

Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission Newsletter

www.birminghamjandp.org.uk



Issue 52

Autumn 2022

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to be able to introduce and commend to you our latest Justice and Peace commission Newsletter. As you will see it contains a wealth of information on the many issues which are part of our troubled world. Many are a call to action to us all.

Though it is not covered in this issue it is good to report that our Archdiocese is now making efforts to tackle the climate emergency as it affects the life of our diocese and its parishes, schools and institutions.

Our schools have taken this matter on quite seriously. The majority are getting involved in Live Simply Programmes and taking a variety of actions. Much progress is being made. We are concerned about the effect the climate crisis is having on the mental health of students and young people. Our parish communities as yet seem to have more difficulty in taking any concentrated reflection and actions. Please do all you can to support and foster any local initiatives. It would be great if more parishes would consider taking on the Live Simply Programme as a way to begin to engage with these issues.

May I commend to you a viewing of the new film THE LETTER as a great resource to encourage more serious thinking, prayer and action on the Climate Emergency. It is too serious to ignore. May the Lord bless all our efforts for justice and peace.

May the Lord inspire and bless us all in this work. Fr. Gerard Murray (Chair)

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Dates for your diary:

Tuesday 22nd November
Justice and Peace on-line Forum 7pm

Date for 2023

Tuesday 24th January	Discussion Forum 7pm
Monday 20th February	Commission meeting,
Saturday 4th March 2023	Lenten Retreat
Monday 24th April	Commission meeting,
Tuesday 23rd May	Discussion Forum 7pm
Monday 3rd July	Commission meeting,
Monday 4th September	Commission meeting,
Our Assembly	
Monday 6th November	Commission meeting,
Tuesday 21st November	Discussion Forum 7pm

All Justice and Peace Commission Meetings are held online via Zoom at 11am.

The Forum meetings are also on Zoom at 7pm

Our Lenten Retreat will be held in person on the Saturday 4th March at St Paul's Convent, Selly Park, Birmingham B29 7LL

Comments on this years Assembly Topics



Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers

Justice and Peace Assembly, Session 1 Refugees,
Migrants and Asylum Seekers.

I was privileged to chair this session. Our speaker was Megan Knowles from J.R.S., the Jesuit Refugee Service, which is a global organisation working in over 50 countries.



Megan led us through an overview of how the system works, or doesn't work, in our country.

She introduced us to Cecile, who told her story of seeking refuge. It took over ten years for Cecile to be granted asylum and allowed to stay, and this involved her being moved many times between one city and another, and back again.

Megan explained in detail how there are different classes of refugees, those who come on a scheme, e.g from Ukraine, or Afghanistan, (at least some Afghans), and those who travel to the U.K. seeking asylum. Asylum seekers will also include those who are here, whose circumstances at home change and are forced to seek asylum.

I strongly recommend that you watch Megan's presentation on you tube. You can access it here [Justice and Peace Assembly 2022 - Refugees, Current Laws, and Church Teaching - YouTube](#)

Megan quoted from Pope Francis' message:

"... the future begins today and it begins with each of us. We cannot leave to future generations the burden of responsibility for decisions that need to be made now, so that God's plan for the world may be realized and his Kingdom of justice, fraternity, and peace may come.

In the light of what we have learned in the tribulations of recent times, we are called to renew our commitment to building a future that conforms ever more fully to God's plan of a world in which everyone can live in peace and dignity."
(Pope Francis: Message for the World Day of Refugees 2022).

When we decided on this topic as one for our Assembly, we did not foresee just how topical this would become. Pope Francis really does guide us. The 'hostile environment' created by this government is cruel. We all need to educate ourselves and write to our Members of Parliament demanding that the policies must change, and refugees treated with dignity.

And one final point. There is no requirement in law that refugees seek asylum in the first 'safe' country they arrive in. This idea is one that the current Government have promulgated, and their MPs will quote, in response to any question about policies. It simply is not true. International law is clear, and we were one of the leading countries who wrote the laws shortly after the second world war. The International Convention on Refugees was agreed in 1951 and amended in 1967. It calls for the same treatment be given to people seeking safety as is enjoyed by that country's own citizens.

Phil Mayland November 2022.

Building dignity, agency and power together

Introduction

We were aware that lots of Catholics want to raise their awareness of and take action to relieve poverty. We invited Niall Cooper, the Director or Church Action on Poverty to lead us in a session to address this.



CAP's vision is that the UK can and must be transformed into a country where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. Poverty robs people of dignity, agency, of power over their own lives. We believe our vision – an end to poverty in the UK – can become a reality.

Their goal over the next 5-10 years is to contribute to building a social movement based on organising with people and communities struggling against poverty, to create the social and political space to reclaim dignity, agency and power.

Niall's address covered the following key points:
Poverty as a denial of dignity, agency and power
The task of tackling poverty is challenging in the current context.

Covid-19 pandemic both brought into much sharper focus pre-existing inequalities in society and led to dramatic increases in poverty and debt.

Cost of living crisis, which is and will impact hugely and most heavily on people and communities already struggling to make ends meet.

This leaves many families and communities with the prospect of reduced life chances (and indeed, life expectancy) for years to come.

Beyond this, there are strong and deep-seated public attitudes in the UK which stigmatise and blame individuals for their own poverty.

In the words of Wayne Green, who spoke at the first National Poverty Hearing we held back in 1996: "What is poverty? Poverty is a battle of invisibility, a lack of resources, exclusion, powerlessness... being blamed for society's problems"

In spite of this, Church Action on Poverty affirms the belief in the transformational possibilities of people coming together to reclaim their dignity, agency and power.

Dignity

For Christians, the centrality of human dignity is based on the foundational theological principle that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. Pope Francis' recent encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, "offers a new vision of society in which human dignity and the human rights of all are respected... He has always wanted to make it clear that his papacy is one of action – placing the needs of the poor, marginalised and disenfranchised at the centre of his ministry."

Agency

To be truly human means being invested not only with dignity, but also with agency. Agency is about people's ability to act individually or collectively to further their own interests. Agency is tricky.

People on the right seek to blame people for their own poverty, without understanding the wider forces which come into play on people's lives to restrict their agency to act. People on the left can focus so much on structural forces that create poverty and inequality they risk denying people any agency to change anything.

In Church Action on Poverty's experience, people who struggle against poverty on a daily basis have far greater insight not just into the challenges they face, but a really deep understanding of what needs to change, and some of the best ideas for doing so.

Power

I frequently find that people both in the churches and the voluntary sector have a problem with the idea of power. It makes us uneasy. But I'm reliably told that there are more references to power in the Bible than to prayer.

What is power, other than, in Martin Luther King's words "The ability to achieve a purpose... It is the strength required to bring about social, political, and economic change."

Transforming unjust structures is core to the mission of the church, but if we are serious about transforming the unjust structures then we have to be willing not just to speak truth to power, but to enable people to do so for themselves.

