

The e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly within the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com

RUNNING ORDERS

They call us now.
Before they drop the bombs.
The phone rings
and someone who knows my first name
calls and says in perfect Arabic
"This is David."
And in my stupor of sonic booms
and glass shattering symphonies
still smashing around in my head
I think "Do I know any Davids in Gaza?"
They call us now to say
Run.
You have 58 seconds from the end of this message.
Your house is next.
They think of it as some kind of
war time courtesy.
It doesn't matter that
there is nowhere to run to.
It means nothing that the borders are closed
and your papers are worthless
and mark you only for a life sentence
in this prison by the sea
and the alleyways are narrow
and there are more human lives
packed one against the other
more than any other place on earth
Just run.
We aren't trying to kill you.
It doesn't matter that
you can't call us back to tell us
the people we claim to want aren't in your house
that there's no one here
except you and your children
who were cheering for Argentina
sharing the last loaf of bread for this week
counting candles left in case the power goes out.
It doesn't matter that you have children.
You live in the wrong place
and now is your chance to run
to nowhere.
It doesn't matter
that 58 seconds isn't long enough
to find your wedding album
or your son's favourite blanket
or your daughter's almost completed
college application
or your shoes
or to gather everyone in the house.
It doesn't matter what you had planned.
It doesn't matter who you are
Prove you're human.
Prove you stand on two legs.
Run.

Lena Khalaf Tuffaha

The Poem that Spoke When I Could Not

Sometimes you search for the words to write a poem. And sometimes the words of a poem find you. In the summer of 2014, I spent many hours glued to various screens, helpless and disempowered as yet another war on Gaza began. In the beginning, I engaged. I wrote letters to editors, called my elected representatives, and shared all the information I could on social media sites. I participated in weekly protests in my city. But with each passing hour, with each attack more ferocious than the one before, I felt my words withering away. Among the many news reports that I watched, I remember an interview with a woman who described a phone call that she and her neighbours had received from the Israeli military. "They call us now" she said. The irony of a phone call announcing an impending death from which there was no chance of escape was a glowing ember inside her words. For days and nights those words played over and over in my head. And I began to write.

Running Orders was the first poem I posted on my personal Facebook page. A week later, it had travelled farther than I could ever imagine. A friend in Canada posted it to a Facebook group, and wrote to tell me that she heard people reading it at a peace rally she had attended in Toronto. Soon, my nearly inactive twitter account lit up with people tweeting the poem and translating it into many languages including Greek, Hebrew and Spanish. Another friend forwarded my poem to me in a post by the Irish Workers' Party. One friend found it published in *The Tokyo Progressive*. Later in the summer I would meet people from San Diego, Vancouver BC, Washington DC, and Pittsburgh who had heard it recited at peaceful protests demanding an end to the violence in Gaza.

A composer from New Mexico named Joanne Forman sent me a letter and some lines of the poem set to music in a piece she named "*Gaza: Prison by the Sea*." In her hand-written letter, Joanne said: "As you know, very many American Jews are horrified by the war on Gaza, and are NOT admirers of AIPAC. But I realize I have no impact on Israeli policy - but I can do this. I hope it can be of use."

I wrote *Running Orders* at a time when I was losing faith in words. Throughout previous wars from Palestine to Lebanon to Syria, I always found comfort in the belief that art would keep us human. Art would help us witness. Last summer, as that belief was being tested in the extreme, this little poem travelled so far and connected me with many human beings all over the world who turn to art, just as I do, in order to persevere. On this page I've included some of the most powerful ways that *Running Orders* has lived in the world. Every one of these links represents a moment when *Running Orders* was used as a prayer, a testimonial, or a rallying cry. Every one of these was done by people I have never met. I can think of nothing more satisfying than to have written words that move people to speak them out loud. This poem's journey continues to humble and inspire me.
Lena Khalaf Tuffaha

<https://www.lenakhalaftuffaha.com/running-orders.html>

SEE ALSO: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/NJPN-E-Bulletin-18-May.pdf>

'EVERYWHERE, THERE IS PAIN': INDIAN SISTERS ON LIFE IN THE COVID-19 HOTSPOT

13 May 2021 **Global Sisters Report** invited its sister columnists in India to share their experiences of how the terrible outbreak of COVID-19 has affected their country in the last few months. Six sisters wrote special columns, compiled below, describing their experiences and what it is like on the ground as health workers, as tribal citizens, as compassionate caregivers and as victims of the virus themselves:

***Lalita Roshni Lakra** is a Daughter of St. Anne from the Simdega district of Jharkhand, North India. She joined the community right after high school, studying science and social work and finally taking a law degree. She has taught high school science, worked at the Xavier Institute of Management, and served as the province social work coordinator in Ranchi and as a regional secretary of the Conference of Religious India. She is currently an assistant secretary in the Office for Tribal Affairs of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India and practices law in the district and supreme courts for the Alliance Defending Freedom in New Delhi.*

Choking India screams, "More oxygen, please."

Almost all calls and messages shock us with news of death, calls of requests and help, with crying and sobbing. We are tired of responding, "Rest in peace," and exhorting friends to stay home, stay safe, take care, prayers assured! Everywhere, there is breathlessness, helplessness, mourning, sinking hopes and prevailing despair.

People are being treated by the roadsides, in parks and makeshift hospitals with saline bottles hanging on the trunks and branches of trees. The scarcity of medical facilities is scandalous to us; in this tug of war between life and death, death seems to be stronger, swallowing lives. I was stunned to see on the TV news a woman giving oxygen to her infected husband, mouth to mouth. (Ultimately, he died in a car outside the hospital from lack of a ventilator and hospital bed.)

WhatsApp groups, Facebook and other social media outlets, print and electronic media feature sad stories frequently. More than 100 priests and religious and four bishops have died so far in India. Five priests died in the state of Gujarat in 15 hours. Two sisters of the same congregation, both on the leadership team, died of COVID-19 in two days in the same hospital. I was broken because I had worked with both of them. One of our kitchen staff lost her husband and daughter the same day. A parishioner died the day before her daughter. A wife died, but the husband in the ICU does not know it.

As a tribal woman religious, I am saddened that we have lost many young tribal scholars and intellectuals in the pandemic, mainly from Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Odisha.

I managed to talk to the members of a family affected by COVID-19 in my village in Jharkhand. They said: "Sister, we can't afford to go to hospital as we are poor. We will die of this virus at our home itself. For us, no medicines are available at an affordable price. We don't have single rooms in our homes to be quarantined." It is in this context that I, as a Catholic and religious, am pondering how to revive hope in people who trust in the divine power and existence of God and how to help people to deepen their faith in the Lord. How and where to get courage and strength? Sometimes, like Jesus' apostles, I ask: "Where are you, Lord? Why have you forsaken the world and me? Lord, come to save our world and family. 'Lord, save us. We are perishing' " (Matthew 8:25).

But maybe those are the wrong questions. Now, I am asking, "Lord, how are you present to us amid this pandemic reality?" In my spiritual attempt to protect my world from COVID-19, I find that Psalm 91 is helpful in giving me faith. I have seen people helping enemies; oxygen cylinders being distributed thanks to generous help from several different countries; those who are well praying for the sick. Many families who did not pray are now on their knees, praying with great trust and faith; many are finding solace in online Masses, the divine mercy rosary, and adoration. I composed a Hindi hymn for the intercession of Mother Mary Bernadette, our founder, who served during the cholera epidemic of 1895.

Let us "be positive but test negative."

***Frida Toppo** is a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate from Chhattisgarh, Eastern India. Educated by the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, she began her ministry teaching in a school of the Indian Missionary Society fathers and has continued teaching for 15 years in different schools. She also completed a degree in history and currently works in Loyola School, Bishnupur, run by the Jesuits in the Imphal Archdiocese, Manipur state, Northeast India. She also serves as the animator of the Maria Niketan community in Bishnupur.*

At the beginning of the second wave of the pandemic that began in April, the federal government failed to contain it with firm political will, policies and strict rules to contain the spread, and the people did not follow health protocols. This has caused havoc. Poor health, economic poverty, and thousands of daily deaths have stunned the people, and the whole country — rich and poor, the young and aged — is in danger.

Now, the nation, state and district levels of the health system are in chaos. Poor women with low immunity and undernourished children have to fend for themselves for health care needs. In remote villages, the health care infrastructure is very poor, with inadequate health care centres that lack basic medical facilities and are often understaffed. The pandemic has added insult to injury. Sick people in rural areas have no transport to the hospital. Hospitals have a shortage of beds, doctors, nurses, staff, oxygen, medicine and personal protective equipment for health care professionals. Patients lie in the courtyard, many by themselves, with no one to assist them. Everywhere, there is pain, distress, anguish and tears. Almost every family has positive COVID-19 cases. Death is imminent, and this is affecting every individual with insecurity, emotional confusion, isolation and stigma.

There is economic distress because of closed education institutions and the loss of work and jobs, adequate medical response and basic necessities — almost beyond one's imagination to bear.

Life has become helpless and hopeless as fear and anxiety spread everywhere. This has resulted in a range of emotional reactions: distress, psychiatric conditions, unhealthy behaviours, depression and anxiety. Beyond the stress inherent in the illness, mass stay-at-home orders, quarantine and isolation have made life boring, stressful and painful.

