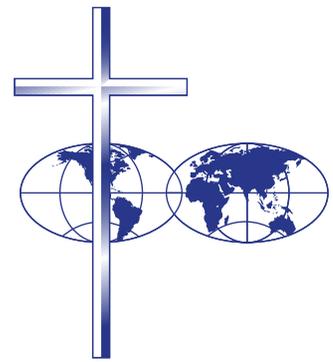


# Vocation for Justice

Spring 2021 Vol 35 No 1



**'Let's Create A World  
Without Racism'  
Columban Schools'  
Competition 2021  
CLOSES 20 FEBRUARY  
[www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com)**

## A Time for Healing

God takes us beyond what our minds can imagine  
beyond the limits we put on our hearts  
knowing that the cosmos and all Earth creatures  
are brother and sister as St. Francis knew.

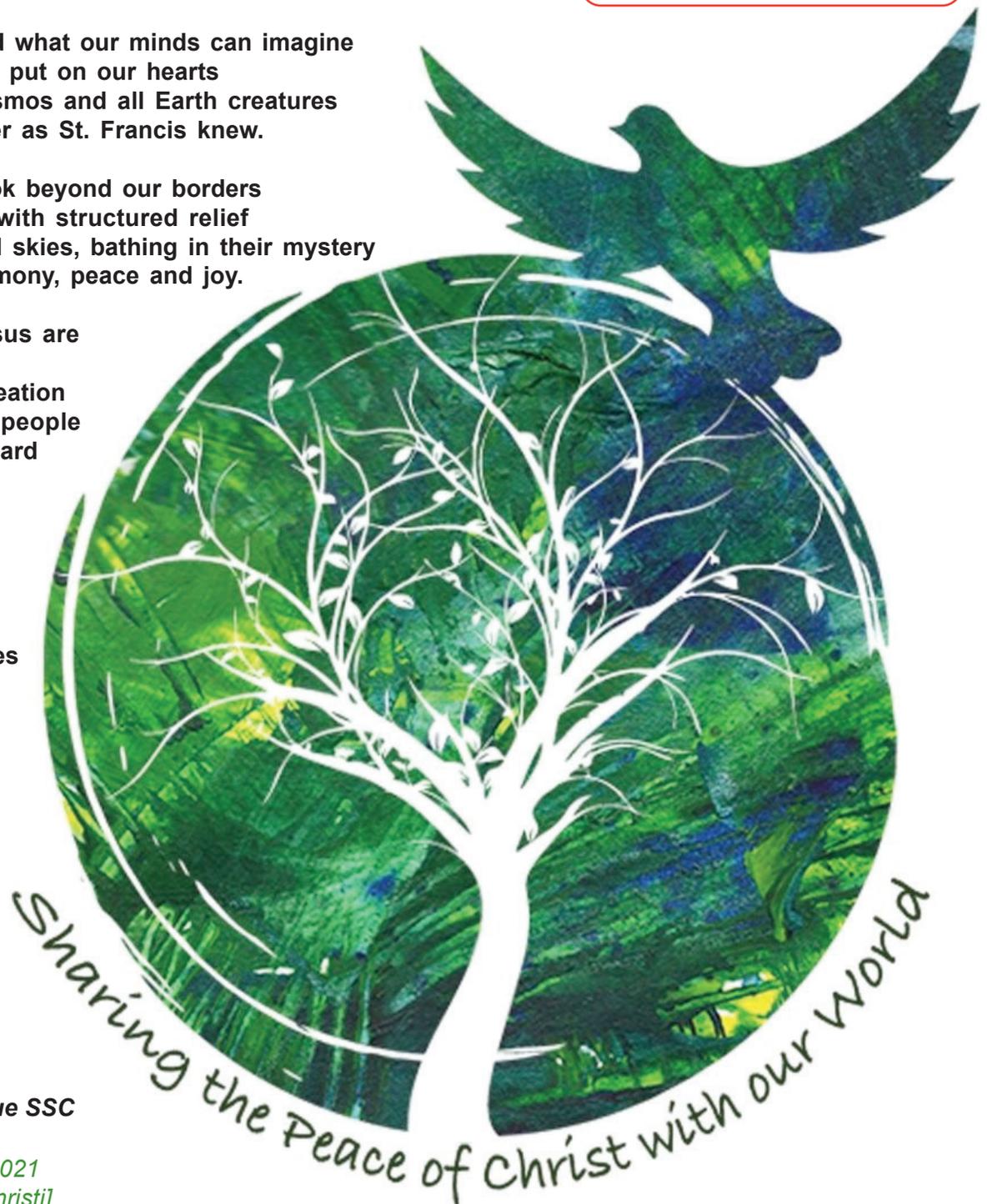
The Spirit has us look beyond our borders  
to serve all nations with structured relief  
to love land, sea and skies, bathing in their mystery  
growing lives of harmony, peace and joy.

The teachings of Jesus are  
radical, demanding  
but lead to a new creation  
where advocacy for people  
on the margins is heard  
and advocacy  
to sustain our  
common home  
bears fruit.

God gives us music  
in the sound of waves  
wind and the  
human voice.  
Parish hymns  
proclaim God's  
dance of creation  
moving forward to  
the end time  
in love for all.  
Creator God,  
we pray for  
the gifts of  
Harmony,  
Peace and Joy.

by Fr Charles Rue SSC

[Peace Sunday 2021  
Logo from Pax Christi]



**COLUMBAN MISSION**

Collaborating with the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales & Justice and Peace Scotland

**As we begin this new year of such uncertainty and challenge may we make a fresh commitment to allow the Gospel of justice and peace to take root in our Church communities.** On New Year's Day, Pope Francis urged that 2021 be "a year of peace, a year of hope." It is up to us to make that happen. In fact, there may be unforeseen possibilities prompted by the pandemic, such as addressing child poverty in the UK.

In Birmingham, Columbans have helped faith communities to share stories of inspiration this past year, and these included using faith buildings to distribute food to vulnerable families. And it was pointed out in online gatherings in November that Covid has highlighted inequalities and the need for collective social action. A Hindu speaker called for justice, "because charity maintains the gap between rich and poor".

In Westminster, Columban JPIC has supported justice and peace activists, working alongside Caritas, to provide charity alongside work for justice. Our friend Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, Chair of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission, wrote in the first e-bulletin of 2021 that amidst the suffering of the pandemic, "the Gospel of justice and peace has certainly been proclaimed throughout these last months in our communities and on our streets." He was referring to vital Church homeless services and foodbanks organised by Central London Catholic Churches and, "advocacy for the vast numbers of newly poor here on our streets." This advocacy has involved meeting government ministers to challenge the 'no recourse to public funds' which has left many new homeless and asylum seekers destitute.