Taking Action

None of these are abstract ideas.

For Church Action on Poverty, making change happen must always start at local level, by enabling groups of people to come together to reclaim their own dignity, agency and power.

I want to share two examples of what this looks like in practice.

Self-reliant groups

The smallest scale level at which we bring people together is through Self Reliant groups. Taking inspiration from the ways in which some of the poorest people in India manage to survive and thrive, almost 10 years ago the Church of Scotland decided to see how working in groups could change their lives for the better.

Today there are over 50 SRGs supported by Church Action on Poverty and our partner organisations in Scotland, England, Wales and the Netherlands each with its own achievements and stories. We are keen to find new partners who might be interested in supporting the development of Self Reliant Groups across the country.

Your Local Pantry

Since 2017 we have been also working to grow a network of Local food pantries across the UK. Each Pantry is hosted by a local community organisation – some are in high street shops, but increasing numbers are hosted by local churches, community centres, schools, even public Libraries

This work has expanded rapidly as a response to the Covid 19 pandemic. The network now comprises over 80 Local Pantries, and we have just launched a three year partnership with the Cooperative which will enable us to support local partners – churches, schools, community centres - to open up to 150 further Local Pantries across the UK. We have a team of people who can help you set up and run a Local Pantry – including a worker based in the West Midlands hosted by Thrive Together in Birmingham Challenge Poverty Week

Alongside celebrating the good work that people communities are already doing to challenge poverty locally it is also important to 'speak truth to power.' Challenge Poverty Week – starting on 17 October – is a great opportunity to do this. Challenge Poverty Week is an opportunity to celebrate what local churches, communities, and others are already doing challenge poverty locally, to hear the voices of people experiencing poverty and to challenge others – whether that is our local councillors, MPs or others – over what they are also doing to challenge poverty.

Investing in becoming a church on the margins
Turning lastly to the question of 'what has all this got to do with the task of being Church? Over recent years we have begun to explore more directly the challenge to the church of what it would mean to respond in practical and tangible ways to Pope Francis' challenge to be or become a 'Poor church of and for the poor.'

Ultimately, however, this is a question for the churches at all levels – not just in poor neighbourhoods: As institutions that deploy hundreds of clergy and other staff, run schools, own large numbers of buildings and in many cases hold significant investments.

"Not just a food bank for the poor, a debt advice project for the poor, a campaigning organisation for the poor... A church for the poor." Rev Al Barrett

Questions

The group considered the following questions in break out rooms.

- What would it mean to put the ideas of building dignity, agency and power into practice in our own parish or community?
- How do we respond to Pope Francis' challenge to become a 'Poor church of and for the poor.'
- What is already happening local to challenge poverty that we might want to celebrate?
- What practical steps could we take to listen to the stories and experiences of people struggling against poverty in our communities?

Supplied by Deacon Nick St John



Tax Justice

Our first planned Assembly online session on Tax Justice became the third, postponed because of the Queen's Funeral Day. This year's assembly concentrated on three very important and relevant themes: Refugees and their treatment, Poverty today and Tax Justice.

Tax came to be an important issue in the Conservative leadership contest and in the subsequent ill-fated rushed economic plans of the short lived Liz Truss government.



To guide us and lead us in our reflections on Tax Justice we were fortunate to have Sue Richardson, who worked for Christian Aid for many years and a veteran justice and peace campaigner in Catholic and ecumenical circles for many years. She is chair of Church Action for Tax Justice for the common good. This is an ecumenical body which looks at the way our tax system operates.

At Sue's suggestion we used the Pastoral Cycle; See, Judge and Act. We used small groups, targeted questions and feedback, some targeted questions, film clips and biblical reflections.

See: how do we see how the tax system is organised and applied today. How much should the wealthy contribute and how tax evasion helps them avoid paying fair tax.

We see; it is a fact that the lower paid in the population e.g. a nurse pays proportionally more tax from her income than a millionaire who pays some tax but has ways of being paid which avoid tax. **We see:** Global businesses avoid tax by placing their profits out of the reach of UK taxes in lower tax jurisdictions. **We see;** the current Council Tax system means lower band owners pay proportionately more tax than wealthier owners.

We see; some people have profited by the Covid health crisis and increased their wealth. The energy crisis means consumers facing huge rise in charges while fuel companies greatly increase their profits. **Judge:** there is plenty of evidence that the current tax system does not operate fairly.

Tax can be seen as scaffolding which makes the construction of the society we want possible and draws out our values (what do we think are the most important).

Tax is important to provide services which benefit all society, provides welfare and support for those in poverty and need. In a democratic society we have a vested interest in how taxes are levied and used. Taxes can help society 'level up' and redress inequalities and opportunity. Tax justice is important because tax demands impact most on those with less resources to pay them. Looking wider money generated by business in poorer countries could, if taxed appropriately, could help them provide services for the people. Instead, wealth is put in tax havens and the poor are exploited.

Abrahamitic faiths, Jewish, Christian and Muslim , speak of care for the welfare of the poor. The wealthy are called to be generous in using their wealth to help the poor and the vulnerable.

Act: Church Action for Tax Justice seeks to wakeup and mobilise the voice of the church on tax by raising awareness of the issue and promoting change. How? Dioceses and Church and faith organisations can help by highlighting the issue of tax justice in their dealings with church investments and businesses they use and deal with.

Do they pay their taxes fairly?

The Fair Tax Foundation can help with this Help other local churches and organisations, perhaps and other local bodies, to look for best practice. Highlight the Fair Tax Week in June each year in the life of the parish community.

Remember: Tax Justice is important for social and economic justice and fostering community unity. Pray and Act for justice. Paying Tax responsibly is loving your neighbour.

Thanks; We thank Sue and all who took part in the Assembly looking at this important and complex issue. May we become more aware of the importance of tax justice in the flourishing of our society for the common good.

Comments supplied by Cannon Gerry

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.



In this month's Laudato Si' Encounter we pray for bold action to move away from fossil fuels, in the context of COP27. Share this resource with your community! [Download it here as a PDF or review it online.](#)

An Ethical Look at Common Church Practices

In this article, the Animators take a critical look at various church practices, to see if Church law can accommodate more ethical alternatives.

CHRISTMAS TREES

The Christmas tree is ambiguous. It started out as pagan, and now represents both Christian and secular aspects of Christmas, but there doesn't seem to be any prohibition by the Catholic Church regarding having Christmas trees in the church, though there is a difference of opinion, particularly about whether it should be in the sanctuary at Mass.

Some see the Christmas tree as a symbol of the secular and materialistic aspect of Christmas, others are perfectly happy with a tree in church. In fact, some view it as a symbol of the birth and resurrection of Christ. It is even an integral part of the Vatican Christmas celebrations.

