

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](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com)

## What makes hopeful people hopeful?

*'Without hope, the people can't live.'* Mohammed, poet and waiter

When the future becomes harder to face, how do some people continue to live and act out of hope, conscious though they are of pervasive violence and injustice?

## Six 'core conditions' of conscious hope

### Alive to the world

When events seem distant and reduce us to *spectators*, how much do we still feel present to them, like *witnesses*, knowing that those events make a claim on how we might live? What do we need to stay alive to the life of the world?

### A feeling for promise

*'There are individuals... holding the humane tissue alive in areas of ultimate barbarity where things are visible that the human eye should never see and they're able to sustain it because there is in them some kind of sense of beauty that knows the horizon that we're really called to...'* John O'Donohue, poet

When the talk is all doom, how familiar are we with the world as a place of vitality, generous in delight, striving to flourish?

What do we need to receive the promise of the world more openly?

### Facing tragedy

*'Hope... you have to face the tragedy of the world.'* Basma Bodabos, student and refugee

When tempted to hide from the world as a tragic place, how ready are we reckon with the violence that makes it that way, be it physical, economic, cultural, ecological, or any other kind?

Where does the courage to face up to violence come from?

### Power in flux

*'The world is always being made and is never finished.'* Rebecca Solnit, writer and activist

When the structures of power seem like a *brick wall*, how attentive are we to a world in process, more like a *forest*, in which the power of every participant counts?

What do we need to notice the ways things change, and so read the world as an ecology of power?

### Committing

*'Even in a broken world, things aren't fully broken.'* Hannah, community worker

In a time of losses – when the prospect of *tomorrow* is hard to face – how committed are we nonetheless to living for what has worth *today*?

What do we need to hold faith with what matters in the present, whatever the future may bring?

### Solidarity

*'Salvation is always social.'* Monica Coleman, theologian

When the challenges ahead seem overwhelming, how open are we to holding hope in common, accompanying one another in the work?

What do we need to assume our own share of hope's work, while trusting others to play theirs?

**Taken with permission from a growing collection of resources for conscious hope from David Gee at**

<https://hopeswork.org/>

## A FRANCISCAN BLESSING

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and to kindness all our children and the poor.

Right now, we are in desperate need of hope.

But hope is not about pretending that everything will be fine.

To me, hope is not something that is given to you, it is something you have to earn, to create.

It cannot be gained passively, through standing by and waiting for someone else to do something.

Hope is taking action.

**Greta Thunberg**  
*The Climate Book,*  
October 2022

## WORLD CUP: IRAN STAND WITH PROTESTERS AS ENGLAND AND WALES BOW TO FIFA OVER ARMBANDS

Sean Ingle at the Khalifa International Stadium, The Guardian 22 November 2022

England have never enjoyed an opening World Cup match like this. Six goals, and a performance soaked in exuberance and enticing possibilities, laid down an early marker for the next four weeks in Qatar. Yet this game will surely be remembered for something else entirely: the remarkable sight of Iran's players refusing to sing the national anthem in a gesture of solidarity with oppressed women and protestors back home. As the anthem rang out across the Khalifa International Stadium, Iran's players pursed lips, bowed heads and locked shoulders. Their 1,000-yard stares told you something else too: that they, and their families, may soon pay a heavy price. And yet they carried on. The defiant, and the damned. A TV camera cut to an Iranian woman in the stands. She was crying.

Many Iranian women here sported T-shirts with the phrase "Woman, Life, Freedom", which has become the rallying cry for protestors since a 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian woman, Mahsa Amini, died in hospital while in police custody. Her crime? Not wearing a headscarf correctly. They also wore skirts and dresses, sang songs and smiled: basic freedoms denied back home.

What made this display of courage from Iran's players so powerful is that they had come under immense pressure to stay out of the revolution in Iran, which human rights groups say has led to more than 450 people being killed and more than 15,000 being arrested. Watching on were two Iran supporters, Bardia and Fred, who praised the bravery of the players. Bardia had put black tape over the badge on his team shirt to signal his opposition to the regime, while Fred explained why so many thousands were cheering their team on in Qatar. "For Iranians all over the world, our hearts are with the women and the young," he said. "Our team belongs to the people, not the Islamic regime."

... It proved to be another hectic day at this World Cup, and it began with another protest coming to a meek end. For the past two months England and Wales have been among seven European countries promising to wear OneLove armbands to protest against discrimination in Qatar. However, after Fifa warned them on Sunday night they would face sporting sanctions – including potentially a yellow card for their captains – they backed down on Monday morning. From a sporting perspective, the decision was understandable, given it could lead to players missing crucial knockout matches. But the contrast with the bravery of Iran's players was stark. As the former British Olympian Jeanette Kwakye noted: "The most powerful protests in global sport have not required permission."

Perhaps surprisingly, [England manager] Gareth Southgate said that he understood Fifa's decision. "You can set a precedent and it's very difficult as to where to draw the line," he said. "But people know what we stand for." However numerous human rights organisations were far less forgiving, with the veteran gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell accusing Fifa's president, Gianni Infantino, of showing his "true colours" after speaking about inclusivity at the weekend. "I urge the team captains at their post-match press conferences to spend just 30 seconds to speak out for the rights of women, LGBTs and migrant workers," he said. "That would have a huge impact, reaching a global audience of hundreds of millions of people. Fifa has crushed the OneLove campaign with the threat of yellow cards. It's time to show Fifa and Qatar the red card."

Fifa said it was only applying its long-held regulations "to preserve the integrity of the field of play" and that it was an "inclusive organisation". Captains will instead wear other armbands as part of Fifa's No Discrimination campaign. Fifa was soon facing fire from a different direction as hundreds of England fans found themselves unable to log into their official mobile ticket app before entering the ground. Football's governing body attempted to resolve the situation by resending ticketing emails and telling supporters to get them printed out at the stadium's ticket resolution point. But that led to huge queues, with many fans still outside when England and Iran kicked off, as scheduled, at 4pm.

There was still time for a final surprise, with Iran's coach, Carlos Queiroz, telling Iranian fans who booed the anthem to stay away from the World Cup if they were going to use it for political statements. "Those who come to disturb the team with issues that are not only about football opinions are not welcome," said Queiroz. "They are just simple football boys. They have one dream, to play football. It is not their fault that the World Cup happens at the moment. The moral is: let the kids play the game."

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/nov/21/iran-stand-with-protestors-as-england-and-wales-bow-to-fifa-over-armbands>

**See also:** Migrant workers employed as security guards in a huge park that will be at the heart of Qatar's World Cup festivities appear to be being paid as little as 35 pence an hour. The claims come on the eve of the start of the men's Fifa World Cup, which is due to start on Sunday amid widespread international criticism of the host nation's record on migrant worker and LGBTQ+ rights.

**Read on here:** <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/nov/18/security-guards-doha-qatar-world-cup-park-claim-they-are-paid-just-35p-an-hour>

**See also:** An alternative tourist guide to the glittering landmarks that will provide the backdrop to the tournament, based on over a decade of reporting on migrant worker rights and the exploitation, debt and squalor that so many World Cup workers told us defined their working lives.

**Read on here:** <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/nov/20/world-cup-qatar-stadiums-sights-hotels-workers-rights-guide>

**See also:** At least 58 Iranian children reportedly killed since anti-regime protests began. According to Human Rights Activists in Iran (HRA), 46 boys and 12 girls under 18 have been killed since the protests began on 16 September, sparked by the death of the 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while in police custody.

