

# Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission Newsletter

[www.birminghamjandp.org.uk](http://www.birminghamjandp.org.uk)



Issue 50

Winter 2022

## Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 50th issue of the Birmingham Justice and Peace commission newsletter. Our thanks to all who have contributed and such interesting material over the years. It is always informative, challenging and encouraging Janet does a great job in pulling it all together. 50 is a significant milestone. We are reminded how the work and prayer for justice and peace must continue as our witness to the Good News in our lives and in the life and work of our parish communities. The Covid pandemic has exposed great kindness and sacrifice for others but also the deep injustices in our world. I hope you enjoy this issue and find it helpful as you reflect on the challenges that face us.

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

With best wishes,  
Fr. Gerard Murray (Chair)

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Link to book onto our Lenten Retreat

<https://bit.ly/LentenRetreat2022>

## Dates for your diary:

### 2022

Monday 21st February

Commission meeting, 11am

**Saturday 5th March Lenten Retreat**

St Paul's Convent, Selly Park, B29 7LL

Monday 25th April

Commission meeting, 11am

Tuesday 24th May

Justice and Peace on-line Forum 7pm

Monday 4th July

Commission meeting, 11am

Tuesday 26th July

Justice and Peace on-line Forum 7pm

Monday 5th September

Commission meeting, 11am

26th September to 2nd October

Our Assembly if Online

Saturday in October

Our Assembly if Face to face

Monday 7th November

Commission meeting, 11am

Tuesday 22nd November

Justice and Peace on-line Forum 7pm

All Commission meetings and Forums are on Zoom

## Justice and Peace Commission New Members

Deacon Nick has been ordained for four and a half years. He ministers in the Parish of the Immaculate Conception in Bicester, Oxfordshire.

Nick is married to Clare, and they have two children in their twenties, Tom and Charlotte, who live in London.

Nick runs a consultancy business helping mainly public and charity organisations to improve their leadership and staff engagement to deliver successful change. He has no plans to retire just yet!

As part of his parish ministry Nick is involved in Adult Catechesis, Evangelisation, Youth work, and with Christians in Bicester. He aims to try and help wherever he can! Nick is also involved with the Archdiocese Ecumenical Commission, and work to support parishes in the roll-out of the Archdiocesan vision.

Supporting the Archdiocesan Vision priorities of Evangelisation, Formation, Liturgy and Worship and Social Outreach is what led Nick to accept a request for a Deacon to join the J&P Commission. He is excited about the impact it can have in social action and tackling the climate emergency.



### USING THE LAUDATO SI ACTION PLATFORM

The Laudato Si Action Platform is now live, launched appropriately on World Day for the Poor, November 14th 2021. What the site provides is a resource and a method for us, either as an individual, a family, or organisation, to take the next step in the ongoing ecological conversion that Pope Francis asks for, to care for our common home. It is highly recommended for anyone who wants to engage with Laudato Si'. This little article is to help you use the platform, but please remember that this is still new and small changes can be expected.



CAFOD recently ran an online talk (30th November) on 'The Laudato Si Action Platform and Livesimply', which can still be viewed at <https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/Livesimply> which you might find useful, but you don't need to view all of it; the following may be of interest:

2:55-8:45 mins (5:55 mins) Pope Francis on the Action Platform (recommended)

23:15-30:00 (6:45 mins) Sophia White – a tour of the Laudato Si Action Platform website

Here's the link: [laudatosiactionplatform.org](https://laudatosiactionplatform.org). Our first impression is that the site is a very professional site and demands our attention, but a little bit of help in using it goes a long way, so what follows is a short guide that might help you navigate it, especially in finding the Laudato Si' Full Planning Guide, explained later.

First. Though, you need to enrol, although it might seem strange being asked to commit to something before you know what it is you are committing to! But unless you do you so, you do not have access to the whole site. You use the ENROLL tab to create an account.

We suggest, to start with, you enrol as a 'family or individual'.

You are committing to four things:

1. Complete a Self-assessment
2. Submit a Reflection
3. Produce a Laudato Si' Action Plan
4. Each year, re-assess, reflect and revise your action plan

which follows the analyse-reflect-act-evaluate of the 'pastoral cycle' that some of us may be familiar with, rather like the 'see-judge-act' method.