This newsletter takes the theme, 'A Time for Healing'. Here in Britain, Columban mission in 2021 is involved in promoting Pax Christi's Peace Sunday materials - the beautiful logo fronts this newsletter - and calling for Tax Justice; plus planning the July conference of the National Justice and Peace Network. **A flyer for this conference is included in this mailing, along with our annual appeal and a pre-paid envelope. We also remind readers that we can take entries up to 20 February for our annual Schools competition for 14-18-year-olds on 'Let's Create a World without Racism'.**

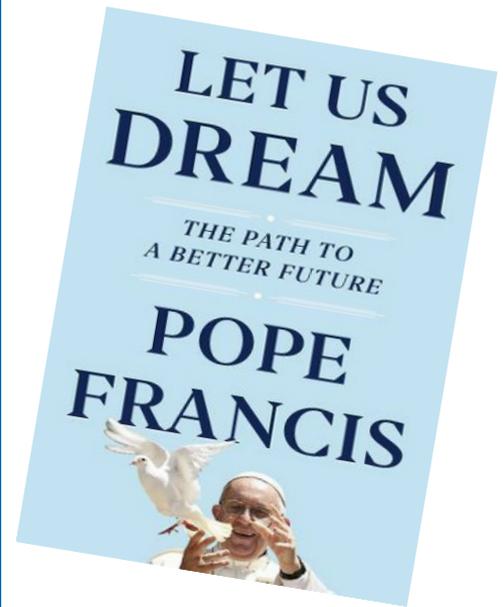
Pope Francis' call to Care for Creation will continue to be echoed in the way we promote environmentally friendly projects and policies and raise awareness of green issues, all leading up to COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. This could be a momentous year, where we have already seen the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January. We must lobby the UK government to sign up to it!

It is up to us to take action for the common good. On page 5 Pat Gaffney highlights 'Stories of Nonviolence' and page 9 focuses on initiatives to address Tax Justice as a way of promoting a fairer sharing of resources. On page 8 our Education Worker writes about this being a time to sow seeds as young people watch and learn how we cultivate resilience, pray, and work for justice, peace and ecology.

In ***Fratelli Tutti***, Pope Francis' third encyclical, he shared how people, political systems, and institutions can help build a more just and caring world in the wake of the pandemic. We cannot be indifferent and we must commit to deep and meaningful change. Pope Francis suggests in paragraph 7 that anyone who thinks that the only lesson to be learned from the pandemic is the need to improve what we were already doing, or to refine existing systems and regulations, is "denying reality." **Our centrespread provides a process for studying the encyclical.**

From the Philippines Fr Shay Cullen, who runs projects on rescuing street children and promoting livelihoods through Fair Trade, wrote in his New Year message, which could be a reflection for Lent: "The hope and love that Jesus of Nazareth shared with us can save humanity from self-destruction, hatred, violence and nuclear war and even save us from extinction. It is by sharing life in a universal community and working together helping the poor and the oppressed that change will come. We just need to persuade enough people to choose to do it." ■

## Let us Dream Pope Francis



In this uplifting book, written in collaboration with his biographer, Austen Ivereigh, Pope Francis explains how we can make the world safer, fairer, and healthier.

He explores what the pandemic can teach us about how to handle upheaval in our lives and in the world. He reveals how crises in his life changed him dramatically for the better, and we can emerge from the crisis better than before.

Francis offers a critique of the systems and ideologies that produced the current crisis, particularly a global economy obsessed with profit and heedless of the people and environment it harms. He reminds us that Christians' first duty is to serve others, especially the vulnerable, just as Jesus did.

The Pope offers a blueprint for building a better world for all humanity by putting the poor and the planet at the heart of new thinking. Ordinary people acting together can discover unforeseen possibilities.

He offers observations on the value of unconventional thinking, and on what he learned while scouring the streets of Buenos Aires with garbage-pickers.

'Let Us Dream' is an epiphany. It is Pope Francis at his most personal, profound and passionate. With this book and with open hearts, we can change the world. ■

## COP26: Taking on Mordor

Ellen Teague

This is a big year for tackling the climate crisis, with the lead up to COP26 in Glasgow. However, we should be aware of the complexity around the issue of what Thomas Berry called the 'great work' of transitioning. And more than that, the structures that mitigate against transition happening... and certainly happening quickly enough.

In November 2020, 8,000 people internationally joined some of the 53 online events over 80 hours organised by the COP26 Coalition, one of the newer UK networks in the climate movement and led by young people. It marked the month when COP26 in Glasgow was due to happen, and its theme 'From the Ground Up' brought in local communities – from indigenous in Amazonia, to farming confederations in Indonesia and France, to victims of extractive industries in Scotland.

One fascinating session offered a 'Toxic Tour of Scotland' and highlighted the infrastructure in the country that could undermine climate negotiations, now scheduled for Glasgow 1-12 November 2021.

The Grangemouth oil refinery complex on the Firth of Forth is the only operating crude oil refinery in Scotland and is also the largest climate polluter in Scotland, spewing 3.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the air during 2019. Its numerous gas flares and cooling towers are visible across a wide area of the Scottish Lowlands.

Then there is the Mossmorran Petrochemical facilities – operated by Shell and ExxonMobil – which local campaigners say has caused long-term social, health and environmental impacts in the locality. In scenes reminiscent of Niger Delta, flaring – the burning of excess gas – can last up to six days at a time. Local residents are "sick to death of the smell, noise and pollution" and complain bitterly that Shell has infiltrated organisations which advise the government on emissions targets, such as the Climate Change Committee. In the chat someone said, "It looks like Mordor" – the evil kingdom of Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' epic. Another retorted, "It is Mordor!"

We learned that within a few miles of the COP26 conference are the offices of Teekay Shipping – an oil and gas shipping company – and two banks that fund fossil fuels – PG Morgan Chase and Barclays Bank. Close by is the Strathclyde Pension Fund, Scotland's richest pension fund, which is estimated to have £800 million-worth of investments in fossil fuel companies. The Fund has some 221,000 members in the West of Scotland including councillors, council employees such as college staff and others such as housing association employees. Climate Justice requires a new economic model, and we need to see it with these businesses.

A trip across the central belt of Scotland brings you to Faslane, the home of Britain's nuclear weapons, which might still see £205 billion spent on its renewal programme. There has been a Faslane Peace Camp nearby since 1982. The Hunterston nuclear power station on the Firth of Clyde is to close next year after inspectors discovered 350 microscopic cracks in the reactor's graphite core two years ago, but that graphite core needs to be kept safe for many generations. Anti-nuclear campaigners want nuclear power as well as nuclear weapons out of Scotland. There is dismay that the company running the port at Hunterston wants to use it to break up the radioactive hulks of defunct nuclear submarines!

But what about personal action? Another session 'Resisting Green Extractivism' had me questioning our family's electric car that we are so proud of. Does the extraction of minerals for electric cars and for renewables used in the energy transition mean sacrificing people and environment in the name of addressing climate change? The switch to transition minerals could massively increase to meet green demands, warned Andy Whitmore of the London Mining Network. We heard from an indigenous community in Atacama, Chile, who fear that a huge increase in mining of lithium – used in electric cars – will destroy their environment. Mapuche Indians said lithium mining is already destroying areas used by nesting flamingoes and

community agriculture and they want to regain control of their land and food production. They reflected that Western society is "blinded by images of futuristic cars and renewable technologies". The session rejected such terms as 'green extractivism' and 'climate smart mining' which are now commonly used by mining corporations. There are no benchmarks to measure these concepts. The US concept of "sacrifice zones" is rejected by communities, who are increasingly refusing to become victims to extractivism, green or otherwise.

