

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

THE DOWNING STREET RESIGNATIONS CAN ONLY BE BAD NEWS FOR BORIS JOHNSON

Peter Kellner *Prospect Magazine* 4 Feb

The latest resignations from 10 Downing Street have various possible explanations; but all are bad for Boris Johnson. Chief of staff Dan Rosenfield, communications chief Jack Doyle and principal private secretary Martin Reynolds were made to pay the price for their role in the “Partygate” scandal. In one of those typically opaque statements of the kind that accompany the fallout from nasty boardroom rows in dysfunctional companies, the prime minister’s official spokesperson said they were departing “by mutual consent.” Leave aside whether this means they were actually sacked; the real question that the “mutual consent” statement leaves unanswered is whether the three men were deemed to have done anything seriously wrong, or are merely victims of Johnson’s desperate attempts to save his own political skin.

The unwillingness to provide an answer is understandable, because either way Johnson looks bad. If they have broken the lockdown rules, we are seeing the application of the principle that anyone at the heart of government who breaks such rules should lose their job. If that is the case, then the prime minister would find it hard to explain why he is keeping his. On the other hand, if they are not accused of committing any sackable offences, but merely of having become a political liability to Johnson, then he has abandoned any shred of decency that should be displayed by a boss to loyal members of his staff.

Munira Mirza’s departure falls into a different category; and if and when Elena Narozanski, a member of Mirza’s team, explains her own resignation, we may find that the two women’s reasons are much the same.

Mirza’s now-famous resignation letter is remarkable, not simply for its directness, but because seldom, if ever, has someone who has been so close to any prime minister for so long quit in order to defend the character of the leader of the Opposition. Mirza, former director of the No 10 policy unit, was far from the only Conservative to be appalled when Johnson told MPs on Monday that Starmer, when he was director of public prosecutions, “spent most of his time prosecuting journalists and failing to prosecute Jimmy Savile, as far as I can make out.”

Mirza wrote that “there was no fair or reasonable basis for that assertion.” She tried to persuade Johnson to retract it and to apologise for “an inappropriate and partisan reference to a horrendous case of child abuse.”

Johnson clearly felt he had done enough to draw a line under this ugly controversy when he said on Thursday: “Let’s be absolutely clear, I’m talking not about the leader of the Opposition’s personal record when he was DPP and I totally understand that he had nothing to do personally with those decisions.”

Mirza’s riposte in her resignation letter will surely have met with the approval not just of Johnson’s critics, or worried Conservative backbenchers, but anyone with a basic understanding of the English language who compares what Johnson said on Monday with his remarks three days later. Mirza wrote: “You tried to clarify your position today but, despite my urging, you did not apologise for the misleading impression you gave.”

Johnson plainly knew what he was saying on Monday, and why his “clarification” was mealy-mouthed. He has been one of the most entertaining political writers of our time. He knows exactly what effect he hopes to have on his audience. It wasn’t that he tried to set the record straight on Thursday and failed; it was that he only pretended to do so.

What will Conservative MPs do now? If they act swiftly to depose Johnson and hold a fresh election for a new party leader, they might regain a shred of decency and public respect. The longer they defend Johnson with statements as mealy-mouthed as his, the harder it will be for them and their party to recover.

So let us not—or not only—talk in terms of decency and morality, but in the basic currency of political trading: self-interest. What every minister and Tory backbencher says about Johnson this weekend, and next week, and next month, will remain on the record. In deciding whether to help the prime minister hang on, the question they can usefully ask themselves is this: will I be happy to defend those words to the voters in my constituency at the next election?

<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/politics/the-downing-street-resignations-can-only-be-bad-news-for-boris-johnson>

Peter Kellner is former President of YouGov and a political analyst and commentator

NJPN BLOG: VOICES FROM AFGHANISTAN

Henrietta Cullinan 28 Jan

For over 13 years, Afghanistan Peace Project, formerly Voices for Creative Nonviolence UK, visited and supported a group of young people who ran community projects in Kabul. They provided employment for poor women and education for street children and took part in direct actions such as a gender-free bike ride and a border-free football team. They have been scattered 'from East to West', some remaining in Afghanistan, some escaping to Europe and neighbouring countries. Using Whatsapp and Facebook Messenger they have sent these updates and reflections.

This month, the UK government opened its resettlement scheme to Afghan citizens. They say they will prioritise, "people who face a particular risk from the Taliban, for example because of their stand for democracy and human rights, or because of their gender, sexuality, or religion." However, it's not so easy for our friends to take advantage of this visa system. Passports, flights and visas have to be obtained on the black market which is extremely costly. If you travel to Pakistan illegally, there is the chance you will be prevented from leaving.

Since the Taliban seized power, daily life itself has become hazardous.

Nahal writes from Kabul: "The situation here is getting worse for us every day. When I see women who raise the voice of freedom and peace being taken hostage every day, when I see one of these Taliban on the street, I feel that they will shoot me. There are announcements every day that they [ex Afghan Jihadi groups] are importing firearms by helicopter at night in the provinces. At the end of March, the war will begin again."

Abdul writes, "I am worried about my future. I wish I could finish my education but currently I can't. There is no hope for a better and brighter future for me in Afghanistan. I don't feel safe: the Taliban are searching home by home looking for people who worked with foreigners."

Activists and community volunteers with connections with the West feel their lives are in danger. Ramineh, in hiding in Kabul, cannot leave the house to find money, or buy food or fuel. She is now desperate to leave. "Last night the Taliban killed my friend Zahra. The wild people shot her through the heart. They could attack me at any time and kill me like my friend Zahra. Now, Afghanistan is not a safe place for me."

In Afghanistan, Ahmad was so worried he couldn't leave the house. At any time the Taliban could stop him and ask for documents. To say nothing was equally dangerous. Now safely in Germany, preparing to start a new life, Ahmad writes about his anxiety of having to leave his mother and siblings behind. "It is so hard to me wondering how the situation will be for my mother now she's jobless and she can't work right now outside the house because of the 'Taliban databank. If you are a woman they don't let you work outside."

Maryam was the first in her village to go to university. Her family has also been scattered while her mother remains in Afghanistan. "My heart is crying inside of me. I really can't describe my feelings during these days. I feel that if I could go back to be with my mom and cry with her maybe it would help to [alleviate the sadness]. Maybe if I could be with her she would feel for a moment that she is not alone her children are not forced to leave her alone."

Maryam and her husband, along with many others, are in Pakistan from where they hope to get visas for countries from which they won't be deported, such as Somalia, Albania, Brazil, Portugal. Maryam writes about conditions in Quetta, where many Hazara refugees have fled, where they have to live in hiding, often having to move house and covering their face. "Our blood is red, our hearts work the same way, our eyes work to see each other's eyes, to touch each other's feelings, we relate to each other, we live in the same world, we share the same sky, our basic need to be alive is breathing, I believe there are no borders between humans."

"If women have the chance to work and make decisions in Afghanistan they will not let any of their children die, or join the military. Women can show life, peace and love. They just share their kindness and love with humans. If women could be educated they could make a better life for women, children, and men, and make a green land for living without war and killing. Please don't forget women, they are very kind."

I am enormously grateful to the friends who have sent these messages. The intention here is to give a picture of the tragic disruption that perpetual war and forced migration cause to people's normal lives and families.

Afghanistan Peace Project: <https://afghanistanpeaceproject.co.uk>

All names have been changed.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43954>

EDINBURGH: MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR BEATIFICATION OF EL SALVADOR MARTYRS

Danny Sweeney 25 Jan

"True love is what Rutilio Grande brings with his death, with two campesinos next to him." This was the homily of his friend and archbishop, Oscar Romero following the murder of Fr Rutilio, along with his partners in mission Manuel Solórzano and Nelson Lemus on 12 March 1977 by a military junta death squad.

Over 40 years later, and with a couple of COVID-related delays, the Church recognised the martyrdom of Rutilio, Manuel and Nelson, along with the Italian Franciscan Fr Cosme Spessoto who was assassinated in El Salvador on 14 June 1980 while saying Mass for a murdered student.

