

# NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin March 2021

The e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly by the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to [anneoc980@hotmail.com](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com)

## CATHOLIC CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY NETWORK (CCLEEN)

Since the middle of last year an informal group of Catholic organisations, networks, and individuals, has been meeting together to explore ways of highlighting concerns over the climate emergency and the need for Catholic hierarchy to speak out more forcibly in the public arena, and encourage Catholics to engage politically, in the broadest sense, on this issue.

To this end a letter was sent to Cardinal Nichols and all Bishops of England and Wales asking that they meet with concerned representatives from their own diocese to discuss the specific issues raised in the letter. Positive responses have been received from a number of Bishops. It is hoped that people from each diocese will be able to meet with their own Bishop to take this initiative forward.

## RESPONSES

- Diocesan Divestment from fossil fuels, (Lancaster, Middlesborough and Arundel and Brighton Dioceses have already committed to this)
- Salford and Arundel & Brighton Bishops have each already written a Pastoral Letter on the environment
- Salford – have a full time Environment worker & *Laudato Si* centre
- Arundel & Brighton are working with the ECG (Ecological Conversion Group) & have already done good work
- Liverpool – there is a process ongoing engaging the various parts of the Diocese on work to become sustainable
- The Bishop of Shrewsbury replied to the letter saying there was no need for a meeting
- CBCEW (The Catholic Bishops' Conference for England and Wales) has produced "*Global Healing*" and "*Global Caring*" CaFE films for parishes, groups and individuals to use, along with leader's resources for parish groups, events, etc.
- Bishops are putting together a network of Environmental Leads in each Diocese

## AIMS

- Aim for net zero carbon emissions in its own operations by 2030, (the Church of England has already committed to this aim)
- Educate Catholics and the public, and engage with the UK government on the need for the UK to aim for net zero carbon emissions by 2030 at the latest.
- To give at least equal emphasis to political action (in the widest sense): we are all 'stuck' in the system, which makes the personal and even ecclesial / organisational changes harder – so we need to engage the UK government to act on:
  - a) the need for a 2030 UK Net Zero target
  - b) the need for the UK to show leadership ahead of COP 26

As *Fratelli Tutti* (n181) says: "love...is also civic and political"

- To ask the bishops to write a Pastoral Letter – ahead of COP26 in Glasgow 2021 that would hopefully contain a commitment to, and/or prominently contain the "3 Asks" - especially recognising the need for UK net zero carbon by 2030, in order for the to play our part in the global 1.5C target and also emphasise the Season of Creation.
- That both the Pastoral Letter and the re-written "Call to Creation" document that is currently being worked on give equal emphasis to calling Catholics, other Christians, and other people of good will, to take political action (in the widest sense) to bring the UK government to:
  - a) aim for Net Zero by 2030, and
  - b) show leadership ahead of COP 26
- That the bishops continue to put significant resources into educating Catholics about the need for the 2030 target, and the impact of the transformation required.
- That the bishops support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill.
- That the bishops ask for an Environmental Synod in England & Wales.
- That the Cardinal and/or CBCEW Environmental Bishop lead a CBCEW delegation at the COP26.

*"Listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, who suffer the most. The urgent need for interventions can no longer be postponed."* Pope Francis

## BISHOP JOHN ARNOLD LAUNCHES PROJECT TO LEAD CATHOLIC COMMUNITY TO CARBON NEUTRAL FUTURE

17 February 2021: The Diocese of Salford has launched a new research project that Bishop John Arnold hopes will spearhead the efforts of the Catholic community in England and Wales to tackle the current ecological crisis, by paving the way to a sustainable, carbon neutral future. The research team will collaborate with other dioceses, parish communities, industry experts, theologians and other groups to develop carbon accounting and environmental management tools that will lead to an implementation framework for use in other dioceses. The two-year pilot project aims to involve over 100 parishes and over 200 schools, alongside religious communities and other parts of the diocese. The study is part of the church's response to what Pope Francis has described as the 'cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.' It will reduce the diocese's carbon footprint, improve energy efficiency and generation, and facilitate greater involvement from parishioners and local communities.

Dr Emma Gardner, Head of Environment at Salford Diocese, said: "We need to take urgent action today to 'protect our common home'. This project will help provide ways to address the ecological crisis through practical solutions and positive change. The Diocese of Salford is looking forward to working with other dioceses and organisations so we can play our part together."

In 2019, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales set out their commitment to engage in this urgent issue in their statement '*Guardians of God's Creation*'. In the document, they pledged to avoid the worst consequences of this ecological crisis by engaging now and over the next decade on what they described as the 'long path to renewal.' Bishop John Arnold has responsibility for environmental matters at the Bishops' Conference, making his own Diocese of Salford the perfect place to begin. Bishop Arnold said: "The Catholic Church recognizes the ecological crisis we are living through and is keen to play its part in delivering the UK net-zero strategy. We are looking to deepen our understanding of how to put a Catholic diocese on the path to carbon neutrality, and this collaborative research will tell us what needs to be done and what structures must be put in place to support this. I hope that the findings will assist organisations and institutions beyond the Church both here and abroad."

Salford Diocese is collaborating on the project with St Mary's University, Twickenham, and the Laudato Si' Research Institute, Oxford, and is supported by the Catholic Bishops' Conference. Other partners including the Tyndall Centre at the University of Manchester will be involved as the project progresses.

In December, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, vowed to cut the UK's carbon emissions by at least 68% from what they were in 1990 by the end of 2030.

Dr Roland Daw, the project's lead researcher at St Mary's University, Twickenham, said: "This work is about collective action that empowers the whole Church with the understanding, technologies and financing mechanisms it needs to speak to this urgent crisis. Statistics and doomsday predictions have not been enough to change behaviours in the face of this urgent crisis, so faith groups have as important a part to play in educating their communities as any others in society."

The Vatican has been promoting awareness of the Pope's ecological message contained in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* and has called for communities around the world to become environmentally sustainable. Pope Francis has called for an 'ecological conversion,' whereby the "effects of encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us."

The project will take an 'integral ecology' approach at all levels, meaning that it will not just be limited to questions of carbon, but will consider wider social and environmental sustainability objectives. Integral ecology is a way of looking at the world that connects at depth our human life with God, each other and the natural world. By doing so it affirms human dignity and the special worth of each and every creature that God has made. It therefore informs our action at different levels, the individual, the family and society.

Celia Deane Drummond, Director of the Laudato Si' Research Institute, Campion Hall, said: "This is an exciting project that has the potential to pave the way for a systematic transition to more environmentally sustainable practices in the Catholic Church. The Laudato Si' Research Institute is delighted to have the opportunity to support this pilot study as a partner, and to work collaboratively to address one of the most pressing ecological issues of our time." The Laudato Si' Research Institute in Oxford will help develop this understanding of integral ecology as applied to sustainability and carbon neutrality.