The important thing, if a tree is to be used in church, is for it to be eco-friendly. Millions of Christmas trees, both real and artificial, are discarded every year in the UK. So, ask your parish to use a potted living tree, and reuse year after year. Decorations can be home-made by children in the parish, and lights can be LED lights, as they use up to 95% less energy than traditional bulbs.

PAPER

As we all know, Earth's forests are vanishing. We need to think before we use paper as to whether it's needed, and whether there is a sustainable alternative available: <https://pgpaper.com/eco-friendly-paper-products/>

So, let's ask that the paper used in our hymn books, service books etc is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified and certified recycled. Even better if we can find an eco-friendly alternative.

GENERAL PRODUCTS

Products that are used by the parish, like washing up liquid, toilet paper, cleaning agents, disinfectants, bleach, antiseptics, wildlife deterrents etc, all have eco-friendlier choices.

Eco-friendly meaning biodegradable or recyclable, sustainably produced, vegan, organic, recycled. Baking Soda, vinegar, lemon juice, citric acid, alcohol, corn starch and tea tree oil are items that can be used to clean, bleach and disinfect in place of the usual brand-named products which probably contain highly polluting and cancer-causing chemicals. Also, many stores sell recycled paper tissue products, and greener brand names such as Ecover and Method. So, recommend that your parish chooses the green options for general products.

CUT FLOWERS

For the Church, flowers symbolise many things – graces and virtues, joy, innocence, holiness. The Catholic Church has distinct rules and regulations regarding flowers, and makes use of them for specific spiritual symbolism in the Church calendar.

A report on BBC Radio 4 in January 2022 followed the trail of the cut flowers industry, from where they are grown in countries like Ethiopia and Kenya in East Africa, to where they are sent, mainly to Europe but also to Australia, Japan and other countries.

They are an environmentally unfriendly cash crop, being grown non-stop throughout the year and using massive amounts of pesticides which pollute the land and kill people. At a time when droughts are increasing around the world, the trade uses a great deal of water, which will hasten the process of water depletion, leading to desertification in drought threatened areas. They are often flown thousands of miles in refrigerated airplane holds, causing greenhouse gas emissions.

Cut flowers that are grown in Europe have to be grown in heated greenhouses, which has an undesirable carbon footprint. So, fresh flowers are not eco-friendly. What are the alternatives?

The Liturgy Office of England and Wales says nothing about potted flowers, but says that dried flowers, ferns and sprays can be used, and that artificial flowers and plants should not be used.

The Instruction of the Roman Missal governs all aspects of the celebration of Mass, and there is no prohibition regarding potted or dried flowers.

So, ask your parish to use local grown, organic potted flowers or local grown, organic dried flowers. If this is refused, ask that the parish grows its own flowers organically on parish land. These can be used fresh cut or home dried.

CANDLES

Candles are a symbol of light, grace and beauty. The cult of the wax candle started from when it was seen as a reference to the virgin birth, the bee being seen as chaste. In 1904 the Sacred Congregation of Rites stated that it would no longer require candles to be made entirely of wax. Since that decree, various church officials have pronounced on their interpretation of the percentage of wax required for each type of candle (Paschal candle, blessing of baptismal water candle, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament candle, etc). The Holy See leaves the final word to the local Bishop as to exactly what the percentage should be. Nevertheless, there is no prohibition against non-beeswax candles.

Beeswax involves the exploitation of bees, which are now subject to intensive farming. They are not treated naturally, but are made to perform according to the farmer's profit-motivated wishes. The treatment they undergo causes them welfare problems. Then, after visiting 30 million flowers to produce just one pound of wax, their whole home system is taken from them by the farmer.

Wild bees are dying out at a frightening rate. Domestic bees do not help, on the contrary.

Honey bees can't pollinate a tomato or an eggplant flower, and are much less efficient than wild, native bees at pollinating pumpkins, watermelons, blueberries, cranberries and other plants. Honey bees compete with and can disrupt and threaten wild bee populations.

Candles often contain a greater or lesser degree of paraffin wax, which is derived from unsustainable and polluting fossil fuels, and which also releases carcinogenic toxins when burnt (benzene, toluene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, acrolein, soot). Scented candles can be polluting both in manufacture and in use, so should be avoided. The wick can also be polluting - organic hemp is recommended.

Candles in general consume resources for a luxury, and cause air pollution, so we are better off if we can do without them. If not, there are more healthy, environmentally friendly and animal friendly alternatives available. For instance, soy wax and rapeseed wax, if grown organically, are a much better choice.

Organic coconut wax is probably the best ethical choice.

Don't forget that candles can be recycled and reused. This Exeter based company will take your used candles: <https://therecycledcandlecompany.co.uk/> There may be a place near you which collects used candles.

So, it looks like organic, coconut wax, unscented candles with organic, recycled hemp wicks are our best choice environmentally. If our bishops commissioned these, they would be available for all churches to order.

LS Animators UK

<https://www.facebook.com/LSIUUK>



Giving Hope to vulnerable Christians for over 12 years

Samer and Jane have five children and with Samer's elderly parents living with them as well, their household in Beit Sahour is a busy one. Eldest son, Daniel is 17 and suffers with a developmental delay meaning that he requires specialised care. Friends of the Holy Land have been paying the fees for him to attend the Life Gate Centre for Rehabilitation since 2019.

Michael, 74 and his daughter Diala, 32, were both found to have tumours that urgently needed removal. As there is no free healthcare, Friends of the Holy Land took the pressure off the family's finances by contributing nearly half of the cost of both surgeries. Adriana, like many six-year-olds, loves drawing and sport. Supported by Friends of the Holy Land, she is doing well at the Rosary School in Bethlehem. Her family is one of the poorest Christian families in town. Adriana is one of the 270 school children who were helped by Friends of the Holy Land with the fees to attend a Christian school last year.

This is the routine daily work of Friends of the Holy Land. Established in 2009 with a mission to secure a resilient and enduring community for Christians living in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan; the focus of our work is providing practical help directly to the most needy and vulnerable of our Christian brothers and sisters. We help in emergencies, support a Christian education and fund practical small projects to create employment and improve housing, all to sustain their future – most importantly to give them HOPE.

It is little known among Christians in the UK that Christians today account for less than 2% of the overall population of the Holy Land whereas at the beginning of the 20th century, Christians made up roughly 29%. Without support, the Holy places of the Bible could become cultural museums with no vibrant or secure Christian presence at all. Many of the daily challenges facing our brothers and sisters in the land where Jesus walked are also little known. With very high unemployment, travel restrictions and the inability to pay medical and utility bills where there is little government support, Friends of the Holy Land is one of the few, UK based charities, that has the sole focus to support these 'living stones' (1 Peter 2:5) of our Mother Church.

We are registered as a charity in country so we can maintain and staff a local office to deal with cases directly and we can operate our own local bank accounts, so our grants largely go directly to individuals and families in need not through agencies.