Sacred Heart Church, Edinburgh marked the beatifications a few hours ahead of the events in El Salvador on 22 January 2022. The Jesuit church has a small chapel dedicated to Romero and Grande including a relic of the new Blessed: his diary. Fr David Stewart SJ showed me the diary before the Mass started, it includes notes by Grande reminding him to take medication for his diabetes. "We're not quite sure how it ended up here, or really if we should keep it" he confesses. Fr David has been the driving force behind the event, with the support of the Jesuit community, Justice and Peace Scotland, and the Archdiocese of Saint Andrews and Edinburgh.

Archbishop Leo Cushley led the celebrations, the Gospel for the vigil mass recalling Jesus starting his ministry taking up the scroll of Isaiah; "The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour."

The good news to the poor is what led Grande and his partners to be martyred. Fr David noted in his homily that Grande's murder wasn't the start of Romero's conversion to the option for the poor but certainly was a fork in the road which led to his own martyrdom three years later. But the new Blessed brings far more to the universal Church than being just "the inspiration of Oscar Romero". Looking online to the response in both English and Spanish I'm struck by the numbers across the world who are celebrating this. Is a beatification usually such big news? There is a call for Grande to be recognised as a patron saint for mental health, following his first-hand struggles with mental and physical health challenges. Fr David noted that most Salvadorean Jesuits at the time were committed to university academia, but Grande chose to go out to the poorest in the villages, and banners carried in San Salvador are celebrating him as "Amigo de los pobres".

Speaking with those gathered I was most struck that they wanted their children to be present. One mother to two young girls from the parish serving on the altar, the other whose son is a university student in Edinburgh, both told me they saw this event as speaking to the life of a Church which is active and engaged in the world, and they thought it important to share this with their families. Perhaps it is the grouping of the three new beati which can speak volumes? Manuel Solórzano in his early 70s, Nelson Lemus aged 16, both lay people along with Fr Tilo (as he was known) on a shared mission for justice and in solidarity with the poorest in their community. Coming from a reality where for too long the Church had sided with the rich and powerful, where generals and dictators expected the archbishops' blessings, to see clergy and laity taking the side of Isaiah, of Jesus, of the poor gives us new hope that we won't just speak the words of justice, peace, and hope but will live them in our community too.

For me, I found myself thinking of the communities I've come to know in recent months ahead of COP26 who with Pope Francis are trying to hear and respond to 'the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor'. In Latin America we continue to see the murder of Earth defenders, indigenous leaders, and activists by governments and corporations more interested in exploiting our common home than protecting it. In Myanmar, another military junta is waging war against the people and the Church. We know that such persecutions continue today, but they can seem very distant from our own experience in the West. This distance was shortened towards the end of the Mass when Archbishop Leo remarked how deeply moved he had been by the service, having known in his previous ministry several people who like Rutilio, Manuel, Nelson and Cosme had paid the same price for proclaiming the good news to the poor as they had.

Perhaps it is fitting that here too, where we see a government mired in corruption, the poorest communities suffering the most, and the various mental and physical health challenges exacerbated by two years of pandemic, we celebrated the beatification and looked to the lessons these martyrs have for our Church here and around the world.

Blessed Rutilio Grande, Blessed Manuel Solórzano, Blessed Nelson Lemus, and Blessed Cosme Spessoto; Rezar por Nosotros!

Danny Sweeney is Social Justice Co-ordinator for Justice and Peace Scotland: www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk

Watch: Edinburgh Mass of Thanksgiving for the Beatifications on 22 January:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvRkNAi5Tojs **Report:** <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43931>

RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2022 "WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH ME?"

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has produced a resource for Racial Justice Sunday 2022. It is the product of ecumenical cooperation and partnership between Christian church denominations, parachurch organisations and groups, and individuals in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and England - the four nations. This is a call for all Christians to engage in the righteous struggle for racial justice because racial justice is everyone's business. It is an opportunity for all Churches to focus on the three 'R's of 'Remembering', 'Reflecting' and 'Responding':

Remembering the importance of racial justice.

Reflecting on human diversity and thanking God for it.

Responding by working to end injustice, racism and ignorance through prayer and action.

<https://ctbi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/RJS-2022-edit.pdf.pagespeed.ce.nU7KxSg95M.pdf>

The Catholic Church in England and Wales has also produced resources building on those it produced last year, Racial Justice Sunday 'A Time to Act', which reflected on the importance of everyone recognising themselves, their race, their culture and their history in the life of the Church. The aim of the 2022 resources is to continue conversations about how we see others in the 'Image and Likeness of God'. www.cbcew.org.uk/rjs22/

CALLED TO BE PROPHETS

Anne O'Connor 30 Jan: This Sunday's Old Testament reading told the story of the call to Jeremiah to become a prophet for the Lord.

Jeremiah 1: 4-5 *The word of the Lord came to me, saying: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I appointed you as prophet to the nations.'*

Jer 1: 9: *Then the Lord stretched out his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: 'There! I have put my words into your mouth.'* And in verse 17 it states: *'...prepare yourself for action. Stand up and tell them all I command you. Have no fear of them and in their presence I will make you fearless.'*

Jeremiah 9:1-9.11 continues: *I raise the wail and lament for the mountains, the dirge for the desert pasture, for they have been burnt: no one passes there, the sound of flocks is heard no more. Birds of the sky and animals, all have fled, all are gone. Who is wise enough to understand this?*

Who are the prophets for our times and what is their message? I suggest one such prophet is Leeds Vicar Jon Swales who has long been a vocal champion of green issues and active in his commitment to raise awareness of the link between climate change and environmental destruction. In advance of the COP26 climate conference in November 2021, Jon produced a dedicated collection of climate prayers and videos, several of which have been published in past NW E Bulletins.

26 Prayers for the Climate and Ecological Emergency (initially composed for COP26)

Text here: <https://atyourservice.arocha.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/26-Prayers-for-the-Climate-and-Ecological-Emergency-Jon-Swales.pdf>

Jon has recently produced a series of podcasts called **Lament & Hope: Prayers for the Climate and Ecological Emergency**

Podcast here: <https://www.audible.co.uk/pd/Podcast/B08K5WSPHN>

or here: <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/lament-hope-prayers-for-the-climate-and/id1597456994>

As well as speaking out on environmental issues Jon ministers to those who are 'battered and bruised by the storms of life' as Mission Priest at Lighthouse West Yorkshire, based at St George's Church Leeds. He was awarded an MBE in the 2022 New Year's Honours for services to the city, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, the Lighthouse team has supported vulnerable adults, providing pastoral care, food parcels and doorstep visits to those isolating. It also runs a Christian Day Centre six days a week that provides holistic care and support so that individuals can live lives full of dignity and purpose.

Alongside the day-to-day care Lighthouse is also committed to raising up and sending out leaders. Presently, 2 of the core pastoral team positions are 'training pastor' roles, with previous team members now training for ordained ministry within the Church of England. Lighthouse is working with Leeds School of Theology to deliver training and resources through their 'Mission, Theology & Ministry for the Margins' course. In addition, a new course on 'Justice, Peace & Reconciliation' will equip the church to engage the contemporary world in justice, peace-making and reconciliation. Through a mixture of live lectures, discussion groups and assigned homework, this introductory course will particularly focus on a Christlike and prophetic response to the interrelated issues of climate breakdown, violence and conflict and racial injustice. This course will once again be a partnership between Leeds School of Theology and Lighthouse West Yorkshire following the success of the 'Mission, Theology & Ministry for the Margins' course. <https://www.lighthousewestyorkshire.org.uk/>

Ash Wednesday

Almighty God,
The Creator of All that is,
You created us from the dust of the earth,
And breathed upon us
and gave us the gift of life.

In our fragility and weakness,
We marvel at the precious gift of life,
And the calling you have placed upon us
to tend and keep your cosmic temple.

Almighty God,
The Creator of All that is,
Dust we are and to dust we will return,
Yet you dignified us with the gift of love.

A love in which dust is taken up
in your divine embrace,
word became flesh
dust became divine.
A love in which the fire of your presence
sanctifies dust.

Almighty God,
Humanity as dust,
Has been granted the possibility and potential
to reflect your glory,
But we embarked to the far country, &
Squandered our inheritance,
Lord have mercy.

