NJPN E-Bulletin 2nd October 2022



Creator God, You have given to our care a world with abundant resources. Make us generous people, who use our faith to ensure that the world's harvest is shared and all people have food and justice. Amen

(Image and prayer from the CAFOD Weekly Reflection)

Dear Friends.

What a fortnight it has been. There is so much going on, and none of it very good, that I don't really know where to start in compiling this edition.

Firstly, Queen Elizabeth II's funeral was beautifully done, and it brought the whole country together for those few hours. And then things changed...

In the course of around an actual week of working, our new Prime Minister and her Government have managed to trash the economy, and will potentially be ruining the environment. Interest rates are rising, as are fuel bills and food costs. I am just waiting for the bottom to drop out of the housing market (although possibly that is their plan).

Around the world there is hunger, devastation from Hurricane Ian, and of course the situation in Ukraine - and that is getting very frightening when you think about what Putin's end game could be, especially as he is losing face.

On the plus side, the Government are hitting rock bottom in the polls, and Labour's leadership are looking like a viable alternative. (although unless something happens to force the current Government out, we still have a two year wait until we are able to vote).

I have included a sample of as much as I can, but there was not enough space for everything.

The next e-bulletin will be out later than normal, and should be around the 30th October. I am taking a short break, and then have a work commitment the following weekend. If you could please bear that in mind when sending items to be included. Apologies in advance.

Stay safe, and keep well and warm,

Sharon

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- 26. 8th November Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
- 27. 12th November NJPN Open Networking Day
- 28. 12th November World Community for Christian Meditation event
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ACTION OF THE WEEK

The least well off in our communities are facing the sharpest end of this crisis, and without substantial support will be dragged into destitution.

50+ faith, charity and community leaders write to the PM
Visit jpit.uk/EnoughToLive

#EnoughToLive

Is Cost of Living Support Enough?

Joint Public issues Team write: -

On 21 September 2022, over 50 faith, charity and organisational leaders signed an open letter to the Prime Minister, calling for direct support for the poorest households in response to rising living costs:

The letter begins: -

As faith groups, charities, trade unions and front-line organisations we have seen the cost of living emergency escalating not only in the statistics but in the lives of people we meet day to day, in foodbanks, debt centres and in our places of worship. The least well off in our communities are facing the sharpest end of this crisis, and without substantial support will be dragged into destitution.

It is the urgent, moral responsibility of the Prime Minister to ensure that people on the lowest incomes have enough to live in the months ahead. Spiralling costs are affecting everyone, but for those who were already fighting to keep their heads above water this winter's challenges will be a matter of life and death.

You can read the rest of the letter and see the signatories through the JPIT website.

There is also new analysis (21 September 2022) by Prof Donald Hirsch which updates his earlier report (7 August) to calculate the gap between rising living costs and the support provided by government to low-income households in England.

It calculates that a family of four receiving Universal Credit will still be £1391 behind what they need to stay warm and fed, despite government support.

Finally, former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has written an article in <u>The Guardian</u>, which references the letter, stating that for the first time since the Welfare State was created, the food bank will be our safety net and charity our last line of defence.

Our hope is that you will read the letter, analysis and Gordon Brown's article and do something. There are resources you can use through Google Drive with graphics you can share on social media. Or get involved with Challenge Poverty Week (17-23 October in England and Wales)

Thank you!

NEWS AND COMMENT

1. Climate/Environment (includes an Events and Actions)

Bishop of Salford calls for rethink on lifting fracking ban

Following on from a <u>letter</u> that the Laudato Si' Animators sent to Jacob Rees-Mogg, Bishop John Arnold, Catholic Lead Bishop for the Environmental Issues, called the lifting on fracking ban a 'short-term look at a solution on energy', and that it was 'clearly a threat to the local population, their property and their well-being.'

The full article is available through **BBC News**.

Talking of fracking, Friends of the Earth have stated that *lots of us could be impacted by fracking sites where we live. Over a quarter of local authorities in England are covered by existing licences to explore for oil and gas, which could involve fracking.*

Action - They have a <u>map tool</u> to see if your neighbourhood is at risk from oil and gas extraction, plus details of how you can speak up for communities under threat.

You will also find lots of information on their website about why fracking is so bad.