Once you have enrolled and you are logged in, you have another set of additional tabs. To start, choose the DASHBOARD. To begin it might be useful to read their Planning Guide, but to find it you need to scroll down to the button: **[Read the Full Planning Guide]** at the very bottom of the page! However, it is provided in a zip folder and you may need some guidance, to read or print the file (9 A4 pages).

Now, in the Dashboard page, you can begin. You can complete your **Self-Assessment**, your **Reflection** and your **Action Plan**. These are easy to find and use on the Dashboard.

For the **Self-Assessment**, it says allow about half an hour, but it could take about an hour, and it is useful to

find out your annual energy usage before you begin. Once completed, you will receive an email acknowledgement, with the promise “your results will be evaluated and shortly you will receive a report with the results of your overall environmental impact and carbon footprint.” At the time of writing we have yet to receive this to know exactly what form this takes. “Having an overall view of our current practices in integral ecology can be very helpful. Being able to see where we stand gives us a sense of direction, an understanding of how far we’ve come and where we might want to go from here.” [LS Planning Guide]

The next stage is your **Reflection**, which is very much free-style, so you can write what you wish in any style that you wish, or even produce a video, but ideally you might want to relate it to the Laudato Si’ Goals in some way. There are a few reflections of others that you can access to see what they have done.

Finally, you make your **Action Plan**. Again, what form this takes and what it contains is entirely up to you. There is no pro-forma or suggested layout. In the Suggested Actions page there are plenty of suggestions and you may even be overwhelmed. One simple approach might be as follows:



Go through the Suggested Actions for each of seven Laudato Si’ Goals, which you will find in the Suggested Actions tab (and you will already have seen them in the Self-Assessment section).

For each Laudato Si’ Goal, select the simplest and easiest action that you are able to do in the next year. If there is any criticism to be made, it is that some of the actions are not easy to interpret or are beyond the scope of most people, but a little imagination goes a long way, since each one can be used liberally rather than literally.

If you wish you can make a list of these, for example:

#### Response to the Cry of the Earth:

Insulate buildings - I could do this by draught-proofing my home as much as possible.

#### Response to the Cry of the Poor:

Ensure members of the community have free access to clean water and sanitation - I will contribute to a charity (like CAFOD) with a monthly standing order. I will be generous.

#### Ecological Economics:

Purchase recycled and sustainable materials - I will shop at a Charity Shop as a first port of call, as and when I need something.

#### Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles:

Transition diet from meat-based to plant-based as much as possible - I could try to go meat-free/plant-based for one day each week (in addition to Friday) and do more if I can.

#### Ecological Education:

Create opportunities for youth-led Laudato Si’ initiatives - I could offer support to our youth leader in doing something related to LS with them.

#### Ecological Spirituality:

Regularly host outdoor prayer services - I could take part in a reflective ‘walk in the park’ as and when it is organised.

#### Community Resilience and Empowerment:

Organise social/ecological events - I could take part in an activity organised by the LiveSimply Parish team or organise something myself.

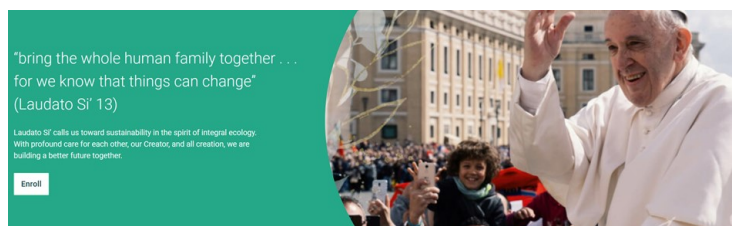
Then select the easiest, achievable goal. Make this your Action Plan for the next year. If you want to take on more than one, or schedule them for each month, you are free to do that. But it is suggested you make any activity SMART – simple, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. This is your goal for the year.

Job done! And then, next year, you review your progress by carrying out a new self-assessment and repeat the process.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if each of us, individually, undertook a LS action plan? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if every person in our parish undertook an action plan?

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if every parish in every diocese took part? What can we do to make this happen?

Laudato Si Animators UK (contributed by Brian Austin)



<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>





## Catholic Concern for Animals

CCA will be launching a major new educational campaign in 2022, which will be called "CCA Campaign to end Bullfighting in Catholic Countries".