In our arrogance, we erected Babel, &
Have forgotten who we truly are,
And what we are called to be.
Lord have mercy.

Yet we now reap what we have sown,
And find ourselves,
Cast Adrift as Homesick Exiles
East of Eden and lost in sin and shame.
Lord have mercy.

Almighty God,
We have misused our power and privilege,
And have plundered and pillaged,
This world of yours,
This world of ours,
This world which we share
with a host of non-human worshippers.
Lord have mercy.

And so in this context of rising temperatures,
As we face our own existential threat.
Knowing the gods of consumerism
and economic systems will not save,
We remember, We lament,
We repent.
Lord have mercy.

And so in the context of rising seas,
As we face ecological ruin,
Knowing the gods of individualism
and technology will not save,
We remember,
We lament,
We repent,
Lord have mercy.

We remember your great love,
We lament our prideful arrogance,
We repent and turn to you the wellspring of love.

We receive ash upon our head
as a reminder of our mortality,
Shaped as a cross.
Knowing that we are signed and sealed,
In the self-giving love of Jesus

We receive ash upon our head as a reminder of our
mortality,
Shaped as a Cross,
Knowing that we are called afresh to embrace and enact,
The self-giving love of Jesus.

Almighty God,
On this day when we are reminded of our fragility,
We too are reminded of your faithfulness.
On this day when we are reminded of our mortality,
We too are reminded of your grace.

Almighty God,
The Creator of All that is
You created us from the dust of the earth,
And breathed upon us and gave us the gift of life.

In our fragility and weakness,
We marvel at the precious gift of life,
And the calling you have placed upon us
to tend and keep your cosmic temple.

Almighty God,
The Creator of All that is.
Dust we are and to dust we will return,
Yet you dignified us with the gift of love.

A love in which dust is taken up in your divine embrace,
A love in which the word became flesh
and dust became divine.
A love in which the fire of your presence sanctifies dust.

Almighty God,
Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our
mortality and penitence,
that we may remember
in the context of climate breakdown
that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given
everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

HOLY LAND: AMNESTY ISSUES MAJOR REPORT ON 'APARTHEID' ISRAEL

Dan Bergin 2 Feb Source: Amnesty International/ Israel Embassy

The Israeli authorities must be held accountable for committing the crime of apartheid against Palestinians, Amnesty International has said in a damning new report released yesterday. Commenting on a leaked copy of the report, the Israeli foreign ministry called on Amnesty to withdraw the report before it was made public and denounced it as "false" and "extremist". It said the report "serves as a green light for the perpetrators and others to harm not only Israel, but Jews around the world."

Amnesty's comprehensive 280-page report - *Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity* - documents how massive seizures of Palestinian land and property, unlawful killings, the forcible transfer of Palestinian people from their land, drastic movement restrictions, and the denial of nationality and citizenship to Palestinians are all components of a system amounting to apartheid under international law. This system is maintained by violations which Amnesty found constitute apartheid as a crime against humanity, as defined in the Rome Statute and Apartheid Convention.

Amnesty's investigation details how Israel enforces a system of oppression and domination against the Palestinian people wherever it has control over their rights. This includes Palestinians living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), as well as displaced refugees currently in other countries.

In light of the report, Amnesty is urging the UK government to ensure there is a "major re-assessment" of its foreign policy position and strategy on Israel so as to "confront and begin to tackle the scale and systematic nature of Israel's apartheid crimes."

Amnesty's findings build on a growing body of work by Palestinian, Israeli and international NGOs which has increasingly applied an apartheid framework to the situation in Israel and/or the OPT. A system of apartheid is an institutionalised regime of oppression and domination by one racial group over another. In international criminal law, specific unlawful acts which are committed within a system of apartheid and with the intention of maintaining it constitute the crime against humanity of apartheid. These acts are set out in the Apartheid Convention and the Rome Statute, and include unlawful killing, torture, forcible transfer and the denial of basic rights and freedoms.

Amnesty has documented acts outlawed in the Apartheid Convention and Rome Statute in all areas Israel controls, although they occur more frequently and violently in the OPT than in Israel. Israel enacts multiple measures to deliberately deny Palestinians their basic rights and freedoms, including draconian movement restrictions on Palestinians in the OPT; chronic discriminatory underinvestment in Palestinian communities in Israel, and the denial of refugees' right to return. Amnesty has also documented forcible transfer, administrative detention, torture and unlawful killings, both inside Israel and in the OPT. These acts form part of a systematic and widespread attack directed against the Palestinian population - and are committed with the intent to maintain the system of oppression and domination; they therefore constitute the crime against humanity of apartheid.

Amnesty is calling on the International Criminal Court to consider the crime of apartheid in its current investigation in the OPT and calls on all states to exercise universal jurisdiction to bring perpetrators of apartheid crimes to justice.

Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International's Secretary General, said: "Our report reveals the true extent of Israel's apartheid regime. Whether they live in Gaza, East Jerusalem, Hebron or Israel itself, Palestinians are treated as an inferior racial group and systematically deprived of their rights. We found that Israel's cruel policies of segregation, dispossession and exclusion across all territories under its control clearly amount to apartheid. The international community has an obligation to act.

"For Palestinians, the difficulty of travelling within and in and out of the OPT is a constant reminder of their powerlessness. Their every move is subject to the Israeli military's approval, and the simplest daily task means navigating a web of violent control. There is no possible justification for a system built around the institutionalised and prolonged racist oppression of millions of people.

"Apartheid has no place in our world, and states which choose to make allowances for Israel will find themselves on the wrong side of history. Governments who continue to supply Israel with arms and shield it from accountability at the UN are supporting a system of apartheid, undermining the international legal order, and exacerbating the suffering of the Palestinian people. The international community must face up to the reality of Israel's apartheid, and pursue the many avenues to justice which remain shamefully unexplored. Israel must dismantle the apartheid system and start treating Palestinians as human beings with equal rights and dignity. Until it does, peace and security will remain a distant prospect for Israelis and Palestinians alike."

The unlawful killing of Palestinian protesters is perhaps the clearest illustration of how Israeli authorities use unlawful acts to maintain the status quo. In 2018, Palestinians in Gaza began to hold weekly protests along the border with Israel, calling for the right of return for refugees and an end to the blockade. Before the protests even began, senior Israeli officials warned that Palestinians approaching the wall would be shot. By the time the protests stopped at the end of 2019, Israeli forces had killed 214 civilians, including 46 children.

In light of the systematic unlawful killings of Palestinians documented in its report, Amnesty is also calling for the UN Security Council to impose a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel. This should cover all weapons and munitions as well as law-enforcement equipment, given the thousands of Palestinian civilians who have been unlawfully killed by Israeli forces. The Security Council should also impose targeted sanctions, such as asset freezes, against Israeli officials most implicated in the crime of apartheid.

A 430-mile fence, which Israel is still extending, has isolated Palestinian communities inside 'military zones', and they must obtain multiple special permits any time they enter or leave their homes. In Gaza, more than two million Palestinians live under an Israeli blockade which has created a humanitarian crisis. It is near-impossible for Gazans to travel abroad or into the rest of the OPT, and they are effectively segregated from the rest of the world.

Amnesty states: "As one of Israel's closest diplomatic allies, the UK should call on the country to make urgent changes to dismantle its apartheid system. In its official assessment of Israel's human rights record, the UK describes Israel as 'an open democracy, underpinned by robust institutions and a vibrant civil society', while noting that it has "continued to violate human rights and humanitarian law in the context of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza".

In November, Amnesty also called on the UK construction giant JCB to take urgent measures to prevent the company's diggers from being used by the Israeli authorities to carry out the unlawful destruction of Palestinian homes or the construction of settlements in the OPT. In a substantial report, Amnesty showed that in recent years there have been dozens of incidents where JCB machinery was used to demolish residential and farm buildings belonging to Palestinians, to destroy water pipes, and to uproot large numbers of olive trees and other agricultural produce and structures. The same month, the Government found JCB to be in breach of international human rights standards in respect of failures to carry out proper due diligence on the end-use of its goods. Amnesty is calling for the Government to ensure there are consequences for JCB over these failings, including the denial of public procurement contracts.