India has become a place where patients are dying like animals inside and outside of hospitals, waiting for doctors and treatments. Every morning, I hear about more cases of COVID-19 and the increasing death rate. I hear about the deaths of many priests and religious sisters. "I am filled with fear, stress, depression, confusion, frustration and anger," said Fr. Isidore Baa, a religious priest of Third Order Regular, a Franciscan whose brother, mother, niece and nephew are sick. "I am tired of life. I surrender everything in the hand of God." (While this was being written, his elder brother died, leaving behind a wife and five children.)

Sadly, it is getting worse because the government and the people are still not taking it seriously enough. Amid all the fears, the government allowed one of the largest religious gatherings in the world: Kumbh Mela (the pitcher festival), the weeklong major Hindu festival in India in Haridwar city along the Ganges River in the northern Uttarakhand state. This was another super-spreader event: Out of 61 returned pilgrims in Madhya Pradesh, 60 tested positive for the virus. And there were 9.1 million participants in Kumbh Mela!

The recent election in the five provinces/states was the second reason for the vast spread of COVID-19, as politicians and people attended hundreds of political rallies and campaigns, defying all health protocols — few masks, little social distancing. To battle the pandemic, the government, international community, civil society groups, religious groups and people from every walk have to be united. We have to appreciate the preciousness of life more than ever.

***Monica D'silva** is a sister of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd from the Province of South West India. She completed her degree in nursing from St. Martha's College of Nursing, affiliated with the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, in Bangalore, and also obtained a diploma in theology from Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, the Pontifical Athenaeum in Pune. She has been working in St. Martha's Hospital for about two years; currently, she is working in the COVID-19 ward of that hospital.*

As a nurse working at St. Martha's Hospital in Bangalore amid the pandemic in India, I am witnessing the cry and misery of our people every minute, every day, but hoping for a better tomorrow. I love my profession and derive daily strength from my Lord, who called me to this healing ministry. I never expected a pandemic would challenge me personally as a young religious.

In March 2020, we began to see the COVID-19 cases in our hospital. Working in the COVID-19 ICU, I encountered the agony of my brothers and sisters on their deathbeds. Being a front-line warrior gives me mixed emotions: excitement at seeing critical patients recover, and grief over the deaths that take place before my eyes. The health care team has worked around the clock to save every precious life. Six hours of regular duties and 12 long hours of night shift with high-level personal protective equipment left us drenched with sweat. Some of my colleagues were not able to see their beloved family members for months; even I stayed away from the community in consideration of the elderly sisters' well-being.

In October, I contracted COVID-19, enduring the trauma of the symptoms but never losing hope. I remained positive, casting all my fears and worries to my Shepherd God, and began living every day with an experience of healing and caring. After 14 days of home quarantine and treatment, I sprang back again as a front-line warrior. I realized that the experience of being a COVID-19 patient myself gave me a better understanding of the suffering of thousands of other patients. The second wave of COVID-19 began in full swing in March 2021. It is much worse than the first. Working at the emergency room's flu desk, I encountered people coming in tears to receive treatment — sometimes a number of them from the same household. If no beds are available, we still receive the sick patients, stabilize them with primary care, including oxygen and medication, and release them, but the cry of the relatives not to send them out and begging us to lay them in any corner on the floor and treat them — that still echoes in my ear.

This pandemic made the rich richer, but the ordinary man became penniless. Every walk of life has been shaken and brought to an abrupt halt. The hospitals are filled with COVID-19 patients and have no more beds for new cases, and there is a dire shortage of oxygen all over the city and country. Thousands of the dead have left us with no place to even cremate or bury our dead. Can you hear our cry?

My brothers and sisters, let us be united in one spirit, supporting each other as we go through these difficult moments. Even now, as broken as you may feel, you are still so strong. You hold yourself together and keep moving, even though you feel shattered. Don't stop. This is your healing. It doesn't have to be pretty or graceful. You just have to keep going!

Margaret Gonsalves belongs to the Sisters for Christian Community, Washington, D.C. She is active in church and theological fora. As founder of ANNNI Charitable Trust, she works to empower Indigenous girls and women, offering residential programs in English and sustainable development skills in India.

On March 20, I developed a cough, headache, sore throat, cold-like symptoms, conjunctivitis and fatigue. I feared going to the hospital because I know people who went there and did not return. I take little medicine, so I called a neighbour to get me something, but at 9 p.m., there was still no medicine. In desperation, I walked to the medical shop and got a strip of Cheston Cold. Around 1 a.m., I began experiencing a mild breathlessness. Immediately, I pressed acupressure points for asthma and did some ujjayi-type pranayama. By 3 a.m., I could breathe the breath of new life from the cosmic womb and slept well, but I woke at 9:30 without enough energy to make a cup of tea. Here is where I felt the pinch of being alone but not lonely. I did not want to call the hospital, thinking the medical system is a corrupt money-making racket.

I tapped into inner resources. Every day, I increased 15-minute segments of meditation with breathing and pranayama. I disconnected from many social media groups like WhatsApp — the depressing news about ill treatment of the farmers, injustice and brutality were overwhelming. The government-controlled media was promoting ruling party politics and not bothering about supplying vaccinations. I quarantined myself for three weeks. I ate a high-protein diet, inhaled a lot of hot steam, took vitamin C and multivitamins, asked for a lot of prayers. Drawing inspiration from Louise Hay, who healed herself from life-threatening sickness with paracetamol, I healed myself with only three Cheston Cold tablets.

On April 15, my sister and her daughter called, needing a place to stay: Her son and his mother-in-law were home with COVID-19. I consulted my family doctor, who advised me to get vaccinated first. But I was deeply moved with pastoral concern for the needy.

I began reading the news again and drew hope from the critical reviews of government failure to care for the people. I began to realize the importance of art and humour in the fight for freedom, especially the powerful articles by prophetic female writers. "We need a government. Desperately," says Arundhati Roy. "And we don't have one. We are running out of air. We are dying. We don't have systems in place to know what to do with help even when it's on hand. What can be done? Right here, right now?"

India has been exporting vaccines to the world, and we have to be satisfied with the crumbs! Men are busy fighting elections, erecting statues and temples, and traveling at great cost. Too long, the male voice has dominated both church and civil society. We in India are in dire need of caring mothers who would think of their children first and then politics, like Mamata Banerjee of Bengal. Working for the underprivileged and downtrodden, she is called "mother of the motherland" of the people of Bengal.

I said prayers of gratitude for life, changing my perspective toward death. How can I be a breath of fresh air to the COVID-19-struggling humanity? Those not afraid of death can bring much-needed oxygen of hope to fearful, breathless souls. This mild COVID-19 attack helped me understand the Lenten practice of kenosis, self-emptying. Kindness brings oxygen to the air. The rise of prophetic female political leaders will provide oxygen and plant seeds of health for all.

Mini Amalobhavam belongs to the Medical Mission Sisters, South India Province. As a young woman, she longed to help those suffering and living in poverty. On hearing about the Medical Mission Sisters during a diocesan vocation camp, she decided that would be a way to extend her service to the needy in a committed way. While spending a year at Ayushya, a Medical Mission Sisters' centre for healing and wholeness in Kerala, she became more aware of the brokenness of the world and its great need for healing. She is currently pursuing two graduate degrees.

India started its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic just over a year ago, and now, the second wave has hit very hard, with more than 400,000 new cases on May 1. India began its vaccination drive in January 2021. The Serum Institute of India is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, designed to supply vaccines to the whole country of 250 million people, and was also exporting vaccines to other countries that needed vaccines. Barely 10% of the people of India had been vaccinated when the country began to face a shortage of vaccines.

Our hospital in South India, Immaculate Heart of Mary Hospital (Marygiri), the first Syro-Malabar Catholic hospital in Kerala, is run by my community, the Medical Mission Sisters. The hospital began doing COVID-19 tests in July 2020, when positive cases were very low, and to fulfil government mandates, they made 10% of their beds available for COVID-19 patients. But during the second wave, the hospital has been struggling to treat COVID-19 cases. Now, the government demands that 25% of beds be set aside.

While the hospital can supply oxygen, it does not have ventilators and has to refer patients to other hospitals. But other hospitals don't have beds, either. The hospital is required to test any patient who comes to the hospital, and the majority of them are positive cases. These patients are not allowed to be accompanied by their own helpers, and with the lack of staff, it is challenging for the hospital to respond to their many needs while calling back and forth to find available beds elsewhere. It is overwhelming for the Immaculate Heart of Mary Hospital to find ways to cope with this unmanageable and uncontrollable condition. The hospital management also tries to provide the people from the economically lower strata with materials like food, masks, clothes and reduced medical charges.

It is hard to see one person left in a family while others die of the coronavirus; it is hard to see the mass cremations without even knowing the identity of the individuals, with family members and relatives left in suspense. These people have already suffered through lockdown without enough food and necessary supplies available.

Trying to respond to needs according to the advice of our founder, Mother Anna Dengel — "As Medical Missionaries, the needs and sufferings of humanity must find an echo in our hearts" — the sisters commit themselves ardently in serving God and his people, even though of the 15 sisters working in the hospital, only three are younger than 60. Those sisters who are not directly at the forefront in fighting the coronavirus support the others through their prayers. Trusting in God's providence, they continue their journey of being a presence of Christ the Healer.