This campaign will involve working in all those countries we identify as complicit in this appalling "spectacle" to educate on the barbarity of the bullfight. We will work with all interested groups and individuals to try and bring an end to this abhorrent activity. We are launching the campaign by publishing a revised version of Barbara Gardner's article "End Bull Torture Now" from the Spring 2019 Ark and which you can read here.

I will be reporting regularly on how this educational campaign is proceeding in the months, and indeed years, ahead, as I have to be honest and admit that this is a massive undertaking that will not be a success overnight but will require a lot of continued work and dedication over a considerable period of time.

Indeed it will also require a large amount of CCA resources, including financial resources, and if you would wish to support this project, I would ask that you consider making a donation for this campaign via the [CCA Website](https://catholic-animals.com/). <https://catholic-animals.com/>

We are also focusing in 2022 on the subject of wolves, which are another species that get hugely unfair and cruel treatment from humans.

A new "pressure group", which has been called "The Wolf Pack" has been formed across Europe under the auspices of Eurogroup for Animals and of which CCA are founder members. This new grouping has recently had its inaugural meeting online and are putting together an action plan for 2022.



With Ryn and Dawn at the helm, volunteers packed 271 presents for Asha's children while Lydia prepared envelopes with 'a little extra' for 70 parents and 28 men and 25 women.

They started work at 10 o'clock and finished at 8.00 pm. At lunchtime everyone enjoyed a delicious Sri Lankan lunch prepared by Manjula.

The presents and gifts were delivered by Ryn, Dawn, Jackie, Lydia, Keita and Tamba, and volunteers, Diane, Kevin, Cordelia and Connor, Ruth and Tom, and Margaret.

A BIG THANK YOU to 71 individuals who supported the appeal financially and in kind, especially Louise Hampton and Mark at Porter Signal 1 Cash for Kids, Sharon Blakeman and Captain Leanne Wallis Leek Salvation Army, Lizzie Meek and Bongsi Msimanga BBC Radio Stoke, Elaine Dodd Umbrella Company, Trinity Church Leek, Sisters of Nazareth, Moores Metals, Tatton Book Club, and two members from the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints who arrived with an extra-large load of toys.

FOOD Thank you Aldi, Tesco and Sainsbury who donate surplus food weekly and who cleared their shelves before Christmas.

### FOREST PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL MARKET PLACE 1 December 2021

This was an opportunity for representatives of local support organisations to meet teachers, parents and pupils and Asha was delighted to attend. Ryn and Dawn pricked up their ears when two excited youngsters rushed into the hall shouting, "It's Asha. Wait, let me get my Mum and tell her Asha is here." Big smiles broke out as the boys went to find their Mum who commented: "We have attended this session as you are here. Asha means so much to us, it's our family. Throughout our time in Stoke you have always supported us. Thank you, Asha!"

SAURDAY CHILDREN'S CLUB 11 December 2021

It was the usual mayhem of happy kids participating in craft activities, playing computer games, and with toys. Ryn was sitting on the floor, interacting with the children. Making sure all were happy and safe; she started an imaginary conversation with young boy. They went on an adventure together in their space rocket. As they powered into space, Ryn asked where would the best place in the whole universe to go? Without hesitation, he boy replied "Llandudno." Have you ever been to Llandudno," he asked? "I went with Asha; it was the best day ever." A day trip to the seaside can leave a lasting legacy of positive emotions and memories.



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## REFUGEES

By Brian Bilston



They have no need of our help  
So don't tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not OK to say  
These people are just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way

Now read this again from the bottom line upwards.



## How fair is Fairtrade coffee?



### What is 'fair trade' coffee?

Every day we drink 2 billion cups of coffee worldwide. From mocha and macchiato to flat white and latte, the coffee market is worth tens of billions of pounds. It's a lucrative business. However, with shoppers growing more and more conscious of where their food comes from, plenty of coffee brands are increasingly using words like 'eco', 'ethical', 'sustainable' and 'fair' to promote their products.

These claims are designed to reassure coffee lovers that their spending choices are having a positive social, economic and environmental impact. However, the bitter truth is that many of the 125 million people who depend on coffee for their livelihoods still don't enjoy the standard of living that their hard work deserves.

The problem is, when it comes to coffee's ethical credentials it can be hard to distinguish the good from the bad. For instance, when non-Fairtrade certified coffee suppliers label their product as 'fair trade', 'ethically traded' or 'fairtrade' – with a lowercase 'f' – without mentioning the name of an ethical certification scheme, it's hard to tell what production standards they actually follow.

