



Justice & Peace

News from National Justice & Peace Network

Autumn 2022

Prayer for Good Government

Give the government justice, O God, and give righteousness and mercy to those who represent us.

Help us strive together for a government that makes justice for all.

God, you demand justice for the poor and deliverance from their needs.

Help us work steadfastly for political systems that care for the least among us.

God, you call us to be peacemakers in all things, large and small.

Help us to seek peace and pursue it with all our hearts, minds, and resources.

God of all, give us the courage to speak truth to power.

God of justice, help all those in power to seek truth.

O God, give us the conviction to elect a government that gives priority to the "least of these."

Amen

by Dan Claude



'Hope - A verb with its sleeves rolled up'

NJPN Conference July 2022

In her book 'The Outrageous Pursuit of Hope - Prophetic dreams for the Twenty First Century' Mary Grey, when reflecting on various tragedies of our time, poses the following question

"What is it, then, that keeps hope alive in the most desperate of circumstances" (1)

She speaks of rediscovering the God of the covenant and nurturing a **spirituality** of hope.

Pope Francis, in 'Let us dream' writes that he is filled with hope that:

"We might come out of this crisis better. But we have to see clearly, choose well, and act right" (2)

As we emerge from the difficulties presented by the pandemic, the conference aimed to offer an opportunity to reflect on the past couple of years, acknowledging that our world is now a very different place, where all people must strive to create a more just and equitable society. We must recognise and celebrate signs of hope which will sustain us as we seek a kinder world in which all may thrive.

Around 160 adults gathered for the weekend, a sign of hope in uncertain times, engaging in workshops and activities as well as hearing from our keynote speakers.

Keynote speakers included **Philip McDonagh**, former Irish diplomat who played a part in the Northern Ireland Peace process in the build-up to the Good Friday agreement and is currently Director of the Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations at Dublin City University. As we face the challenges of our current reality, the pandemic, climate change, environmental degradation, impact of digital technology, widening social disparity and conflict, Philip stated that the future is invisible, indeterminate, and full of risk. In exploring the meaning of hope,



Philip draws on the words of Pope Benedict in his encyclical Spe Salvi: *"All serious and upright conduct is hope in action"* believing this can lead to relationship building, movement and change.

He went on to say that hope requires courage, is rational and if restored to its full meaning in our culture, can inspire and bring together all those who face the future determined to be 'part of the solution' - all those willing to serve under the banner of justice to bring consolation and healing to an ailing society.

Philip quoted from his recent book: 'On the Significance of Religion for Global Diplomacy' as follows:

"We must find the courage to believe as Dietrich Bonhoeffer believed during the darkest days of the 20th century, that something new can be born that is not discernible in the alternatives of the present" (3)

By developing a culture of dialogue and engagement throughout political systems Philip believes that "We can transform our understanding of effective action and create the conditions for a different kind of civilisation" An example of such a change in attitude has been the transformation of

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the role of women in society, through the course of the 20th century. Philip spoke of “following the heart, to discern the truth,” thus recognising that any effective change must begin from our current reality and not where we might wish we were.



Keynote speaker, **Rev. Dr. Patrick Devine SMA**, founder and international chair of the Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation spoke about his mission in ‘Transforming Inter-ethnic Conflict and Religious Ideological Extremism’ Fr. Patrick reminded us that “messages of peace and conflict transformation resonate around the world, we’re all involved in different ways”

Shalom works ecumenically in around 20 African countries, with multi-ethnic communities, high numbers of refugees, encountering conflict and difficulties brought about by environment degradation and climate change. In addition, there are challenges resulting from structural violence and injustice, internal conflict, poor infrastructure, and fragile economies. The root causes of all these issues of injustice and conflict must be recognised before a positive peace can be achieved and basic human needs met.

There is also the impact of Religious ideological extremism.

In conflict situations there are always instances of ignorance, arrogance, misinformation, and Shalom works for personal conversion, building of relational structures and cultural and religious tolerance.