Dorothy Fernandes is a Sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a social activist who has been working in Patna since 1997 with communities on the periphery with the goal of making their cities inclusive so no one is left behind. She also serves as the chairperson of the women's commission for the Patna Archdiocese and is the advisory member of the social wing of the archdiocese, Forum for Social Initiatives.

"An overconfident government that has failed its people" is what rings in my heart as I sit and reflect on what is happening to this beautiful country of ours in which we took pride. I am shocked, to say the least. After the first wave of the pandemic was over, instead of preparing and making arrangements for the second wave, the emphasis was on the greed for power: addressing huge gatherings in election campaigns without abiding by any safety protocols. Most of the people who attended these rallies were not just the poor, but the leaders who yelled over the public address system about wiping away others in power. At a time when the central government should have been busy giving orders and assessing the grave situation, they were out to garner power at the cost of lives.

There were huge gatherings for three days at the Kumbh Mela, where devotees were seen in the rivers without masks and not socially distanced as if in a trance. We have lost all sense of values, caring for others. It hurts and pains that we have just become incapable of addressing this mess. We see all hell let loose: people running with their loved ones for oxygen, medication, beds, ambulances. Everything in short supply and the stress under which the health workers and front-line services are working around the clock tell us how callous our government has been.

Last year, many of us moved out, throwing caution to the winds and just responding the best we could to human need. This year, it is simply impossible to move out; our communities on the periphery have also begun to realize that they will have to become independent and learn to manage their lives. Stepping out of the house is not permitted. It's not just the matter of you going out; it's returning home, where you have family, community. The virus is everywhere; no one knows who is a carrier, so be careful, be sensible, be responsible.

But then, what happens to those who are delivering goods and have to work, who are bringing vegetables to our doors, who work in grocery shops that are open? They risk their lives to keep us alive. Humanity needs to bow down in hope and gratitude to all those in public service, the police force and the cleaners who risk everything.

Then there is the story of an 83-year-old man in Nagpur in the state of Maharashtra who tested positive and was being treated in a hospital. A young woman came in crying, looking for a bed for her husband, 40, who had tested positive. Hearing this, this elderly man was moved. He said, "I have lived my life. This lady needs her husband. I will give him my bed." He signed the papers and agreed to move out. Three days later, he breathed his last at his home.

Other such stories raise our heads and hearts, and I fall humbly before this our God who has kept the humanity in us alive. <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/coronavirus/news/everywhere-there-pain-indian-sisters-life-covid-19-hotspot>

A PASTORAL LETTER ON THE ENVIRONMENT FOR PENTECOST

A Pastoral Letter on the environment, prepared by the Bishops of England and Wales, for use in churches on 23 May 2021, Pentecost Sunday:

The Solemnity of Pentecost reminds us that everything which exists, every person and the whole of creation, is a gift of “God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.” God our loving Father creates and continues to give life to the world through His Word, Jesus Christ, in the power of His Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church, which we celebrate at Pentecost, is not something separate from Creation. God’s revelation of himself in Creation is inseparable from the revelation of his love for us in Christ and in his desire to live in us through his Holy Spirit

‘God’s Spirit is always and everywhere “the Lord, the Giver of Life”, and the voice of Pentecost is echoed in the voice of creation being transformed into the glorious liberty of God’s children.’ In this liberty, as God’s children, we call on the Spirit to ‘renew the face of the Earth’, and as his children, we are called, in turn, to use this liberty for the good of creation and for the good of all that brings life. Our world, God’s creation, is a precious gift to us. It is our common home entrusted to each generation. But how have we used that glorious liberty? How do we honour this precious gift? Are we really demonstrating love, care and respect for our common home?

As we celebrate Pentecost this year, we are acutely aware of the damage that continues to be inflicted on the Earth, and the repercussions for the well-being of our brothers and sisters, both here in our own countries and, more especially, in the poorest countries of our world. Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have both taught us that everything is interconnected and interdependent. The way we live our everyday lives has an impact on everyone and on the earth.

The urgency of the situation, and the enormity of the challenges we face, have spurred us to speak out together this Pentecost Sunday, as bishops of England, Wales and Scotland, about the role that the Catholic Church and our faith must play in our shared care for God’s gift to us. For all too long we have either been ignorant of, or ignored, the systematic exploitation of our planet and the unsustainable consumption of its resources. While accepting the crucial need and demand for energy for the benefit of the poorest of our brothers and sisters, the provision of our energy must, nonetheless, be by means which radically reduce the use of carbon-based fuels.

In our political thinking, there must be a new global understanding of our world, where nations recognise our common responsibility for the dignity of all people and their rights to sustainable livelihoods, in authentic freedom. Pope Francis speaks of a global politics that looks beyond our own needs to the needs of all, most especially the poor and the marginalised. But we cannot leave the healing of our common home and the wellbeing and care of our brothers and sisters merely to a response from industry and governments. Our own local concern and action is necessary and has far-reaching consequences. We all have a part to play, each and every one of us, in the routines, choices and decisions of our everyday lives and our aspirations for the future. The actions of parishes, families, schools, and individuals will have a significant impact on our efforts to restore our common home. There are now many resources, freely available, to advise us on our choice of food, saving of water and electricity, suggestions about travel, waste, and re-use. These are measures that everyone can employ, in some degree, with minimal inconvenience and change. They are effective ways in which we can each reaffirm our personal vocation to be stewards of creation.

This Pentecost comes at a time of remarkable challenge and opportunity. We are gradually emerging from the tragedies and restrictions of the pandemic. We have the ability to make changes. Our countries are also hosting two most important meetings this year, the G7 in June and COP26 in November. These meetings will gather together men and women who have the power to make defining choices and policies which will help us build back better, provide for our brothers and sisters, and take care of our common home.

In all our human endeavours, we need the presence of the Holy Spirit, “the Lord, the Giver of Life”, whose gift to the Church and the world we celebrate again at Pentecost. Let us keep this Feast with that enduring hope that we can begin to repair the damage we have done and provide a healthy home for future generations. Our hope will be strengthened by our prayer. May our constant request be that the Holy Spirit guide us, strengthen our resolve and ‘renew the face of the earth’. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/pastoral-letter-environment-pentecost/>

RESPONSE TO BISHOPS OF ENGLAND AND WALES LETTER ON ENVIRONMENT

17 May 2021: **Laudato Si Animator, Virginia Bell**, writes this personal view.

The eagerly awaited Statement on the Environment from our bishops has been released. It is to be read out in churches on Pentecost Sunday, 23rd May 2021. You should all hear it soon, and you can read it above.

The main question is, will it inspire Catholics to reconsider their lifestyle practices and the effect these have on the natural environment and on our fellow humans and our fellow creatures?

There are positive aspects of this Letter which we can be happy about. One is that it is to be read out in all of our parish churches. This is something that should be celebrated.

This Pentecost will be the first time that some Catholics will be taught by our leaders that our treatment of the environment and of other creatures is an integral part of our Christianity. After centuries of almost no mention during Mass of our Christian duty towards the natural environment and towards our fellow creatures, this Letter deserves to be welcomed and embraced.

Another positive aspect is that the Letter explains that creation, being intricately part of God's purpose, must be put firmly into the focus of our conscious decisions and behaviour choices. In other words, we should care about creation not only because of the effect we have on others, but also because creation matters to God.

The Letter points out that the situation is urgent, with damage continually being inflicted on the earth. The bishops admit that people have been ignorant about or ignored the systematic exploitation of our planet and the unsustainable consumption of its resources, and they encourage a new economic model of considering the sustainability of our businesses and activities before accepting and promoting them.

The old model that the Church followed was to accept and promote what was being done to gain a livelihood, whether sustainable or not. At least that is how I saw it.

The Bishops encourage all of us to make a contribution to restoring our common home, motivating us by noting how do-able many lifestyle changes are, not just for us as individuals but also as parishes. This mention of parishes will bring the matter nearer to the notice of priests, whom one hopes will henceforth look more favourably on parishioners who want to establish a parish green team and a parish Environment Policy.

The bishops bring attention to those two crucial Summits this year, G7 and COP26. The preservation of the world is, to a large degree, in the hands of the participating countries. They must be made to commit to sustainable policies in all aspects of human activities on earth. So, this highlighting of the two Summits is laudable.

I am very happy that an episcopal Letter focusing on the environment is to be read out at Mass in all our parishes. But could more have been said? I think so.

I feel that there are some negative aspects to this Letter. The bishops should have taken this opportunity to encourage priests and parishioners to set up green teams in the parish. Loads of actions could flow from such groups. What better way to ensure that parishes commit to becoming sustainable? What better way to engage in making contributions to restoring our common home,

which the Letter calls for? This practical action of setting up a parish green team should have been specifically encouraged. Unfortunately, the fact that it wasn't mentioned may make some doubt how determined the bishops really are to see change take place at grass roots level.

There should also have been mention of Environmental Policies (EPs). EPs would naturally follow from parish green teams, and would be the cement for parish aspirations. The bishops could have said that Diocesan EPs are being developed, and that parishes are expected to develop their own, using their Diocesan one for reference.

