NJPN E-Bulletin 3rd January 2021

"Peace, justice and care of creation are three inherently connected questions, which cannot be separated in such a way as to be treated individually ..."

Quotation from the 2021 World Peace Day Message

Dear Friends.

I hope you had a peaceful and blessed Christmas, despite the Tier that you have been put into. We all know that we just have to make the best of it, although it seems harsh and unfair at times. Hopefully, this time next year it will be a completely different scenario.

Our Action of the Week and lead article are all about Peace Sunday, being celebrated on the 17th January 2021. Yes, it is in advance of the date, but it is really important that you take action and bring it to the attention of your Parish Priest, and anyone else you can. Particularly this year, when Mass attendances are a fraction of what they were (and who knows whether we will still be having Mass in two weeks' time; the situation is very fluid at present).

I wish you all a Happy and healthy New Year. The next bulletin will be out on Peace Sunday, and don't forget, if you have something you particularly want shared, send it to:-

ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org.uk. God bless, Editor

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ACTION OF THE WEEK



'A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace'

This year, more than ever, we should be celebrating and raising awareness of Peace Sunday.

Although it is still two weeks away, please do highlight the resources available on their website to your Parish Priest, including the Letter to Priests from Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP, National President of Pax Christi England and Wales.

In these challenging times a creative approach will be especially important and Pax Christi is here to support everyone with a wide range of resources and ideas.

Start planning now!

NEWS AND COMMENT

1. Peace Issues

A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace in Africa

The message of peace is always the clarion call of the Church, to the world, on the first day of the New Year. This Year 2021, Pope Francis wants us to cultivate a culture of care as a path to peace.

<u>Vatican News</u> reports on Pope Francis' message and the situation in Africa.

2. Refugees and Migrants

We deplore King Herod for his historic cruelty. But we are hardly any better.

Valerie Schulz for America Magazine has written a very thought-provoking piece, likening the plight of the Holy Innocents to what has been going on in modern day America under the Trump Administration, with parents and children being separated when they look to countries like America and the UK for help. 'The Holy Innocents of today continue to arrive and ask for our help. They are at our border and in our jails. The way we welcome them or neglect them tells the story of who we are as a nation and lately it is not looking very Christian. We deplore the despot Herod for his historic cruelty. The blood of the Holy Innocents forever stains him. But we are hardly better.'

Read the article here.

Reporting: a pointless and damaging Home Office condition

Ahmed, who is a member of JRS UK's refugee-led advocacy group 'Refugees Call for Change', has drawn on insights of the group as a whole when writing this blog for JRS. In it he explains the practice used to undermine and degrade those seeking asylum.

Read it here.

Born in a stable: the plight of those who do not belong

On the 1st of April 2020, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, 14 guests from 'Hope for Southall Street Homeless' shelter were provided with hotel accommodation by Ealing council and the Greater London Authority. It addressed an immediate problem. Since then, the staff of HSSH have been supporting them as best as possible.

The work continues to look after those homeless people who have been housed in hotels and hostels. As we learn to love with COVID-19, efforts have been made to provide permanent accommodation for these people. However, this offer is not open to all. Those with uncertain immigration status, or who are still being processed by the system, do not have access to public funds or benefits.

A film about the plight of the guests of Hope for Southall Street Homeless has been made by two Jesuits with the help of shelter staff. The film has been entered for the Ealing Film Festival, and can be accessed through Mill Hill Missionaries.

Holy Innocents: The case of refugees in Israel

Each year the Holy Land attracts millions of pilgrims from around the world. It is a special place for Christians, Jews and Muslims. What the average pilgrim is not aware of, however, is that this region has also become a promised land for hundreds of thousands of refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, the Philippines and India. Within the last ten years over 63 thousand economic migrants and asylum seekers have flowed out from Asia and Africa to Israel.

