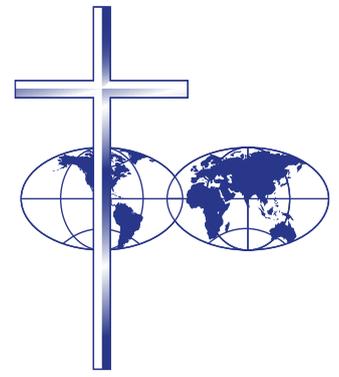


# Vocation for Justice



Centrespread:  
Columban Competition 2022

Summer 2022 Volume 36 No 2

# WAR IS A CHOICE

# BUT SO IS PEACE!

COLUMBAN MISSION

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

The Ukrainian invasion has brought into our homes a daily live show about humanity's capacity for Evil. The bombardment of homes, schools, hospitals, universities, theatres and parks, the utter destruction of people's lives and places of gathering, are all witnessed daily. And the grief of 10 million people either displaced from their homes or exiled. It is a living theatre of the evils of war and distresses all humanity.

But will it culminate in a fresh commitment to end war and for humanity to grow up and out of patriarchal empire-building? Will we move to seriously address the climate crisis and the extinction of species – possibly even our own – that we face today?

“If we want the world to change, then first our hearts must change” says Pope Francis. Yet, tolerance of violence is at a record high level. I noticed a recent offering on Netflix, called ‘Peacemaker,’ described as “the bombastic peacemaker is on a mission to secure peace, by any violent means necessary.”

Columbans know the costs of violence, with 24 Columbans killed violently in our history, and Columbans today witnessing brutality in Myanmar and other countries. Peacemaking alternatives are offered by Columbans such as Fr Niall O'Brien, whose books tell stories of effective nonviolence in the Philippines during the Marcos years. Columban missionaries are members of Pax Christi International and peacemaking through nonviolence receives attention in this newsletter.

At a Columban gathering at Solihull in April we heard a report from our members who work on interreligious dialogue, particularly lay missionaries. In Birmingham, they run Fatima House, which supports women asylum seekers, and give voluntary support to other refugee projects such as St. Chad's Sanctuary and Restore. They help run community gardens which help people's mental health. This practical support goes alongside tackling unjust structures which underpin the worsening situation of poverty and marginalisation in Britain which damages our peace.

Our front cover illustration has been lent to us by the Quakers whose dedication to peacemaking is inspirational. They highlighted in February that the European Peace Facility will dedicate 500 million euros for delivering military equipment to Ukraine, including lethal weapons! This culminates a recent upward trend in EU militarisation, when the Quakers feel it should, “promote peacebuilding practices and peace values within the EU and its immediate neighbourhood.”

Inward reflection and transformation towards more sustainable peace could be fulfilled by, for instance, mainstreaming peace education across education systems; taking a more systematic approach in consulting grassroots and civil society groups; and adopting a broader spectrum of peace narratives, values and practices.

Our centrespread highlights winners in our latest Columban Schools Competition. The fifth annual competition, covering Britain and Ireland, with two strands of articles and images, attracted 260 entries from nearly 50 schools. We learnt that young people admire those who have compassion for the wellbeing of others, have a strong moral compass and live their values. They are courageous in their service to others in need. Usually, they act knowing there is a personal risk and without expectation of reward. Most subjects of winning entries were guided by their faith and many by Catholic Social Teaching, which underlines the dignity of all. We thank all the teachers who supported the competition.

As Christians we must be active peacemakers. Let us actively promote the educational efforts of Pax Christi in England, Wales and Scotland and the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The Columban JPIC team will be at July's annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network which has a great title, ‘Hope! A verb with its sleeves rolled up.’

Peace was the goal of the UN rising from the ashes of World War II, to prevent future world wars. And UN work includes building peace with the planet, through its Biodiversity

and Climate Change Conventions. War, armed conflict and military intervention have significant environmental impacts, often triggering degradation, ecosystem collapse or even ecocide. We urge support of UN action and on page 8 we see how Columban education in a Birmingham school engaged with the British government delegation at biodiversity talks in Geneva, and then Columban representatives met them at the talks.

Pope Francis has been setting the stage for profound Catholic engagement in this urgent paradigm shift. His visionary 2015 encyclical, “*Laudato Si'*, on Care for Our Common Home,” his clarion call for ecological conversion and for a “new post-pandemic normal” point clearly in this direction. In the 2020 encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, he said: “Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil.” And the Vatican has given every support to the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative of Pax Christi International. Opportunities to promote it have been offered by the synodality process, which, Pat Gaffney suggests, “creates a space, a community, where something powerful, innovative, a renewed Church can potentially emerge.”

The *Vocation for Justice* Team would like to thank Fr Peter Hughes for his years as team director. He was often seen at the annual NJPN Conference, Migrants Mass and peace vigils. And we remember London-based Fr Aodh O'Halpin who died on 2 April. His ministry to domestic workers was outstanding in Britain over four decades. ■

## Ellen Teague



Fr Aodh O'Halpin, Fr Peter Hughes and Ellen Teague at a Migrants Mass in Westminster Cathedral.

## Squandering the Gift of Peace

**Pope Francis**

**On the Feast of the Annunciation on 25 March, Pope Francis reflected on humanity's need for God's forgiveness. He said:**

"If we want the world to change, then first our hearts must change..... we have strayed from that path of peace. We have forgotten the lesson learned from the tragedies of the last century, the sacrifice of the millions who fell in two world wars.

We have disregarded the commitments we made as a community of nations. We have betrayed peoples' dreams of peace and the hopes of the young. We grew sick with greed, we thought only of our own nations and their interests, we grew indifferent and caught up in our selfish needs and concerns.

