

Message from the Chair

Dear friends,

I am happy to welcome our latest newsletter. It is full of interesting material about the work for Justice and Peace in its different forms and progress being made in different projects and campaigns. I hope you will find it encouraging.

Our 15th consecutive Assembly Day comes up on 12th October in Solihull. This year it will be a day with a difference as we are partnering with the Columbans Missionaries and will be seeking to reflect and respond to our role as missionary disciples in our own local situation and in the wider world. It is part of the extraordinary month of Mission called by Pope Francis in October. Please put the date in your diary. More information will be available after Easter. I hope you will be able to join us for this special Day.

With all good wishes for your work for justice and peace.

Fr Gerard Murray (Chair)

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Dates for your diary:

Annual Justice and Peace Lenten Retreat

will take place at Selly Park Convent,
Selly Park Birmingham B29 7LL on **16th March 2019**
10am to 4pm
It will be led by Fr. Martin Newell CP

Annual Justice and Peace Assembly Saturday 12th October 2019

St. Peter's School, Solihull

Baptised and Sent:

Our call to be Missionary Disciples
Pope Francis has declared October 2019 as an Extraordinary Missionary Month. The Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission and the Columban Missionaries invite you to reflect on your experiences, celebrating and putting into action the call to mission for justice, peace and care for creation.

The Justice and Peace Commission
Archdiocese of Birmingham



Lenten Retreat

The Passion of Christ, and the Passion of the Earth
Saturday 16th March 2019

Registrations 9:30am Start at 10:00 finished by 4pm
St Paul's Convent, Selly Park, Birmingham B29 7LL

All welcome



Led by Fr. Martin Newell CP

£5 concessions free, to be collected on the day.

Bring your own packed lunch
Tea and coffee will be provided

**A time of reflection, silence and prayer for those involved or interested in the
work for justice, peace and social justice.**

Please register your intention to attend by Email to:

Janet Vaughan

Administrator, Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission

Email: bham.jandp@gmail.com

Or book on-line <http://bit.ly/2FJFaRX>

RC Archdiocese of Birmingham Registered Charity 234216

You can find the proposed programme for the day on our website

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

An estimated 40.3 million people are in slavery worldwide.

In every country around the world, people are working for little or no pay, controlled by threats, debt, and violence. We call it by many names, but it amounts to the same thing: modern slavery. Slavery is illegal everywhere, but it continues to thrive because so many of us don't understand it, don't want to think about it or don't know how to change it.

Solomon, 29: alleges that he was subjected to months of being followed and intimidated by government agents at the mines after a series of minor workplace disputes with his superiors and other workers. Solomon says he was abducted at gunpoint from Bisha mine, thrown into solitary confinement, tortured with electric shocks and beatings, and accused of being a spy.

Kidane, 37: After his father died and he was refused permission to attend a religious memorial ceremony, Kidane left the mine without permission and went into hiding for four months. He was punished with two months' imprisonment. On another occasion, when he failed to recognize a government figure at the checkpoint, he was imprisoned for two months in solitary confinement.

Aman, 32: said he was conscripted by the army when he was 20 and assigned to work at Segen, an Eritrean government construction firm. He claimed he was sent to Bisha mine, hundreds of kilometers from his family, in 2009. "Life was very harsh," he said. "There were sandstorms 24 hours [a day], the temperature was 38C [100F] or 40C. We never had full stomachs. My work was constant.

*all accounts as reported by The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/global>

These are just a snippet of the stories that are being told by Eritreans working at the Bisha mine*, majority-owned by Nevsun Resources Ltd – a Canadian Mining company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Nevsun operates the Bisha mine and subcontracts work there to a state-run company Segen Construction Company – known to make extensive use of conscript labor from the national service program.

Nevsun chose to set up mining operations near Asmara, Eritrea in 2008 in order to mine copper, zinc and gold – despite the widespread concern of human rights abuses perpetrated by the government against its own people. In fact, just recently a UN commission found that **the government is guilty of committing**

“systematic, widespread, and gross human rights violations.” Nevsun is one of the only international businesses operating in Eritrea, paying the government billions of dollars.

There have been repeated allegations of the use of forced conscript labour, propped up by intimidation, abuse and torture since construction began at the mine. Nevsun has either denied the existence of forced labor, or denied responsibility for it – whilst continuing to profit and even expand Bisha's operations without truly addressing it.

The Supreme Court of British Columbia, Canada, has granted the right to take Nevsun to trial over potential abuses in Eritrea – a landmark ruling. Right now, as the case against Nevsun will go ahead, we can also take action and ensure that big business does not profit from slavery.

For more information

<https://www.freedomunited.org/>



A Diocesan Environmental Policy?

Work-in-progress

You might like to know that your J&P Commission have been considering proposals for a **Diocesan Environmental Policy**. To be quite honest about this, we have taken the basic ideas from the **Middlesbrough Diocese** as a starting point, which you can view at <https://middlesbrough-diocese.org.uk/environmental-policy/>

This is primarily in response to Pope Francis' Encyclical, *'Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home* in which he calls upon our world community to **value and take care of our precious planet and its limited resources** and undertake an **ecological conversion and change our lifestyle**.

For the Diocese to consider it as a policy, though, we have condensed it to a number of objectives for the Diocese itself, for parishes and for individuals. We have tried to take into consideration what is already in place, such as an Ethical Investment Policy, having a green energy supplier and being a real Living Wage Employer, as well as what we would like to see the Diocese working towards.

Hopefully, this will have progressed further by the time of our next newsletter in the Summer and we will be able to give you more specific details. If you have any strong opinions about this, by all means let our Administrator know your views by email to bham.jandp@gmail.com

St. Josephine Bakhita Day

Friday 8th February was the Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita - the patron saint of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. On this day Catholics are encouraged to pray for all those affected by the crimes of modern slavery and human trafficking, and the people that volunteer and work to eradicate this crime.



This year the particular focus was on those who are caught up in forced labour and labour exploitation both in the UK and beyond.

The Santa Marta Group is an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales whose mission is to bring the global Church and law enforcement together to combat and eradicate modern slavery.