Companies who use these claims on their packaging, websites or adverts aren't obliged to meet any officially recognised standards, unlike companies who sell their coffee on Fairtrade terms. This makes it much harder for you, as the consumer, to trace the origins of the roast or understand how a company's policies ensure fairness for the coffee farmers and workers who produced the beans.

### How Fairtrade helps coffee farmers face challenges

Coffee farmers are currently facing multiple crises. First of all, many non-Fairtrade farmers receive very low prices for their crops that don't cover their costs. Secondly, the climate crisis is a huge threat to those in low-income countries, despite them having contributed the least to the crisis. From more frequent and intense floods, droughts and storms, to the emergence of new pests and crop diseases, these harmful climate impacts mean farmers can lose entire harvests when disaster strikes.



All this has been made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic which has disrupted production and sales, leaving farmers out of pocket.



*Tekembi and his family. Tekembi is a member of the Neknasi Coffee Growers Cooperative Society in Papua New Guinea*

Despite being a lucrative industry, the average non-Fairtrade coffee farmer lives on as little as £1.37 a day. This is fundamentally unfair. Unless farmers earn more for their crops, they'll struggle to afford to protect their families and livelihoods from the many crises they face.

Fairtrade partners with farmers and businesses alike to tackle these crises. We do this in many ways, including campaigning for fairer incomes, providing emergency funds for farmers during the pandemic and training coffee farmers to fight the climate emergency and adopt greener, more sustainable farming methods.

### **How to know if your coffee really is fair trade: enter Fairtrade**

If you want to enjoy a truly fair coffee, you need to make a conscious choice to choose labels that don't stir up poverty, inequality and environmental harm. This means opting for brands who can explain exactly how they support the farmers who grow their beans to get the best deal possible, how they ensure that the coffee supply chain doesn't exploit workers or the environment and how they can show that their claims are independently verified. And that's where Fairtrade comes in.

Fairtrade is a global movement that represents more than 1.6 million farmers and workers in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and is 50% owned by farmers and workers. The goal is that producers in low-income countries enjoy a fair wage, safe working conditions and fairer terms of trade.

### **What makes Fairtrade fair – and why it's fairer than non-Fairtrade coffee**

Choosing Fairtrade coffee makes a world of difference to the 750,000 Fairtrade coffee farmers worldwide, from Colombia and Kenya, to Indonesia and Ethiopia.

By requiring companies to pay farmers sustainable prices for their crops, the Fairtrade system tackles the

injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the most marginalised communities. This means when farmers sell their coffee under Fairtrade terms, they get a better share of their crop's value, giving them more funds to farm sustainably, build a better quality of life.

### **Here are three ways Fairtrade works for farmers:**

- Fairtrade farmers are guaranteed to receive at least the Fairtrade Minimum Price for their coffee (with an extra price incentive for organic coffee). This provides a safety net to farmers when market prices plummet.
- Certified cooperatives also receive the Fairtrade Premium: an additional payment to invest in business, social or community projects of their choice (although at least 25% must be spent on improving product quality). In 2020, Fairtrade coffee farmers earned £6.7 million in Premium through the sales of coffee in the UK. This helped to pay for health supplies, food, environmental projects, education, farm improvements and much more.
- Fairtrade's environmental, economic and social Coffee Standards fight for a better deal for farmers, including by protecting their rights, stamping out gender inequality and ensuring decent working conditions. These Standards also encourage growers to protect the environment by planting trees, conserving water and avoiding pesticides.

Since Fairtrade is the only certification system that requires traders to pay a Minimum Price and Premium to coffee farmers, conscious consumers can be sure that their Fairtrade cuppa puts people and the planet before profits.

### **Why choose a Fairtrade roast?**

Fairtrade is the world's most trusted and recognised ethical label: it has decades of experience and expertise in making sure that the journey from crop to cup is as fair and sustainable as possible.

Buying Fairtrade coffee is easy and affordable. There are dozens of Fairtrade coffee suppliers across the UK, ranging from eateries like Greggs, and Leon, supermarkets such as Waitrose and Co-op, and popular brands like Percol, Café Direct and Cru Kafé.