This is what a river should look like: Dutch re-wilding project

A much more positive story: - <u>The Guardian</u>, as one of their long reads this weekend, has covered Europe's largest river restoration, bringing benefits to both people and wildlife. The Meuse has been widened, and its riverbanks lowered, thus expanding the flood plain.

Closer to home, <u>Rewilding Britain</u> have details of the Wilder Blean Project in Kent, which, in their words, 'has a pioneering and innovative strategy to restore keystone species and ecosystem engineers to one of the largest areas of ancient woodland in the UK. The return of these species will aim to restart natural processes, creating a dynamic woodland that can support an abundance of wildlife. The mission of the project is to promote stronger and

dynamic habitats that are able to withstand the current environmental crisis and support nature recovery in the long-term.'

Plastics

I know I have said it before, but it is SO difficult to do a shop without buying things in plastic. We have become accustomed to packets of crisps, biscuits, ready meals, cheese etc. all wrapped in some form of plastic. (however, I did go to a local greengrocer this morning and was pleasantly surprised to find that most of his produce was loose, plus, if you have a Veg Box delivered from one of the organic farms/suppliers, most of their goods are either loose or in compostable/recyclable packaging.) We can all agree that the supermarkets and large corporations are the issue here, fuelled by our need for their food/prices.

Action - Everyday Plastic have produced an article asking why the price of wrapped supermarket potatoes is dearer than buying loose potatoes from that same supermarket, which is hardly an incentive to buy them. At the end of the article you can Tweet Tesco and Sainsburys demanding loose produce.

Action - On the back of the Big Plastic Count, <u>Greenpeace</u> are asking us to watch their video and share it with our MP, telling them that we need a serious plastic reduction target.

Event - Faith in Action Event

CAFOD invite us to join them at the above event on Saturday 29th October, between 11am and 2.30pm. Hearing from various people during the day, they will be looking at tackling the problems we face in the world - 'fixing a global food system which doesn't work for those who work the hardest and which is making the climate crisis worse; fixing a corporate system where some big businesses prioritise profit over people and our common home; and fixing the focus of decision makers to deliver on their duty to tackle the climate emergency at this autumn's COP27 climate talks and beyond.'

Where are we now in respect to climate change?

Independent Catholic News write the following: - *Green Christian Climate campaigner Reggie Norton has made public a letter he has written to his MP, David Johnson, to check what the UK government is doing in the*

leadup to the COP27 UN Climate talks in Egypt in November. You can read Reggie's words here.

Perhaps if we all did what Reggie has done, the MPs may get the message...then again, probably not.

Action - Please consider adding your name to the <u>Save the Bees</u> <u>petition</u>, through the UK Government and Petitions website.

'Cut hazardous pesticides and support nature-friendly farming'. There is actually a response from the Government, saying what they are committed to doing, but as the petition only stands at 18,221 signatures, it won't get heard in Parliament until it reaches 100,000. As it is live until January 2023, please consider adding your name, and passing it on.

Action - Sign your community declaration on climate justice

Fairtrade Foundation write: - Show your solidarity by demanding fair funding for communities living with the worst effects of the climate crisis. Sign your Community Declaration to show local politicians there's real grassroots support for global action on climate justice.

Event - War and Climate Emergency: a day school for climate and peace campaigners

Taking place on Saturday 29th October, 10.30am - 5pm in Oxford.

It may - or may not - be too early to say whether the war in Ukraine and with it the renewed threat of nuclear-tipped Cold War will wreck or accelerate national and international efforts to respond to an ever worsening climate emergency. It certainly poses questions for how grass-roots climate as well as peace campaigners 'think' effective action in the coming months and possibly years ahead.

For more details on this educational workshop, and to book your space, click here.

Green Burial alternative - human composting approved in California

Now this was one that came rather out of left field as far as I was concerned...and yet California is the fifth US state to legalise human remains being turned into soil. It is a burial method in which human remains get turned into compost in a reasonably short period of time. The process that they use takes 1/8th the energy of that of cremation. There is an interesting article in <u>USA Today</u> about the process.