The Diocese of Salford is the first Catholic diocese to appoint a full-time environmental lead, responsible for environmental strategy and coordination of the 'Laudato Si' Centre' at Wardley Hall, as well as other projects and initiatives around the Diocese and further afield.

**Source:** CCN <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishop-john-arnold-spearheads-catholic-efforts-to-go-carbon-neutral/>  
**Guardians of Creation** [www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/diocese/environment/guardiansofcreation/](http://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/diocese/environment/guardiansofcreation/)  
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/341574>

## GLOBAL HEALING

On 18 February, Bishop John Arnold of Salford, lead bishop for the environment in England and Wales, launched an online series of speakers, prayers and discussions based on the film-based resource, 'Global Healing.' The talks take place each week throughout Lent, with Salford Diocese's Head of Environment Dr Emma Gardner sharing her own knowledge and experiences with us on 4 March. The films take place over six Thursdays, from 18 February - 25 March 2021, 7.30pm - 8.30pm and are hosted by the Global Catholic Climate Movement *Laudato Si'* Animators in the UK. To register email: [jane@catholicclimatemovement.global](mailto:jane@catholicclimatemovement.global)

### SPEAKERS FOR GLOBAL HEALING LENTEN SERIES:

18 February *Global Healing Episode 1:* Bishop John Arnold, Salford Diocese and Bishop for the Environment.  
25 February *Global Healing Episode 2:* Jane Mellett (Global Catholic Climate Movement).  
4 March *Global Healing Episode 3:* Dr. Emma Gardner (Head of Environment, Salford Diocese)  
11 March *Global Caring Episode 4:* Sr. Shirley Aeria, (FMDM). Sr. Shirley has lived and worked in Australia, Ireland, Malaysia, Nigeria and UK both as educator in schools and leadership roles in the congregation at various times. Since embracing the message of Pope Francis' encyclical, '*Laudato Si'*', she is now more involved in conservation ministry.  
18 March *Global Caring Episode 5:* Graham Gordon, Head of Public Policy, CAFOD.  
25 March *Global Caring Episode 6:* Live Simply Parish Speaker.

For more information about this area of Catholic life and faith have a look at [www.catholicclimatemovement.global](http://www.catholicclimatemovement.global)  
If you are unable to attend or would like to use these resources after the meetings download the resources at: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/environment/global-healing/global-healing-films/>

## OPERATION NOAH NEWS

2021 is a crucial year for climate action. In November, leaders from across the world will meet in Glasgow for COP26 and have the opportunity to take the urgent action necessary to tackle the climate crisis. Before that, in June, the G7 will meet in Cornwall to discuss a number of issues, including the climate crisis. As Scotland prepares to host the UN climate talks (COP26) later this year, we have a unique opportunity to make an impact and increase the pressure on institutions and governments to respond with the urgency that the climate crisis demands. Eco-Congregation Scotland is organising a webinar to help you find out how Churches in Scotland – both locally and nationally – can support a just and green recovery by divesting from fossil fuels and re-orienting investments towards a clean energy future. Speakers at the event will be:

Dr Lorna Gold, Director of Movement Building at FaithInvest and Acting Chair of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, will share how the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference divested from fossil fuels, as well as how the Republic of Ireland became the first country to commit to divest.

Very Revd John Conway, Provost of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in Edinburgh, will speak about how St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral divested from fossil fuels, as well as what needs to happen now in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Seonaid Knox, former clerk to the Church of Scotland Youth Assembly, will speak about her involvement in the Church of Scotland divestment campaign, and why the Church needs to listen to the voice of younger generations.

James Buchanan, Bright Now Campaign Manager at Operation Noah, will share the key findings of the report Church investments in major oil companies: Paris compliant or Paris defiant?

Alejandro Alemán Treminio, Climate Change Officer at the Nicaraguan organisation Centro Humboldt (a Christian Aid partner) and coordinator of Climate Action Network Latin America, will speak about the impacts of the climate crisis in the region, how communities are being supported to adapt and his hopes for climate justice at COP26.

The webinar will be chaired by Fiona Buchanan, Campaigns and Advocacy Coordinator at Christian Aid Scotland.

Around the world, more than 400 faith institutions have divested from fossil fuels, including the World Council of Churches, the United Reformed Church, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. Fossil fuel divestment will be on the agenda at this year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The webinar will see the launch of the Scottish Churches COP26 Pledge on Divestment and the Just and Green Recovery, which can be signed by individuals, churches, regional Church bodies and national Churches. The webinar is an excellent opportunity to find out more about how your church can join the next global divestment announcement for faith institutions in spring 2021.

The webinar series is sponsored by: Eco-Congregation Scotland, Operation Noah, Christian Aid, Justice and Peace Scotland and Friends of the Earth Scotland. Register for your free place: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/scottish-churches-cop26-divestment-investment-in-just-green-recovery-tickets-141263774753>

## CLIMATE EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- 1) World hunger is rising (before the coronavirus) for the first time in many years – due to extreme weather - droughts, floods, etc – 820 million don't have enough to eat (UN – 2018 & 2019)
- 2) “By 2025, half of the world’s population [4 billion people] will be living in water-stressed areas” - at least partly due to climate change impacts
- 3) “More than 3bn could live in extreme heat by 2070” (BBC) “More than 3bn people will be living in places with ‘near un-liveable’ temperatures by 2070, according to a new study.” (2020)
- 4) The number of climate related weather disasters that result in displacement have increased five-fold over the last decade. Climate change disasters forced 20 million from their homes in 2019.
- 5) Up to 1 billion could be displaced by 2050 (most estimates are of 200 million environmental migrants – the same number of international migrants currently, globally)
- 6) Most emissions are caused by rich countries & rich people. The top 10% wealthiest people globally emit 50% of all consumption-based carbon emissions, while the poorest 50% contribute only 10% of emissions
- 7) Carbon emissions are still rising globally (pre-Covid): by 2.7% in 2018 and 0.6% in 2019
- 8) THE 2050 TARGET IS INADEQUATE
  - A) GLOBALLY – the target needs to be 2040 because:
    - i) it's too risky – a 1/3 to ½ risk of overshooting
    - ii) the IPCC while very authoritative, is very slow and over cautious
    - iii) there is growing evidence that warming is happening much faster than predicted
  - B) FOR THE UK – needs to be 2030 - 10 years before the global 2040 target because:
    - i) Poorer countries will not be willing to make sacrifices or take initiative, if rich countries like the UK are not willing to take the lead
    - ii) the industrial revolution started in the UK, so we one of the highest historic emissions per person, in the world. Those carbon emissions are what our wealth is built on
    - iii) UK government policy is nowhere near what is needed to achieve even its own 2050 target. If anything, it is going in the other direction
- 9) At current (pre-Covid) rates of carbon emissions (without rises or falls), globally we have 9 years left until we have used up the 1.5C carbon budget - according to the 2018 IPCC Report
- 10) “There is a widespread view that a 4C future is incompatible with an organised global community, is likely to be beyond adaptation and be devastating to the majority of ecosystems.” - Kevin Anderson, leading climate scientist,
- 11) The latest report of the UK Government’s Climate Change Committee says the UK will need to adapt [and] plan for ... up to 4C”. It says the UK has failed to prepare for “even the minimum climate risks faced”.
- 12) THE UK RECORD SO FAR: domestic carbon emissions exclude UK international aviation and shipping emissions, or those from the goods we import. If these are included, there is only a 10% reduction since 1990 – 0.4% a year
- 13) UK Climate Change Committee Report 2020: The UK has failed on 14 out of 21 progress indicators, falling further behind in many areas, says the CCC. And just two of 31 key policy milestones have been met over the past year, it adds.
- 14) UK banks and the government fund large amounts of new oil, gas and coalfields in other countries around the world that are not included in these figures. It is estimated that 15 per cent of global fossil fuel financing comes from the UK. These huge UK emissions were missing from the Climate Change Committees report.
- 15) How much worse will the problem get? Even the current pledges from the Paris 2015 Climate Summit, generally with no policies attached, lead to a 3C rise.
- 16) the EU is planning to tax imports according to the CO2 emissions of the country they are coming from – this is thought to have influenced China’s recent announcement of a 2060 zero emissions target.