To find out more about the situation that made them leave their homelands, and to discover the impact on Israel and what the local Catholic Church is doing to provide some care to those who have fled their homes, go to the Mill Hill Missionaries website.

3. Latest NJPN Columns in The Universe

18/25 December: - Phil Kerton, Co-Director of Seeking Sanctuary 'Celebrating Migrants'

UN International Migrants Day is observed on 18 December. There are 272 million migrants in the world, most living new lives and building communities in new lands. Most move voluntarily, but 80 million have been forcibly displaced from their homes, and less than half of these (40%) seek refuge abroad, most moving to safer regions of their native countries.

Migration has shaped humanity for millennia, as many Old Testament stories reveal. Migrants leave home seeking safety or opportunities to reinvent themselves through education and training. They hope to establish lives free from prejudice and discrimination.

The UN Day reminds us of the generosity of host communities that embrace newcomers, who often arrive with little or nothing to their

names. Many of these receiving communities are next door to states producing migrants and are fragile and limited in resources, yet still offer a welcome.

Societies are not static: community networks constantly fracture and regrow when factors such as economic recession, ageing populations or the tensions of different political views cause change. So much of the migration debate is about whether it is good or bad, too costly, or pays out too much or too little. But considering only numbers and economics fails to recognise the God-given humanity and potential of each individual involved.

Migration is not a scapegoat for all the ills of society: rather, with the right structures of welcome, it can be an important element of a cure.

In his recent encyclical, Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis focuses on social friendship, proposing a hopeful vision for a new way of living based upon a love which sees us all realise our place in the wider human family. One of his concerns is the treatment of those forced to flee their homes. He again asks for steps to welcome, protect, and integrate new arrivals. He wants to see a 'culture of encounter' where host communities and new arrivals exchange and share the gifts of each other's cultures to enrich all involved.

Our Faith should lead us to uphold the dignity of every human being. Important themes from our social teaching are solidarity and community, encouraging dialogue and peacebuilding alongside people of all faiths and none.

We share common values and join together in caring for one another, making real the Pope's vision for a future based on love and compassion. Christmas and the New Year are good times to take this seriously!

18/25 December – Barbara Butler, Executive Secretary of Christians Aware, and an ecumenical member of the NJPN

'Journeys of Healing'

The Magi followed the star from their homes in the East to Bethlehem. Their journey brings out the essential truth of Christ's incarnation, that he was a gift for all the peoples of the earth, poor and rich, old and young, living and dying.

The traditional Epiphany story is of the Magi taking gifts to the Christ child. They are obviously rich and have gifts to give. The child Jesus and his family are poor and rejected, living in a stable with the animals. This is a story of giving and receiving and some of the giving is from the Magi to the child.

But the Magi kneel to the child because they know that they are receiving the greatest gift of all, the gift of new and everlasting life.

The gift of the child is not easy to understand. It can only be discerned by those who go beyond the star, beyond the story, to live the life that is offered in a world of suffering and need.

The graceful gift of the Christ Child may, if we receive it humbly and thankfully, gives us all courage to go out into our war and virus-torn world, divided in so many ways and yet the one world we all share, to listen and learn and to go on to share desperately needed hospitality and healing.

When we have the courage to do this and to be part of the suffering world, instead of being on the outside trying to help, we may realise and recognise the Christ who is already there in every place and person. The challenge we face is to work to change the world as partners with our fellow human beings, so that it is a fit place for the Christ and for all people.

Jesus and his family became refugees from the destructive fury of Herod almost as soon as the Magi had left. They made the long journey to Egypt, where they stayed until after Herod had died. They are part of the history long suffering community of refugees whose numbers are growing in our world every minute of every day.

Read Matthew 2. 1 – 18 and the Christians Aware leaflet – 'Beyond the Star.'

www.christiansaware.co.uk

1 January – Bruce Kent, Vice President of both Pax Christi and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

In many ways the end of 2020 is a gloomy time. Covid is on an upward move.... already nearly 70,000 deaths in this country alone. Worldwide, hundreds of thousands more.

