

NJPN Comment in the Catholic Universe - Barbara Butler: Acting for Healing

'I'm convinced that the pandemic we're currently living through is both a manifestation of and a mere interruption in the relentless march towards an interconnected world, one in which peoples and cultures can't help but collide. In that world - we will learn to live together, cooperate with one another, and recognise the dignity of others, or we will perish.'

Barack Obama, August 2020

No message could be more relevant to every person in the world we now live in than this one. Whoever and wherever we are we have no choice but to see ourselves as only one member or one group amongst all living things in one fragile planet, and we must live and act accordingly.

There are fragile people and communities everywhere in our world, including our own country and region. 700 million people live in extreme poverty in our world. Burma/Myanmar has just suffered another coup and military take over. India is almost overwhelmed by Covid-19. Syria is said to be the most war-torn country in the world, followed by Iraq and Afghanistan. I could fill a large book in writing about the suffering in our world today. But, as David Attenborough said, *'Time is short, but we can recover.'*

We can all change our direction and act for healing, for all and for all the world.

I recently attended a zoom lecture about a woman who was a true internationalist who gave her life for the dignity of others. Mother Maria Skobtsova was born and grew up in Russia and lived through turbulent times of revolution before moving to Paris. She became a sister in 1932 as a monastic in the world. In 1934 she took over a derelict house and at first gave a home to Russian emigres. When Paris fell in June 1940, her home was offered to Jewish people destined for Auschwitz. She was arrested in 1943 and died in Ravensbruck in 1945.

Her example of being a monastic in the world is one we can all take up in many different ways and for some of the fragile people in our world today.

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Barbara Butler is Executive Secretary of Christians Aware, an ecumenical member of the NJPN.

Please visit the Christians Aware website, where there is a link to You Tube, where some recent conference presentations are recorded. www.christiansaware.co.uk