

Dear friends,

For your attention and action where appropriate: (this information can also be found on our website <http://bit.ly/2udGQts>)

Nakba Day 2019

The 15th May 2019 is the 71st Anniversary of the Nakba (Arabic for "catastrophe"). This commemorates the expulsion of more than 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and the destruction of over 400 Palestinian towns and villages to make way for the Israel state. Around the world there will be activities in support of the Palestinians and especially those who, after more than seven decades, remain refugees.



On May 15th Pax Christi International and Pax Christi UK will issue a Press Release which will be circulated, and we invite you to join us in taking action with all those praying and working for justice, equality and peace in Palestine and Israel.

Whatever you do, please tell Pax Christi and if possible send a photograph. Thank you

Possible Actions:

Prayer:

Light a candle and pray for justice, freedom and peace for those denied their human rights. Ask for a prayer to be included in a service locally.

Circles of Silence:

Palestinians aren't heard – so we stand alongside them in silence.

In your home, group, parish, school, community, wherever you are arrange to have a time of silence in solidarity with the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Please take a photo that can be sent to Palestine that will say, 'We have not forgotten you.'

Sign a Petition:

<https://palestinecampaign.eaction.online/HSBC-End-your-complicity>

Write a letter to your MP (via <https://www.writetothem.com>) **asking that the UK Government:**

- recognises the Nakba and the right of return and/or compensation for Palestinian refugees;
- acknowledge that Palestinians have the right to nonviolent, peaceful protest,
- insist that all Palestinians are afforded their human rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989;
- ends the arms trade with Israel.



Stories from the Holy Land: CAFOD meeting for Kidderminster deanery volunteers and supporters

Friday 21 June, 7-8.30pm followed by a bring-and-share supper. Teas and coffees served from 6.45pm.

St Peter's parish, 2A Charford Rd, Bromsgrove, B60 3LU.

An exciting opportunity to hear from our Step into the Gap volunteer, Caroline Collins, about her visit to the Holy Land, to encounter CAFOD projects, partners and communities supported there. We'll also have a look at our exciting new ambition No One Beyond Reach and our climate change campaign, 'Our Common Home'. All very welcome!

To book your place, please email ewignall@cafod.org.uk or ring 01922 722944.

Stories from the Holy Land: CAFOD evenings in Bartley Green and Kings Heath

Two exciting opportunities to hear from our Step into the Gap volunteer, Caroline Collins, about her visit to the Holy Land to encounter CAFOD's work. We'll also explore our new climate change campaign, 'Our Common Home'. **All very welcome!** To book your place, please email ewignall@cafod.org.uk or ring 01922 722944.

St Peter's RC Church, 42 Adams Hill, Bartley Green, B32 3QG. **Thursday 20 June, 7pm-8.30pm.**

Teas and coffees served from 6.45pm

St Dunstan's Conference Room, Kingsfield Road, Kings Heath, B14 7JN. **Monday 24 June, 7.30-9pm.**

Palestinian refreshments will be available.

Come to *The Time is Now* mass lobby of Parliament in London on Wednesday 26 June



As people of faith, we're determined to speak up for our common home in the face of the climate crisis, and on 26 June we'll come together with 100 other organisations to meet our MPs and make our voices heard. We'd love you to be part of it. [Read more about the day here.](#)

Meet our new director in June in London or Manchester

Places are filling up for our two national gatherings for CAFOD volunteers, Trustees and Leadership Team. It's a chance to meet and hear from our new director, Christine Allen, and to explore our mission as we look to the future. Do join us!



[Book for London](#) Saturday 8 June: Westminster Catholic Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden Ave, Westminster SW1P 1QH.

[Book for Manchester](#)

Saturday 15 June: St Catherine of Siena Community Centre, School Lane, Didsbury, M20 6HS



Baptised and Sent: Our call to be Missionary Disciples

Pope Francis has declared October 2019 as an Extraordinary Missionary Month, being 100 years since Pope Benedict XV's teaching on mission. It will be a special month of prayer and action, calling us to renew our missionary commitment to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all peoples.