Sacha Deshmukh, Amnesty International UK's CEO, said: "For too long the UK has tried to sit on the fence when it comes to Israel's shameful human rights record - effectively turning a blind eye to the systematic discrimination against Palestinians amounting to a system of apartheid. Instead of honestly confronting the enormity of Israel's crimes, the UK has contented itself with low-key criticisms of Palestinian protester killings and the relentless expansion of Israel's illegal settlements on occupied Palestinian land.

"Ministers often make the claim that a confident 'Global Britain' stands for the rule of law around the world - if this means anything it must mean concrete consequences for a close ally like Israel over its cruel and unlawful apparatus of discrimination. Ministers should use the UK's close diplomatic ties with Israel to hold it to account for its crushing system of apartheid and institutionalised discrimination against Palestinians - and ongoing settlement-building and the Gaza blockade must end. The UK should impose a comprehensive import ban on all products from Israel's illegal settlements, rein in JCB's exports linked to illegal house demolitions, and immediately suspend all UK military and policing assistance to Israel."

Amnesty's report provides numerous specific recommendations for how the Israeli authorities can dismantle its apartheid system and the discrimination, segregation and oppression which sustain it, including:

- Israel must end its brutal practice of home demolitions and forced evictions.
- Israel must grant equal rights to all Palestinians in Israel and the OPT, in line with principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.
- Israel must recognise the right of Palestinian refugees and their descendants to return to homes where they or their families once lived, while providing victims of human rights violations and crimes against humanity with full reparations.

Israeli foreign affairs Minister Yair Lapid accused Amnesty of recycling "lies, inconsistencies, and unfounded assertions that originate from well-known anti-Israeli hate organisations. The report denies the State of Israel's right to exist as the nation state of the Jewish people. Its extremist language and distortion of historical context were designed to demonize Israel and pour fuel onto the fire of anti-Semitism," he said in a statement.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43984>

Read the full report HERE <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

IAN LINDEN: SOUTH AFRICA'S HEROES: NEW TIMES, SELECTIVE MEMORIES

Ian Linden 2 Feb: The death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu over Christmas felt like the end of an era, the story of the anti-apartheid movement fading into the past. Journalists' 'first drafts of history' are giving way to second drafts with their selective memories and erasures.

The global anti-apartheid movement was much broader than the well-respected and effective Anti-Apartheid Movement that older readers in Britain will remember. Compared with other nationalist and liberation movements of the time an extraordinary combination of protagonists actively resisted the apartheid regime. Liberals as well as socialists and communists, the stoic resistance of Nelson Mandela and his colleagues on Robben Island, the schoolchildren of the 1976 Soweto uprising, the scores of organisations in the popular front of the 1980s, the United Democratic Front (UDF), minority religious communities as well as Christians and Church leaders, a broad coalition of ethnicities. Within and without South Africa, from civil disobedience to sports and consumer boycotts from campaigns for economic sanctions to mobilising ANC front-organisations from diplomacy to strategic planning by an exile ANC leadership as well as guerrilla infiltration, there was a huge variety of active resistance. A broad, heterogeneous movement fighting apartheid operated in the midst of the Cold War.

There were special and profound theological reasons for Protestant Christian resistance to 'the system'. One reason was similar to that of the Confessing Church's Declaration of Barmen in Nazi Germany. They confronted not only a national security state that tortured and murdered its opponents - as in Latin America - but the heresy of a form of Christian Nationalism, the ideological justification for apartheid promoted by the Nederduiste Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), the Dutch Reformed Church.

There have been many touching encomia for Archbishop Tutu. He became the recognisable voice and Anglican face of non-violent opposition to apartheid violence. He also made work for human rights a key part of the life of the South African Council of Churches which he led from 1978 to 1984. In the repression of the mid-1980s when the internal leadership of the ANC were almost all jailed, a man of God spoke truth to power. In New York in 1986 following a failed UK visit to change Margaret Thatcher's mind on sanctions, Tutu publically challenged Reagan's refusal to exert economic pressures on the apartheid regime. Despite Presidential vetoes, Congress later that year passed an Anti-Apartheid Act including some economic sanctions.

If and when they sought a Christian leader offering newsworthy, clear and courageous comment and advocacy for many journalists Desmond Tutu was the only name in their address book. And perhaps for that reason the role of the Catholic Church in resisting apartheid often gets forgotten. I tried to remedy this in a chapter of my book on Global Catholicism which contains some of my memories from the 1980s: of Father Smangaliso Mkhathswa, Secretary-General of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) and ardent ANC supporter, arrested and tortured, of the inspiring Dominican theologian Father Albert Nolan and his spiritual guidance for young ANC supporters, along with the women of the Grail providing shelter for the many on the run. And, of course, Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban.

Appointed in 1947 the youngest Catholic bishop in the world, after 1948 he was confronted with the injustice and inhumanity of Nationalist Party rule, and began gradually to campaign for change, calling for less talking about the principles of Catholic social teaching and more concrete action for justice. As President of the SACBC from 1952-1961, and again 1981-1987, he was able to take his convictions to a national level. Under his leadership the Conference denounced apartheid as "intrinsically evil" and successfully blocked draft legislation banning racially mixed worship. Later he was instrumental in setting up its Department of Justice and Peace.

But while he led and spoke out against the segregation of the Group Areas Act and the suffering of forced removals - "an enormous act of piracy" - getting others to follow and adopt a coordinated and strategic opposition to apartheid was less easy. Only in 1989 with the national Pastoral Plan did his vision see the full light of day. He could not count on the active support of all his archdiocesan clergy, let alone Rome, which tellingly never offered him a Cardinal's hat, while secular honours such as the Legion d'Honneur and the Chancellorship of Natal University came aplenty. It must have been a lonely position - perhaps made worse by a long clerical training in which intimacy and expressions of emotion were shunned, though he had many friends.

He did what he could from Durban, brought the Archdiocese into the local Council of the Churches, started Khanyisa, a catechetical centre, spun off Diakonia, an ecumenical social action centre, and PACSA, the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness. He supported IDASA, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa as a director. It became a major national institution. His support for the Young Christian Workers whose headquarters were in Durban was unswerving. He retired there in Sabon House, their offices converted into a retired priests' home. I remember the lovely scene as a black miner, with his helmet, analysed the worker struggle, argued with Cardinal McCann about Marxism, and told a meeting of the SACBC in 1982 what he expected of them. Archbishop Hurley was instrumental in persuading the bishops to support the launching of the radical New Nation newspaper, mouthpiece of the black democratic movement.

During the intense repression of the mid-1980s, Denis Hurley rose to the challenge, supporting the End Conscription Campaign, appearing in one instance in court to support Charles Yeats, a young Baptist conscientious objector, and saying in effect that the war in Namibia was an unjust war. He mounted a successful challenge to Section 29 of the Internal Security Act to get the Diakonia director, Paddy Kearney, out of detention, and was himself prosecuted in 1983 for "defaming" the brutal South African paramilitary koevoet units in Namibia by suggesting they committed atrocities. A year before a SACBC Report on Namibia had been categorical that they did. The case was dropped as the trial opened. He never fully came to terms with the campaign for sanctions against South Africa and feared its impact on South African workers.

He once told me how, for the benefit of the more intelligent security police listening, he would mention on the telephone that Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty of Hungary had given him his ring. The message was that he would be more bothersome in jail than out. My most tender memory remains seeing Walter Sisulu, white-haired veteran of Robben Island and just out of jail, hugging and thanking him at Mama Sisulu's house in Soweto.

A friend of CIIR and CAFOD, Archbishop Hurley knew Britain and its ways well: Canon John Collins dragging him into St. Paul's sacristy - "the only safe place"- to hand over £20,000 from the International Defence and Aid Fund. My sneaking him through the back door of the old station hotel in Paddington for discussions with Oliver Tambo. Hugs then beer and sandwiches. All negotiated with a characteristic patience and wry amusement at the necessary subterfuge. Like Pope John XXIII, from out of a traditional priestly formation came a spirituality of great breadth and depth.