ARSINTE'S STORY

Arsinte was approaching 60, a mechanic and driver in Romania, living close the Hungarian border. In 2013 he was approached by men who asked him if he would be willing to drive vehicles from Ireland to Romania. Arsinte jumped at the chance, he came from an impoverished background, and even with his skills work was hard to come by. He flew to Dublin, where at the airport he was met by his traffickers. They told him that he was now their property, and they sold him to a gang for 400 euros. Arsinte lived in fear, constantly under threat from his traffickers, and was forced to work on vehicles with no pay, and without proper accommodation. Later he was moved to another part of the country, and made to shoplift and scavenge in bins for food. Arsinte refused to be involved in this criminal behaviour and made the extraordinarily brave decision to go to the police for help.

There are an estimated 40 million victims of modern slavery worldwide. Modern slavery now ranks as the second most profitable worldwide criminal enterprise. Modern slavery is a serious crime in which people are coerced or deceived into a situation where they are exploited, for the purpose of making a profit. This exploitation can take many forms including; forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced criminality and organ harvesting. It is believed that modern slavery affects every country in the world and here in the UK some recent figures suggest there are in excess of 100,000 victims hidden in plain sight. Labour exploitation currently makes up the greatest percentage of modern slavery cases in the UK. Victims of forced

labour are made to work long hours, often in tough conditions without the training and safety measures in place. The majority, if not all, of wages are taken by the traffickers. This is often accompanied by threats and violence. Cases of labour exploitation have been widely reported in car washes and nail bars however victims have been found in the manufacturing, entertainment, hospitality, agriculture, and construction industries.

The eradication of modern slavery and the pastoral care of victims is a priority for the Catholic Church. Pope Francis continually draws the attention of the Church and the wider world to the moral and human crisis evident in this widespread exploitation.

"Faced with the tragic reality of rising contemporary slavery, no one can wash their hands of it without being, in some way, an accomplice to this crime against humanity. This immense task, which requires courage, patience and perseverance, demands a joint and global effort on the part of the different actors that make up society."

(Pope Francis to the participants of the 2nd International Forum on Modern Slavery, May 2018)



The DPRTE Arms fair has been moved out of Birmingham in response to the planned protests.



But this is not the end – many are planning to follow the Arms fair to its new home on the Farnborough Airbase, Surrey, to challenge it there (28th March). So hold on to your action ideas- they may still be useful!

I will send out details of the next Birmingham Stop the Arms Fair group meeting, where activists will be discussing how to respond to this, next week so please check your email and keep an eye on the Birmingham stop the Arms fair Facebook page.

The news broke 11th February that the fair had been chased out of Birmingham, and campaigners received an email from the event organisers which claimed that the decision was made following consideration of "the impact of all events on all our guests." Organisers say that they decided it was "more appropriate for DPRTE to be hosted at a more self-contained venue". The new location in Farnborough also serves a military base.

Hugh Douglas from Birmingham Stop the Arms Fair said: "This move is a response to the people of Birmingham and of Solihull making it clear that the arms industry is not welcome here. The DPRTE was already chased out of Cardiff, and now Birmingham. The government might be willing to ignore the death and destruction caused by the arms industry, but local people are not."



World-class peacebuilders come to Coventry

The RISING 2018 Global Peace Forum in September 2018 was the third such Forum held in Coventry. RISING is a partnership between Coventry University, the Cathedral and Coventry City Council. The Forum is one of the main annual events that reinforces Coventry's unique status as the UK's only City of Peace and Reconciliation, such status being one of three current 'badges' held by the City, the others being UK City of Culture 2021 and European City of Sport 2019.

RISING is the only UK event that sets out to be 'The Davos for Peace'. In France both the Forum Mondial pour La Paix in Caen and the Paris Peace Forum share this vision, albeit with considerably greater budget some of which is public sector-funded, and these two events were held for the first time in June and November 2018 respectively.

The RISING 2018 Forum sought to deliver inspiring keynote presentations and participative workshops based around the theme of 'The Anatomy of Peace'. The aim was for dialogue that would lead to learning about what it takes to initiate contact to end violent conflict, to make a peace deal and then to sustain the peace. The 2018 Forum aimed also to attract a wider range of high-profile speakers than in previous years, as well as more delegates including academics, students, policymakers, charities, community groups and members of the general public.

Serious planning for the 2018 event had started in November 2017. Day One of the event included six keynote presentations from two Nobel Peace Prize winners (including the first African female Head of State President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from Liberia), another former Head of State (John Bruton) who contributed to preparation for the Good Friday Agreement, the Speaker from an Oceanic Parliament in Papua New Guinea where there had been civil war, a former UN Special Representative for Iraq (Ad Melkert) and, deliberately to provoke dialogue, the former Downing Street Director of Communications Alastair Campbell.

On Day Two of the Forum 29 speakers and chairs took part in ten workshops. In four of these workshops staff from the University's Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations were the main speakers alongside external speakers. Coventry Cathedral staff spoke in one workshop.

Across the two days 207 people took part in the event, being 32 speakers, 65 academics, 53 practitioners, 25 University staff and 32 others, mainly community representatives. This was at least 75% more than at the Forum events. 81 delegates also attended the Gala Dinner.

Delegates were surveyed both before and after the event and the qualitative feedback noted the quality of the speakers and the opportunity for dialogue and networking. Quantitative feedback revealed that awareness of Coventry as the UK's only City of Peace and Reconciliation shifted from an average score of 7.1 in August to 8.7 after the event.

In 2019 the Forum will again be held in Coventry and the dates will be 13th and 14th November. The theme will be the 'Ecology of Peace' – including peace built up from grassroots, community level. This theme will also cover the various RISING half-day symposia planned locally, nationally and internationally for 2019. The 2019 Forum will also include specific content to explore the strategic contribution that cultural activities/dialogue and sport/activity can have in building and sustaining peace. As in 2018, participation at the 2019 Forum event will be free and anyone who wishes to attend should email RISING@coventry.ac.uk

*Richard Dickson, RISING Development Manager,
November 2018*





Brief visit to see some of the work of the Batthula Care Trust in India

I first met Rev. Canon John Batthula at St. Elizabeth's Coventry in 1995 not long after he arrived in England. He was ordained a priest in India 10th March 1992.

