

Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission Newsletter

www.birminghamjandp.org.uk



Issue 48

Summer 2021

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

There are so many issues in our modern world that claim our attention as people who seek to work for justice and peace. We often have to make a difficult choice on what to focus on now.

One very important issue which becomes ever more pressing is the climate emergency and our responsibility to care for Creation. Pope Francis and our Church calls us to reflect, pray and act and do what we can as individuals, parishes and diocese to help make the changes in our mindset and lifestyle to ensure the future health of our climate and our world. We must pay attention to the cries of the poor who are suffering and will suffer most in this situation. It is time for action. It is a major focus of the Commission and will be in the future.

May the Lord inspire and bless us all in this work.

With best wishes,
Fr Gerard Murray (Chair)

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Dates for your diary:

Dates for 2021 (All meetings on Zoom)

Monday 12th July
Commission meeting, 11am

23rd - 25th July NJPN 43rd Annual Conference

Tuesday 27th July:
on-line discussion forum

Monday 13th September
Commission meeting, 11am

27th September to 3rd October Our Assembly

Monday 15th November
Commission meeting, 11am

COP26 UN climate conference, which will now take place between 1 and 12 November 2021 in Glasgow.

Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission

On Tuesday 11th May a number of us joined together via Zoom to discuss how we can put the proposed Environmental Policy into practice.

- How we can implement it in our situation?
- How can our Parish be more environmentally friendly?
- How to include our Parishes Schools?
- How do we get it into the blood stream of the parishes and the diocese?

During our discussion forum meeting our chair, Canon Gerry, informed us that the next letter from the Bishops was going to be about the environmental issues and how they link in with our catholic social teaching.

[\(CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES Pastoral Letter for Pentecost 2021\)](#)



**THE GLOBAL CATHOLIC
CLIMATE MOVEMENT**

Commission member Phil and myself have now completed the Laudato Si' Animators training. I am sure that all those of you reading this that have already completed the course would join with me in recommending you to do it if the opportunity arrives. The areas covered in the course includes:

- * SEE: The Work for Climate Justice
- * JUDGE: What does our faith say? Laudato Si' and Catholic Social Teaching
- * ACT: A Commitment to Personal Ecological Conversion
- * ACT: Action in the Light of Our Faith

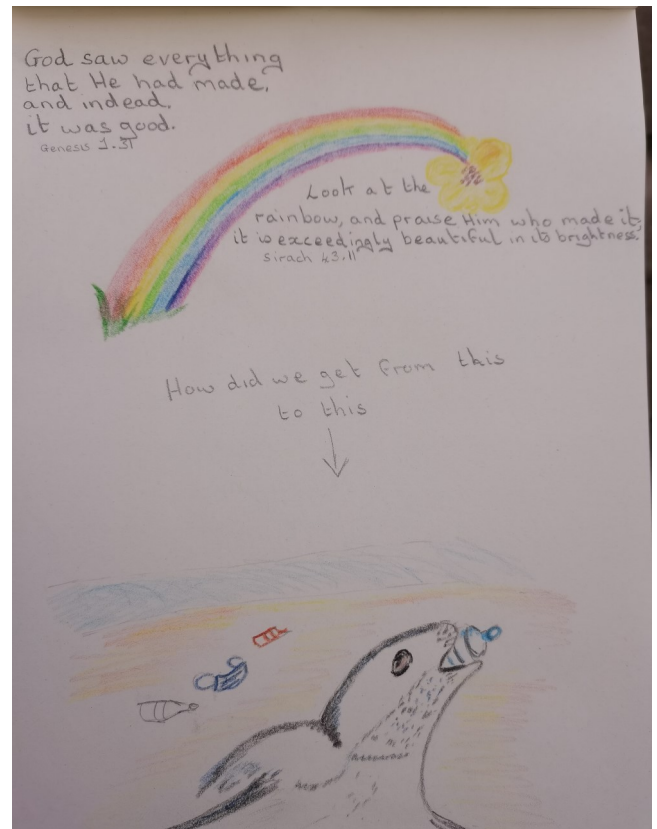
The good thing about the course being on Zoom was that we were joined with people from many different countries.

I also attended the Living Laudato Si': Your Parish and Your Planet Zoom Retreat led from Boarbank Hall, Cumbria

- * WHY? Faith is the place to start.
- * WHAT? Understanding is the place to start.
- * HOW? Sharing experience is the place to start.

One of the tasks was to creatively represent how you would ideally like Laudato Si' to become a reality in your parish.

Well this is what I managed to draw.



It is not finished and not particularly very good, but what I was trying to highlight was that everything beautiful and good, then we with our over use of plastics, our industrialisation, our putting profit before people, have turned it into the world we have now. We have caused the problems, now we, bit by bit, little by little need to sort it out. We each in our own way need to do our bit with enthusiasm and not be afraid to say "I recycle ...", "I don't buy that because of the damage it does to the environment", or "I don't buy that because it was produced using slave labour", "I try to always buy locally grown produce", "I walk, cycle, use public transport as much as I can". All these things add up and make a big difference.

During our next discussion forum we may talk about how much do we know about Laudato Si'. What do we know about Cop-26?

Our next Assembly, like last year will be taking place on Zoom. Our discussion forums are a way for us to work together and get to know each other. As well as helping each other develop ideas and good practices.