In triumphant scenes few will forget Nelson Mandela was released in February 1990. Then the Soviet Union imploded. Funding for the ANC was cut off almost overnight. Negotiations in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa began in 1991 and resulted in free and fair elections in 1994. It was sanctions that proved to be the proverbial last straw - more a heavy bale - which broke apartheid's back. A unique case of God and Mammon serving a common cause?

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43986>

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See also: Denis Hurley Centre - www.denishurleycentre.org/

CARE FOR CALAIS

30 Jan: Yesterday was amazing. We spent five hours in a muddy field on an overcast day. It was freezing and there was nowhere to sit down. But we gave over 300 warm winter coats to people who desperately needed them, and that was incredibly satisfying. Some of the people already had a coat, but when you are outside 24/7 one layer is often not enough. Shockingly many had no coat at all and we met very cold people in jumpers, denim jackets and cheap leather coats. I do not know how they survived; sleeping outside in January is no joke. But we were able to give every single person a warm coat. And thanks to the many wonderful people who chose to give a Christmas gift to a refugee this year they were all brand new. Meaning everyone got the right size and we know that every single one is completely waterproof and has a hood too. To all those generous donors I cannot thank you enough.

One young man said to me "this is the best help I have had in Spain or France or Germany". He meant to be nice but I found that a sobering thought. But there were many happy faces to be seen as people warmed up. Getting 300 people kitted out was a long distribution so we did our services at the same time. 600 cups of tea and coffee (Rebecca said she will be dreaming of pouring tea), hairdressing, phone charging and bike repairs. There was even a bit of dancing. It was a great day. A lot of work goes into making something like this happen. Back office support, transport and donations, as well as the exhausted volunteers from yesterday. Thank you to everyone who played a part. The many people who said thank you to us were thanking you too. I hope you can feel their appreciation. Sadly, there are many more refugees sleeping outside in Calais who need our help. You can buy a coat for a refugee at: Care4Calais.org/donate

A MOVING ENCOUNTER

Anne O'Connor 29 Jan: Whilst shopping I came across a puzzling sight - random objects scattered on the village bowling green. Walking closer I saw plastic 'candles' with paper flames, single roses strewn on the lawn and an assortment of shoes - for men, women and children. Then I realised. It was two days after Holocaust Memorial Day (27 Jan). This chilling display was a reminder of the horrors of that time. Another shopper joined me. We were both in tears as we discussed what it meant. I told her about a study day I'd attended at a local synagogue some years ago where survivors had shared their stories. As we parted a woman walking her dog called me over to ask why the shoes were there. She too was visibly moved. We were joined by another. She wondered, as we all had, why there was no sign to explain the display and suggested perhaps it was to encourage us to go away and find out more. We were all changed by that encounter on the green. May we never forget and always continue to question. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/>

PAX CHRISTI USA REFLECTION: HAPPY ARE PEACEMAKERS WHO WAKE UP THE REST OF US

Joan Chittister OSB, *National Catholic Reporter* 28 Jan

It's all very ironic.

It's very difficult to talk about peace in the United States without starting a fight. There's at least one in every crowd who hail the strongman need for keepers of the peace who are willing to fight in order to keep it. Those types were there at the beginning. They were the ones who were in favour of suppressing Native Americans by moving them off their own land now that we were here and declared that land ours. Then, astonishingly, called themselves "peacekeepers" when Indigenous people fought back.

And they were still here 350 years later when we dropped two planet-splitting bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki — despite the fact that the end of the war was already in sight — in order to see which bomb could do the most damage. In case we needed to use it again ... to keep the peace, of course.

It all comes down to a view of the world that teaches "take what you want and threaten what you must" to "keep the peace." Then everyone will all be happy — as the beatitude says. Right. Unless, of course, being peaceful is not about squashing disagreement and obliterating whomever stands in our way. Unless it's about not fighting, or destroying life and traditions and whole swaths of people who are simply different than we are.

The problem is that the Jesus who died on a cross and would not fight to descend it leaves us looking for ways to keep the peace without suppressing and destroying the rest of society to get it.

Having said that, the church has never been all that good in teaching this beatitude. In fact, the church has a history of getting to "peace" itself through slaughter and suppression and enslavement and all manner of other things we refuse to remember as an institution. Like the Crusades. And the Inquisition of the Jews. And the persecution of Christians who were committed to a different version of Christianity. And, oh yes, like the battles fought to decide which candidate would become pope in the Middle Ages.

So, here we are, never actually forgiven our obligations to peacemaking but never really wholeheartedly committed to it either. Instead, the unarguable reasons for not doing it were discretely instilled over the centuries. As the weapons got bigger and bigger and the armoury more and more lethal, we have all managed to practice more dismay than moral determination. "Yes, but," we wail, "what can one person do?" Or, "after all, we have to defend ourselves." Or, "they started it."

The counterarguments are all true, yes, but groundless. Yes, we have the right to defend ourselves but surely not with devices capable of killing every child in its path for 20 miles around. And yes, they started it but haven't we really been fuelling it with our own taxpayers' money for over 75 years while those same children have grown up without three meals a day, or couldn't afford college educations, or didn't have medical insurance, or lived in unheated walk-up rooms in some slum-landlord's moneymaking hole? Isn't all of that violence, too? Aren't we required to address that?

Shouldn't we be wondering how it is that we go on arming ourselves to deliver death to unseen enemies while our society is dying in other ways at our own hands as a result? And now our so-called representatives and senators tell us that those social things are too expensive for them to allow while they have pumped the military budget up and up, over and over, for all the years of our lives?

Yet, dark as Catholic/Christian history may be, it's possible that we may be living at a moment when the Catholic world begins to teach the difference between fighting and solving human problems through less barbarian means.

What's happening? First and foremost, for instance, Santa Fe Archbishop John Wester — the diocese that is at the centre of nuclear development — has written a pastoral letter "Living in the Light of Christ's Peace." Most of all, it is a letter that does not call for deterrence, as has become common. Instead, this one calls us to work for the abolition of all nuclear weapons. This letter is a strong and holy one: It calls for diocesan recommitment to the nuclear issues in very concrete ways.

First, he calls for parishes to hold public conversations to determine the actual public steps that can be taken to open the nuclear conversation across the country again. Wester calls us to press for The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It has been ratified by 86 countries so far but not one of the nine nuclear powers — the U.S., China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, India, Pakistan, Israel or North Korea — have signed it. Obviously, we have work to do.

He reminds us to realize that we have far exceeded "nuclear deterrence" with a few hundred nuclear weapons. In fact, we now have over thousands of them. Thousands of nuclear weapons. To be justified how? He reminds us that we are, ironically, destroying ourselves and our country in the name of defence.

The archbishop's letter is a humane, holy and understandable approach to a topic that has often unleashed passions so deep they were actually ineffective everywhere. At the same time, this letter, I admit, strikes me in a very tender place. Like Wester, I went to Hiroshima, too. I visited the museum, too. I saw the clothes that had been radiated into pieces of brick wall as the person who had been wearing them literally disappeared into the ether. Then I followed the two-part diorama that shows on one side of it a model of the bustling and developed city of Hiroshima until — on the other side of the divider — there was nothing left but one teetering tower and a hunk of brick here and there. I looked at it and blinked. In seconds, Model A had become Model B. And behind it, in simple frames on the wall, were two letters from President Harry Truman commanding the U.S. Air Force to refrain entirely from **bombing five Japanese cities** — Kyoto, Yokohama, Kokura, Hiroshima and Nagasaki — so we could find out which of the two new bombs would do the most damage.

I am an American! Standing in that crowd in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the embarrassment of it consumed me. I could feel the tears pour down my face before I could attempt to dry my eyes. I turned my back away from the crowds pushing behind me to continue the tour. And then, out of nowhere it seemed, I felt someone put their arms around my waist and say softly in my ear, "I'm so sorry. We cry, too, sometimes, but we don't want you to cry." It was my young teenage Japanese guide with a searing lesson in forgiveness and universal care at the same time.

From where I stand, it is clear that violence starts at the top for us. Under the aegis of "defence," we have come to exalt the kind of violence that undermines every layer of our entire society. It corrupts our children, it unmoors our relationships, it blinds us to the poison in our national heart while we get less and less happy every day.

