

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

"A QUESTION OF STORY" THOMAS BERRY

Heather Kiernan writes: Thomas Berry was an early voice awakening moral sensibilities to the environmental crisis. Thomas' emphasis on the cultural transmission of coherence and meaning throughout history brought him to one of his most singular insights regarding the cosmological stories of a people.

Extract from *The New Story*: "For peoples, generally, their story of the Universe and the human role within the universe is their primary source of intelligibility and value. Only through this story of how the Universe came to be in the beginning and how it came to be as it is does a person come to appreciate the meaning of life or to derive the psychic energy needed to deal effectively with those crisis moments that occur in the life of the individual and in the life of the society. Such a story communicates the most sacred of mysteries and not only interprets the past, it also guides and inspires our shaping of the future."

The Universe story is the quintessence of reality. We perceive the story. We put it in our language, the birds

This essay from 1978 by Thomas Berry was first published in *Teilhard Studies no 1* (winter 1978)

Download in PDF: https://newstories.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/04/Thomas_Berry-The_New_Story.pdf

• **Thomas Berry** (9/11/1914 –1/6/2009) was a Passionist priest, cultural historian, cosmologist and "Earth scholar". Among advocates of ecospirituality, he is celebrated for proposing that a deep understanding of the history and functioning of the evolving universe is a necessary inspiration and guide for our own effective functioning as individuals and as a species.

DECARBONISATION STRATEGY GUIDE FOR CATHOLIC PROPERTY

Source: Guardians of Creation Team 2 July 2021: Faith groups in the UK, collectively, have a significant property footprint. For the government to meet its legally binding target of reducing carbon emissions by 78% by 2035, the built environment, which is responsible for approximately 40% of UK emissions, will need to decarbonise quickly. This first report from the 'Guardians of Creation' project will help Catholic dioceses begin that journey, providing advice on developing a buildings decarbonisation strategy.

Each Catholic diocese in England and Wales is responsible for hundreds of buildings; churches, halls, schools and presbyteries, in a variety of sizes, conditions and uses. Initial findings estimate that in the Diocese of Salford these buildings (excluding Catholic schools) are responsible for the equivalent of three hot air balloons full of carbon dioxide every day. Data for schools is still being collected, which it is expected will increase this amount several times over.

The report, '*Guidance on Developing Strategy for Decarbonising Catholic Diocesan Building Stocks*,' is based on consultations with diocesan managers and

Link to the report: www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/areas/theology-and-ethics/guardians-of-creation/resources.aspx

put it in theirs, and the trees put it in theirs. We can read the story of the Universe in the trees. Everything tells the story of the Universe. The winds tell the story, literally, not just imaginatively. The story has its imprint everywhere, and that is why it is so important to know the story. If you do not know the story, in a sense you do not know yourself; you do not know anything.

It's all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we are in between stories. The Old Story — the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it — sustained us for a long time. It shaped our emotional attitudes, provided us with life purpose, energized action, consecrated suffering, integrated knowledge, guided education. We awoke in the morning and knew where we were. We could answer the questions of our children. We could identify crime, punish transgressors. Everything was taken care of because the story was there. But now it is no longer functioning properly, and we have not yet learned the New Story."

expert participants from industry and academia. It offers guidance on developing a strategy to reduce the operational emissions of diocesan building stock, breaking the task of decarbonisation down into comprehensible, manageable elements. This is the first report issued as part of the '*Guardians of Creation*' project, which is running as a pilot in the Diocese of Salford. The insights from this pilot project are being translated into tools to support other dioceses. During the lifetime of this project, practical guidance will be released on topics such as calculating a carbon footprint and environmental auditing within a diocese, as well as social and theological aspects of sustainability in the Catholic Church.

The Guardians of Creation project has been developed collaboratively with the Diocese of Salford, St Mary's University and the *Laudato Si'* Research Institute at Campion Hall, University of Oxford. The project team regularly consult with diocesan environmental networks, which include NJPN and CAFOD members.

For any enquiries, please contact:

decarbonisation@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

LIVING WITHOUT DESTRUCTIVE PLASTIC

Fr Shay Cullen: 2 July 2021: Plastic was and is a magical invention. It is a material based on oil and has thousands of excellent and life-saving uses. In the medical world, in construction, in tool-making, manufacturing of phones and other gadgets, cars, household items, furniture and almost everything you see has plastic in it. Our modern world depends on plastic to sustain its present lifestyle. But that lifestyle built on the plastic revolution has its dangerous dark side. Everything we humans use and discard can have dire consequences for the planet. Garbage is everywhere and it is damaging our health. Plastic pollution is destroying many creatures and poisoning our air and rivers and oceans and people don't seem to care.

It is dangerous to health because it is a destructive chemical-based pollutant and it is the one-time use of disposable plastic stuff that is so dangerous and damaging to our lives, our health, our environment. The fish we eat have plastic in them because the vast oceans are filling up with discarded plastic. If you Google 'Plastic Pollution in Manila' you will get a sight that will make you cry or angry. You will see photos of the esteros, canals, rivers and Manila Bay choked with millions of discarded plastic bottles, cups, straws, bags, nets and wrappings. Eventually some drifts into the far ocean.

These single-use plastic items make up 40 percent of all annual plastic production worldwide. They are with us forever, you might say, and will not disintegrate for about 400 years. The millions of tons of floating plastic will eventually join the great Pacific garbage patch that covers a surface area that is 1.6 million square kilometres. That is three times the size of France. It is swirling in ocean currents between California and Hawaii and elsewhere. There are many other lesser known floating garbage islands where our discarded single-use plastics end up.

The ocean currents sweep up the floating plastic in gyre regions as they are called. An estimated 297 million tons of plastic is out there on the ocean currents distributed as follows: in the North Pacific (36 percent), Indian Ocean (22 percent), North Atlantic (21 percent), South Pacific (8 percent) and the South Atlantic (4.5 percent). The Mediterranean Sea has 8.5 percent. We humans sure dirty our own planet.

What is most dangerous to all living creatures in the short and long term is the damage to our health from micro-plastics. The plastic bottles, cups, straws and bags eventually breakdown into tiny micro-plastic particles and even Nano-plastics. A massive eight million tonnes every year float into the oceans and tons of plastic dust are blown into the atmosphere from the tons of plastic in open pit garbage dumps. We breathe the dust into our lungs. It may be necessary to always wear a mask. The micro-plastics get into everything- our throats, lungs and stomachs- and they harm wildlife, too. Fish are found dead their stomachs filled with plastic bags. Tests have shown micro plastics are in many caught fish on our dinner tables. I have gone vegetarian.

Birds are dying by the thousands from eating plastic items. Penguins, albatrosses and many sea gulls have died as a result of eating floating or submerged plastics. Thousands of dolphins, sharks, whales and turtles are caught in the drifting discarded plastic fishing nets of the commercial fishing industry. What incredible damage we are doing to wild nature, ourselves and our children by such irresponsible I-don't-care behaviour.

Discarded one-use plastic is a culture of death and destruction. Researchers have found items from almost every continent floating in the garbage patch and cast up on remote Pacific islands. They have been found in the deepest part of the ocean to the highest point on earth, Mount Everest, no less. Europe and the United States have their garbage and plastic disposable and recycling challenges yet Asia is the source of most of the plastic garbage.

The plastic garbage monster is coming not only from the Pasig in Manila where most of it stays in coastal waters but mostly it is coming down the five major Chinese rivers and also from the Nile in Egypt, the Ganges in India, the Indus in Pakistan, the Niger in Africa and the Mekong River that passes through Laos, Thailand and Cambodia.

There is one way to solve this: a worldwide ban on single use plastics like plastic bags, cups, bottles, drinking straws stir-sticks, cutlery and food containers. There are laws in place in some countries banning plastic bags. In the Subic Bay Freeport Zone, plastic bags are banned in stores and super markets. More restrictions are coming in the US and the EU but not soon enough. The Philippines needs such laws to save our beautiful islands and rivers and beaches. Burying the garbage in the sand is not the answer.

Beach and environmental clean ups are good and we see youth cleaning up other people's dirty environmental mess that is destroying the ecology. Speeches are important but action is more effective. It will be so much better to prevent the plastic pollution by passing and implementing laws to get all stores, supermarkets, and food establishments to use only recyclable bio-gradable packaging and wrapping.