Peace is not merely the cessation of violence but an ongoing process where all sides are committed to the well-being of the other, a process which needs the time and space to discern the authentic voice of those involved. In facilitating positive peace building Shalom commits to engaging with local leaders, working on inter-ethnic projects, providing training programmes and workshops to enable communities to find their voice, develop their knowledge and understanding and facilitate conflict resolution and reconciliation. In reconciling, all must acknowledge the truth of their past lived experience. Fr Patrick emphasised the importance of education, both inter-ethnic and inter-religious, the great desire within communities for increased

educational opportunities and challenged us to continue our own education and not be complacent “none of us has the whole picture” Fr. Patrick also stressed the importance of interreligious dialogue but that there comes a point when inter-religious dialogue must move to interreligious practice. In conclusion Fr. Patrick re-stated the mindset of Shalom as being embedded in the methodology, of transformation, peace building and development projects.

Andy Flannagan, CEO of Christians in Politics spoke of the need for all people to engage in the political process in his presentation entitled ‘Getting beyond Optimism to Hope’, proposing that it is when we take a holistic view of life and faith, that the reign of God is adhered to - the Kingdom - the place where heaven and earth meet, a space where God reigns. He believes that it is in these moments of life when we experience such alignment that hope is found, together with the possibility of building a better world that motivates many to engage in the political process. We are not tasked with building the Kingdom but called to demonstrate what has already been created for us. He believes that as people of faith, knowing the end of the story must affect our journey. We are called to be stewards of all creation each in our own space and time. Andy went on to say that in the world of politics ‘calling’ is a crucial word, it is a call to build and change, “to image the rule of God in the public space”



This is more than just “getting things done” We must recognise the special moments in our politics where the Kingdom of God is evident – moments of hope. Andy reminded us that the very nature of God is relational, so we must hear the message, discern what is true by engaging and building relationships. In the relating we will be drawn closer; we will learn and be transformed. He suggested that for J&P activists it is necessary to pause and reflect on what will be our next relationship, consider our next step. Andy emphasised that the time for urgent action is now and concluded by suggesting that, in recent years, something has shifted and that in the past relative prosperity has insulated many of us from the real impact of bad decision making, but this is no longer the case. With economic, environmental, and social uncertainties it really does matter who are the decision makers.

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- (1) Mary C. Grey, ‘The Outrageous Pursuit of Hope’ (London: DLT, 2000)
 - (2) Austen Ivereigh, ‘Let us Dream’ (London 2020)
 - (3) Philip McDonagh, Kishan Manocha, John Neary, Lucia Vazquez Mendoza, ‘On the Significance of Religion for Global Diplomacy’ (Oxen: Routledge 2021)





Tim Livesey, Conference Chair and CEO of Embrace the Middle East, facilitated the final sessions, identifying signs of hope as action, from NJPN members, enabling participants to leave Swanwick feeling re-invigorated and encouraged. **Ann Farr** from Pax Christi spoke of the signs of hope evidenced in her work in the Middle East,

where despite injustice and suffering Palestinians find hope in the support offered by the international community in the planting and harvesting of olives, the dedicated work of religious communities and organisations in supporting peace building projects. We were urged to bring hope to those suffering from oppression by challenging the unjust systems in Israel/Palestine. **Aisling Griffin**, Youth Education officer with Pax Christi, was encouraged in her work by the enthusiasm and active commitment to issues of peace and social justice. She saw great signs of hope in the openness and desire of young people to engage in action, longing for practical ideas and initiatives, and looking for ways to be part of a movement of hope. **Martin Birdseye**, spoke of his work with Christian CND and his campaigning for the end of nuclear weapons. There is a belief that because nuclear weapons exist, they cannot be abolished but, if there is a will this would be possible. Martin reminded us we are sharing our planet with so much destruction and stated that, “together with climate change, nuclear weapons are the existential threat to humanity” he went further and suggested that “To do nothing is a sin against hope” By contrast, the work of ICAN and its partners resulting in the landmark global ‘Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’, now ratified by 66 nations is surely a sign of hope. It is the moral argument which will ensure the abolition of nuclear weapons, and Martin argued that such a collective undertaking would be surely a sign of active hope. **John – Paul de Quay, Ashley Rawlston and NJPN Environment Group** introduced the ‘Journey to 2030’ resource pack. With its focus on the interconnectedness of society and the environment as well as a commitment to change in life- style, the resource reinforces the message that God’s creation, our common home, encompasses all humanity and the natural world. Behavioural change is difficult but possible and the resource is offered as a sign of hope for those who wish to commit. To effect change there must be collaboration between politicians, business leaders as well as groups and individuals. John Paul stated that we need “a complete realignment of how we see and interact with the world” He suggested that it is in places of encounter and relationship building that change occurs and the Journey to 2030 action pack offers a wealth of information and ideas for practical action in line with the sustainable development goals inviting a community response. The session ended with a practical group activity, to

produce artwork as an example of what a sustainable project could look like.