Janet Vaughan

**Our next discussion form is planned to
take place using Zoom at 7pm on
Tuesday 27th July**



Laudato si'

Laudato Si' changed my life!

When Pope Francis' encyclical came out 6 years ago, I read it with great interest and arranged a series of talks for the Westminster cathedral interfaith group by Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and humanist speakers.

<https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/593848159928436554/5636506199406640569>.

They all loved the document. The group went on to study "Sharing Eden" a Christian, Jewish and Muslim initiative.

Last year I trained as a Laudato Si' animator with the online course from the Vatican organised by Global Catholic Climate Movement. It was excellent and interesting to hear from people all over the world. I started asking who in England was also doing the course and put my email address in the chat each week asking people in the UK to contact me.

As a result a group of us started meeting on zoom on Thursdays and that has now become a regular fortnightly commitment. We worked with Journey to 2030, CAFOD, J and P and GCCM to put on a Lent course "Global healing" with films from the Bishops conference and speakers like Carmody Grey, Emma Gardner and Paul Kelly, Our weekly handouts reached 900 people and 110 have now done the Laudato Si' animators course this year!

People were invited to email me and I have put people in touch within their own diocese to create networks including J and P and CAFOD.

Colette Joyce of Westminster J and P had been to one of the interfaith group meetings and I "met" her again on a J and P zoom. She co-ordinates a weekly Monday meeting for London with people from 5 dioceses. It is so helpful to have this sharing of information as there is so much going on this year. We are working on London climate action week June 26 to July 4 with an interfaith service and schools assemblies on June 29 focusing on the climate crisis.

A major influence was reading "The joyful environmentalist" by an old friend from my librarian days Isabel Losada. Any eco-conversion has to start with yourself and a serious look at your home life. Lock down gave the opportunity for a huge clear out and perhaps the highlight for me was giving some of my school prize books to my eldest grandson who is an eco-warrior at his school! It was also a time to contemplate creation in our garden as I see Laudato Si' as essentially a spiritual document.

My task now is to work in the parish to get Laudato Si' and Live Simply known and over the next 7 years bring the Laudato Si' platform to parishes first and then wider afield. I have another role as chair of South London interfaith group so I am also working in Southwark archdiocese. Pope Francis is so inspiring and I loved "Let us dream". I can confirm that my wife would agree that "Laudato Si' changed my life for the better!".

John Woodhouse

johnwoodhousecat@gmail.com

Facebook Laudato Si' animators UK



CAFOD Reclaim Our Common Home

CAFOD's campaigning tackles the causes of poverty and hunger, not just the symptoms. Speaking out for justice goes hand in hand with our work overseas to help vulnerable families and communities to flourish. It enables us to help thousands more communities than we could through fundraising alone, by advocating for changes in policy and practice to reduce poverty overseas. It includes political campaigning, but it is not party political. There are a variety of ways you can participate.

In 2020, we experienced the worst global health crisis in a century. The coronavirus pandemic has devastated lives and shattered families in Britain and across the world, with disastrous consequences for people's jobs and livelihoods. The pandemic exposed many of the inadequacies of how our world currently works. It has proved that we need greater cooperation

between nations, solidarity between people and a greater focus on the poorest in society. Our latest campaign, Reclaim Our Common Home launched in January 2021 is a response to Pope Francis's call for a new way of thinking about the world, and to take an active part in renewing our troubled societies by embracing the universal values of solidarity and fraternity. He tells us this moment of extraordinary turmoil is the time "to rethink the future of our common home and our common project" and, in doing so, address the causes of poverty, inequality and the climate emergency. The three main goals are as follows:

- Tackling the climate crisis – Global solidarity
- Ending unjust debts - Global justice
- Holding business accountable – Global responsibility

Britain will host two major international conferences this year, firstly the G7 in June, an annual meeting where leaders from the world's seven richest countries will gather to discuss how to rebuild after the pandemic. In November, the 'COP26' climate talks will take place in Glasgow where world leaders will meet to identify a way forward in working together with the aim of ending the climate crisis. Against this backdrop, there are several ways to get involved:

Urge Boris Johnson to put people hardest hit by the climate crisis at the heart of COP26 by signing the petition [here](#)

Parliament in Your Parish

As part of the Reclaim Our Common Home campaign we are inviting Catholics to organise a virtual meeting with their local MP to discuss how to rebuild from the pandemic addressing issues of climate change and unjust foreign debts. There are numerous online resources available for you. To find out more information and a step-by-step guide about how to arrange a meeting can be found [here](#). There is a lot of support available. If you have any questions, please contact PinyourP@cafod.org.uk with any queries you may have. If you have arranged a meeting, please do let us know by registering your meeting [here](#)

Further information regarding Reclaim Our Common Home can be found [here](#)

Joanne O'Meara – CAFOD Birmingham

CAFOD
Catholic Agency for
Overseas Development



Delivering a Common Future to Eradicate Modern Slavery

A High-Level Dialogue on delivering a common future to eradicate modern slavery was held on 31 March. Organized by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) and Walk Free, the virtual conference was moderated by the journalist Roger Hearing. Key note speakers included Sanjoy Hazarika International Director of CHRI, Her Excellency Ambassador Nazrat Shameen Khan, President of UN Human Rights Council, Rt Hon Theresa May MP, and Dame Sara Thornton, UK Independent Slavery Commissioner.