Aged 91, I am told to be very careful. Neighbours kept at a distance. My admiration for those brave people - doctors, nurses and workers of all sorts in the NHS - is unlimited. A quick dash around the local park is all I am allowed to manage. Sunday Mass is possible but only if zoomed in from somewhere else.

That's enough gloom for the moment.

There IS great news for the whole world, but it doesn't seem to have been noticed by very many. On Friday 22 January an International Treaty comes into force. The possession and deployment of nuclear weapons will become illegal in over 120 countries which have signed up to the new Treaty so far. The nine countries now possessing nuclear weapons will have to be careful where and how they move them. That is a new logistical problem. More importantly, the message is now clear. About two-thirds of the world thinks it is illegal to have them at all.

In our British case it is stupid as well. We boast about having independent nuclear weapons. What an illusion. We do make those mass murder warheads but we have to borrow the missiles on which to put them from the United States. It's as 'independent' as a family car for which one has to rely on some distant neighbour for the wheels!

Pope Francis has shone a very powerful light on the immorality of nuclear weaponry. He has gone far beyond rejecting the actual use of such weapons, as other Popes have done before. In November 2017 at a meeting in Rome he went much further: 'If we take into account the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error or any kind, the threat of their use, as well as their very possession is to be firmly condemned.'

Pope Francis tells us that 'security' based on nuclear weapons is an immoral illusion. Real human security is about food, health, human rights and opportunities for everybody on the planet. Let us follow Pope Francis, and take positive action in 2021 to get our government to sign up to the new Treaty.

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

From the ground up #2: Taking Action Now

(COP26 Coalition)



This is an open invitation to the global climate justice movement, including those working for social and economic justice around the globe, to help us organise and deliver an energising two day online global gathering in March 2021.

Submissions are open until 18th January 2021. From there, we'll start to design a programme which captures the spread of the submitted proposals. By the end of January 2021 we will let you know if we can include your session.

For more information, go to the <u>COP26 Coalition website</u>. At the bottom you will find a button to click on to submit your session idea.

UK Government will end support for fossil fuels overseas

Those of you who subscribe to CAFOD news will already be aware that on the 11th December it was announced that Boris Johnson and the Government will end their support for fossil fuels overseas. The Government says it will bring in the ban ahead of the UN 'COP26' climate talks which the UK will host in November 2021 in Glasgow.

This is a huge step forwards. For the full details go to the <u>CAFOD</u> website.

Time to face difficult climate truths, argue scholars

A senior Church of England cleric has signed a public letter in The Guardian calling for open discussion of the risk that society faces 'disruption and even collapse' from climate change. The Very Rev Dr Frances Ward, who was Dean of St Edmundsbury Cathedral until 2017, joins over 250 scientists and scholars from across the world in subjects ranging from climatology and agriculture to philosophy and theology in arguing that 'it is time to invite each other into difficult conversations'.

To read the full details, including a link to the letter in The Guardian, go to the <u>Green Christian website</u>.

5. Covid-19

A Just Distribution of the Covid Vaccine

We have been pushing for this for some while, and in fact highlighted it in the last e-bulletin, but now faith leaders have produced a joint paper on 22nd December, asking for global equity in the distribution of the Covid vaccines. Read the article in Vatican News here.

6. Middle East

Lebanon - Pope issues appeal for stricken Lebanon

Lebanon is mired in its worst political and economic crisis in decades, with its currency plummeting and massive layoffs, as well as soaring prices and rising poverty. It also hosts some 1.5 million Syrian refugees who are now living in poverty, including around one million registered as refugees with the United Nations. The economic downturn has been compounded by the Covid pandemic and the deadly explosion in Beirut's port in August, all of which have raised serious concerns regarding the country's capacity to recover.