We are non-political in our work and do not campaign for a solution to the problems and conflict in the area, rather we deal with the consequences of the facts on the ground. We are also ecumenical and are very proud to have the endorsement of Church Leaders of all denominations such as Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop Justin Welby.

Last year we made grants of almost £600,000 that made a direct difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters, we could not achieve this without the generous charity of Christians across the UK such as the members of the Knights of St Columba. Please visit our website, www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk to see the full picture of the work made possible by this support. We hope you are inspired to support our mission for the year ahead as a direct way of standing with our brothers and sisters in solidarity, love, and friendship.

Perhaps you can speak to your Parish Priest or Headteacher, so that one of our representatives can come and speak in your church or school to share a better understanding of our mission and how they can help maintain the sacred character of the Holy Land. Prayer underpins all that we do so, we invite you to pray, with us, for our brothers and sisters to be relieved of their oppression and for peace to return to the Holy Land. We have prayer resources and a library of spiritual reflections on the prayer page of our website, www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/prayer which we hope will provide inspiration for you and perhaps for your parish prayer group.

Now that travel restrictions have been lifted, we call for all Christians to return on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus can renew our Christian lives and meeting the people will help you understand the issues affecting our Mother Church.

For much of the world the Holy Land has disappeared from the news. But our brothers and sisters are still there, steadfastly remaining despite the daily challenges. While our eyes turn toward Ukraine and our hearts break at the senseless killing of innocents there, I ask you to remember those Christians in the Holy Land who are enduring the effects of the longest continuing conflict in the world. We must redouble our efforts. Let us not allow the light of the Christian faith in the Holy Land be extinguished.

www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/donate

Brendan Metcalfe, Executive Director,
Friends of the Holy Land.



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St Martha's House



School of Joy



www.friendsoftheholylord.org.uk

Lord Jesus
full of grace and truth,
empower our brothers and sisters
in the land where you proclaimed the Good News.
Fill them with your grace.
Bless and guide the leaders of the Churches.
Inspire teachers, medical workers
and all who strengthen the lives of their communities.
Look with compassion and mercy
on all the people of that land.
Draw them nearer to that day
when justice and mercy
will be sought for all
and reconciliation will proclaim
the wonders of your love.
In your holy name we pray. Amen.



Archbishop Gabriele Caccia

Vatican envoy addresses UN on nuclear weapons

Oct 18th, 2022
Source: Vatican Media

Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, delivered a statement to the First Committee of the General Assembly, which addresses issues related to disarmament and international security. The statement was delivered as part of the committee's general debate on 12 October.

In his remarks, Archbishop Caccia recalled that the Cuban missile crisis was averted only through banning nuclear weapons, disarmament, dialogue, and the building of mutual trust. Considering that "disarmament architecture now hangs by a thread," he called for the adoption of an approach of integral disarmament and unequivocal condemnation of any threat to use nuclear weapons.

While highlighting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which complement the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as signs of hope, Archbishop Caccia also noted his concern over the failure of the Tenth NPT Review Conference to achieve consensus, the surpassing of \$2 trillion on military and weapons expenditure, the weaponization of outer space, and the growing malicious use of ICTs and lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS).

The text of the statement follows.

Statement by HE Archbishop Gabriele Caccia
Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See at the General Debate of the First Committee of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Mr Chair,

My delegation congratulates you on your election and would like to assure you of its full support during this session.

Sixty years ago, humanity stood on the precipice of nuclear annihilation as the United States and the Soviet Union came perilously close to war in the Caribbean Sea. It was only through their leaders' commitment to dialogue and recognition of the devastating impact of nuclear war that the world averted destruction.

Writing shortly after the crisis, Pope John XXIII observed "that true and lasting peace among nations cannot consist in the possession of an equal supply of armaments but only in mutual trust." [1] On the basis of such trust, he called for the banning of nuclear weapons and for disarmament under "an effective system of mutual control." [2]

Over the ensuing decades, States began to construct the disarmament architecture as we know it. However, the goal of general and complete disarmament remains out of reach due to, in the words of Pope Francis, "a lack of vision for the future and shared consciousness of our common destiny." [3]

The disarmament architecture now hangs by a thread. Leaders must recommit to dialogue and adopt an approach of integral disarmament, "which calls on every person to disarm his or her own heart and to be a peacemaker everywhere." [4] As Pope Francis has said, "International peace and stability cannot be based on a false sense of security, on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation, or on simply maintaining a balance of power." [5] In light of this, the Holy See reiterates that any threat to use nuclear weapons merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation. [6]

Mr. Chair,

Even in our troubled times, there are signs of hope for disarmament.

This year, another six States ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), moving it toward universalization. The Holy See calls upon all States, especially the remaining Annex II States, to promptly sign and ratify the Treaty. The over two thousand nuclear tests that have occurred since the dawn of the nuclear age have brought untold suffering to thousands of people and have rendered some natural environments unliveable. Given this appalling record, it is beyond time to verifiably ban nuclear testing for all States.

In another positive development, nine States ratified, and five States signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) this year, signaling their recognition that nuclear deterrence is not only illegal but also immoral. States Parties have adopted an

integral approach toward redressing nuclear harm, transforming "a culture of injustice and violence to a culture of fraternal love" that assists victims and remediates contaminated environments in a restorative manner. In doing so, the Treaty complements both the CTBT and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The success of the First Meeting of States Parties of the TPNW contrasts with the regrettable failure of the Tenth NPT Review Conference to achieve consensus. This failure demonstrated that many States still subscribe to what Pope Francis describes as a "perverse dichotomy that tries to defend and ensure stability and peace through a false sense of security sustained by a mentality of fear and mistrust". [7] Until we transition from such a mindset towards one of integral disarmament, the threat of nuclear weapons use will remain. Their total elimination is the only guarantee that they will not be used again.

Mr Chair,

As Pope Saint Paul VI observed during his address before the General Assembly in 1965, "A person cannot love with offensive weapons in his hands." [8] This year, world military expenditure passed \$2 trillion for the first time. [9] This harmful spending squanders resources that could promote integral human development and save countless lives. Without addressing this rampant proliferation, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will remain elusive. Most worrisome is the growing use of indiscriminate weaponry, such as antipersonnel mines and cluster munitions. The Holy See condemns this use and calls on all States to swiftly ratify or accede to the conventions prohibiting such weapons.

Mr. Chair,

The threats posed by the proliferation of weapons extend beyond terrestrial areas. The Holy See notes with concern the development of orbital weapon systems and anti-satellite missiles. As outer space forms part of our common home, it is our responsibility to ensure that all, including future generations, can benefit from its vast potential. The testing of anti-satellite missiles at any altitude is incompatible with this responsibility. The Holy See welcomes moratoria on such tests as a first step toward banning them outright. Such a ban could complement laudable legal efforts to prohibit the weaponization of outer space.