Ambassador Khan outlined the United Nation's long engagement with human rights with the Human Rights Declaration in 1948. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a rise in inequality and increased vulnerability, especially for women and girls, with increased gender based violence resulting in more street children and migrant workers. UNHCR has established a business and human rights committee as private entities must take action.

Sanjoy Hazarika noted that the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2018 committed to eradicating modern slavery but progress has been too slow. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation and created conditions for slavery to thrive. Theresa May said as Chair in Office of CHOGM 2018 the UK government recognized the importance of this issue with 15.8 million people in slavery, and no country is immune. As the Commonwealth is a large group of member states it can unite and take action on slavery and lead the world. In Commonwealth countries 1 in 150 are in slavery.

The UK Modern Slavery Act is an example for the world and the UK is funding work by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to encourage improvement of legislation in member states. The UK is looking to strengthen business supply chains and further work on support for victims. We need conditions that don't encourage entry to slavery and we need to enhance justice systems to break the business model of slavery.

The High Commissioners of Fiji, Bahamas and Australia reaffirmed their commitment to eradicating modern slavery. A recording of the meeting is available on [YouTube](#).

Judith Diment
Dean of the Representative Network & Primary
Representative to the Commonwealth of Nations
Rotary Club of Maidenhead Thames

Please do continue to pray for all those in government making decisions about how best to help the country recover from the pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast 2021 Online

'Life Beyond Covid: A Renewed Hope' is the theme of this year's National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast which is once again being livestreamed on Friday 25 June from 8:00am-8:45am. It will be chaired by The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP and we are delighted to welcome The Rt Revd Professor NT Wright who will give the keynote address. There will also be prayers led by parliamentarians and hymns with special guest singers. Following the Breakfast, there will be a programme of webinars hosted by our partners from 10:00am-3:00pm.

Please pray for all the preparations: for the programme as it comes together, for all the logistics of livestreaming from across the country, and for the invitation to be spread far and wide so that as many parliamentarians, church leaders and Christians from across the UK can join us online. The purpose of the event is to be a thought-provoking Christian witness to all parliamentarians, to inspire church leaders and parliamentarians about the relevance of the Christian faith to politics and to foster closer relationships between MPs and church leaders. Please join us in praying for God's will to be done through this year's event.

[Download the PDF invitation](#) for more information, and [register for free on our website](#) to receive access. [Here is a short promotional film that you can share.](#)

Local constituency breakfasts

While we are unable to all gather in Westminster Hall this year, we are encouraging church leaders to organise local constituency breakfast events for their local MP and other local church leaders to watch the Breakfast together and to discuss ways that they can work in partnership to support people locally.

Please pray that many of these local breakfasts will take place, that many MPs will come, that relationships will be strengthened and that there will be helpful discussions about how to serve together.

If you are a church leader and would like to organise a local constituency breakfast, find out more information on [how to do so on our website](#).

Ongoing ministry

In addition to the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, we are thankful for the opportunities for our ongoing ministry within Parliament. Most of our ministry is still taking place online, but as parliamentarians and staff begin to return to the office, we will move to hybrid and in person ministry.

Please pray that this transition goes smoothly and for wisdom as we continue to seek opportunities to draw alongside Members and staff. We would really appreciate prayer in the following areas:

Chapel services: Our Tuesday lunchtime chapel services continue to take place on Zoom and are attended by a core group of Members and staff. Recent series have included the Pharisees in John's Gospel and Episodes in Elijah from 1 Kings 17&18 and after recess we will be looking at Psalm 103, the latter chapters of Acts and Daniel 1&2. Please pray for all those who attend to be strengthened and built up as they reflect on God's Word, and for all the speakers as they prepare. We are encouraged by a good number of Members who attend each week, but we would love to see more Members making this a weekly commitment.

Bible study and fellowship groups: Our two Bible Studies for Members continue to be a great encouragement, with good numbers at both and a deeper unity in Christ across party boundaries. We are currently working through Joshua and Colossians, respectively. Claire is also leading a new Bible study and fellowship group of women MPs on a Monday afternoon, which has started really well. Please pray for each of these groups: that the Members will benefit from Christian fellowship and will keep their eyes fixed on Jesus as they seek to serve Him in Parliament. Please also pray for 1:1 opportunities as the Christians in Parliament team continue to meet up individually with Members and staff to read the Bible and provide pastoral support.

Finances: We are thankful for God's ongoing and generous provision to us through one-off donations and regular giving which enables our ministry to take place. Opportunities for Gospel ministry in the Houses of Parliament continue to grow, so please pray for new financial support to help sustain and grow the ministry. If you would like to partner in our work financially, please [visit our website for more information](#) or contact claire.newman@parliament.uk.

Thank you very much again for supporting us in prayer.

Yours,

The Christians in Parliament Team
P.S. You can listen to audio from Christians in Parliament events on [Soundcloud](#) or through our [iTunes podcast](#).





CARJ Briefing on the Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

In the summer of 2020, Prime Minister Boris Johnson appointed a Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, to examine 'why so many disparities persist' and 'what can be done to eliminate or mitigate them'.

The Commission was specifically tasked to look at 'race and ethnic disparities in education, employment, crime and policing and health.' The Commission's Report was published on 31 March 2021 with headlines saying that the UK should be seen as an 'international exemplar of racial equality' and 'there was no evidence of institutional racism'. Throughout its Report the Commission is suggesting that, given the progress that has been made and given the complexity of inequalities based on race, class, geography and other factors, we should be taking steps to improve outcomes for all rather than concentrating too much on race. The Commission looks carefully at four areas.