He talked about how he wanted to build a school back home to help the children and their parents out of poverty. On the 13th March 2009 the **Batthula Care Trust** was setup to help the poor, needy and destitute persons, without any discrimination of caste, creed, or religion, in many areas of their need, with special emphasis on Health and Education in India.

Prior to setting up the charity his work in India had already started. He procured land in his home village to help the school there and in Visakhapatnam district, Kasimkota, with the help of his brother he managed to buy a large plot of land on which he would build a school.

The school has now been open for 15 years and helps many children, most are fee paying but a large number of the 1,000 children receive help from the charity to cover tuition fees, uniforms and other support for family members. All the staff at the school (teaching and non-teaching) receive a fair wage, pensions and healthcare cover for themselves and other family members. Non-teaching staff are also provided with a uniform. The school has its own bore hole so that all the children have clean safe water to drink while at school, they also now have back up generators after a large cyclone left the area without power for almost a month, making it impossible for the school to open. (no power - no clean drinking water)

[Link to information about one cyclone](#)

Cyclones are now becoming a bigger problem in the area as they are now more frequent and more powerful.

(Link to photographs of my visit to the Leper Colony)

<http://bit.ly/2sXBwfl>

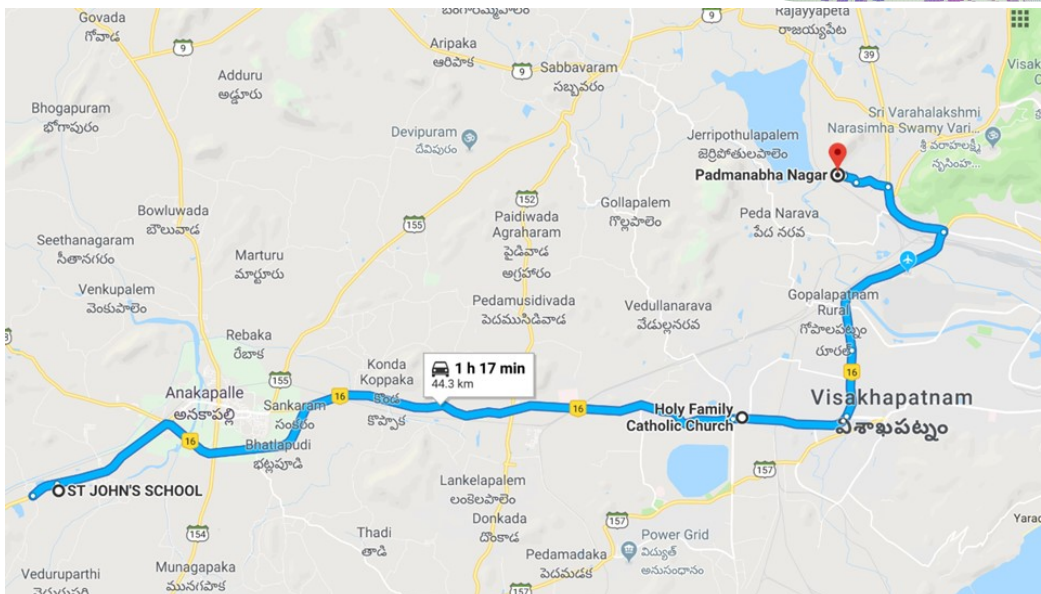
The school also has 7 buses to transport children safely to and from the school, the upkeep of the buses etc. is reliant on the charity.

Besides the school and supporting a number of families the trust, with the help of UK parishioners has built 14 homes for lepers and their families. They also have clean water. Without the trust the children from these families would not be able to afford to go to school and some of them are now at college.

The charity has managed to do a lot of good work since it was founded with the help of many very generous people but for the work to continue it, like many charities, is finding it difficult to raise funds and is always looking for more sponsors.

<http://bcaretrust.com/lepers.html>

Article by Janet Vaughan



Giving blankets to each family

Homily preached at the Unity Service In the Chapel of Unity, Coventry Cathedral on Saturday 19th January 2019

Through the written word and the spoken word, may we know your Living Word Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

I want to begin by saying thank you for the invitation to preach today as part of this special service. Due to the research I'm involved in, I come down to Coventry a number of times a year, and I've had the pleasure of participating in both the Tuesday and Wednesday services held in this Chapel of Unity. Because of this, it's especially good to be here with you all today, as we journey together, worshipping God, seeking the unity of the Church, and praying for justice for those who need it most.

I was struck, as I was reading the material prepared for us by Indonesian Christians, that the theme of justice is also most apposite for us in the UK today. Our context is undoubtedly very different from that in Indonesia; nevertheless, yet again, in the first few weeks of this New Year, we've been hearing on the news about the tightening up of border control both in UK and the US. Not to mention cries for justice by those on both sides of the Brexit debate. The theme of justice seems to be a constant – albeit, what we read hear about in the media, seems to be mostly concerned with justice for those who don't need to struggle for it, rather than showing any concern for those who do.

On the theme of justice, I've been reading recently about a man called Hans Rahmer, who came to England originally from Berlin. He has some good insights into justice, which stem both from his academic life and from his personal experiences. As a Jew, he was neither safe nor welcome in his hometown during the late 1930's, and so he was sent to England. He arrived here August 11th 1939, on one of the last 'kindertransports'; one of the 10,000 plus Jewish children sent to the UK during that period. At just five years of age, he settled down with a local rector in the North East; the rest of his family died later in Auschwitz. He changed his name to John Rayner and served in the British army during his early twenties. He survived the war and later went on to become a Rabbi, and he cultivated the habit of asking the question, "What does the Eternal God require of you?" As far as Rabbi John Rayner was concerned, this question gets to the core of the matter of life. He spoke frequently about justice and summed up, quite succinctly, what it meant to him:

"To be just is to be angry when justice is violated, to be just is to choose just means to right wrongs, to be just is to demand justice for others as well as yourself, to be just is to demand justice for other peoples as well as your own."