Another disappointment is that when referring to G7 and COP26, the bishops did not urge us all to write to the Government demanding sustainable policies and zero carbon. These Summits provide us with an opportunity to lobby for action to combat environmental degradation.

Finally, the Letter seems completely human centric. There is no mention of the millions of species that we share the world with, all of which are loved by God and all of which have a place in the ecosystem of Earth. We are asked to recognise our common responsibility for the dignity of all people: what about all creatures? The bishops remind us that the world is a precious gift to us: isn't it also a precious gift to all creatures? The bishops speak of "the damage that continues to be inflicted on the Earth, and the repercussions for the well-being of our brothers and sisters, both here in our own countries and, more especially, in the poorest countries of our world": that damage is also felt by millions of creatures who have been burned alive in forest fires and displaced from their natural habitats to their deaths because of cash crop farming.

The Vatican's overview of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* ends with: "After *Laudato Si'*, the regular practice of an examination of conscience, the means that the Church has always recommended to orient one's life in light of the relationship with the Lord, should include a new dimension, considering not only how one has lived communion with God, with others and with oneself, but also with all creatures and with nature." June 2015.

This is the same Encyclical which has prompted the Church's concern for the natural environment, and which has prompted the bishops' Pentecostal Pastoral Letter. But there is obviously some way to go before the bishops are fully converted to the ecological spirituality of the Encyclical.

I think the bishops deserve praise and thanks for the effort that they have put into seeing the world in the terms of *Laudato Si'*, even if not yet perfectly. And I hope that they will take on board any feedback they get.
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42222>

'ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION' THEME AT NATIONAL J&P NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Ellen Teague 9 May 2021

'**2021: Moment of Truth**' is the theme of the 2021 annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales (NJPN). The 43rd NJPN conference will take place 23-25 July in Derbyshire. Bookings are now open for an in-person gathering and all are welcome.

NJPN says: "Six years on from *Laudato Si'* we are learning that the "ecological conversion" called for in *Laudato Si'* is a matter of life and death. Decisions at United Nations summits in 2021 on both biodiversity and the climate crisis will be critical for salvaging a viable future. This is also the year when the Vatican Dicastery of Human Development is inviting us to embark on a journey through the '*Laudato Si'* Action Platform', to be launched on 24 May 2021.

The UN Climate Conference in November will be hosted by Glasgow and the Justice and Peace movement will join those be lobbying there. In October, a major UN Conference in China will focus on Biodiversity and raising awareness on this issue is another NJPN focus.

At Conference 2021 we will take inspiration from *Laudato Si'*, *Fratelli Tutti* and secular thinking on integral ecology. "We will seize this moment of grace for the changes and choices now confronting us," says NJPN.

A keynote speaker is Chair of the Global Catholic Climate Movement and author Lorna Gold. Her book, '*Climate Generation: Awakening to Our Children's Future*' highlights stories of people who are doing amazing things to tackle the climate crisis. Other speakers include Lord Deben (Independent UK Committee of Climate Change), Andy Atkins, Fr Eamonn Mulcahy and Mark Rotherham. Bishop John Arnold of Salford, the lead bishop on the environment for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, will be the conference Mass celebrant. Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD, is to chair.

Liturgy will be led by Colette Joyce, Justice and Peace Fieldworker in Westminster Diocese, in collaboration with liturgical composer and pastoral musician Marty Haugen online. He has written a special chant '*For Our Common Home*' for the occasion. More than 20 stalls will be available in the Just Fair and around 15 workshops available. It will be a practical and life-affirming gathering of the Justice and Peace movement in England and Wales.

So, on the sixth anniversaries of both the Paris Agreement on Climate and Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the conference will stimulate moves towards "ecological conversion". It will address structural change and simpler lifestyles. It will push for fossil fuel disinvestment by more Church groups as part of the rise of institutional shareholder activism. Churches will be encouraged to join the sustainability revolution and demonstrate in liturgies that there is engagement with "the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor". More parishes will be encouraged to join the Livesimply programme, which already involves more than 90 parishes and schools in England and Wales.

The conference aims to launch a decade of transformative action – in lives and communities. It will discern how to deepen commitment to build a world where all of God's creation can live in peace and prosperity. Participants will be given resources to work together to make this vision a reality.

For more information see: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/ or call: 020 901 4864
<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42161>

METHODIST, UNITARIAN AND FREE CHURCHES DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

3 May 2021 **Operation Noah:** The Methodist, Unitarian and Free Churches have all voted to disinvest from fossil fuels.

At the online AGM of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian churches on 24th April, members voted overwhelmingly to disinvest from companies whose turnover is more than 10% from oil and gas.

The motion was proposed by Stephen Lingwood, pioneer minister in Cardiff. He said: "In the year of COP26 in Glasgow I've very happy that my denomination has made this commitment to help tackle the climate emergency. Divestment is one of the tools available to us to push the world towards a zero carbon future. My faith calls on me to love God, and to love my neighbour, and loving my global neighbour means making sure people in Pacific Island nations and elsewhere still have homes to live in. That will only happen if we keep global temperatures below a 1.5C rise."

Also speaking in the debate was Professor Geoff Levermore, a Unitarian and Nobel prize winning climate scientist. He said: "Some consider that we may already have gone past the tipping point with climate change, as the polar ice caps are losing ice so quickly now. Covid will be easier to solve than climate change and all countries need to respond, especially the developed ones. Fossil fuel companies, like water companies, should pay for the pollution of CO2 just as water companies pay for the sewage disposal."

The resolution requests that the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches does not invest in companies whose total turnover is more than 10% derived from the extraction and/or supply of fossil fuels, and that the divestment is fulfilled by 2025. It encourages Unitarian congregations, which are independent and autonomous, and other Unitarian funds to do the same.

The resolution builds on a long history of climate activism in the church, with previous agreements to tackle climate change and protect the environment going back to the 1970s. A number of Unitarian individuals and congregations have in recent years been actively involved in climate change campaigns such as Extinction Rebellion.

The General Assembly has £6.3m of investments, currently managed by Newton Investment Management. On 30 April, the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church announced that it has fully divested from fossil fuel companies, after selling its remaining shares in Shell and Equinor. The decision followed advice received from the Methodist Church's Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment (JACEI) earlier this month, that no oil and gas companies are currently aligned with the climate change targets set out by the 2015 Paris Agreement. The Central Finance Board divested from coal and tar sands in 2015.

The Methodist Church has sold almost £21m in shares in Shell, as well as selling around £2m of bonds in Norwegian oil company Equinor. David Palmer, Chief Executive of the Central Finance of the Methodist Church, which oversees £1.3bn of investments, said: "The patience of the Church has run out." He added: "The pace of change across the oil and gas sector has been inadequate and we welcome the recommendation of JACEI to disinvest."

Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, Chair of JACEI, commented: "The Committee has determined that the slow pace of corporate change means that the oil and gas sector is failing to meet the targets set by the Paris Accord. Shell, along with its peers, is currently failing to play a substantial enough role in addressing the climate emergency."

The decision comes after the Methodist Conference and Methodist Council both supported resolutions on fossil fuel divestment last year. The 2017 Methodist Conference passed a motion calling for divestment from any fossil fuel company that had 'not aligned their business investment plans with the Paris Agreement target of a global temperature rise well below 2 degrees' by the 2020 Conference.

The Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church previously announced in June 2020 that it would divest from BP and Total. In the same month, 260 Methodists, including 114 ministers and former Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Methodist Conference, signed a letter calling for the Central Finance Board to complete divestment from all fossil fuel companies. The group highlighted recent Transition Pathway Initiative and Carbon Tracker analysis, showing that no oil and gas companies had aligned their business investment plans with the Paris Agreement goals.

The Methodist Council passed a resolution on divestment in October 2020, after the Methodist Conference: "The Council supports the request that JACEI recommends that the Central Finance Board... disinvests before the 2021 Conference from all oil and gas companies which are not currently aligned with the Paris Agreement target of a global temperature rise well below 2 degrees." The issue had been referred to Council by the Methodist Conference in July 2020.

Michael Pryke, Chair of the Methodist Zero Carbon Group and former Methodist Youth President, welcomed the news: "It's excellent to see the Methodist Church divesting from oil and gas companies. The prophetic voice of the Church has been heard and the reaction has been amazing to witness. But we mustn't get complacent, as we still have a lot to do to achieve net zero by 2030." Martha Rand, Vice Chair of the Methodist Zero Carbon Group, who proposed the motion on divestment at Methodist Conference as a representative of the Methodist Youth Assembly, said: "I'm overjoyed to hear today that the Central Finance Board has fully divested from oil and gas. As Methodists and Christians, it is vital that we show our concern for God's world and our siblings around the globe through action as well as words. This is a brilliant and important step we have taken. Thanks to everyone who helped make this happen, especially Operation Noah and everyone in the Methodist Zero Carbon Group."

James Buchanan, Bright Now Campaign Manager at Operation Noah, a Christian climate change charity, said: "This is a hugely significant and welcome step by the Methodist Church in responding to the climate emergency, especially as the UK prepares to host COP26 in November. We thank all the Methodists who have campaigned tirelessly to make this happen. We hope other Churches will join them in supporting a just and green recovery by divesting from fossil fuels and investing in the clean technologies of the future."