Education. The Commission sees education in recent decades as a success story, with young people from ethnic minority communities achieving in school and going on to university. A few groups (eg Caribbean, Pakistani, Gypsy/Roma/Traveller, poor Whites and some mixed groups) still under-achieve and some of these are over-represented in exclusions. Under-achievement is due to many factors including poverty, geography, and family structure. The Commission has a number of recommendations to support all young people in education.

Employment, Fairness at Work and

Enterprise. Employment for Black people and Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups is significantly lower than for White and Indian groups. A relatively small pay gap between white and ethnic minority groups remains. Ethnic minorities are making progress up the professional and occupational class ladder, but less so at the top. The Commission recommends further attention to the pay gap, promoting fairness at work and supporting young entrepreneurs.

Crime and Policing. Ethnic minorities are disproportionately both victims and perpetrators of crime. Black people especially are disproportionately victims of violent crime and homicide. For every young white victim of homicide there are 24 Black victims. Class B drug offences account for almost half of crime committed by ethnic minorities. Stop and

search statistics need more careful analysis. Assaults on police officers are increasing and there are assaults on ethnic minority police officers including by people from similar backgrounds. No police service is ethnically representative of the population it serves. The Commission recommends work on establishing trust, supporting young people away from crime, encouraging ethnic minorities to work with the police and improving diversity in the police while giving them the skills to better serve a diverse community.

Health. The Commission rejects the generalisation that ethnic minorities have worse health outcomes than white people. The situation is extremely complex. Ethnicity is not the main cause of health inequalities in the UK. Deprivation, geography and exposure to health risks play an important part. More needs to be done to explore health risks like family structure, social networks and unhealthy behaviour. There is no strong evidence of racism in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.

The summary above is only suggestive and we encourage readers to read the full Report by following the link below. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>

Criticism of the Report – Institutional Racism

The Report is rich with data, but its interpretations and reflections go beyond the data and are questionable. However, many of its recommendations should be given thoughtful consideration. The Report has met with a chorus of criticism from reputable sources. We share many of these criticisms, and we are especially concerned about the Reports' sceptical discussion of 'institutional racism'.

The Scarman Report into the Brixton disorders (1981) defined institutional racism narrowly and denied its existence. Almost twenty years later, the Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, headed by Sir William Macpherson, finally looked carefully at the issue of 'institutional racism'. The Macpherson Report concluded that 'institutional racism ... exists both in the Metropolitan Police Service and in other Police Services and other institutions countrywide.' (6.39) Macpherson defined 'institutional racism' as:

'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership. (6.34)'

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales welcomed the Macpherson Report and urged Catholic organisations and institutions to review themselves and 'look again at how they could better serve minority ethnic communities in our society.'

<https://www.carj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Serving-a-Multiethnic-Society.pdf>

The recent Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities acknowledges the earlier Macpherson Report and its definition of 'institutional racism', but is sceptical about the current use of the term. We prefer the positive approach of the Bishops to the Commission's scepticism. We would suggest that organisations and institutions might be expected to take some responsibility for offering an appropriate service to our diverse society – along the lines of the 'public sector equality duty'.

Some Critics of the Report

The following are a few of the critics with a link to their statements:

The Runnymede Trust
<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/sewell>

Muslim Council of Britain
<https://mcb.org.uk/press-releases/mcb-responds-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities-report/>

NHS Providers
<https://nhsproviders.org/news-blogs/news/to-pretend-discrimination-does-not-exist-is-damaging>

British Medical Journal (BMJ)
<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/03/31/structural-racism-is-a-fundamental-cause-and-driver-of-ethnic-disparities-in-health/>

Simon Wooley Baron of Woodford
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/apr/01/sewell-report-no-10-racism-protests>

Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/01/doreen-lawrence-says-no-10-report-gives-racists-the-green-light>

David Olusoga
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/apr/02/sewell-race-report-historical-young-people-britain>

British Sociological Association (BSA)
<https://es.britsoc.co.uk/bsa-response-to-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/>

Open letter from 399 Academics
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EQwtYRfT6Mxx-30T-FGthcA5eaf8M5YUjSXBNNyN-Ww/edit>

The King's Fund
<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/press/press-releases/kings-fund-responds-commission-race-ethnic-disparities-report>

CARJ, 9 Henry Rd, London N4 2LH.
020 8802 8080.
Info@carj.org.uk.

The Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ) is an independent charity committed to working with others of diverse backgrounds and beliefs to bring about a more just, more equal, more cooperative society. CARJ Briefings are primarily intended to give readers accurate and relevant background information on current issues. Occasionally, a position or argument may be put forward provisionally for reflection and further discussion.



A MESSAGE TO SUPPORTERS May 2021

With respect to a gradual opening of the centre and the resumption of outdoor activities, Asha's Board of Trustees will be guided by advice from Public Health England. We are also especially aware of the vulnerability of our user group. Meanwhile, food deliveries and distribution continue and remote support to families and individuals will be tempered by visits to parks and small outdoor gatherings.