Pope Francis has issued a letter to the Church in Lebanon, in which he makes an urgent appeal to political and religious leaders, and the international community, to help the nation overcome the grave crisis it finds itself in. Vatican News have the full report here.

NEWSLETTERS

7. Global Justice Now

'What we have stood for together in 2020. Together we have fought for immediate changes to global rules which currently prevent governments from protecting their people's health and livelihoods – on the streets, in the media, in parliament and in the inboxes of the powerful.'

Read the full round-up of their achievements in 2020 here.

8. Salesians of Don Bosco December 2020

Their Organisation of the Month is Friends of the Holy Land, and the newsletter is based around their plight, and how you can help. Click here.

9. Biofuelwatch December 2020

Their final update of the year, along with a brief reflection on 2020. Go to their website here.

10. London Mining Network December 2020

Lots of news on their work and where you can take action is available from their website by <u>clicking here.</u>

11. Joint Public Issues Team Review of 2020

2020 has been a strange year, full of news and activities we would never have expected. Looking back, the JPIT team have gathered their favourite books, podcasts, hobbies and more, which got them through this year.

Click here to read.

12. Operation Noah December Newsletter and Review

Both the Review and December Newsletter are available by clicking on this link to the <u>Operation Noah website</u>, and looking under Latest News.

13. ECCR Christmas Newsletter

The ECCR Christmas Newsletter is available to read from their website by clicking here.

14. CSAN Advent 2020

The Caritas Social Action Advent Newsletter has been sent out to all those subscribing. The information found in it is also available from their website, but if you want the actual newsletter delivered into your inbox, you will need to subscribe to it by <u>clicking here.</u>

15. Fellowship of Reconciliation Winter 2020/21

You can read the Winter edition of <u>Peacelinks here.</u> Lots of interesting articles, along with events they have planned.

EVENTS and COMPETITIONS (in chronological order where applicable)

16. 7th, 12th and 18th January - 6.30pm UK time

Join the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy on a three-day immersive VR travel journey to explore Palestine through locally guided tours with exclusive footage. The events will provide you with a rare chance to fully immerse yourself in the Palestinian experience by connecting with a range of experts, activists and people on the ground.

For more details and to sign up, click here.

17. Deadline of Friday 8th January

Write a Prayer to Show the Love

As a contribution to the Show the Love campaign, Green Christian is seeking a prayer they can ask churches to use in their worship services on Sunday 14th February. A hymn of praise for all the good things we love, a

lament for what we have lost, repentance for our complicity, or a combination of themes.

They invite all of their members and supporters to send them an original short prayer which you have written. They will publish all of the prayers on their website, and will select just one to be used in the Show the Love campaign. The idea is that they will endeavour to get as many church communities as possible to pray the chosen prayer on Saint Valentine's Day.

Send your original short prayer to barbaraechlin@greenchristian.org.uk Please give your name, confirm this is your own creation, and give permission for the prayer to be used on the Green Christian website.

18. 9th January 4pm - 6pm

A service to mark the anniversary of the Nigerian Civil War. Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal will be joining the overseas fellowship of Nigerian Christians (UK) to offer words of wisdom and challenge on reconciliation and peacebuilding. Watch the service live on YouTube

19. 12th January 7.30pm – 8.15pm (doors open 7.15pm)

Paths of Peace – the work of the Catholic Non-Violence Initiative A briefing by Joan Sharples

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative "CNI" is a project of Pax Christi International initiated in 2016 with the support and continuing encouragement of Pope Francis, who has called for "thoughts on revitalizing the tools of nonviolence, and of active nonviolence in particular." Thought and dialogue at all levels in many countries have been stimulated, with Pax Christi England and Wales playing an important role. Already days of action have been held to help parishes celebrate nonviolence through liturgy, discussion and action.

Joan Sharples is a member of the Executive of Pax Christi England and Wales and former Shrewsbury Diocesan J&P Coordinator. Among other things she has led reflections in parishes on the Pax Christi Icon of Peace.