German and Jewish, Rabbi John Rayner served alongside people who in many ways would have been quite different from himself, certainly according to birth,

but with whom he shared a common goal: to seek justice for other peoples as well as his own.

The message of our readings today bear this same theme of justice, and especially look to justice for the many, rather than the few. The author of Deuteronomy offers us a striking picture of what living justly might mean. Rather than tightening up borders or building walls, we are presented with a picture of radical inclusion.

Our reading from Deuteronomy comes in the middle of an important story which begins in Genesis and continues through Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. In Genesis, God's promises began to be fulfilled but we end on a cliffhanger because Jacob's family are brought to Egypt due to a famine. Exodus then picks up the story and tells of taking Jacob's descendants from captivity to Canaan. This does not happen quickly. They spend no small amount of time wandering around the desert, seemingly unable to trust God for full deliverance. It's in Numbers and Deuteronomy that we see them move from Mount Sinai to the edge of the promised land. The people of Israel remain on the very edge of Canaan as the book deals with Moses' final address to Israel. In fact, Deuteronomy itself means 'second law' and is an expansion and a deepening of the themes raised in the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai. In Deuteronomy, as well as looking back over the journey they have made together, Moses speaks to Israel about the ways in which they should worship God and how this should shape their lives. He goes into quite a lot of detail about how Israel should handle life once the people arrive in Canaan. Most importantly, it's about remaining fast to a close relationship with the God who loves them and continues to pursue them each time they move away.

God's justice continues to be a theme which runs throughout the whole of the Bible. We are told in the Psalms to clothe ourselves in justice (Ps 132:9) and Isaiah tells us to do justice (Is 64:4). God's justice is based on the God-given order of things and God's saving activity. John Goldingay, an Old Testament scholar, likes to translate the Hebrew word for justice as 'absolute faithfulness' (tsedeq). He does this because it conveys the idea of God's positive and benevolent intervention. Let's turn to the reading chosen for us today to see how this works out.

The verses prior to our reading are concerned with describing what's called the Festival of Weeks. Moses tells Israel: "You shall count seven weeks; begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. Then you shall keep the festival of weeks to the Lord your God, contributing a freewill offering in proportion to the blessing that you have received from the Lord your God."

After this, our reading begins with 'rejoice!' 'Rejoice before the Lord your God'. If we set this in the context of the whole book, I think this is quite intentional on the part of the author. For what he does (I think we can assume it's a 'he') is locate our understanding of justice in the context of worship and celebration.

In other words, justice begins with a party!

Whilst the chapter moves on to consider justice as that which is fair and right, it does not begin there. It begins with a celebration of God's goodness to Israel. And there's something particularly important about this party – it includes everyone: "you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, the Levites resident in your towns, as well as the strangers, the orphans, and the widows who are among you". At the time when this was probably written, there would not have been anyone else left to include. So, it's not simply about unity, or even about all the different tribes of Israel, but also the inclusion of all – insiders and outsiders. Even those who were not normally part of everyday life.

A few lines later we move on to the Festival of Booths and, if we had not got the message already, again we hear exactly the same refrain:

"Rejoice during your festival, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, as well as the Levites, the strangers, the orphans, and the widows resident in your towns". This, in a few words, is a command to celebrate and include everyone! It's only after yet another call to celebration that Israel is told how to appoint judges and officials, and get down to the nitty, gritty of executing a detailed working out of justice.

It struck me whilst I was reading this, and thinking about justice that I don't often hear it spoken of in the context of rejoicing and celebration. So, in light of the reading chosen by our Indonesian sisters and brothers, I think it's worth asking the question: from what does our justice work flow? As churches do we engage in justice work from a place of having rejoiced and celebrated together? Where does your energy, or your church's energy for justice come? Are there ways in which it is rooted in celebration? And what might be the benefits of this? For, if there's one thing this passage points to very clearly, it's that God's blessings are cause for us to rejoice, and that we are to include as many people as possible in our rejoicing. Justice, in Deuteronomy at least, is the ever-flowing river, which has, as its source, a radically inclusive celebration of God's goodness. Amen.

By Rev Dr Gabrielle Thomas



HEADING FOR EXTINCTION - And what to do about it -

Forests are burning, temperatures are soaring, people are dying ... and governments still do nothing. We are in a climate emergency & a mass extinction event. Conventional campaigning has failed.

Time to rebel: Come to this workshop to find out more.

When: Wed, 20 February 2019 - 6.00pm

Where: Birmingham & Midland Institute ,
9 Margaret Street , Birmingham B3 3BS

The science is done - we are on the road to climate catastrophe and mass extinction. So in November Extinction Rebellion began mobilising people all over the country to take part in civil disobedience. Over two weeks, non-violent rebellion was declared, 5 major London bridges blocked, 150 people arrested & more.

Find out the truth of our situation, and what you can do. Help is needed with the many support roles, as well as courage to risk arrest and even imprisonment. We intend to provoke a national debate on what we are doing to the planet and the world we are creating for our young people. We demand that the government reduces carbon emissions to zero within the next decade and aim to set up national assemblies of citizens to replace corrupted political institutions.

There's a lot to do to organise this nonviolent rebellion against the ecocide of the UK government. Find out what's the plan, how you can get involved and start organising.

For more info about the overall plans see:
<https://rebellion.earth/>

For more info about XR Birmingham, see our Facebook page facebook.com/extinctionrebellionbirmingham/ Or Contact us at: extinctionrebellionbham@gmail.com



Information sent to use from Fr. Martin Newell CP

Ending arms trade investment in the West Midlands

A three-year campaign to pull the West Midlands Pension Fund (WMPF) out of all cluster bomb investments was successful at the end of 2017. This was welcome, of course, but we have to remember that all 'support, assistance and encouragement' to the trade in cluster bombs was outlawed in the UK as long ago as 2010. The fact that it was possible to flout the law on this point, to the full knowledge of the authorities, is a sorry reflection on the state of play when it comes to arms investments.