Faith communities must continue to build solidarity with them, particularly challenging the criminalising of indigenous leadership. We have guidance from *Laudato Si'*, the 2015 encyclical of Pope Francis, which called for us "to hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor". And the latest encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* calls for "civic and political" action.

It was interesting that in another COP26 session on 'Faith Perspectives' Faiths came under criticism for tending to focus on individual action over advocacy. They were urged to do more policy engagement. One person complained that only a tiny number of church-going people have been visible at climate events. She said, "I just thought that this would be an absolute given for faith-based people." Well, this is a fair comment but let's acknowledge that many Church people have been prophetic on the climate change issue – our Columban Sean McDonagh being one of them. Also, Pope Francis.

In England and Wales, justice and peace activists have been urging our bishops to prepare for COP26 in Glasgow 2021 by writing a Pastoral Letter. It could contain a commitment to the need for UK net to reach zero carbon by 2030, in order for the UK to play our part in the global 1.5C target; give specific ideas for parishes and parish groups, such as the livesimply project; and emphasise the Autumn Season of Creation. The bishops have also been asked to have a significant episcopal presence at COP26, joining with a Scottish Bishops' delegation. We hope to meet them there! ■

# Racism and Climate Change

Jeremy Willams

**Jeremy Willams is the editor of 'Time to Act,' a Christian response to the climate emergency.**

"Wealth is treacherous, and the arrogant are never at rest" laments the prophet Habakkuk, looking out at a world facing disaster at the hands of an unjust power. "They open their mouths as wide as the grave, and like death, they are never satisfied. In their greed they have gathered up many nations and swallowed many peoples."

These words resonate in our own context when I look at the injustice of climate change. It is the world's richest and most powerful nations that have disrupted the climate. And yet, though they have done so little to cause the problem, it is the poorest and most vulnerable who will suffer the most harm.

There is a racial dimension to this injustice that often goes unnoticed. The parts of the world most responsible for global heating – certainly historically – have majority white populations. The places bearing the greatest risk have majority black populations. History may well judge climate change to be a racist phenomenon, like slavery and empire before it.

And indeed, there is a connection between all three injustices. Slavery provided the global North with free labour, and the wealth from the slave plantations served as the seed capital for industrialisation. As slave owning elites invested in factories, raw materials such as cotton were shipped in from the colonies to supply them. Stolen labour and stolen land drove the industrial revolution, and its fossil fuel power would drive climate breakdown. "The impact of climate change on black and brown-skinned people comes on the back of 500 years of exploitation" says theologian Anthony Reddie. "It's a compound disaster, adding one injustice to another."

"How much longer can this go on?" cries the prophet. Though the climate emergency unfolds over decades, the same attitudes that lie behind this injustice are visible closer to home. It is the same attitude that is seen in police

violence, or the mass incarceration of Black men in America, or the systematic inequalities that hold back people of colour in Britain. It is the belief – formerly explicit, and now more often buried away in social structures – that holds some forms of human life to be more valuable than others. It denies the truth that all are equal in the eyes of God, and all bear the divine image.

In climate talks and carbon targets, some lives matter more. The economies of the richest are protected, growing even though they have more than enough. But the price for delay is that in other places lives and cultures are treated as expendable. "Just crumbs," writes the Marshallese poet Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, "like the Marshall Islands must look on a map, just crumbs you dust off the table, wipe your hands clean."

A newcomer to the issue could be forgiven for thinking that the main victims of climate change are polar bears and coral reefs. In the affluent parts of the world, people have the luxury of seeing climate change as an environmental issue, perhaps one that will affect future generations. This is climate privilege – the luxury of being untroubled by climate change, and the highest form of climate privilege is to choose not to believe in it at all. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, India or the hurricane-flattened islands of the Caribbean, climate change feels much more like an emergency. It is not a matter of belief. It is

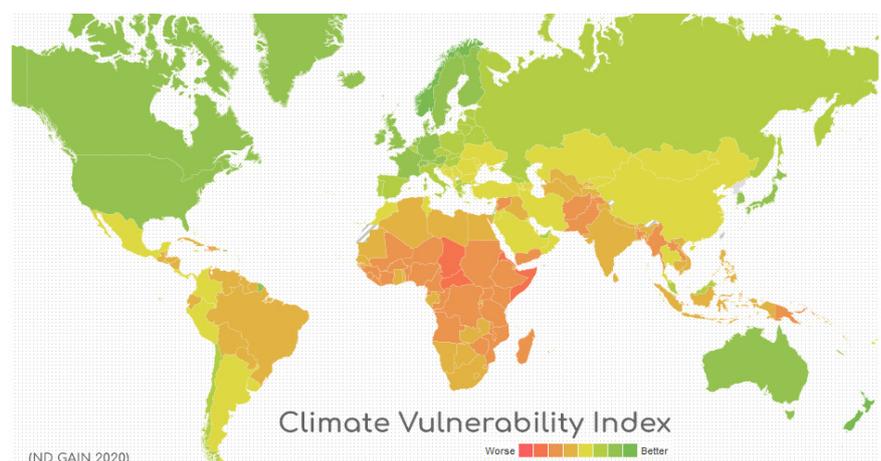
experienced in the body, as thirst, as hunger, as violence.

"Why must I watch all this misery?" says the prophet. In every environmental group I have been part of, there have been conversations about how to engage ethnic minorities, and concerns about being 'too white'. But perhaps the colour of the faces around the room is only the visible aspect of a deeper problem – that the group's concerns were White and privileged. Perhaps the suffering of Black and Brown communities had been overlooked in favour of narratives about saving nature, or acting for our grandchildren. Of course nature matters, and future generations matter. But perhaps we failed to engage those communities because we forgot to say that Black lives matter.

If climate change is a form of systemic racism, with fundamentally different risks for people of colour, then White climate campaigners like myself need to confront some hard truths about race. As the marine biologist and climate writer Ayana Elizabeth Johnson challenges us: "To White people who care about maintaining a habitable planet, I need you to become actively anti-racist. I need you to understand that our racial inequality crisis is intertwined with our climate crisis. If we don't work on both, we will succeed at neither."

"In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by" prays Habakkuk. "And in your anger, remember your mercy." ■

Jeremy writes at [www.earthbound.report](http://www.earthbound.report)  
More of Ayana Elizabeth Johnson's work at [www.ayanaelizabeth.com](http://www.ayanaelizabeth.com)



# Stories of Nonviolence

**Pat Gaffney**

**Pat Gaffney is a Vice President of Pax Christi England and Wales and an executive board member of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative.**

How many of you remember the 1970s singer-song-writer, Ian Dury, and his *Reasons to be Cheerful pt 3*? Even today it makes me smile and reminds me that sometimes we need to seek out good news stories to encourage and cheer us. So, entering a New Year, I want to shine a light on stories that convey the creativity, success and value of nonviolence. To begin with, nonviolence is a much-maligned word, too often associated with giving in, being passive. Perhaps it is beyond the reach of us ordinary mortals, so fine for Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr, but not the rest of us. Yet, it is an approach and choice that is practical and active. It addresses injustices and threats and it can be motivated by faith and become a way of life. What do we see and learn from these stories?