We have been called by strong bishops over the years, all of whom understood this infection in the body politic. Bishops Thomas Gumbleton, Raymond Hunthausen, Leroy Matthiesen, and 75 other bishops who led the American episcopacy into the first peace pastoral in the United States precede a bishop who is waking us up again to what the Beatitudes are really all about.

The difference is that Wester is alone and standing in what came to be the centre of the "American Nuclear Soul" in Santa Fe calling us again to examine our American consciences. As Pope Francis said at the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima on Nov. 24, 2019, "The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral. ... How can we speak of peace even as we build terrifying new weapons of war?"

Who says that no one can do anything important alone? We have a bishop now who by standing up alone may — we can hope — wake this country up again to the place of conscience in the life of the Beatitudes.

Provided, of course, that we are willing to stand there — alone — as well.

<https://paxchristiusa.org/2022/01/28/happy-are-peacemakers-who-wake-up-the-rest-of-us/>

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 21 February to 6 March

In 2022, our online Choose the World you Want Festival will return from 21 February to 6 March. Last year's festival saw campaigners, shoppers, students and businesses come together in a show of support for the farmers behind our food on the front line of the climate crisis. From online panels to bake-offs and coffee mornings over 50 virtual events took place, with supporters sharing the power of Fairtrade and what needs to happen next to ensure farmers and workers are put front and centre of conversations on how to tackle the climate crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us more than ever how interconnected we are globally.

Since last Fairtrade Fortnight we have seen the G7 and COP26 take place. Over 33,000 campaigners joined 1.8m Fairtrade farmers and workers in backing the Be Fair With Your Climate Promise challenge to world leaders at the UN COP26 summit. But frustration came as the wealthiest nations failed to recognise the urgent need to invest in farmer expertise by delaying their promised \$100bn annual funding to the most climate vulnerable countries until 2023. That isn't good enough. Climate justice was never going to be won or lost at one conference in Glasgow. But where the COP26 agreement fell short, we need to increase the pressure for urgent action.

Find out more: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Get-Involved/Current-campaigns/Fairtrade-Fortnight/>

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

This Fairtrade Fortnight, we invite schools and colleges to stand with farmers and workers seeking climate justice. We have created new films, lesson plans and activities that will help you to explore the inequalities at the heart of the climate crisis, and learn how governments, businesses, schools and individuals can take collective action for a fairer future for the people who grow our food and drinks, mine our gold and who grow the cotton in our clothes — people who are often exploited and underpaid. Through learning about how we are all connected through the things we eat, drink and wear, young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills to shape a more compassionate and sustainable world.

https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/take-action/fairtrade-fortnight-2022/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=EC_fair+future&utm_content=EC+SchFeb22+FairFuture

COLUMBAN SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION

This is the final reminder for the Columban Schools Media Competition which closes on 11 February 2022. If you haven't done so already, please share it to any students you know aged 13 to 18 inclusive.

Who in the world today is doing something about inequality, injustice, exclusion and environmental degradation? What can they teach us? How can we draw on our own faith and personal experience to be changemakers?

We are looking for students (aged 13-18 inclusive) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme:

More details are available through the Columban website <https://www.columbancompetition.com/>

Two separate competitions will be held, one for students in Ireland and one in Britain (England, Scotland, Wales); each has two categories: **Writing and Image**.

Winners will be announced on Columban media on 11 March 2022.

The winning entries will be published in the Far East magazine, Vocation For Justice newsletter, online on Columban websites in Ireland and Britain, shared on Columban social media, and published in other Catholic media.

TERRY PRATCHETT ESTATE BACKS JACK MONROE'S IDEA FOR 'VIMES BOOTS' POVERTY INDEX

Alison Flood *The Guardian* 26 Jan

Terry Pratchett's estate has authorised the anti-poverty campaigner Jack Monroe to use the "Vimes Boots Index" as the name of her new price index, which is intended to document the "insidiously creeping prices" of basic food products. The author's daughter, writer Rhianna Pratchett, said her father would have been proud to see his work used in this way.

Monroe was prompted to create her index after inflation jumped to 5.4% last week, and she found herself "infuriate[d]" that the index (the consumer price index or CPI) used for this calculation "grossly underestimates the real cost of inflation as it happens to people with the least". She laid out how the prices of "value" product ranges in supermarkets had soared over the last decade – rice in her local supermarket had increased in price from 45p for a kilogram bag last year, to £1 for 500g, a 344% increase – and how the number of value products has shrunk. She was soon working with economists, charities and analysts to compile her own index. "One," she wrote in the *Observer*, "that will document the disappearance of the budget lines and the insidiously creeping prices of the most basic versions of essential items at the supermarket" and "serve as an irrefutable snapshot of the reality experienced by millions of people".

In a tweet on Wednesday, Monroe announced that the index is already starting to make a difference, as the Office for National Statistics has admitted that "one inflation rate doesn't fit all". She wrote: "Delighted to be able to tell you that the @ONS have just announced that they are going to be changing the way they collect and report on the cost of food prices and inflation to take into consideration a wider range of income levels and household circumstances", using the hashtag #VimesBootsIndex. The index, Monroe said, is named in honour of Pratchett's creation Sam Vimes, who in the Discworld novel *Men at Arms* lays out the "Sam Vimes 'Boots' theory of socio-economic unfairness".

"The reason that the rich were so rich, Vimes reasoned, was because they managed to spend less money," wrote Pratchett. "Take boots, for example. He earned thirty-eight dollars a month plus allowances. A really good pair of leather boots cost fifty dollars. But an affordable pair of boots, which were sort of okay for a season or two and then leaked like hell when the cardboard gave out, cost about ten dollars. Those were the kind of boots Vimes always bought, and wore until the soles were so thin that he could tell where he was in Ankh-Morpork on a foggy night by the feel of the cobbles. But the thing was that good boots lasted for years and years. A man who could afford fifty dollars had a pair of boots that'd still be keeping his feet dry in ten years' time, while a poor man who could only afford cheap boots would have spent a hundred dollars on boots in the same time and would still have wet feet."

The Pratchett estate has authorised the use of the name, tweeting its own Pratchett quote in support of Monroe's campaign. "Sometimes it's better to light a flamethrower than curse the darkness," wrote the late Discworld author in *Men at Arms*.

Rhianna Pratchett said: "My father used his anger about inequality, classism, xenophobia and bigotry to help power the moral core of his work. One of his most famous lightning-rods for this was Commander Vimes of the Ankh-Morpork City Watch - a cynical, but likable, man who attempts to better himself whilst railing against the injustices around him. Some of which he's had a hand in perpetrating in the past. Vimes's musing on how expensive it is to be poor via the cost of boots was a razor-sharp evaluation of socio-economic unfairness. And one that's all too pertinent today, where our most vulnerable so often bear the brunt of austerity measures and are cast adrift from protection and empathy. Whilst we don't have Vimes any more, we do have Jack and Dad would be proud to see his work used in such a way."

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/jan/26/terry-pratchett-jack-monroe-vimes-boots-poverty-index>

CHRISTIAN AID CHANGEMAKERS CONFERENCE: REAL PEOPLE, REAL CHANGE

Join Christian Aid's virtual supporter conference: 20-25 February 2022

Can you help change the world in 2022? Join us in a movement for change this Christian Aid Week. We will be joined by a number of inspiring speakers including + John Sentamu (our new chair) and our partners in Zimbabwe.

Sign up here for the conference: https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/events/changemakers-conference-programme?utm_source=conference&utm_medium=CTA&utm_campaign=Im%20ready%20to%20sign%20up

Sign up here for regional sessions: https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/events/changemakers-conference-programme?utm_source=conference&utm_medium=CTA&utm_campaign=Sign%20me%20up%201

WILLIAM NOLAN TO BE NEXT ARCHBISHOP OF GLASGOW

Christopher Lamb *The Tablet* 4 Feb

Pope Francis has chosen Scotland's justice and peace bishop, William Nolan, as the next leader of the Archdiocese of Glasgow. Bishop Nolan, 68, who shares Francis' concerns for the plight of migrants, protection of the planet and opposition to the arms trade, will take charge of one of the UK's largest Catholic communities. As Archbishop of Glasgow, his position will also give him a voice on the national stage.