The campaigning strategy in Coventry (the only place, so far, in the West Midlands to tackle arms trade investments) relies heavily on three arguments:

The investments made by the WMPF are taken from Council Tax revenues across the region. Anyone who pays Council Tax in any of the seven Districts of the West Midlands is therefore both implicated in the investments and has the right to object to them. The Trustees of the Fund are all local Councillors and therefore within easy reach of the electorate.

Further, investments in the arms trade are contrary to the ethos of the city of Coventry in particular, which claims to be committed to Peace and Reconciliation, at home and abroad.

The only way the investment arrangements can change for the better is by local people and their representatives acting together to convince the Trustees.

With the end of cluster bomb investments, we were faced with a difficult question: how to proceed? WMPF still had tens of millions in investments to get rid of. There was no shortage of possible answers, but in fact it took us several months to identify the best way forward, bearing in mind all relevant factors. And how is 'relevance' to be defined? For us, the firm or firms had to be part of the WMPF portfolio, to retain the issue of how our Council Taxes are being used. Secondly, there should be as close a local connection as possible, to maintain the tension between the work for Peace and Reconciliation (which goes on in many ways in the city), and the fact that arms-dealers simultaneously work here, unknown to most people. Thirdly, we ought to take on a firm whose activities would readily illustrate to the public the scale and scope of the arms trade.

We decided to go for Lockheed Martin, the world Number One arms-dealer (Hellfire missiles, F-35s, Trident). And they turned out to have a subsidiary, Leidos, based in Coventry University's Technology Park. Leidos, ranked 17 in the world of arms-dealing, is a logistics specialist and handles the supply of weaponry to U.S. troops and their allies across the Middle East, eg: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iraq, the Gulf states.

Our first task is to get this basic information into the 'municipal bloodstream', so to speak. All of the city's major institutions are caught up in the problem. On December 7, 2018, in advance of the quarterly meeting of the Pensions Committee of the WMPF, we had a meeting with Coventry City Councillor John Mutton who sits on this Committee of WMPF. The meeting was initially intended to explain to him the reasons why we were particularly concerned about the Lockheed Martin/Leidos situation. We were able, though, to explore a number of other issues with him, including the scope for the WMPF to look at ways of devising alternatives to the current arms investments held by the Fund.

Councillor Mutton was not optimistic about getting the necessary support from the Pensions Committee for further steps along the road to ending arms investments. But we have since learned that the Committee did, in fact, agree to begin a process of 'engagement' with Lockheed Martin. The Director of Pensions, Rachel Brothwood, has asked for information which might be helpful to the Committee to be passed to her. The Pensions Committee meets again in March. Also in March there will be an opportunity to protest at the major arms fair being held at the NEC on the 28th.

Coventry Justice and Peace Group



A grassroots network of UK Quakers are building a creative, vibrant and radical Quaker response to one of the world's largest arms fairs.

The DSEI (Defence and Security Equipment International) takes place in September in East London every two years. The arms fair is attended and supported by individuals and organisations who all stand to make financial gain from war, violence, and human rights violations around the world. Its sellers are arms companies dealing in small arms, planes, tanks, warships, crowd control equipment, and surveillance.

DSEI was last held in September 2017. Nonviolent activists traveled from across the UK, Europe, and the rest of the world to resist the event. They blockaded roads, slowed down trucks, and disrupted preparations in the week before the arms fair. Quakers took action throughout the week, working alongside people of all faiths and none. A large Quaker Meeting for Worship was held in the road, with several hundred participants, and a number arrested after refusing to leave. Quakers were also involved in other forms of nonviolent direct action, including abseiling from bridges, joining road blockades, and challenging arms dealers as they arrived at the event.

Roots of Resistance are the community of Quakers aiming to stop the arms fair. They're building a network of 100 Quakers in Area Meetings around the country. These organisers will in turn attempt to find 10 more

Quakers in their local area, interested in joining with Roots of Resistance as they take action against the arms fair.

To get Roots of Resistance news and updates, head to www.rootsofresistance.org.uk!



Pax Christi and Christian CND are also part of this network against the Arms Trade.



JTP @livesimplyparish

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God,
 you are present in the whole universe
 and in the smallest of your creatures.
 You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
 Pour out upon us the power of your love,
 that we may protect life and beauty.
 Fill us with peace, that we may live
 as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
 O God of the poor,
 help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
 so precious in your eyes.
 Bring healing to our lives,
 that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
 that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
 Touch the hearts
 of those who look only for gain
 at the expense of the poor and the earth.
 Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
 to be filled with awe and contemplation,
 to recognise that we are profoundly united
 with every creature
 as we journey towards your infinite light.
 We thank you for being with us each day.
 Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
 for justice, love and peace.
 Amen.

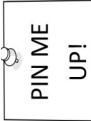
*'A prayer for our earth' was first published in Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si'.
 It is for all who believe in a God who is the all-powerful Creator*

Lent and Laudato Si' A Lenten Calendar

Here in Leamington Spa, we were looking for a way to engage more people in getting to know the messages from Laudato Si' and we came up with the idea of a **Lenten Calendar**, rather like an Advent Calendar, that people could pin up in their kitchen, or somewhere, and focus on one 'window' each week during Lent.

Each week tried to relate to each chapter in LS. See what you think? Could you use this in your parish this year (the dates would need updating for one thing and you may want to change it to suit yourselves)?

More information from Brian Austin cl.iandp@gmail.com who can give you the original for editing.



A Lenten Calendar

Our Archbishop has asked us to pray during lent with the Pope's encyclical 'Care for Our Common Home' or 'Laudato Si'!"

CHAPTER 1

6 MAR—13 MAR

WEEK 1

What is happening?
 Pray for our earth:
Use the prayer on the back of this calendar and pray with it at least once this week.

CHAPTER 2

13 MAR—20 MAR

WEEK 2

The Gospel of Creation
Fast on Friday 15th—it's CAFOD's Lent Family Fast Day. If you can, come to Soup and Rolls after Mass at 1.00pm.