## Nonviolence is not new

Let's begin with the Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah, ordered to murder boy children they delivered. The new king of Egypt was afraid that the people of Israel were becoming too numerous. Scripture tells us they were God-fearing women, who found a way of **not** cooperating. They told the King that Hebrew women gave birth so quickly that the midwives were too late!

The drama that unfolds in the play 'Lysistrata' is another example. The women of Athens, tired of endless wars, decided to impose a sexual boycott. Negotiating with the men Lysistrata says: "Why don't you make peace? What's in the way?" These are timeless questions, with culturally appropriate actions, enacted by women the world over who are tired of losing brothers, fathers, sons and husbands to war.

Today, movements like Women in Black continue around the world in their silent vigils at city centres, and through their engagement in communities, to say 'no' to militarism and injustice.

An act of creative disobedience and noncooperation against the grave injustice of a King and a focused boycott, turn tradition and skill and

power on their head in the service of life and justice. They are distinct strategies of active nonviolence.

## Actions and consequences

In the 1980s the Columban Fathers working in Negros, the Philippines, were campaigning with oppressed sugar workers and challenging powerful sugar barons whose loyalty was with the Filipino dictator, Ferdinand Marcos and the Filipino military, including dedicated death squads, ruthlessly imposing martial law. Three priests: Niall O'Brien, Brian Gore and Vincente Dangan and six co-workers faced fabricated charges of murder and were imprisoned for months. They were willing to accompany local people - sometimes to the fields to help them harvest their crops while gunmen looked on. In his book, *'Seeds of Injustice, Revolution from the Heart'*, Fr Niall O'Brien reflected that if the end came he would "use it to try and bring about a lessening of violence in the world, a growth of love and care and a lessening of the amount of tears shed."

Many others have followed this path of accompaniment to protect people and the environment. The Ecumenical Accompaniers in Palestine and Israel, a presence and voice of advocacy in the midst of occupation, draw attention to the abuse of human rights and seek redress. Gathering information, accompanying people and denouncing injustice, are also strategies of active nonviolence. Some people offer their lives as a consequence. Berta Caceras from Honduras was murdered on 3 March 2016 when she challenged the violence done to indigenous communities and their environment.

## Closer to home

Last summer many news stories of nonviolence captured my imagination. During the worst days of the riots around the Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaigns it was mothers who came onto the streets in Portland and Chicago to form a human barrier between the BLM protestors and the police. They called out their disappointment at



Pat Gaffney with Pope Francis

the actions of the police. White women acknowledged that black mothers have been protesting in this way for years and they joined them in solidarity. This mirrors the actions by mothers the world over against knife and gun violence here in the UK or against the disappearance of children in Latin America.

Bavaria, Germany, saw another act of nonviolence as Mechthild Thürmer, Abbess of a Benedictine Abbey was fined and threatened with prison for "aiding and abetting an unauthorised stay" of asylum seekers. She said: "There's a huge difference between what you are taught at school about human rights or women's rights and when you are actually facing a woman, looking into her eyes and seeing the scars. Then I have no choice, I must help as much as I can."

Acting in solidarity, with empathy and using disarming and creative tactics are further strategies of active nonviolence. They help reflect back to the 'other' the inhumanity of their actions and create space for something better to happen.

Quite simply, nonviolence is an approach to life that teaches us to make **different** choices, develop skills and approaches that allow us to affirm life, enhance courage, transform injustice and violence, as individuals and as communities. It is the Gospel. ■

## Web resources

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative:  
<https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/>  
Pax Christi England and Wales :  
<https://paxchristi.org.uk/>  
Reflection and study resources:  
<https://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/nonviolence-in-action/educational-resources-for-nonviolence/>  
Waging nonviolence: a web resource on global nonviolence social movements <https://wagingnonviolence.org/>

# Fratelli Tutti

On 4 October 2020, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis released a new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. This social encyclical – the third of his papacy - explores building a culture of peace and dialogue in order to care for each other as a human family, especially as we recover from the pandemic. *Laudato Si'* was about the interconnectedness of all things; *Fratelli Tutti* is about the interconnectedness of peoples.

## Chapter One: Dark Clouds Cover the World

Pope Francis describes the darkness he sees in the world today. First, political systems are regressing and the profit-based economic model, “does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings.” Second, there is a culture of indifference. By employing a strategy of ridicule, suspicion, and relentless criticism, one group can dominate and exclude another, creating a permanent state of disagreement, confrontation and even violence. The loneliness, fear and insecurity experienced by those who feel excluded are easy targets for gangs. Also, human rights are not universally respected. This is most apparent in the absence of dignity for migrants at borders and for many people impacted by the pandemic. Pope Francis wants to strengthen the idea of social friendship and social peace in the face of social violence, which he sees running through the economy, politics, and even through social media.

### Reflection:

*How has the pandemic impacted you? In what ways have you experienced a revived sense of community?*

## Chapter Two: A Stranger on the Road

The Good Samaritan (*Luke 10:25–37*) is a parable about a Jewish traveller who is stripped, beaten, and left wounded alongside the road. First a Jewish priest and then a Levite come by, but both avoid the man. Finally, a Samaritan happens upon the traveller. Samaritans and Jews despised each other, but the Samaritan helps the injured man. Jesus is described as telling the parable in response to the question from a lawyer, “And who is my neighbour?” The neighbour is the one who shows mercy to the injured man - the Good Samaritan. The parable is a lesson not solely about charity, but also a transformative encounter of mercy. So, who is my neighbour? Francis concludes this chapter by calling for catechesis and preaching that, “speak more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, ..... our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person and our reasons for loving and accepting all our brothers and sisters.”

### Reflection:

*Have you ever experienced such an “encounter of mercy”?*

## Chapter Three: Vision of an Open World

This chapter presents the pope’s teaching about love. “The spiritual stature of a person’s life is measured by love,” he writes. This love must grow beyond family and nation to include strangers and all people - into a friendship where the worth of every person is acknowledged.

Human connections must be consciously cultivated through education in dialogue in order to defeat the “virus” of “radical individualism,” as well as recognition of the values of reciprocity and mutual enrichment.

Based on universal love and recognition of the inherent dignity of every person, we have an obligation to ensure that every person has sufficient opportunities for integral development. Francis says this requires a “re-envisioning of the social role of property” to ensure each person has what is necessary to live with dignity. The right to private property, Pope Francis says, “can only be considered a secondary natural right” to the “universal destination of all goods,” or the idea that God’s gift of creation belongs to all. This principle applies to the international sphere as well, where “a territory’s goods must not be denied to a needy person coming from elsewhere.”