During the weekend there was the opportunity to select from nine workshops covering a wide range of J&P issues. The Just Fair hosted twenty-five stalls providing opportunity for organisations to promote their campaigns and activities.



The number of young people present was a sign of hope, a number supported by the generosity of contributors to the Rosemary Read Bursary fund as well as by individual members.

When reflecting and then looking to the future we must never forget our roots and those who have enabled our journey. It was important that we remembered with love all our justice and peace companions who are no longer with us, those who lived out their commitment to justice and peace in diverse ways and we thanked God for their faithful service and for their presence in our lives. Each one a beacon of hope for those whom they encountered. Over the course of the weekend names were written on cards and displayed for all to see, and all these special people were remembered during our final liturgy.

The ecumenical flavour of the conference, another sign of hope, with people from differing faith traditions working effectively on issues of common concern and celebrating liturgically, with members of the **Lay Community of St. Benedict** and the **Reverend Ruth Gee**, a Patron of NJPN, leading an ecumenical service.



We left the conference re-energised and with words from the final hymn confirming our hope for our future:

***We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day
The One who has loved us has brightened our way***
(Awake from your slumber, Daniel L. Schutte)



Anne Peacey
Photographs by Tom Ormiston



THE 4 KEY POINTS OF THE POPE'S MESSAGE

for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

- **A time to cultivate our ecological conversion:** The Pope defines the Season of Creation as “an opportunity to cultivate our ‘ecological conversion’”, recalling this concept encouraged by St. John Paul II as a response to the ‘ecological catastrophe’ announced by St. Paul VI as early as 1970.
- **Sweet song and bitter cry:** Listening to creation, Francis mentions that there is a “kind of dissonance”: “On the one hand, we can hear a sweet song in praise of our beloved Creator; on the other, an anguished plea, lamenting our mistreatment of this our common home”.

- **A warning message ahead the COPs:** Ahead COP 27 on climate (Egypt, November 2022) and COP 15 on biodiversity (Canada, December 2022) Francis recalls in his message the importance of “promoting the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement”.
- **Four key principles for biodiversity:** Francis also uses his message to call on nations to halt the further collapse of the “web of life” – biodiversity – pointing to four principles:
 - i. Building a clear ethical basis for the transformation we need in order to save biodiversity;
 - ii. Fight biodiversity loss, support its conservation and recovery, and meet people’s needs in a sustainable way;
 - iii. Promote global solidarity, taking into account that biodiversity is a global common good that requires a shared commitment;
 - iv. Put people in vulnerable situations at the centre, including those most affected by biodiversity loss, such as indigenous peoples, older people and youth.

Read the full message at: <https://laudatosimovement.org/news/message-of-his-holiness-pope-francis-for-the-celebration-of-the-world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation/>

N4BW's founder makes a visit to Malawi

To mark the 10th anniversary of Network for a Better World (N4BW), its founder, Alice Davidson, O.B.E. aged 85 years, took a visit to Malawi to reflect on the work undertaken and to plan for future projects. She was overwhelmed by the exciting welcome she was given with the villagers singing and dancing to mark her arrival and to give thanks for all she has done.

During her stay in Sitima in July, Alice visited Kachere School to view the near completion of a new classroom block. This is in fact the eighth school block built by N4BW. School communities in Malawi are responsible for creating their own infrastructure, a task exceptionally difficult in this rural, impoverished area. Working collaboratively, we are able to work with schools to build classrooms preventing hundreds of children being taught under the trees whatever the weather – intense sunshine and sometimes torrential rain. Schools work is not all about building classrooms but involves a lot of ongoing

teacher training and during Alice’s recent stay the focus was on assessment, using different tools and applying a range of methods to monitor the progress of the learners. A couple of years ago much of the training provided by N4BW with both teachers and pupils, explored ways of mitigating the effects of Climate Change and Alice was delighted to see how the good practice has continued. An example was seen at Namisunju School where the vegetable gardens have developed, both as a learning project and to provide extra nutritious vegetables for the children. Tree growing in the community is another project, where a local man has gained employment, local people can buy trees for shade, firewood and food and schools are provided with 100 trees each year as a means of providing shade and fresh fruit.