Each of us can do our part. We can always have your own reusable water bottle, demand restaurants give a glass, ceramic or paper cup and paper straw and refuse to order if they use plastic. Look for bio-degradable materials. We can bring a shopping bag to the supermarket and never use plastic that is not biodegradable. At home or in the office, we separate all discarded materials and make a weekly trip to the recycling bins. If we all did these things, it would make a big difference. Let's make a start. But we have to persuade government to act and pass stricter laws to end the plastic pollution in the Philippines and elsewhere.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42547>

LINK: [Preda Foundation - www.preda.org](http://www.preda.org)

JRS UK CONDEMNS 'GRATUITOUSLY CRUEL' PROPOSALS TO DETAIN REFUGEES IN OFFSHORE HUB

28 June 2021: The Jesuit Refugee Service UK (JRS UK) has today condemned plans for offshore processing as cruel, ineffective and impractical. According to a government source quoted in *The Times*, Home Office ministers and officials have discussed proposals with the Danish government, which passed its own law this month to process asylum seekers outside Europe. Although *The Times* mentions a memorandum with Rwanda, a Rwanda government statement says: "Receiving asylum seekers from Denmark in Rwanda and processing asylum applications to Denmark is not part of this MoU." The plans are expected to appear in a new bill on immigration, to go before parliament next week.

Sarah Teather, Director of JRS UK said: "Proposals for the offshore detention of people seeking asylum are gratuitously cruel. Offshore detention has produced a brutal catalogue of human suffering in other places it is practised. And additionally, this would be expensive and inefficient. It represents a determination to build walls against vulnerable people seeking sanctuary, whatever the cost."

The Home Office has drawn further inspiration from Australia's policy, which bans asylum seekers travelling by sea and redirects them to offshore immigration accommodation centres in neighbouring states. It is widely accepted by experts that the Australian model is ineffective and inhumane, including testimonies and experiences from those who have been held there, and extensive work from JRS Australia.

This happens as part of the government's New Plan for Immigration, which contains inhumane and unworkable proposals to overhaul the asylum system, which set out to undermine the refugee convention and make it as hard as possible to get asylum. Another policy widely condemned as utterly unworkable is already in force: the 'inadmissibility rules', under which the government will try to remove asylum claimants who have passed through third countries without even examining their asylum claims, to anywhere that will take them. It is understood that the government has failed to secure any bilateral agreements to enact this policy. In the absence of these, the policy will simply prolong and complicate the asylum process. There are also plans for 'receptions centres' - probably entailing continued use of degrading ex-military barracks to house people seeking asylum, and plans to open a new detention centre at Hassockfield.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42517>

LINKS

Rwandan Government Statement: www.minaffet.gov.rw/updates/news-details/statement-on-cooperation-agreements-with-denmark

The Times report: www.thetimes.co.uk/article/priti-patel-plans-migrants-held-offshore-africa-hub-processing-denmark-8ktj9q36p

See also: JRS Demands Closure of Napier Barracks after Damning High Court Ruling
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42341>

THOUSANDS SEEKING ASYLUM FACE CRUEL WAIT OF YEARS FOR ASYLUM DECISION

2 July 2021: A new report published by the Refugee Council today reveals a staggering rise in the numbers of people seeking asylum condemned to wait for over a year for even an initial decision on whether they will be able to remain in the UK.

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests of Home Office data obtained by the charity show that the number of people waiting for more than a year for an initial decision increased almost tenfold from 3,588 people in 2010 to 33,016 in 2020. Other shocking findings include the number of children waiting longer than a year for an initial decision having increased more than twelve-fold from 563 children in 2010 to 6,887 in 2020. More than 250 people had been waiting for 5 years or more for an initial decision on their case, of whom 55 were children. The analysis finds that the average waiting time for an initial decision on an asylum case is likely to be between one and three years. It says that the backlog in initial decisions is primarily driven by the number of initial decisions failing to keep pace with the number of asylum applications being made.

The report exposes the detrimental impact asylum delays have on the mental health and wellbeing of people who seek safety in this country having fled war, terror, ongoing conflict and persecution. It says that it is common for Refugee Council staff to see people becoming increasingly unstable as the years of delays to their case and the corresponding uncertainty damages their mental and physical health. In some cases, it has led to self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

People caught up in the asylum backlog for years on end also lose any work-based skills they arrived with, damaging the integration and employment prospects for the majority of cases that go on to be granted status. The Refugee Council warns that the government's 'New Plan for Immigration' contains no plans to address the backlog and will only make this issue far worse, with further delays to the asylum process a highly likely outcome of new inadmissibility rules and other proposed changes to the asylum system.

The charity is calling on the government to urgently address the issue of asylum delays, with recommendations for the Home Office including introducing an effective triaging and prioritisation system, undertaking a review to ascertain the reasons why cases have been waiting for more than a year for an initial decision and establishing a dedicated backlog clearance team.

Enver Solomon, CEO of the Refugee Council, said: “Leaving vulnerable men, women and children waiting for years on end for news of their fate in what feels like a never-ending state of limbo is cruel and unjust. It is an incredibly inefficient, ineffective and unfair way to operate a refugee protection system. We need a system that works by making timely decisions and ensures everybody in need of safety gets a fair hearing. Competence and compassion are what matters. Instead the government’s asylum reforms are likely to lead to even longer waits with even more people condemned to years of worry and uncertainty.”

Case study: Ahmad* came to the UK with his wife and two children in 2018 having escaped kidnapping and persecution in his home country. His initial relief at having found safety in a new country, and enthusiasm to rebuild his life here, gradually subsided as the wait for even an initial decision on his claim got longer. Three and a half years later Ahmad is still waiting for his substantive interview and any real clarity on whether the UK can be his and his growing family’s home for the long term.

“Sometimes the Home Office write to us to say that we’ll have our interview in 6 months, but they have so many times, I can no longer rely on their word. In the first year, first two years, I was so tense, always waiting for letters. Your day starts waiting for a letter and ends like this, every day is like this. I cannot work here. I have two degrees, one in Economics and one in Law, but it means nothing here. I love studying and learning. I was planning on going to university here, do a short-term course here, but time is running out. I am 35 already; maybe I won’t get my status until I am 40 and there’ll be no point to get an education, and I will be thinking about my children’s education.”

*Name has been changed to protect anonymity.

<https://refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/thousands-seeking-asylum-face-cruel-wait-of-years-for-asylum-decision-fresh-research-shows/>

URGENT ACTION REQUEST: RESET THE DEBT

Church Action on Poverty is part of the Reset The Debt campaign, which has been working hard with MPs to secure a debate on the impact of Covid-19 on household debt. We’re pleased to say that MPs will be given the chance to gather in parliament to debate the issue on 8 July at 1:30pm. The debate will give MPs the chance to seek a comprehensive roadmap out of debt for those currently facing its legacy of long-term problems, to acknowledge the full scale of the problem and to recognise the particular suffering caused by Covid-related debt.

It’s really important that the debate is attended by as many MPs as possible, so that it has maximum impact. It’s also important that MPs from across the political spectrum come to participate in the debate. We need your help to make sure that the debate is packed out, energetic, and solution-orientated. Could you get in touch with your MP to ask them to attend the debate? We’ve made it really easy to send an email using our template. **Ask your MP to attend the debate:**

https://e-activist.com/page/85397/action/1?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=resetthedebt&utm_content=2021+06+RTD+debate+action,+CAOP+supporters&ea.url.id=5390411

The UK may be gradually returning to normal, but for many in the UK, the end of restrictions will not mean the end of the fallout from Covid-19. As you know, millions of families have been weighed down by household debts incurred as a result of the pandemic, with low-income households and those with children hit the hardest. Debt advice charity StepChange estimate that 11 million people have built up £25 billion of arrears and debt since the start of the pandemic. We must all move forward from the impacts of Covid-19 together, and that means addressing the weight of debt which is holding whole communities back.

Please write to your MP to seek solutions to the impact of Covid-19 on household debt.

Liam Purcell, Church Action on Poverty <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/>

Reset The Debt is a campaign launched by the Baptist Union, the Church of Scotland, Church Action on Poverty, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

LIFE ON THE BREADLINE REPORT FOR POLICYMAKERS

Stephanie Denning 2 July 2021: The Life on the Breadline Report for Policymakers in the UK has been published and is now available to download: https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Life-on-the-Breadline-report-for-policymakers_July-2021.pdf

SHREWSBURY CARITAS AWARDED COVID CRISIS FUNDING, WELCOMES NEW CEO

15 July 2020: A new Chief Executive Officer, Ben Gilchrist has been appointed to Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury. The agency has also received two grants totalling more than £100,000 that will allow it to offer crucial lifelines to people plunged into poverty and other problems by the coronavirus crisis. The grants are £62,000 from the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation and £47,000 from the National Lottery. The money will be used to support people in states of personal crisis because of the Covid-19 public health emergency. The grant from the Gubay foundation means that the social care agency of the Diocese of Shrewsbury can launch the Caritas Crisis Fund to provide one-off grants to support families who would benefit hugely from a small amount of funding.