Unfortunately, though, the Catholic Bishops in the US are not in favour of the idea: - "We believe," explained California Catholic Conference spokesperson Steve Pehanich, "that 'transformation' of the remains would create an emotional distance rather than a reverence" for the remains. Pehanich added that even cremated remains must "... remain in a communal place befitting of the dignity inherent in the human body and its connection to the immortal soul." (Catholic World Report)

2. Refugees and Migrants (includes an Event)

World Day for Migrants and Refugees

This was celebrated last Sunday, 25th September, and Mill Hill report on Pope Francis saying that the gates of this kingdom are open to everyone, especially to people who are marginalised and excluded, and therefore to migrants and refugees.

For more details on what Pope Francis said, and to watch a video asking the question 'What decisions need to be made right now to build and inclusive and better future for all, starting today?' click here.

Also, Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Migrants and Refugees, put a message out for WDMR, and it is available to read through <u>Independent Catholic News</u>.

Event - History in the Making - next steps in supporting Ukrainian and Afghan Refugees

<u>Sanctuary Foundation</u> invite Church Leaders to attend this online event on 25th October at 2.30pm.

For more details and to register for this event, click on the link above.

Event - Monthly Prayer Vigil Outside Home Office

At the Home Office, Marsham Street, SW1P 4DF from 12.30-1.30pm. Every third Monday of the month. (next one being the 17th October).

We remember

- those who have died trying to reach the UK,
- victims of the war in Ukraine
- workers with asylum seekers in detention centres,
- those supporting homeless migrants
- those struggling to inject welcome and humanity into our legislation.

Add your name to our mailing list for future dates and prayer sheets in advance via barbarakentish@talktalk.net or johanmaertens@hotmail.com

3. Palestine/Israel (includes an Action)

Israel to impose Jewish holiday closures on West Bank and Gaza

A report from Middle East Monitor states that the Israeli Army are closing the crossings at the West Bank and Gaza Strip for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, apart from exceptional humanitarian circumstances, which will need to be approved. The Israelis are looking to 'secure the celebrations of the settlers'. Sadly, another sign of oppression of the Palestinian people.

Action - Hunger Strike for Justice

In support of the 30 Palestinian detainees that are on hunger strike, Palestinian Solidarity Campaign are asking us to send a letter to the UK Government pressing them to ask Israel to end its use of administrative detention and torture, and free all political prisoners. Add your details here.

Chokehold: Dispossession, Domination, and Systematic Disintegration of the Palestinian People

If you were in any doubt about the situation that the Palestinians are in, then please read this article that Maryknoll Sister Susan Nchubiri wrote for <u>ICN</u> about the numerous human rights violations against the Palestinian people.

Action - Write to your MP to reject any plans to move the Embassy in Tel Aviv

Both the <u>Balfour Project</u> and the <u>Palestinian Solidarity Campaign</u> are asking us to send letter to the Foreign Secretary or our MP respectively, advising why moving the British Embassy to Jerusalem would be a bad idea. Click on the links above for more information.

4. Prisoners' Sunday - 9th October 2022



(Picture courtesy of Andy Aitchison)

PACT write: - Prisoners' Sunday is a time to think about how we as individuals, as a Church and as communities are serving those affected by imprisonment. Prisoners, people with convictions, and their children and families often find themselves on the margins of our society. Yet Jesus challenges us with His words: 'I was in prison and you came to me.'

For more information on Prisoners' Sunday and Prisons Week (9-15 October), and to see how you can be involved, go to the <u>PACT website</u>.

5. Africa

So many stories now about the situation in various parts of Africa - famine, climate issues, religious persecution etc. A selection of them are below.

CAFOD Family Fast Day focuses on East Africa

Family Fast Day takes place on the 7th October, and this year CAFOD will be focusing on the world food crisis, and are working hard to provide emergency food supplies to the worst hit countries in East Africa. For information, resources, or just to donate, please visit the CAFOD website.

Cameroon

<u>Mill Hill Missionaries</u> and <u>Aid to the Church in Need</u> report on the nine Catholics that have been abducted from St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nchang after the church was set on fire.

Nigeria

Christians in Nigeria are persecuted here more than anywhere else in the world. Aid to the Church in Need again reports on what has been happening there, plus they are encouraging people to take part in #RedWednesday on the 23rd November, where they 'Break the Silence' on the persecution of Christians and others.

Our church, apart from during the last two years due to Covid, has actively participated in #RedWednesday, with a special Service/Mass and a red-themed lunch. One year we did try lighting the church up in red for the event, but the film we used over the outside light was obviously not fit for purpose, and I seem to remember it melted!