Pope Francis has observed that the internet "offers immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity." [10] These possibilities, however, are threatened by the malicious use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). To defend against this threat, it is essential that all States foster a spirit of fraternity in implementing the eleven UN norms of responsible State behavior in cyberspace, as outlined in the 2021 report of the Group of Governmental Experts. In particular, the protection of critical infrastructure and the reporting of vulnerabilities are crucial for limiting the

real-world consequences of cyberattacks, which have the potential to cause real harm to persons.

Other new technologies also put humanity at risk. In his address to the Seventy-Fifth Session of the UN General Assembly, Pope Francis warned that "lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) [...] irreversibly alter the nature of warfare, detaching it further from human agency." [11] By separating the unique human capacity for moral judgment from actions that could result in bodily harm or even death, LAWS cannot maintain compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL). In light of this, the Holy See urges for the consideration of a moratorium on the development and use of LAWS pending the negotiation of a legal instrument that prohibits such systems from targeting humans and ensures that all weapons systems remain under meaningful, human control.

Mr Chair,

In closing, the Holy See must express concern regarding the introduction of ambiguous, non-consensual terminology within fora pertaining to disarmament. It is the hope of my delegation that this issue does not arise here, which would create unneeded barriers in the way of our common efforts to advance disarmament and build a culture of peace.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

[1] Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter Pacem in Terris, 11 April 1963, 113.
[2] Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter Pacem in Terris, 11 April 1963, 112.
[3] Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti, 3 October 2020, 260.
[4] [For reference only] Cardinal Silvano Tomasi, "Pope Francis' Vision of Peace: Disarmament, Development and Inclusiveness in the Catholic Conception of a Just Peace", Georgetown University, Washington, DC, 30 January 2020.
[5] Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti, 3 October 2020, 262.
[6] Cf Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes, 7 December 1965.
[7] Pope Francis, Address on Nuclear Weapons at the Atomic Bomb Hypocenter Park (Nagasaki), 24 November 2019.
[8] Pope Paul VI, Address to the United Nations Organization, 4 October 1965.
[9] [For reference only] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), "World military expenditure passes \$2 trillion for the first time," 25 April 2022.
[10] Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, Fratelli Tutti, 205.
[11] Pope Francis, Address to the Seventy-Fifth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 25 September 2020.



**CAFOD Faith in Action Day
29th October 2022**

This day, 11.00 am to 2.30pm was organised by CAFOD as an online meeting. There were over 100 participants with over 70 staying for all sessions. The first session was about food production and focused on Bangladesh. We heard about the work of a group of small farmers led by Farida Akthar. We were connected live to Farida. Farida leads a group of small farmers who are advocating for a return to traditional methods of farming. Farmers caring for their land, using traditional seeds which are fertile, thus providing seeds for the next planting, and using traditional ways of rotation. These farmers are demonstrating that the yields they can produce are viable. I thought Farida's presentation was excellent and follows on from the Fix the Food System Campaign.

For the second session we were introduced to Musamba Mubanga, a young lady from Zambia who is working for Caritas Internationalis in Rome. Musamba led us through the main points of the upcoming COP27. Her presentation was thorough and clear. She was very impressive. On a personal note, I was thrilled to listen to a young lady from Zambia. I taught there for many years, just as the country was developing its education system after Independence, and education for girls was not always encouraged by the general population.

The final speaker was Mike Caine M.P. Mike was inspiring. He talked about his role in Parliament as chair of a cross party group of Catholics/Christians. He explained how Catholic Social Teaching was a motivator for himself and that we should all become more involved with campaigning issues and to develop relationships with our own Member of Parliament.

You can listen to all the above on the CAFOD website here: [Faith in Action event 2022 | CAFOD](#)

Phil Mayland November 2022.



Green Christian Annual Conference 'Building Back Greener' on Zoom and live in Birmingham, 7th and 8th October

Green Christian's annual conference 'Building Back Greener' took place on Zoom and in the Quaker Priory Rooms, Birmingham on 7 to 8 October. We explored the need for a new approach to economics, based on Green Christian's Joy in Enough project. [Joy in Enough – Awakening to a new economics](#)



The Conference encouraged participants to think about the economy of the future, likely developments, and Christian perspectives on these. It offered thought-provoking talks, workshops and discussion on creating a sustainable economy with opportunities for bringing questions and concerns. Speakers surveyed principles for economics and consumption rooted in the Christian tradition, such as sufficiency and justice. These contrasted starkly with the Government's vision of "growth, growth, growth".

We had three keynote speakers, whose talks can be found [here](#)

Writer Paul Kingsnorth, a former deputy editor of The Ecologist, warned of grave societal threats posed by technology.

Christopher Southgate, a theology professor based at Exeter University, gave an Introduction to his view of Green Theology with particular reference to climate change. He said, "Creation speaks in a language we can't quite hear. Our task is to keep listening to wild nature with all our spirit... make connections with green places."

Molly Scott-Cato, Professor of Green Economics at Roehampton University and a former Green MEP, spoke about the need for "system change, not climate change", and for an emphasis on well-being rather than continual and unsustainable economic growth.

She said, "Inequality is growing. Who has really benefited in this globalisation constant growth model? The richest."



In a series of workshops, participants considered Christianity's historic engagement with economic issues such as tax, debt, inequality, tenants' rights, consumption and the dignity of labour. The Joy in Enough project team plan to take forward insights on the economy gained at the conference to challenge policy makers and church leaders to promote a new economy based not on ever-increasing consumption but on what Kathryn Tanner has described as God's "economy of grace".



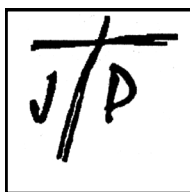
A lively final Panel of Cat Jenkins (Church Action on Tax Justice), Rosie Venner (Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility), Prof Tim Cooper and Revd Nick Read responded to questions and challenges from the floor, chaired by Revd John Daniels. Tim Cooper, a trustee of Green Christian and former researcher at the New Economics Foundation, said "an uncritical approach to economic growth does not align well with the teachings of Christ and the New Testament epistles, which warn of materialism and call for an ethic of sufficiency."

The day ended with a moving liturgy written by Andii Bowsher and led by Green Christian's Chaplain, Rev Andrew Norman. The service included the symbolic planting of bulbs into a bowl of soil. An impromptu choir led everyone in the kyrie eleison responses.

Though beset by difficulties (a rail strike, illness of some key participants), feedback given has shown that participants found the conference rewarding and enjoyable. More information on Green Christian activities can be found on [What's On – Green Christian](#)



Review of Justice and Peace Commission Annual Retreat



At their September meeting the Commission thought that the arrangements for our annual Lenten retreat would benefit from a review. It was not that the current way of providing the retreat necessarily had to change but as this year's was cancelled due to extremely low numbers it was thought that a consultative review would be wise prior to planning next year's event. So the review was based on the premise that holding an annual J & P retreat, in some way, should continue.