## THE TIME IS NOW

Use your voice to tell politicians that you want a cleaner, greener, fairer future at the heart of plans to rebuild a strong economy. *The Time is Now Declaration* asks the Prime Minister to lead the UK towards a healthier, greener, fairer future. Ahead of hosting the United Nations climate summit in Glasgow in 2021, we can build back better together if we:

- **Unleash a clean energy revolution** that boosts jobs across the UK, making our transport, power and housing fit for the future
- **Protect, restore and expand our green and wild spaces**; allowing nature to thrive, taking carbon from the air and boosting the nation’s health
- **Leave no one behind** by increasing support to those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change at home and abroad

The UK must lead the world by ensuring our recovery gets us on track to net-zero emissions and limits the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees C. Our best chance of building a resilient economy goes hand in hand with tackling climate change. We are ready to play our part, and we call on you to join us.

**Sign the Time is Now Declaration** at <https://thetimeisnow.uk/declaration>

## A LAMENT FOR THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

Father of Creation,  
God of Compassion,  
You created a world of wonder,  
of possibility and potential.  
You declared it to be good.

For this we give thanks.  
To you be praise, honour and glory.

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To you be praise, honour and glory.

Father of Creation,  
God of Compassion,  
this world is no longer as you intended it to,  
humanity has betrayed its calling  
to tend and keep.  
Creation groans.

For this we weep,  
Lord have mercy.  
For this we mourn,  
Christ have mercy.

On our watch,  
we reap what we have sown,  
on our watch,  
sea levels rise,

For this we weep,  
Lord have mercy.  
For this we mourn,  
Christ have mercy.

On our watch,  
forests destroyed.  
On our watch,  
locusts swarm.

For this we weep,  
Lord have mercy.  
For this we mourn,  
Christ have mercy.

And so now with tears in our eyes  
we look to you,  
with regret,  
with repentance,  
knowing the difficult decades that we face,  
as temperatures rise,  
extinctions increase,  
as we come to terms with our existential plight.

For our children,  
Lord have mercy.  
For our Grandchildren,  
Christ have mercy.  
For the world's most vulnerable,  
Christ have mercy.

Father of Creation,  
God of Compassion,  
wake us from our slumber,  
equip us afresh  
to be the justice shaped people of God.

Father of Creation,  
God of Compassion,  
wake us from our slumber,  
equip us afresh  
to our priestly and prophetic calling.

That we would speak truth  
in a culture of denial,  
that we would enact hope  
in a culture of despair,  
that we would face what will be  
with love filled action,

that in humanity's darkest hour  
you would enliven us  
so we would bandage the wounds  
of those caught  
beneath the wheels of climate injustice,

that in humanity's darkest hour  
we would have the courage  
to drive a spoke  
into the wheel of climate injustice itself.

Father of Creation,  
God of Compassion  
You created a world of wonder,  
of possibility and potential.  
You declared it to be good.

In our grief,  
in our mourning,  
we give thanks.  
to you be praise, honour and glory.

**Jon Swales 2021**

• **Jon Swales** is Mission Priest for The Lighthouse in West Yorkshire, 'a Christian community for those who are battered and bruised by the storms of life, including homelessness, addiction issues, criminal background, poverty and crisis in mental health,' based at St George's Church, Leeds. [www.lighthousewestyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.lighthousewestyorkshire.org.uk)

Jon and our late daughter Annie were the only two students taking a Biblical Studies MA course in 2002-3 in Sheffield. Travelling different paths, they both dedicated their lives in loving service to the poor and the broken – Anne O'Connor.

## FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 22 FEBRUARY – 7 MARCH

Fairtrade Fortnight 2021 is highlighting the growing challenges that climate change brings to farmers and workers in the communities Fairtrade works with. Read more here: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Get-Involved/Current-campaigns/Fairtrade-Fortnight/>

Farmers and workers in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Honduras, who have done the least to contribute to climate change, are disproportionately affected by it. They have told us that:

- Climate change is one of their biggest challenges right now.
- Low prices for their crops mean that they are struggling to fight back.
- Only with more money will they feel equipped to meet their everyday needs and deal with the challenges they face from climate change.

The climate crisis is an immediate and ever-increasing threat and those in climate vulnerable countries are already seeing its impacts from droughts and crop disease to floods, heatwaves and shrinking harvests.

With the emergence of the global COVID pandemic, the challenges that farmers face now are bigger than ever before with falling commodity prices and widespread shocks reverberating along our global supply chains. Ongoing poverty in farming communities makes it increasingly hard to cope with the effects of climate change.

We need your help to put farmers' voices at the heart of tackling the climate crisis and share the reality of their struggles. Our global trading system is balanced in favour of the powerful few. Trapped in this system, farmers already struggle to meet their immediate needs. More than ever, they need a fair price for their crops and their hard work.

Fairtrade works to raise the voices of farmers and workers and prioritise what they need to respond to the environmental crises unfolding in already vulnerable communities. This Fortnight, we are asking you to 'Choose the World You Want' and use your voice to tell others about the challenges that farmers face from climate change.