Applicants must be in exceptional circumstance and live within the Diocese - which covers the Wirral, nearly all of Cheshire, Shropshire and Greater Manchester south of the River Mersey. It is anticipated that the fund will help people to better address personal problems caused or often accompanied by loss of income, unemployment, domestic violence and abuse, neglect, poor relationships, autism and ADHD, addictions, anxiety and depression.

The Caritas Crisis Fund can be accessed after the completion of two-page application forms by head teachers, representatives of a parish, support agencies or by Caritas employees on behalf of a family or individual. The witnesses will detail the difficulties applicants are experiencing and explain why they might require one-off financial support. The fund will give Caritas support workers an option to pay a key utility bill or provide extra food to relieve pressure. The agency will also be linking with diocesan food banks to ensure that families have enough food and hygiene products but will also work with families over a period of months to support the mental health of their members and to help them to address any long-term issues they face.

Trish Spencer of Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury said: "This fund will ensure the most vulnerable don't sink into poverty and desperation during this pandemic but maintain a foundation from which lives can be rebuilt."

The money from the Lottery will be used to support clients with mental health problems, as well as to provide practical assistance with vouchers for basic hygiene and household needs for those who have had to move out or have no benefits in place. The funds will also be used to purchase vouchers for food when foodbanks cannot supply enough for bigger families; help with Internet subscriptions so children may continue to be home-schooled and adults can access online support, and pay for transport for families with hospital appointments or ongoing crucial treatment. It will also fund bereavement programmes and resources, parenting programmes, domestic violence programmes and behaviour strategies and resources.

The crisis funding is necessary because there has been an increase in domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and bereavement following months of lockdown. Caritas has recorded a threefold increase in the number of people approaching the agency to ask for help. Many families are also experiencing problems related to children's behaviour and parenting issues and to loss of jobs, with some people finding themselves without money because of delay or inability to apply for benefits. They include people who have been abandoned by their partners or were compelled to leave their homes because of domestic violence, sometimes leading to a delay in benefits of up to 10 weeks.

Caritas can provide support through such social media platforms as Skype and Zoom and also by telephone and will ensure deliveries of food and prescribed medication to the doorsteps of families when necessary.

The two awards come as Caritas prepares to welcome Ben Gilchrist as new Chief Executive Officer following the retirement of Mary Kilcoyne earlier this year.

The Rt Rev Mark Davies, the Bishop of Shrewsbury, said: "As we emerge from the long months of lockdown with many anxieties about the future, let us not forget the poorest. Many of the neediest and most vulnerable are facing severe challenges in a post-lockdown world. I am delighted that thanks to your support and generosity we have in Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury our own social action agency already working in the field. I want to welcome Caritas's new Chief Executive Officer Ben Gilchrist who arrives with a wealth of experience and at a critical time for our work and witness. I also wish to record all our thanks to the Gubay Foundation and the National Lottery Fund who wished to support the work of Caritas in the Diocese of Shrewsbury at this time of crisis for many."

Ben Gilchrist said: "I am excited to be joining Caritas Shrewsbury. This is a very challenging time for families and communities but it is exactly when the work of Caritas is so vital. I'm looking forward to helping develop and grow the impact of the charity and the range of partnerships through which to do that. A huge thank you to all our supporters, volunteers and staff for all you are already doing. I am really looking forward to working with you."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/40028>

LINKS

Caritas Shrewsbury: www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk

Diocese of Shrewsbury: www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE NEWS

Congratulations - CAAT has been nominated for the 2021 Nobel peace prize together with their partner Mwatna for Human Rights, a grass roots organisation working in Yemen. They were nominated for their work to stop UK government's sales of arms to Saudi Arabia, particularly the ongoing court case to challenge UK government's decision to resume arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in the war in the Yemen. You can find out more about the nomination on <https://caat.org.uk/faq-answers-to-your-questions-about-caats-nobel-peace-prizenomination/>

It was 6 years this March since Saudi-led forces launched their first attacks on Yemen which have killed thousands of people and resulted in the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. UK and International rules on arms sales should prohibit arms sales if there is a clear risk of the weapons being used in violations of International Humanitarian Law. Yet the government has continued to allow the supply of weapons for use in Yemen despite repeated targeting of civilians. CAAT continues to challenge the government in the courts. Please give your support to CAAT's work by adding your name to the letter to Boris Johnson <https://caat.org.uk/open-letter-end-uk-arms-sales-for-use-in-the-war-on-yemen/>

THE CROSS ON THE WALL

Jon Kuhrt 19 June 2021: For 8 years, I led a homelessness charity which was based in offices attached to a church. In these offices, there was a room that we frequently used for smaller meetings. On the end wall of this room there was a small cross. During the years I was in the job, many of the most difficult experiences that I had were in this room. Some were Managers meetings where colleagues disagreed with my decisions; some were Trustee meetings where I was challenged; some were with local and national government teams who were reviewing our funding. We also held many HR meetings there: investigations into misconduct and formal meetings which led to dismissals, resignations and redundancies. Of course, these kinds of meetings are not easy for anyone involved, especially for those directly affected. But they are also unavoidable if you are to manage an organisation effectively.

Leadership is relatively easy when you can be gracious, accommodating and inclusive. But a leader is really tested when you have to confront situations and take responsibility for hard decisions. A commitment to uncovering the truth, and acting on it, is costly. But the health of any organisation (or business, club or church) can be measured by how well these kinds of critical conversations are managed. As someone who likes to be liked, I found this aspect of leadership difficult. I don't have particularly happy memories of that room, but there is one aspect that I will never forget: the cross on the wall. It became very important to me.

Historically, the cross is a cruel instrument of death favoured by the Roman empire for its political opponents. But for Christians it is the core symbol of our faith. This is because it was the route that God took to heal and redeem humanity.

Over the years, the cross in that room became simultaneously a comfort and a challenge to me. As I sat through difficult meetings, it reminded me of a down-to-earth-God who shows solidarity with those who suffer and bear pain. But it also challenged me to be brave, to ask the hard questions, to go deeper, not to settle for the false comfort of a cheap grace which side-lines the truth. I don't want to pretend I got it right all the time, far from it. I made plenty of mistakes and there are many things I would do differently if I had my time again. But often, when I was tempted to skirt over something, duck a challenge, pretend things were better than they were, ignore a difficult issue, the cross on the wall spoke to me.

Jesus' crucifixion, in Palestine, under Pilate's jurisdiction, is a historic 'happening' rooted in time and space. Yet, Christians believe that Jesus' life, death and resurrection provides the central 'clue' to understanding human purpose. Ultimate meaning is not found in 'timeless truths' which lie outside of history but in the specific life and actions of a carpenter-turned-healer/preacher.

Jesus death on the cross achieved something objective: it was the unique moment where God sealed a victory over death to redeem humanity. The creator God shows his power and glory through self-sacrifice. But this is not just an objective theological truth detached from us. Jesus told his followers that they also need to take up their crosses. It is a divine template for us to follow, an example to apply in the vast range of subjective experiences we all face. It is this fusion of the objective and subjective which makes the Christian story so compelling.

The cross is the ultimate symbol of grace and truth. The wrongness of the world was confronted and overcome. And this makes forgiveness and reconciliation possible. The truth is that grace has triumphed over evil. As the early Christians put it, who suffered so much persecution and threat: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Hebrews 12:2)

The cross on that wall did help me to 'consider' Christ and the opposition he endured. And this helped me not grow weary or lose heart through some tough times. I pray that this can be true for you too.

<https://gracetruth.blog/2021/06/19/the-cross-on-the-wall/>

OBITUARY: MARTHA WHITE, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Martha White, who played a key role in starting the 1953 Baton Rouge bus boycott, died at age 99 on 5 June 2021.

White was a 31-year-old housekeeper during the summer of 1953, when she would walk miles in the sweltering heat to reach her bus stop and go to and from work. But on June 15, 1953, the only seats available on the bus were designated for white passengers only.

White decided to take a seat just behind the bus driver and was soon ordered to get up. She refused, and another Black woman sat by her side. The bus driver threatened to have the two arrested before the police, the bus company manager and civil rights activist Rev. T.J. Jemison arrived at the scene. Jemison informed the driver of a recently passed ordinance to desegregate the buses in the city, meaning White wasn't violating any rules.