CHAPTER 3

20 MAR—27 MAR

WEEK 3

The human roots of the earth's crisis
 Think about my part in putting creation under threat by overconsumption.
This week, reduce the use of ONE thing (Water? Energy? Food? Plastic?)

CHAPTER 4

27 APR—3 APR

WEEK 4

Human life is intertwined with the rest of the natural world—Pope Francis calls this 'integral ecology'. This week I examine my **conscience** on how I have, or have not, lived in communion with God, with others, with all creatures and with nature.

CHAPTER 5

3 APR—10 APR

WEEK 5

Lines of approach and action
Pray before meals every day this week and reflect on where my food has come from and who brought it to my table.

CHAPTER 6

10 APR—17 APR

WEEK 6

Education and Spirituality
 Pope Francis says we all need to change and "to aim for a new lifestyle"
What can I do myself and what can my family do to live more simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor?

As readers of this Newsletter will, of course, be aware, CAFOD holds two fast days each year, the Lent Fast Day on the Friday of the first full week of Lent (so this year on 15 March), and Harvest on the first Friday in October. These are important in a number of ways. Firstly, they are anchored in, and build on the Catholic tradition of not eating meat on Fridays, and on fasting and abstinence during certain periods of the year, especially Lent. They also enable the 'ordinary person in the pew' to reflect on a key expression of Catholic social teaching, giving alms, to use the traditional word, and showing solidarity with our poorer sisters and brothers around the world. Last but not least, they raise vital amounts of money for CAFOD, without which it would not be able to put Catholic social teaching into practice in all the ways that it does. In 2017-18, for example, CAFOD received £52.6 million in income, with the majority donated from supporters in England and Wales, mainly from the Catholic community. At the Lent Fast Day in 2018 £124,024 was given in the Birmingham Archdiocese. (The rest is raised from Caritas and other Catholic agencies, and other governmental and institutional donors, including the UK government).

As Christians, we believe in a world where every woman, man and child can flourish. But the reality is that CAFOD is forced to turn away one in three requests for help, and this is simply because there is not enough money to support all needs.

We see these issues in practice in the story that CAFOD wants us to focus on this year around the Fast Day on 15 March, as a way of really bringing home the reality of others' lives. This Lent we are invited to look at the life of a woman in Bangladesh who is in need of our help. Her name is Mahinur and she lives very near the coast, in an area that's badly hit by climate change. Cyclones are common, salty sea water floods the rice fields, and - most devastatingly for Mahinur - a drought last year killed all the fish.

As she dragged her empty net out of the river, Mahinur spoke of her struggles: 'There should be fish in the river now. But there's nothing. I have no reason to smile.' Moreover, Mahinur has a disabled husband and son to support, so she's working every hour of the day doing odd jobs for her neighbours in return for rice. However, this is not enough. Some days the family just drinks water for dinner. As things stand, currently, there is no happy ending to Mahinur's story. This is the situation she faces today, because, as yet, CAFOD has been unable to support her. She is the one in three.

The Gospel readings around the time of the Fast Day further enable us to see Mahinur's life in context. For example, on the Sunday before the Lent Fast Day we have a reading from Luke 4:1-13. The Gospel follows



Jesus' baptism by John in the River Jordan. Immediately he is led by the Spirit into the desert. Without food for forty days, he is famished and then tempted by the devil. As we reflect on the Lenten journey, in which ways do we find that we are we tempted each day? How are we blinded to the needs of our sisters and brothers due to the distractions of the world, rather than seeing what truly matters? This Lent, let us pray that the living water of our baptism opens our hearts to God's mercy and love so that we can help people like Mahinur to realise their dreams.

Then, the following weekend, there is another reading from Luke, 9:28-36. In this Gospel, Peter, John and James are led up a mountain by Jesus. They go to find space and silence to pray. The voice that comes from the cloud is also addressed to us: 'Listen to Jesus'. We need to make space and silence to listen to God this Lent, to discern how we are called to be changed through God's mercy. We hope we may also be changed through our encounter with our sisters and brothers throughout the world, whilst helping their dreams to be fulfilled.

As we reflect on these readings, and on Mahinur's life, we also need to remind ourselves of some of the essential facts around CAFOD's work. That is, by working through the local Church, CAFOD's experts make up one of the largest aid networks in the world. Through them, our support can reach literally to the ends of the earth. Our donation is a lifeline, an outstretched hand to a friend in danger. Together, we can reach out to children, women and men in God's family with love. Together, we can change the ending of more stories like Mahinur's.

Supplied by Joe Andrew



**Justice and Peace
Commission Website**

www.birminghamjandp.org.uk

Is it User Friendly ?



Please email
bham.jandp@gmail.com
your thoughts.



Dear Friends and Supporters,
We wanted to give some of the people staying in the Shelter at the moment a chance to share some of their thoughts and ideas; and the chance for you to get to know those staying with us a bit better. So here is a 'Portrait in Words' of one of our Shelter users; in their own words.

Can you describe yourself in 3 words?

Caring, passionate, forgiving, a bit lazy.

Can you tell us something that has inspired you in the past year?

My father.

Could you recommend a book, artist, song or piece of music to the people reading?

Listen to Arabic music.

How would you describe the UK in 3 words?

Nice people, diversity, inspiring.

How would you describe the country you have come from in 3 words?

Hospitality, corruption, crazy.

What are the best things about life in the UK?

Work, justice, chance for every one regardless of their colour, religion or where they come from.

What do you think are the biggest problems facing asylum seekers in the UK at the moment?

Not giving permission to work.

If you could change one thing to improve the situation for people what would it be?

It depends on what people and what kind of thing they need to improve their life.

What have you seen or been involved in in the UK that you think has made a difference to the life of asylum seekers?

For example, Peace House helps people who have nowhere to sleep. This is a difference made to the life of those people.

If people reading asked you how they could make a positive contribution to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK or abroad what would you say?

Help if you can. If you cannot, just a couple of words that may give them hope.