### Reflection:

*In what ways can your local community put human dignity at the centre of social and economic life?*



## Chapter Four: A Heart Open to the World

Pope Francis explores the moral and social implications of having a, “heart open to the whole world.” Pope Francis first considers immigration, explaining that until the conditions which force people to migrate are collectively addressed, nations should have a fundamental openness to welcoming, protecting, and integrating their “neighbour,” the migrant or refugee. Immigrants bringing new cultures into society should be regarded as a gift, and cultural differences should not be erased but celebrated.

Pope Francis describes how, especially in the era of globalisation, “mutual assistance between countries proves enriching for each”. This is true in terms of cultural exchange and the cooperation which is needed to address poverty in parts of the world. He calls for more than commercial exchange but on true concern for the wellbeing of those in other nations.

Francis acknowledges the, “innate tension between localisation and globalisation,” but says that each has its place. “We need to pay attention to the global so as to avoid narrowness and banality. Yet we also need to look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground.”

### Reflection:

*How do you feel called to cultivate a “heart open to the whole world”?*

## Chapter Five: A Better Kind of Politics

A better kind of politics protects work, tackles poverty, and aims to find solutions to social problems which deny fundamental human rights, including hunger, human trafficking and other social exclusions.

Pope Francis feels the international community wasted an opportunity for reform after the financial crisis of 2007-08. "Indeed, it appears that the actual strategies developed fostered greater individualism, less integration and increased freedom for the truly powerful, who always find a way to escape unscathed." Francis also notes the need for reform at the United Nations and international finance institutions, so that "the family of nations can acquire real teeth."

He repeats lines from *Laudato Si'*: "politics must not be subject to the economy" and "true statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good."

### Reflection:

*What do you think are the first steps to building a "better kind of politics?" How can you contribute?*



## Chapter Six: Dialogue and Friendship in Society

Authentic dialogue is necessary for building a better world. Pope Francis first addresses the shortcomings of discourse in social and journalistic media, which he says can foster a, "feverish exchange of opinions" or "parallel monologues" rather than true dialogue. "Social dialogue" requires interlocutors who each deeply respect the other's experiences and values. Dialogue can help us lead to "social consensus" based on facts and reasoning, but more importantly, it can help us recognise fundamental truths upon which we base our societies' moral principles.

Pope Francis calls for the careful cultivation of a "culture of encounter" which can help us transcend our divisions and differences as we work together to pursue the common good. Such a culture is hardwon, requiring effort and sacrifice from all of us. He calls on us to "recover kindness" in a renewed, enriched sense - a kindness which is an antidote to indifference, and based on genuine concern for others.

### Reflection:

*Have you ever experienced such a "culture of encounter?" What would it look like to cultivate it?*

## Chapter Seven: Paths of Renewed Encounter

Pope Francis calls for peacemakers to forge new paths of healing and "renewed encounter" in our fractured world. He begins by explaining that building peace requires "starting anew from the truth," or facing the reality of the harm done. In the difficult work of building a peaceful society, "there is an 'architecture' of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, each according to its own area of expertise, but there is also an 'art' of peace that involves us all," including ordinary people and especially the most vulnerable.

Pope Francis describes the importance of reconciliation and its relationship to forgiveness, explaining that while forgiveness is central to Christianity, it does not mean forgetting harm done and it cannot be required of victims. Memory is important; we cannot forget tragedies, such as the Holocaust or the atomic bombings in Japan, lest we repeat these catastrophic mistakes.

Finally, Pope Francis develops the Church's teaching on the "false answers" of the death penalty and war, including the use or threat of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. He says, "it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war.'"

### Reflection:

*How can you be involved in the "art" of building peace in your community or society?*

## Chapter Eight: Religions and Fraternity

Pope Francis says, "we, the believers of the different religions, know that our witness to God benefits our societies. People of faith are called to work together to build bridges and seek the common good. Because religious tradition provides the transcendental values that are the bedrock of social morality, the Church "does not restrict her mission to the private sphere," nor "remain on the sidelines" in the building of a better world, but rather seeks to "reawaken the spiritual energy" that can contribute to the betterment of society." He reiterates that, while the Church proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it "esteems the way in which God works in other religions" and "rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions," affirming especially that which contributes to the common good. Pope Francis believes that, "a journey of peace is possible between religions" and that violence is a "distortion" of our fundamental religious convictions.

### Reflection:

*Reflect on an encounter with someone of another faith that made you feel we are "brothers and sisters all?"*

***Taken, with permission, from a 6-page study guide for 'Fratelli Tutti', produced by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. It offers key points and quotes from each chapter of 'Fratelli Tutti', along with reflection questions and the two prayers that Pope Francis includes at the end of the encyclical. [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org)***

***The Vatican has a dedicated website on the encyclical, with the text and a variety of reflections, news, and resources, including a summary. [www.fratellitutti.va](http://www.fratellitutti.va)***

# Columban Education

## A time to sow?

James Trewby

James is the JPIC Columban Education worker.

*“The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago.  
The second best time is now.” (Chinese proverb)*



As I sit down to write this at the start of January, schools are once again having to adapt day-to-day, doing all they can for their students.

Since the beginning of the pandemic I have been privileged to accompany educators and young people, through visits, work with small groups, inputs for teachers and lots of online content. Catholic educators' courage, commitment and willingness to go the extra mile keeps blowing me away – I've seen head teachers filling in as social workers, visiting at-risk young people, incredible provision for families seeking asylum, school staff cooking Christmas meals. No teacher could ever have imagined all that this pandemic has asked of their vocation. Thank God for their dedication and love of the young!

These strange and difficult times might feel like we are pressing pause on the “normal” work of education. It might feel like a wasted time, or a season of waiting to get back to doing things how we used to do them. But it's helpful to remind ourselves that the seeds sown during this time might just grow some of the most important shoots later on. Young people are watching and learning how we cultivate resilience during this time: How we build a better future. How we oppose injustice and violence. Yes, their education doesn't look “normal” this

year, but I believe we can continue to help them explore the relationship between faith and action which will bear fruit into the future.

Last term ended up being surprisingly busy (largely thanks to 'seeds' planted in the past!). For example, I had a number of primary eco-retreats (made COVID-safe by being based outside whenever possible - thank goodness for my dad's old walking boots). Each Friday afternoon was spent in a Catholic secondary accompanying a class of Year 10s through a programme on See-Judge-Act and 'Caring for Creation'.

I facilitated a number of online encounters between young people and educators here and people around the world experiencing first-hand the devastating impact of climate change in their communities. Young people reflecting on these experiences, exploring solidarity, praying, taking actions such as joining virtual protests, writing to their MPs or, with CAFOD, sending Christmas cards to environmental defenders – all these seeds were planted during these strange times. For example a CYMFED webinar on 9 December (above) on Climate Justice included Fr Liam O'Callaghan, who is on mission in Pakistan where climate change is a huge issue and AG Sano from the Philippines who lost three close friends in the Haiyan

typhoon that hit the Philippines in 2013. A young climate activist in Britain joined the panel.