Bus drivers across the city began a strike against the new ordinance, and it was later overturned by the district attorney. In response, Jemison, attorney Johnnie Jones and activist Willis Reed led a bus boycott for the Black community of Baton Rouge. They organised groups that went door-to-door, informing bus riders of the boycott and arranging for drivers to take them to and from work, according to Jason Roberts, co-owner of the Baton Rouge African American Museum and son of the late activist Sadie Roberts-Joseph. "We really lost a true pioneer for civil rights," Roberts said of White's death.

More than 80% of bus riders at the time were Black, so the boycott was a major problem for the city's public transportation system. Eight days after the boycott's launch, Jemison negotiated an agreement with the city for better seating arrangements for Black riders.

Baton Rouge's bus boycott, one of the nation's first public transportation boycotts of the Civil Rights Movement, later provided the framework for Martin Luther King Jr. to start his own bus boycott in Montgomery in 1955.

Roberts met White once at an event for his museum just before the pandemic. She sat in front of the door outside the museum, which bears her name, but didn't reveal her identity to anyone there. Roberts hadn't realized who she was until someone else asked if he'd like to be introduced to her. Roberts said she offered her condolences for his mother's passing and gave him a blessing to continue her legacy at the museum. She was "reflective" in how she interacted with him that day.

"It was a very poignant moment for me to have met someone who I know my mother considered an icon," Roberts said. "Had I known that she was there from the beginning, I would have asked her to sit on stage with me, but she was content to sit among the crowd."

Ted Jemison, the son of Rev. T.J. Jemison, remembered White being very outspoken and unafraid to share her opinion throughout her life. He recalled a conversation he had with her years ago about that historic summer day, where she told him she just wanted to sit in that bus seat because she was tired from working on her feet constantly. "Can you imagine working on your feet all day and just wanting to sit down?" Jemison remembered White telling him. "She was the same way from when she was young to when she was 90 years old. She knew that what she did was for the good of everyone in Baton Rouge."

Jemison not only knew White through her work with his father, but through their participation in the McKowen Missionary Baptist Church. Their pastor, Rev. Gerard Robinson, knew her best from her participation in Sunday school each week, where she tirelessly and meticulously studied scripture to share with the class. "If I said something, she had to say something behind me," Robinson said with a laugh. "If I missed one part of the lesson she knew, she was going to tell me, 'well, pastor...'"

Robinson said she was very outspoken on the issues she cared about: Sunday school, social justice and community issues. He said if she could have, she likely would have held a march for community safety in response to ongoing crime in Baton Rouge. "She just loved people," said Robinson. "She was a fond lover of her Church members and the people of the Church."

Mayor Sharon Weston Broome released a statement Monday afternoon regarding White's passing, recognising her contribution to the historical boycott. "Martha White undoubtedly shaped our community in Baton Rouge, and communities across our nation," said the Mayor in a statement. "We honour her legacy today and every day."

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_3d06587e-c7d6-11eb-ae53-d74c1e3811e9.html

THE WOMEN WHO WANT TO BE PRIESTS

Margaret Talbot *The New Yorker* magazine 21 June 2021: Soline Humbert was a seventeen-year-old studying history and politics at Trinity College in Dublin when she first felt a calling to enter the priesthood. She did not welcome it. A cradle Catholic who was born and raised in France, Humbert knew that in the Roman Catholic Church only men could be priests — it was an indisputable rule anchored in official teachings and traditions. This was in the early nineteen-seventies, and in other religions, and in society at large, women's roles were being recast under the influence of second-wave feminism. Most of the major Protestant denominations had already either recognized the ordination of women or were moving toward it. Reform Judaism had just ordained its first female rabbi. But the Catholic Church, so ingrained with symbols, held fast to the notion that a priest must bear a physical resemblance to Christ in order to stand *in persona Christi*. Vatican authorities often noted that Jesus chose only men as his twelve apostles — the model for the priesthood and for the foundation of his church. Moreover, his omission of the Virgin Mary from those ranks meant that women could be revered without being ordained. Other Christian traditions found countervailing inspiration in the knowledge that Christ picked Mary Magdalene to witness and proclaim the Resurrection — and in Catholic theology she was sometimes known as the apostle of the apostles. But the Vatican did not see that story, or stories of Christ's openness to women, as justification for allowing them into the priesthood.

Humbert told me that the sudden conviction that came over her was profoundly dislocating. It felt like “a delusion rooted in pride, or in a rejection of my female nature and of God.” She was a capable, grounded person: she had weathered the death of her beloved mother from cancer, when she was twelve, and she had moved from France to Ireland on her own. Now she wondered if she was losing her mind. She saw a psychiatrist, then confided in a chaplain, who laughed at the idea. Finally, she began to pray: “Do not call me — your Church doesn't want me.”

Humbert tried to put her sense of vocation behind her. She graduated from college, earned an M.B.A. and a master's degree in theology, and got married and had two sons. She worked as a management consultant and volunteered at her local diocese, as a marriage counsellor. Then, one day in 1990, the yearning came back, like a dormant volcano that resumes rumbling. She was happy with her husband, Colm Holmes, a businessman who had a warm, twinkly manner and easy-going, egalitarian convictions — he'd grown up on stories of his great-aunt, a suffragist. Their boys, eight and six, were flourishing. There was nothing outwardly, or even inwardly, wrong with her life, except for her enormous longing to serve God by preaching the Gospel, hearing confessions, and blessing the bread and wine of the Eucharist. She went to tell the archbishop of Dublin, thinking that, given the dwindling supply of priests, he might be glad to know that God was calling women. Humbert recalls, “He told me, ‘Why do you want to be a priest? You could be a saint.’ And I said, ‘Well, I could be a priest *and* a saint. Men can be both.’”

For months, Humbert wept at the thought that her deepest sense of herself would never be realized. “If you are an acorn, you are meant to be an oak, not a pine tree or a cactus,” she told me. She was moved when a nun friend gave her the unexpected gift of a chalice and a Communion plate, telling her, “The Catholic Church is not ready, but *you* are.”

The years went by, but her desire did not fade. One summer, Humbert and her husband decided to drive with their boys from Dublin to France, to visit her family. As they were about to leave the house, a religious newsletter dropped through the mail slot. Humbert grabbed it to read on the long ferry ride across the Bay of Biscay. That evening, she opened it up to an article about the nineteenth-century saint Thérèse of Lisieux, a Carmelite nun sometimes called the Little Flower of Jesus. Humbert knew quite a bit about her, but she hadn't been aware that Thérèse had also felt a powerful calling to the priesthood. Thérèse's sisters had given testimony at her beatification proceedings that she had asked them to shave the top of her head so that she would have a tonsure — an emblem of priestly devotion. Thérèse had written in her diary, “I feel in me the vocation of a PRIEST,” and she had declared that she would die at the age of twenty-four, because that is the age at which she would have been ordained — and God would surely spare her the pain of not being able to exercise her calling. Thérèse died at twenty-four, of tuberculosis.

Humbert read deep into the night. It struck her that she had not known this thrilling information about Thérèse because the Church was embarrassed by it: she had been taught about Thérèse's sweet simplicity, but not about her fierce calling. When the ferry landed in France, the family made a pilgrimage to the town of Lisieux, in Normandy, where a basilica commemorates Thérèse. In subsequent years, Humbert returned nearly a dozen times.

In 1994, Pope John Paul II issued a stern official letter that seemed to preclude even speaking about women's ordination. He lamented that, despite the “constant and universal Tradition of the Church,” the possibility of women priests was “considered still open to debate” in some parts of the world. John Paul went on, “I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful.” Humbert told me that the Pope's words were devastating: “It's hard to describe how sort of violent, spiritually violent, that felt to me, because, after all, it's a document. But it felt like it was intended to put an end to people like me — to any woman who had that sense of vocation. It felt like it was trying to kill what was most alive in us, what was bound up with the divine.” Humbert believed that a true vocation — whether religious or artistic or scientific — would always be coursing through you. If you were born to do something, she said, “you resist it at your own peril.”

Unlike Humbert, Myra Brown was not born into a Catholic family. Her parents were Southern Baptists who left that church after moving from Arkansas to Albion, New York, as migrant farm labourers, in the early sixties. A few years later, her father got a job at a steel mill, and the family relocated to Rochester. When Brown, the youngest of eight children, was a teen-ager, her father died of hypothermia, after being mugged. The family was poor, but her mother kept them all fed with government assistance, an abundant vegetable garden, and work cleaning other people's houses. Brown and her siblings were allowed to go to church with whoever would take them on a given Sunday. They went to a Baptist church with their grandmother, to a Pentecostal church with friends, and to a Catholic church, St. Bridget's, with neighbours and with Brown's older sister, who had converted to Catholicism.