The easiest way to spot a certified coffee is to look out for the FAIRTRADE Mark. So next time you head out for a drink, be sure to choose Fairtrade to guarantee that your cuppa is as fair as it possibly can be.

<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

# Walking Together

communion | participation | mission

As part of the Synod 2021 - 2023 on Tuesday 25th January the topic for discussion at our forum was:

***How can the Gospel message of Justice and Peace be heard more effectively and responded to in our parishes and diocese?***

We were pleased to be joined by Canon Paul. During the evening we split into 4 discussion groups. Each of whom had an opportunity to feed back to the rest of the attendees.

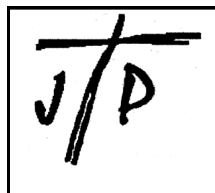
The forum with the feedback from each group can be found on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/hE5wM4Of-Z4>

Other feedback and information regarding the Synod can be found on the diocese website.

<https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/the-synod-2021-2023>



## Justice and Peace Lenten Retreat 2022



This year we are going back to St Paul's Selly Park for our Lenten Retreat. It is on the first Saturday in Lent, 5th March. You can book online <https://bit.ly/LentenRetreat2022>

Our retreat will be lead by Sr. Olivia Nakayenze from The Missionary Congregation of the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary, based at St. Elizabeth's Church Coventry.

The theme of this year's retreat is Praying with Scripture



Link to the video with - Tomás, about activities in 2022: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2IPm9Jfnk4>

### **New Laudato Si Animator course date -**

the new global course for English-speaking participants will start just after Easter - first webinar will be on Wednesday, 20th April 2022. Shareable resources and materials to promote the LSA course will be prepared and ready at the beginning of March.

Registration will be open at [laudatosianimators.org](https://laudatosianimators.org) at the beginning of March.

**Coal phase-out/fossil fuel phase-out in Europe -** we are already involved on different levels in some campaigns and protests around:

Turów (Poland/Czech Republic/Germany) - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57484009>

Lutzerath (Germany) - <https://news.sky.com/story/the-villages-killed-for-coal-12341492>

TOTAL (France) and EACOP (Uganda - Tanzania) - <https://laudatosimovement.org/2021/09/09/iucn-should-make-a-public-statement-and-put-in-place-an-ad-hoc-group-on-the-tilenga-kingfisher-eacop-oil-projects/>

We are looking for Animators' actions and activities around coal/fossil fuel phase-out and divestment activities.

Let me know what is happening in your region, country and how are you involved - please, write to me if you have any actions, protests near your place of living that you would like to support even better!  
([magda.n@laudatosimovement.org](mailto:magda.n@laudatosimovement.org))

### **Prayer for Environmental Sustainability**

Let us pray for an end to the Waste and desecration of God's creation  
For access to the fruits of creation,  
To be shared equally among all people  
and for communities and nations to find sustenance  
In the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us.  
Almighty God, you created the world and gave it  
Into our care so that, in obedience to you,  
We might serve all people:  
Inspire us to use the riches of creation with wisdom,  
and to ensure that their blessings are shared by all;  
That, trusting in your bounty, all people may be  
Empowered to seek freedom from poverty, famine, and oppression.





## Welcome Anne

We kicked off the year at CIIC by welcoming Anne Schankin as our new Director. Anne previously worked as Director of Client Development & Sales at CME Group, the world's largest financial derivatives exchange, but began her career in the non-profit space working for organizations like Focolare Movement and Catholic Charities of Dallas.

[You can read her full bio on the CIIC website](#) and reach out to her directly at [anne@catholicimpact.org](mailto:anne@catholicimpact.org)!

On the blog, we take a deeper dive and hear from Anne and Elizabeth Garlow, Co-Founder of the Francesco Collaborative who previously got to know Anne through the [Focolare Movement](#), about Anne's faith journey, Catholic Social Teaching, and the CIIC community.