It is a great way to bring the plight of persecuted Christians to the general public, and of course MPs.

Irish Government's response to Horn of Africa Hunger Crisis

ACI Africa report on the increase in overseas funding that the Irish Government has allocated in their budget for the hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa.

Trocaire, the overseas development agency of the Catholic Bishops of Ireland acknowledges "the €177 million (US\$18.2 million) increase in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and the additional immediate allocation of €30 million (US\$32.2 million) in response to the extreme hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa announced in today's Budget."

Also, Trocaire's CEO recently visited Somalia, the worst hit country of the region, and her report of the visit, the people they met and what they are facing is available through their <u>website</u>.

6. Nuclear weapons threaten human existence

Vatican News report on Cardinal Parolin's words on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Cardinal Parolin 'reiterated the moral imperative to eliminate nuclear weapons, and calls on all parties to respond to the nuclear threat with a collective and concerted response.'

Full details here.

7. Mosque helps Christian neighbours

I love this story from <u>The Independent</u> about how a Mosque in Surrey is helping to fundraise to repair All Saints Church in Tilford. At a time when the world seems to be in a downward spiral, this article shows that on a local basis there is still positivity. What a great boost for interfaith relations!

8. Columban Schools Competition - Building Peaceful Futures



Emma Darling, through <u>Independent Catholic News</u>, writes: - *The Columban Missionaries in Britain and Ireland are proud to announce the launch of their latest Schools Media Competition which this year has the title: 'Building Peaceful Futures'. It is being launched on World Peace Day, 21 September.*

The competition is targeted at students aged between 13-18 years old who are invited to demonstrate an awareness and an understanding of conflict and peacemaking in the world today through the submission of either a written article or an original image. Students are being asked to do their own research and shine light on people, communities and/or organisations who are trying to make the world a better place for everyone by building peaceful futures.

Quote: "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy." Hebrews 12:14

For more information about how to enter, and the Columbans, click on the link above.

Newsletters/Reports

9. September in the Laudato Si' Movement

Details of Season of Creation events around the world, and forthcoming events. Click <u>here</u> to read.

10. Boaz Trust Report 2021-2022

Stories and reflections from across the Boaz Community. Available here.

11. Operation Noah September 2022

Lots of interesting things going on. Click on the <u>link</u> to read it.

12. Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility September 2022

Good articles and events to put your name down for. Available to read <u>here.</u>

13. Salesians of Don Bosco September 2022

A single sheet with a Justice and Peace flavour. Their charity of the month is WaterAid. Click <u>here.</u>

14. Green Christian News 215

Important information about their Conference if you are booked in to go, plus details of other events and workshops. Read it through this link.

15. Joint Public Issues Team Newsletter September 2022

A recording of an instant reaction to the mini-budget, events and campaigns. it can be read <u>here.</u>

16. The Balfour Project Newsletter September 2022

This newsletter is a new undertaking for the Balfour Project and tells of what has been going on in the organisation, the work that they are doing, and how to join them. Available to read hemz.

EVENTS (in chronological order where applicable)

17. 3rd October, 10th October - 7pm - Birmingham Justice and Peace Assembly 2022

3rd October - Poverty/ Cost of Living/ Energy Crisis 10th October - Tax Justice: What? Why? For Whom?

18. 3rd, 4th and 6th October - London Mining Network Powerlands UK Screening Tour

19. 5th October - 6.30pm - Global Justice Now Webinar - Is there a new 'red-green' tide in Latin America?

20. <u>7th-8th October – Green Christian Conference</u> Please note that despite the train strike this is still going ahead.

21. 9th October - Prisoner's Sunday: A Fresh Start

22. 15th October - 9.45am for 10am - Pax Christi

Exploring Gospel non-violence - Pax Christi welcomes all to a day of prayer, reflection and sharing. To explore how we might 'live in the Light of Christ's peace' in these troubled times.

There will be information about developments in the Catholic understanding of nonviolence and a just peace.