**Read on here:** <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/nov/20/iran-protests-children-killed-reports-mahsa-amini>

**Human Rights Activists in Iran:** <https://www.hra-iran.org/en/>

## THE SILENCE IS DEAFENING

**Index on Censorship:** 25 November 2022

Today we want to talk about Saudi Arabia. We were stunned when US President Joe Biden's administration told a court last week that as a "sitting head of government" Saudi leader Mohammed bin Salman should be immune from civil court proceedings over the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Khashoggi was a well-known Saudi journalist and intellectual who, due to safety concerns, decided to live in self-imposed exile in the United States. He was a firm promoter of freedom of speech and press freedom in the Arab world. On 2 October 2018 he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul to obtain official documents in order to get married. There he was brutally killed in what the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard, called a "premeditated extrajudicial killing" for which the state of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is responsible. Full transparency and justice have yet to be granted. Index has continuously called for it: <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2019/10/justice-for-jamal-khashoggi-one-year-on/>

We know many of our readers are familiar with these facts but we think it's necessary to repeat them here to reiterate the extreme barbarity of the case. Our heart breaks for his family. "Jamal died again today," tweeted Khashoggi's fiancée Hatice Cengiz when she heard news of MBS's immunity. The Biden administration has, meanwhile, said it was strictly a legal determination that did not reflect its views on the "heinous" killing (a statement that has been contested): <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/18/biden-administration-says-mohammed-bin-salman-sovereign-immunity-civil-case-khashoggi> Either way by shielding MBS from prosecution, justice for Khashoggi looks once again far off.

Biden's troubling move came just days after UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak sat down with MBS at the G20. We don't know exactly what was discussed, but the little we do know does not sound hard-hitting. If we had sat down with him, on the other hand, our first question would be to request the release of Leeds student Salma al-Shehab, who was in the UK when she posted comments on Twitter that proved to be the basis of her arrest and imprisonment when she returned to Saudi Arabia: <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2022/08/index-condemns-34-year-sentence-for-salma-al-shehab/>

Read more of the other questions we think Sunak should have asked MBS:

<https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2022/11/questions-that-rishi-should-have-asked-mohammad-bin-salman-at-g20but-probably-didnt/>

Speaking of Twitter and Saudi, we also wrote for the Byline Times this week about Twitter's second biggest investor, the Saudi billionaire and member of the country's royal family Prince Al Waleed bin Talal Al Saud:

<https://bylinetimes.com/2022/11/22/if-elon-musks-twitter-is-all-about-free-speech-then-what-about-its-second-biggest-investor/>

Millions of people in Saudi use Twitter, just in a way that is carefully curated in order to avoid falling foul of the authorities. As Mark Frary and Nik Williams put it: "The dichotomy between Musk's view of Twitter as a platform for free speech – including potentially allowing back banned users such as former US President Donald Trump – and the company's second-largest investor needs careful scrutiny."

To end on a slightly more positive note, we were in awe of the Iranian football team's silent protest ahead of their World Cup game with England on Monday (and also disappointed by England and others who quickly abandoned the OneLove armband upon threat of yellow card). Francis Clarke wrote about it here and as he highlighted the stakes for the Iranian team are immensely high, making their action (or inaction) all the more formidable: <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2022/11/failed-empty-gesture-0-1-strong-silent-stand/> Indeed, yesterday news broke of Voria Ghafouri, a former member of Iran's national football team, being arrested and accused of spreading propaganda (aka speaking in defence of the nation's Kurds). His arrest comes a day before Iran is set to play Wales and is a clear warning to the team to not protest further.

## NJPN MEETING TALK: A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS

**Maggie Beirne** 14 November 2022

The quarterly meeting of the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) in London on 12 November heard from two speakers of the Quaker Truth & Integrity Group (QTIG). Maggie Beirne of Westminster J&P Commission reports:

Peter Hussey commenced his remarks by referring to Pope Francis' call for a better kind of politics - "one truly at the service of the common good". But is this a description that we would recognise of our current politics - do equality, fairness and the wellbeing of our neighbours feature in the interactions we see in our parliament, on our television screens, or in our news or social media? Or, instead, do we hear people who have stopped engaging and say: "There's no point - they're all the same".

Democracy can only really exist when political leaders are honest and practise integrity. 'Spin' can be just a variation of emphasis but it becomes unacceptable when it is a lie. After 13 years in government, accusations of dishonesty and failings of integrity are bound to be directed primarily at the party in power but reminding ourselves of claims about the existence of "weapons of mass destruction" suggests that power, not political opinion, is the main enemy of truth. In light of these problems, the QTIG wants to work along with other groups to highlight injustice or failures in standards.

Parliament itself has set out seven principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership\*), and government needs to be measured against these principles.

\*See: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life)

Whilst it is true that some may enter politics to line their own nests, many more, possibly the majority, want to improve the lives of the communities they represent. They are people who try to operate with honesty & integrity. QTIG is committed to finding such people and supporting them as much as possible by giving them positive reinforcement. QTIG seeks the "Kinder Ground" to offer to politicians, writers and administrators, away from the chill winds of recrimination and accusations - wanting to encourage those who stand for truth and integrity rather than, primarily, looking for fault.

Citing the example of the Brexit Bus with its promise of an additional £350m a week to spend on the NHS, Peter said that Boris Johnson might have to carry some of the blame for many of the lies and misconceptions around the Brexit Referendum, but he was only effective thanks to an army of other opinion formers. And this is part of the established pattern of misleading statements from our political leaders, whether it be "There is no alternative" to austerity, or the existence of "weapons of mass destruction". We see similar problems now in the discussion of climate change, or budgeting for capital projects. Our politicians and the media of the day provide a revolving door for a tiny group of people who manage information and opinion. Many work in parliament, but many others work in lobbying firms, think tanks and the media. The internet offers great benefits (fact checking, etc.) but also allows for lies, conspiracy theories and group thinking.

A politics "truly at the service of the common good" is a precious thing that will take patience and kindness, as well as truth and integrity. It may require moving away from tribalism and the politics of conflict. It may require a movement of people acting in faith and with love, it may need us to move away from difference and towards unity.

Jan Arriens built on this introduction by explaining what the QTIG is practically doing to promote a better kind of politics. They in particular want to shine a light on the good and bring back truth and integrity to centre stage. In this endeavour, they have developed a Declaration: <https://quakertruth.org/declaration/> that they hope people will send to their own MP. They urge people to write to their MPs, other elected representatives, and others in public life, commending them whenever they act with integrity. QTIG wants to promote a more participative democracy and constitutional reform that will allow for MPs to be more responsive to the needs of their constituents rather than other vested interests. They also want to promote higher standards of truth telling in the media. To these ends, they have also introduced an Award for an individual who makes a marked impact with their standard of honesty & integrity. Do people have possible nominees to suggest? See: <https://quakertruth.org/truth-award/>

The Quaker Truth and Integrity Group want in particular to work with other faith groups, and beyond, to promote better standards in public life - both promoting greater awareness of, and building up more respect for, the Nolan Principles

In the discussion that followed, there were exchanges on the adversarial parliamentary system (even the architecture of the House of Commons that does not encourage bi-partisanship); the first-past-the-post electoral system; the whipping system - all of which contribute in different ways to the polarised positions taken by our politicians.

Several examples were given of other groups that might be interested in supporting QTIG's Declaration, learning about the Award, making combined statements and developing common programmes of work - for example the Catholic Union of Great Britain, Christians in Politics, More in Common, Hope not Hate, Together for the Common Good etc. CAFOD (and other such groups) also have 'Parliamentary Correspondents' etc. who could be alerted to the Nolan Principles and the work of QTIG in the course of their campaign efforts.

In smaller group discussions, some of these issues were brought further forward since everyone seemed to agree with the initial question, but they were all very worried about the standards of honesty and integrity in public life. Participants discussed issues such as: the importance of challenging untruths; the need to get the facts out and explain underlying problems (e.g. to counter mis-information about migrants and refugees); an awareness that the promotion of justice (more than charity) requires advocacy and 'good' politics; the importance of education (in schools, and indeed in seminaries) about the values we require of public service; is it enough for the MP to be sincere or how do we ensure that they have accurate information for policy making; the need to discuss issues rather than labels and reality.