The archbishop-elect currently leads the Diocese of Galloway, in southwest Scotland, and is president of Justice and Peace Scotland, a national body that advocates on a variety of social issues from climate change to nuclear weapons. Last year, Bishop Nolan announced the establishment of a Scotland-wide "Care of Creation Office", an initiative that had been inspired by the Pope's encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si'* and established in time for the COP26 green summit in Glasgow.

"As Bishop of Galloway, Bishop Nolan presented a pastoral vision with a genuinely collaborative approach. He led with humility and determination, inspired by the initiatives of Pope Francis, and focussing on the needs of the Church for the 21st century," Fr. William McFadden, Vicar General of the Diocese of Galloway, said.

Around a quarter of Scotland's 800,000 Catholics live in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, which includes 89 parishes, 83 primary schools and 21 secondary schools. The archdiocese covers the majority of the city of Glasgow, the most populous in Scotland and the fourth-most populous in the UK, along with some areas on its outskirts. Although the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh is the Scottish diocese traditionally led by a cardinal, in 1994 Glasgow's Archbishop Thomas Winning was given the red hat by Pope St John Paul II. Bishop Nolan's focus on the social gospel would make him a strong contender for a red hat in the Francis papacy. Scotland is currently without a cardinal.

"I am well aware of my own inadequacies and of the difficulties the Church faces today," the archbishop-elect said about his appointment. "Thank God therefore that we can sure of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the Church. As I leave the Diocese of Galloway behind, from now on I belong to Glasgow. And I assure the people of Glasgow of my commitment and dedication to them." He added that he felt "overwhelmed by the trust Pope Francis is putting in me."

Alistair Dutton, chief executive of Sciaf, said: "A very warm congratulations to Bishop William Nolan who has been appointed as Archbishop of Glasgow by Pope Francis today. We deeply appreciate his presence on Sciaf's Board and his commitment to social justice. Sciaf has benefited greatly from his leadership, most recently his contributions throughout Cop26. We wish him well as he concludes his time with the people and priests of Galloway and begins a new chapter in Glasgow."

As a bishop, Bishop Nolan has been a member of the "Holy Land Co-ordination" group, a delegation of prelates who make annual trips to the Holy Land. He has talked about the "unjust situation" facing people in that region and lamented the departure of Christians in the area.

Bishop Nolan made the trip to Calais alongside Bishop Paul McAleenan, an auxiliary in Westminster and the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales' spokesman on migrant issues. Last year, they wrote a joint letter to the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, expressing their strong opposition to the Government's immigration plans.

The appointment of the new Archbishop of Glasgow is the first leader of a major archdiocese that has taken place since Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti was appointed papal ambassador to Great Britain. As the Pope's envoy, he assists in the appointment process by drawing up a shortlist of candidates and other briefing materials. So far, Archbishop Gugerotti has shown he is determined to appoint bishops who share the pastoral, synodal style and priorities of the Francis pontificate. He is understood to already be working on another major appointment for the church in Great Britain: a new Archbishop of Westminster.

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/14978/william-nolan-to-be-next-archbishop-of-glasgow>

SVP: LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER A MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR UK

James Welton 3 Feb

The government's long-awaited Levelling Up White Paper represents a missed opportunity to address the ingrained social and economic disparity across the UK, says the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP). Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, announced details of the White Paper on Wednesday 2 February after months of delays. Mr Gove previously said: "We are on a mission to regenerate the nation, transforming derelict areas in our towns and cities into thriving places people are proud to live and work in". However, the SVP believes that high streets and deprived areas can only thrive if the people living there have access to good quality jobs, fit for purpose education and affordable housing.

The majority of levelling up funding so far has been spent on infrastructure, and while this is an important step in supporting economically deprived areas, a robust social infrastructure is a vital component in binding communities together. As an organisation which supports at grassroots level the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged in our communities, the SVP has first-hand experience of the challenges facing those at whom the Levelling Up agenda should be squarely aimed.

Additionally, the government has maintained that its levelling up agenda is about "shifting power closer to local people," however, limited consultation has taken place with groups supporting people in communities across the country, such as the SVP, which are best able to inform the conversation on regional inequalities.

The SVP operates nine St Vincent's community support centres across England and Wales, each providing a tailored response to the need in their community. There are also hundreds of local groups of SVP members supporting people and families in need. Since the start of the pandemic, requests for support coming into the SVP's national office have increased by 75% for food, 50% for clothing, and 140% for support with paying bills and money advice. This signals a worrying trend in some of the most deprived areas of the country, including Liverpool and surrounding areas, Birmingham, Essex, and parts of Yorkshire, all of which are in urgent need of Levelling Up funding.

We welcome the government's proposal that "by 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing." However, the success of this agenda will be determined by the detail, and the White Paper fails to lay out a clear plan for reaching this ambitious goal. There is little mention of quality employment or secure employment. Without these embedded in the levelling up strategy, it will be hard to reach this goal.

Mr Gove also announced that the £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will be decentralised to local leaders as far as possible, with investments set to regenerate communities, boost skills and support local businesses. While we welcome efforts to regenerate communities, the White Paper lacks crucial details of how funding will be allocated, and how the UKSPF will contribute to strengthening the social fabric of our society, which is vital in bridging the gaps between communities and regions.

Commenting on the White Paper, National Audit Office head Gareth Davies says: "The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has not consistently evaluated its past interventions to stimulate local economies, so it doesn't know whether billions of pounds of public spending has had the impact intended. With its focus on levelling up, it is vital that the department puts robust evaluation arrangements in place for its new schemes to promote local growth."

SVP chief executive, Elizabeth Palmer, says: "We welcome the ambitious aims of the Levelling Up White Paper, however, change must be informed by those at grassroots level, those who are supporting people in need and those being supported. Without listening to the voices of people who are directly and indirectly affected by regional inequalities the government cannot hope to direct funding where it is most needed. The social and economic disparity between wealthy and poorer regions isn't a new phenomenon, it has been a reality for millions for decades, trapping the most vulnerable and poorest in a cycle of deprivation. I hope the aims of this White Paper will be realised, only then will our poorest communities have the economic and social infrastructure to lift themselves into a position of parity with the rest of the country."

The SVP will also be providing a full reply to the government's Levelling Up White Paper with comment from our regional centres.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is an international Catholic volunteering organisation dedicated to providing practical assistance to those in need, irrespective of ideology, faith, ethnicity, age or gender. Founded in 1833, it now has 800,000 volunteers operating in 150 countries worldwide, including 10,000 in England and Wales. SVP England & Wales is a registered charity, number 1053992.

LINK: St Vincent de Paul Society - www.svp.org.uk
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43994>

COMPLAINT AT DROPPING OF ECONOMIC CRIME BILL

Ellen Teague *The Tablet* 2 Feb

Church Action for Tax Justice spoke last week of its dismay that the Economic Crime Bill has quietly been dropped from the schedule for the next parliamentary session. At the same time, Lord Agnew, a minister in the Treasury and Cabinet Office, resigned in protest at the failure to deal with alarming levels of allegedly fraudulent Covid business support loans. He described the deferral of the Economic Crime Bill as “foolish”. Earlier this week politicians called on Boris Johnson to revive the Economic Crime Bill to “plug the gaps” posed by dirty money in London. The bill was expected to bring forward measures to improve almost non-existent oversight of the UK’s business register, Companies House, and bring in a public register of beneficial ownership of property, revealing individuals behind offshore companies used to hold valuable UK homes and land. Tougher laws on fraud were also expected.

Church Action for Tax Justice, which lobbies for a fairer and greener tax system, suggested that at a time when public trust in our leaders is strained, there is much to be said “for those in power leading both by the example of their personal conduct, and, crucially, by the rules they create and by which our society and economy is governed.”

On 25 January, Sarah Edwards, executive director of the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, wrote in a blog: “For Christians to remain relevant in today’s complex and polarised world, we need to be able to confidently share what difference Christian thinking makes to issues of money, poverty and economics, so that we can see a more just and sustainable society for everyone.” She pointed to scriptural texts which highlight such issues as economic exploitation and fairer taxes and called for more conversations in the media, in parliament, and in communities across the land about money, finance and taxes, and how they can be used for good.