Alice revisited the Adult Literacy group where the newest initiative the women have engaged in is a sewing project and they were very proud to show Alice the blouses and skirts they had made. She took food and clothes to Mikuyu Prison where more than 300 young men live in cramped conditions, surviving on one basic meal a day following a day working hard in the fields. Supplementing the food is well received as are the clothes which the young men wear as they return to life outside the prison. Lots of conversations took place between



Alice and Kachere School Committee standing in front of the nearly completed classroom block

Alice and local community groups to consider ways in which N4BW can support the community during the next 10 years. Education remains high on the agenda along with projects that aid self sufficiency. A development Alice would like to see is an increase in enterprise programmes and she and the trustees are researching ways this might happen and looking for an enterprising person to take the lead.

Alice returned tired yet extremely happy in the knowledge that the people of Sitima have been more opportunities and skills and the future is looking rosy.

Marian Kearney www.n4bw.org.uk
marian.kearney@live.co.uk



This seasons trees which will be planted out in December



Photos of the school garden at Namisunju School.

Schools of Sanctuary – “part of the fabric of our faith”

Many in the NJPN network will know about City of Sanctuary – the national network of cities, towns, boroughs, schools, universities, colleges, libraries, gardens, theatres..... which have all committed to making the UK a place of welcome rather than a place of hostility towards those who seek safety within our shores.

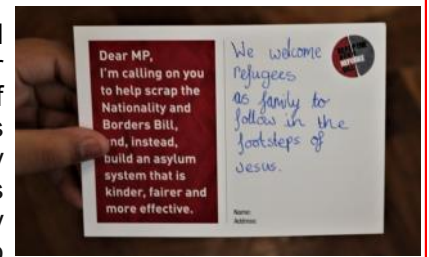
Within this network over 350 schools across the UK have been given the Sanctuary Award, which is not given lightly but is a result of close scrutiny of the school’s adherence to the three City of Sanctuary pillars Learn – Embed – Share.

In Birmingham, we have 30 awarded schools, and around a further 40 schools which are at different stages of the journey towards the Award. What makes Birmingham unique, is that half of the awarded schools are Catholic primary schools, and also around half of those who are working towards the Award, including five secondary schools.

What is it that makes Catholic schools in particular embrace the School of Sanctuary vision? The staff at the schools know that this fits seamlessly with Catholic Social Teaching, and frequently say that it is “part of the fabric of our faith”. Put into practice, this involves a wide range of activities, from reading projects to poetry competitions to campaigning for changes in legislation. At St Dunstan’s Primary, the pupils have made friends with asylum-seekers, designed Orange Hearts (symbol of the Together With Refugees coalition) and banners to campaign against the ongoing anti-refugee legislation, and sent Valentine’s Day cards to their MP Tahir Ali – who not only referred to this in the House of Commons but also



visited the school and is now a firm supporter of Schools of Sanctuary. St Thomas Aquinas Secondary School also sent cards to their MP Gary Sambrook, who also then paid a visit to the school. At Abbey Primary, Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator Rebecca Lonergan is clear: “This is #WhoWeAre.” Matthew Tehan, Head of St Dunstan’s, and formerly HT at our very first Birmingham School of Sanctuary which received the award in 2014, repeatedly points out that as Christians and Catholics, this is the only possible response.



We have too many schools to mention here, but our special Birmingham Schools of Sanctuary web-page (<https://bit.ly/3QCFdk0>) gives links to some of them. Underlying all this work are the words of Pope Francis, referred to in an article for our newsletter from Holy Family School: “We pray for the many brothers and sisters who seek refuge far from their native lands, who seek a home where they can live without fear: that they might always be respected in their dignity.”