[Read the stories of farmers affected by climate change: https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/choose-the-world-you-want/storytelling-tent/](https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/choose-the-world-you-want/storytelling-tent/)

Sign the Climate Coalition's Climate Declaration <https://thetimeisnow.uk/> and tell your local MP or Council about your commitment to putting the voices of farmers and workers at the heart of the climate crisis fight. A new press release template is available now: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources-library/current-campaigns/fairtrade-and-the-climate-crisis/template-press-release/>

## UNITED BY FAIRTRADE ZOOM EVENT

United by Fairtrade Wednesday, 3 March, 2021 at 7pm. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us more than ever how interconnected we are globally. This interconnection is at the very heart of the Fairtrade message, bringing people of all faiths, and none, together. Adam Gardner, Head of Campaigns at the Fairtrade Foundation, will talk about the challenges currently faced by farmers and workers in the global south – the 'key workers beyond our borders' and what we can do. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/united-by-fairtrade-tickets-141951722423>

On-line events and resources available to link into and download:  
<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/choose-the-world-you-want/festival-website>  
<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/choose-the-world-you-want/lineup/>

## HOW WILL DISABLED PEOPLE MANAGE THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC? – 9 MONTHS ON

Published by Stephanie Denning 24 February 2021

In May 2020 as part of the Life on the Breadline research guest blog posts during the Covid-19 pandemic, we heard from disability activist and blogger, Hannah Deakin, on '*How will disabled people manage through the Covid-19 pandemic?*'

Nine months later, we hear from Hannah again as she reflects on disability and the pandemic. Hannah writes: "The past year has been difficult for everyone, especially disabled people. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 6 out of every 10 deaths caused by Coronavirus were disabled people up to 20th November 2020, (30,296 of 50,888 deaths).

At the time of writing this we have just gone over the horrifying 121,000 deaths mark. This means if the pattern of statistics continued approximately 72,600 disabled people would have died from Coronavirus so far. That is quite a hard and shocking statistic to swallow. Although, they are not just statistics, they are people. People, whose lives were cut short and whom families are grieving for.

For most disabled people the last year or so has been an increased battle and struggle. There is still rarely a BSL (British Sign Language) interpreter on the Prime Ministers updates, those on ESA (Employment Support Allowance) have not been given an increase of £20 a week like those on Universal Credit. Many disabled people have had to choose to go back to work or risk losing their job when shielding ended, others have had to struggle through, spending most or all of the last year housebound, to try and protect themselves from the virus. In some cases, having a huge detrimental effect on their mental health, wellbeing and loneliness.

I was worried that we were coming to the position in January 2021 that the NHS may have had to choose who they saved, leaving many disabled people scared about whether they were worthy of saving. Fortunately, this hasn't been the case. However, although there was widespread uproar and condemnation of last year's situation of the distribution of DNR (do not resuscitate) letters, it has come to light that people with Learning Disabilities have been issued DNR letters in this second wave.

Is this suggesting their lives are not as valuable? Or are more expendable?

Organisations have battled to get those with disabilities moved up the priority list for the vaccine and Scope has campaigned for the #WeWontBeForgotten campaign. Asking the Prime Minister not to forget disabled people.

Success has been made moving those who are extremely clinically vulnerable up the list. Nevertheless, there are going to be so many with severe disabilities and with underlying health conditions at increased risk but who don't have one of the conditions mentioned. Similarly, to the distribution of shielding letters during the first lockdown, it looks as if the area you live in and who your GP is, may affect whether an individual gets the vaccine earlier in one of the priority groups or not.

I had no idea when I will get a vaccine, now I believe that I will not get it any earlier as I don't fit in any box. I have never fitted in a box! After enquiries I have found out how to register my PAs (Personal assistants) for the vaccine – they qualify as front-line health and social workers. So, at this rate it will look like all my PAs will have it but I won't. Which is some respects is strange – they are looking after someone who is vulnerable, they will be protected, but can still pass it on to the person who is more at risk and hasn't had the vaccine!

On another note, a positive one, my hydrotherapy and physiotherapy sessions started again in August and have continued since. This makes a huge difference to me, especially being able to get into the water, stretch, move around and be free. It helps my muscles, joints, pain and mobility.

I restarted my work experience in August, that I do for 3 hours one day week, however this time from home. After taking a while to adapt, it has been good that I have been able to continue it, albeit remotely. It has been a challenging period employing PAs and needing care. I am so grateful to my parents who have done even more than they normally do. Without them there would have been so many times I would have been left in a difficult position, to say the least. I am lucky that my family and my PAs have not had Covid-19. Unfortunately, one of my PAs has been seriously ill.

Recruiting PAs during the pandemic has been tricky, for a temporary position whilst one is off sick and a permanent position. I know all my PAs quite well and think they are relatively careful with social distancing, limiting contact and trips out. However, there will not be that same trust initially. Can you trust them? Furthermore, gaining an impression from someone is hard enough in a short interview, but then trying to do that on zoom or a video call is even harder. However, you want to try and keep the number of people in the house to a minimum.

The continuation or restarting of many events or meetings via Zoom has been another positive. I started a journalism course via Zoom in the first lockdown through Ability Today. We have also listened to weekly church services recorded online, and started 'Fruitfulness on the Frontline' course with the church. These things have firstly been particularly supportive through the pandemic, but also would either not have been possible, or been very difficult to achieve and attend if they had not of been online in normal times.

Hopefully you are all keeping safe and well and next time I write, the world situation with Coronavirus, will be much improved. Please take care, stay positive and be very kind to yourself."

<https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/2021/02/24/how-will-disabled-people-manage-through-the-covid-19-pandemic-9-months-on/>  
<https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/>

To read more from Hannah visit her blog – Hannah's hope <http://hannahdeakin.blogspot.com/>

## FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD - MUSIC AS A FORCE FOR CHANGE

Music brings people together and captures people's attention – and it can be a force for change. In Yorkshire, for the past two years, one community's shared love of music and a shared desire to learn has led to new relationships, and new-found solidarity and belief. Through the power of music, participants are reasserting their dignity and agency, and building new friendships along the way.

Yo Tozer-Loft set up the Food Glorious Food choir in the Sheffield area in 2015. The group gained national attention singing at Sheffield Cathedral to highlight the injustices of food poverty and when it was used as research for the National Theatre Play, *Faith, Hope and Charity*. In January 2020, just before the pandemic, Yo and some of the group set up a guitar circle, to build on that success. Throughout lockdown, the group kept in touch via WhatsApp and they hope to restart the group again as soon as they can.

"We put a call out to see if people had spare guitars sitting around not used, and it was lovely to get them coming in. A local musician, Pod Pearson from Rich Tone, restrung all the guitars in his own time for free, which was very generous, and whenever anyone broke a string, they helped again. The other people who were so supportive was a well-known cellist called Liz Hawks, who supports community music and got tuners for everyone, and Stuart, our teacher, who waived his fees."

"We started at the start of 2020 and had nine sessions until everything stopped in March. We had planned a showcase performance and did not get to do that, which was such a disappointment. We had all been building up to perform, and it would have been a really lovely moment. People were so committed. I have worked before with nervous people but so often people rise to the moment, and the guitarists were willing to put themselves up there as soloists. Gleadless Valley Methodists supported us, but so did the Gleadless Valley Library, who hosted a couple of sessions. Reach South Sheffield and St Mary's Bramall Lane also supported us. Once lockdown ends, we are really hoping to regroup as soon as we can.