We invite you to a Zoom Meeting to hear more about CNI from Joan.

To register for the meeting please email SKeithTayl2@outlook.com

20. 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.

21. 20th February 2021 End Racism - Schools Media Competition



22. 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...

23. 27th February 2021 11am - 3pm

NJPN Networking Meeting

Come and join us for our next Networking Day, starting at 11am, and held via Zoom. Book your free place via **Eventbrite**.

24. Feeding Britain's Children

Possibly the most well-known football player through the NJPN circles...not for his skill on the pitch, but for the work that he has done in the past year helping make sure that children on the poverty line do not go hungry. The BBC have produced a documentary about his campaign for free school meals. If you missed it when it aired just before Christmas, it is still available on iPlayer, as long as you have a TV licence. Click here to watch it.

ACTIONS/APPEALS

25. Help free Aung San Suu Kyi's political prisoners

Burma Campaign say 'For years we all campaigned for Aung San Suu Kyi to be freed. She said that once she was in government, she would free all political prisoners. She didn't keep her word.

Today, after more than four years in government, Aung San Suu Kyi is keeping more than 200 political prisoners in jail.

Some supporters of Burma Campaign UK have asked us, after all that effort, what is the point in carrying on? Why bother?

We carry on because however disappointed we might be, it is nothing compared with how disappointed those political prisoners sitting in a concrete cell with bars are right now.

Many of them had put their faith in Aung San Suu Kyi that once she was in government, she would free political prisoners and repeal the laws used to jail them. People could speak out and make jokes without fear. Now, they have lost that hope.'

Please <u>email Aung San Suu Kyi here</u> and ask her to free all political prisoners,

E-Petitions

26. Grenfell United: Don't let cladding company get away from justice

'We will never forget the night of the 14 June 2017 - when our home, Grenfell Tower, caught fire. 72 people died. Those of us that survived, lost loved ones, or saw the building burn that night are determined those responsible for ignoring our safety and wrapping our home in combustible cladding face consequences.

That is why we are outraged that witnesses who worked at Arconic, the company that made the cladding, are trying to get out of appearing before the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.'

For more details and to sign their petition, go to Change.org here.

Vacancies

27. Faith for the Climate are recruiting for a Movement Builder *Closing Date Tuesday 5th January*

The successful applicant will have a track record of building and strengthening grassroot action on social justice, working across different ethnic and/or religious communities, and demonstrable commitment to multi-faith working and engagement with climate action.

For more details on the role, click here.

To apply please send a CV and a letter, maximum 750 words, on why you would like to be considered for this role, to Canon Giles Goddard, chair, Faith for the Climate: giles@stjohnswaterloo.org. Closing date: Tuesday 5th January, 12 noon. Interviews: Planned for Wednesday 13th January. For further information or to discuss the post, please email Giles Goddard.

28. THE LAST WORD

Zuzu's petals and the pandemic: reminders of what is most important (courtesy of Grace + Truth)

Jon Kuhrt has worked with people affected by homelessness and poverty for 25 years. He is a former CEO of West London Mission and is now a government adviser focusing on how faith and community groups address rough sleeping. He has written a great blog on the Grace + Hope website comparing the film 'It's a Wonderful Life' to the situation we found ourselves in during 2020. It's a good read, and you can access it here.



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NEWS LINKS

Independent Catholic News

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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 <u>here</u>

Vatican News homepage: www.vaticannews.va

World Council of Churches

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

UK Parliament News

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

Follow us on Twitter: @NJandPNetwork

Follow us on Facebook: National Justice and Peace Network

Please note that 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

About these E-BULLETINS

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.

To unsubscribe from these mailings, email ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org with "unsubscribe" in the subject box. We also welcome your feedback at the same address. Forwarding these emails: Please feel free to forward these emails on to your contacts – but please remember to tell them to contact YOU if they want to unsubscribe!

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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