We chose to ignore God, to be satisfied with our illusions, to grow arrogant and aggressive, to suppress innocent lives and to stockpile weapons. We stopped being our neighbour's keepers and stewards of our common home. We have ravaged the garden of Earth with war and by our sins we have broken the heart of our heavenly Father, who desires us to be brothers and sisters. We grew indifferent to everyone and everything except ourselves. Now with shame we cry out: Forgive us, Lord!

.... We have forgotten our humanity and squandered the gift of peace. We opened our hearts to violence and destructiveness. How greatly we need maternal help!

*Therefore, O Mother, hear our prayer.  
Star of the Sea, do not let us be shipwrecked in the tempest of war.  
Ark of the New Covenant, inspire projects and paths of reconciliation.*

*Queen of Heaven, restore God's peace to the world.  
Eliminate hatred and the thirst for revenge, and teach us forgiveness.  
Free us from war, protect our world from the menace of nuclear weapons.*

*Queen of the Rosary, make us realise our need to pray and to love.  
Queen of the Human Family, show people the path of fraternity.  
Queen of Peace, obtain peace for our world.*

*....Through your intercession, may God's mercy be poured out on Earth and the gentle rhythm of peace return to mark our days. ■*

**Pope Francis said after the Angelus on 27 March:**

"More than a month has passed since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine, since the beginning of this cruel and senseless war which, like any war, represents a defeat for everyone, for all of us. There is a need to repudiate war, a place of death where fathers and mothers bury their children, where men kill their brothers without having even seen them, where the powerful decide and the poor die.

War not only devastates the present, but also the future of a society. I read that since the beginning of the attack on Ukraine, one in two children has been displaced from the country. This means destroying the future, causing dramatic trauma in the smallest and most innocent among us. This is the bestiality of war, a barbaric and sacrilegious act!

War cannot be something inevitable: we must not get used to war! Instead, we must convert today's outrage into tomorrow's commitment. Because, if we come out of this affair as before, we will all be somehow guilty. Faced with the danger of self-destruction, humanity must understand that the time has come to abolish war, to erase it from the history of humanity before it erases humanity from history.

I pray for every political leader to reflect on this, to commit themselves to this! And, looking at battered Ukraine, to understand that every day of war worsens the situation for everyone. Therefore I renew my appeal: enough, stop, silence the weapons, be serious for peace! ■



*Praying for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons on Ash Wednesday 2022 at London's Ministry of Defence.*

**On Ash Wednesday this year, a national zoom prayer for peace, organised by Pax Christi England and Wales and Christian CND, attracted around 100 participants.**

The prayer focused on a call to Repentance, with an acknowledgment that humanity "is destroying and squandering the resources of the Earth." Romans 12 was read out: "Never pay back evil with more evil..... Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone." Participants held up images and names of people and places they wanted to pray for. These included children living in the shadow of war in Ukraine and the West Bank, and the destruction of the beauty of a number of countries, including Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. There were calls for a Change of Heart, urging moves away from a culture of death towards a culture of life. Then a focus on Thanksgiving where Sr Wamuyu Teresia Wachira, Co-President of Pax Christi International, spoke from Kenya about Pax Christi being "a sign of hope in the world". She was proud that Pax Christi is showing a different path to that of violence; instead, choosing a path of peace, justice, equality and respect for the natural world.

## Reject the Possibility that War can be Just

**Marie Dennis**

**Marie Dennis is senior adviser and past co-president (2007-19) of Pax Christi International, and is the programme chair of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. This article first appeared in the National Catholic Reporter. Reprinted with permission.**

Emerging from the death, destruction and displacement caused by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine are inspiring demonstrations of diverse nonviolent strategies that upend the logic of war. If we are to avoid World War III, de-escalation, diplomacy and peacebuilding are the only route forward.

The stories of creative, active nonviolence in Ukraine and Russia must be told. They include dogged diplomacy, civil resistance, civilian-based defense, symbolic action, non-cooperation, winning over enemy combatants, solidarity and accompaniment, music and art, acts of kindness and welcome, the use of digital tools to document war crimes and more. They are about nonviolence — a way of life and a spectrum of realistic, effective strategies for preventing or interrupting violence, for protecting human life and the planet, for promoting a just and peaceful world.

Nonviolence researcher Maria Stephan calls our time “a moment of profound moral clarity.” The war in Ukraine is not more important than the other wars destroying human lives and the Earth, but, as *The Tablet* editorialised on 19 March, it is “history-making, game-changing, paradigm-shifting.” Given the ongoing carnage and potentially catastrophic consequences, Pope Francis' assertion that “there is no such thing as a just war” rings true.

The question is not *whether* to defend against a brutal military invasion, but *how*. The nonviolent strategies being used by Ukrainians in many different locations are vitally important and illustrate powerful and effective ways to defend their communities and to break the cycles of violence. Their courageous actions point to a future when nonviolence will be the universal ethic that humans, for the sake of survival, have finally embraced.

We know that we need a paradigm shift. We have been living in a context of war and preparations for

war, assuming that militarised security was the only way to survive.

The war in Ukraine, by its link to nuclear weapons and its threat to nuclear power plants, is especially dangerous, an existential threat to all life on our common home, planet Earth. But the heartbreaking violence unleashed by war in Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Gaza, Colombia demands the same response.

We know what we need to do. We need to stop accepting perpetual war and layers of violence as normal. Racism, imperialism, militarism, nationalism, the theft of resources to prepare for war, economies dependent on and fortunes made from trade in weapons, cultural violence, economic violence, extremes of wealth and poverty, gender-related violence all create fertile soil in which violent conflict and war percolate and spread.