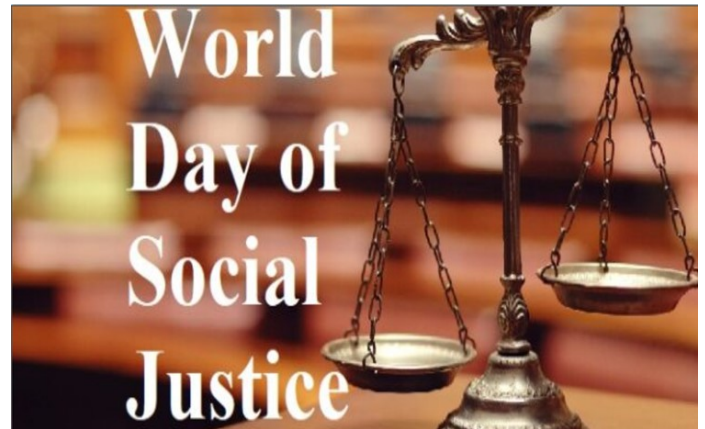


Coventry Lord Mayor's Committee for Peace and Reconciliation is pleased to announce that Roger Harrabin will deliver the Lord Mayor's Peace Lecture on 11 November.

Roger was born in Coventry and attended Stivichall Primary School and King Henry VIII School. After studying English at Cambridge he returned to Coventry as a journalist at the Coventry Evening Telegraph. From there he moved to Thames Television News and then to the BBC where he won a series of Media Natura Environment Awards for reports on environment and development issues.

He is a senior journalist and Energy and Environment Analyst at the BBC and an Associate Fellow of Green Templeton College, Oxford, and an Honorary Fellow of St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

The expected venue will be Coventry Cathedral.



## World Day of Social Justice 2022

The lack of social justice is one of the major factors leading to civil wars. Therefore it is important to think about social justice and World Day of Social Justice prompts us to do that when it is commemorated annually on February 20.

The goal is to speak out against racial injustice, elevate awareness about social inequality and to introduce together people across the world from all walks of life to eradicate poverty, sexual identity and biological prejudice, lack of education, and religious bigotry in order to create a more socially inclusive community. The UN's [International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO) works to advance social justice and promote [decent work](#).

It has called for [greater recognition and protection](#) for the hundreds of millions of people who work from home, accounting for almost eight per cent of the global workforce.

***"The challenge of social justice is to evoke a sense of community that we need to make our nation a better place, just as we make it a safer place." (Marian Wright Edelman)***

***"Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe." (Frederick Douglass).***

***"The failure to invest in civil justice is directly related to the increase in criminal disorder. The more people feel there is injustice the more it becomes part of their psyche." (Wilhelm Joseph)***



**United Nations**

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/social-justice-day>



## Jim Quinn Joins Commission



Hello as new member of the Diocese's Justice and Peace Commission I have been asked to introduce myself with a newsletter piece, so I would like to share some of my Justice and Peace journey with you.



You may remember the terrible famines in Ethiopia in 1984-85. Well, up until then my charity work had mainly just been fundraising. But the enormity of this human tragedy angered me. I wanted to know why? How could this happen in a world of plenty? So I joined Oxfam's Hungry for Change Campaign. Shortly afterwards a notice appeared on the parish notice board inviting anyone interested to a CAFOD training day at the Cathedral. This was to launch what was then CAFOD's new campaign, "Just Food". I went. I was struck by the difference to Oxfam. Central to the day in every respect: the format, the materials and the activities was a spirituality which resonated with me. I am not criticising Oxfam for not being something it was never meant to be. It is a secular organisation and an effective one. But for me working for change cannot take place in a spiritual vacuum. I just didn't know it until then. Not only did this strengthen my motivation, it deepened my faith and increased my knowledge. I discovered, and am still discovering, the riches and challenges, the at times frightening challenges, of the church's social teaching.

So this is what attracted me to CAFOD in the first place and together with a few others I met at the training day (led by one Brian Davies – then CAFOD's Head of Education) started a CAFOD group in our parish (St. Mary's Harborne). Very early on we decided not to be a fundraising group (although we did do some). Campaigning was to be our charism. We wanted to help change the underlying causes of poverty. We felt that to do this effectively we needed to get clued up, so initially concentrated on learning about development and CAFOD's work. CAFOD's excellent resources helped greatly as also did those who helped us with our journey. These included Gerry W Hughes SJ who happened to live in the parish at the time. He gave us an entertaining talk which, using biblical insights, demonstrated how God is a God of justice and compassion.