For Information

TOGETHER WITH REFUGEES

ASYLUM REFORM INITIATIVE

Together with Refugees is a coalition of national and local organizations, refugees living in Britain, and people from all walks of life who believe in showing compassion to people fleeing war, persecution or violence. The campaign is founded on a simple, but powerful, set of shared convictions:



How we treat refugees is about who we are. At our best, we are welcoming and kind to those facing difficult times. If any one of us feared for our lives or for our loved ones, we'd want to know that others would help us to safety.

Together, we are calling for a better approach to supporting refugees that is more effective, fair and humane. This means standing up for people's ability to seek safety in the UK no matter how they came here and ensuring people can live in dignity while they wait for a decision on their asylum application. It means empowering refugees to rebuild their lives and make valuable contributions to our communities. And it means the UK working with other countries to do our bit to help people who are forced to flee their homes.

Research shows that many more people have compassion for refugees than the media narrative would have us believe. This is why it is more urgent than ever to:

- Build public and political consensus for a more effective, fair and humane system for refugees and asylum-seekers, as part of a wider shift in attitudes on race and immigration.
- Help support a thriving, diverse and united movement, with people with lived experience leading.
- Secure changes to ensure asylum-seekers and refugees receive fair, humane treatment in a changed system.

Individually we may feel helpless. Together we can make a difference.

Asha North Staffordshire supports the campaign and invites you to support it also.

Activities will peak on World Refugee Day on 20 June and Asha hopes that staff, users, volunteers and supporters will be able to come together in person around this time.

Asha North Staffordshire, Unit 7 Hanley Business Park, Cooper Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 4DW



The Green Church Showcase

Launched
Friday 4th June



The Church Times, in collaboration with members of both the Church of England and Roman Catholic environmental working groups, is launching this Friday:

The Green Church Showcase

— a hunt for inspiring church initiatives to protect and preserve the planet. The Showcase builds on earlier successful collaborations: the Green Church Awards and the Green Health Awards.

We are inviting churches, church schools, dioceses, and Christian groups of any denomination to submit details of work that they have undertaken to combat climate change, protect nature, and involve their communities in making changes.

A judging panel chaired by the Church of England Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, the new lead bishop for the environment, will sift through the entries at the end of July. They will be looking for projects that are most easily reproducible by others, so that the whole Church contributes to the reversal of climate change.

These selected projects will feature in a specially commissioned video — the 'showreel' — to be launched during the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow at the start of November.

Because this isn't an awards scheme, there are no specific categories. But we will be encouraging people to tell us about:

Building projects moving towards net-zero carbon, such as energy efficiencies, pew heaters, heat pumps, and solar panels

Building projects that balance conservation and the environment, such as maintenance programmes, sympathetic retrofits, and using low-carbon materials
Courageous advocacy and community engagement
Nurturing the natural world, and using church land to develop health and wellbeing

Involving young people at every level
Diocesan initiatives that break new ground
Simple but effective gains on a shoestring

Past winners of Green Awards, eco-congregations, and groups from any denomination are invited to tell their stories.

The showreel will be launched during an online debate about the Church's response to the climate crisis in early November. The selected projects will also feature in a booklet, published at the same time. And detailed advice will be available online, to give other churches and groups the tools they need to replicate the successful projects.

Timetable:

Launch: 4 June

Closing date for entries: Wed 21 July

Judging w/b: Mon 26 July

Creation of videos, booklet, and dossiers: August-October

Launch event and publication: w/b 1 November

The Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich and Chair of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group, said this week:

"It's my great pleasure to support the Green Church Showcase as one of my first actions, in the week I take over as lead Bishop on the Environment.

"In this vital year for climate action, I encourage churches and church schools around the country to tell their stories. The Showcase aims to celebrate practical action on the ground and, through these real examples of what is possible, inspire others.

"Whether your project has tackled the energy use in your building, cared for nature in your grounds, or engaged your community, please do apply as part of the Green Church Showcase."

The Rt Revd John Arnold, Bishop of Salford and lead Bishop for the Environment, for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, said:

"The Green Church Showcase is a welcome opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of those parishes who are at the forefront of making green changes, which are key to creating a more sustainable future for our society.

"Sharing examples of best environmental practice and supporting creative change will help us to better understand how we can make progress together, as the Body of Christ, on the pressing issue of climate change. In my own Diocese of Salford, through the 'Guardians of Creation' project, we are leading on research into the local church's response to the ecological crisis. We will share this research across ecumenical networks, as the project unfolds.

"Catholic communities are already pioneering change in various ways, including engaging with CAFOD's livesimply award, transitioning to greener energies and developing education on this issue in our schools. As we move towards COP26, we hope that 'Green Church Showcase' provides a platform that will enable and encourage churches to learn from each other across denominations.

Andy Atkins, Chief Executive Officer of A Rocha UK, said:

"The Green Church Showcase is a very timely initiative to celebrate — and learn from — the achievements of churches who have been working so hard to make a difference on climate change. In all my 35 years of campaigning on social justice and the environment, I cannot remember a time so fraught with risk and so overflowing with opportunity. Christians and churches can have a critical influence on this outcome by becoming beacons of good practice, and, speaking up together, on climate change.

"Five years after A Rocha UK launched Eco Church, it has become a national community of more than 3,500 churches addressing the environmental crisis, using practical ways to restore biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions. Christians and churches have a wealth of assets — buildings, land, community links — to bring to bear to this challenge of our generation. And Eco Church provides a learning community with shared tools in which churches can draw on those assets and advance together".