What is the value of faith groups using their voting power to assert good values; the importance of the (Catholic) hierarchy thinking more strategically and 'outside of the box' in promoting greater truth and integrity in our politics; the need to recognise that integrity in public life requires change (and formation) not only in our elected representatives but also in the electorate; the value of hope and looking for it in ourselves and others; the need to promote that human values and human dignity should be at the heart of any faith initiative, thus avoiding misguided claims of "being too political"; the need to work on an ecumenical basis to promote some of these principles more effectively.

There was general agreement to a statement to be proposed to the Network executive proposing continued cooperation between the NJPN and QTIG.

**LINK: Quaker Truth** [www.quakertruth.org](http://www.quakertruth.org)  
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45903>

## **RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT SHOULD PUSH WORLD TOWARD DISARMAMENT, EXPERTS SAY**

**Aleja Hertzler-Mccain National Catholic Reporter** Washington 22 November 2022

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its subsequent threats to use nuclear weapons in the ongoing conflict should serve as a "tipping point" in the decades-long pursuit of nuclear disarmament, several foreign policy experts said during a recent event at Georgetown University.

"The risks of nuclear weapons use and radiological explosions are higher than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis," said Maryann Cusimano Love, associate professor of international relations at the Catholic University of America. "We should not let this crisis go to waste," she urged.

Catholic scholars and intellectuals gathered at Georgetown Nov. 14-15 to honour the legacy of Jesuit Fr. Drew Christiansen, who died in April. Christiansen, a scholar, journalist and nuclear arms expert, was a senior fellow at Georgetown's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, which sponsored the two-day event. During his career, Christiansen had served 1991-98 as head of the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace and then 2002-12 as editor-in-chief of the Jesuit-run America magazine.

In his plenary address to the conference, Jesuit Fr. David Hollenbach mentioned Christiansen's legacy working as a consultant to the Vatican on disarmament issues and in serving as an expert in the Vatican delegation to the 2017 U.N. negotiations that led to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: <https://www.ncronline.org/news/treaty-prohibition-nuclear-weapons-signature> That treaty, which entered into force in 2021, is the first legally binding international agreement to prohibit countries from developing, testing, or producing nuclear weapons.

Martin Hellman, a noted cryptologist known for applying the principles of risk analysis to a potential failure to the global system of nuclear deterrence, also spoke to the Georgetown conference via video link. Hellman, an emeritus professor of electrical engineering at Stanford, said that U.S. sanctions against North Korea have led the country's leadership to seek a nuclear deterrent. "We should treat every nation with the respect it would deserve if it already had nuclear weapons," Hellman said. "Otherwise, we will unwittingly encourage nuclear operation."

Jonathan Granoff, president of the Global Security Institute, said that the Gospel command to love our neighbour should guide efforts toward nuclear disarmament. Granoff said that the idea of a neighbourhood did not encompass the whole planet in Jesus' time, but that "today how we drive our cars and heat our homes makes neighbourhood a moral location." "We simply have to cooperate," he said. Granoff said he had come to this conclusion after each nuclear non-proliferation treaty conference since 1995. He said that attempts at disarmament had repeatedly failed because "the pursuit of military advantage overtook cooperative security, common security, and even strategic stability, and more importantly, undermined the very fabric of civilization itself."



Cusimano Love spoke about the strategic importance of including young people, women, minorities and people affected by nuclear weapons in nuclear weapons treaty negotiations. "You can't break the impasse with the same people who gave you the impasse," she said. "You have to expand the voices, expand on the table, expand the participation to get a different outcome." Cusimano Love connected nuclear arms to environmental degradation. The United States spends over \$6 billion every year cleaning up nuclear weapons from the Cold War, she said, calling it "the largest environmental clean-up on the planet."

Douglas Shaw, senior adviser to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, criticized the Biden administration's assertion that negotiation on nuclear issues requires good faith partners. "If we don't have the partners we need, should we rend our garments and consign humanity to perpetual fear or should we plan and work and lead towards survival?" Shaw asked. "Change is vanishingly unlikely if we are unprepared for it."

Shaw also issued a call to action for Catholics. "Today I ask you to consider all the ways the faith, work and imagination of 1.3 billion Catholics worldwide could push back the hands of the doomsday clock and prevent a civilization-shattering nuclear war by asking hard questions, speaking up for the voiceless and the vulnerable, and devising solutions no one has thought of yet for living outside the shadow of the bomb," he said.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/russia-ukraine-conflict-should-push-world-toward-disarmament-experts-say>

## **#REDWEDNESDAY SHINES A LIGHT ON NEED TO HELP SUFFERING CHRISTIANS**

**John Pontifex** 24 November 2022

Parliamentarians, bishops, priests, students, young professionals, benefactors and other friends of ACN as well as volunteers, young and old representing numerous nationalities all marked #RedWednesday 2022 yesterday, 23rd November, in style. More than 200 people attended the #RedWednesday evening event at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Family in London's Mayfair district.

Earlier in the day, more than 25 MPs including Fiona Bruce, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, stood in solidarity with Bishop Jude Arogundade of Ondo, Nigeria. It was in his diocese that Islamic State West Africa Province militants claimed responsibility for an attack on St Francis Xavier's Church in Owo where 41 died and 78 were injured during Pentecost Sunday Mass. Meeting the MPs at Westminster Hall in the Houses of Parliament, Bishop Arogundade thanked them for their sympathy with the plight of persecuted Nigerian Christians, and asked for their help to encourage the UK Government to alleviate the situation.

All this week, around the world buildings lit up red to highlight the witness of the martyrs to their faith in Christ, such as those in Nigeria. Among the buildings to go red in London was the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in Whitehall.

Outside the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, which was also bathed in red, a large crowd gathered to pray the first decade of the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary. The crowd then packed into the cathedral for the Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite. Presiding was Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski, Apostolic Eparch of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy, and concelebrants included Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark and Bishop Arogundade. After the Mass there was a reception in the Cathedral hall, hosted by the Ukrainian parish community who offered delicious barszcz, garlic bread and refreshments.

Back in the church, ACN's John Pontifex explained the findings from ACN's latest research *Persecuted and Forgotten? A Report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2020-22* launched in Parliament last week. Bishop Arogundade gave an eyewitness account of the Owo atrocity and Coptic Archbishop Angaelos paid the tribute to the work of ACN.

In concluding remarks, Dr Caroline Hull, ACN (UK) National Director, said: "The support across the UK - and globally - for #RedWednesday 2022 shows just how much the plight of those who suffer for their faith speaks to people everywhere. For Christians and those of minority faith groups not to be able openly to express their religious beliefs is wrong; no one should live in fear simply for adhering to a faith different from the beliefs of those in power."

Meanwhile, a Scottish #RedWednesday digital webinar took place sponsored by Clare Adson MSP, and ACN's Dr John Newton presented the report's findings.

**To order a copy of *Persecuted and Forgotten? A Report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2020-22* visit:**

[www.acnuk.org/orderpf22](http://www.acnuk.org/orderpf22)

**To sign the ACN (UK) #RedWednesday petition calling on the UK Government to demand the Nigerian authorities bring to justice those responsible for attacks on Christians and others, see:** [www.acnuk.org/petition-2022](http://www.acnuk.org/petition-2022)

**LINK: Aid to the Church in Need** [www.acnuk.org](http://www.acnuk.org)

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45978>

## UKRAINIAN REFUGEES FORCIBLY DRAFTED TO THE ISRAELI MILITARY

*Anne O'Connor writes 'my colleague John has forwarded this to me':*

Hi John, my name is Inna. I am New Profile's Counselling Network legal aid coordinator. I am writing to you with an urgent request to support our work of providing legal consultation and representation to Ukrainian refugees who are forcibly drafted to the Israeli military. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we are the only organization in Israel assisting Ukrainian refugees, fleeing the horrors of war, in obtaining an exemption from the compulsory military service in Israel.