"We got so much from the project. Learning is so magical. Learning brings joy and lets people feel like the humans they are meant to be. The guitar circle combined learning, music and discovering yourself, and people discovering themselves through music is wonderful to see. Learning, music and community are such a combination, and having music to enable connections and friendships really does work.

"We kept going once the pandemic hit. We had a WhatsApp group to stay in touch, so had group calls every week and that was a good continuation for people, giving and getting human support."

[https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/2021-stories-how-new-friends-are-striking-a-chord-for-justice/?fbclid=IwAR2Y\\_dYwHK3FHVpruaP\\_K0C5zaW\\_KlpYH1h933qColoDx19bXnjq9zE1qQo&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=engagingnetworks&utm\\_campaign=Food+glorious+food+choir+and+guitar+circle&utm\\_content=2021+02+24+Food+Glorious+Food+calendar+blog+post](https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/2021-stories-how-new-friends-are-striking-a-chord-for-justice/?fbclid=IwAR2Y_dYwHK3FHVpruaP_K0C5zaW_KlpYH1h933qColoDx19bXnjq9zE1qQo&utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=Food+glorious+food+choir+and+guitar+circle&utm_content=2021+02+24+Food+Glorious+Food+calendar+blog+post)

## CARDINAL NICHOLS WELCOMES REPORT ON COUNTERING EXTREMISM

24 February 2021: Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has given his support to a new report by the Commission for Countering Extremism drawing attention to gaps in legislation that allow extremists to operate with impunity in the UK.

The landmark report, 'Operating with Impunity', evidences some of the most shocking and dangerous extremist content currently lawful in Britain.

Cardinal Nichols said: "Extremism is a danger and so we need to work together to ensure there is unambiguous legislation that not only prevents and penalises those spreading it, but equally protects those who experience it. The Report of the Commission for Countering Extremism is a significant contribution to a most important issue. The rise of hateful extremism, not least through the use of social media, is a grave concern and calls for ongoing efforts by all who have our common good at heart. Our society must be characterised by a determination both to counter hateful extremism which seeks to inflict harm, and to protect freedom of speech. This Report is a stimulating voice in drawing attention to these matters, with all their sensitivity and resonance. For freedom of religion and freedom of speech to be meaningful they must include the right to express opinions which run counter to a prevailing cultural consensus without embracing or proposing hate or violence.

"While warning against the threat of political and populist extremism, Pope Francis has said: "Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other's point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns...it is desirable that they should articulate their positions for the sake of a more fruitful public debate." (Fratelli Tutti 203)

Read the full report '*Operating with Impunity*' on the Commission for Countering Extremism's website: [www.gov.uk/government/news/commission-for-countering-extremism-publishes-legal-review](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/commission-for-countering-extremism-publishes-legal-review)  
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/41625>

## MODERN DAY SLAVERY: AN ECONOMY WITHOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

St Josephine Bakhita Talk: 9 February 2021

Go to <https://youtu.be/hFXwb-5Pobg> for an edited recording of the 2021 talk “An Economy without Human Trafficking” to support the Day of International Prayer against Human Trafficking on the Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita (8 Feb) given by Imelda Poole IBVM MBE, founding president of Mary Ward Loreto and President of RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Human Trafficking) – see also below – and Julia Bayton from Refugee Women Connect, Liverpool.

Facilitated by Liverpool South Pastoral Area Justice & Peace Group and supported by the Archdiocese of Liverpool J&P Commission on Tuesday 9 February 2021.

<https://jp.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/2021/02/17/an-economy-without-human-trafficking/>

### Useful Links

<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/trafficking/column/combating-human-trafficking-albania-and-across-european-borders> – recent article by Imelda Poole

<https://slaveryfootprint.org/> – find out how many slaves work for you and support the lifestyle you lead

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/immigration/trafficking/report-human-trafficking/> – how to report Human Trafficking in the UK

<https://www.renate-europe.net/> Religious in Europe Networking against Trafficking and Exploitation

<https://www.albaniahope.com/> Mary Ward Loreto Albania

<https://www.talithakum.info/> International Network against Trafficking Persons

<https://www.refugeewomenconnect.org.uk/> Refugee Women Connect

<https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/safecarwash> The Clewer Initiative Car Wash App

<https://jp.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk> Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice and Peace Commission

From the chat: <https://www.global-slavery-index.org/2018/findings/country-studies/united-kingdom/>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/modernslaveryintheuk/march2020>

UK Modern Slavery Helpline 08000 121 700

Finally, here is a story of a woman who was promised a job, but sold into trafficking. Read her journey from 'the brink of hell' to then completing her college studies: <https://www.renate-europe.net/stella-promised-a-job/>

## WHAT WOULD FRANCIS DO? – A SERIES OF LENTEN TALKS

On 19 March, the feast of St Joseph, Pope Francis will mark eight years in office. Over that time, he has attempted to bring back to the Catholic church the energy and zeal which emerged from the Second Vatican Council. How far he has succeeded is the subject of the Edinburgh Jesuit Centre's series of Lenten talks. Six prominent thinkers, each an expert in their own field, will address different aspects of Francis' tenure.

The series started at 7.30pm on Tuesday 23 February when Austen Ivereigh - biographer of Pope Francis and catalyst of Francis's latest book, *Let us Dream* – explored the Social Justice elements of his teaching. On subsequent Tuesdays, Imelda Poole IBVM, president of RENATE, will focus on *Trafficking and Migration*, 2 March; James Martin SJ, *LGBTQ+ issues*, 9 March; the *Tablet's* Christopher Lamb, *Francis and his Battle for Church Reform*, 16 March; Lorna Gold, of the Vatican Commission on the post-Covid world, on *Ecology*, 23 March. The series will conclude on 30 March when theologian, Gemma Symmonds CJ, will talk on *Women and the Church*.