I share this story of my induction in justice & peace because it was how I discovered that Gospel values calls us to work to bring about change, but it also requires understanding of the context and the structural issues which cause/perpetuate injustice. So

by the mid-80s I understood "see, judge, act" and, as Brian Davies described it, had become a pastoral cyclist! I also came to discover, quite quickly, that justice and peace issues were something much of the Church, both clerical and lay, did not want to know about and, sadly, working for change often had to start with overcoming the difficulties of communicating these messages within the church. This is still something which, despite Pope Francis' prophetic exhortations, still occurs. This reluctance to engage is often strongest when political action is being promoted, be that lobbying an MP, boycotting a business or attending a demonstration. I can understand hesitation if you have no experience of such activity, perhaps are wary of it, but find it particularly disappointing when Catholics don't see it as part of their faith. Politics and faith are in separate boxes. When was the last time you heard a homily on corporate or government morality? As the late great Desmond Tutu once said: "when someone tells me that the gospel and politics don't mix I ask them what bible they are reading" But I have learnt the lesson that you have to start where people are, not where you would like them to be.

So I have been a campaign volunteer with CAFOD for around 30 years now and am grateful to the Holy Spirit for keeping me going and the help she obviously also pours out onto all who work for justice and peace, judging by my encounters over the years.



Changing the world can also be fun!

Speaking of the Holy Spirit, I am greatly heartened by the awaking of the Church under Pope Francis and wish his teaching was more widely promulgated. We are all called to be prophets, to light candles in the dark and Francis encourages and empowers us to do just that.

I am now in the Redditch parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and part of a Laudato Si group which launched a parish climate project last year.

You will see from the member's page of the Commission's website my longstanding interest in and the importance of environmental issues. I learned the hard way many years ago that one cannot change the world alone. It is impossible to get involved in every J & P issue that comes along. Fr Ed O'Connell once advised not to be overwhelmed by all the problems of the world but focus on that issue that resonates most with you. That is the one you may be being called to help address and that is what I bring to the commission.

## Racial Justice Sunday: 13th February 2022

This article is taken from the Catholic Bishops' website:

This year's Racial Justice Sunday falls on 13 February 2022. The theme is "In the Image and Likeness of God" celebrating different presentations of the Holy Family from different countries and cultures.  
Sunday, 13 February 2022

The theme builds on that of the previous year's Racial Justice Sunday 'A Time to Act', which reflected on the importance of everyone recognising themselves, their race, their culture and their history in the life of the Church.

Our aim, in 2022, is to continue these conversations about how we see others in the "Image and Likeness of God".

In this section, you will find resources, prayer, the [Lord's Prayer](#) and the [Hail Mary](#) in the world's languages and more.

### Resources

We have produced a series of A4 PDF posters, that individuals or parishes can download, featuring Our Lady and the Child Jesus from a diverse cross-section of countries and cultures. Although by no means exhaustive, we hope this series highlights the rich diversity of our Catholic community and encourages reflection on how we are all made in the image of God. The posters also carry a prayer taken from Pope Francis' document *Fratelli Tutti*. The posters are produced in English but, in some cases, where we have been able to, we have added a suitable translation.

Please visit the [cbcew website](#) for the various images.

The closing prayer is from *Fratelli Tutti*:  
Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,  
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,  
so that we may discover anew  
that all are important and all are necessary,  
different faces of the one humanity that God so  
loves.  
Amen.



## CAFOD Lent Appeal: Walk Against Hunger:

During the past 30 years there has been a remarkable improvement in the global families' story when we realise the progress that has been made. Over 1 billion people, that is more than 1,000,000,000, people have been lifted out of extreme poverty, (defined as living on less than £1.50 per day). Between 2010 and 2019, 1.1 billion people have been able to access electricity for the first time. Between 2010 and 2019 the number of children not attending primary school decreased from 100 million to 58 million. These are good news stories.

However, the number of people suffering from hunger had increased, even before the pandemic. This is partly because of the wars in Syria, Yemen and other countries. Nearly 2 billion people were affected by moderate or severe food insecurity in 2019, an increase from 22.4% in 2014. The number of people affected by hunger had been slowly rising since 2014.

In 2020, the covid pandemic pushed an estimated 119-124 million people back into extreme poverty. 768 million people do not have enough nutritious food. 200 million children's lives are at risk through malnutrition.

CAFOD are asking us to walk this Lent, to raise funds. Can you walk 5km a day, for 40 days? Can you persuade others to join you? Set up a Just Giving page for yourself, your family and friends, or for your parish, and ask people to sponsor you and others. Visit the CAFOD Website to read about Lombek's story.