New Profile is a feminist and de-militarist movement founded in 1998. We believe that militarism, which is deeply rooted in Israeli society, makes society more violent, sexist, and racist. Furthermore, it blocks the path to peace and to ending the Israeli occupation of territories captured in 1967, and perpetuates human and women rights' violations in Israel and Palestine. A substantial part of our work is the Counselling Network, which since the establishment of New Profile to date has supported over 22,000 youths who independently chose not to serve in the Israeli Military.

Most of the updates you get from Refuser Solidarity Network are about the handful of Israeli youth who refuse military draft publicly, publish a public statement, talk to the press about their refusal, and get imprisoned. The work of our counselling network is complementary to that, by supporting the dozens of thousands of youth who refuse "under the radar," in a non-public way. Typically, the youth we support come from marginalized backgrounds. We help them go about obtaining a military exemption via ongoing support, free legal aid, and additional resources and information.

I am an immigrant from Russia. I came to Israel at the age of 21. Because of this, I was able to experience first-hand the layers of discrimination of Jewish society in Israel, which is still trying to melt—into a single mass—the Jewish people living on "their own land." I quickly found out that every citizen who does not meet the ideas of the occupation regime, about how a "real Jew" and "real Israeli" should be, instantly becomes demonized. A good citizen, in the eyes of the state and most of Israeli society, is one that takes part in the occupation of Palestine and serves in the Israeli military. The "real Jew" and "real Israeli," according to the system, must be a loyal soldier of the occupation.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, countless of refugees from Ukraine have arrived in Israel. A short period of time after arriving in Israel, those of the appropriate age are required to enlist in the Israeli Military. These are people who fled war, lost relatives, and experienced severe traumas from the brutal war taking place around their home—bombs, shootings, rape, and political prosecution. These are not people who are supposed to enlist in any army, but refugees who deserve healing and rest.

We can't handle the flow of immigrants. There are only two members in our Counselling Network who speak Russian, including me, and a volunteer. I work in a part time position - fifteen weekly hours. As part of my work, besides the direct legal and emotional support of the counselees, I protect their interests by directly contacting the internal military systems to take care of their needs and regularly visit our counselees imprisoned in military jails. We are struggling to fundraise in the current socio-political environment. We need your help to raise funds in order to hire an additional legal aid coordinator and, in doing so, help immigrants who choose not to serve in the Israeli army receive an exemption.

New Profile, following the decisions of the UN European and International Commissions on Freedom of Conscience and the Right to Conscientious Objection, believes that anyone who declares that they are unwilling or unable to perform military service has the right not to serve.

We believe and know that the demilitarization of our society can end the long years of injustice and occupation, and change the country into a more equal, free, and democratic place.

Since our mission is perceived as radical, both in Israel and abroad, it is hard for us to find new funds to support our work. With your help, we will be able to continue to support young refugees struggling with an extremely rigorous, bureaucratic, and violent system.

In solidarity, Inna

**Click here to support:** <https://app.moonclerk.com/pay/63q6hbq2xyop>

*New Profile is a feminist, anti-militarist organization that has been active in Israeli society for more than 20 years. Mesarvot is an Israeli network supporting those who refuse to be soldiers of the Israeli Occupation. Refuser Solidarity Network is an international network supporting the refusers. Together, the three networks send these regular refusers updates - You can directly contact us at [info@refuser.org](mailto:info@refuser.org)*

## CAMPAIGNERS REMEMBER 32 PEOPLE DROWNED IN CHANNEL

24 November 2022 Gunes Head of Campaigns and Communications at Safe Passage writes:

One year ago today, 32 people lost their lives in the Channel attempting to seek safety in the UK. Today, we remember them. Along with other refugee organisations, we have co-signed a letter to Rishi Sunak, written by the bereaved relatives of those we lost. In it, we urge him to change this Government's approach and offer safe passage for all refugees, so that nobody needs to risk their life crossing the Channel.

No one should have to risk their life to seek safety. We warned time and time again of the dangers of refugees not having safe routes to the UK, but the Government repeatedly ignored these warnings. This tragedy must not happen again.

We need a complete reset from the Government on how it welcomes and support refugees. It's truly painful that these losses appear forgotten in this Government's approach to refugees and Channel crossings. We urgently need safe routes so that people in dire need of protection are not forced to undertake such dangerous journeys to safety.

If you're on social media, please help us spread the word about the families' demands via Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Or if easier you can share this email and the letter with friends and family.

**Read the full letter on Care4Calais's website:** <https://care4calais.org/letter/>  
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45979>

## MAN ARRESTED IN UK IN CONNECTION WITH DEATHS OF AT LEAST 27 PEOPLE IN CHANNEL CROSSING

**Nadeem Badshah The Guardian** 29 November 2022

A man has been arrested in the UK in connection with the deaths of at least 27 people who drowned while trying to cross the Channel in a dinghy a year ago.

Harem Ahmed Abwbaker, 32, was detained at an address in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, at about 6.45am on Tuesday, the National Crime Agency (NCA) said. He is accused of being a member of an organised crime gang behind the crossing in November 2021. All but two of the people on board died after the boat sank. Four people are still missing. He is due to appear at Westminster magistrates court on Wednesday for extradition proceedings.

Craig Turner, the NCA deputy director, said: "This is a significant arrest, and comes as part of extensive inquiries into the events leading to these tragic deaths in the Channel. The individual detained today is suspected of having played a key role in the manslaughter of those who died. Working closely with our French partners, we are determined to do all we can to get justice for the families of those whose lives were lost, and disrupt and dismantle the cruel organised criminal networks involved in people-smuggling."

Commenting on the arrest, the home secretary, Suella Braverman, said: "My thoughts continue to be with the families of all of those who tragically lost their lives in this horrendous incident. I thank the NCA and other agencies across the UK and France for their tireless work to deliver justice for the victims and their families by identifying those we believe to be responsible and ensuring they feel the full force of the law."

An interim report from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) published last week confirmed that the boat had reached UK waters. Initially, officials thought the tragedy was outside their jurisdiction because the bodies and survivors were found in the French part of the Channel.

Bereaved families who lost relatives in the mass drowning have criticised the MAIB for a lack of progress in determining how and why dozens of lives were lost. Of those on board the dinghy, 27 bodies were recovered. Four are still missing. Only two people survived in the incident, the worst maritime disaster in the Channel for 30 years. Among the dead were 21 men, seven women, including one who was pregnant, and three children. Sixteen of the bereaved relatives have written to the prime minister, Rishi Sunak, urging him to make changes to prevent future tragedies.

After the MAIB's report last week, the organisation said: "While it may not be possible to fully understand precisely what happened at the time of the accident, it is important that we examine whether the UK's emergency response was appropriate that night once it became apparent that migrant boats might be in distress in UK waters. The purpose of our investigation is to improve safety, and if lessons can be learned, and if deemed appropriate, we will make recommendations to address the issues identified. Our investigation is ongoing, and we expect to publish it in early summer 2023." The spokesperson added that tracing victims' families was "a complex process".

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/29/significant-arrest-in-connection-with-deaths-of-at-least-27-people-crossing-channel>



## WHAT DOES THE AUTUMN STATEMENT MEAN FOR HOUSEHOLDS ON LOW INCOMES?

**Joseph Rowntree Foundation** 18 November 2022

New measures will significantly limit low-income families' exposure to rising costs next year. But as attention shifts to 2023, they are about to face the worst winter many will remember.