[https://www.jesuit.org.uk/what-would-pope-francis-do-new-series-lent-talks-edinburgh-jesuit-centre?utm\\_source=Jesuits+in+Britain&utm\\_campaign=501c48d088-](https://www.jesuit.org.uk/what-would-pope-francis-do-new-series-lent-talks-edinburgh-jesuit-centre?utm_source=Jesuits+in+Britain&utm_campaign=501c48d088-)

[EMAIL\\_CAMPAIN\\_2018\\_07\\_24\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_22ed05a35f-501c48d088-87595669&mc\\_cid=501c48d088&mc\\_eid=ddf37ee126](https://www.jesuit.org.uk/what-would-pope-francis-do-new-series-lent-talks-edinburgh-jesuit-centre?utm_source=Jesuits+in+Britain&utm_campaign=501c48d088-EMAIL_CAMPAIN_2018_07_24_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_22ed05a35f-501c48d088-87595669&mc_cid=501c48d088&mc_eid=ddf37ee126)

Zoom Login information: <https://us02.us/j/2365092814> or Meeting ID: 236 509 2814

View on Facebook by typing Edinburgh Jesuit Centre into Facebook

For more information contact: [edinburghjesuitcentre@jesuit.org.uk](mailto:edinburghjesuitcentre@jesuit.org.uk)

## YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CHURCH

On 22 February, Francis X. Maier, senior fellow in Catholic Studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, and senior research associate in Constitutional Studies at the University of Notre Dame, published some observations from a research project he's conducting into the lives and ministries of diocesan bishops across the U.S. Here's an interesting excerpt: "I asked each of the bishops I interviewed a concluding question: At the end of the day, what worries and what encourages you the most? In case after case, a bishop gave the same answer to each question—young people. The greatest pain is the number of young persons exiting the Church. The greatest source of hope is the zeal and character of the young people who remain faithful and love Jesus Christ. And this is why, at some mysterious level, every bishop I interviewed was both vividly alert to the challenges he faces and simultaneously at peace."

<https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2021/02/somebody-needs-to-be-dad>

## WCC URGES RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DIGNITY, FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM MYANMAR

24 February 2021: "The World Council of Churches (WCC) supports the call to preserve the sanctity of life and human dignity and rights, for asylum seekers from Myanmar."

The Council of Churches of Malaysia is urging the authorities not to participate in the "disavowing of refugees" amid the government's plan to deport 1,200 Myanmar nationals, in coordination with the Myanmar military.

"In this time of political insecurity in Myanmar, sending these Myanmar nationals back is to send them to an uncertain fate," said Council of Churches of Malaysia general secretary Rev. Dr Hermen Shastri in the 23 February statement. "The system of checks and balances, transparency and accountability have all but disappeared, and the fate of these people to be repatriated from our shores is to send them into a hostile and very dangerous situation."

Shastri noted that any such deportation would be contrary to international law and norms. He also urged the government to allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees full access to detention centres to identify refugees and asylum seekers and to ensure their protection and safety. "Until such time when law and order are restored in Myanmar, and a democratically elected government is firmly in place, chosen by the popular vote of its citizens, we should not cast the lives of these 1,200 detained Myanmar nationals into an undesired and dangerous territory," Shastri added.

Shastri also emphasised the teaching of mercy and compassion in the Christian faith. "Since this is the season of Lent and we are called to spiritual introspection and to engage in acts of charity, what better way to affirm it than to uphold the principle of the sanctity of life and the dignity of all persons, created, loved and endowed with rights by God," Shastri said. "Not a single asylum seeker, refugee and anyone else whose life is under threat should be forced to return to Myanmar or any other country where they may face persecution and even death in a situation of conflict."

However, latest reports indicate that, despite a temporary stay of deportation ordered by a Malaysian court, the authorities have nevertheless proceeded with the deportation of 1,086 people.

World Council of Churches (WCC) Acting General Secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca said that the WCC stands in support of the Council of Churches of Malaysia's statement and its call to preserve the sanctity of life and human dignity and rights. "The WCC fellowship's stands strongly with the National Council of Churches of Malaysia, raising our common voice to call for justice and mercy for those seeking asylum and fearing for their lives," said Sauca. "We call upon the Government of Malaysia to observe international humanitarian law and to not participate in the violation of fundamental human rights."

<https://alc-noticias.net/en/2021/02/24/wcc-urges-respect-for-human-rights-dignity-for-asylum-seekers-from-myanmar/>

## CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE NOMINATED FOR THE 2021 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE!

19 February 2021: A few days ago we got a surprise Zoom call from The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) to let us know we've been nominated alongside our partner Mwatana for Human Rights, a grassroots organisation working in Yemen. The nomination from AFSC and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) aims to draw attention to CAAT's work to stop the UK government's sales of arms to Saudi Arabia, particularly our ongoing legal challenge to UK arms sales for use in the war in Yemen.

This is also an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the suffering of the Yemeni people who are experiencing the world's worst humanitarian disaster. Millions are facing starvation as a direct result of the actions of the Saudi-led coalition. This is all made possible by weapons supplied by the UK and sustained by its ongoing military support. Inspirational Yemeni groups like Mwatana have shown remarkable dedication in documenting human rights violations by all parties to the war and raising the voices of victims in exceptionally dangerous circumstances.

We are truly honoured that our campaigning is being acknowledged in this way. This nomination is a tribute to all of us. If you have ever signed a petition, come to a protest or event, shared on social media, written to your MP, made a donation, or taken any other action against the arms trade, you have helped to make this happen.

<https://caat.org.uk/news/what-a-nobel-peace-prize-nomination-means-for-our-campaigning>

## CELEBRATING NONVIOLENCE AND WOMEN PEACEMAKERS

Pax Christi gathering for International Women's Day, 8 March at 7pm.

To celebrate the power of nonviolence and the role of women peacemakers we have invited two of our colleagues to help us understand more about Nonviolence and the role of Advocacy and Nonviolence and Religious Life:

- Mary T Yelenick, Pax Christi International UN-NGO, New York and
- Sr Katrina Alton CSJP peace activist and member of Pax Christi

There will be time for prayer and discussion too. The session will last for around one hour. Do join us. All you need to do is click the link below and register on ZOOM here: <https://bit.ly/36QWZeQ>

## CARDINAL NICHOLS RECALLS HIS VISIT TO IRAQ

Source CCN: In just a few days, Pope Francis will touch down in Baghdad for his historic visit to Iraq - the first of any Pope to the country. The Holy Father has a busy schedule and will travel the length of Iraq to stand in solidarity with the country's Christians and, under the theme of the visit 'You are all brothers', all Iraqis....

Cardinal Vincent Nichols visited Erbil in the north in April 2015 - less than a year after ISIS insurgents swept through the region taking Iraq's second city Mosul, wreaking havoc and killing and displacing thousands.

On a 'Catholic News' podcast, Cardinal Nichols spoke with James Abbot from the Bishops's Conference Catholic Media Office about his strong memories from the visit - not to mention the people he met and the church-run projects he witnessed in action. The country and its people are still firmly in his heart.

Cardinal Nichols arrived in Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan to be greeted by Archbishop Bashar Warda - a man well known to us in the UK. He has visited on a number of occasions to highlight the plight of Iraq's Christians and the need for the international community to support them.

Cardinal Nichols recalls how the Archbishop kicked into action immediately when faced with an extraordinary number of displaced people: "Archbishop Warda literally woke up one morning and there were over 100,000 refugees knocking on his door. And what did he do? He opened churches. He opened every bit of property that they had and said, 'come and sleep here'. He established refugee hostels and camps in all sorts of places. I remember the frame of a building that was not yet developed - just floors and pillars, like an open skeleton. And they started putting portakabins into this concrete framework so the people had somewhere to live.