Barbara Forbes
Secretary of the Birmingham City of Sanctuary local group and coordinator of the Birmingham Schools of Sanctuary network



Aisling working with pupils in Our Lady’s School, Lancaster



Pax Christi visit to Lancaster Diocese

Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission was delighted to welcome Aisling Griffin from Pax Christi to the Diocese. Aisling undertook a number of ‘Peace and Conflict’ workshops with secondary schools within the area including St Bedes, Our Lady’s, Fulwood, St Cecelia’s and Our Lady’s, Lancaster.

Aisling asked pupils to consider and discuss statements such as ‘If you want peace, you must prepare for war’ and ‘If you want peace, you must work for justice’.

Pupils were also asked to imagine how they would work for a better world if they were Prime Minister and what action they would take.

Grateful thanks to Aisling and Pax Christi for a wonderful, informative visit and many thanks too, to the Xaverians who kindly hosted her accommodation.

Sue Grubic



This is a selection of dates. Find more on the Rolling Calendar and Year Planner on our website www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

DIARY

 Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

1st October: CCND AGM in Liverpool
christiancnd.org.uk book on eventbrite



7th-18th November:
COP27 (UN Climate Change Conference) in Egypt



7th October: CAFOD Harvest Fast Day:
cafod.org.uk

9th October: Prisoners' Sunday:
prisonadvice.org.uk; 020 7735 9535
9th-15th October: Prisons Week:
prisonweek.org



12th November: NJPN Networking Day Romero House London



13th November: Remembrance Sunday White Poppies ppu.org.uk



9th October: Homeless Sunday:
housingjustice.org.uk; 020 3544 8094



13th-20th November: Interfaith week: interfaithweek.org
13th November: World Day of the Poor: csan.org.uk



15th October: Exploring Gospel Non-Violence Liverpool
3rd December: Advent Service
15th January 2023: Peace Sunday paxchristi.org.uk



10th October: World Mental Health Day: wfmh.global

16th-23rd October: Week of Prayer for World of a Peace
020 8968 4340
weekofprayerforworldpeace.com



25th November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: un.org/en/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day



17th-23rd October: Challenge Poverty Week
challengepoverty.co.uk

29th October: CAFOD Faith in Action Day 2022: Zoom 11-2.30



29th November: Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People: un.org/en/observances/international-day-of-solidarity-with-the-palestinian-people



2023
18-25th January: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: ctbi.org.uk; 0203 794 2288



27th January: Holocaust Memorial Day: hmd.org.uk
8th February: Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking: catholicchurch.org.uk
12th February: Racial Justice Sunday: catholicchurch.org.uk; carj.org.uk



24th-30th October: UN Disarmament Week: un.org/en/observances/disarmament-week

6th November: International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict un.org/en/observances/environment-in-war-protection-day

1st December: World AIDS Day: National AIDS Trust: worldaidsday.org



1st December: Prisoners for Peace Day: wri-irg.org/en/campaigns/

10th December: UN Human Rights Day: ohchr.org



18th December: International Migrants Day: un.org/en/observances/migrants-day

19th February: Church Action Poverty Sunday: church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/
21st February-6th March Fairtrade Fortnight: fairtrade.org.uk; 020 7405 5942
25th February: NJPN Open Networking Day



NJPN National Justice and Peace Network Open Networking Days

Saturday 12th November, at CAFOD, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB

10.30 for 10.45 – 4.00

For further details contact: Geoff Thompson Tel: 020 7901 4864

Email: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

Provisional date for first 2023 meeting February 25th on Zoom

Future Conferences

45th Annual Justice & Peace Conference

21st-23rd July 2023

The Hayes Derbyshire

“Sustainability? Survival or Shutdown”

Dates for 2024 July 19th-21st

DONATE TO NJPN: Online via our website. By cheque payable to NJPN. BACS to NJPN Sort Code:16-31-15 Account No: 10089516, put your name and Donation in the reference field. Caf donate on: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/8130#!/DonationDetails>.

To make a regular donation by Standing Order, use your online banking or contact the Administrator or download the Membership Form on the website

If you have items for the NJPN ebulletin or Calendar please send them direct to Sharon: ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org.uk



The National Justice & Peace Network welcomes all who share a vision of a world in which people live in peace and harmony, where our common humanity is respected and all are able to contribute freely to the common good. NJPN seeks to encourage work for justice and peace by promoting communication and shared action between members, supporters and partners.

This newsletter is produced three times a year by the Network.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of the National Justice and Peace Network.

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