing that has been done). Having said that, at least our Government has been able to afford the vaccine. Many will not be so lucky, as highlighted in the following news report from Oxfam on the 9th December.

Campaigners warn that 9 out of 10 people in poor countries are set to miss out on COVID-19 vaccine next year. Rich countries have hoarded enough doses to vaccinate their entire populations nearly three times over.

It goes on to say that nearly 70 poor countries will only be able to vaccinate one in ten people against COVID-19 next year unless urgent action is taken by governments and the pharmaceutical industry to make sure enough doses are produced. Read the full report [here](#).

Global Justice Now have also highlighted this issue about countries in the global south being at the back of the queue when it comes to the vaccines. To watch their video on Facebook, [click here](#).

They are holding a People's Vaccine Day of Action on the 14th December demanding that the vaccine gets shared with the world. [Sign up here](#).

The Catholic Bishops Conference for England and Wales have issued a follow-up statement on the Covid-19 vaccinations, expressing that one may, in good conscience and for a grave reason receive the vaccine even if it has been developed from cell lines originating from an aborted foetus in 1983. To read the full statement, go to the [CBCEW website](#).

6. Refugees/Migrants

Can the UK Government decide to arbitrarily deny asylum claims?

The Jesuit Refugee Service have an interview with Michael Tarnoky on the UK's recent changes to immigration laws. Unfortunately, the changes being made do not appear to put the needs and protection of people at the

centre. Read the full article on the [JRS website here.](#)

Also on the JRS website, Sarah Teather reports that the Home Office are showing a disregard for human life, and are by-passing their own policies to rapidly remove victims of trafficking.

[Read all about it here.](#)

The Truth about Refugees

Seeking Sanctuary have produced this [YouTube](#) video about the refugee situation, and the reasons why people feel driven to leave their own country.

'Seeking Sanctuary' aims to raise awareness about people displaced from their homes and to channel basic humanitarian assistance from Faith Communities and Community Organisations via partnerships with experienced aid workers. "Our special concern is for the 2000 or so exiles who are stuck in north-western France, mistakenly expecting a welcome in the UK.

They need food, water, good counsel and clothes, which are accepted, sorted and distributed by several organisations, including two Calais warehouses which also supply needs further afield."

For more information on Seeking Sanctuary, [click here.](#)

7. Middle East

Christians Leaving the Middle East

On the 10th December, the Vatican organised a meeting of over 50 Catholic agencies to address the humanitarian emergency, the refugee crisis and the exodus of Christians from Syria, Iraq and neighbouring countries. To read about the dire situation, exacerbated by the pandemic, and to read what was said, go to [Vatican News.](#)

Concern at Humanitarian Situation in Ethiopia

As fighting continues in some areas of northern Ethiopia, aid agencies are warning of a deteriorating humanitarian situation. Expressing his concern for defenceless citizens, Pope Francis has twice appealed to warring parties in the Horn of Africa nation to reject violence and find a peaceful resolution to disagreements. Over the last few weeks, thousands of people have died, and more than 40,000 refugees have fled to Sudan. To read and listen to the article, [click here](#).

8. The Legacy of the Maryknoll Sisters murdered in El Salvador

On December 2, 1980, four Catholic missionaries from the United States working in El Salvador were raped and murdered by five members of the El Salvador National Guard. They were Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Dorothy Kazel, and lay missionary Jean Donovan. All four of the women had been urged to come home by their families and friends, but despite the escalating situation over there, they chose to stay. This tale of their incredible determination to keep on with their work, which led to their murder, is told brilliantly by Margaret Swedish for [America Magazine](#). She links it in with the crisis we have been through this year, and asks where our faith lies. Well worth a read.

9. Just 51 Days until Nuclear Weapons are Illegal

Christian CND writes, 'After years of campaigning, lobbying and praying, nuclear weapons will be banned under international law on Friday 22 January 2021. This is something we have all worked and prayed for, and a time to pause, celebrate and give thanks God.'

Christian CND is teaming up with friends in the Network of Christian Peace Organisations for a range of activities ahead of the day. Please go to

their [website](#) for more information.

Last month 31 Anglican Bishops issued an open-letter calling on the UK government to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which will come into legal force on Friday 22 January 2021.

Read their letter [here](#).

NEWSLETTERS

10. Medaille Trust Winter 2020

'Hope on the Horizon.' News from the Medaille Trust and their work to improve the lives of victims of modern slavery. [Read it here](#).