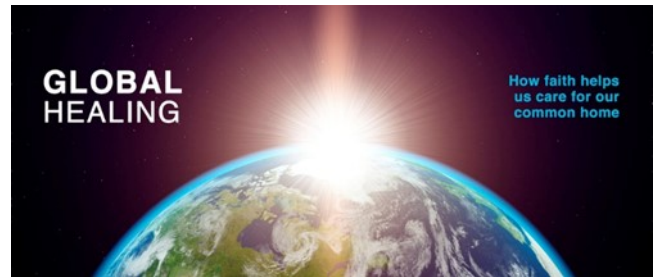
And if you could tell the people one thing to think about or to tell others what would it be?

Put yourself in others' situations and try to understand their feelings.

Beth Ash
Shelter Co-ordinator
The Night Shelter - registered charity 1180003
shelter@covpeacehouse.org.uk

<http://coventrynightshelter.my-free.website/>

07443428916 (please text or whatsapp)



Celebrating the Season of Creation

It is not too early to start planning for September

The Season of Creation (1st September – 4th October) is a powerful time to bring Christians together in our common concern for creation. Christians are encouraged to host prayer services that incorporate a symbolic action. Remember that the Season of Creation was celebrated by other Christian Churches before Pope Francis brought the Catholics in!

It's not too early to plan something for this September, even if it is just one single event during that time. Here are some ideas for you to follow up:

A FREE CaFE FILM RESOURCE

Global Healing is a film-based event for parishes, groups and individuals. It will inform, challenge and equip people to engage with Pope Francis' vital call to *Care For Our Common Home*.

The Global Healing event begins with a shared meal followed by film clips including well-known experts, engaging testimonies and on-location filming from around the UK. There are times for discussion & prayer to help stir deeper ecological conversion and fresh practical responses.

Follow-on material is available to create a short course. The film clips are available as [free downloads](#) but **DVD copies** can be inexpensively purchased if needed. There are also downloadable **posters, fliers, newsletter info** and **leaders guides** with numerous **more info links** for deeper reflection & action.

Go to www.ourcommonhome.co.uk for all the information you need.

If you have a contribution you would like included in the **June 2019** newsletter please send it by Email for consideration to:

The Administrator, J&P Commission.

Email: bham.jandp@gmail.com

June 2019 Edition:

Last date for copy **31st May 2019**

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.

www.birminghamjandp.org.uk

Birmingham J&P @BhamJandP





JOIN THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT

From September 1 to October 4, Christians around the world unite to pray and care for creation. It's the "Season of Creation," and it happens from Paris to Pittsburgh, Pretoria to La Paz. In 2018, the season was celebrated with 650+ events in 68 countries on 6 continents. Christians are coming together as never before to care for the Earth, our common home. In **2019**, the Season of Creation will be focused on **biodiversity**. You're invited to begin planning your 2019 event now.

Go to www.seasonofcreation.org

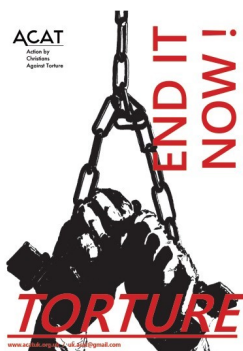
SIGN THE PLEDGE!

Following his historic environmental encyclical, Pope Francis endorsed the Laudato Si' Pledge campaign, which was also supported by many other Church leaders. Through the Pledge, the Global Catholic Climate Movement aims to mobilize at least 1 million Catholics to become directly engaged in turning Laudato Si into action to care for the planet.

The pledge is simply: "Answering Pope Francis' urgent call in Laudato Si, I pledge to:

- Pray for and with creation
- Live more simply
- Advocate to protect our common home."

Go to www.livelaudatosi.org



Easter Card Campaign

As usual we suggest that you write a simple card or greeting to the individual saying that you are thinking of him/her and/or urging him/her not to lose hope (or words to that effect). A picture postcard is always welcome and cheapest to send. You can include your name and address (if you wish) but do

not mention ACAT or include a religious greeting if so advised, For the Easter campaign we focus on prisoners persecuted for their faith, although others are included.

Don't forget Pax Christi sell cards suitable to send to prisoners.

For more details about sending cards please look on the J&P Website.

PRAY WITH THE LITURGY

The Columbans in Australia have produced 'A Catholic Season of Creation' resource, which explores the Sunday scripture readings for September/October to help us find the voice of the earth as the voice of the Holy Spirit. Our common Sunday worship is an easy place to start seeing the natural world in God's plan of salvation in Jesus by linking the insights of ecology with scripture. Each Sunday focuses on a particular theme:

8th September	22nd Sunday Year C	Humbly take our place
15th September	23rd Sunday Year C	Reconcile the world
22nd September	24th Sunday Year C	Loving Embrace
29th September	25th Sunday Year C	Respect

A Catholic Season for Creation is a free download.

Go to [https://www.columban.org.au/media-and-publications/educational-resources/a-catholic-season-of-creation-sundays-of-september-\(year-c\)](https://www.columban.org.au/media-and-publications/educational-resources/a-catholic-season-of-creation-sundays-of-september-(year-c))

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT IS NOT OVER! Empowering communities around the world

Fairtrade Fortnight this year is just about upon us (28th February-10th March) and whether we have organised any event or not we may think that that is it all over for another year. But what we really need to do is to look at the bigger picture and use this Fortnight as a springboard for the rest of the year.

You are invited more than ever before to get closer to the wonderful world of Fairtrade – all year round.

Starting now, you can celebrate the positive impact Fairtrade has on the lives of people all over the world. You can get involved by sharing Fairtrade products, recipes and news in your community.

By celebrating Fairtrade with a coffee morning, an event, a talk at your local school or even just a chat with your friends and family, you can help more people to understand and choose Fairtrade. The more people choosing, sharing and shouting about Fairtrade the more power the producers have to change the world.

You can download a pack from the Co-op with tips on how to host a Fairtrade coffee morning or event and share a few recipe ideas, resources and inspiring stories too.