He also remembers the hospitality offered by the people in the camps. He was particularly struck by a story told by a Christian woman who felt, acutely, being separated from her Muslim neighbour when she fled the invading ISIS insurgents in June 2014: "One woman I remember speaking to just outside her home, her portakabin, she had a number on the door and a big picture of the Virgin Mary by the side. "She said to me, you know, 'I had two hours to leave my home in Mosul. And we just had to leave, just had to walk away'. But she said, 'those two hours my Muslim neighbour spent weeping because we were going to be separated and we'd been there all our lives together'. And she said, 'well, you know, the more I think about it, I think I'd rather be here than her, living in Mosul under ISIS.'"

Cardinal Vincent also remembers meeting an elderly Iraqi lady in Ankawa - a Christian suburb of Erbil: "I remember a tiny old lady, probably in her 80s, all dressed in black with crooked fingers. She told us about being stopped by the ISIS guards as they approached the border with Kurdistan.

"And she said they took every bit of jewellery they had. And then she said, 'I began to tell him off. I began to tell this ISIS fighter that he was a disgrace and he shouldn't be behaving like this. And that this was no way to treat anybody - never mind an elderly lady'. And she said he backed off and let them through. So, you know, there was raw courage and incredible tenacity that they managed to survive this mass exodus."

There are many iconic components to the Papal Visit to Iraq, not least the Mass that Pope Francis will celebrate in the newly-reconstructed Cathedral in Qaraqosh - a city in the Nineveh Plains whose people suffered so much under ISIS. 20 miles east of Mosul, it was the largest Christian city in Iraq. But it's the Pope's visit to Najaf to meet with Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Al-Husaymi Al-Sistani that the Cardinal sees as highly significant:

"One of the most important things that Pope Francis has included in his agenda is the visit to Najaf, where he's going to see Ayatollah Sistani. Now, that is crucially, crucially important, because here you have the spiritual leader of not just Shia Islam in Iraq, but in a whole swathe of the Middle East. He is a man who is revered and his responses are formative. He will welcome the Holy Father and what they say together and the signals that will give will be hugely important for the Christians, particularly the Catholic people in Iraq.

"You know, affirmation from Ayatollah Sistani, for the Christian Catholic community embedded in that large Muslim majority - that affirmation will be priceless. And to me, that's one of the most important moments, I believe, in this visit."

Watch a video of the podcast here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEprXYTfYlw&feature=emb\\_imp\\_woyt](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEprXYTfYlw&feature=emb_imp_woyt)  
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/41642>

Holy Apostles, Pimlico is holding a Holy Hour of Prayer on Wednesday 3 March at 3pm to pray for Persecuted Christians throughout the world on behalf of Aid to the Church in Need. This will be live-streamed or you can pray at home: <https://www.holyapostlespimlico.org/> and <https://acnuk.org/news/iraq-charity-celebrates-popes-help-for-iraq/>

## HAVING A PRESIDENT WHO GRIEVES AGAIN

John Pavlovitz 24 February 2021

President Joe Biden is a man who understands loss. You can see it in the deep lines on his face, you can hear it in the way his voice shakes, and you can feel it in the words he speaks through laboured pauses.

And to understand loss you have to understand love. To ever know the massive gaping vacancy in your heart when someone is taken from you, you first have had to have space in your heart for them to begin with. To be capable of grief is to have been capable of connection in the first place. It's been a while since we've had that in a leader.

The president's eloquent words marking the passing of the unfathomable milestone of five hundred thousand Americans, are ones that could have never been spoken over the past four years and never were, because the person occupying that space was incapable of such humanity and unwilling to attempt it; because compassion was beyond his capacity and authentic emotion considered a character flaw to his brand and his base.

Not only would it have never occurred to the man Biden replaced to even acknowledge the unthinkable scale of the loss of life (as such an admission would have been impossible to leverage for personal or political gain) it would have been inauthentic of him to pretend it mattered to him anyway. That's largely how we ended up with half a million Americans dead in a year: because we had a sociopath at the helm and that was never going to be conducive to protection of the living, concern for the dead, or empathy for the survivors.

Joe Biden's grief is a welcome companion for a nation whose attrition over these past twelve months is incalculable. Our collective loss cannot be measured but at least now it is being mentioned. That in itself is a victory. It's good to have empathy in the White House again: to know that a fully formed human being is leading us, one who has access to a deep well of emotional reserves, one who measures life and losses beyond election results and poll numbers and ledger balances. It is a comfort to realize that we have a president who gives a damn about other human beings and has been left winded by the unexpected sucker punch of death—because we too have struggled to breathe and to move.

The President said in his remarks to families trying to navigate the way forward in the haze of their grieving: "I know all too well. I know what it's like to not be there when it happens. I know what it's like when you are there, holding their hands, as they look in your eye and they slip away. That black hole in your chest, you feel like you're being sucked into it."

For those of us who've been violently pulled into that void, we aren't embarrassed by Joe Biden's candour but lifted by it, not unsettled at his displays of sorrow but comforted by them. We know that if these things amount to a declaration of weakness at all, it is one we too have had to declare, as the savagery of grief brought us to our knees—the weakness that reminds us what it costs to fully love someone else and to live irreparably injured in their absence.

Biden promised to half a million distraught families and to a nation mourning in solidarity with them: "The day will come when the memory of the loved one you lost will bring a smile to your lips before a tear to your eye. It will come. I promise you. My prayer for you though is that day will come sooner rather than later. And that's when you know you're going to be okay — you're going to be okay."

That okay-ness will be hastened by his words. That elusive healing will come far more quickly because the person in the most powerful position in our nation has the decency to say them, to remind us that no platform or position exempts us from the collateral damage of being human and loving deeply; that there is affinity in our losses and that we should be gentle with one another.

I am grateful for a president who mourns along with us, someone my children can emulate, a person capable of caring about another human being, a president whose world does not revolve around himself. America, we have a leader who grieves again. We are a better nation for it.

<https://johnpavlovitz.com/2021/02/24/having-a-president-who-grieves-again/>

● **John Pavlovitz** is a writer, pastor, and activist from North Carolina. In the past four years his blog *Stuff That Needs To Be Said* has reached a diverse worldwide audience. A 20-year veteran of local church ministry, John is committed to equality, diversity, and justice - both inside and outside faith communities.

● Our daughter Annie, who died suddenly of natural causes in June 2020, spent a year studying in North Carolina in 1999 - 2000. She remained keenly interested in US politics – her final post was in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. Her birthday was 3 November – I fervently hoped that Joe Biden would win the Presidency on that day as a posthumous birthday gift to her. As we know, the result wasn't ratified till many days later but it finally pointed towards better times.

## FAIR TAX NOW Report January 2021

Our tax systems are unfair. This is both because they are designed as unfair and because individuals and corporations exploit the weaknesses in the systems in order to dodge the taxes that they owe. This report is designed to accompany our 'Fair Tax Now' campaign. That campaign draws attention to a number of ways in which our current national and global tax systems are unfair.