LINKS: Unitarian Church - www.unitarian.org.uk/

The Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church has divested from all oil and gas stocks -

www.cfbmethodistchurch.org.uk/news/the-central-finance-board-of-the-methodist-church-divests-from-all-oil-and-gas-stocks/

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42118>

NJPN AGM: A "VIGOROUS, LIVING AND BREATHING" NETWORK

Ellen Teague 9 May 2021: The National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) was described as a "vigorous, living and breathing" network at its AGM on Saturday by its Chair, Paul Southgate. A Member of the J&P Co-ordinating Council in Hexham & Newcastle diocese, he reported on positive dialogue with the Bishops of England and Wales on environmental justice, the focus on "ecological conversion" for July's annual conference, and he underlined that J&P people are never indifferent to injustice and violence. (Text below).

Around 40 people in the zoom meeting included representatives from the dioceses of Westminster, Arundel and Brighton, Birmingham, Clifton, East Anglia, Hallam, Hexham and Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Nottingham and Southwark. Organisations included CAFOD, Christian CND, Christians Aware, Green Christian, London Mining Network, Pax Christi, Romero Trust, Seeking Sanctuary and ACTA. In discussion, there was a call to look into increasing diversity within NJPN, to research ways to better include people with disabilities such as deafness, and to reach more young people.

Laudato Si' week (16-25 May) and the launch of Vatican action platform on 24 May was highlighted by John Woodhouse, who is in a network of *Laudato Si'* Animators. Part of this is pressure to disinvest from fossil fuels and for "eco-conversion". Ann Farr, Chair of Pax Christi, urged a push for dioceses to divest from the weaponry of war as well as from fossil fuels. Pax Christi reminded about its Pilgrimage for Peace 15-21 May. There was a call for NJPN to write to the hierarchy to express concern about the "horrendous violence" in Jerusalem at the moment, particularly the mosque being invaded by Israel police at the end of Ramadan last Friday and over 200 people being injured.

At the Noticeboard session, Christian CND reported alerting churches about the routes of nuclear convoys and also work on Ethical Jobs. CAFOD highlighted its '*Reclaim our Common Home*' petition and its call for banks to cancel the debt of poor countries. Events in the leadup to COP26 in Glasgow are on CAFOD's website, including an Interfaith event in Truro Cathedral on 10 June, ahead of the G7 meeting in Cornwall, and a Climate Sunday Catholic Mass template for 5 September.

Westminster reported becoming a Fairtrade diocese, convening weekly Care of Creation meetings for five dioceses and a Tree walk for London Climate week in June. Southwark reported on ethical investment discussions with the financial staff of the diocese and pride in the recent annual Migrants Mass which more than 500 people attended online. Birmingham reported a meeting next week to discuss the Birmingham Archdiocese Environmental Policy and "how we can implement it in our lives".

In the afternoon there was a talk on '*Closing the Gap? Post-Lockdown ramifications for pupils in schools.*' Professor Anthony Towe and Matthew Dell - both of St Mary's University - provided early indicators of the post-lockdown pupil experience as well as considering the implications for educational attainment. Dell encouraged everyone to read 'Let us Dream - the path to a better future' by Pope Francis and Austen Ivereigh. He felt that post-Covid we need to, "rethink the system, being more open to variety and seeing education as a vehicle for social justice." Towe urged volunteering as school governors, influencing policy and helping to put social justice at the heart of education; also as volunteers for school enrichment, offering mentoring or help with music and reading

The NJPN Chair, Paul Southgate, gave the following report at the AGM:

This month I began in earnest to work in the allotment. I remember that there is no such thing as permanently perfect soil. All things change. You can only aim at having a vigorous, living, breathing soil by feeding it and nourishing it. It's like Justice and Peace, for as Pope Francis says in *Fratelli Tutti* - "Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realised each day".

Justice and Peace have to be realised each day, because all things change. So, I want to report on the five months since our last AGM. You are the judge of whether NJPN is vigorous, living and breathing like the soil in my allotment; or whether it needs more feeding and nourishment.

In November, Ian Rutherford spoke to us about homelessness. It was an entreaty to adopt a strategy which he called the four 'R's - reduction, respite, recovery and reconnection. Churches are good at providing respite but need to work on reduction, recovery and reconnection. We can't do the whole package on our own; no sector can. We need to build networks and partnerships to bring about systemic change, long term solutions.

Speaking of being homeless, with major changes going on at Eccleston Square, NJPN feared being shown the door for lack of space. However, thanks to Greg Pope and his team, we've been welcomed back home, and we wish to express our immense gratitude to all at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales for their valuable support, especially Liam Allmark who has the international affairs brief. Following Brexit, the NJPN Executive was keen to re-establish links with Europe. I approached Liam to ask about the European Conference of J&P Commissions and he arranged a meeting with their President, Bishop Treanor, and the Secretary General Mr Stefan Lunte. As a result, we were invited to the European meetings and I've attended two so far this year with Liam. So, the relationship is good and fruitful.

In February, we invited Harriet Crabtree and Jon Dal Din to address us on Inter-Faith relations. Why? Because in our Network we are involved with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, human trafficking and human rights, the Palestinian situation, global issues like climate change and so on. It is estimated that 85% of people on Earth identify with a Faith community. And the Church is everywhere, speaking in every tongue in every culture, so we have a gift and responsibility to build relationships with other Faiths.

The NJPN Environment Group has been very active. The Group held its 61st meeting in April. In November, the NJPN sent a letter to every bishop in England and Wales advising them of our strong environmental concerns and inviting them to discuss with us the possibility of a national Catholic Synod on the Environment. We put to them three 'Asks': Divest from fossil fuels (I believe that three dioceses have done so already. Keep lobbying.); Decide, like the Church of England, to aim for net zero carbon emissions by 2030; Educate and lobby for the UK to aim for zero carbon emissions by 2030. Bishop John Arnold, the bishops' environmental lead, subsequently met with some of our members in December.

There is now a 14-strong network of diocesan environmental leads and Bishop Arnold would ideally like one in every diocese. We stressed that we thought these should include activists and not just diocesan functionaries, and we asked our members (although some didn't wait to be asked) to take up the matter with their own bishops. Bishop Arnold has established an Environment Advisory Group which you can read about on the Bishops' Conference website. I hope our NJPN members will work with them. And, of course, we look forward to welcoming Bishop Arnold to our annual Conference.

The theme of the Conference 23-25 July is '*2021: Action for Life on Earth: moment of truth*' to reflect our belief that ecological conversion is crucial to building a viable future as we battle climate change, the biodiversity crisis and the pandemic. This year presents a unique opportunity for all of us, including our leaders and policy makers at Glasgow's COP26 climate summit in November, to make the difference. At the Conference we'll take inspiration from *Laudato Si, Fratelli Tutti* and secular thinking on integral ecology. We'll seize this moment of grace for the changes and choices now facing us.

Anne O'Connor quoted Seamus Heaney's '*The Cure at Troy*' in this week's excellent NW E-Bulletin. "History says, don't hope on this side of the grave. But then, once in a lifetime the longed for tidal wave of justice can rise up, and hope and history rhyme." This is our once in a lifetime moment of grace, maybe.

It's been a year like no other. In many ways, hostile. Everything knocked up against each other because it's all interconnected: pandemic, climate change, environmental terrorism, poverty and inequalities, violence, displacement of people.

Jesus talked about coping with hostility: "Remember I am sending you out as sheep among wolves, so be as cunning as serpents and yet harmless as doves" (Mt 10:16). I've been meditating on this and I'm still not sure what it means! I'd hate that to be on my tombstone "He was harmless"! Sheep among wolves. Now, for a sheep that's hostile territory. Serpents and doves? Not sure about them. But I think it does have something to do with J&P. Justice needs us to "be cunning", do the research, be strategic, shrewd, on the alert, wise. Peace needs us to have simplicity and honesty, integrity and straightforwardness. So, strategic and peace-seeking. Yes, maybe that's it.

Thanks to all our friends and partners who have also generously funded and supported us to do our work: Mill Hill Missionaries, Columbans, Passionists, Sister of St Joseph of Peace, Sisters of the Holy Cross, Assumption Sisters, Salford Diocese, and also those dioceses who will be funding young people to join the annual Conference. Thanks, all of you, for standing by us.

Let me finish with words from the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Elie Wiesel: "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. The opposite of life is not death, it's indifference."

Thank you all, and to those who have gone before us, for your total lack of indifference!

NJPN - www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42163>

6TH FORM SYLLABUS: "ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME"

The Ecological Conversion Group have launched a new 12-week 6th form syllabus, to unpack the themes presented in Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home*. Fully illustrated throughout it delves into our ecological and social crises through the lenses of faith, science, philosophy, and spirituality. Its main aims are to allow our knowledge of reality to be connected with our values and beliefs, motivating through hope and love to act and make a meaningful change in the world. <https://greenchristian.org.uk/6th-form-syllabus-on-care-for-our-common-home/>

HOMESCHOOLING HAS REVEALED THE ABSURDITY OF ENGLAND'S NATIONAL CURRICULUM

20 May 2021 **Anne O'Connor** writes: I was especially interested in the lockdown experience which formed the afternoon session at the NJPN Zoom meeting on 9 May. Home schooling for us was a revelation. Never before have teachers and teaching methods been so visible to parents, grandparents and carers.