So in early October a short questionnaire was sent out to everyone on the Commission's mailing list with an invitation to respond by 28th October. This would enable the results to be collated and reported to the Commission at their meeting on 7th November. Of the 358 questionnaires sent out 10 were returned, a response rate of just 3%.

Summary of responses (headings relate to sections in questionnaire)

Should you need to refresh your memory a blank questionnaire can be seen at:

<https://www.birminghamjandp.org.uk/lenten-retreat.html>

When

A clear majority were in favour of Lent but suggestions were also made to hold it during the Season of Creation or linking it to our annual assembly. A clear majority were in favour of an all-

day retreat, two respondents suggesting a rough timeframe of 10:00 to 16:00 (ish).

Where

A majority were in favour of a return to in-person retreats but two vulnerable respondents supported this only if participants tested beforehand (and presumably tested negative).

St Paul's Convent Selly Park, where many retreats have been held in the recent past, was the clear favorite as a venue with the assembly venue being the only other vote and only if, obviously, the retreat was "linked to" (presumably meaning part of) the assembly. If a venue other than St Paul's was chosen accessibility by public transport was seen as the most important criterion with having a quiet outdoor space second most important. There was also a suggestion that the location should move around the diocese. However the travel difficulties this might create, compared to a Birmingham location, was acknowledged.

Format

The existing format of the retreat was described in the questionnaire as, broadly speaking, opening prayer, talk, private reflection, sharing, lunch, second talk followed by private reflection, closing prayer or short liturgy and depart. All responses to this question were to continue with this format. There were however two specific suggestions:

"taking an art work back to the parish could help reflection."

"not motivated to listen to talks but sharing or doing something together with quiet time is more attractive"

The invitation to suggest themes for future retreats produced a large number of suggestions. These were:

Prayer

Social justice

Cultivating faith in our busy lives

Culture of encounter

Beauty of creation

Shared world for all

Peace starts with me

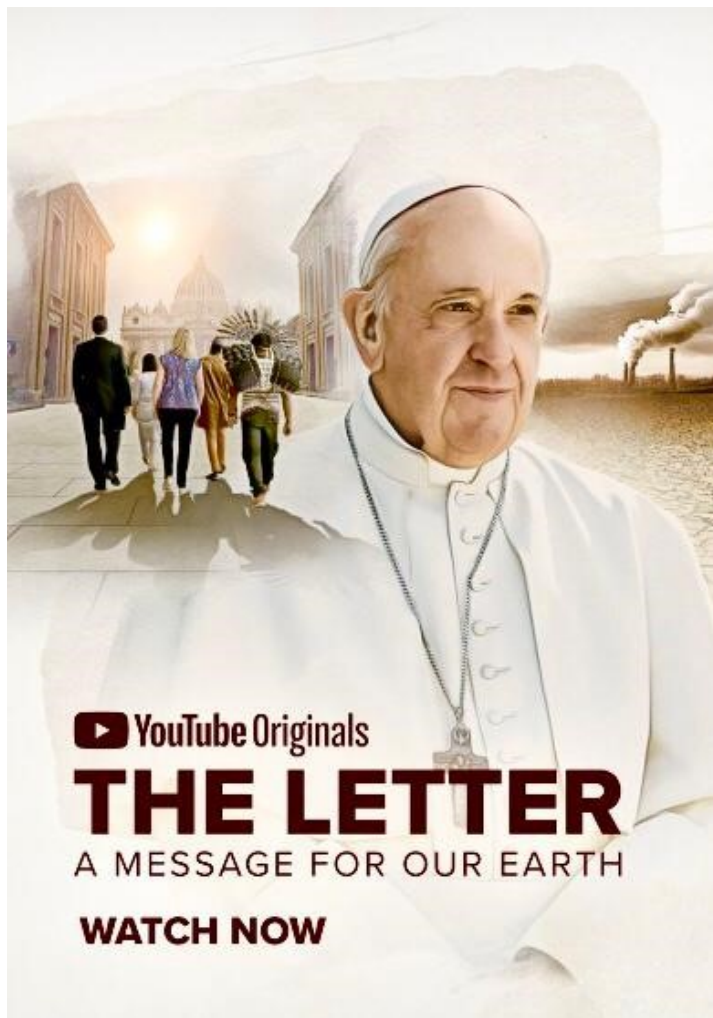
Justice within the Church

Scripturally-based reflections on war and peace, crime and punishment, migration, economic justice, hospitality

Finding/nurturing peace in the modern world

The Commission found these responses very helpful in guiding and influencing its decision at its November meeting. As a result it was decided that for next year's retreat we would return to an in person event in Lent, follow the existing format and, subject to availability, be at St Paul's Convent in Selly Park, Birmingham. The chosen theme was spirituality and economic justice. Thank you to everyone who responded.

Jim Quinn



‘THE LETTER’

‘THE LETTER’ is the title of the film written and directed by Emmy-winning director Nicolas Brown and released by Laudato Si’ Movement on YouTube on St. Francis’ Feast Day, 4th October 2022. It lasts for 1 hour 21 minutes.

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote his Encyclical Laudato Si’, which is what ‘The Letter’ refers to, encyclical being the Latin word for letter. The Encyclical was about the environmental crisis, and was addressed to every single person in the world.

In the film, Pope Francis himself describes how this Encyclical came about, and we hear something about the reactions that followed its publication.

The protagonists

A few years later, four voices that have gone unheard in global conversations were invited to an unprecedented dialogue with Pope Francis. Hailing from Senegal, the Amazon, India and Hawaii, they bring perspective and solutions from the poor, the indigenous, the youth, and wildlife into a conversation with Pope Francis himself. This documentary follows their journey to Rome and the extraordinary experiences that took place there, and is packed with powerfully moving personal stories alongside the latest

information about the planetary crisis and the toll it’s taking on nature, people and animals.

The Voice of the Poor is proclaimed by Arouna Kande from Senegal.

The Voice of the Indigenous is proclaimed by Chief Dada from the Amazon.

The Voice of Youth is proclaimed by Ridhima Pandey from India.

And The Voice of Wildlife & Nature is proclaimed by husband-and-wife team Dr Greg Asner & Dr Robin Martin from Hawaii

Arouna tells us about his struggles in Senegal. Climate migrants are increasing, but Arouna wants to stay in his homeland if he possibly can.

Chief Dada tells us how the agribusinesses came and started to occupy and manage the land, cutting down trees and murdering protesters.

Ridhima showed how fires and floods are destroying peoples’ homes. A striking piece of film showed one of the 3 billion animals burnt in the Australian bushfires in 2019-2020, struggling through the devastation.

Greg & Robin explained that coral reefs are very important for marine life, but heat waves are destroying them.