We need to reject the possibility that war can be just. We need to stop dismissing nonviolence as naive, simplistic, disengaged or ineffective and to invest in a radical reset of our values, our priorities, our relationships with each other and with the planet. We need to start to build a new nonviolent paradigm that replaces the scarcity model and “survival of the fittest” with values that draw on the wisdom and experience of cultures and traditions committed to respect, wholeness, connectedness, mutual dependence, reciprocity, justice and life, rebuilding the systems and structures of our societies.

Such a complete shift may take decades: of listening to the stories and understanding the experience of the most marginalised and neglected communities; of transformative education, life-skills development and values formation; of redesigning and rebuilding political, economic, financial, social, cultural, environmental systems so that they promote socioeconomic justice, human dignity, whole Earth healing and, therefore, peace.

Every step toward a solution in Ukraine must lead toward the kind of paradigm shift that we know we have to make if we plan to survive for much longer on this planet.

### For example:

- Resources should be made available for Ukraine (the government and civil society, including the Churches) to engage the conflict using nonviolent strategies in a just peace framework that focuses on breaking the cycles of violence.
- Beyond an immediate cease-fire, diplomacy should pursue a cooperative, demilitarised, denuclearised security relationship between Russia and the West, a common security and economic zone that brings Russia together with Ukraine as partners in a larger zone of peace and includes an urgent commitment to reduce carbon emissions and transition away from fossil fuels.
- The long-stalled reform of the United Nations, particularly the P-5 veto power in the Security Council, should proceed if the U.N. is to fulfill its purpose of maintaining peace and security.
- Reinforcing the international rules-based system is crucial for holding Russia to account for violating international law in Ukraine. U.S. violations of international law and failure to join treaties that ban land mines, cluster bombs and, most recently, nuclear weapons, as well as U.S. repudiation of other major arms control treaties (the Iran nuclear deal, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty) decidedly undermine international law.
- Sanctions can be effective, ethical, nonviolent tools for promoting peace; sanctions can also be unethical and violent. Catholic social teaching requires that sanctions “be used with great discernment and must be subjected to strict legal and ethical criteria.” Sanctions on Russia must be restructured to include clear incentives for positive action and to avoid lasting harm to the Russian populace.
- Ukrainians fleeing war, Russians fleeing repression and all refugees from violence must be treated with equal respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and religion. ■

<https://paxchristi.net/>

## Catholic Nonviolence

Pat Gaffney

**The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI), a project of Pax Christi International, aims to make nonviolence central to Catholic life and teaching.**

With a wealth of grassroots experience to draw upon, 75 years of global peacebuilding, status at the United Nations and the European Union, Pax Christi International and CNI are well-placed to make more substantial demands on policy makers at State and Church level, to promote nonviolent strategies, and invest resources to develop this effective process of change.

Upholding the dignity of each person and responding to the needs of Earth are nonviolent activities and demand certain political and economic choices. One of these is the choice about how governments spend money – and in particular, what they spend on military security/defence. In just a few weeks we have seen another tragic product of the war in Ukraine – an increase in global military spending. Our own government, in the spring statement, has increased spending by £4 billion, £1 billion of which has been military aid to Ukraine. Germany announced a one-time increase of \$113 billion for defence spending and has pledged to spend more than two percent of Germany's economic output annually on defence. It is as if the world has forgotten its commitment to development of people and its obligations under COP26. War distorts plans and takes resources away from life-giving work.

### New resources

A new resource speaks to our time, including opportunities to bring nonviolent strategies to situations of war. Key themes include:

- Developing a 'Just Peace' Ethic in preventing and limiting conflict.
- Supporting civil society initiatives and actions.
- Training for and promoting Unarmed Civilian Protection.
- Supporting inclusive decision-making around injustice and violence.

**The resource is at:** <https://paxchristi.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/PCI-brochure-POLICYMAKERS-TOOL-NONVIOLENCE-21.pdf>

CNI has been working closely with the Laudato Si network and hosted a webinar and produced reflection papers on Gospel Nonviolence for a Laudato Si Future. See: <https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/2022/03/07/gospel-nonviolence-for-a-laudato-si-future/>

### Days of Action

The Global Campaign on Military Spending UK has Days of Action 13 April–12 May. Ideas at: <https://demilitarize.org.uk/global-days-of-action/>

And note the **Catholic Nonviolence**

**Days of Action 21 Sept–2 Oct.** A reflection is offered on the Vow of Nonviolence as a tool and a prayer, especially on **2 October, the International Day of Nonviolence** <https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/2021/07/21/catholic-nonviolence-days-of-action-2021/>

### Nonviolence and Synodality

The Synod creates an opportunity to nurture nonviolence. Pax Christi International offers these questions:

- If the Church were to adopt nonviolence as a way of life, how would relationships in the Church change?
- How can the Church best promote nonviolence and just peace?
- Can you share an example of how the Church promotes or undermines nonviolence and just peace in your community?

## Women in Black

A London Group of Women in Black has met each week at the Edith Cavell Statue, St Martin-in-the-Fields for the past 20 years. Even during COVID lockdown, our group maintained a weekly on-line vigil.

I joined in 2019 and have greatly valued the nonviolent spirit and faithfulness of the women and their clear overall focus: **Women Against Militarism and War.** Each week we choose a theme that relates to events in our world and where we can offer lobbying suggestions to our government.

Recently we focused on Ukraine and Russia and also Yemen and Afghanistan, recalling the seven-year war with Yemen and the role of the UK Government in supplying arms to Saudi Arabia which leads the military actions there. We produce an information and action leaflet, giving out around 200 each week. Other groups are active in Oxford, Leeds, Bradford, Cambridge and Edinburgh.