To my great discomfort I also spent a lot of last term being beamed live into schools and across dioceses – and even worse, being recorded for young people to watch in their own time or at virtual events. Examples have included a long interview for Leeds Diocese, a confirmation session for Northampton Diocese Youth Service, a session on 'Laudato Si' and walking the talk' for the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation and being interviewed by young people about taking groups to join climate strikes as part of retreat days. I sometimes wonder what impact the videos have. It can feel disheartening when I compare the online style with the interaction of normal times. But again, it comes back to planting seeds. Perhaps one of the views might act to inspire, challenge or affirm someone to explore their 'vocation for justice'.

Planting seeds at this time might be a challenge – but gardeners have been battling the challenges wrought by the climate crisis for a long time and have had to learn to adapt; trialing plants that thrive in more extreme weather and developing new and different forms of agriculture. We as educators also need to learn to adapt in this current crisis. Some seeds require fire or smoke to germinate! As a Christian I try to believe that the Holy Spirit will work through these difficult times, using them to nurture the leaders, prophets, activists, healers and educators we need.

We ask God's blessing on all involved in the great work of education – teachers, chaplains, young people and more – during these difficult times – may they know the value of what they do. ■

### Youtube links for Columban education resources

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAb9-8p\\_gLc&t=6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAb9-8p_gLc&t=6s)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2i-cDUCJhAw&feature=youtu.be>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaZkE5Ws-6I&t=12s>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6Gga\\_4Axyg&t=1727s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6Gga_4Axyg&t=1727s)

## Pope Francis and Tax Justice

**Justin Thacker**

### **From the Director of Church Action for Tax Justice.**

Given his history of ministry in Argentina's shanty towns, it is no surprise that Pope Francis has a particular concern for the poor. It has been expressed in his refusal to adopt some of the more extravagant trappings of the papacy, his frequent proclamations on the issue and in his ongoing ministry to and with those who are poor. Pope Francis has also tackled the question of tax justice as part of his commentary on inequality and poverty.

Tax justice is essentially the recognition that at least one of the structures of sin that works to maintain a situation of poverty and inequality for so many is the tax behaviour of multinational corporations and the wealthy. Pope Francis has said: "The structures of sin today include repeated tax exemptions for the richest people, often justified in the name of investment and development; tax havens for private and corporate gain; and of course, the possibility of corruption on the part of some of the world's largest corporations, often with the agreement of the governing political sector."

Tax dodging by multinationals and wealthy individuals costs the world hundreds of billions of dollars each year. The Tax Justice Network have estimated that as much as \$32 trillion is stashed in tax havens around the world. In addition, tax dodging costs governments somewhere around \$600 billion every year. Approximately, a third of that - \$200 billion - is lost to governments in the global south. Pope Francis says that is money that "should be paid in taxes to finance healthcare and education" but instead "accumulates in tax havens, thus preventing the possibility of dignified and sustainable development for all social actors."

The important thing to recognise about these funds is that this is money that is owed to the global south, but which instead ends up in the offshore account of some wealthy millionaire. If, for example, you use a mobile phone then it is quite possible that the copper wiring in that phone was dug out of the

ground in Zambia, which is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest producer of copper in the world. Each year, its various mines produce around 800,000 tons. The work is dangerous, and in light of this you would think that the miners and their families deserve access to good quality healthcare and education. But that is not the case. Like many countries across sub-Saharan Africa, Zambia spends relatively little on its healthcare which is one of the reasons why life expectancy in Zambia is just 63, and your chances of dying before your fifth birthday are 1 in 15.

In 2013, Zambia lost approximately \$1 billion in tax revenue due to large corporations shifting profits to tax havens. Much of this involved companies in the mining sector. They do this either by under-reporting the amount of copper they are actually digging out of the Zambian soil or by selling the copper at artificially reduced prices to another subsidiary in the same multinational firm. Either way, the Zambian mining company can end up declaring no or little profit, and therefore pays no tax in Zambia. However, the subsidiary can go on to sell it from a tax haven at much higher rates thereby raking in huge profits for themselves and their shareholders. Some of these processes are legal, but they are all immoral. They deprive the Zambian Revenue Authority of money for healthcare and education.

Indeed, if the \$200 billion each year that is currently owed to the global south was paid then much of sub-Saharan Africa could double its provision of health or education, and possibly wipe out its debt in just four or five years. It would go a huge way to ensuring the Sustainable Development Goals were met. The important point to note about this is that this is not aid money; this is not money being given because Western governments are being generous. This is money that is owed to the Zambian government by multinational corporations.

Francis has said, "it has become evident that those who do not pay taxes do not only commit a felony

but also a murder: if there are not enough hospital beds and artificial respirators, it is also their fault." He refers to tax dodging as a "structure of sin," drawing on a long legacy of Catholic Social Teaching that has highlighted how our economic systems perpetuate structures of injustice, but to my knowledge Pope Francis is the first pope to explicitly describe tax dodging in this way.

He has talked about the need for, "a new ethic that presupposes being aware of the need for all to commit to working together to eliminate tax havens, avoid tax evasion and money laundering that robs society, as well as to tell countries the importance of defending justice and the common good above the interests of the most powerful companies and multinationals." His language of robbing society echoes a point he has made before, that when the wealthy refuse to provide for the poor, their actions can be described as theft.

Pope Francis has described working for a fair distribution of resources as our obligation as Christians. He describes philanthropic efforts as "about giving to the poor and to peoples what is theirs by right". But he has gone further. He has quoted St Ambrose that: "You (rich) do not give what is yours to the poor .... but you give them what is theirs. For you use the given common property for the use of all." Similarly, in his most recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, he said: "We have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development...if one person lacks what is necessary to live with dignity, it is because another person is detaining it." St John Chrysostom says: 'Not to share our wealth with the poor is to rob them and take away their livelihood. The riches we possess are not our own, but theirs as well'. St Gregory the Great: 'When we provide the needy with their basic needs, we are giving them what belongs to them, not to us'."

If it is theft when we fail to give to the poor out of our wealth then how much more is it theft when that wealth was created by immoral tax dodging in the first place. ■

<https://www.catj.org.uk/>  
<https://www.taxjustice.net/reports/the-state-of-tax-justice-2020/>

## Meet a Missionary

A Columban video series interviewing missionaries in the society most recently spoke with Fr Vincent Busch. He has worked in Mindanao, the Philippines, for more than four decades, particularly with the Subanen indigenous people. Ellen Teague was interviewed in December. <https://tinyurl.com/yxwxc25>

## Livesimply Award

The 80<sup>th</sup> award was given in November to St. Joseph's, Upminster, Brentwood Diocese. Ellen Teague and Colette Joyce were the assessors. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/40956>

## NBCW Domestic Violence

To raise awareness within the Catholic community of domestic abuse, the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW) has produced a booklet offering pastoral care and guidance. There are useful links and resources to help both those suffering domestic abuse and also survivors. Download at: [www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/08/NBCW-Domestic-Abuse-A4-Booklet.pdf](http://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/08/NBCW-Domestic-Abuse-A4-Booklet.pdf)

## Surprise at UK poverty

Three Columban lay missionaries from the global south, now working in Birmingham have been surprised by poverty in Britain. Homelessness is widespread in Birmingham and the missionaries help with the charity, 'Let's feed Brum'. Sophia Ting said in January: "We see refugees, asylum seekers, the homeless and the destitute. While in the Philippines we saw beggars, children and families living in the streets but I never associate it with a western country such as this." In December, about 500 UK church leaders wrote to the government to say they are "gravely concerned" about household debt and poverty.

## Report on virus impacts in Peru

As coronavirus cases in Peru pass one million, Fr Ed O'Connell in Lima reports that Columbans are giving extra assistance to the children and families of the Manuel Duato Special Needs school and the Warmis Huasi project in Lima and in the Andes mountains. He also highlights that more than 5,000 young women and girls have disappeared since the pandemic started. "Gender violence,

the slave trade, including prostitution, and interfamily problems are given as the causes," says Fr Ed.

## Nuclear Treaty welcomed

As the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into legal force in January Christian CND joined with friends in the Network of Christian Peace Organisations to raise awareness, inform and celebrate together. Now there is emphasis on lobbying the British government to engage. The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales and Scotland issued a joint statement, calling on the UK "to forsake its nuclear arsenal" and use the savings "to alleviate the suffering of the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society, for the Common Good of all peoples."

## Virus impacts in Pakistan

Over five million primary age children are out of school, most of them girls, due to lockdown, gender discrimination and child marriage, according to Fr Liam O'Callaghan who is based in the Sindh. He is also concerned that his environmental outreach work in 2020 was largely cancelled. Pakistan is the fifth most vulnerable country in the world to climate change.

## Respecting asylum seekers

On International Migrants Day, 18 December, the Commission of Bishops' Conferences of the European Union called upon the EU and its Member States to put human dignity and the common good at the centre of negotiations on the proposed EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. In Britain, the Jesuit Refugee Service reports that asylum seekers are deported without due process, particularly checking stories about trafficking.

## Fossil fuel funding stopped

On 11 December, the British government announced that it would stop funding fossil fuel projects in the global south. A CAFOD statement said: "This is a huge step forward in the UK's leadership on climate change, and before COP26 in Glasgow." Global Justice Now reports that the UK has given nearly £4 billion to dirty fossil fuel projects overseas in the five years since the Paris Agreement was signed.

## Climate Emergency Bill

A group of MPs is urging the government to get serious about tackling the climate crisis with the

tabling of a Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill. It's Early Day Motion #832 and 75 MPs are behind it currently. No Conservatives have signed. <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/57374/climate-and-ecological-emergency-bill>

## Seven-year *Laudato Si'* Plan

A project of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development invites all Catholic institutions to commit to a seven-year journey to become "totally sustainable in the spirit of the integral ecology of *Laudato Si'*." Seven sets of *Laudato Si'* goals include achieving carbon neutrality, defending all life, using less plastic and eating less meat. Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery, has called for forgiveness of the foreign debts of poor countries, and the end of conflict and arms trafficking. He said, "we are rediscovering the value of the things that matter and the worthlessness of so many things that we once considered important." <http://www.humandevlopment.va/en/vatican-covid-19/ultime-notizie.html>

## Interreligious solidarity

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the World Council of Churches have released a joint document to encourage churches and Christian organisations to reflect on the importance of interreligious solidarity during the pandemic. Called 'Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action during COVID-19' the document offers a Christian basis for interreligious solidarity. <https://bit.ly/3nREBzb>

## Monthly Columban Campaigns

The Columban website carries a monthly sheet of campaigning ideas supported by the Justice, Peace and Ecology Team. Here is the January sheet: <https://columbans.co.uk/justice-peace/5724/time-to-act-january-building-a-culture-of-peace-in-2021/>

## Green Christian Membership

By becoming a member you receive the excellent 'Green Christian' magazine, publications which you can use in your church, and have the opportunity to share ideas in the Green Christian Members' email discussion group. <https://greenchristian.org.uk/>

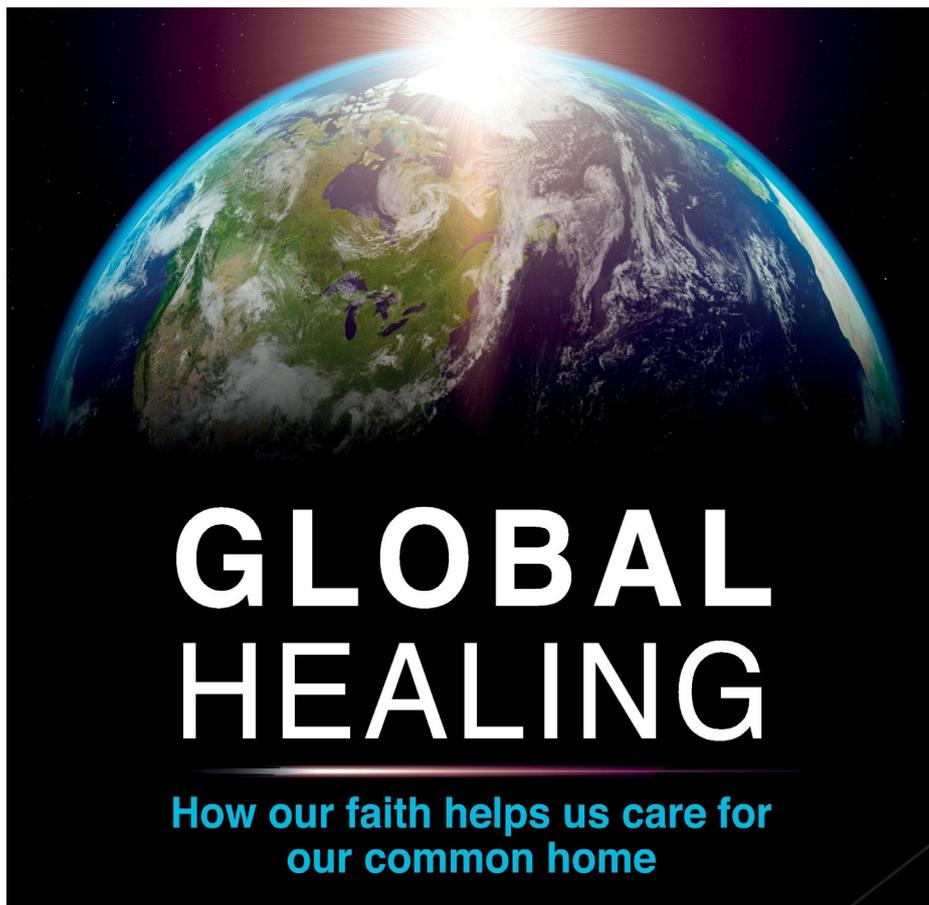
# Action Ideas

## Prepare to lobby Glasgow Climate Summit

The focus of environmental politics this year will almost certainly be the two-week COP26 UN Climate Summit in Glasgow 1-12 November. It is a vital meeting as it will be five years since the Paris Agreement, and governments will be asked to submit their revised plans for carbon emissions cuts. Covid-19 permitting, thousands of world leaders, diplomats, and business figures will gather, plus non-governmental organisations and religious groups. In Paris, in 2015, a Columban delegation joined a huge faith lobby from around the world to present a petition of nearly two million signatures of people of faith urging an agreement. Christina Figueres, the UN's Climate lead in Paris, acknowledged the key role faith groups had played in securing that deal. But it is still to be fully implemented. Look out for advocacy plans from CAFOD, SCIAF, Scotland Justice and Peace and at the National Justice and Peace Network annual conference in July.



An important campaign – particularly by Global Witness and Friends of the Earth Scotland - is to stop lobbyists from fossil fuel companies taking a place at the negotiating table during COP26. Previous summits have been partly bankrolled by sponsorship deals with energy companies. Fossil fuel lobbyists are incredibly powerful in the COP process. They have immense influence over governments' negotiating positions and national policies. <https://corporateeurope.org/en/2019/12/corporate-cop25-biggest-failure-so-far>



This Lent, the Global Catholic Climate Movement invites you to 'Global Healing' in response to Pope Francis' call to care more deeply for Our Common Home!

**When?** Six Thursdays from 18th February – 25th March 2021, 7.30pm – 8.30pm

**What?** The Global Healing film sessions with reflection, guest speakers & discussion.

**How to join?** To register click [HERE](#) or email [jane@catholicclimatemovement.global](mailto:jane@catholicclimatemovement.global)

Hosted by GCCM Laudato Si' Animators in the UK.

## Racism Competition

The Columban schools competition "Let's Create A World Without Racism" is open for entries until 20 February 2021. It invites

14-18 year olds to submit an article or an image on the theme. Cash prizes are offered. Winners will be announced on 15 March.

**For more information see:** [www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com)

## Peace Sunday follow up

Resources produced by Pax Christi for Peace Sunday 2021 on 17 January can be used at any time during the year.

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2021/>

Celebrating the World Peace Day message annually, challenging military spending, promoting peace education at all levels, campaigning to rid the world of nuclear weapons and the arms trade are elements of Pax Christi's work all year around **Consider becoming a member of Pax Christi.**

## Asylum Seeker Action

### - No Recourse to Public Funds

Meals and homeless services have been "busier than ever" according to Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, chair of Westminster Diocese Justice and Peace Commission and involved with Central London Catholic Churches, which have fed homeless people on the streets of London. "There seem to be more and more new homeless" reports Fr Dominic "and after 1 January, with 'no recourse to public funds' the number of people facing destitution and starvation will get worse." Migrants and asylum seekers are hard hit by 'no recourse to public funds', meaning they cannot claim most benefits such as tax credits and housing assistance. See: **Jesuit Refugee Service at** <https://www.jrsuk.net/>

## Church Action on Poverty Sunday 21 February

Join churches around the UK in prayer, giving and action this Church Action on Poverty Sunday. Share a vision for a society founded on compassion and justice, where all people are able to exercise dignity, agency and power. CAP has produced free resources to reflect and pray for change, and raise funds to enable more vulnerable communities to speak truth to power. <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/>

# Resources

## Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and the World

**Pax Christi International** and the **Catholic Nonviolence Initiative** have published the culmination of a three-year global conversation among church leaders, community organisers, theologians and others about how the Catholic Church might return to its Gospel nonviolence roots. This book shares the experiences of on-the-ground nonviolent interventions, and explores the scriptural, theological and historical foundations of nonviolence. It answers questions about active nonviolence and Catholic Social Teaching.  
[www.fast-print.net/bookshop/2299/advancing-nonviolence-and-just-peace](http://www.fast-print.net/bookshop/2299/advancing-nonviolence-and-just-peace)

## Hope in Hell

### **Jonathon Porritt**

A patron of Green Christian, Jonathon feels we have a decade to seriously confront the climate emergency. He believes we have time to do what needs to be done, but only if we move now and move together. In this ultimately optimistic book, he explores all these reasons to be hopeful: new technology; the power of innovation; the mobilisation of young people; and a sense of intergenerational solidarity as older generations come to understand their obligation to secure a safer world for their children.  
ISBN-10: 1471193276

## Martial Mining

### **London Mining Network**

Highlights that mining and militarism are interlinked and interdependent forces in the world. From the minerals needed to produce weapons of war, to the military force needed to police mining operations, extractivism is a militarised process. *Martial Mining* exposes the links between mining, international arms trading, and warfare.  
Free download: <https://londonminingnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Martial-Mining.pdf>

## Robots, Ethics and the Future of Jobs

### **Sean McDonagh SSC**

Considers the ethics of artificial intelligence (AI) and new technologies. Sean warns of the negative consequence for livelihoods and incomes. In the near future it is predicted that AI will put millions of people out of work.  
<https://www.messenger.ie/>



## Faith for Earth: Call for Action UN Environment Programme

Describes the essential, unshakeable reverence that all religions have for creation and nature, and introduces the world's major life support systems. It offers inspiration for faiths to become part of the flourishing global interfaith movement that is increasingly bringing people together to protect and sustain life on Earth.

Free download at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/33991/FECA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

## Towards a Just and Ecologically Sustainable Peace: Navigating the Great Transition

### **Joseph Camilleri & Deborah Guess**

International in scope and grounded in the reality of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia and the wider Asia-Pacific context, this book brings together important insights drawn from the Indigenous relationship with land, ecological feminism, ecological philosophy, the social sciences more generally, and a range of religious and non-religious cosmologies.

ISBN 978-981-15-5021-8

## Green New Deal New Economics Foundation

The UK needs a more just economy and more ambitious plans for climate action. The Green New Deal addresses economic, social and environmental crises together.  
<https://neweconomics.org/2019/04/agreen-new-deal>

## God is Green

### **Ian Bradley**

Subtitled 'Christianity and the Environment' Ian Bradley argues that Christianity at its essence is a 'green faith'. This new edition of the book is revised for the contemporary state of our climate, and includes a chapter-by-chapter study guide for individuals and small groups.  
ISBN: 978 0 232 53470 2

## FOR LENT

### **DVD - Stations of the Forests Columban JPIC**

An audio-visual lamenting devastation of rainforests and tribal people. A Resource Booklet provides agendas and reflections for meetings.

£7.00 inclusive of p&p

Or download from <http://www.columbans.co.uk/resources/dvd-video/stations-of-therainforests/>

### **Creation and the Cross: Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril**

#### **Elizabeth A. Johnson**

How can we extend the Christian belief in salvation to include all created beings? What might cosmic redemption mean in our own time?

ISBN-10: 162698266X

### **Combined Creation Time and Lent Resource**

#### **Liverpool Archdiocese / CAFOD**

<https://jp.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/combined-creation-time-and-lent-resources/>

Hard copies at: <http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/formation-shop>

## VOCATION FOR JUSTICE

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