“Once you know, you cannot look away”

We see them all meet up in Rome, welcomed by Dr Lorna Gold, Chair of Laudato Si’ Movement.

After the Pope received them, they each in turn spoke a few words to him.

Chief Dada said that he was here representing the indigenous people and the Amazon in Brazil.

Greg thanked the Pope for being allowed to speak for wildlife, and Robin said that science is only a tool – it needs people to use it effectively.

Arouna said that people from his homeland are migrating to the big cities because of climate change, and are living there in poverty. He is here to fight for the planet and for justice.

Ridhima said that she is speaking for youth, who are inheriting a destroyed planet.

In his reply, Pope Francis likened economic power to the Tower of Babel, showing how human arrogance uses power to build a mighty economy which enslaves people and destroys nature. And now, he said, we see nature starting to complain. We need unity to save mother Earth, he urged.

Uniting and bonding

After the meeting and discussion with the Pope, the guests shared their feelings with each other. They bonded and shared each other’s pain. Lorna Gold summed up the feelings of all, which was that they shared a dream.

Conclusion

At the end of the film, the main characters state what they feel is the way forward.

Lorna said that we need to form alliances.

Arouna said his main focus is to advocate for reforestation and to organise campaigns.

Chief Dada said that we all need to take care of the Amazon for it to stay green.

Ridhima said 'be the change you want to see'.

Greg said that the rest of his life will be defined by his experience with his fellow guests, and Robin said that everyone's story is the story of today (i.e. the stories are the results of environmental destruction).

Pope Francis said that we must unite, stand together to build the future.

The background music added a lot to the presentation, being in turn dramatic, serene, uplifting as required. Original music was composed by RTS-winning William Goodchild.

At the very end the link to further action was prominently shown:

<https://TheLetterFilm.org>

We are also encouraged to organise a screening of the film in our parishes or elsewhere, and helpful advice is provided to enable us to do this:

<https://theletterfilm.org/download/2711/>

It is the prayer of all concerned in the film that all who watch 'The Letter' will go on to take further and stronger action to tackle environmental destruction.

Laudato Si' mi' Signore!

V. Bell LS Animators UK



COP27 6th to 18th November 2022. Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

The annual meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC, are known as COPs, and this will be the 27th such meeting, hence COP27. The first meeting was held in March, 1994. All signatories, and there are currently 198 countries, have agreed that they must work together for the safety of humanity, even if the science is not always clear. This is the same as the Church's principle of the Common Good.

The ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations "at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human induced) interference with the climate system." It states that "such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner."

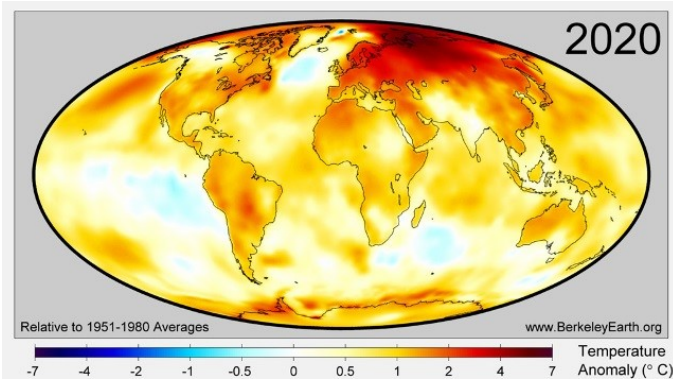
The onus is on industrialized countries to lead the way. The idea is that, as they are the source of most past and current greenhouse gas emissions, industrialized countries are expected to do the most to cut emissions on home ground. They are called Annex I countries and belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). They include 12 countries with "economies in transition" from Central and Eastern Europe. Annex I countries were expected by the year 2000 to reduce emissions to 1990 levels. Many of them have taken strong action to do so, and some have already succeeded.

Climate Finance. Industrialized nations agree under the Convention to support climate change activities in developing countries by providing financial support for action on climate change-- above and beyond any financial assistance they already provide to these countries. A system of grants and loans has been set up through the Convention and is managed by the Global Environment Facility. Industrialized countries also agree to share technology with less-advanced nations.

In 2015, it was agreed to set up a fund of \$100 billion per year for Mitigation and Adaptation, by 2021. This total has not been reached and is currently just below \$80 billion. The wealthier countries do need to step up. It is hoped that further progress will be made in Egypt. Mitigating the effects of climate change in many developing countries takes many different forms. Adapting to changing conditions similarly can be very varied. The simple fact is that some Annex 1 countries have simply not kept their promises.

This leads on to loss and damage. Compensation for loss and damage has been discussed but we are far from agreeing what constitutes loss and damage and who should pay anything. Earlier the G7 countries could not agree to setting up any fund for this. As we live in a very rich country, with a very developed society, (don't forget that we began the industrial

revolution, based on coal power), it can be very difficult to imagine the effects of climate change in the Pacific Island Nations.



This year, 2022, will go down as the warmest on record. Each month has been warmer than the average for that month, and in July and August we saw record temperatures. We have also seen floods, as the result of intense rainfall, a months-worth of rain in a day, wildfires breaking out, not only in the countryside but in the capital city. Yet despite these events, there just is not enough urgency in society in addressing these issues. Even our new Prime Minister has had a lot of pressure put on him to decide to attend the COP.

We live in a democracy. Each one of us, at age 18, is entitled to vote and is also represented by a Member of Parliament. How often do we contact our M.P. to express our views on Climate Change? Climate Change is killing people. It is destroying ways of life, habitats, biodiversity. Pope Francis wrote the encyclical letter *Laudato Si* in 2015 addressed to everyone on the planet. How many Catholics have read it? How many homilies have been preached on this? How many Catholics have heard of the Bishops' document "The Call of Creation", very recently updated? How many have read it?

Please pray that world leaders, including our own, will put the needs of those on the peripheries first, the poor, the hungry, the indigenous peoples, the young. We need to change, and quickly, so pray for agreements and goodwill in Egypt.

Phil Mayland. Nov.2nd 2022.



Turkey for Christmas?

"We read in the Gospel that Jesus says of the birds of the air that 'not one of them is

forgotten before God'. How then can we possibly mistreat them or cause them harm?"

Laudato Si Encyclical paragraph 221

Turkey Farming

The Turkey for Christmas has only been a widespread tradition for the past 70 years. Most people in the UK couldn't afford it, and couldn't store it, until the 1950s.

If we are to take *Laudato Si* seriously, we should ask ourselves 'is turkey for dinner an ethical choice?'

The reality of turkey farming is that thousands of birds are tightly packed into industrial-sized sheds, with no ability to express natural behaviour. Automatic mechanisms control their feed, heating and light.

They will all be either chronically disabled, damaged, diseased and/or in chronic pain due to selective breeding for unnatural weight gain and due to the rearing conditions. Too fat to fly, too disabled to even walk without difficulty.