An international movement Women in Black describes itself as a 'means of communicating and organising', not an organisation. It acknowledges that women have distinct experiences of violence - domestic, community and structural - and that women choose to respond to this in safe and controlled environments.

See: <https://womeninblack.org/>



Pat Gaffney at far right.

## Who I Find Inspirational! Scarlett Peart-Lapidge



**Scarlett Peart-Lapidge (right), of Bishop Thomas Grant School in London, was a winner in the Columban Schools Competition on the subject: 'Anyone can make a difference: 21st Century Changemakers'. She wrote about Margaret Mizen.**



Margaret Mizen

There are many people I find inspirational. My family and teachers are those who immediately come to mind. However, I want to talk about a special woman, who spreads love and teaches us how to forgive even when we really don't want to. That woman is Margaret Mizen.

I could talk about the whole family to be honest, but she stands out to me. But before I am able to tell you why she is so incredible, I need to tell you about her son Jimmy. On 10 May 2008 Jimmy was going to a bakery with his brother. Upon walking into the bakery he saw Jake Fahri, someone whom Jimmy's older sibling had been harassed by years previously. They got into a fight, resulting in a glass plate being thrown at Jimmy, killing him.

Jimmy's mum came to my primary school, and I had the honour of listening to all the fun times she had with him - like how he was excited to go out and buy a lottery ticket and how he was an overall happy boy, with a carefree and laidback nature. She also told his story. But I was confused. How was she so strong? She was able to talk about what had happened and still not dwell obsessively over the tragedy. Moments later, she began to show us her path to acceptance. She talked about how devastated she was, losing her son. And how she felt every emotion. But what amazed me was when she told everyone in the room about how she forgave the man who killed Jimmy. At that very moment, it was as if everything in the room had shifted. No one was expecting that. We eagerly listened on. She told us how she promised herself how she would keep Jimmy's name alive and would be an advocate for peace.

Mrs Mizen is an amazing woman who draws her strength from religion, and this is why I chose her. She's the perfect role model and imbeds what a true Catholic is. She has devoted her life to helping young people feel safe and on the 10th anniversary of Jimmy's death she created a campaign to stop knife crime which resulted in it reducing by 30%. She is doing this to honour her son's name and making the streets safer for young people like me, and making us feel safe to walk home. And for that I thank her, because there are not many who would be so kind, especially with what she has been through. The way she channels everything she does with positive energy is so admirable.

When I was eleven in 2018 I was fortunate enough to meet her again, this time with five of my classmates and two teachers. It was a Mass dedicated to Jimmy. With every word Margret Mizen said you could feel fondness radiate from it. We sang hymns in Jimmy's honour, but we weren't there to mourn. We were there to celebrate, to celebrate what the 'FOR JIMMY' charity has done, and quite simply celebrating his life.

But what has the 'FOR JIMMY' charity done? You may ask. Well one thing they have done is they carried out research using five different schools in Lewisham, and found out that 90% of students believed that their lack of work experience was holding them back. What did they do to help? They taught young people the skills and confidence to land and keep long-term employment and how to avoid criminal and anti-social behaviour.

If I wanted to, I could have talked about Greta Thunberg, Martin Luther King, Marcus Rashford and so many others, but I didn't. What sticks out about the Mizen family is that they mirror all of our daily lives. We have so much in common with the Mizens. Just a normal family and Jimmy just a normal boy. He was a boy with his future ahead of him, his memories making him who he was, and, like Mrs Mizen said, a boy who was "always smiling". And for me personally their family morals really chime with my own. This is why their cause really resonates with me and many others.

We all have the power to be like her, to be like them. What that family do is incredible. We all say, "I could only dream of being that strong". But that is false. We can be strong, we can fight for the right thing. I'm saying this because that is partially, to me, what the 'FOR JIMMY' movement is about. We all have the potential to be like them. It is achievable! Together we can make our local community better, safer and most importantly stronger. Overall, the whole Mizen family are extraordinary, and are a perfect example of how to grow, and spread love, not hate. ■

**Other winning articles were by Jessica Saxon from St George's College in Weybridge, Ella Bothwell of St Richard Gwyn School in Flint, and Mahi Sikand of Thomas More School in Bedford.**  
**Link to all winners: <https://www.columbancompetition.com/>**

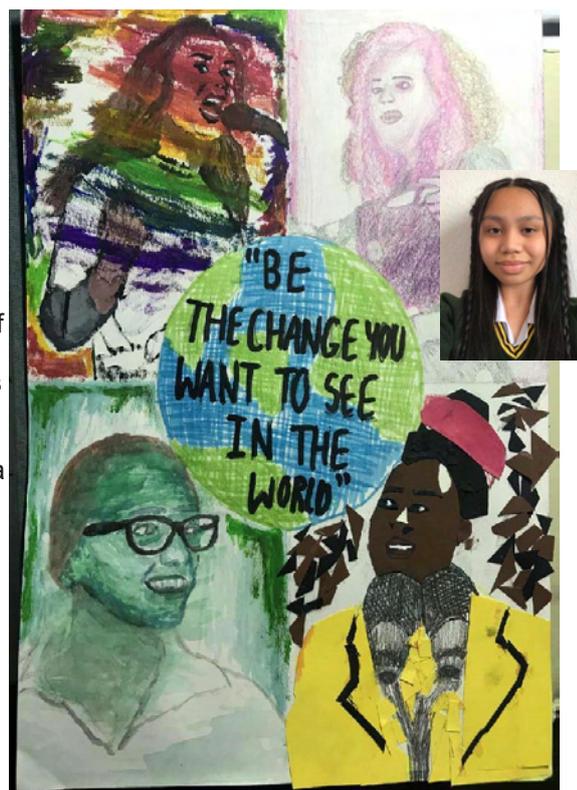
# Schools Competition 2022 - IMAGES



Elijah Gilbert of Richard Challoner School, New Malden, won first prize in the images section for his collage, 'The Shatter of Inspiration'. He produced a shattered glass with illustrations of influential people in each shard. Elijah said: "The people in the larger shards have done an outstanding amount of things that one can be inspired by." These included Pope Francis, Malala Yousafzai and Vanessa Nakate in the bigger shards and Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos in smaller ones. Wealth and power give influence but the greatest influencers, in Elijah's view, promote values of love of neighbour, kindness, generosity and hope.