11. Lancaster Faith and Justice December 2020

A lot of very interesting articles, in particular on modern slavery, our lead theme for this e-bulletin. You can access it [here](#).

12. Church Action for Tax Justice December Newsletter

Tax Justice issues and ways that you can get involved, along with some bible study events. Click on this [link](#).

13. Campaign Against the Arms Trade 2020 Round Up

'2020 has been a year like no other but together we've still had significant success in our campaigning – [here are nine ways we took on the arms trade this year](#).'

14. Diocese of Nottingham Justice and Peace Commission

The Diocese of Nottingham have lots of interesting things that you can get involved in through their website. The fortnightly edition of Grapevine has just been published. Not only does it have articles to read, but also there are lots of events going on. [Access it here](#), and please subscribe to a regular copy [here](#). You can also read their Winter 2020 Edition of '[Just Now](#)' .

EVENTS and COMPETITIONS (in chronological order where applicable)

15. 15th December 2pm-3pm

Christmas Gathering on the Margins

[Join Church Action on Poverty](#) for an opportunity to connect with people across the country to hear each other's stories, and share some Christmas cheer.

16. 17th December 7.30pm

Stand Up for Palestine - featuring Alexei Sayle

Palestine Solidarity Campaign are thrilled to announce this very special seasonal online fundraiser.

The show will feature none other than a true comedy legend, the fantastic Alexei Sayle, who will be in conversation with the compere, human rights activist turned comedian Daphna Baram; plus fast-rising talent Mo Omar, outstanding Sameena Zehra and the award winning Alasdair Beckett-King. For more details on getting tickets and how to join, [click here](#).

17. 21st December through to Christmas Day

Share the Light Campaign

UK Churches and Christians have been asked to 'Share the Light' on the shortest day of the year, through to Christmas Day, by placing a light in their windows, as a symbol of hope.

Independent Catholic News reports that the 'Share The Light' campaign is the concept of newly-appointed Chief Creative Officer at CPO Resources, Stew Smith, who also produced the film that is at the core of the campaign, featuring Delirious? frontman Martin Smith. The campaign is encouraging Christians around the nation to share the film across social media in order to celebrate and thank those who have been lights to our nation this year.

Read the article from [ICN here](#).

The Share the Light video can be viewed [here](#).

18. 14th January 2021 11am - 12.15pm

God is in Business: economic justice and Christian faith



God is in Business invites Christians to join in building a just economy within the ecological limits of the Earth.

Join Nottingham Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission for an interactive session to consider what business is for, the impact of globalisation, and the connections between trade justice and climate action

- all from a Gospel perspective.

We'll explore alternatives like 'doughnut economics', Kate Raworth's model of what the economy should really be about - meeting genuine needs and protecting the earth.

It's a taster in a series of 'café conversations' called Plenty! being prepared for the Joy in Enough project of the charity Green Christian.

[Click here for more information and to book your place.](#)

19. 20th February 2021

End Racism - Schools Media Competition



20. 21st February 2021

Church Action on Poverty Sunday will be on the theme of 'New Wineskins'. We invite you to join churches across the UK and be part of this special day:

Give, act and pray to ensure people on the margins are fully involved in the world we build as we emerge from the pandemic

We live in tough times. The past few months have highlighted the inequalities that sweep too many people into poverty. But we have also been reminded of the values that matter most: mutuality, compassion and community. As we journey forward together, we have the chance to do things differently. If we are to build a society in which everyone can live a

full life, free from poverty, we must ensure the voices of people who are struggling to make ends meet are heard.

Join churches around the UK in prayer, giving and action this Church Action on Poverty Sunday. Share a vision for a society founded on compassion and justice, where all people are able to exercise dignity, agency and power.

Get your [Resource Pack here...](#)

ACTIONS/APPEALS

21. Ask Royal Mail to deliver a Living Wage

Share Action writes "This Christmas will be a Christmas like no other. Restrictions mean we will not all be able to be with our families this year. Our postal service is going to play a huge role this festive season. It will allow us to exchange gifts and cards – to connect to our loved ones where we can not physically be close.

Royal Mail is prepared to meet this increased demand. They have hired over 30,000 temporary staff – an unprecedented amount. But these workers will ***not be paid a Living Wage.***"

[Click here](#) to write to Royal Mail and ask them to deliver a Living Wage.

22. Tell the British Government to help secure justice for Rohingya

For the first time the Burmese military is facing charges of genocide in an international court.