More could and should have been done to protect households on low incomes:

- April 2023 benefit uprating is a huge relief, but people cannot wait for April – we have been calling for additional support now as we head into winter.
- New measures will offset much of the extra costs next year for poorest families.
- Failing to unfreeze Local Housing Allowance is a serious omission that will hit renters hard.
- Overall, many low-income households will still be worse off next year.
- Investment in, and reform of, social security is still urgently needed to ensure that people can never be left without enough to afford the essentials.

### **Relief as families on benefits' incomes rise with inflation - but benefit levels at historic lows**

Confirmation that benefits will rise next April in line with 10.1% inflation will be a huge relief to families receiving this income. There had been hints the Government was considering a lower uprating of 5-6%, which would have amounted to the biggest permanent real-terms cut to the basic rate of benefits ever made in a single year. By not going ahead with this cut, the Government has acknowledged that people cannot withstand our safety net being eroded any further. Unfortunately, this uprating will not happen until next April, rather than being brought forward as we recommended: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/low-income-families-still-waiting-reassurance-benefit-uprating>

Low-income families are already struggling with rapidly rising bills and prices, and this winter will be incredibly difficult for many. Increasing benefit incomes early would have provided desperately needed extra help, during a period when energy bills will be particularly high through the cold winter months.

The Chancellor also announced the benefit cap would rise by inflation next year, again a recognition of the intense pressures facing people on the lowest incomes. This will be the first time the cap has been raised since its introduction in 2013 and it was cut significantly in 2016. The rise next April is desperately needed but will still leave thousands of families with incomes far beneath their need.

Even with the uprating, levels of social security support remain at historic lows. The basic rate of benefits is at its lowest in real terms for 40 years – barely clearing destitution levels for some adults. After more than ten years of cuts and freezes, simply maintaining the value of benefit incomes is not enough. Living in a country without a decent safety net is scary. It means that people like us, and the people we know, are no longer properly supported if they face challenging times. We need the Government to make changes to Universal Credit so that it can never fall below a level that would result in people being unable to afford the essentials.

### **Struggles of families this winter risk being forgotten as attention turns to next year**

Low-income families did not receive any reassurance of additional support to help them this winter. We know that back in May 7 million lower-income households had already cut back on essentials and 1 million had taken out new loans specifically to cover these essentials. The numbers falling behind with their bills and unable to afford hot meals will only have risen since. JRF will be updating this analysis in December, showing how households are faring as they head into winter.

Entering this crisis with low levels of economic security and financial resilience has made it especially hard for many households. Without savings buffers, a secure and affordable home, and options for affordable credit, millions have fallen into arrears. The impact of being behind on essential bills, and using loans and credit cards to pay bills, rent or council tax has vicious implications for financial futures, impacting credit scores, health, having debts that spiral with rising interest rates. We know that even after the energy price guarantee and cost of living payments are received, the extra costs facing families this winter overwhelm the extra income they are receiving. With foodbanks warning they will struggle to meet the need this winter, it is clear more support is vital and we urge the Chancellor not to leave it too late.

### **Newly announced measures will offset some, but not all, extra costs next year**

The combination of a higher energy price guarantee and cost of living payments to those on means-tested benefits will provide significant support across the board, while targeting more support to people who need it most. Energy bills for a typical household will be capped at £3,000, while £900 payments will be made from April for those on means-tested benefits. Recent extra payments to pensioners (£300) and people receiving non-means-tested disability benefits (£150) will be repeated. These measures will mitigate some of the worsening in people's financial positions next year, though support will come at the wrong time for many (especially those on prepayment energy meters) as bills are high now with falling temperatures.

### **Continued use of one-off ad-hoc payments is a blunt policy tool, with serious limitations.**

These payments don't account for differing need, result in rough justice for people who happen to need to claim outside the eligibility timing window, and people who narrowly don't qualify are hit hard with a 'cliff edge': those just above the threshold for Universal Credit will have to tackle typical energy bills of £3,000 on their own while families with similar, but slightly lower, earnings receive £900 additional help. Fundamentally it highlights again the importance of ensuring our existing safety net in Universal Credit is strong enough to ensure that no one's income can fall below what's needed to afford the essentials. Universal Credit provides support that is adjusted to need, regular, and tapered so the 'cliff-edge' effect seen with one-off payments does not occur.

**Confirmation the National Living Wage rate will be increasing by 9.7% to £10.42 in 2023 is very good news**, as is Government's ongoing commitment to the National Living Wage meeting two-thirds of the median wage by 2024, as a key lever in tackling very low pay. For many on the lowest wages, this pay boost will work alongside the benefit uprating and rise in the benefit cap, acting together to make a significant difference.

Alongside this increase in the wage floor, it is important to see sufficient investment in enforcing minimum wages across the labour market. In 2019, the Low Pay Commission (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minimum-wage-underpayment-on-the-rise-low-pay-commission-finds>) estimated that around 440,000 workers were paid less than the minimum wage; that's 1 in 5 (21.5%) workers 'covered' by the rate, with the latest data from ONS showing a current figure of around 500,000:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/lowandhighpayuk/2022#national-minimum-wage-and-national-living-wage>

Well-resourced labour market enforcement is essential to ensuring rights on paper are also rights in practice, and to create a level playing field for employers, ensuring good employers aren't undercut by bad ones:

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/making-jobs-work-improvements-job-quality-are-key-our-recovery>

### **Low-income households not fully shielded from tax rises and frozen benefits**

**A serious omission from the statement was action to unfreeze Local Housing Allowance.** Instead, this will stay at levels based on rents over the 12 months to September 2019, hitting private renters very hard while not offering additional support while rents rise at their fastest rate for a decade. Increasing proportions of private renters on Universal Credit are facing shortfalls between their rents and support towards housing costs, meaning support meant to contribute to food and bills will have to be used to cover rent.

Constraining social rent increases to 7% goes some way to mitigating the impact of what could otherwise have been an 11% increase. But as other bills soar, an average annual increase of £360 in rents (for the third of families who pay all their rent) will pile pressure onto already squeezed household budgets. The finances of social housing landlords are also under substantial pressure as rent increase constraints mean falling real incomes while analysis suggests that the costs of repairing and maintaining homes are increasing faster than inflation. Beyond this, other changes made in the statement will affect households on lower incomes:

- Councils are now allowed to raise council tax by up to 5% from April, a development that will scare many already in arrears. In May this year 1.4 million lower-income households (12.3%) reported being in arrears with council tax.
- Continuing to freeze personal tax thresholds, such as income tax and national insurance for an additional two years to April 2028 will bring some lower earners into paying tax and raise taxes for others.
- For many Government departments, there is nothing to support them to manage higher inflation-related costs, including pay, this year and next. Public services will likely struggle to maintain current service levels and many lower-income families will be affected if provision is further weakened.

### **Measures aren't enough to protect people on the lowest incomes next year**

While the measures in the statement offset a large proportion of extra costs next year, for many this will still not be enough to prevent them being worse off overall: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/families-chancellor-has-pledged-help-will-still-be-worse-next-year-even-support-announced> For example:

- For a single unemployed adult over 25 living alone, privately renting a relatively cheap room in a medium-cost area of the country, the measures announced in the statement will mitigate around two thirds of the potential fall in living standards next year. But they will still be around £538 worse off in 2023-24 than in 2022-23.
- A couple in low-paid work (one working full-time just above minimum wage and the other working part-time on minimum wage) with two children, topped up with Universal Credit, and renting privately in a similar area, will see almost all of their fall in living standards mitigated, but will still be around £103 worse off next year.