Brown fell in love with the rituals, the music, and the fervent way the priest talked about Jesus. As an African-American, she liked that St. Bridget's had a significant number of Black parishioners, and incorporated gospel singing into its services. Brown was a good speaker and a beautiful singer. Yet in 1992, when she was twenty-four, she was taken aback by an invitation from the priest, Father Bob Werth, to preach a homily sometime. Official Catholic teaching kept women away from the altar as well as from the priesthood. It wasn't until 1994 that the Vatican permitted altar girls, and even today there are priests who balk at the idea. One of the leaders of the flourishing conservative-Catholic movement in the United States, Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, the former archbishop of St. Louis, has attributed young men's declining interest in the priesthood partly to the presence of altar girls. "Young boys don't want to do things with girls—it's just natural," he told a Web site punningly titled the New Emangelization Project, in 2015. "The girls were also very good at altar service. So many boys drifted away over time." Youthful altar service was a proving ground for the priesthood, Burke contended, and it required "a certain manly discipline."

It was only this past January that Pope Francis amended canon law to officially recognize women as acolytes and lectors — roles in which laypeople read from the Bible and assist with such tasks as lighting candles and setting up the altar. At the discretion of local bishops, women had been fulfilling these duties for years, especially in parts of Latin America where priests and male lay ministers were in short supply. Traditionalist Catholics found these reforms objectionable, too.

At first, Brown told Father Bob that she simply couldn't deliver a homily. Then she went home and, as she was vacuuming her living room, she felt a tug on her shirt. She went upstairs to her bedroom, dropped to her knees, and prayed. She heard a voice say, "Yes, I'm calling you to preach, and teach my Word." Brown told me, "I thought, you've got to be kidding me. And I started to argue with God. I said, 'I'm Black, I'm Catholic, and I'm a woman. They don't do that in my church!'" She told Father Bob yes.

Will the Roman Catholic Church ever ordain priests who are not men? Plenty of women feel that they have a priestly vocation, and many Catholics support them: according to a survey from the Pew Research Centre, roughly six in ten Catholics in the United States say that the Church should allow women to become priests (and priests to marry). The figure is fifty-five per cent for Hispanic Catholics, the Church's fastest-growing demographic. In Brazil, the Latin-American country with the largest Catholic population, nearly eight in ten Catholics surveyed by Pew endorse the idea of women priests. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/12/20/many-catholics-in-latin-america-including-a-majority-in-brazil-support-allowing-priests-to-marry/>

But, even if many Catholics would welcome women's ordination, the prospect seems as distant as ever. The Roman Catholic Church is not a democracy, as its traditionalists are forever reminding its would-be reformers. Its governance is elaborately and rigidly hierarchical. And successive Popes have made a point of issuing fresh pronouncements on the incompatibility of women with the priesthood. They have also punished priests who have publicly expressed support for women's ordination, sometimes going so far as to defrock or excommunicate them. In early June, the Vatican published a revision of its canon laws codifying automatic excommunication for "both a person who attempts to confer a sacred order on a woman, and the woman who attempts to receive the sacred order." <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2021/06/01/210601b.html>

Some progressive Catholics have suggested that revelations in recent decades about clerical sex abuse — and the unflattering light that the scandal cast on the all-male leadership, which covered up misconduct for so long — have bolstered the case for permitting women priests. But, at the top levels of the Vatican, the scandals do not seem to have influenced views on gender roles in the Church. In 2010, the Vatican, under Pope Benedict XVI, issued new rules making it easier to discipline paedophile priests, but the same document classified the "attempted sacred ordination of a woman" as a *graviora delicta*—a category of offence that also includes paedophilia.

It wasn't until 2007, when Anne Tropeano was in her thirties, that she found a church to reanimate the wan Catholicism of her childhood. She had a background in marketing and communications, and had been managing a rock band called TapWater, living with the musicians on a lavender farm outside Portland, Oregon. The people she hung out with, including her boyfriend, were secular types who loved her fun-girl energy. One Sunday, she went alone to Mass at St. Ignatius, a Jesuit parish in Southeast Portland. When the opening rites began, she noticed the priest, Tom Royce, at the back of the procession. He was in his early eighties, white-haired and hunched over. Tropeano said to herself, "This guy is, like, a

million years old — what’s he gonna do?” She was surprised, and deeply moved, when he got to the altar and delivered “the most joy-filled, authentic homily about filial fear and the appropriate way to ‘fear’ God — not to fear God as a punisher but to have a respect-filled awe for this majestic Creator who loved us into being.”

Tropeano kept returning to St. Ignatius, a plain white structure on a busy street near a bus stop. Homeless people rolled out sleeping bags in the doorway. Inside, tiles sometimes fell from the ceiling, and parishioners regularly mopped up puddles of water that seeped through the floor. But the pews were packed, and Tropeano found the congregation to be unusually diverse. There was a significant Vietnamese and Filipino membership, along with families whose Croatian and Italian ancestors had filled the congregation in its early decades; there were a number of parishioners with disabilities. Tropeano, whose years of spiritual questing had included New Age and Buddhist interludes, found that the “Jesuit flavour of spirituality” — “the seeing God in all things, the commitment to social justice and serving people on the margins, and the intellectual acumen” — was precisely what she had been seeking. She threw herself into the life of the parish, and helped attract hundreds of new worshippers to the Novena of Grace, an annual nine days of prayer. Katie Hennessy, a palliative-care social worker who is active in the St. Ignatius community, noticed unusual qualities of charisma and compassion in Tropeano, but also signs of a solitary, solemn intensity. Hennessy sometimes went by the church in the middle of the day and saw Tropeano praying alone, kneeling at a pew as watery light streamed through the stained-glass windows of the darkened church.

In 2014, when Tropeano was forty, she enrolled in a Jesuit divinity school in Berkeley, California, where most of the other students were men preparing for the priesthood. A friend thought that Tropeano herself seemed very much like a priest in the making. Tropeano “worked so hard to wrestle with everything from liturgy to Scripture to Vatican II,” she recalled. “And she seemed so prepared to *lead* a church community.” (The friend asked not to be named, because she teaches at a Catholic school, and believes that speaking about Tropeano’s calling could get her into trouble.)

Hennessy thought that in the past, when even the idea of becoming a woman priest would have been beyond her imagining, Tropeano might have joined an order of nuns. But many of those orders were dying off. When Tropeano confided that she felt called to the priesthood, it made sense to Hennessy, who told me, “With her fervour and zeal, Anne needed to have a priestly role within the faith community and perform all parts of the Mass.” Tropeano’s dilemma reminded Hennessy of the Biblical parable of the talents, in which a man going on a long trip entrusts his servants with some money. Two make investments, generating a profit, but a third buries his share in the ground, for fear of losing it. The story is often interpreted as an exhortation not to let timidity get in the way of acting on one’s God-granted gifts. Hennessy told me that the Church “was burying talent out of fear.”

Pope Francis, for all his populism, warmth, and commitment to social justice, has expressed no more interest in seeing women ordained than his predecessors did. At a 2015 press conference, he referred to John Paul II’s 1994 *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, the proclamation that had so distressed Soline Humbert, saying, “Women priests, that cannot be done. Pope St. John Paul II, after long, long, intense discussions—long reflections—said so clearly.”

http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2015/09/28/pope_francis_i'm_not_a_star,_but_the_servant_of_servants_o/en-1175317 When a Swedish journalist asked Francis about it again, in 2016, he reiterated his fealty to John Paul’s line on the matter.

That year, Pope Francis appointed a commission to study the question of women serving as deacons. In the Roman Catholic Church, deacons are ordained ministers who perform baptisms, weddings, and funerals, among other ministerial duties, but cannot celebrate Mass, hear confessions, or consecrate the bread and wine of the Eucharist. People who wanted to see women enter the diaconate — and perhaps, eventually, the priesthood — were hopeful. Among those appointed to the commission was Phyllis Zagano, an outspoken scholar at Hofstra University who has devoted years of research to making the case that women *did* serve as deacons in the early centuries of the Church. (The apostle Paul refers to the first-century Christian woman Phoebe as a deacon.) But Francis was not keen to take action. Saying that the commission’s findings were too disparate — “toads from different wells,” as he put it — he appointed a second one, with all new members, in 2020. It has yet to issue any deliberations. When he officially permitted women to serve as acolytes and lectors, he took care to emphasize that these are lay ministries “fundamentally distinct from the ordained ministry that is received through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.”