For the four weeks of October 2019, four themes have been approved by the Holy Father:

1. A personal encounter with Jesus Christ living in His Church
2. The witness of missionary saints and martyrs
3. Biblical, catechetical, spiritual and theological formation for mission
4. Missionary charity as a commitment to support the Church's missionary activities and communities too poor to support themselves

The Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission and the Columban Missionaries invite you to reflect on your experiences, celebrating and putting into action the call to mission for justice, peace and care for creation at our Assembly on Saturday 12th October 2019.

Book now:- http://bit.ly/JandP_Assembly2019



No Planet B...

Acting out Faith in the World



Xanh Tran | Survival Media Agency

Saturday 29th June 2019 10am - 4pm
Priory Rooms, Bull Street, Birmingham, B4 6AF

An ecumenical environmental conference

- Connecting us with the World
- Practical action we can take together as Churches
- What we can do as Individuals in our Communities

Register at: centralenglandquakers.org.uk/noplanetb

Hosted by Central England Quakers, organised by:



Ecumenical Environmental Conference in Birmingham: No Planet B... Acting out Faith in the World

An ecumenical day for all those concerned that there is no planet B and interested in how we can act out faith to protect the world we already have. Featuring speakers & workshops on:

- Connecting us with the World
- Practical action we can take together as Churches
- What we can do as Individuals in our Communities plus an exploration of plant based diets, with a vegan lunch provided.

Register at:

centralenglandquakers.org.uk/noplanetb

Organised by a planning group of regional environment representatives from Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Quaker and URC churches, plus CAFOD and Christian Aid.



To mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day and the completion of the Coventry Peace Orchard, **you are invited to a Peace Picnic on 6th June**. The event will be attended by hundreds of school children and will include games, poetry, live 'period' music and food stalls. Soft drinks will be provided.

The Peace Orchard has been created with local schools and conservation groups. It includes 700 native apple trees and fruit hedging plants, hundreds of newly sown wildflowers, paths, seats, signs, information boards, plaques and a web site. The project is intended as an environmental and education resource for Coventry schools and communities. See <https://www.peaceorchard.co.uk/> for more information.

Date: Thursday 6th June 2019

Time: Drop in between 12:00 noon – 3:00 pm

Place: Coundon Hall Park, Tamworth Road entrance (opposite Sandpits Lane) CV6 8NJ

Please register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-peace-picnic-tickets-60804183951>

All are welcome. If you would like to bring a large group, please email contact@normandy-day.co.uk



MARKING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

The Normandy Day UK charity, Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Coventry City Council are delighted to invite you to:

A COMMUNITY PEACE PICNIC

JUNE 6TH 12.00 – 3.00 PM

COVENTRY PEACE ORCHARD, COUNDON HALL PARK, TAMWORTH ROAD, COVENTRY CV6 8NJ

Join Coventry people, hundreds of local school children, veterans and Coventry's Lord Mayor to mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day and celebrate the Coventry Peace Orchard.

Carnival atmosphere with games, live music & poetry, food stalls and an ice-cream van. There will be a short presentation around 2.00pm

Soft drinks will be provided. Bring a picnic and something to sit on.

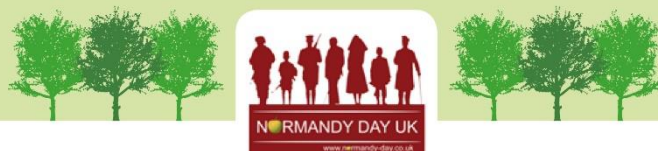
This event is part of Coventry's Positive Images Festival.

**A MESSAGE FROM DENNIS DAVISON,
D-DAY VETERAN, BEM, LEGION D'HONNEUR**

The Normandy Campaign turned the tide of WWII. I was in the D-Day landings in 1944 and served in the support teams supplying the front lines. In later life, I settled in Normandy and took part in the mass peace picnics held every year on the landing beaches on 6th June, the first Day of the Normandy campaign, and re-visited the apple orchards of the Pre-Bocage, where much of the inland fighting took place. When I returned to Coventry, UK, I wanted to help protect the legacy of peace that Europe has enjoyed since 1945 and the memory of the young men who gave their lives.