Second place went to Katherine Fawole of St Paul's Academy in London for her Gouache painting of climate change activist Greta Thunberg



Paulette De Jose of Holy Cross School in New Malden was joint third. Her collage included Amanda Gorman (a racial justice activist), Molly Burhans (an environmental activist), Jamie Margolin (an LGBTQ+ rights activist) and Jaclyn Friedman (a feminist).



Oliver Lafite of Richard Challoner School came joint third, drawing footballer Marcus Rashford as Superman after he initiated a food campaign during the pandemic.

# Columban Education

## Making Peace with Other Species

**Juliette Bone**

**Juliette Bone is a Columban Faith in Action Volunteer. The month before the COP15 meeting in Geneva she delivered a workshop at a Birmingham primary school on Biodiversity.**

It was a bright but breezy afternoon on the 1 March when, accompanied by fellow Faith in Action Volunteer Tobi and Education Coordinator James Trewby, I made my way to the SS John and Monica Catholic Primary School. The task was simple - a workshop inspiring change and influencing COP15 Biodiversity negotiators to put biodiversity conservation promotion and sustainability into legislation.

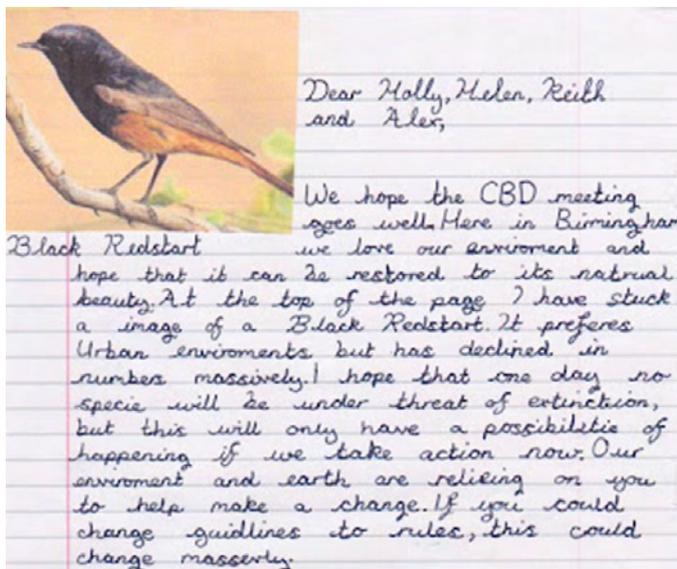
To build an idea of why legislation or 'rules' matter the workshop started with a dynamic task: the students created in pairs their own rules for an imaginary town. Starting with the downright outrageous ideas of no writing days and wearing pink on Wednesdays to the sensible no killing or fighting, the students created rules that would keep their town in order. The spin came when these rules were reduced to guidelines, and students discussed the chaos that might ensue if this were to happen. And so the importance of laws was built in their minds.

Next they journeyed through the murky waters of past Biodiversity conferences, particularly the 2011 Aichi Targets: the conservation of biological diversity (plant and animal species), the sustainable use of natural resources and the fair and just sharing of the benefits from resources (making sure indigenous communities and countries - home to biological riches - benefit from their use.)

Students expressed their disappointment, anger and frustration at the reality that none of these 'guidelines' had been observed or even reached. This highlighted for them the need for laws and legislation to uphold these three areas and for this to form a central part in the Post 2020 targets to be discussed at the forthcoming pre-COP15 Biodiversity meeting in Geneva.

But why do we need to include nature and biodiversity in our legislation? And what is happening? With a little help from David Attenborough, we explored the significance of nature in our lives, globally and locally and got our teeth into the reasons for its decline. Zooming in locally we discovered some local species at risk including the Dingy Skipper butterfly, the Great Crested newt, Bechstein's bat, the Black Redstart and the white-clawed crayfish.

Bringing all of our collected knowledge and passion together the pupils wrote letters to the UK negotiators - Helen, Holly, Keith and Alex - to thank them for their hard work and to wish them well at the meeting in Geneva, but most of all to remind them that sometimes guidelines aren't enough - we need rules and law to protect nature. We then took photos of the letters and sent a sample of the best by email to the negotiators who responded with their appreciation and looked forward to meeting the class personally later in the year. ■



## Columbans at UN meeting to protect Biodiversity



From 14-29 March 2022, delegates of nearly 200 nations met in person in Geneva to work on measures to safeguard Nature by 2050, specifically Biodiversity. Faith-based organisations present included representatives from the Missionary Society of St Columban: Amy Echeverria, International Columban JPIC coordinator, and Cynthia Gonzalez, US Region Advocacy Coordinator for the Columbans (pictured above). Amy and Cynthia met with the UK negotiators and followed up on the students' letters. Dialogue continues.