Go to: <https://food.coop.co.uk/food-ethics/people/fairtrade/>



The Pax Christi Peace Award – Celebrating ‘ordinary’ people’s contribution to peace and justice

In 2001 Pax Christi created a way for members to recognise the peace and justice commitment of ‘ordinary’ people in the UK through its bi-annual Peace Award. Since then 31 people have received the Award, presented at our Annual General Meeting. As a membership organisation, a movement for peace, our members, supporters and collaborators for peace are our strongest asset – they remind us of the words of Pope Paul VI: “peace is the fruit of anxious daily care, to see that each person lives in justice as God intends”. Until 2015, the ‘award’ was a beautiful medal which reflects the work of Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salaam village in Israel for Israeli’s and Arabs to live together, established by the late Fr Bruno Hassar. One side shows the head of Abraham, father in faith to the Jewish and Muslim religions. The reverse shows the symbol of Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salaam, “My people shall have an oasis of peace.” The award changed in 2017 when we presented the P.E.A.C.E Please Enlist All Communities on Earth medal. Both were created by the artist Natasha Ratcliffe

Birmingham Archdiocese has been well represented over the years among the recipients of the Award:

Margot Hutchison from Birmingham was a long serving member of Pax Christi and member of the Birmingham Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission. She received the Award in 2005. Margot campaigned on issues including the arms trade, overseas development, justice for women, nuclear disarmament, homelessness, racial justice and refugees. She maintained links with peace and justice organisations in her native America. Margot died in 2007.

In 2009 **Hans and Teresa Kohen** were nominated to receive the award posthumously by Winifred Flanagan because of their long commitment to work for peace. Teresa and Hans were founder members of the British friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al Shalom so it is quite fitting that they should be remembered in this way. They had supported Jewish-Christian studies at the Ammerdown Centre, the Intercultural Mass at Saint Catherine’s church, Birmingham and the Jubilee Debt Campaigns. They motivated many people with whom they came in contact and challenged people’s thinking on various issues. They provided financial aid to a family in the Philippines. In the 1980’s they arranged a trip to Hungry to learn about the situation of the Catholic Church in that country during the cold war years. Hans, who was of the Jewish Faith died in 1988 and Teresa, a Catholic, died in 2005.

Susan Clarkson, a long-term activist for peace and disarmament was given the Award in 2013. Having worked for many years with CND and Pax Christi, she went to the USA to join the Catholic Worker movement,

taking part in various direct actions against military installations. She also went to visit Afghanistan. Susan said: ‘The example of Christ is clear; we cannot love neighbour or enemy without disarming ourselves. We cannot serve the poor without defending them against the violence of the state. We cannot affirm life without standing directly and non-violently in confrontation with all that deals death.’ Susan joined Catholic Workers in Oxford upon her return from the USA. (She has since moved to Yorkshire). Often you would see her kneeling in prayer, waiting to be arrested after cutting wire at Aldermaston or at Northwood, marking the MOD buildings at Whitehall, or blockading the gates at Aldermaston. In fact blocking the road can make you very vulnerable particularly if you have a severe visual handicap. Susan also gives talks and writes about her experiences. On her visit to Afghanistan she had her hosts organise meetings with visually impaired people there, including the deputy director of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Kabul. Susan says: ‘I am doing something God has wanted me to do.’

Sue Scott has been a Pax Christi member for a good number of years. She was also a founding member of the Midlands branch of the Neve Shalom – Wahat al Salam support group. She has been a supporter of the Palestinian cause as well as the beatification of Franz Jaegerstatter. Sue has made two exposure visits to Palestine with Pax Christi, most recently the 2015 World Assembly in Bethlehem. She keeps in contact with a group of people similarly concerned with peace issues, informing them of news of conferences, lectures etc. by email. Sue has been part of the Birmingham Circle of the Newman Association and a local choir performing at charity fund raising events. She received the Award in 2015.

Martin Newell, a Passionist priest who will be leading our Justice and Peace Retreat on 16 March, was also one of the first recipients of the Award in 2001. At that time he had just served several months in prison following the Jubilee Ploughshares action, a challenge to the arms trade. He continues to give witness through nonviolent direct action. He helped to set up Catholic Worker Houses of Hospitality in England and currently gives hospitality to refugees in Birmingham.

Do you know of any people who are working for peace at grassroots level, or on behalf of organisations, who might be nominated for the 2019 Award? If so, send your nomination to Pax Christi, setting out your reasons, supported by two referees, by 25 March. They can be sent by post to Pax Christi, St Joseph’s, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY, or emailed to: coordinator@paxchristi.org.uk, marked for the attention of Arn Dekker who is on the Award Committee.

See more about the Pax Christi Award at <http://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/peace-people-2/pax-christi-peace-awards-2001-2015/>

Article supplied by Ann Kelly

Coventry celebrates 60th anniversary of twinning with Dresden

The city of Coventry is celebrating 60 years of friendship between one of its twin cities, Dresden, in Germany.

To mark the occasion, the Lord Mayor of Coventry, Cllr John Blundell and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Abdul Salam Khan, were invited to visit the city of Dresden, along with 30 pupils from Cardinal Newman School.

The Lord Mayor was asked to give an opening address as an arts exhibition in Dresden, called 'Condition Humane', which contained work from two Coventry artists who contributed as part of the Dresden Arts Exchange, who also were invited to visit.

The pupils established a school exchange with Friedrich Schiller 62nd Secondary School, working with the students in Dresden to create a peace-themed theatre performance.

The city of Dresden held a commemorative service for the anniversary of the bombing of Dresden in 1945.

Speaking of his experience, the Lord Mayor said: "It was a great pleasure to have the opportunity visit the city of Dresden and it was wonderful to be able to celebrate with our twin city."

"Coventry is so proud of its friendship with Dresden and its people. It's heart-warming to think that a bond that was formed 60 years ago, when the world was a very different place, is still so strong."

"Coventry continues to show the world why it is a city of peace and reconciliation, and it's a joy to see young people continuing the work started by past generations."

Students from Dresden will also have the opportunity to visit Coventry later in the year to continue to celebrate peace and reconciliation.