When Francis talks publicly about women, his words often echo traditional Catholic teaching about the complementarity of men’s and women’s roles. He lauds women’s special virtues as wives and mothers, their inherent dignity, their selfless service to their parishes. He speaks about the Church as the bride of Jesus Christ. In 2015, he told reporters that women should be consoled and uplifted by the knowledge that the Church is feminine and that “the Madonna is more important than popes and bishops and priests.” For that reason, he implied, they shouldn’t need — or want — the authority that comes with ordination. Last year, in a papal document titled “Querida Amazonia,” he wrote that it would be a grave mistake to assume that women could be “granted a greater status and participation in the Church only if they were admitted to Holy Orders.” Ordaining women as priests would “subtly” undermine the “indispensable” roles they currently

play: “Women make their contribution to the Church in a way that is properly theirs, by making present the tender strength of Mary, the Mother.”

Natalia Imperatori-Lee, a professor of religious studies at Manhattan College and a Catholic, finds the Pope inspiring when he talks about poverty or ecological devastation, but is unhappy with his rhetoric about women: “A lot of what he says is so wrapped up in femininity as beauty and enhancement, as uniquely spiritual and safeguarding the morality of the world. He does speak out against violence against women — but often it’s couched in ‘don’t-sully-this-precious-flower’ language. It’s really problematic for women who just want to be seen as human beings with the capacity for self-determination.”

Massimo Faggioli, a professor of historical theology at Villanova, told me, “Of the main issues on which Pope Francis has been a hero to liberal Catholics, the most disappointing to them is the issue of women. He is less conservative than some former Popes in saying that women should work, but he is still close to the traditional narrative of separate and complementary — not equal — spheres. In that way, he is a typical cleric born in the nineteen-thirties.” However, Francis has taken some novel steps toward involving women in decision-making and Church leadership. He has appointed women to roles in Vatican governance which they had never before occupied—including the directorship of the Vatican Museums and the council that oversees Vatican finances. In February, he chose Sister Nathalie Becquart to be the first woman to serve as an under-secretary in the Synod of Bishops, an influential committee that advises the Pope.

There is at least one scholarly precedent that some softened-up Church of the future could dust off to justify the presence of female priests. In 1976, the Pontifical Biblical Commission, a body established by Pope Leo XIII, voted in favour of the position that nothing in Scripture alone prevents the ordination of women, and that it would not necessarily violate Christ’s intentions were the Church to do so. Campaigners for women’s ordination also know that they have certain demographic realities on their side: the clerical population is aging, and fewer young men want to enter the priesthood. But the movement to ordain women does not tend to rely on practical arguments. It focusses instead on a moral idea: that barring people from Holy Orders because they aren’t biological males enforces misogynist values that have harmed both women and the faith.

Erin Conway, a former Catholic-school teacher who recently graduated from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, told me, “There’s this theological argument against women — that the priest is *in persona Christi*, and that since Jesus was a man you can’t be a priest if you’re not a man. But I come back to the idea that God is *bigger* than that. It just seems too limiting to say God only wants half of the population to be priests. I want a God who isn’t worried about your anatomy but *is* interested in your call.”

Advocates for female ordination point out that Jesus welcomed women into his community. The Holy Roman Empire, however, eroded the faith’s early egalitarianism, and medieval theologians enshrined the idea of women as inferior, impure, and unfit for ministerial service. (Aquinas: “Woman is naturally subject to man.”) Deborah Rose-Milavec, the co-director of FutureChurch, a Roman Catholic church-reform organization, told me, “There is nothing more radicalizing than to realize that the early Church looked very different from the Church you grew up with.” Mary Magdalene, for example, was long seen “only as a repentant prostitute, when really she was this crucial, powerful figure.”

In Germany, where laypeople have played significant roles in running the Church, a grassroots movement for women’s ordination has been particularly influential. In December, Georg Bätzing, the head of the German Bishops’ Conference, told a journalist that “there are well-developed arguments in theology in favour of opening up the sacramental ministry to women.” The Catholic Church in Germany is such an outlier on the issue that some think it could split off, triggering what the Vatican most dreads: a schism. “Could Germany break away?” Massimo Faggioli said. “That’s the one-million-dollar question. The Catholic Church there is very powerful. It enjoys the status of an established church. It gives a lot of money to the Vatican, to Latin America and Africa.” Yet it has a “tradition of theologians and entire academic institutions that are fully behind women’s ordination.”

In divinity school, Anne Tropeano found herself increasingly convinced that the “tight grip the institutional Church is keeping on the priesthood is choking the life out of the entire Church.” Privately, she believed that she would be a “phenomenal pastor of a parish,” and it filled her with despair to know that the Vatican would not allow it. So she decided to pursue ordination with the Roman Catholic womenpriests movement. The ceremony is scheduled to take place in October. For now, she is working at a non-profit in Albuquerque, but she hopes to become a full-time priest and build, from the ground up, a big, busy, social-justice-oriented parish. Most Roman Catholic womenpriests are married, and many have children and grandchildren, but Tropeano, who is now forty-six, has decided that celibacy will be part of her vocation and that she will wear the Roman collar. (Many women in the movement do not.) She recently started a blog called “Becoming Father Anne,” <https://www.fatheranne.com/> and likes to call herself a “Vatican reject.” In an e-mail, she explained that she aims to “challenge and mock the absurdity and narrow-mindedness of this idea that women cannot live out the role of priest within the Catholic Church.” She went on, “You say women can’t be priests? Watch me. I will strive to be a completely kick-ass priest.”

Read the article in full: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/06/28/the-women-who-want-to-be-priests>

ROOT & BRANCH INCLUSIVE SYNOD 5 - 12 September 2021

Working for an inclusive, just and welcoming Catholic Church

5-8 September via Zoom only.

10-12 September via Zoom and at St Michael's Church Conference Centre, Stoke Gifford, Bristol

Mary Varley writes: When we began our lay-led Inclusive Synod, last September 2020, zooming with an ecumenical range of speakers from across the world, we were calling it our "Year of Discernment". It seems many other reforming groups across the world are also choosing to use this exact word, discernment. The Holy Spirit is indeed moving within us.

An inclusive Synod that, instead of ending with women, starts with them. Joanna Moorhead called in *The Tablet* in January 2020 for "a Synod that instead of ending with women starts with them." We heard her call for action. We will start with women, but our remit is to return to the inclusivity modelled by Jesus, honouring and empowering all people.

Sr Myra Poole, SND, a lifetime campaigner for women's ordination, will open the inclusive Synod. We are honoured that Mary McAleese will give our keynote speech on Canon Law, the Church and Human Rights legislation.

She will be joined by an impressive range of thinkers and leaders. These include the noted art historian Ally Kateusz; award-winning writer James Carroll; Catholic theologian, priest and author James Alison; campaigner for church reform Miriam Duignan; activist, writer and theologian Virginia Saldanha; and leading lay woman in the Church of England Christina Rees; educationalist, psychologist and feminist theologian Martha Heizer; barrister and broadcaster Helena Kennedy QC, and renowned theologian Ursula King. Other exciting speakers to be announced.

After dialogue with the hierarchy, religious, theologians, activists and yourselves, the inclusive Synod will agree four statements and the actions arising from them to take us forward.

For more information about our journey towards the Synod or to register your interest visit:

<https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org>

EXHIBITIONS

LIFE ON THE BREADLINE PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Life on the Breadline is a challenging new exhibition being premiered in Coventry Cathedral this summer

Date: 3rd July 2021 to 28th July 2021

Time: 10am to 4pm from Monday to Saturday, and from 12.30pm to 3pm on Sundays

Where: Chapel of Unity, Coventry Cathedral

The exhibition features photographs from our Life on the Breadline grassroots case studies in Birmingham, London, and Manchester which challenge the way we think about people's experience of poverty in the UK and how Christians have responded to poverty during the 'age of austerity'. The photographs have been taken by the research team and by local residents, volunteers, and staff at the six case study projects.

<https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/2021/06/23/life-on-the-breadline-photographic-exhibition/>

CROSSINGS: COMMUNITY AND REFUGE

A powerful display highlighting the perilous journeys made by refugees, and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Featuring the Lampedusa cross, alongside Syrian born artist Issam Kourbaj's installation Dark Water, Burning World.

Starting in Coventry Cathedral the exhibition is touring England and will be

From Saturday 29 May 2021 to Sunday 5 September 2021 at the People's History Museum, Left Bank Spinningfields Manchester M3 3ER 10.00am - 4.00pm Please note the museum is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. The museum is free to visit with a suggested donation of £5 Contact the Museum 0161 838 9190

The Lampedusa cross was made by the Italian island's carpenter Francesco Tuccio, from fragments of a boat that was wrecked off the coast of Lampedusa on 11 October 2013. The boat was carrying Eritrean and Somali refugees attempting the crossing from Libya to Europe. Tragically over 300 people drowned. The island's inhabitants helped to save 155 others, risking their own lives in the process. Tuccio, moved by refugees' experiences, but frustrated that he could not make a difference to their situation, made a cross for each of the survivors as a symbol of salvation and hope.

