



Catholic Social Teaching: Sharing the Secret...

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UPCOMING EVENTS

21 February, Church Action on Poverty Sunday: The theme this year is 'New Wineskins'. We invite you to join churches across the UK as we share a vision for a society founded on compassion and justice for all people. We seek to raise awareness of the problems faced not only by people who are poor but also by those on the margins of society.

If we are to build a society in which everyone can live a full life, free from poverty, we must ensure the voices of people who are struggling to make ends meet also are heard and acted on.

Calling All 14 to 18 Year Olds: Schools Media Competition 2021

Columban Missionaries are inviting young people from 14 to 18 years old to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme 'Let's Create A World Without Racism'.

Cash prizes in each category (writing and image) are 1st £300, 2nd £150, and 3rd £100. Deadline for entries is 20 February 2021, and winners will be announced 15 March.

The winning entries will be published in the *Far East* magazine, online on Columban websites in Ireland and Britain, shared on Columban social media, and published in other Catholic media.

This is a chance to engage with an issue that addresses equality, justice, inclusion and also draws on faith and personal experience.

"Our Catholic Faith does more than condemn racism, it also calls us to challenge racism, to eliminate its causes and to heal the wounds it brings. We each have a part to play, first by making sure that we think of every other person as someone worthy of respect. We uphold the rights, the equality, and the sanctity of every human life. To God, and to us, every life is a gift and irreplaceable. We affirm that every person's life matters and that the life of every black person matters." *Catholic Bishops of Southwark Archdiocese, June 2020*

For full details on the competition, including information on how to submit an application, see the link below:

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

Ban on Nuclear Weapons Becomes International Law

It seems impossible to believe: a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, negotiated by the United Nations in 2017 and supported by 122 nations and states, went into effect on 22 January 2021.

A very helpful resource pack (with ideas for prayer, giving, and action) is available to help parishes plan events. Please use link below to order the pack:

<https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/>

27 February, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.: National Justice & Peace Networking Meeting.

Join us for our next Networking Day, held via Zoom. Book your free place via [Eventbrite](#).



Study the path of others to make your way easier and more abundant. Lean toward the whispers of your own heart, discover the universal truth, and follow its dictates. Know that the truth always leads to love and the perpetuation of peace. Its products are never bitterness and strife.

Clothe yourself in the work of love, in the revolutionary work of nonviolent resistance against evil. Anchor the eternity of love in your own soul and embed this planet with goodness. Release the need to hate, to harbor division, and the enticement of revenge. Release all bitterness.

Hold only love, only peace in your heart, knowing that the battle of good to overcome evil is already won. Choose confrontation wisely, but when it is your time don't be afraid to stand up, speak up, and speak out against injustice.

And if you follow your truth down the road to peace and the affirmation of love, if you shine like a beacon for all to see, then the poetry of all the great dreamers and philosophers is yours to manifest in a nation, a world community, and a Beloved Community that is finally at peace with itself.

John Lewis (1940-2020), US politician and Civil Rights leader: *Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change and the Future of America*

The Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has said, 'After years of campaigning, lobbying and praying, nuclear weapons will be banned under international law.... This is something we have all worked and prayed for, and a time to pause, celebrate and give thanks God.'

The new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. It forbids nations to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

That's the excellent news. Unfortunately, there's bad news too. The 122 nations that ratified the treaty are all small (meaning powerless) ones; none of the world's countries with the largest nuclear arsenals (United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, France, Israel, Pakistan, and Iran) have signed on to the treaty; neither have many of the wealthier countries such as Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, and Japan.

So we seem to have a toothless agreement and one that has little hope of really changing things for the immediate future. Even so, it is an extremely hopeful beginning, and it is much better to have made this start and continue to work on the other countries to make the world a much safer place.

As the UN says, "States that haven't joined the treat will feel its power too – we can expect companies to stop producing nuclear weapons and financial institutions to stop investing in nuclear weapon-producing companies" (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/10/1076082>).

Thirty-one Anglican bishops have written to the UK government to urge its ratification. In addition, Pope Francis stated at the Hiroshima Memorial that even the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral--and that we will be judged on this. "Future generations will rise to condemn our failure if we spoke of peace but did not act to bring it about among the peoples of the earth. How can we speak of peace even as we build terrifying new weapons of war? How can we speak about peace even as we justify illegitimate actions by speeches filled with discrimination and hate?"

Among the things that individual Catholics can do are campaigning and helping to raise awareness. In addition, among the groups that are active in working for a total ban on nuclear weapons include the already-mentioned Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Greenpeace, Pax Christi UK (<https://paxchristi.org.uk>) and Friends of the Earth International.

New Website for *Fratelli Tutti*

The Vatican now has a website specifically for *Fratelli Tutti*. It aims to spread the message about the fraternity and social friendship of the encyclical, deepening and making known all the aspects proper to the text." <http://www.humandevlopment.va/en/fratelli-tutti.html>



The Holy Father appoints a man named a Bishop to a seat--- a cathedra. From that seat --- the cathedra --- the Bishop teaches the truth to all men so that the truth may make them free. But some people are Bishop-shy. They are Bishop-shy because they are hungry, shivering, or sleepy. They must be fed, clothed, and sheltered before they will consent to come to listen to Christ's Bishop. To feed, clothe, and shelter them at a personal sacrifice is to participate in the Bishop's apostolate.