It highlights Jo, a nurse in the NHS, who along with her colleagues is struggling with the impact of covid. While nurses like Jo put themselves on the line for the rest of us it seems unfair that they are taxed at a higher rate than the average person earning £10 million per year. That is one of the stark conclusions that emerges from research undertaken in the Summer of 2020 by Advani and Summers. They show that when you include earnings and taxation associated with capital gains that on average those earning £10 million per year pay a lower rate of tax (Income Tax, Capital Gains Tax plus National Insurance Contributions) than a typical nurse in the NHS.

The campaign tells the story of Andy and Sarah who while earning just above minimum wage paid almost 10% of their income on Council Tax. One day, a bailiff appeared at their door and began to take an inventory of their goods. It made Andy feel like a failure. Their experience contrasts starkly with those who earn over £1 million and who pay approximately 1% of their income in Council Tax. This is just one of the injustices of the current Council Tax system that, according to Citizens Advice, creates the most frequent debt problem in the UK.

We also draw attention to the copper rich nation of Zambia who in 2013 lost \$1 billion of tax revenue that should have been paid by a collection of multinational corporations. If that revenue had been received, it could have addressed almost a quarter of Zambia's debt or been used to double its spending on healthcare or education, and in the process saved thousands of lives.

We discuss the ethics of all this drawing attention to how the values of equity, justice and compassion undergird our shared notion of fairness. In response, we propose a change in the in the public narrative so that paying taxes is considered as socially responsible as seeking to reduce your carbon footprint. It should be just as unacceptable to dodge taxes as it is to pollute the atmosphere.

More specifically, we propose the following policy measures to be enacted:

- Tax Income Equally – combine Income Tax, National Insurance and Capital Gains Tax into a single progressive tax with a single allowance.
- Reform Council Tax – we suggest it should be replaced either with a proportionate property tax or a land value tax.
- Tax Wealth Effectively – such a tax could exclude pensions and people's main homes, but tax net wealth (possibly on an annual basis above a threshold of £1 million) at an appropriate rate.
- Stop The Dodging – tighten the legislation to close the loopholes and in particular properly resource HMRC and Companies House so they are able to enforce those rules
- Ensure fairer Global Tax Rules - prioritise the needs of lower income countries in the global tax negotiations that are currently taking place.

Read the full report at: [https://www.catj.org.uk/uploads/1/1/8/6/118613197/ftn\\_report\\_pdf\\_standard.pdf](https://www.catj.org.uk/uploads/1/1/8/6/118613197/ftn_report_pdf_standard.pdf)

There is help with writing to your MP on Tax justice in light of the coronavirus and Global tax justice at:

<https://www.catj.org.uk/lobbying.html>

Petition to end tax dodging by multinational corporations in poorer countries at: <https://www.catj.org.uk/petition.html>

## LENTEN READING

This Lent I'm reading a book in tandem with a friend, actually a close friend of my late daughter Annie who has now become my friend through our shared grief and many happy memories too. I did the same with another of Annie's friends for Advent 2020, reading *In the Bleak Midwinter*, a daily journey of reflections through Advent and Christmas drawing on the poems of Christina Rossetti, by the Anglican priest Rachel Mann. There is a wonderful closeness in knowing that another person is journeying with you and absorbing the same wise words in memory of and alongside a cherished loved one.

Our Lenten book is David Rhodes' *Lenten Adventure*, a powerful and thought-provoking interpretation of our journey as Christians, not only through the season of Lent but beyond. He tells an interesting story of a Bishop who arrives by train in a far-flung part of his diocese to be greeted by the Mayor of the town. A red carpet is laid out on the platform where the first class carriage is due to alight. No sign of the Bishop. Finally, he is spotted coming from the back of the train. Puzzled, the Mayor asks why on earth did you travel second class. Because there was no third class the Bishop replies.

Rhodes invites us to move away from the 'quietness and solemnity; stability and silence' of one interpretation of 'church' and embrace the 'challenging and provocative figure' of Christ.

## WAY OF THE CROSS - WAY OF JUSTICE

The risen Jesus penetrates the entire cosmos  
pervades the whole world,  
and makes his presence felt in every human being.  
The resurrection is a process that began with Jesus  
and will go on until it embraces all creation.

Wherever an authentically human life is growing the world,  
wherever justice is triumphing over the instincts of domination,  
wherever grace is winning out over the power of sin,  
in their social life together,  
wherever love is getting the better of selfish interests  
and hope is resisting the lure of cynicism or despair,  
there the process of resurrection is being turned into reality.

*Way of the Cross - Way of Justice* Leonardo Boff, Brazilian theologian and writer

## DIARY DATES

### FEBRUARY

**Fairtrade Fortnight**, which runs from 22 February to 7 March. **Choose the World You Want** [fairtrade.org.uk/choose-the-world-you-want/?fbclid=IwAR28AxZpJOT2zrrcT7EH-eOA7LfjxosYnd5HShot6p482dT0un1dGdZPKw](https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/choose-the-world-you-want/?fbclid=IwAR28AxZpJOT2zrrcT7EH-eOA7LfjxosYnd5HShot6p482dT0un1dGdZPKw) Please get involved, and at the very least make wise choices when you are doing your shopping.

### MARCH

5 Women's World Day of Prayer prepared by women of Vanuatu [wwdp.org.uk](http://www.wwdp.org.uk)

8 International Women's Day [internationalwomensday.com](http://internationalwomensday.com)

21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination [un.org/en/events](http://un.org/en/events)

22 World Water Day [worldwaterday.org](http://worldwaterday.org)

24 Romero Ecumenical Service Metropolitan Cathedral Liverpool 6pm Archbishop Malcolm McMahon

27 Earth Hour [www.earthhour.org](http://www.earthhour.org)

### APRIL

4 Easter Sunday

19 Online conversation on "The Politics of Division" 7pm - 8.30pm hosted by Church and Peace in Britain and Ireland. "Is the UK government pursuing a "white nationalist" agenda to split our communities?" Join us on zoom to discuss this issue. After a short introduction to "unconscious bias" we will hear from Simon Barrow (Director of the ecumenical thinktank Ekklesia) and Bishop John Perumbalath (Chair of Churches' Refugee Network). Opportunities for small-group discussion. Register here: <https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/2021/02/online-conversation-politics-of-division/>

NJPN continues to have a weekly column in *The Universe*, and some of these are 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.

- ESSENTIAL READING TO KEEP YOU INFORMED ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES

Sign up at [bulletin@justice-and-peace.org](mailto:bulletin@justice-and-peace.org) for a new fortnightly e-bulletin with a comprehensive round-up of current events, campaigns, e-petitions and resources

Back copies of NJPN news and NW E-Bulletins at: [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)

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