Severely malnourished and dying from malnutrition, her mother managed to get some life-giving food from the clinic run by a group of Sisters. A simple, nutritious food saved her life.

Together, we can see that this story is repeated all over the world. Why wouldn't you want to be a part of that? Jesus told us, in Matthew's gospel, "I was hungry and you fed me", and "whenever you do this to the least of my brethren, you do this to me."

Phil Mayland





## How can we stop the West Midlands funding the arms trade?

Pope Francis has spoken most forcefully against the international trade in arms. How can we bring it to an end? It is not easy. Our small Justice and Peace Group in Coventry has been trying for nine years to find a way to stop local investments. Here's what we, and you, face.

If you pay Council Tax in Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Walsall, Solihull, Dudley, Sandwell or Coventry, some of your money is taken to invest in the arms trade under the banner of the West Midlands Pension Fund (WMPF). You can't stop this from happening. Even if you object loudly, refuse to pay, go to prison, your money will still be taken. On top of that, if you are a member of the WMPF you also make a personal contribution to the Fund, and if you are a pension-holder you derive some of your benefits from the arms trade investments.

The only way to end this is to force the Councillor-Trustees of the West Midlands Pension Fund to end the investments they make in the arms trade (with public money) and put that money elsewhere.

Where is the money invested? In all the major arms manufacturers – conventional and nuclear: Lockheed Martin, Boeing, BAE Systems, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics .... Believe me, I could go on. How much is invested? Approximately £100 million directly into firms of this sort. There are other ways in which much more Council Tax money gets to the arms trade, by indirect investment in banks and other financial institutions. We have limited ourselves to those direct investments which are itemised in the Fund's Annual Statement of Equity Investments, published every March 31st.

Having said that, this document is harder and harder to get hold of, but it is the only source of the detailed information needed to carry on the campaign.

So, we are caught up in this situation, hundreds of thousands of us across the West Midlands, whether we like it or not. And the same situation is repeated many times over across the country, in West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and wherever else a municipal pension fund makes investments of this sort.

To return to the figures for a moment. The WMPF is worth £17 billion; we estimate direct investments in arms manufacturers to be approximately £100 million. That is, roughly 0.6% of the total value of the Fund. This is not a huge amount, and could easily be ended and reinvested in other sectors, given the will to do it. The decision-makers in this case are the 16 members of the WMPF Pensions Committee, all local Councillors.

I will now name the Councillors currently sitting on this committee..

Wolverhampton  
Councillors Jaspal, Collingwood, C.Smith, Inston,  
T.Singh, Page, Sweet, Simkins, P.Singh, Randle.  
Birmingham Cllr Davis  
Solihull Cllr Sandison  
Dudley Cllr Taylor  
Sandwell Cllr Allen  
Coventry Cllr B.Singh  
Walsall vacant

Membership changes from time to time, but can be checked on the Fund's website.

The committee meets quarterly, in March, June, September and December. Meetings are open to the public and are held in the Wolverhampton Civic Centre. All information is available at: [wmpf online](http://wmpf.org.uk).

Three Unions attend the quarterly meetings as observers: Unite (I.Smith, M.Cliff), Unison (M.Cantello) and GMB (J.Wardrup).

Committee members are all elected Councillors. Their contact details are publicly available. The greatest pressure can be applied by their Ward residents. But other councillors in the District may be able to add to this. At the moment in Coventry we are starting on an initiative to lobby as many councillors individually as we can, in order to find out how much support there is for our aim, and to persuade them to talk to their colleagues about what they have learnt from us in discussions. It is tempting to think we can do this more easily by email, but we are keen to know whether face to face meetings can be more successful. We are hoping to build up support across the City Council so that the Coventry representative knows they are speaking on behalf of the City when they attend the Pensions Committee.

More information: [bpmcgowan@hotmail.com](mailto:bpmcgowan@hotmail.com)  
07484246810

Paul McGowan  
04/02/2022

If you have a contribution you would like included in the **June 2022** newsletter please send it by Email for consideration to:

The Administrator, J&P Commission.  
Email: [bham.jandp@gmail.com](mailto:bham.jandp@gmail.com)

**June 2022 Edition:**  
Last date for copy **31st May 2022**

*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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