Of course, for families on low incomes but not eligible for Universal Credit these figures will likely be much worse as they will not have the £900 payment to support them.

As the economic climate further deteriorates, we are all affected. But for people on low incomes, this moment of intense hardship comes on top of a decade of cuts to the value of their incomes, a pandemic that dragged many into debt, and rocketing living costs for more than a year now. There is overwhelming evidence of huge and increasing numbers of people falling behind with their bills, unable to afford enough food and going without the essentials, even with Universal Credit and the additional support this year.

New announcements to help with costs from next April are welcome but there remain gaps and much comes too late. It's clear our social security system still requires urgent reform to ensure no one's income falls below what's needed to afford the essentials. The effects of this winter will stay with us for years to come unless we act.

**Written by** - Rebecca McDonald, Rachelle Earwaker, Iain Porter, Abby Jitendra, Morgan Bestwick, and Joe Elliot.

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/what-does-autumn-statement-mean-households-low-incomes>

## QUAKER COMPOSER PREMIERES NEW CHORAL WORK EXPLORING SHADOW OF TORTURE

11 November 2022: Leading composer Sally Beamish's new work, 'A Knock on the Door', uses two choirs representing detainees and interrogators, to explore how torture damages all involved. The work was commissioned by Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT), who work to address how torture wounds the souls of tortured, torturers and the society which condones it. With the help of John McCarthy, who was held hostage in Beirut for nearly five years, and a libretto written by Peter Thomson, Beamish has composed a piece lasting about 25 minutes, with an understated, conversational style.

'A Knock on the Door' can be sung by groups with little musical background, and Q-CAT hope that Quaker meetings and other groups will take it up.

Beamish, who was featured in the Proms this year, said: "This commission was extremely challenging, and approaching the subject profoundly uncomfortable. An important factor was to emphasize that torture causes deep and lasting damage both to the victim and to the perpetrator, and that all humans are vulnerable to finding themselves in circumstances where they might become either victim or oppressor."

'A Knock on the Door' takes the form of a dialogue, and towards the end the two choirs reverse roles – victims becoming oppressors. The piece was premiered at a Songs of Protest concert on Remembrance Sunday, 13 November, at Birmingham Town Hall. It was a great occasion and perhaps the extended silence at the end of 'A Knock on the Door' before the applause showed the powerful effect of the music and words on the audience.

Juliet Morton of Q-CAT said: "Torture encompasses much more than the victims and the perpetrators due to its illegal nature – structures of the nation become warped because of the involvement of judges, doctors, guards and so on. As well as the impact on victims of torture we want to raise concern for the spiritual and mental welfare of the perpetrators of torture, and those in the chain of command, as they too are damaged to the core of their being by its use."

Recently Q-CAT has worked with other charities on bills passing through the UK Parliament, including the Overseas Operations Bill and the Northern Ireland Legacy Bill, which seeks to create a dual system of law, allowing some to commit crimes - including torture and murder - with impunity.

Scores for 'A Knock on the Door' will be available in due course for purchase from Edition Peters - we hope that amateur choirs will make it part of their repertoire. We plan to have some sets available from Q-CAT on loan. A video will be available for a short period, probably after Christmas - look for a link here: <https://qcat.org.uk/events/>

We are very grateful to everyone who helped us raise money for this commission, which is part of our effort to find new ways to witness against torture.

<https://quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quaker-composer-premieres-new-choral-work-exploring-shadow-of-torture>

**Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture** - <https://qcat.org.uk/>

## PEACE SUNDAY, 15 JANUARY 2023

Resources will be available in early December, but it's not too early to start planning what you might do in your parish to spread the message of peace and raise money to help Pax Christi in its work. If the designated date is not possible, work with the parish to find one that is. Some Pax Christi Members will be encouraging their Bishop to ensure a Peace Sunday Mass is celebrated in their Cathedral. If you help with this, let us know. The office team is always happy to help with resources and a listening ear. Do let us know what you are doing. <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>

**Christmas Resources** Do take a look at the Pax Christi Shop for cards, gift and books. A flyer can be downloaded for your church noticeboard from <https://www.paxchristi.org.uk/home/>

## **PAX CHRISTI WELCOME NEW CEO**

**Source: Pax Christi** 25 November 2022

The Executive of Pax Christi England and Wales this evening have announced that Andrew Jackson has been appointed as their new CEO. Andrew is presently the Director of CHIPS, the Christian International Peace Service. Andrew joined CHIPS in July 2018. Qualified as a lawyer, he has worked as a solicitor in both private practice and in industry with an international building materials group. Prior to joining CHIPS Andrew was Director of Social Justice at Kerith Community Church in Bracknell, Berkshire, where he grew and developed the church's social action initiatives and partnerships with national charities - including a major development project in Zambia with Tearfund. Andrew is married to Janine and they have three young adult children.

\* This year's **Advent Service** will be held on Saturday 3 December at 2pm at the Church of the Holy Apostles, 47 Cumberland Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 4LY.

**LINKS: Pax Christi EW** <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>

**Christian International Peace Service** <https://chipspeace.org/>

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45989>

## **2021 CENSUS: CHRISTIANITY NOW A MINORITY RELIGION IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Pat Ashworth Church Times** 29 November 2022

For the first time, fewer than half the population of England and Wales — 46.2 per cent — describe themselves as Christian according to the 2021 Census, down from 59.3 per cent in 2011. In the 2021 Census, the results of which were published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on Tuesday, 94 per cent of respondents (56 million) answered the voluntary religion question, up from 92.9 per cent (52.1 million) in the last Census in 2011.

“Christian” remains the most common response (46.2 per cent, 27.5 million people), followed by “No religion” at 37.2 per cent (22.2 million), up 12 percentage points since the 2011 Census.

The ONS observes that factors such as differing patterns of ageing, fertility, mortality, and migration might be contributing to the changing religious composition of England and Wales. It suggests that changes might also be caused by differences in the way individuals chose to answer the religion question between the two censuses.

In a response to the figures, the Bible Society suggested on Tuesday that the shift away from Christian belief happened some time before the past decade, and that people were now less willing to wear a label that did not describe them accurately, especially since claiming a faith that they do not hold no longer had a bearing on social approval.

After “No religion”, the number of people describing themselves as Muslim rose in the decade by 4.9 per cent to reach 6.5 per cent of the population (3.9 million). Hindus made up 1.7 per cent (one million), up from 1.5 per cent. The percentage of Jewish people remains broadly the same, 0.5 per cent, though the numbers rose slightly from 265,000 in 2011 to 271,000 in 2021.

In Wales, many fewer people reported their religion as Christian. The results show a sharper drop even than in England: a 14-per-cent fall from 57.6 per cent in 2011 to 43.6 per cent in 2021. Those marking “No religion” increased from 32.1 per cent in 2011 to 46.5 per cent in 2021.

London proved to be the most religiously diverse region of England in 2021: more than one quarter of all usual residents reported a religion other than Christian. Tower Hamlets had the highest percentage (39.9) of the population who described themselves as Muslim; others with high percentages of Muslims were Blackburn with Darwen, and Newham, also in east London.

Harrow remained the local authority with the highest percentage of the population responding as Hindu — just over one quarter — but Leicester had a greater increase, up from 15.2 per cent in 2011 to 17.9 per cent in 2021. Wolverhampton and Sandwell, in the West Midlands, had both the highest percentage overall and the largest percentage increase of people describing their religion as Sikh.

For the first time, the Census provides insights into religious-group composition in the 17.3 million households composed of more than one person. Of these, 8.1 million households reported all having the same religion; 5.1 million reported no religion; 3.4 million reported a combination of the same religion and no religion, and 1.1 per cent (285,000) reported at least two religions.