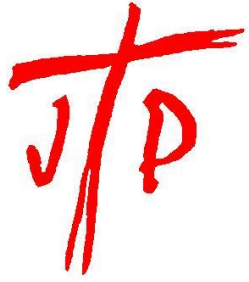


Since 2013, we have spoken about the Normandy campaign with thousands of school children, made two short films and created a Normandy Peace Orchard. This work has prompted the outpouring of veterans' memories, often for the first time, and these stories have captured the imagination of children and young people. I'm humbled by what this means.



The Coventry Peace Orchard is proudly supported by





The 2019 European MEP Election – Advice and Prayer from NJPN Thinking about which party to vote for

Be careful about promises: At election time politicians like to make big promises. It is easy to promise, but much more difficult to make them happen. Ask yourself if these promises are meant honestly, or if they are just a way of capturing your vote?

Look at who is on the party lists: We vote for parties, but the parties send individuals to the European Parliament to be our MEPs. They are there to represent us and our interests. Who are these people? You can find out who they are by looking at the lists published. Look up:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/en/european-elections/european_elections.html

Be careful about giving your vote to those who have shown themselves to be abusive, corrupt or incompetent.

Understand their policies: Some parties have good speakers; others can organise inspiring rallies. But when the speeches and the rallies are over, can they actually represent you diligently in the European Parliament? Will they support policies in the interests of all citizens? As Pope Francis asks in the quote below, do they have good, sensible policies? And do they know how to put these policies into place?

There are many important issues: The economy is important, but so is the environment and social welfare and peace. Poverty and inequality affects millions across Europe. Corruption and tax avoidance needs to be tackled, and so does violence and crime. Human rights, employee rights and freedoms need to be defended. We should not pick just one issue as the most important 'single issue'. Which party do you think has the best approach to dealing with as many of these questions as possible, as well as possible?

Check where the funding comes from: Some political parties have been very secretive about their donors and have been fined for breaking spending rules, and are under investigation. Ask the parties how they are funded? Are they funded from outside the UK?

A spiritual preparation for voting...

- Come to the decision with openness to where God may lead you. Don't vote for a party because you always have in the past.
- Gather information by reading and asking questions of the parties you are considering voting for.
- Consider which party seems to be thinking and acting most closely to the values of Jesus.
- Ask which party is most likely to serve the common good – not just my interests, or the interests of the economic elite.
- Make a tentative decision and offer it to God in prayer, talk to God about why you have decided this.
- Listen to the Holy Spirit in your heart – what is God's choice?
- Look for a sense of deep peace – this is a clue that you have discerned well.

"People say 'I'm from this party' or 'I'm from that party', but effectively, they don't have clear thoughts about the basics, about proposals. The people are sovereign. I will only say: *Study the proposals well, pray and choose in conscience.*" – **Pope Francis**

This has been adapted from a pamphlet issued by The Southern African Catholic bishops' Justice and Peace Department, in advance of that country's recent election.

Prayer for the 2019 European Elections

Lord, as we approach the European MEP elections,
grant to us and across Europe the wisdom and courage we need,
to make the right choices.

Move us to carry out our duties as responsible citizens
with respect for the rights of all Europeans citizens.

By voting in a spirit of Christian fellowship, human solidarity and service,
may we bring hope to the poor, unity to all European people
and a commitment to stabilise the Climate and stop pollution,
for a more secure and peaceful future for all your children and creation.

Lord do not allow us to become discouraged or misled by hollow or harmful promises.

Fired-up by the Holy Spirit, inspire us to contribute to the re-building
of the European Peace Project with vigour and generosity.

Loving and merciful Lord, we pray that in our voting the world may be blessed,
we ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Relevant articles:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/can-british-democracy-handle-the-european-elections-public-debate-civility-and-extremism/>

https://www.ted.com/talks/carole_cadwalladr_facebook_s_role_in_brexit_and_the_threat_to_democracy

https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_why_brexit_happened_and_what_to_do_next



To help you keep abreast of what is going on in the diocese our Website is updated regularly. We also now have a twitter account so please follow us. Don't forget if you are running any Justice and Peace related events or holding Justice and Peace related meetings email me the details so that they can be added to the Justice and Peace Website Calendar.

We are also looking for articles for next months News Letter, so please send us information about what you have been doing or what you feel would be interesting to others.

With best wishes as always,

Janet Vaughan

Administrator, on behalf of the Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission

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The views expressed in this newsletter are the view of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission or the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham.