



Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Justice and Peace News

Summer 2021

Welcome to the Summer 2021 newsletter of the Justice and Peace Co-ordinating Council.

Articles in this newsletter are as follows:

- Introducing the Diocesan Environmental Group.....Chris Myers.
- Palestine and Israel – What's to be done?.....Pat Devlin
- Tyne and Wear Citizens.....Fr. Chris Hughes
- On the Bumpy Road to COP26.....Chris Myers
- Pilgrimages to COP26 Visiting our DioceseChris Myers
- Inclusive Economy Event.....Pat Devlin
- Justice and Peace Refugee ProjectTony Sacco
- A Story of DetentionLiz Archibald
- The Catholic Writers' Guild a hopeful prayer Competition...Gerry Loughran
- Review of Books on the theme of Justice and Peace.....Fr. Chris Hughes.

We regularly update our webpage on the Diocesan website. This can be accessed by going to our page on the [Diocesan website](#).

You are receiving this newsletter because you have signed up in the past to receive information from the Justice and Peace Co-Ordinating Council. If you no longer wish to receive this please contact me at lizarchibald.justiceandpeace@gmail.com.

We do not share your details with any third parties

Introducing the Diocesan Environment Group

Bishop Robert has established a Diocesan Environment Group which has been meeting regularly since February. The group has been formed to support the Diocese in taking concerted action to address the climate and ecological emergency recognising the call by Pope Francis in Laudato Si' to care for our common home.

The science informs us that we need concerted action at all levels of society, including within our own diocese to avert catastrophic climate change, which threatens the viability of all life on earth. Reducing our carbon footprint, learning to live sustainably in harmony with the whole of creation is an imperative for each and every one of us in our Diocese. We must learn to live our spiritual and physical lives in recognition that the earth is sacred.

Within the Diocese the group will come under the Vicariate Caritas. The remit of the group which is still being finalised includes:

- drafting a revised Environmental and Social Justice Policy for approval by the Board;
- linking with the [Guardians of Creation Project in Salford](#) which is aimed at delivering the tools and know how to achieve sustainability within Catholic Dioceses;
- advising the Board on implementing sustainability policies and actions at a Diocesan level;
- working with schools and parishes to calculate the carbon footprint of our Diocese and assist with developing a plan to achieve carbon neutrality;
- establishing and supporting a network of climate champions in our parishes to instigate sustainability projects and actions;
- identifying, encouraging and promoting sustainable activities within our schools and parishes, sharing of good practice and examples;
- promotion of appropriate resources and information on adopting sustainable life styles;
- organising education and liturgical events to promote ecological spirituality and actions.

The group's membership is:

Bishop Robert Byrne

Fr. Chris Hughes, Chair

Claire Hetherington, Primary Schools RE Advisor

Minnie Fraser, Property Surveyor and Environmental Lead

Chris Myers, Justice and Peace Co-ordinating Council

Deacon Richard McLaughlin

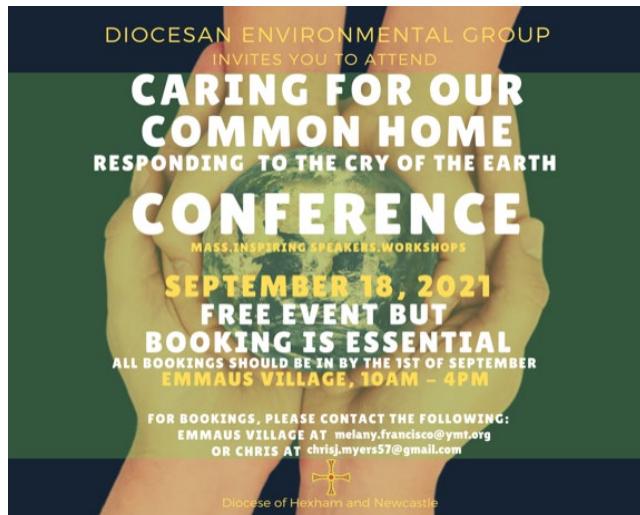
Mel Fransicso-Lawless, Youth Ministry Team

Hannah Bartlett, Youth Ministry Team, Secretary

Tim Madeley, CAFOD Co-ordinator North East

The group is currently developing its own web pages and planning a launch event on the theme "Caring for our Common Home" a one day conference to be held at the Youth Village Emmaus on Sat Sep 18 (see below). The event will include keynote speakers (Emma Gardner, Project Lead for the Guardians of Creation Project and Christine Allen, CAFOD Director), achieving sustainability within Catholic Dioceses, presentation and feedback on the draft policy, COP26 and advocacy, workshops on sustainable living (buildings/energy, food, travel, plastic/waste) and a Mass for Creation presided over by Bishop Robert. Programme details and booking information to follow.

More information from Chris Myers email: chrisj.myers57@gmail.com



Palestine and Israel – What's to be done?

When we see our TV screens filled with images of deadly violence once more in Palestine and Israel – the Holy Land for Christians Jews and Muslims alike, we can feel helpless. But, Palestinian Christians have been calling on us, the Universal Church and the International Community, through their Kairos Document issued at the end of 2009 to respond in some very specific ways. They don't want hand wringing and empty words of sympathy – **they want our action** They have called on us to: **pray; to inform ourselves** about the history and the current reality of the situation; to **come and see**, meeting with their communities during any visit to the Holy Land and to take and urge our politicians to **take economic action** as the most effective non-violent way of achieving an end to the Blockade of Gaza, an end to the Occupation of the West Bank, and an end to the discriminatory laws in Israel, thus opening the way to a Just Peace So at the request of Liz Archibald I have outlined below some very practical ways that we can respond to the longstanding call of Palestinian Christians. No one can do all these things but **everyone can pray and do at least one other action**

Prayer

- Sign up for the weekly Sabeel Wave of Prayer

<https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/category/taking-action/wave-of-prayer/>

- Organise monthly prayer in parishes

Resources could be supplied for last Saturday of the month, email: patdev48@btinternet.com

Stay informed

Get regular updates on the situation in the West Bank

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel

<http://eepurl.com/bObPFX>

- **Personal Stories from:**

Parents Circle: Israeli & Palestinian bereaved families working together for a just peace

<https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcf-home-page-en>

Combatants for Peace: Israelis and Palestinians formerly involved in

the armed struggle, now committed to nonviolent means to achieve a just peace <https://cfpeace.org/>

- **Reports & Statistics** from Israeli information centre for Human Rights B'tselem <https://www.btselem.org/>
- **Invite speakers + join online webinars**, e.g. <https://fmep.org/events/>

Come & See

Pilgrimages: Let's ensure all our diocesan pilgrimages include encounters with Palestinian Christians – the Living Stones

Through Sabeel Palestinian centre for Liberation theology <https://sabeel.org/>

Or Kairos Palestine <https://www.kaiospalestine.ps/> or Pax Christi (see below)

Encounter & awareness visits:

- Pax Christi <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>
- Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions <https://icahd.org/>

- Green Olive Tours <https://greenolivetours.com/>

Take Action

Show solidarity: Send messages of solidarity to Palestinian families at <https://childrenacrossborders.wordpress.com>

Lobby

Email your MP asking them to support

- An end to the blockade of Gaza
- An arms embargo on Israel (because of its systematic violations of International law, including the disproportionate use of force against Civilians)
- A ban on importing goods from illegal Israeli Settlements

Boycott :

- Companies who manufacture goods in or support Illegal Israeli Settlement e.g. Motorola; Keter (plastic garden stores),
- Companies profiting from the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian Territories eg Hewlett Packard (supply security systems for checkpoints, prisons)

For further info: email patdev48@btinternet.com

Donate to:

Medical Aid for Palestine whose aid is particularly invaluable in Gaza <https://www.map.org.uk/donate/donate>

Hebron International Resource Network

<https://friendsofhirn.wordpress.com/how-to-donate>

Helping communities stay on their land, education+livelihoods

Currently responding to the aftermath of violence in Gaza & the West Bank

Pat Devlin



Latest News on Tyne and Wear Citizens

- o Institutions in North Tyneside along with the Green, Fair, Healthy Action Team had a cleanup of Scott Park, Coach Lane, North Shields, on May 22nd. Mayor is willing to meet the team and have made a commitment to improve the park. There will be a meeting at the park
- o Training: At least ten people from the diocese took part in training in May, including members of my parish and members of the YMT and a school chaplain . Feedback has been positive. I have had a discussion with YMT as to how they can incorporate the training into their work
- o At the meeting of the TWC leadership group we were joined by the CEO of CUK Matthew Bolton. There is a plan to reduce the number of national campaigns so that they can be more affective
- o In their research, the Mental Health Action Team have discovered that waiting time for CBT is over a year in Newcastle but just 6 weeks in Gateshead and South Tyneside. We think this is a scandal to have such discrepancy. We are looking at ways to bring this fact to wider attention
- o The Dignity and Diversity at Work and the Safe and Equal Cities Action Teams have been merged
 - o Congratulations to Dame Maura Regan, CEO of the Bishop Hogarth trust who was given a DBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Dame Maura has been very supportive of our Just Change Campaign, with the secondary schools in her trust becoming the first schools to adopt this policy of ensuring that all money designated for free meals actually goes to the children

Fr. Chris Hughes.



Making our Economy work for Everyone

What does this mean for our North of Tyne Communities?

What needs to change?

Join us at

St Vincent's Centre, Newbridge St, Newcastle, NE1 2TP

on

Saturday September 25th 10am – 3pm

Registration, Tea & Coffee from 9.30am Lunch Provided

Listen to real experiences of Barriers & Breakthroughs
from Amble to Benwell, from Walker to Meadow Well & more....

Hear the responses from North of Tyne Civic & Faith leaders
Including Bishop Christine Hardman, Cllr Joyce McCarty

Free Registration at capnortheast@gmail.com - Donations welcome

This is an advance invitation from Church Action on Poverty North East (CAPNE).

Taking advantage of Bishop Christine acting as chair of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) Inclusive Economy Board, CAPNE have been working with communities from Northumberland, Newcastle, and North Tyneside to give them an opportunity to influence the way NTCA delivers its programmes.

By sharing their stories of the barriers they've faced and by highlighting the creative community initiatives which have helped them to breakthrough some of the barriers, they aim to exercise some agency over the policies that have a major impact on their lives.

It takes courage to speak out. So, we are asking you to be there for them – letting them know that there is real support in the Church and the wider community for 'Making the Economy Work for Everyone' – **Please, put the date in your diary now**

On the bumpy road to COP26

Introduction

After all the hype around the build-up and hopes for the G7 summit held in Cornwall in June the actual outcome was a disappointment as has been reported by a number of organisations [1,2].

Christine Allen CAFOD Director has said:

"It is clear that the G7 leaders have not adequately heard the voices of the world's poor in relation to vaccines and climate finance. Will the actions of these G7 nations create necessary trust around the world as we move towards the next major summit in the UK – COP26? I'd say that's unlikely.

If Boris Johnson believes that 'global Britain' is a force for good, then he needs to show by his actions the moral imperative to take urgent action for a fairer, greener and just world."

Ruth Valerio, Director of Advocacy and Influencing at Tearfund, said:

"This weekend has been full of hollow words with little more than spare change on the table to end support for fossil fuels and bring about the green revolution we desperately need. The G7 has finally recognised the egregious impact of coal, but has fallen short of ending the era of polluting fossil fuels and ushering in a climate-safe future for us all. Empty promises will do nothing for the 132 million people who will be pushed into extreme poverty this decade by the climate emergency.

Cutting the aid budget has left the UK weak on the global stage and failing to lead in a vital year in the fight against the climate crisis. This could have been a springboard for successful Climate Talks in November, but without the cash, these promises are like writing in the sand and will do nothing to turn the tide of the climate emergency that is already devastating the lives of millions."

COP26 Hopes and Expectations

The focus is now very much on COP26, the climate conference in Glasgow which will be held from Nov 1-12 when world leaders with their negotiating teams will attempt to reach agreement on the action required to address climate change and specifically to implement the Paris Agreement to keep the global temperature increase to 1.5C.

What are the Goals for COP26?

These goals are taken from the official COP26 web site ([COP26 climate change conf](#)):

1. Secure global net zero emissions by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach

Countries are asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets that align with reaching net zero by the middle of the century. To deliver these targets, countries need to:

- accelerate the phase-out of coal;
- curtail deforestation;
- speed up the switch to electric vehicles;
- encourage investment in renewables.

2. Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats

The climate is already changing and it will continue to change even as we reduce emissions, with devastating effects. At COP26 we need to work together to enable and encourage countries affected by climate change to:

- protect and restore ecosystems;
- build defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure and agriculture to avoid loss of homes, livelihoods and even lives.

3. Mobilise finance

To deliver on our first two goals, developed countries must make good on their promise to mobilise **at least \$100bn in climate finance per year** by 2020. International financial institutions must play their part and we need work towards unleashing the trillions in private and public sector finance required to secure global net zero.

4. Work together to deliver

We can only rise to the challenges of the climate crisis by working together. At COP26 we must:

- finalise the Paris Rulebook (the detailed rules that make the Paris Agreement operational);

- accelerate action to tackle the climate crisis through collaboration between governments, businesses and civil society.

A Reality Check

As the host country, the UK Government is leading extensive diplomatic efforts to encourage countries to deliver more ambitious emissions reductions targets (known as Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs).

BUT the recent reports by the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) have highlighted that whilst the UK has legislated for a 78% reduction in carbon emissions by 2035 it does not yet have a creditable plan to achieve this [3,4].

Lord Deben, Chairman of the Climate Change Committee has said: "We are in the decisive decade for tackling climate change. The Government must get real on delivery. Global Britain has to prove that it can lead a global change in how we treat our planet. Get it right and UK action will echo widely. Continue to be slow and timid and the opportunity will slip from our hands. Between now and COP 26 the world will look for delivery, not promises."

Hence the Government has much work to do in the build up to COP26 to get the international community on board and to demonstrate that it has a creditable plan to deliver on its own targets. Whilst many countries are now coming forward with their NDCs which aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 (in the case of China, 2060) what happens over the next decade will be decisive.

The IPCC report in 2018 identified that emissions need to be reduced by at least 50% by 2030 to have any chance of keeping within the Paris Agreement [5]. Despite a reduction in emissions last year due to the pandemic they are expected to rebound this year – so we have still not yet reached peak emissions! The scale of the challenge to transition the global economy away from fossil fuels is enormous.

If we needed a reminder of how urgent action is required to avert climate catastrophe the recent heatwave in Canada and North America shows what lies ahead for us if we fail to act [6]. This devastating heatwave has occurred with a global temperature rise of 1.1C – we are currently on track for a rise of over 3C by 2100 which will have disastrous consequences for all life on earth.

COP26 – what can we do?

We need Governments to make the right decisions at COP26 and agree the ambitious actions which will accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels towards a more sustainable, fairer, healthier, greener society. But whilst we can advocate for Government action we must recognise that we must also change our lifestyles and respond to Pope Francis' call in Laudato Si' to truly care for our common home. These changes will come from a change of heart, an ecological conversion in which we learn to live out the physical and spiritual dimensions of our lives recognising the earth as sacred.

Below are some suggestions for advocacy and action:

- Join CAFOD's Reclaim our Common Home campaign including signing the petition to the Prime Minister [7].
- Sign and share this petition – healthy people, healthy planet being organised by the Vatican in conjunction with the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM, 8).
- Arrange to meet your MP to raise your concerns about the climate crisis ideally as a Parish group [9].

- Organise a climate Sunday Service or ask your Parish Priest to hold a Mass for Creation during the Season of Creation [10,11].
- Establish a green team and register to Become a Live Simply Parish [12].
- Attend the Conference on Caring for our Common Home on Sep 18 to learn more about Laudato Si' and what is being planned within our Diocese (see previous article).
- Become a Laudato Si' animator - the next course begins on July 28 [13].
- Consider ways in which you and your family can reduce your carbon footprint and live more sustainably [14].