Peter Maurin (1877-1949), *Easy Essays*



No matter what is going on around us, it's important to remember that God keeps transforming creation into something both good and new. Instead of hurtling us towards catastrophe, God always wants to bring us somewhere even better. A helpful word here is "evolution." God keeps creating things from the inside out, so they are forever yearning, developing, growing, and changing for the good. That might be hard to see sometimes in the moment, but it's nevertheless true. Richard Rohr, *Daily Meditations*, 3 January 2021



Need for Truth

Development, social well-being, the search for a satisfactory solution to the very grave socio-economic problems besetting humanity, all need truth. And what they need even more is that this truth should be loved and demonstrated. Without truth, without

End to Funding of Fossil Fuel Projects Overseas

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced that the UK will end public investment in new climate-wrecking oil and gas projects overseas. Throughout 2020, tens of thousands of campaigners called on the government to stop the funding of fossil fuel projects abroad. On 12 December 2020, the 5th anniversary of the signing of the historic Paris Agreement, sustained pressure has paid off. Well done to all who helped achieve this significant agreement.

Calls for Covid Vaccines for Poorer Nations

For the UK at least, vaccinations against Covid-19 have been started despite some concerns about the limited testing. Our government and most of the wealthier countries have no problems being able to afford the vaccinations, even on a massive scale. Some have hoarded vaccines and have enough supplies to inoculate their populations several times over (Canada is head of the list, with enough to vaccinate every citizen five times).

Many poorer nations are not so lucky. Campaigners warn that 9 out of 10 people in poor countries are set to miss out on COVID-19 vaccination. Some of these poor countries will only be able to vaccinate one in ten people against Covid-19 this year unless urgent action is taken by governments and the pharmaceutical industry to make sure enough doses are produced.

An alliance of campaigning organizations, including Amnesty International, Frontline AIDS, Global Justice Now and Oxfam, have called for a "people's vaccine." They found that 67 countries with low and lower-middle incomes risk being left behind as rich countries move towards their escape route from this pandemic. Five of the 67 (Kenya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan and Ukraine) have reported a total of nearly 1.5 million cases.

Anna Marriott, Oxfam's health policy Manager, said, "No one should be blocked from getting a life-saving vaccine because of the country they live in or the amount of money in their pocket. But unless something changes dramatically, billions of people around the world will not receive a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19 for years to come."

As Heidi Chow, from Global Justice Now, has urged, "All pharmaceutical corporations and research institutions working on a vaccine must share the science, technological know-how, and intellectual property behind their vaccine so enough safe and effective doses can be produced. Governments must also ensure the pharmaceutical industry puts people's lives before profits."

The People's Vaccine Alliance is calling on all drug companies working on COVID-19 vaccines to share their technology and intellectual property through the World Health Organization COVID-19 Technology Access Pool to make safe and effective vaccines can be available to all who need them.

trust and love for what is true, there is no social conscience and responsibility, and social action ends up serving private interests and the logic of power, resulting in social fragmentation, especially in a globalized society at difficult times like the present.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009)



If I sit next to a madman as he drives a car into a group of innocent bystanders, I can't, as a Christian, simply wait for the catastrophe, then comfort the wounded and bury the dead. I must try to wrestle the steering wheel out of the hands of the driver.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German theologian (1906-1945)



As far as the Church is concerned, the social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory, but above all else a basis and a motivation for action. Inspired by this message,...down through the centuries...men and women of all states of life devoted themselves to the needy and to those on the margins of life, convinced as they were that Christ's words, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40) were not intended to remain a pious wish, but were meant to become a concrete life commitment.

Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (1993), 57

A lie doesn't become truth, wrong doesn't become right, and evil doesn't become good just because it's accepted by a majority.

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)

Steve Cockburn, Amnesty International's Head of Economic and Social Justice, remarked "By buying up the vast majority of the world's vaccine supply, rich countries are in breach of their human rights obligations. Instead, by working with others to share knowledge and scale up supply, they could help bring an end to the global COVID-19 crisis."

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/campaigners-warn-9-out-10-people-poor-countries-are-set-miss-out-covid-19-vaccine>

Pope Francis too has condemned nationalistic actions and called for countries to act for the common good of all humanity, not just selfish interests. Both the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* and a joint document from the Vatican Covid-19 Commission and the Pontifical Academy for Life reaffirm the need to make Covid-19 vaccines available and accessible to all.

The latter document cited the CST principles of justice, solidarity, human dignity, and inclusion as the main criteria in meeting the challenges posed by this worldwide emergency. A fuller account can be found in the following link:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-12/holy-see-calls-for-just-and-equitable-distribution-of-vaccines.html>

Petition: Prevent Leaseholders from Paying to Replace Combustible Cladding

People were horrified when on 14 June 2017 the Grenfell Tower building caught fire owing to the building's highly combustible cladding. In the fire 72 people lost their lives.

The Grenfell Tower building was not the only one affected. Thousands of other buildings were (and still are) wrapped in highly combustible cladding, both in the UK and around the world. Often the tenants of these buildings are required to pay thousands of pounds to have it replaced.

The Draft Building Safety Bill currently proposes a Building Safety Charge payable by leaseholders for cladding remedial works. This should be removed and public funds made available to protect citizens through appropriate safety standards, and Freeholders should also be made to contribute.

A petition to Parliament to protect leaseholders from having to pay for cladding remedial works can be found at the following website: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/332674>