But instead of joining the case and trying to secure justice for the Rohingya, the British government is standing on the side-lines doing nothing.

Tell the British government to join the genocide case at the International Court of Justice. [Click here](#) to add your name.

23. Send a Christmas Card to a political prisoner in Burma

As Christmas approaches, there are almost 230 political prisoners in jail in Burma. They won't be able to spend Christmas in their own home with their families. Many of them were arrested simply for peacefully protesting, or making jokes about the military. Please add a political prisoner to your Christmas Card list. [Details available here.](#)

24. Britain Talks Climate - a Questionnaire

Can you help Green Christian by answering 16 golden questions?

[Go to the Climate Outreach page here.](#)

25. Send your MP a Reset the Debt Bauble or Letter

Over 6 million families are being weighed down by debt they were forced to take on by Covid-19. This Christmas, it's time to give families burdened by debt a fresh start and a more hopeful future. That's why Church Action on Poverty has teamed up with the Methodist, Baptist, United Reformed Churches and Church of Scotland to ask the Chancellor to create a Jubilee Fund, to pay off and cancel unavoidable Covid debt for households in the UK.

Could you send your MP a Reset The Debt bauble, and ask them to remember those who are weighed down by debt this Christmas?

[More details available here.](#)

26. Tell Priti Patel to honour her promise to the Windrush victims

We're two years on from the Windrush scandal and the victims are still

suffering and without justice.

People like Renford McIntyre, who arrived in the UK over 50 years ago and went on to work for the NHS. His life was torn apart by the Windrush scandal and he was made homeless. Renford applied for compensation for this trauma over a year ago. He is still waiting. Renford's story is heartbreaking. And there are hundreds more people with stories just like it. This week, an Equality and Human Rights Commission investigation into the government's hostile environment policies found that they were illegal! The government now has to review their policies to make sure they comply with their own equality laws. But we need to make sure that this is not just another review - these victims deserve the real justice they were promised.

Will you email Priti Patel and ask her to keep her promise to the Windrush victims. [Click here](#) to add your name.

E-Petitions

27. Sign to demand an arms embargo on Israel

Last week, the Israeli Chief of General Staff met with the UK Chief of the Defence Staff and signed a joint agreement to "formalise and enhance" military co-operation between the UK and Israel.

The deal must be rescinded, alongside the enactment of an immediate two-ways arms embargo until Israel stops deploying brutal and indiscriminate military force to violate the human rights of the Palestinian people.

[Sign the Petition here.](#)

28. Total's Mega Oil Project in Uganda

Devastation is being caused to both people and the environment in Uganda, caused by Total's Mega Oil Project. Various organisations, including Friends of the Earth, are supporting Ugandan communities to take Total to court in France. Listen to the video [here](#). You can then sign the [petition here](#).

Resources

29. Fratelli Tutti -

The Vatican now have a website specifically for 'Fratelli Tutti.' "It aims to spread the message about the fraternity and social friendship of the Encyclical in a capillary way, deepening and making known all the aspects proper to the text and the magisterium of the Holy Father in this sense," [Access it here](#).

30. THE LAST WORD

Let's Unite the World for Christmas

A song for this current time, written by Guide Dog Owner, Mark Whitton, and sung by his niece, Sarah Edwards in aid of three charities - UNICEF, Crisis and Guide Dogs for the Blind. If you like the song, they would be very grateful if you could share it amongst family and friends. Listen to it on [YouTube here](#).

Advent Reflections for 2020

Anne O'Connor, whose beloved eldest daughter, Annie, passed away in June, has put together some Advent Reflections based around some of

Annie's writings and blogs. In case you missed them last time, they are available to [read here](#).

NEWS LINKS

Independent Catholic News

Find Justice and Peace stories at:

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/justice-peace-environment>

[Sign up](#) to receive these regularly.

Catholic Communications Network

Find news stories at www.catholicnews.org.uk

Latest Zenit Headlines [here](#)

Vatican News homepage: www.vaticannews.va

World Council of Churches

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/>

UK Parliament News

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/>

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The items above are emails received from around the Network which may be of interest to those involved in working for justice and peace.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of NJPN.

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Urgent Actions:

We sometimes receive emails that need immediate action and cannot wait for the weekly bulletin. To receive these items email the same address with “**urgent actions**” in the subject box.

If you appreciate these bulletins, help to keep them coming by donating to NJPN:

Send cheques payable to NJPN to: NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX.

*Make a regular donation by **standing order**: Download standing order/membership forms from <http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/>*

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