We home schooled two of our grandchildren (5 and 9) during the second lockdown. The standard of teaching within the same school varied enormously as did the quality of outsourced online lessons, some of which were presented by so-called 'teachers' who garbled the set texts, killing the meaning and any sense of adventure or fun. By far the worst on offer was the English teaching. Our younger daughter often joined us in her lunch breaks. She and I are both English graduates but we were both perplexed by the ridiculous terminology our 9-year-old granddaughter has to master and also the rigidity of the curriculum which would put anyone off reading for pleasure.

The teaching methods completely stifled creativity. After watching the poor girl laboriously work her way through two Philip Pullman novels – good stories that should have been enjoyable – I felt heartened by the next KS2 book, *Tuesday* by David Wiesner, an intriguing tale with no words, just a set of rather puzzling illustrations. It was left to the reader to decide what was happening and how it might end. Here was something to let her imagination soar! It was not to be: both teachers had made up a back story for the two characters, even giving them names, which the children had to copy into their exercise books. This they did over three lessons, gradually adding more of the dreaded noun phrases (adjectives to you and me) because, as the teacher encouraged the children to chant, she liked to see two noun phrases, or better still three, for each noun. Whatever happened to less is more?

My hope is that the greater visibility of teaching content and method may lead to a reassessment of the National Curriculum and teaching standards. The following article highlights these concerns.

Eliane Glaser 28 February 2021: In normal times, my cheery "So, how was school?" rarely receives more than a grunted "OK." But homeschooling is revealing what my children actually do all day. And the discovery has come as a shock. My 11-year-old son and eight-year-old daughter go to a perfectly decent state primary, which has valiantly provided worksheets week by week throughout our successive lockdowns. But I read them with incredulity, hilarity and horror.

My daughter is told to improve her writing using "PUGS (Punctuation, Up-levelling, Grammar and Spelling)." ("Up-levelling," I gather, means "improving.") Meanwhile, she is left finding comprehension incomprehensible: "Use evidence from the text to justify your thinking!" – the exclamation mark failing to animate the task, which involves describing the appearance and personality of protagonists; or spotting expanded noun phrases. (I kid you not.)

Suspicious, I took out their old exercise books, which I'd shamefully only ever briefly glanced at in the holidays. At the top of each page is an "LI," which, they informed me after some racking of brains, stands for "learning intention." (Other schools use "learning objectives" or "WALT" – We Are Learning To...). When she was six and seven, my daughter was in the habit of writing her name followed by a row of hearts and kisses. Yet under that charming heading, she'd been made to scrawl such heart-sinking formulas as "LI: to practise inference skills"; "LI: to interpret a pictogram"; "LI: to work systematically to solve a problem"; and "LI: to identify features of a non-chronological report." Underneath the "LI" they have to paste in a checklist of "success criteria": "I can add extra information to my sentence using a subordinate conjunction"; "I can use time adverbials"; "I can include technical vocabulary." It was as if I'd booked a babysitter but a marketing manager had turned up instead.

The maths worksheets seemed more cogent, but the language was just as weirdly abstract—all tell, no show. "LI: to add using expanded column method"; "LI: to use inverse relationships to solve problems"; "Challenge: how many different division facts will you be able to write for the following statements? Explain your answer." The wording reminded me of a poorly translated instruction manual.

When Michael Gove instituted a new national curriculum in 2014, the highly technical grammar foisted on primary pupils attracted some consternation (the secondary grammar curriculum is tiny by comparison). Six- and seven-year-olds are now expected to know prepositions, conjunctions and subordinate clauses; eight- and nine-year-olds, noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, preposition phrases, fronted adverbials and determiners; nine- and 10-year-olds, modal verbs and relative pronoun cohesion. I don't even know what some of these terms mean, and I've got a PhD in English.

But there is a bigger problem with our education system, and it is manifest not just in the grammar, but in its entire lexicon. The dismal ingredients listed in the national curriculum are ending up, raw and unprocessed, on my children's plates. The teachers—who are expected to serve up this extraordinarily detailed menu – have no time to properly prepare it. When an outsider like me suddenly sees what is going on, the obvious question is: why are they spending precious learning time deciphering abstruse terminology that is clearly age-inappropriate, joyless and fundamentally pointless?

Part of the problem is that “knowledge” has been incorrectly defined as “grammatical concepts.” Children’s author Frank Cottrell-Boyce tells me he has done readings in primary schools where the teacher says afterwards: “Now class, let’s identify the wow words, connectives and metaphors that Frank is using here.” This is not the fault of teachers: “I see amazing work all the time,” he says, “but it’s in the teeth of what they’re asked to do – they’re having to gouge moments out of the day and twist the curriculum to be able to do it.”

Cottrell-Boyce believes the value of listening to stories is being missed. “It’s a strange thing for a writer to say,” he tells me, “but I think we really overvalue writing. A lot of the writing that’s done in the classroom is to create some physical entity that can be assessed. It has no intrinsic value apart from the testing – and kids know that.” Testing leads to everything being “gamed,” he says. “Kids are being urged to expand their sentences and add adjectives that their story doesn’t need because they gain points for it; so, at some level, the whole process is becoming transactional. And the kids know there’s bad faith in that,” because it’s not really about them. Schools are ranked by SATs performance: “So at the core, we’re teaching cynicism over pleasure. Pleasure is regarded as suspect, to do with fun and distraction – but I think of pleasure as a really profound form of concentration. You will only do something well if you are taking pleasure in it.”

Formal grammar teaching is defended as a remedy for those who do not grow up around books. But Cottrell-Boyce points instead to the “huge inequality” between “kids who experience a book on their mum’s knee or being read to in bed, and kids whose first encounter with a book is decoding this terrifying puzzle on a desk. It’s very hard to get over that hurdle.” “Why are our children spending time deciphering abstruse terminology that is clearly age-inappropriate, joyless and fundamentally pointless?”

There is technical language in all subjects, but it is not the case that grammar is to writing what the periodic table is to chemistry. As linguists Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker have shown, children deploy grammar instinctively; they don’t use it as building blocks to construct sentences. They can write “I went to the park and played with my friend” without knowing they’re using a conjunction. Earlier this month, the writer and teacher Kate Clanchy tweeted reassurance to homeschooling parents struggling with fronted adverbials: “Grammar is not ‘the basics’ of language,” she wrote: “it’s the description of how it works.” Even if there could be some application for it as part of language learning or literary criticism somewhere down the road, it is surely consuming disproportionate amounts of time in the primary school classroom.

Clanchy was writing in tribute to her late mother, Joan Clanchy, herself a headteacher and an adviser on the curriculum, until she resigned in 2011 in protest at emerging literacy plans. “It’s as though the driving test just involved doing a three-point turn without taking the driver out in traffic,” Joan commented at the time. “The interest, enjoyment and excitement will go.” Michael Rosen, another prominent critic of grammar teaching divorced from context and function, argues that writing is best learned through “imitation, parody and invention.”

“It’s a very long time in this country since we have had real discussions about what we want children to learn and to what purpose,” former adviser Debra Myhill tells me. She would like to see a rethink across the board, not just in literacy. “It used to be a strong field of research in the sixties and seventies. Since 1988, we’ve had curriculum after curriculum, but the design has been shaped by political ideology rather than discussions about what we want education to be for. It is a choice: we as a country decide what we think is important.”

“If I had a magic wand I would reinvent the whole thing,” teacher Carrie Derrick tells me. “I’d give teachers room to be creative, and actually do things that children like doing, and be led more by them and their sheer love of learning, rather than the need to provide evidence. That is why I’m a teacher.” Pendulum swings in education policy sap energy. But we cannot in good faith persist with a system that converts children’s natural curiosity into bafflement, strategising just to “get through,” and ultimately disengagement.

Homeschool has been gruelling. Tactfully ignoring most of the worksheets, my kids and I have learned why limestone foams in vinegar and how a valley is formed, but also what happens to an alarm clock when it is thrown across a room. Explaining how to tell the time was harder than I’d expected. But it has also revealed what is possible. I will send them back to the classroom with relief on 8 March—but also a heavy heart. School involves an accommodation with the state. It’s basically fine, you tell yourself as you wave them off, bags on backs. It could get even worse, however, if the pandemic produces a doubling down on standards and a rush to plug attainment gaps.

What, though, if things went the other way? If enough parents were to reject what teachers have bemoaned for years, now that they’ve seen it for themselves? If pressure built to the point where all the jargon had to be stripped out and meaningful knowledge added in; if all the futile documentation, testing, inspections and league tables were abandoned and teachers liberated to speak in their own words? That really would be a silver lining.

Read the article in full: <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/homeschooling-parents-lockdown-national-curriculum-uk-eliane-glaser>

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: HOW A CORONATION STREET STORYLINE WILL CHANGE LIVES

For two decades, Sylvia Lancaster has been working to ensure her daughter's legacy. Sophie was just 20 when died after being brutally attacked by a gang of teenage thugs in a Lancashire park. It was a crime that shocked the nation and left an indelible mark on the Rossendale town where Sophie grew up. Sophie's family, prosecutors and police insist she died simply because she looked different [she dressed as a Goth].

At the start of May, Coronation Street aired upsetting scenes which mirror the attack on Sophie and her boyfriend Robert Maltby 14 years ago. Popular characters Nina Lucas and Seb Franklin were violently assaulted by a gang during scenes aired on Wednesday night (May 5). Fans of the show were horrified by the scenes. But Sylvia hopes the storyline — watched by millions — will have a major impact on how people view those from alternative subcultures. "I think it's already making a difference because I have read the comments about Nina," Sylvia says. "People don't only see the person she shows the world she is, they also see the real person underneath that and I think that's really important and can change people's attitudes. So that's massive."

Over the years The Sophie Lancaster Foundation — the charity Sylvia founded in the wake of her daughter's death — has been approached numerous times by TV and film companies. Many have asked to use Sophie's story but Sylvia says it hasn't felt right. With Coronation Street, she hopes the issue of hate crime will get the audience it deserves.

In August, it will be 14 years since Sophie's death. Sylvia has used every moment of that time to try and make changes to how hate crime is tackled. Much of the Foundation's work revolves around education, with Sylvia presenting at schools, colleges and prisons to challenge perceptions of people in subcultures. "Children are amazing and it's a privilege to be able to go into schools and do this work with them. You can see a lot of them have never even thought about it," she says. "And I know it makes a difference. We were doing something in Halifax and went into this cafe and the woman serving us said 'I know exactly who you are, my son was in one of your presentations'. "She said he came home and told her all about it and they had a big discussion which was so unusual for him. So, I know it works."

When the pandemic hit, the charity's work around schools and music festivals had to stop. But they have been busy all year working to update the website, revamping education packs and piloting online educational programmes, to make sure the work continues despite schools being closed. The charity was awarded £55,000 from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund to help them develop new ways of working. It was a lifeline during a year which hit charities hard. "Last year was very difficult," Sylvia says. "Thank God we got that money. We got the lockdown and that was all our work gone - no schools, no festivals. But we have been really busy throughout digitising everything and we've got a new website that came online last week. I have missed speaking to people face to face though. To me that's the most important thing. We have had young people come to us and say they have been in that difficult position, or they have targeted someone alternative and they wouldn't do it again. So, it works on so many levels."

Over the years Sylvia and her small team have made great strides towards change. In 2013 Greater Manchester Police became the first force in England to record and monitor hate crimes and incidents against people from alternative subcultures. Another 17 forces have since followed suit to record hate crime in this way. But there is still a long way to go. The Law Commission is currently re-evaluating hate crime legislation and as such, Sylvia put forward a proposal to ask if hate crime relating to people from alternative subcultures could be included in the proposed changes. "What they are arguing is there's not enough data and figures," Sylvia says. "I was gutted to be honest. But we have to carry on and see what we can do."

Sylvia says hate crime against alternative subcultures is still prevalent. "It's interesting talking to Mollie, who plays Nina. She's lovely and she's actually quite alternative herself. She lives in Manchester and says she's never really seen any prejudice. It's not seen as quite as strange as it might be in Bacup. But we have done work in schools in Manchester and it's been quite obvious that prejudice has been going on and they will tell me so. You can tell the work that has been done in schools on sexuality, race and religion because the kids know not to discriminate in that way. That's taken decades to instil in them. But what we are seeing is that they will target alternatives as they don't know they're not supposed to. So, they will still stick it to the alternatives. It just takes time."

Every change Sylvia and the Foundation have made has been an uphill battle, but they have made plenty of progress. Sylvia hopes the Coronation Street storyline will shine a light on an issue she feels is as important as ever before. "I think we have stayed true to ourselves as a charity over the years," she says. "We have stuck with what we originally intended to do. And we keep going."

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/newsmanchester/i-think-it-e2-80-99s-already-making-a-difference-how-a-coronation-street-storyline-inspired-by-sophie-lancasters-murder-in-rossendale-will-change-lives/ar-BB1gvJ4k?ocid=uxbndlbing>

See also:

<https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2021-05-05/coronation-street-base-storyline-on-hate-crime-murder-of-sophie-lancaster-killed-for-dressing-as-a-goth>

BEING A HEARING ALLY FOR THE DEAF COMMUNITY

8 May 2021 **Michelle Roca, Director of the Caritas Deaf Service**, writes: In a perfect world, my job would not exist. Every parish would be fully inclusive to everyone, including those who are Deaf, Deafblind or hard of hearing. Everyone would be fluent in sign language, everyone would automatically turn on the hearing loop and use the microphone when they spoke. The one in six people who are Deaf or hard of hearing would only not hear the homily if they chose not to listen (something I will admit to doing on occasion!). That utopia of a fully inclusive parish is, however, still a long way off. As Deaf Awareness week comes to a close, I was reflecting on what it means to me as a hearing person to be an ally for the Deaf Community. When is it my time to speak and when should I let others take the lead? I am privileged that my life and work spans both the hearing world and the Deaf Community; I get the best of both worlds. I can share with wonderful people from both communities, but I am not Deaf; I don't know what that feels like.

The past 14 months have been challenging in so many ways for so many people, but just imagine for a moment the effect of people wearing masks on those who rely on lip readings and facial expressions to communicate. A notice from your GP tells you that all contact has to be by telephone in the first instance. Where does that leave a parent who happens to be Deaf with an ill child that they are desperately seeking help for? Last March, the Prime Minister decided the situation was so dire he must speak directly to the nation; but there was no sign language interpreter, so Deaf people who rely on British Sign Language (BSL) had no access to what he was saying. Did you get confused at all with the tier system and what you were allowed to do when and where? Imagine trying to understand the latest information on the television news with the sound off. Difficult? Challenging? For some Deaf people, quite simply, it has been impossible to follow what has been going on.

Like any community, the Deaf Community is made up of a huge variety of people, they are not a homologous mass; everyone is different, but a lack of an interpreter to provide information and a lack of closed captions or subtitles on videos and some TV channels, has created a common frustration over a lack of access to information. So how can hearing people support the Deaf Community with respect and appreciation? How can you make your parish truly Deaf friendly? Invite Deaf and hard of hearing people onto committees and organising groups in your parish and listen actively to their contribution. A different perspective can be challenging but it can also be interesting, so be open to understanding this different perspective and to doing things differently. Engage with this different perspective and show your commitment to accepting change if that is what is required. Speak up if you realise that others in your parish are ignoring or marginalising Deaf or hard of hearing people.

Treating everyone the same does not necessarily mean that you are treating people equally. Equality is sometimes created by doing things differently. The best person to explain what it feels like to be Deaf in a parish is a Deaf person. The same with someone who is hard of hearing; if their experience is to be shared, it should come from someone who is hard of hearing and has first-hand experience of what that actually feels like.

Do I want to be standing shoulder to shoulder with my Deaf friends and colleagues? Actually, no I don't, I want to be one step behind them. I want them to know that I fully support them and I am right behind them as they lead on what they are the experts at. Deaf awareness should not be not just for a week; it should be part of everyday life.

Caritas Westminster Deaf Service www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/deaf-service.php

Deaf Awareness Week 3-9 May 2021 Coming Through it Together <https://www.deafcouncil.org.uk/deaf-awareness-week/> <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42153>

RENATE ANTI-TRAFFICKING SHORT FILM COMPETITION

RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation) is inviting 16-24-year-olds in European countries to join its mission to tackle human trafficking by entering a film competition. Entrants are invited to produce a short film individually or as part of a team, up to four minutes long, around the slogan 'Slavery - Human Trafficking - Near YOU!', and some or all of the tags #StopTheDemand, #BreakTheChains, #EndTheCycleTOGETHER.

Competition winners will receive £2000 for first place, £1000 for second place, and £500 for third place. If entering as a team, the prize money is per entry, so will be shared between team members. The deadline date of entry is mid-August 2021. For more information: www.renateevents.net/film-competition Winning entries will also be shown in London at RENATE's Film Festival, which will take place on 12 September 2021 across two venues in London. [This was originally scheduled for 18 October 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19.] The first place winner will be shown at BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts), and all three winning entries will be shown at the Royal Society of Arts.

Pope Francis has described human trafficking as a 'crime against humanity'. RENATE endeavours to abolish all forms of human trafficking and exploitation that violate the human dignity and rights of persons. Throughout its European Network, RENATE adopts a Victim-Centred, Human Rights, Trauma-informed approach in relation to the Law.

RENATE - www.renate-europe.net Further information from: communication@renate-europe.net
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42105>

PETITION ASKS FOR LECTIONARY TRANSLATION IN INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

6 May 2021 Source: **SLN** (Scottish Laity Network)

The Core Group of the Scottish Laity Network write: It is not commonly known that the Scottish Bishops have decided to adopt a new translation for Bible texts that are read at Mass. It is of great concern that this translation continues to use gender-exclusive language when the equal partnership of women and men is fundamental to our society and to the credibility of the Church today. A petition set up by the Scottish Laity Network is asking for a Bible translation in inclusive language.

Those who keep abreast with specialist Catholic news outlets may be aware that both the Bishops of England & Wales and the Bishops' Conference of Scotland have chosen the English Standard Version - Catholic Edition (ESV-CE) for the lectionary to be used at Mass in the future. The vast majority of laity in our parishes, however, are quite oblivious of this decision that will impact an entire generation.

In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, the three Bishops' Conferences of Ireland, Scotland and England & Wales approved the Jerusalem Bible (JB) as the basis for the revised three-year lectionary of the Roman Rite of Mass. This translation has been in use for some 50 years so we can expect, at Mass, to be listening to any new lectionary translation for decades to come. Scholars have voiced concerns about the lack of consultation, the provenance of the ESV-CE, and its lack of gender inclusivity. The far-reaching consequences therefore raise questions about its pastoral suitability for the mission of the Church in 21st century Scotland, England & Wales and Ireland.

In our petition, the Scottish Laity Network express concern that the ESV-CE continues to use gender-exclusive language, opting for 'he', 'man', 'brother' etc even when the context includes both male and female, and an inclusive translation is easily possible.

The Bible was written and revised over centuries when patriarchy was the norm and such language was not seen to be exclusive. Our cultural climate is markedly different, however. We now expect both men and women to enjoy the same human rights. In the 21st century, young women and men in these Isles see themselves as equal partners in the home, in school, in the workplace, and in the eyes of God.

They expect no less in their Church. The perception of language has shifted significantly, even over the last 55 years since the JB was published. What was formerly a generic use of 'men' and 'brothers' is now considered outdated and is no longer understood by younger people to include women as well. It is now felt to be exclusive and is preventing women from recognising themselves as being addressed in Scripture.

Much is at stake. Women are already leaving the institutional Church, feeling disenfranchised, and they have the support of their male partners and brothers. Gender-exclusive language is likely to accelerate that exodus. The Church is already in decline, and losing young people as the first teachers of faith of future generations will exacerbate the situation.

A translation which will be alienating for many, both inside and outside the Church not only has serious pastoral implications. Exclusive language is also likely to have a detrimental impact on the Church's credibility. To neglect to make the Word of God accessible in a cultural context of gender equality is to risk becoming irrelevant. In doing so, we are compromising the Church's mission to dialogue with and bring the Good News to our wider secular society.

Alternative inclusive translations for Catholic use do exist. The Canadian Episcopal Conference, for example, adopted the New Revised Standard Version-CE (1985) in 2008. Our petition asks the Scottish Bishops to approve the most recent Revised New Jerusalem Bible (2018), which has received much praise for its inclusive language and up-to-date scholarship, if necessary alongside the ESV-CE so that a choice may be made. This would by no means be unprecedented, since up until now two translations were approved by the Bishops of both England & Wales and Ireland, the JB (most commonly used) and the Revised Standard Version-CE.

A similar earlier English petition addressed to Cardinal Nichols closed at 875 signatures. To date, the Scottish petition has gathered 892 signatures, including English & Welsh, Irish and international support. This might serve as a litmus test that there is indeed wide-spread concern about gender-exclusivity, well beyond the boundaries of Episcopal Conferences. The Irish Bishops, with whom the Association of Catholic Priests have raised the same concerns, are yet to make a decision. It will be interesting to see which road they will take.

The petition is available here: www.change.org/Inclusive-language-bible-texts-at-Mass

The Scottish Laity Network is an organisation that, through dialogue, discernment and support, aims to provide a forum for laity seeking new ways of being Church in Scotland in the 21st century. Email: slaitynetwork@gmail.com
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42142>

CHRISTIANS AWARE RELEASES NEW BOOK: 'IT'S THE JOURNEY'

Barbara Butler 3 May 2021

'*It's the Journey*' is a new book written by Timothy Biles, a retired priest of Salisbury Anglican Diocese. It is a wonderful collection of stories from his travels for many years all over the world. The stories are uplifting, depressing, surprising and true.

The book is divided into sections: Culture clashes, Victims and heroes, That's war, God of a hundred faces, Journey's joys. There are coloured photographs throughout and it is attractive, interesting and thought-provoking.

In this book he reflects on his experiences of life in lands dominated by the Muslims of Pakistan, the Hindus of India, the Buddhists of Sri Lanka and the Jews of Israel-Palestine. He finds heroes and victims from all the faiths as wars and turbulence drive people to support each other in the search for safety and a life worth living.

In Luxor, Egypt, Tim tells of a visit to a home where his host was rich because he had water and animals. He offers incredible insights into refugee camps and their mostly dignified and very brave inhabitants.

Throughout his book Tim introduces readers to remarkable people including Archbishop Elias Chakour, Brother Andrew of the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, and Father Bede Griffiths.

"Whilst it is true that the meaning is in the journey not the destination, Tim Biles has been to some fascinating places. He has collected his reflections on a series of vivid encounters and made them into good stories. What I like most of all is the way in which he opens the experience to us and does not try to resolve the puzzles, dilemmas and contradictions he encountered. He enjoys life and loves people. In seeking meaning, his own beliefs and values become clear but he leaves us with work to do."

Barbara Butler is the Executive Secretary of Christians Aware.

'*It's the Journey*' - £14 + £4 p&p from Christians Aware, 2 Saxby Street, Leicester LE2 0ND or you can order by emailing the author: timbiles35@gmail.com
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42117>

HARD RAIN: OUR HEADLONG COLLISION WITH NATURE

Bob Dylan, who turns 80 on May 24 this year, was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 2016, an award about which he was diffident, remaining silent for months before accepting the honour, then declining to attend the acceptance ceremony in Stockholm, where Patti Smith touchingly choked up singing A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall.

Inspired by Dylan's song and published in 2009 with a series of hard-hitting photographs by Mark Edwards to accompany each line, the book *Hard Rain: Our Headlong Collision With Nature* was sent to every Prime Minister and President in the world, with the challenge, "it brings alive the global problems you were elected to solve: poverty, the wasteful use of resources, the loss of habitats and species, and the summation of our problems, climate change." An exhibition of the photos in the book toured worldwide. Highly recommended.

Lyrics Bob Dylan, photos Mark Edwards, July 2009. Buy on Ebay or read in full with introduction, words and photos at: <http://hardrainproject.com/pageflip/01/files/index.html> ISBN 978-1-905588-02-2

Referring to the song, Dylan said "I wrote A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. People sat around wondering if it was the end, and so did I. Would 10 o'clock the next day ever come? It was song of desperation. The words came fast - very fast. It was a song of terror. Line after line, trying to capture the feeling of nothingness."

VIDEO: FOOL FOR CHRIST - THE STORY OF DOROTHY DAY

In this one-woman drama, Sarah Melici masterfully plays Dorothy as well as eleven other characters, including Forster Batterham, the father of her daughter. As a costume, she wears a simple replica of the prison uniform from Dorothy's last arrest, when she was jailed with the farm workers in Delano, California, supporting Cesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers union campaign.

After the premier of *Fool For Christ* in Maryhouse, New York in 1998, Sarah toured the country performing the play in colleges, parishes and Catholic Worker houses. When Dan Berrigan saw the play for the first time, he wrote: "*Fool for Christ* is worthy of the original Dorothy."

A recording of the play is now available on Youtube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDBKRJyuuy0
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42123>

DIARY DATES

MAY

16-25 Laudato Si' Week <https://laudatosiweek.org/>

25 and 26– Israel/Palestine: in search of the rule of law Free online conference, organised by the Balfour Project. Exploring the distance between international law – which Britain has pledged to uphold – and the lived reality in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Speakers include Baroness Hale, Dominic Grieve, Philippe Sands, and a range of parliamentarians. Balfour Project: working for Peace, Justice and Equal Rights in Israel/Palestine, acknowledging Britain's historic role and current responsibilities. Details, and to Register: <https://balfourproject.org/rule-of-law>

JUNE

6 Environment Sunday www.arochoa.org.uk

6 Tax Justice Sunday www.catj.org.uk/tax_justice_sunday.html

7 TED Zoom talk & discussion "How Africa can keep rising" 7-9pm. A TED talk is a short video created from a presentation at the main TED (technology, entertainment, design) conference or one of its many satellite events around the world. Listening to/watching a TED talk gives us the opportunity to hear expert leaders who communicate effectively, concisely and with passion for their subject. For this CWDF "Extra" session we have selected this talk as a stimulus for discussion: 'How Africa can keep rising' given by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in 2016. She is a Nigerian-American, a respected global economist and international development expert who took up her post as Director-General of the World Trade Organisation on 1st March 2021 - the first woman and first African to hold the office. For the Zoom link email bernard.payne691@btinternet.com

14-20 Refugee Week <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/theme-of-refugee-week-2021-we-cannot-walk-alone/>

26 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture www.fiacat.org/en/our-actions/thenetwork-campaigns/night-vigil

24-25 'Life on the Breadline' End of Project Conference.

Conference Programme: <https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/events/end-of-project-conference/>

Register here: <https://coventry.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/life-on-the-breadline-end-of-project-conference-reg>

JULY

23-25 NJPN conference '2021: Moment of Truth' in Derbyshire. Bookings are now open for an in-person gathering and all are welcome. See page 8 of this bulletin. Details and booking: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/

NJPN continues to have a weekly column in *The Universe*, and some of these are uploaded onto our website at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

● 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 including **a new fortnightly e-bulletin with a comprehensive round-up of current events, campaigns, e-petitions and resources** (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues for NJPN North West) at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org or admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk 020 7901 4864

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