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/14953/complaint-at-dropping-of-economic-crime-bill>

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE TO BECOME RECOGNISED LANGUAGE IN THE UK

Tom Ambrose *The Guardian* 27 Jan: British Sign Language (BSL) is on course to become a recognised language, after the government backed a proposal by a Labour MP. The private member’s bill, introduced by Rosie Cooper, aims to improve accessibility for deaf people and would see the promotion of BSL when making public service announcements. It would also see the launch of an advisory board of BSL users to offer guidance to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on how and when to use it and look at increasing the number of BSL interpreters. It will encourage government departments and public bodies to follow the guidance, giving deaf people “equal access to education, employment, public services such as the NHS”, according to the British Deaf Association (BDA).

EastEnders actor Rose Ayling-Ellis made history as the first deaf contestant on BBC One’s *Strictly Come Dancing* and has urged people to back the bill. She told BBC News: “Why doesn’t this country legally recognise BSL? It’s our language. It should be accepted.” She added: “If I go to the doctor and there is no interpreter, it means I have to bring a family member with me – but I don’t want that, I want privacy.” In the wake of her celebrated *Strictly* win, research revealed more than three-quarters of deaf children thought the show has given the public a better understanding of deafness. There are an estimated 87,000 BSL users in the UK. Although BSL was recognised as an ‘official’ language by the UK government in 2003, it does not have the same legal protections as Welsh or Gaelic, for example.

David Buxton, chairman of the BDA, said: “Deaf people still do not have access to the same essential information and services that are available to the hearing population. The Equality Act does not cover linguistic rights. We are forced to rely on inadequate disability discrimination legislation to access information in our own language. British Sign Language is an indigenous language of the UK and should be accorded the same legal protection as Welsh and Scottish Gaelic.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/27/british-sign-language-to-become-recognised-language-in-the-uk>

On Friday (28 Jan), the British Sign Language Bill passed its first hurdle in the House of Commons when MPs approved it at an unopposed second reading. The bill will now move on to committee stage with the final reading expected in March.

In an emotional speech in the Commons the Labour MP for West Lancashire Rosie Cooper, who put forward the Bill, recalled her own experiences of growing up as the hearing child of deaf parents. She said “For every deaf person like my parents, who’ve been ignored, misunderstood or even treated as unintelligent for simply relying on BSL, this recognition will be clear and will be a message that their language is equal and should be treated as equal.” The MP thanked *Strictly* winner Ms Ayling-Ellis, saying: “Clearly, much of the awareness is due to Rose Ayling-Ellis in *Strictly*, she proved what my dad always says ‘deaf people can do anything, even the impossible’, such as winning *Strictly* when you can’t hear the music. That 10-second glimpse she gave the hearing world into deafness when the music stopped was truly momentous.”

According to figures from the British Deaf Association, up to 250,000 people use some BSL on a daily basis.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-60171412>

LENT STUDY 2022: FOLLOWING CHRIST IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SAINTS

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have a course based around a pilgrimage commemorating St Winefrede (Gwenffrewi). This journey through Lent, available to download below, draws upon 16 individual resources on St Winefride put together by their Mission Theology Advisory Group (MTAG) and links to a 70-mile pilgrimage from Holywell, Wales, to Shrewsbury in April and May 2022, led by Bishop Sarah Bullock from the Anglican Diocese of Lichfield. You can use the course without having to go on the pilgrimage! <https://ctbi.org.uk/lent-study-2022/>

Find out more about MTAG here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/deeper-god-mission-theology>

The pack of resources is available from <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/ourfaith/pilgrimage/> under 'St Winefride Pilgrim Trail'. These extra resources will help you follow the St Winefride 'thread' which runs through this Lent material. The resources take you more deeply into the traditional accounts of St Winefride, whose story has many touchpoints with our modern world – sexual harassment and coercion, misuse of power, the place of faith and the right to follow Jesus, and the contemporary need for healing and hope. However, if you don't want to use the extra St Winefride resources, you can still use the study for groups or for your personal journey through Lent, because other options, based on the Scripture for the day, are also provided from the Revised Common Lectionary. Or you can mix and match.

Stations

Each station on the journey for Ash Wednesday and for each week in Lent starts from a piece of Scripture set for the day, and offers something to talk about together, something to reflect on, something to do and something to deepen our Christian lives as disciples as we seek to follow Jesus Christ more faithfully. Each station on the way then concludes with prayer.

Depending on how you like to engage with Lenten material you can pick one of the sections and concentrate on that, or use some or all of them in the course of a session or even over a week.

Station 1 – questions and conversation starters if you like to talk about a topic.

Station 2 – food for thought – maybe something you haven't thought about before.

Station 3 – something to do: practical action for you to engage with your community.

Station 4 – something to take you deeper into being a follower of Jesus.

Station 5 – a prayer to say together or to think about after the session.

Download resources: <https://ctbi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/St-Winefride-Lent-Journey-2022.pdf>

See also: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/liv Lent-2022-church-resources-embracing-justice>

<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Cycle/LentCP.shtml>

LIFE ON THE BREADLINE LENT COURSE

This Lent course has been developed from the 3 years of Life on the Breadline research as a result of engaging with Church leaders, Christians, and community groups across the UK. It has been designed with Lent 2022 in mind (2nd March to 14th April 2022) but could be used in other years, or for home groups outside of Lent.

The course has 6 sessions which can be followed individually or in a group. Each session follows the same format which is planned to take an hour – combining prayer, a short video, a Bible passage, guided reflections, discussion questions, and take-away actions.

If you're taking part in the Lent Course as a group, consider having a meal together at the start or end of each session to continue conversations further.

The sessions cover 6 themes:

1. Christian responses to poverty
2. "Love thy neighbour" – poverty and inequality
3. Race, ethnicity, austerity and faith
4. Deficits and assets
5. Housing (in)justice
6. Poverty and structural inequality

Download all the sessions together by clicking here: https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Life-on-the-Breadline-lent-course_for-website.pdf

<https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/churches/lent-course/>

DIARY

FEBRUARY

13 Racial Justice Sunday <https://cte.org.uk/racialjusticesunday2022/>

20 World Day of Social Justice: A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy www.un.org/en/observances/social-justice-day/

20 Working for Peace in the Middle East: CND online conference: <https://cnduk.org/>

20-25 Christian Aid virtual supporter conference <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/events/changemakers-conference>

21 February to 6 March FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk>

26 NJPN Networking Day 10.45am for a prompt 11am start via Zoom www.justice-and-peace.org.uk 0207 901 4864.

The planned follow up day on Mental Health has been postponed due to unavailability of the speakers. We are in the process of looking if we can use this day to produce a Justice and Peace Response to the Synod. If any organisation has anything they want to advertise during the Networking Session, please email it to Geoff by 22 Feb to enable him to collate it onto the PowerPoint. His email address is admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

Please register in advance for this meeting on the following link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckcumrpzwrHdN0ZBadT25ZQ>

PeDnifN_nNS

27 Church Action on Poverty Sunday: www.church-poverty.org.uk 0161 872 9294

28 – 6 March Fairtrade Fortnight www.fairtrade.org.uk 0207 405 5942

MARCH

4 World Day of Prayer: 'I know the plans I have for you' Prepared by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) 01892 541411 www.wwdp.org.uk

6 Distribution of CAFOD Fast Day envelopes and date for talks at Masses

https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/57981/790793/version/1/file/Lent_2022_Short%20talk_v3.pdf

11 CAFOD Lent Fast Day www.cafod.org.uk 0207 733 7900

26 CAFOD Community Walk Against Hunger This Lent, we would love parish communities to come together to take part in our Community Walk Against Hunger on Saturday 26 March, as part of the 40 day Walk Against Hunger sponsored walking challenge for individuals. Could you speak to your parish priest and friends in the parish soon about planning a sponsored parish walk to join parishes all over England and Wales? We hope parishioners and parish priests will value the opportunity to bring the community together safely. Sign up information here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Sponsored-challenge-events/Community-Walk-against-Hunger>

● **Read NJPN's weekly column** online on Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com or find articles 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

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