Driven somewhat mad by this imprisonment, they can start attacking each other.

Farmers 'manipulate' male birds for semen, then 'manipulate' females to impregnate them with the semen. The entire experience is invasive and terrifying for the birds.

Chicks are hatched in incubators. They search for their mothers but never find them. They have no parental guidance to find food and may starve.

Injured, sick, and too small baby turkey may be ground up alive.

Bits are cut off them for various reasons, from the beak, snood, wings and toes with no pain relief, leaving them in agony after the traumatic experience of the mutilation.

During heatwaves they will bake in their sheds. Many die this way.

At slaughter time, several at one time are grabbed by the legs and thrown into crates on lorries. The journey to the slaughterhouse is so bad that some don't survive.

At the slaughterhouse they are hung upside down by their feet on a moving belt. They pass through an electric current which is meant to stun, but may only cause an electric shock. Then they pass a slashing knife which could miss their throats and catch their faces, and they could go into the boiling water having been electrically shocked, knifed and still conscious.

14–15 million turkeys are killed each year in the UK. (1)

Unsustainable and Wasteful

Turkey manure causes land, water and air pollution.

Turkeys are fed with soy from South America, which is linked to deforestation, pollution, land destruction, loss of biodiversity and climate change. Land, water and food is wasted at an astronomical rate to grow animals.

Even though 700 - 800 million people are hungry or starving, yet 70 – 80% of the world's soy crop is fed to turkeys and other farm animals, instead of to humans. Feeding the soy to animals first instead of directly to humans results in the loss of about 90% of the calories and proteins that the feed contains, giving back only about 10%.

Pandemics

Turkey farms encourage the spread of infections and are a reservoir of diseases, some of which are dangerous for humans like salmonella enteritidis and bird flu. Bird flu can be deadly for humans.

Our next pandemic could come from a turkey farm.

New outbreaks of bird flu in poultry farms and captive birds as well as in wild bird populations are constantly being reported, with over 200 cases confirmed across the country in the last 12 months. (Defra press release 28/10/2022) All domestic infected birds are culled to prevent further infection.

Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotics are routinely used to combat diseases and infections that thrive in the filthy and unhygienic conditions of factory farms. This has contributed to the creation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria – superbugs. So now we have the increased and growing risk of humans contracting life-threatening diseases for which antibiotics are no longer effective.

Try the Vegan Options

Respecting animals, respecting the planet and respecting other humans are all intimately interlinked. If we abuse one, we harm all three.

Giving up turkey doesn't have to be a sacrifice; there are delicious vegan options available. (2) and (3).

(1) <https://viva.org.uk/animals/turkeys/>

(2) <https://viva.org.uk/lifestyle/living-vegan/vegan-christmas-guide/>

(3) <https://www.veganrecipeclub.org.uk/search/?q=turkey>

V. Bell for Laudato Si' Animators UK



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Columban banner

Poll finds Catholics want government to do more to tackle climate change

- Nearly six out of ten Catholics feel the government has done too little to tackle climate change in the last year.

- 52% of Christians felt the government had done too little to tackle climate change over the last year.

- Just one in five Catholics think the government is committed to meeting its Net Zero target.

- Nearly six out of ten Catholics (58%) in Great Britain feel the government has done too little to tackle climate change in the last year.

- Just under half (48%) of Catholics felt the government is not committed to meeting its Net Zero target by 2050 and reducing its reliance on fossil fuels.

The opinion poll was conducted between 24th and 26th October 2022, with a sample size of 3305 adults in Great Britain and included 212 Catholics.

One in three Catholics also (37%) felt the government was doing too little to support poorer countries to tackle climate change.

Source: CAFOD

Full report:

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45841>



ONE is a global movement campaigning to end extreme poverty and preventable disease by 2030 so that everyone, everywhere can lead a life of dignity and opportunity.

In the UK, ONE is calling for immediate action from the UK Government to respond to the urgent risk of famine in East Africa.

The rising costs of food and fuel globally is driving millions deeper into poverty, both at home and abroad. Yet, this is felt most in Africa where, after four consecutive droughts, 50 million people are facing starvation.

THE HORN OF AFRICA: AN UNPRECEDENTED HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE

As COP27 dominates the news agenda we may recall the heatwaves which swept over Europe this Summer, giving rise to greater concerns about how Climate Change may continue to affect us. Yet, this is nothing compared to the disaster which has ensued on other continents. The Horn of Africa is now entering an unprecedented fifth failed rainy season. This devastating drought is causing a humanitarian crisis of catastrophic proportions.

In Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia, on average one person is dying every 36 seconds from extreme hunger. Children are being taken out of school, girls are at heightened risk of child marriage and 12 million are now displaced across the region. This displacement is devastating for those affected, and generates immense costs to meet their food, shelter, protection and health needs. Over 7 million children are acutely malnourished across the region.

THIS UK MUST ACT

Preventing further starvation and mass displacement requires action now. Tragically, given the growing effects of climate change, this will not be the last drought in the region.

Communities are in desperate need of increased access to urgent food assistance, water, cash, nutrition monitoring and healthcare - people's lives now depend on it, which governments in East Africa cannot solely provide: Most recent reports suggest that Africa's continent's GDP growth could fall by two-thirds this century.

Somalia's drought envoy has said that Britain is no longer the key humanitarian player and 'great ally' it once was. It has only committed £156 million so far, which is well short of the £900million of funding for the UN Humanitarian appeals for Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan that aid agencies are calling for.

CONVERGING CRISES

The world needs the UK to show up to tackle three of the major crises the world is facing, namely disease,

climate change and hunger, which are inextricably linked. Warmer temperatures also will also risk making zoonotic diseases more common, putting East Africa at higher risk of disease outbreaks or future pandemics. This new government has the opportunity to show leadership again, but must do so urgently.

As well as acting to save lives now, it is vital that the UK Government acts to stop crises like this from happening again through strengthening the resilience of at-risk countries like Somalia and Ethiopia - so they may deal with the inevitable shocks of climate change, food shortages, and future pandemics. This means releasing the financing and investment that will enable every country to respond to the climate crisis, undo the damage it is causing and embrace the new green technologies needed to build a fairer, greener and more just future.



ONE COMMUNITY LEADERS PROGRAMME

ONE is currently recruiting for its 2023 Community Leaders programme.

If you would like to be trained and supported to work on our campaigns and issue areas like the food security crisis please click on this link to join our ONE Community Leaders program <https://act.one.org/survey/uk-community-leader-2022/>

Alternatively please contact Ayesha Farah via ayesha.farah@one.org for more information.

If you have a contribution you would like included in the **February 2023** newsletter please send it by Email for consideration to:

The Administrator, J&P Commission.

Email: admin.jandp@rcaob.org.uk

February 2023 Edition:

Last date for copy **31st January 2023**

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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