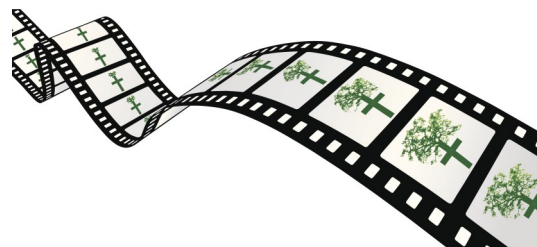
Paul Handley, editor of the Church Times, said:

"Nothing is more encouraging than learning from people who have tackled the same problems and met the same challenges — and overcome them. We know that many Christian communities have taken huge

strides in reducing their carbon footprint and protecting the natural world. It will be a privilege to report these achievements and inspire others to follow their lead."

For more information, and application forms, see <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/green-church-showcase> (goes live on Friday 4 June 2021)

Or contact Paul Handley: editor@churchtimes.co.uk; 07719 813792



Creation Care

Christian Responses to the Climate Emergency

creationcare.cc

Creation Care is a new six-session online course for small groups, developed to help Christians learn about, and then respond to, the Climate Emergency. Each session invites you to read, pray, discuss, and consider how we are called to react to this huge challenge which faces us.

The course has been built by the FaithJustice network and supported by the Passionists.

The six sessions attempt to give a basic overview of the subject. Beginning with a session focused on the science. Then moving on to the bible. Session three looks at our emotional responses to this crisis. From session four the focus moves towards what we might do, starting with direct action, then divestment. In the final session the course looks at ecological conversion and how we might live more sustainably.

It can be run by parishes, movements, small groups, or individuals; and is designed to work either in person, online or as a hybrid. There is the flexibility to run it over whatever intervals work for your group.

For each sessions there are video and articles, then questions for group discussion.

Why not log in and take a look!

<https://creationcare.cc/>

Supplied by Matthew Neville

UK CHURCHES' RELAY TO COP26

Birmingham Hub
24th - 26th August 2021



More info at yccn.uk
relaytocop26.birmingham@gmail.com



Rise to the Moment

Churches Relay from G7 to COP26

On Sunday 13th June the first pilgrims will set off from Truro Cathedral starting the long walk to Glasgow, arriving for the beginning of the COP26 climate summit.

The relay is an act of Christian witness calling for a meaningful response to the climate emergency.

Rachel Mander is one of the young organisers of the pilgrimage, she write: "I was inspired to walk on the relay as an act of solidarity with those people and places most affected by climate change, inspired by the long history of Christian pilgrimage and social action".

The journey to Glasgow will not take a direct route, it will walk to London via Bristol, then head north to Birmingham, then to Nottingham before crossing the country to Manchester, back across the Pennines to Leeds then up the East coast through Newcastle to Edinburgh then back west to Glasgow.

There will be a three day pause in Birmingham, 24-26 August.

The relay is for everyone. There are many ways to get involved. As a walker, by offering accommodation, by offering hospitality in a church, by helping to plan the route or by being part of the team organising events during the stop in Birmingham.

To find out more go to <https://www.yccn.uk/>

Or email:

relaytocop26.birmingham@gmail.com

Supplied by Matthew Neville



WHY?

Inspired by the long Christian tradition of pilgrimage and the history of Christian activism, we're coordinating this as a group of young Christians seeking to mobilise the UK church as a whole in climate justice.

We hope that those in every church, regardless of age, would feel inspired to get involved as we take a stand against climate change.

WHAT?

This November, world leaders are meeting in Glasgow for important climate negotiations. We believe it's time to make decisions which protect people not bank balances, to decide that no country will go into debt tackling climate change. It's a decade-defining opportunity.

Join the UK churches' Relay to COP26 as it passes through Brum

HOW?

- ✓ Birmingham is 1 of 10 Residency Cities
- ✓ 3 city-wide events, and opportunities to host local events
- ✓ The walk features 20 Route Sections
- ✓ 100+ Walking Days
- ✓ Open to all ages

GET INVOLVED!

1. Join us on the Route
2. Help with our Birmingham Residency Hub
3. Participate in other ways

relaytocop26.birmingham@gmail.com

Sign up at yccn.uk



"bring the whole human family together . . .
for we know that things can change"
(Laudato Si' 13)

We are responding to the call of Laudato Si'. With profound care for each other, our Creator, and all creation, we are building a better future together.



A CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

"...public pressure has to be exerted in order to bring about decisive political action." Laudato Si paragraph 179

AN INTRODUCTION TO COP26

COP stands for Conference of the Parties. The United Nations Framework Convention (UNFCCC) has over 200 countries which are Parties to the Convention. The Parties to the Convention meet once a year. This year's meeting is COP26, and will be in Glasgow. The UNFCCC, which takes scientific guidance from the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has established agreements between the Parties to act on climate change. The COP meetings assess the effects of the measures taken by the Parties and the progress made in dealing with climate change.

The Parties have made various pledges:
to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
to respond to the impacts of climate change through ways of adapting and through helping in climate catastrophes
for wealthier nations to provide finance and technology to help poor and vulnerable countries to take action.

The Official UN COP26 site <https://ukcop26.org/>
CAMPAIGNING ORGANISATIONS

Many organisations are running campaigns to address COP26. Here are a few. Click on the name to visit the website. Faith Based Organisations (FBO) are recognised by UNFCCC as informal Non-Governmental Organisations, so joining with a FBO will strengthen your demands.