Please bring your own lunch; tea/coffee are provided

Suggested offering £10 or £5 unwaged

Venue : Irenaeus Centre , 32 Great Georges Rd, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 1RD

For information and booking contact Jan Harper 07591 082195 or email: janharper1@yahoo.co.uk

23. 15th October - 10.30am - 4pm - World Community for Christian Meditation

<u>This emptiness, more beautiful than existence (with Lawrence Freeman OSB) - either online or at the The Medatio Centre</u>

24. 17th - 23rd October - Challenge Poverty Week England and Wales Download Toolkit

25. 29th October - (moved from the 1st October) - 10am - Debt Justice National Activist Gathering

26. 8th November - 11am - 4pm - Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Life Beyond Borders

27. 12th November - NJPN

Open Networking Day - London/South East tbc

28. 12th November - 10.30am - 4pm - World Community for Christian Meditation

Signposts of love, authenticity and meditation (a retreat day with John Siddique)

29. 17th November - 9am - 11am - World Community for Christian Meditation

Online only! Breathing in, breathing out; What is happening to earth our only home.

30. 19th November - 11am - 3pm - Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility

Just Money Conference

Actions

31. Sign the official record of support for people-centred trade

Transform Trade (formerly Traidcraft Exchange) are asking us to add our names and call for trade which values people and the planet over profit: where people are treated with dignity and respect, everyone shares in the rewards and businesses are held to account. Click <u>here</u> to join in.

32. Colonialism and Debt: How debt is used to exploit control

Debt Justice are asking us to share this <u>video</u> through Facebook or Twitter. They write: For centuries powerful governments, institutions and corporations have used debt to control and plunder the resources of countries in the global South for their own gain.

Zambia's debt crisis is an example. During the pandemic, debt repayments were three times more than healthcare spending. BlackRock, Zambia's largest bondholder have repeatedly ignored thousands of people calling for debt cancellation.

BlackRock can do this because the financial system benefits the historically powerful. Relying on the pre-existing colonial legacy to extract wealth, our financial system is neocolonial.

Today, we see a different kind of independence struggle happening. Together with Zambian campaigners, Sri Lankan campaigners, Pakistani campaigners, Bajan campaigners, Argentinian campaigners, and many more - we can win debt justice, and disrupt this neocolonialism.

33. Don't deregulate the banks

Global Justice now write: - In the last few days Liz Truss's government has sent the cost of borrowing spiralling and sparked a run on people's pensions. And this is just the beginning! For her next trick, she wants to remove many of the rules brought in after the financial crisis of 2008 to try and make the banking system safer and serve society. What could possibly go wrong?

That's why today we're launching an urgent new petition to stop Truss's plan to deregulate the banks through the Financial Services and Markets Bill. Can you help build this campaign by signing and sharing now? Add your name here.

THE LAST WORD

34. A plea for your old mobile phones

Louis van den Berg from the Catenians has put an appeal through ICN for any old mobiles that you or your families have lying around - preferably smartphones, but any relatively recent mobile will do - and with chargers and cables if you have them.

He writes: - They are to be donated to the mothers with children at the Matumaini Centre for Children with Disability in Dar es Salam, Tanzania. With no landline telephones and unreliable postage, a mobile phone is essential for communication, education and money transactions. Some mothers at the Centre even use their phones to play soothing music when their children become disturbed. But most of them have barely enough to live on as it is.

Click here to find all of the details.

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NEWS LINKS

Independent Catholic News

Find Justice and Peace stories at:
http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/justice-peace-environment
Sign up to receive these regularly.

Catholic Communications Network

Find news stories at www.catholicnews.org.uk

Latest Zenit Headlines <u>here</u>

Vatican News homepage: www.vaticannews.va

World Council of Churches https://www.oikoumene.org/en/

UK Parliament News

https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/

Follow us on Twitter: @NJandPNetwork

Follow us on Facebook: National Justice and Peace Network

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About these E-BULLETINS

The items above are emails received from around the Network which may be of interest to those involved in working for justice and peace.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of NJPN.

To **unsubscribe** from these mailings, email ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org with "unsubscribe" in the subject box. We also welcome your **feedback** at the same address.

Forwarding these emails: Please feel free to forward these emails on to your contacts – but please remember to tell them to contact YOU if they want to unsubscribe!

Urgent Actions:

We sometimes receive emails that need immediate action and cannot wait for the weekly bulletin. To receive these items email the same address with "urgent actions" in the subject box.

If you appreciate these bulletins, help to keep them coming by donating to NJPN:

Send **cheques** payable to NJPN to: NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX.

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from http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/

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