The 0.6 per cent of respondents (348,000) who ticked “Other Religion” (i.e. other than the six world faiths listed (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh) included 74,000 Pagans. The largest increase was seen in the number describing their religion as Shamanism, which has increased from just 650 in 2011 to 8000 in 2021. Also included here were 32,000 Agnostics, 14,000 Atheists, and 10,000 Humanists.

The results show religion to be still mainstream, the Bible Society response said. Its head of research, Dr Rhiannon McAleer, described the proportion of those identifying with a religion as notably high. “The Census definitely does not show that we’re living in a society that turned its back on religion,” she said. “However, it does appear to show that religious identity is changing.”

She suggested that the results showed that people were shedding labels. “It’s not necessarily that they have lost a genuine and heart-felt faith. There’s also far more permission for people to admit that they don’t identify as Christians.”

She concluded: “Religious practice and identity — both Christian and non-Christian — is mainstream, and policy-makers cannot assume that religious voices should be absent from the public square.”

The Archbishop of York described it as “no great surprise” that the Census showed fewer people in England and Wales identifying as Christian than in the past. “But it still throws down a challenge to us not only to trust that God will build his Kingdom on the Earth but also to play our part in making Christ known,” he said. “We have left behind the era when many people almost automatically identified as Christian but other surveys consistently show how the same people still seek spiritual truth and wisdom and a set of values to live by.

“This winter — perhaps more so than for a long time — people right across the country, some in desperate need, will be turning to their local church, not only for spiritual hope but practical help. We will be there for them, in many cases, providing food and warmth. And at Christmas, millions of people will still come to our services.

“At the same time, we will be looking beyond our immediate surroundings, remembering we are part of a global faith, the largest movement on earth and its greatest hope for a peaceful, sustainable future.”

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/2-december/news/uk/2021-census-christianity-now-a-minority-religion-in-england-and-wales>

## **EDDIE YOUNG: COOL-HEADED NEWSPAPER LAWYER WHO GAVE THE GO-AHEAD FOR ONE OF THE BOLDEST AND MOST IMPACTFUL HEADLINES IN FLEET STREET HISTORY**

**The Times** 21 November 2022

It was 2 o’clock in the afternoon on a cold, grey day in February 1997 when Eddie Young learnt that the Daily Mail proposed leading its front page with the sensational headline “MURDERERS”, accusing five men of killing the black teenager Stephen Lawrence. The story could only run if Young, the paper’s chief legal adviser, gave it the green light, and his first reaction was to tell the editor, Paul Dacre, that legally it sounded “pretty damaging”.

Lawrence had been killed four years earlier by a gang of white youths in a racially motivated attack in Eltham, southeast London. However, three of the five suspects the paper was naming as murderers had already been acquitted and the case against the other two had been dropped owing to a lack of evidence.

Young was not the kind of lawyer automatically to put a blue pencil through a contentious headline. Press freedom and the right to publish rather than avoiding trouble were his guiding principles and like everyone else, he had been appalled at the inquest into Lawrence’s death when the suspects had refused to answer questions and emerged from the proceedings laughing, joking and hurling insults at the waiting crowd and television cameras. “My gut feel was that the five of them were guilty,” he said. “I know that’s not good enough but that was my feeling. We were not dealing with honest and upright citizens.”

He spent the afternoon poring over the material on the case which the news desk had assembled to determine whether he thought he could defend the headline. As he later told UK Press Gazette, he knew that he could not hope to prove in one afternoon what the prosecution had failed to do in court; but by 6pm he was feeling “comfortable that at the very worst there were tremendous grounds for suspecting these people, even if in a Court of Law I couldn’t prove that they were the murderers”. The men could have sued for libel, but Young shrewdly reasoned that if they did so they would be unable to ignore questions as they had done in the coroner’s court. Giving evidence, he felt, was “probably the last thing they ever wanted to do”.

However, he also had to calculate how much they might be awarded if they sued and won. “We were dealing with five established racist thugs and I assessed that even if we lost, it wouldn’t cost us much in damages,” he said. Finally, he reported to Dacre that he believed it was a “calculated, well thought-out risk . . . if push comes to shove, it’s worth it. These guys are in my opinion 95 per cent certain guilty.”

The front page was laid out with the word “Murderers” in capital letters followed by the strap line: “The Mail accuses these men of killing. If we are wrong, let them sue us.” Below were printed pictures of the five suspects, Gary Dobson, Neil and Jamie Acourt, Luke Knight and David Norris.



When he left the office that evening, Young took a proof of the front page home to show his family. “You could hear the sound of us all sucking in our breath in shock when we saw it,” his daughter Daniella recalled. “We couldn’t believe how calm he was about it. He was more interested in what was for dinner.”

The story was a pivotal moment in newspaper and legal history. None of the five men sued and Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, was pressured into setting up an inquiry into the killing. The result was the Macpherson Report, which recommended that the law against double jeopardy should be repealed in murder cases and that an acquitted suspect should face a second trial if “fresh and viable” evidence becomes available.

The recommendation was implemented in the 2003 Criminal Justice Act and in 2012 Dobson and Norris were finally found guilty of Lawrence’s murder. By then Young had retired but he expressed his satisfaction. “Investigative journalism highlighted the gross failings of the police and legal system,” he said. “Without the bravery of that headline, the sad truth is that Stephen’s murder would most likely have been pushed to one side.”

There were countless other important stories on which Young’s sage advice was vital to editors — and a few cases which he lost, too. But he knew that the Lawrence case was his greatest achievement in 40 years as a newspaper lawyer. When he compiled a list of the “best moments” of his life for his grandchildren, it featured prominently, although he ranked it behind his delight at England winning the 1966 World Cup. “I never sought the limelight and preferred to keep a low profile but with this event I could not avoid the publicity,” he later said. Characteristically he insisted that the bravery belonged to Dacre, although had Young called it wrong, the headline could have finished the careers of both men.

The Mail’s editor in turn praised Young’s fearless belief that his job was “levering contentious material into the newspaper rather than keeping it out”. It was a view endorsed by Adam Cannon, who worked with Young for nine years and is now director of legal at The Sun. “He always said that journalists’ words were ‘sacred’ and should only be amended by lawyers when absolutely necessary,” Cannon said.

At 6ft 3in, Young exuded a calm but unassuming authority with only the occasional telephone-throwing outburst in moments of extreme tension to disturb his default unflappability. Although he was fearless in front of a High Court judge, his natural modesty meant he would be reduced to a bag of nerves when asked to address a class of journalism students.

A talented rugby player and a gifted cricketer in his youth, he continued to follow both sports closely and in later life ran the London marathon. He is survived by his wife, Diana, and their three children, Daniella, who lives in Israel and worked for many years in police forensics; Nadine, the chief executive of an advertising agency; and Ilan, an osteopath.

Edward Young was born in London during the Blitz in 1942, the fourth of six children to Katherine and Alfred Young, a car dealer. Raised as a Roman Catholic, he converted to Judaism after meeting Diana. At school at St Benedict’s, Ealing, he was captain of the cricket team and played in the same rugby XV as Chris Patten.

He studied law at University College London but, convinced he had failed his law exams, his thoughts turned to a career in advertising. In the end his pessimism was misplaced. He passed and became an articled clerk to an Islington lawyer who was also a part-time vicar. Two years later he became an assistant solicitor with a West End firm.

In 1969 he applied to an advertisement in the Evening Standard for an in-house lawyer. He fell in love instantly with the buzz of a newsroom and the adrenaline rush of breaking big stories. He joined the Daily Mail when the Standard was taken over by Associated Newspapers in 1985. On his retirement in 2009 he was awarded the honour of being “banged out”, a Fleet Street tradition to mark the departure of long-serving editorial staff. It was said to be the first time that a lawyer had received such a distinction and was a mark of how highly he was regarded.