### Columban Biodiversity Statement at:

<https://columbans.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Final-Columban-LS-Week-Message-on-Biodiversity.pdf>

### Healthy People, Healthy Planet petition

<https://thecatholicpetition.org/>

### 'The Wailing of God's Creatures - Catholic Social Teaching, Human Activity and the collapse of Ecological Biodiversity' available at:

<https://lsri.campion.ox.ac.uk/news/lsri-publishes-new-report-current-biodiversity-crisis>

### Columban Biodiversity Podcasts

Last year, Columbans produced a podcast mini-series about Biodiversity. Six episodes explored Biodiversity and a related issue such as economic justice, peace, and migration. Now a Season 2 has been produced and six themes cover Biodiversity in relation to Youth, Indigenous Communities, Food, Climate Change, Beyond COP 15 and COP26, and The Spirituality of Biodiversity. Download at: [www.columbancenter.org/jubileepodcast](http://www.columbancenter.org/jubileepodcast)

## To be who we say we are

**Susan Rose Francois, CSJP**

### **A U.S. member of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace writes of the congregation's charism for Peace.**

In 1884 a small group of women gathered in Our Lady Chapel, St Barnabas Cathedral in Nottingham to profess their vows as the very first Sisters of St Joseph of Peace.

Bishop Edward Gilpin Bagshawe spoke words of encouragement as they began their vocation as peacemakers: "To secure this divine peace for ourselves and procure its blessings for others in the midst of the sin, turmoil, and restless anxiety of this modern world is the object of your Institute."

I wonder what Bishop Bagshawe and our first sisters would make of today's context, 138 years later. The challenges of our twenty-first century - the global pandemic, systemic racism, violence and war, the mass migration of people, political polarisation, and environmental destruction - can be overwhelming. In the midst of the sin, turmoil, and restless anxiety of the twenty-first century, what is our call as peacemakers?

"These new times demand a change of heart: to be, think, and act differently. Our spiritual lives require deep re-examination and transformation; our outward actions must confront privilege and power in ourselves and society." This quote comes from *To Be Who We Say We Are*, the Chapter Act approved by delegates at the recent Congregation Chapter of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace held in March 2022. The charism of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace is to pursue social justice as a path to peace. It is significant, then, that when discerning our response to the signs of today's times, our focus was not so much on *what* we were called to do or *how* to do it but rather, on *who* we are called to be as people of peace.

We are called to be collaborators. We delight in the response of so many to the call to transform and be transformed during these challenging times, whether in response to *Laudato Si'*, the Black Lives Matter Movement, the Church's call to synodality, or efforts to welcome refugees. Each of these

collaborative movements points the way, and we wish to join our hearts, minds, hands, and spirits with others filled with courage, humility, hope and trust.

Our discernment was informed by Chapter speakers who challenged us to respond to the call of these new times. Bana Gora, Chief Executive of the Muslim Women's Council in Bradford, used her experience as an illustration that it doesn't matter how big a step you take, as long as you take a step. "We can complain," she said, "or we can stand up and do something about it." Sister Anita Baird, DHM told the Chapter that as people of peace, we "are called to work tirelessly for justice, inclusion, and unity" during these troubled times. "God is calling you, at this historical moment in time, to lead the way that others might become gospel peace-makers." The Chapter also heard from Congregation Peace through Justice Facilitator Frank McCann, a CSJP-Associate. He spoke about our commitment to respond to *Laudato Si'*. "In our response to the summons of Pope Francis, the time is now, to go deeper," he said.

As a Congregation, we have written many inspiring words over the years that challenge us to grow in nonviolence, care for creation, and provide radical hospitality. Yet in this time and place, the call of the Spirit is clear: "It is time to be who we have always said we are. It is time to live our words." We are called to be people of peace. We desire to speak and act boldly with open, loving and adventurous hearts. In collaboration with others, we commit to:

- Cultivating and practising peace through justice by the intentional living of interculturality, anti-racism, and inclusion
- Addressing, healing, and being present to the wounds and broken relationships among ourselves and all of God's Creation

- Resisting every form of war and violence
- Making a place for everyone at the table where all are welcomed and gifts are honoured

Peace is possible, and peace must begin with each one of us, in ways simple and large. In the midst of the sin, turmoil, and restless anxiety of our times, we are called to resist fear and choose love. We are called to be who we say we are. ■

### **In Britain, the sisters:**

- Offer a weekly Peace Prayer
- Run a house of Hospitality for refugees in Nottingham
- Work alongside others locally at food banks, kitchens and for any other justice issue in the area or in the parishes, such as with people who are housebound or lonely.
- Campaign against war and for climate action. (*Below*)



*Sr Bridgetta Rooney CSJP with Bishop John Arnold and Jesuit Missions at the COP26 Climate March in Glasgow. >*



## Bishop lobbies against Investment in Mining

A delegation from Latin America, including a Catholic bishop, travelled to Europe in March to raise awareness and urge support for communities suffering from destructive mining. It called for disinvestment from mining. The members of the delegation met with European parliamentarians in Brussels on 24 March and with Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ, President of COMECE (the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union). Delegate Bishop Vicente Ferreira is the auxiliary bishop at Brumadinho, within the Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, where a catastrophic tailings dam collapse in January 2019 killed 272 people. The Latin American Churches and Mining Network supported the trip, and, in the UK, the London Mining Network.



## Pope issues apology to Canada's indigenous

After meeting at the Vatican in March with delegations from Canada's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, Pope Francis told them: "For the deplorable conduct of those members of the Catholic Church, I ask for God's forgiveness and I want to say to you with all my heart: I am very sorry. And I join my brothers, the Canadian bishops, in asking your pardon." He said he had been grieved by stories about life in the residential school system – a scheme for the forcible integration of indigenous children into Canadian culture by separating them from their families and communities and placing them in boarding schools. More than 150,000 native children in Canada were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools for more than a century in an effort to isolate them from the influence of their homes. The Canadian government has admitted that physical and sexual abuse were rampant at the schools.

