**MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. COLUMBAN IN BRITAIN**

**TIME TO ACT FOR JUSTICE, PEACE & ECOLOGY**

**January 2022**

A passion for justice, a desire for peace and a concern for the integrity of God's

creation are all essential to the living out of the Gospel. They are not optional

extras, but core components of Christian faith.

**Everyone can build peace**

Pope Francis believes that every individual can contribute to building peace. In his 2022 message for the World Day of Peace on 1 January, Pope Francis says that in every age peace is both a gift from on high and the fruit of a shared commitment. Indeed, we can speak of an “architecture” of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, and an “art” of peace that directly involves each one of us. Francis says, “all can work together to build a more peaceful world, starting from the hearts of individuals and relationships in the family, then within society and with the environment, and all the way up to relationships between peoples and nations.”

Francis calls for a decrease in military spending, greater investment in education, and care for the environment. "The pursuit of a genuine process of international disarmament can only prove beneficial for the development of peoples and nations, freeing up financial resources better used for health care, schools, infrastructure, care of the land and so forth," he says.

He laments that despite numerous efforts aimed at fostering the conditions for peace, "the deafening noise of war and conflict is intensifying." He warns that, "diseases of pandemic proportions are spreading, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation are worsening, the tragedy of hunger and thirst is increasing, and an economic model based on individualism rather than on solidary sharing continues to prevail." The cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth constantly make themselves heard, pleading for justice and peace.

Francis acknowledges the myriad of ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted human relationships, economic opportunities and exacerbated inequalities. He urges intergenerational dialogue to facilitate greater understanding between different generations. “Great social challenges and peace processes necessarily call for dialogue between the keepers of memory - the elderly - and those who move history forward - the young," the pope continued.

Education must be viewed as an investment, rather than an expenditure, which, Francis feels, is vital for "promoting integral human development." Such investments, he says, "make individuals more free and responsible and they are essential for the defence and promotion of peace." He suggest that the environment, “is on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next”. In his view, we ought to esteem and encourage young people to work for a world that is careful to safeguard the creation entrusted to our stewardship.

In his message to parishes for Peace Sunday on 16 January in England and Wales, the Pax Christi National President, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool, acknowledges that the past year has been one of unprecedented and continuing challenges. “We are all conscious of the need to restore and rebuild our communities here and around the world, accepting that we need new ways of working and relating to each other, he says. He urges practical support of Pax Christi’s peacework, saying, “the Christian message of peace, through reconciliation, justice and nonviolence, can offer hope and direction in these times.”

**Campaign 1**

**Peace Sunday is on 16 January 2022**

Pax Christi England and Wales invites you to mark Peace Sunday, amplifying the World Peace Day message given by Pope Francis, titled, ‘Education, work and dialogue between generations: tools for building lasting peace’. To be involved in that work of building friendship between the nations, especially in places that have known conflict, join *Pax Christi*, the international Catholic peace movement. And on Peace Sunday or another Sunday around it consider organising a collection to support the work of Pax Christi and use liturgy materials available.

See: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2022/>

**Campaign 2**

**New Year Resolve to make peace with the environment**

What about making a New Year resolution to measure, reduce and, only then, offset your carbon footprint? This is one of the suggestions in a list of New Year resolutions offered by the ecumenical group Green Christian. Others include, moving towards becoming vegan, which excludes exploitation of and cruelty to animals for food, clothing or any other purpose or making a flight-free pledge not to fly because of the climate crisis.

Ideas at: <https://greenchristian.org.uk/new-year-resolutions-2022/>

**Campaign 3**

**Columban Schools’ Competition**

***‘Anyone can make a difference: 21st Century Changemakers’*** is the theme for the next schools’ competition launched by the Columban Missionary Society. Young people 13-18 years are asked to consider: Who in the world today is doing something about inequality, injustice, exclusion and environmental degradation? What can they teach us? How can we draw on our own faith and personal experience to be changemakers? The competition is open for writing and image entries until 11 February 2022. Please encourage young people to enter.

See: <https://www.columbancompetition.com/>

**A Prayer from Pope Francis**

The peace Jesus gives us is a peace for today and for the future.

May the Lord give us this peace:

Full of hope,

That makes us fruitful,

That make us communicative with others,

That creates community,

And that always looks to the definitive peace of Paradise.