The Climate Coalition 'Great Big Green Week' https://greatbiggreenweek.com/?utm_source=MAIN+LIST%3A+The+Climate+Coalition+Email&utm_campaign=06fd36acfd-

EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_04_01_10_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5d9d4008a3-06fd36acfd-44155358

The COP26 Coalition <https://cop26coalition.org/>
Make COP Count <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-are-uk-faith-groups-priorities-as-we-host-cop26-tickets-152891856659>

Green Christian <https://greenchristian.org.uk/PETITIONS>

There are several COP26 petitions available to sign, which is an easy way to make your voice heard. Copy and paste to search for them in your browser:

Climate Coalition Petition
Global Justice Now
Climate Justice Petition
The Catholic Petition
The Cafod petition
Christian Aid Petition
Petition to COP26 against Fracking
Petition to COP 26 for sustainable catering
Surfers Against Sewage Petition
350 Petition to COP26 against promoting polluters
Polluters Out Petition
Greenpeace Petition

LAUDATO SI ANIMATORS UK

Dedicated to spreading the teachings of the Pope's Encyclical 'Laudato Si'

Provided by Sue Porter

Young Pilgrims Service - YouTube

On Sunday 13th June, Young Christian Climate Network pilgrims began their 1200 mile relay from the G7 meeting in Cornwall to the Climate Summit in Glasgow (COP26) in November. The link will take you to the service in Truro Cathedral that launched their journey of witness. Let's pray for systemic change that will lead to climate justice for the planet and its poorest,

Paschal



Catholic Leamington Are we a LiveSimply Parish?

We, at Catholic Leamington (the three churches of St Peter, Our Lady and St Joseph in Leamington Spa), decided to become a Live Simply Parish. After a good amount of blood, sweat and tears, this was accomplished. Our Parish was the first in our Diocese. After three years, we were reassessed. Dare I say it, but we passed with flying colours. We were setting the standard. Job done.

No, job started!

The biggest challenge is to maintain the standard, to get the whole parish on board and to go the extra mile. This is far from easy, and pandemics and lockdowns don't help.

Now we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, our small Live Simply Parish team, all five of us, recently met on zoom to plan for the immediate future. What are we planning to do?

First and foremost, we are to complete unfinished business in the form of **Recycling for Good Causes** <https://www.recyclingforgoodcauses.org/>. At the time of the first lockdown, we were on the verge of introducing collecting points in the churches to provide recycling of valuables such as mobile phones, cameras, jewellery and so on. They provide a leaflet stand with leaflets explaining what items we can recycle and a sack or box in which to collect our items. Once the sack is a minimum weight they will arrange free collection. Subsequently, we will receive a cheque for our charity, which for us is CAFOD. So we expect to do this, church by church, as soon as we are allowed to do so, hopefully in the not too distant future.

Then we have the **Season of Creation** to consider, 1st September through to 4th October. Once again, we expect to provide a special penitential rite, not only for the 1st and 4th, but also for each Sunday during the season. You might like to use it yourself, or feel free to modify it:

Introduction to the penitential act

During this month of September, we celebrate the Season of Creation through to the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on October 4th. Pope Francis calls us all to celebrate this opportune moment to "reaffirm [our] personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handywork which He has entrusted to our care, and to implore His help for the protection of creation, as well as His pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live." Let us recognise our part in harming the earth and our neighbours, and we ask for the Lord's forgiveness.

Penitential Rite

Lord Jesus, for the times we have been indifferent to the harm we do to our environment and to nature by our excessive use of fossil fuels and plastics and other single use goods ...

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, for the times we have been selfish and self-indulgent in buying what we want, rather than what we really need ...

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, for the times we have ignored the plight of those facing droughts, floods and storms as the climate changes ...

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins
and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen

Of course, it goes without saying that we provide input for Bidding Prayers.

In the past, we have also held a LiveSimply Mass on one of the Sundays at one of the churches, but that is not in our plans this year. There is only so much that our small team can do. But we do have the **EcoFest**, which is a local celebration of all things ecological (and some things that aren't) in the centre of the town, on the Pump Room Gardens, if you know it. It should have taken place in May, but at least it is being planned to happen in September. Fortunately, the District Council have taken over the organisation, but we will have our own stall, promoting Fairtrade and Green Energy.

But this year, September is also the month preceding COP26! And the **Climate Coalition** is asking everyone to organise special events during the week **September 18th – 26th**, for their **Great Big Green Week**, a national week of events celebrating action on climate change. It will be the biggest event for climate and nature ever in the UK, and everyone's invited! What are we going to do? That has yet to be decided

Any ideas?

Brian Austin,
Catholic Leamington LiveSimply Parish team.

CAFOD
Catholic Agency for
Overseas Development



Ahead of the G7 group of nations summit taking place in Carbis Bay, Cornwall from 11-13 June 2021, bishops representing the Catholic communities of England, Wales and Scotland have written to Prime Minister Boris Johnson to stress that we must work together to ensure a just and sustainable future for our global community.

In 2021, the UK has the Presidency of the G7 and will gather leaders of G7 nations, the EU and guest countries for the summit.