## Celebrating Young People Awards

Catholic youth social action charity Million Minutes has launched its popular Celebrating Young People Awards. These six social action awards, inspired by each of the values of Catholic Social Teaching, recognise children and young people, then a further one recognises youth workers, and another recognises religious and clergy. Applicants have until mid-May to nominate a young person doing amazing social action work or someone working on behalf of young people. Award recipients and nominees will be announced at an event held in the Palace of Westminster in July 2022. Applications are open until mid-May. Visit <https://millionminutes.org/national-awards> to nominate

## Climate Sunday

Working together, a dozen Christian denominations and charities helped more than 2,300 churches across the UK and Ireland take action on climate change in the run up to last year's COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. Following Climate Sunday there is a strong momentum among Christian groups for sustaining joint work. Briefings are available on the Climate Sunday website [www.climatesunday.org](http://www.climatesunday.org).

## Demand to stop Fossil Fuel Development

In response to the energy crisis and the threat of climate change, more than 500 local and national church leaders signed a letter to PM Boris Johnson and Chancellor Rishi Sunak in March. They were urged to stop fossil fuel development, invest in green energy, set a windfall tax on oil and gas, put more money towards renewable energy and the insulation of homes, and support those most vulnerable to the cost of living crisis and increasing energy crisis. Columban Director in Britain, Fr John Boles, signed the letter, alongside 70 Catholic and Anglican bishops. Bishop John Arnold of Salford and Archbishop William Nolan of Glasgow also signed.

## Church Action for Tax Justice

is campaigning for the introduction of a wealth tax on the assets of the UK's richest 1%. It is asking that the Chancellor looks for greater contributions to the 'common good' from those best off, as an alternative to the tax

## 'Far East' Magazine

The 'Far East' is the official magazine of the Columban Missionaries in Britain. You are invited to participate in Columban mission by receiving the 'Far East' magazine and sharing it with family and friends within your community.

Details at: <https://columbans.co.uk/how-you-can-help/subscribe/fareast-magazine/>

increases we're seeing on ordinary working people. <https://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/church-action-for-tax-justice/>

## Peace Webinar

Bruce Kent (Vice President of CND, Pax Christi and the Movement for the Abolition of War) and Paul Rogers (Global Security Consultant with Oxford Research Group) are two of the speakers in a webinar on Thursday 12 May. It is titled, 'Blessed are the peacemakers: Peace activism and Catholic theology in the 21st century.' [www.thetablet.co.uk/events](http://www.thetablet.co.uk/events)

## New Play about Hiroshima

'THE MISTAKE' by Michael Mears, a powerful new play about Hiroshima and the first atomic bomb, is being performed 5-27 August in Edinburgh. Mears describes it as "a play more urgent and relevant as each day passes." #MichaelMearsEssentialTheatre

## Nuncio meets asylum seekers

On 31 March, the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, visited asylum seekers housed in former army barracks in Folkestone to show the Pope's solidarity with them as they look to a better future. At a meeting facilitated by 'Seeking Sanctuary' he met with local representatives from refugee support groups, several local clergy and around 30 young residents. He said that the plight of migrants and refugees was a subject close to the Holy Father's heart. He went on to visit Dover and, along with Bishop Paul McAleenan, led prayers in freezing wind at the seafront plaques remembering those who have died attempting to reach our shores. Read more about how to support the work of Seeking Sanctuary at: <https://seekingsanctuary.weebly.com/>

# Action Ideas



James Trewby and Columban Sister Kate Midgley lobbying at Westminster on 14 March.

## Campaigning on the Climate Crisis

Although COP26 in Glasgow is over, the UK continues as COP president, responsible for the outcomes of the conference until COP27 in Egypt in November 2022. Alok Sharma MP continues in a key role. So, it is very important that Churches speak up and hold the UK government to account for delivering and building on the COP26 outcome, as well as getting on and implementing the commitments to practical action they made during the campaign. With the likelihood that countries will be asked at COP27 to ramp up their pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions within a year, instead of waiting another five, it is urgent that the UK steps up its domestic action before then to be in a position to commit more internationally.

Campaigning points following on from the outcomes of COP26:

- Ending UK fossil fuel production and creating jobs in renewable energy rather than developing nuclear power further.
- Compensating countries in the Global South for the irreversible loss and damage caused to them by climate change
- Protecting forests, oceans and nature
- Military emissions to be included in carbon tallies.
- Our own "ecological conversion"

In May look out for news of the transition of the COP26 Coalition into the new Climate Justice Coalition.

Alok Sharma MP can be reached at [alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk) and contact your own MP.

## Season of Creation 1 September – 4 October

The theme of this ecumenical celebration for 2022 is 'Listen to the Voice of Creation'

God's creation moans ever louder and suffers more every day amidst the ongoing climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. But to listen to the voice of creation, we must recapture the ability to contemplate the beauty of God's creation, says Fr Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam, Coordinator of the Sector of Ecology and Creation at the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development:

"Creation speaks to us eloquently of the glory of God but we fail to contemplate, to listen. The root cause is probably we don't have the right attitude. That is the basic perspective we need to recover, to recover creation as a temple, as a holy place." <https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>



## Scotland J&P Resources

### ***Fratelli Tutti – Brothers and Sisters all together***

Pope Francis' encyclical touches on various social issues. This series digs deeper into some of them including use of nuclear weapons, racism, nonviolence, universal human rights and others. Both pdf resource sheets, and powerpoint files are a perfect starting point for individual reflection, group discussion and further learning.

### ***Nuclear Weapons Resources***

In 1982 the Bishops of Scotland issued their prophetic statement 'Peace and Disarmament' against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. To mark the 40th anniversary of this statement there are various resources exploring the statement and Church teaching on nuclear weapons. Available on the Justice and Peace Scotland website and youtube.

[justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk](http://justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk)

### ***Peace at the Heart***

On the 11 May the Peace Education team from Quakers in Britain will launch the report 'Peace at the heart: a relational approach to education in British schools' online. There will be examples of peace education in action, and clips from their series of short films on peace education, which can be found on their website - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/peace-education/peace-education-case>

Pax Christi's Education Worker can be contacted at [education@paxchristi.org.uk](mailto:education@paxchristi.org.uk)

### ***Christian CND – Divestment from Nuclear weapons***

More than £32bn is invested in nuclear weapons by British financial institutions - something we want to change. In May, Christian CND is planning to challenge Barclays, HSBC, Royal London, Nest and People's Pension. If you bank or have a pension with any of these institutions then they would like to hear from you. Get in touch for more information on how you can get involved - actions range from sharing out on social media to speaking out at AGMs. Contact [Liddy@christiancnd.org.uk](mailto:Liddy@christiancnd.org.uk)

# Resources

## Philanthrocapitalism and the Erosion of Democracy

**Edited by Vandana Shiva**

Subtitled, 'A Global Citizens' Report on the Corporate Control of Technology, Health, and Agriculture', this book details how global philanthrocapitalists like Bill and Melinda Gates and affiliated entities work to monopolise and privatise sectors of land use, food production, and public health on a global scale. Vandana Shiva exposes the reckless use of philanthropy by likely well intentioned technophile capitalists who are insensitive about the needs of people and the living Earth. A must-read warning for anyone  
ISBN: 97809077919

## Davos Man: How the Billionaires devoured the world

**Peter S. Goodman**

Every January the world's powerbrokers meet in Davos, Switzerland, for the World Economic Forum. While issues such as climate change or inequality are on the agenda, it is best known as a networking event for the privileged elites known as 'Davos Man'. The book shows the real-world effects of policy decisions for the rich, and it carefully sets out the consequences of profit-driven healthcare, austerity, or the prioritising of shareholder value.

As Christians, the idea that society should be organised around the richest should ring alarm bells. The New York Times's Global Economics Correspondent masterfully reveals how billionaires' systematic plunder of the world - brazenly accelerated during the pandemic - has transformed 21st-century life and dangerously destabilised democracy.  
ISBN-13 : 978-0063078307

## A Creed for Today: Faith and Commitment for our New Earth Awareness

**Donal Dorr**

Concern for environmental issues is at the heart of the Christian Gospel, argues theologian Donal Dorr.  
Veritas ISBN: 978-1847309389

## Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology.

**Catholic Peacebuilding Network**

Looks at the interconnections between peace, conflict, and extractives. Drawing together theology, ethics, and praxis, the volume reflects the diversity of Catholic action on mining and the importance of an integrated approach. Examines Catholic action on mining in El Salvador, Peru, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Philippines. And addresses general issues of corporate social responsibility, human rights, development, ecology, and peacebuilding. The book is available as an open-access e-book.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003094272>

## CHOOSING PEACE - The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence

**Edited by Marie Dennis, Orbis Books**

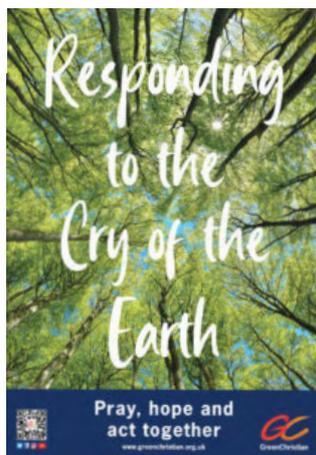
Contributions by leading peacemakers such as Lisa Sowle Cahill, Terrence J. Rynne, John Dear and Ken Utican, Rose Marie Berger, and Maria J. Stephan advance the conversation about the practice of nonviolence in a violent world.

ISBN 9781626982703

## Creation Posters

Green Christian is offering a set of six new posters. Donate £5 (or more) for a large A3 set, or £2.50 for an A4 set.

[info@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:info@greenchristian.org.uk)



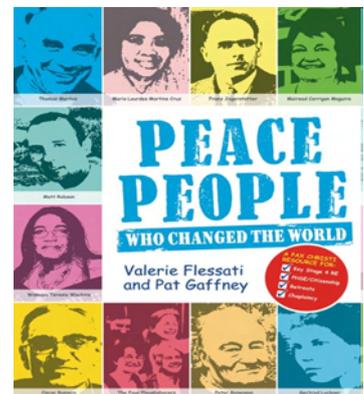
## LINKS FOR PEACEMAKING

Pax Christi (England and Wales)  
<https://paxchristi.org.uk/>  
Pax Christi Scotland  
[www.paxchristiscotland.org](http://www.paxchristiscotland.org)  
Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament  
<https://christiancnd.org.uk/>  
Movement for Abolition of War  
<https://abolishwar.net/>

## PEACE RESOURCES

### Peace People who changed the world

**Valerie Flessati and Pat Gaffney**  
ISBN 9781844179800



### Conflict & Climate Change Movement for Abolition of War

An 18-min DVD with Resource book. Columban JPIC helped produce. £8.99 from [www.kevinmayhew.com/conflict-and-climate-change-bookand-dvd.html](http://www.kevinmayhew.com/conflict-and-climate-change-bookand-dvd.html) or 0845 388 1634

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

**Pax Christi International**

The culmination of a three-year global conversation among Church leaders, community organisers, and theologians about how the Catholic Church might return to its Gospel nonviolence roots and transform the world.

<https://paxchristi.net/2020/10/26/new-book-advancing-nonviolence/>

## VOCATION FOR JUSTICE

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