Dark Water, Burning World by artist Issam Kourbaj examines the plight of Syrian refugees and the journeys they undertake. The installation includes twelve little boats made from repurposed bicycle mudguards, jam-packed with upright, extinguished matchsticks, evoking huddled groups of people making the dangerous sea crossing to Europe. These escaped people now carry visible and invisible scars, scorched into them by the separation from their homeland. The once beautiful and abundant sea has become a terrifying expanse on which the lives or deaths of thousands are decided. Find out more and register to visit <https://phm.org.uk/installations/a-british-museum-spotlight-loan-crossings-community-and-refuge/>

CONFERENCES, COURSES AND ZOOM MEETINGS

LIVERPOOL: INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS TO ADDRESS J&P ASSEMBLY

The Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice & Peace Commission's Annual Assembly takes place on Saturday 10 July 2021 from 10am - 12:30 on Zoom. This year's theme is: 'The World in Crisis - The Cry of the Poor'. Presentations will be given by Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ and Fr Dominic Curran.

Dr Gemma Simmonds is a sister of the Congregation of Jesus who has studied at the universities of Paris, London, Rio de Janeiro and Cambridge and worked among women and street children in Brazil as well as at HMP Holloway prison. In 2018 Gemma joined the Margaret Beaufort Institute as director of the Religious Life Institute (RLI).

Fr Dominic Curran, who was ordained in 2009 for the Archdiocese of Liverpool and has served as a priest in several parishes, is currently Parish Priest of Saint Oscar Romero Parish in Seaforth and Waterloo and has been a chaplain in multiple Hospital Trusts. He is a youth coach chaplain on the Archdiocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage.

Both presenters will reflect and share ways in which we can prepare for the post-Covid future, and will be taking part in a Q&A session.

To register for the zoom link go to: <https://jp.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/>
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42533>

'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 to 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.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42161>

A few places are still available - for more information see: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/
or call: 020 901 4864

CARBON LITERACY COURSE

Faiths4Change are offering Liverpool City Region residents fully-funded places on an accredited 'Carbon Literacy' course that explores climate change and carbon footprints as a way to live faith, care for Creation and act on climate justice. Carbon Literacy is about growing our awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions on an individual, community and organisational basis. The course enables learners to connect issues of climate change to their personal motivations, grow their understanding of climate science, explore issues of climate justice and plan to take high-impact actions. This is the first course nationally to explore carbon literacy from faith perspectives.

Kate from Emmanuel Parish, Fazakerley, said "A few of us have in recent weeks decided that we need to form an eco church group, but we didn't really know where to start or what to do. Then we stumbled across Faiths4Change Carbon Literacy Training and booked on just to get us going. I'm so glad we did! The training the team delivered is outstanding. I learnt so much, in such a safe, non-judgemental setting and it was such a good way to start forming as a group. Sharing this experience with the others from my church has no doubt gelled us together and we can now work as a team on supporting each other and our church & parish to help tackle climate change. And I'm so relieved to know that we can call on Faiths4Change at any time to help us achieve that goal."

Freda said "I have been aware of climate change issues and have personally taken small steps such as conserving water and having no food waste BUT I had never heard of the carbon cycle and much of the science of the early modules. It was a big learning curve for me but so well presented." And Kelly added "Just the right level of information, breaks and discussion so it was not too much to take it but really a full fun day of learning."

This Carbon Literacy training is being offered to up to 400 residents across the Liverpool City Region thanks to a grant from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Community Environment Fund. The course has been developed by Energy Projects Plus: epplus.org.uk/ and is being run with partner Zero Carbon Liverpool: facebook.com/ZeroCarbonLiverpool/ A secular version of the course is available through our partners, please contact Faiths4Change with enquiries.

Day time courses in July: Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th July (1 - 5pm both days)

Evening courses in July: 7th, 8th, 14th, 15th, 21st and 22nd July, (7 - 9pm each day)

• Please note, you can join any of the courses as an individual. If you have a group of 10 people who would like to take the course together, we can offer you your own training date. Please get in touch directly to arrange. Contact Annie Merry and Liz Atherton to enquire and book a place: annie@faiths4change.org.uk liz@faiths4change.org.uk

CHRISTIAN CND 60TH ANNIVERSARY ZOOM EVENT

Patricia and Michael Pulham 30 June 2021: A special commemorative zoom event is planned by Christian CND to mark 60 years of its campaigning against nuclear weapons. It will take place on Monday 12 July at 7pm. The event was originally scheduled to take place in Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, the location of the historic first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in 1946. The first resolution it passed called for the elimination of nuclear weapons! We're delighted that we'll be joined online by Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE, a leading theologian and Methodist Minister who received the World Methodist Peace Award in 2018. He will speak about the biblical principles of nonviolence and why Christians should engage in disarmament efforts. Pax Christi International Senior Advisor Marie Dennis, based in Washington DC, will talk about the steps the Vatican has taken for disarmament and the role of the Catholic Church in the next stage of campaigning. Marie is also a key member of the team working on disarmament efforts at the UN on behalf of the Vatican.

Memories and reflections from the past 60 years will be led by Bruce Kent and Valerie Flessati - stalwarts of the peace movement for decades - and there will be a chance to sing Let us raise Our Voice, the hymn written for our 60th anniversary by Christopher Idle and Sue Gilmurray. Speakers will also include Ben Donaldson of the United Nations Association, Steve Hucklesby of the Joint Public Issues Team, Rebecca Johnson on the Ban Treaty and Tony Miles, Methodist Central Hall Westminster. Christian CND's Development Manager, Russell Whiting, will chair. Breakout groups to choose from include - how to encourage your bank and pension provider to stop investing in nuclear weapons; the morality of nuclear weapons, using the Nuclear Morality Flowchart; what's next for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and what we can learn from the experience of New Zealand.

As a specialist section of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Christian CND campaigns on key issues around nuclear weapons alongside CND and in a way which reaches the Christian community in the UK and further afield. All campaigning work is underpinned by prayer, and a monthly Prayer Diary is produced. Christian CND has a vision for a world without nuclear weapons with the UK playing its part by scrapping our weapons system Trident and cancelling the planned replacement, which is estimated to cost at least £205bn. There will be time for prayer and discussion in what promises to be a great evening. You can reserve your free place on Zoom by registering at: www.christiancnd.org.uk/12july

• Patricia and Michael Pulham are on Christian CND's Executive Committee.

Christian CND <https://christiancnd.org.uk/>
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42532>

VIDEO FILM MAKING COMPETITIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

"WHAT IF – SPESTERRA" YOUTH VIDEO CHALLENGE

The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs have launched a youth video challenge for 18-24 year olds on how the world would look if we spent more money on peace and less on weapons. Click here for more information:

<https://www.youth4disarmament.org/spesterra-video-challenge>

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2021 the “International Year of Peace and Trust”. It is also the first year of the Decade of Action to usher in ambitious steps to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Against this backdrop, the Office for Disarmament Affairs is launching the “What if — Spesterra” Youth Video Challenge to stimulate young people’s interest and knowledge about the vital way disarmament contributes to a safer, more secure and sustainable world for all.

The Sustainable Development Agenda makes clear that there cannot be development without peace and security. Disarmament and arms control are integral to creating these conditions: fields need to be landmine-free before farmers can cultivate them; neighborhoods need to be safe from gun violence in order for commerce to flourish; and roads blocked by armed groups cannot serve a country’s progress. The world needs to be free of nuclear weapons that cast an existential shadow over humanity. Unchecked military spending and growing stockpiles of weapons have not brought us closer to peace, and no number of weapons have protected populations from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coined from the Latin words spes, which means hope, and terra, which means land, the “What if — Spesterra” Youth Video Challenge calls on young people across the globe to imagine a world without weapons of mass destruction, in which conventional arms are strictly regulated and resources are directed towards tangible social and economic benefits for people and the planet.

Making use of multimedia productions like short films, animations, documentaries, and music videos, young people around the globe are invited to showcase their vision of what the world would look like if we put people at the centre of our disarmament efforts to save lives and make our world a safer place.

OPEN CALL FOR YOUNG ARTISTS: CREATE A WORLD WITHOUT NUKES!

Pax Christi International is inviting young people to create a video or digital artwork to convince states that haven't signed up to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to do so- and the UK is one of those states! More information can be found on the website: <https://paxchristi.net/2021/05/10/open-call-artists-for-peace/>

CALL FOR ENTRIES TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S ANTI-TRAFFICKING FILM COMPETITION

Six weeks are left for 16-24 year olds to enter a film competition on human trafficking with generous prizes. It is organised by RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation).

Young people across Europe are being invited to produce a short film, approximately four minutes-long, based on the Slogan 'Slavery - Human Trafficking - Near YOU!' and using some or all of the tags #StopTheDemand, #BreakTheChains, #EndTheCycleTOGETHER.

The film can be produced by an individual or a team. 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 20 August 2021.

Winning entries will be shown in London at RENATE's Film Festival, which will take place on 12 September 2021 across two venues in London. 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'S President, Sr Imelda Poole IBVM and MBE, says: "anti-slavery work is the mission of God and an element of the Church's promotion of social justice." She hopes young people, through the competition, will help RENATE, "to abolish all forms of human trafficking and exploitation that violates the human dignity and rights of persons." This week the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See has nominated Sr Imelda Poole as a 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report Hero. Chargé d'Affaires Patrick Connell: "Sister Imelda has shown extraordinary dedication and leadership advocating for victims of human trafficking."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42549>

For more information and entry details see: www.renateevents.net/film-competition

Renate Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation

RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

We work with a range of partners in the region to campaign for a just peace in Israel and Palestine. If you would like more information on our work or the work of our partners, do get in touch or have a look at our website:

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine/>

If you would like to explore this issue with the young people you are working with we have a workshop on our website entitled **The Wall**: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/secondary/workshop-resources/>

RAZOR WIRE AND OLIVE BRANCHES an extensive resource for secondary school students from Quakers in Britain. This teaching pack explores conflict, human rights and peacebuilding in Palestine and Israel. It includes eye-witness stories from Ecumenical Accompaniers: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/free-resources/teaching-resources-2>

Resources also available on their TES account: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources/shop/QuakerPeaceEducation>

OXFAM has a guide for teachers with guidance and advice on teaching controversial issues:

<https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/handle/10546/620473>

BUILDING A PEACE GARDEN: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/primary-schools/peace-garden/>

SOWING SEEDS OF PEACE focusing on the environment and peace - a session as part of Pax Christi's Elements of Peace activities: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/secondary/lessons-workshops/elements-of-peace/>

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

"...it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone... A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal." [Laudato Si' 202]

Environmental education is a huge part of the change we need to make to prevent and reverse the ecological crisis we are now facing. We need a universal understanding of how our actions impact others and the support to change our behaviours for the better of the whole world. This is why the Ecological Conversion Group have launched their 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.

This syllabus has been designed for use as a component of the UK's 6th Form Core RE course, ages 16-18. However, it is very versatile, and we hope that its use stretches far beyond that! Perhaps you could use it in your parish, community group or at your university. As full notes on the course material are provided, you don't need to be an expert to deliver this course. The lessons are filled with opportunities for discussion and debate and are designed to engage the group to reflect on how the issues raised in *Laudato Si'* relate to their own lives; to invite them to think about what they might need to change to live in a way that cares for all of humanity and Creation.

Download the syllabus for free here: <https://theecg.org/resources/6-form-syllabus/>

<https://greenchristian.org.uk/6th-form-syllabus-on-care-for-our-common-home/>

RECOMMENDED READING

RAGE AND HOPE

75 prayers for a better world Published in March this is a collection of defiant prayers for justice and a better world to commemorate and celebrate 75 years of Christian Aid. Bringing together voices from different contexts and cultures around the world, this is a collection of prayers of lament for the injustices of the world, and prayers of hope for the world we want to see. You can order it from <https://spckpublishing.co.uk/rage-and-hope>

PLANET PALM – how palm oil ended up in everything and endangered the world' Jocelyn C. Zuckerman

Palm oil is so cheap and so adaptable that it has found its way into many products we regularly use – foodstuffs, cosmetics and household products. The little oil palm fruit has played an outsized role in world history and economic development. But the multi-billion-dollar palm oil business has been built on stolen land and slave labour; it spurred colonisation and swept away lives and cultures. Originally grown in West Africa but transplanted to S E Asia a century ago, now Malaysia and Indonesia grow 80 per cent of the world's supply. Today, its fires and mass deforestation generate carbon emissions to rival those of entire industrialized nations, and they've pushed animals like the orangutan to the brink of extinction. Combining history, travelogue and investigative reporting, Planet Palm offers an unsettling, urgent look at a global industry that has become an environmental, public health, and human rights disaster.

Zuckerman makes a case that we must wean ourselves off this dependency on palm oil and offers solutions to help. Publisher: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd ISBN: 9781787383784

DIARY DATES

JULY

5 Nonviolence- Responding to the Cry of the Earth Pax Christi. Zoom link: <https://tinyurl.com/NonviolenceJuly>
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMsceGpqDkuH9AIGGA9MyHg4ERk3facmGic>

8 Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2021 10am -11.15. Join the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Institute for Fiscal Studies as we present the key findings from our flagship annual report on living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK. Register here: <https://ifs.org.uk/events/1920> There will be time for questions after the presentations.

8 Join the 'Stop Arming Israel' Lobby of Parliament organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Join others in your area to speak to your MP about why you believe action is so urgently needed for the people of Palestine. You will get a full briefing and information from PSC, and you do not need any previous experience or expertise. You will not have to lobby your MP on your own. <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/events/national-lobby-of-parliament-summer-2021/>

10 The World in Crisis: The Cry of the Poor 10am – 12:30pm Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice and Peace Commission Annual Assembly 2021 Speakers: Dr Sr Gemma Simmons CJ, The Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge, Fr Dominic Curran, St Oscar Romero Parish, Seaforth & Litherland. <https://jp.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/2021/06/01/the-world-in-crisis-the-cry-of-the-poor/>

11 Sea Sunday www.stellamaris.org.uk

12 Zoom meeting as part of the events to mark **60 years of Christian CND's campaigning against nuclear weapons.** Starting at 7pm. You can reserve your free place on Zoom by registering at: www.christiancnd.org.uk/12july

13 CWDF Forum-by-Zoom: "Fair Tax Now" 7.00pm Speaker Justin Thacker, Director of the campaign Church Action for Tax Justice. The Fair Tax Now campaign calls for fairer national and global tax systems, and puts forward a range of policy proposals designed to make the tax system fairer for all. (CATJ is one of the programmes of ECCR, the Ecumenical Council for Corporate responsibility.) For the Zoom link please email bernard.payne691@btinternet.com and we will send you some background notes.

13-14 Climate Emergency Digital Conference <https://modernchurch.org.uk/events/climate-emergencyconference>

14 The Minimum Income Standard in the pandemic and beyond: practical applications 11am -12.15pm How can the Minimum Income Standard support decent living standards in the post-COVID era? Join Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Loughborough University and an expert panel for this essential and timely discussion. Register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/1916220165300/WN_hmSNJkYNRyCNKI6tHboNMg

23-25 NJPN conference '2021: Moment of Truth' in Derbyshire. A few places are still available for the Annual Conference of the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) 23-25 July 2021, which is looking at ecological conversion and Care for Creation, at: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/

AUGUST

6 and 9 Anniversaries of the first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More information and resources will be available here: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/prayer-and-seasonal/>

Pax Christi has a resource looking at the **UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** here:

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/secondary/workshop-resources/>

9 Commemorating the death of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter. Pax Christi has a range of resources exploring his life and witness: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/peace-people-2/blessed-franz-jagerstatter/> We will be having our annual commemoration service at 6:30pm and more information will be available here nearer the time:

https://paxchristi.org.uk/event/franz-jagerstatter-service/?instance_id=952

SEPTEMBER

1 World Day of Prayer for Season of Creation

1 September-4 October Season of Creation <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/ourwork/environment/season-of-creation/>

The Climate Sunday initiative is calling on all local churches across Great Britain & Ireland to hold a climate-focused service on any Sunday before COP26 (November 2021). The Season of Creation (1 September– 4 October) may also be a suitable time. Encourage your priest to celebrate a special Mass – resources from <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources/Climate-Sunday-Mass>

5-12 Root & Branch Inclusive Synod <https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org>

18–26 Great Big Green Week - a National Week of thousands of events celebrating how communities and groups are taking action to tackle climate change and protect green spaces, and encourage others to get involved too. Everyone is invited. Can you help plan an event or join others locally - <https://greatbiggreenweek.com/>

21 UN International Day of Peace

Sadly *The Universe* weekly newspaper has been forced to close due to decreasing sales but NJPN's weekly column will continue online on Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com and articles will be 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

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