“The urgency of the global ecological crisis, and the teachings of our Catholic faith implore us to speak out, take action, and make decisions that benefit our planet and the most vulnerable in society,” say the bishops. They also emphasise that the social, economic, and environmental crises we face are inextricably linked. “The emergency of the ecological crisis has a human face, recently highlighted by the Vatican’s guidance on climate displaced people. In our race towards our own technological and economic advances, we have caused the exploitation of people and the degradation of our planet. Energy and infrastructure are vital in supporting the poorest in our societies out of the pandemic and out of the ecological crisis, but we must look towards a future whereby we radically reduce our use of fossil fuels – something which the countries which you represent have a shared responsibility for, in ensuring fair outcomes for the benefit of all.” The bishop signatories are Bishop Richard Moth, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton and Lead bishop for Social Justice for the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, Bishop John Arnold of Salford, Chair of CAFOD and Lead bishop for the Environment and Bishop William Nolan, Bishop of Galloway and Lead bishop for Justice and Peace for the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland.

The bishops accept that working towards a solution to these problems is far from easy but highlight what the Catholic Church is doing to play its part.

“Across England, Scotland and Wales, Catholic organisations and communities are already working hard to help respond to the environmental crisis; through transition to use of green energy, a major

project to provide a template for how we can decarbonise our dioceses, working towards CAFOD’s liveSimply award in our parishes, and through education in our 2,600 schools.”

Whilst assuring the G7 leaders of their prayers, the bishops call upon them to:

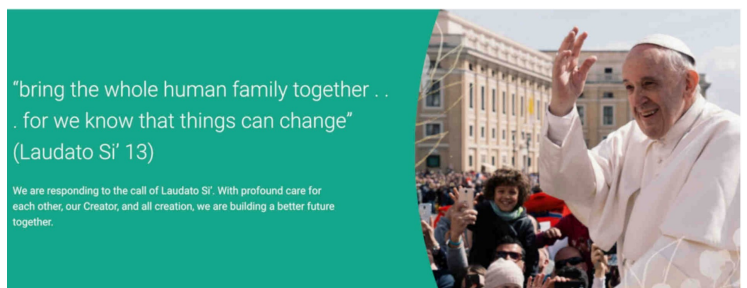
Provide economic support towards a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, and to move quickly to halt the biodiversity loss the planet is facing.
Act to support developing nations, ensuring that they are not left behind in decision making, and have fair access to vaccines.

Ensure sustained action and accountability, to meet targets set out in the Paris Agreement and move as quickly as possible towards a zero-carbon economy, so that we do not exceed the 1.5C temperature rise, beyond which life on our planet will face dire consequences.

Full Text

You can download a PDF of the bishops’ letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson copied to the COP26 President, the Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP.

[G7 Leaders – Bishops’ Letter – 070621](#)



Hayes are still planning to reopen to Conference on July 1st with reduced capacity following government guidelines, and open more fully on 19th July in time for our Conference. The Centre has been accredited by the AA as Covid-19 confident

Look forward to seeing you and welcoming you to Swanwick between 23rd-25th July.

Geoff Thompson
NJPN Administrator

Diocesan Environmental Policy

The Justice and Peace Commission have prepared an Environmental Policy for the Archdiocese. This is meant to be a practical guide for Parishes, Schools, Communities, Groups, and individuals to help them respond to Pope Francis' call for all of us to undergo an 'ecological conversion'.

We were invited to present the Policy to the Diocesan Trustees at the end of April. Fr Gerry and myself met online with the Trustees. It was clear that the Trustees welcomed the Policy, but they did have certain reservations, for example, about the cost of upgrading older buildings. The suggestion to participate in the Live Simply scheme was universally accepted with enthusiasm.

It was agreed that more work needed to be done in refining parts of this and so Eric Kirwan, the new Chief Operating Officer for the Archdiocese, was asked to convene a small sub-committee to discuss and amend the Policy, as it currently stands. We are awaiting news of when this sub-committee will meet.

Whilst we wait for progress, I am updating the Policy to include participation in the Laudato Si Action Platform which was launched by the Vatican at the end of Laudato Si week, 25th May, 2021. This is a seven year programme and more details will be forthcoming in October.

Please be aware of the Season of Creation: 1st September to 4th October. We will be circulating more details in the near future about how we can observe this period.

We all need to pray.

We need to pray more that the richer countries do take the actions, which only they can, to lift people out of poverty, to help provide enough vaccines to combat the pandemic, to cancel debt.

Phil Mayland.

June 2021.



**2021 Global Peace Index
published today
(17th June 2021)**

Dear Friends,

As you may have seen online, the 2021 Global Peace Index has been published today by the Institute for Economics & Peace in Sydney. This is a significant day for Coventry given the city's unique status as the UK's only City of Peace and Reconciliation. You may have heard IEP's founder Steve Killelea speak at RISING19. A copy of the report is attached.

Sir Ciaran Devane, the new Director of the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, has given his reaction to the report – see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfQOaZK5n_o

As well as confirming the findings of our own <https://www.thebetterplaceindex.report/home>, Sir Ciaran has also said how 'leadership for peace' is required to respond to the big global challenges which we face. It's this leadership theme which we'll be exploring at the annual RISING Global Peace Forum 10-12 November in Coventry (PLEASE SAVE THE DATE, details to follow in due course).

With best wishes,
Richard

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Link to the Peace index can be found on our website
<https://www.birminghamjandp.org.uk/latest-news.html>

If you have a contribution you would like included in the **November 2021** newsletter please send it by Email for consideration to:
The Administrator, J&P Commission.
Email: bham.jandp@gmail.com

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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.

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