Long after he was officially out of the game and was rolling on the floor playing with his grandchildren, who had him “wrapped around their finger”, he was still being interrupted by phone calls from nervous editors seeking advice from one of the smartest lawyers Fleet Street has ever seen.

Eddie Young, newspaper lawyer, was born on November 3, 1942. He died of pneumonia following a long battle with cancer on November 17, 2022, aged 80

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/eddie-young-obituary-llqg0rhrc>

## DIARY

### DECEMBER

**3 Pax Christi Advent Service** 2pm, the Church of the Holy Apostles, 47 Cumberland Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 4LY. In person and online at <https://www.churchservices.tv/pimlico> The music will be led by Julie McCann and singers and instrumentalists will gather to rehearse at 10am in the church. The service will be followed by our alternative Christmas market with Fairtrade and Palestinian goods, crafts and gifts, books, cards, refreshments and children's activities. It is hoped that scheduling the service in the afternoon will allow Pax Christi Members and friends to gather together from across the country. A flyer for the event can be found here: <https://paxchristi.org.uk>

**7 UK Webinar Event - "O Little Town of Bethlehem" - Palestinian Christians, Reality, Challenges and Prospects** 3pm - The world turns to Bethlehem during Christmas, but they have a fairytale image of the little town. However, this is a real community with real challenges. This webinar gives an insight into the reality and challenges of Palestinians and Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. Link to join: <https://balfourproject.org/bethlehem/>

**9 Tamer Sahouri, Palestinian Oud Master and Composer, Academic Director of the Edward Said National Conservatoire of Music and faris ishaq, Palestinian Nay Master, Global Jazz Flutist and Composer.** Oud, Nay and Percussion in an extraordinary dialogue of ancient Arabic instruments in rich harmonic exploration 7-9pm at St Mary's Creative Space Saint Mary's Hill Chester CH1 2DW. Organised by Chester Friends of Palestine. Book at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tamer-sahouri-faris-ishaqtickets-460685842757>

**10 Sustainable Cheshire Winter Fair** Chester International School Handbridge. Food, activities for all the family and workshops. With a fun festive theme through the event, we will also have lots of community groups and charities with us... This event will have a limit on tickets being indoors, this will be a ticket only event. Get your ticket on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sustainable-cheshire-winter-fair-tickets395354153917>

**10 Human Rights Day 2022** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights consists of a preamble and 30 articles that set out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all of us, everywhere around the world, are entitled. It guarantees our rights without distinction of nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status. The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be celebrated on 10 December 2022: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/get-involved/campaign/human-rights-day> Read the declaration: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english>

**20 JRS UK Annual Advent Service** 7pm at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, 114 Mount St, London, W1K 3AH. We are excited to have refugee friends, volunteers, supporters and staff members come together to celebrate Advent. This year's service will include carols, readings, and performances from our very own drama group. In preparation for the evening, refugee friends from the JRS drama group have already been meeting regularly to work on their story and performance. This special occasion is sure to be an evening of great celebration and reflection for the JRS UK community. If you cannot join us in person, the service will also be live streamed online from Farm Street church. We will share the link closer to the day. <https://www.jrsuk.net/news/advent-service-2022/>

**27 CAFOD's CHRISTMAS FUN RUN** Join hundreds of people around the country who will be running, walking and toddling 5km to support CAFOD's work supporting people to overcome poverty.

**Liverpool Fun Run** Time: 10am registration, 11am start Venue: Wavertree Athletics Stadium, Wellington Road, Liverpool, L15 4LE Contact: [liverpool@cafod.org.uk](mailto:liverpool@cafod.org.uk) or 07779 804242

**Bollington Fun Run** Time: 10am registration, 11am start Venue: Middlewood Way, Viaduct next to St Gregory's Church, Bollington, Macclesfield, SK10 5JW Contact: [shrewsbury@cafod.org.uk](mailto:shrewsbury@cafod.org.uk)

**Virtual Fun Run** Time: Anytime! Venue: Anywhere! Contact: [events@cafod.org.uk](mailto:events@cafod.org.uk)

**Details of all:** <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Sponsored-challenge-events/Run-for-CAFOD/Christmas->

## JANUARY

**10 CWDF Forum meeting, 7pm at the Unity Centre.**

Originally, we had planned to have our annual session with our City of Chester MP, but by next month we will have a new MP who is going to be very busy indeed getting to grips with their new responsibilities. So, stepping into the breach, Gill Miller has volunteered to give a talk highlighting key issues arising from the COP27 meetings in Egypt. Provisionally, the title will be "Loss and damage: understanding the dilemmas and decisions from COP27".

**12 A Community Screening of the Letter** 7pm – 9pm United Reformed Church, Antrobus St. Congleton CW12 1HE GB This film by Laudato Si' Movement features Pope Francis as the protagonist and among five leaders representing the voices of Indigenous people, the youth, the poor and the wildlife of our planet. <https://actionnetwork.org/events/the-letter-film-how-spiritual-values-call-us-to-take-action-on-the-planetary-crisis-2?source=email&> There will be a short introductions and light refreshments served at 7pm. After the showing of the film there will be time for you to reflect and share your thoughts and what actions we should be taking, as well as a Q&A. Karen Sutton: 07714447417 [ksutton55@outlook.com](mailto:ksutton55@outlook.com)

**13 CAFOD QUIZ** in Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port starting at 7.30pm. As usual there will be a raffle with good prizes and entry is still only £3 - contact Tony Walsh 0151 355 6419

**15 Peace Sunday** see Pax Christi: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>

**18 -25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** ‘Be-Longing: Praying for Unity amidst Injustice.’ <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2023/>

**21 - March 6 Fairtrade Fortnight** <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/Current-campaigns/Fairtrade-Fortnight/>  
**25 4:30 to 5:30pm at the Best Building, University of Chester Parkgate Campus.**

Dr. Rich Waller, Senior Lecturer in Physical Geography at the University of Keele, will give a talk on “Contemporary Energy Crises and Sustainable Energy Futures”. All are welcome, and admission is free.

## FEbruary

**10 CAFOD QUIZ** in Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port see January 13 for details

**19 Church Action on Poverty Sunday 2023** Give, Act and Pray as part of the movement to unlock UK poverty When people come together to reclaim their dignity, agency and power, we can make huge changes - in ourselves - in our communities and in the world. Building a powerful movement to unlock poverty has never been more important.

The cost of living crisis threatens to sweep millions into poverty, threatening their dignity and agency. No one should have to face the choice between heating and eating. To prevent more people being swept deeper into poverty, it's vital that those of us affected have a say. Now more than ever, churches and communities need to stand together and uphold each other's dignity, agency and power. On Church Action on Poverty Sunday, we are invited to join with other churches across the UK in giving, action and prayer and to celebrate the transformational possibilities of people coming together to reclaim their dignity, agency and power. Use our free worship resources to reflect and pray for change, and raise funds to enable more people to speak truth to power. We're looking for at least 150 churches across the UK to hold a special service or take a collection on Church Action on Poverty Sunday. Register here to be one of these: <https://churchpoverty.e-activist.com/page/115061/subscribe/1>

**25 NJPN Networking Open Day** The Cost of Living Crisis: living versus existing 10.45am for 11am–3.30pm on Zoom. Book via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/njpn-networking-day-tickets-466226314457>

● **Read the Winter issue of *MouthPeace* the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses** <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Winter-Mouthpeace-2022-3.pdf>

● **Read NJPN's weekly column** online on Independent Catholic News [www.indcatholicnews.com](http://www.indcatholicnews.com) or find articles be uploaded onto our website at [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)

● Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News [www.indcatholicnews.com](http://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](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk) or contact [ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org](mailto:ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org) or [admin@justice-and-peace.org](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org) 020 7901 4864

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