Conclusion

We are living through a decisive period for humanity and our common home - we need to recognise the need for profound change in the way we live and view the world. If we are prepared to embrace these changes as individuals and society then a brighter future is possible for the whole of creation. Let us pray that our faith will empower us to seize this moment and act decisively.

"For we know that things can change" Pope Francis, Laudato Si'.

Chris Myers

References

- [1] G7 'wastes opportunity' to tackle debt, Covid and climate | CAFOD
- [2] G7 reflections – why we must press on - Tearfund
- [3] 2021 Progress Report to Parliament - Climate Change Committee (theccc.org.uk)
- [4] Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk - Climate Change Committee (theccc.org.uk)
- [5] IPCC Report: Global Warming of 1.5C 2018
- [6] Nowhere is safe, say scientists as extreme heat causes chaos in US and Canada
- [7] Reclaim Our Common Home | CAFOD
- [8] Home - Healthy Planet, Healthy People Petition (thecatholicpetition.org)
- [9] Parliament in your Parish | CAFOD
- [10] Climate Sunday resources
- [11] Home Interest - Season of Creation
- [12] Livesimply award | CAFOD
- [13] Home - Laudato Si Animators
- [14] 10 ways to cut your carbon footprint | 2021 Update | Soil Association

Pilgrimages to COP26 visiting our Diocese

There are two pilgrimages to COP26 which will pass through our Diocese in October on their way to Glasgow. Both pilgrimages seek to raise awareness of the climate crisis within the communities they will visit and will urge the conference to take decisive, ambitious action to tackle the crisis.

1. COP26 European Pilgrimage (Northumberland Stage)

This European pilgrimage is ecumenical and begins in Poland on August 14 – the group of 30 pilgrims will walk across Poland, Germany and the Netherlands before arriving in North Shields via ferry on Oct 12.

Tim Madeley (CAFOD, North East Co-ordinator) and I are assisting the pilgrimage with organising overnight accommodation in Northumberland and contacting local Churches and schools to raise awareness of the pilgrimage.

The current arrangements are:

- Oct 12 – pilgrims arrive at North Shields ferry, a reception at St. Cuthberts, walk to Blyth for an overnight stay at St. Wilfrids.
- Oct 13 – walk up the coast to Cresswell with an overnight stay at Widdrington URC.
- Oct 14 – walk to Alnmouth, staying at the Village Hall.
- Oct 15 – walk to Seahouses, staying at the hostel co-located at St. Pauls Church.
- Oct 16 – walk to Holy Island, staying 2 nights at the SVP Camp, St. Aidans.
- Oct 17 – rest day on Holy Island.
- Oct 18 – walk to Berwick, overnight stay with Berwick Churches Together.

Please contact Tim or myself if you would like to become involved with the pilgrimage including meeting up and walking part of the route, hosting a lunch or a tea/ coffee break, holding a short service or meeting in the evening.

2. **Young Christians Climate Network: G7 to COP26 pilgrimage**

- This pilgrimage is being organised by the Young Christians Climate Network and will involve a relay of walkers beginning at the G7 summit in Cornwall and making their way up to Glasgow over the next few months.
- The route will take in most of major UK cities including Durham and Newcastle (from Oct 4-6) before joining the Northumberland Coastal Path at Amble a few days before the European Pilgrimage.
- For more details of the route and dates please visit the web site at www.yccn.uk where people can sign up to participate via hosting, leading a stage or walking a section of the route.
- They are also keen to participate in Church services and events relating to climate change and COP26.

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Tim Madeley

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Justice and Peace Refugee Project

The Justice and Peace Refugee Project now operates from St Vincent's Support Centre, New Bridge Street, Newcastle NE1 2TQ. We are hugely grateful to the parishes and individuals who continue to support this work both with food and financial contributions. You are making a positive difference to the lives of hundreds of people as a result.

We are attempting to ensure that we have a current link person in each parish with whom we can communicate over food collections and provide updates on project developments. If your parish doesn't currently have a link person for the project, doesn't seem to be receiving updates, or if your contact person has changed recently, we are keen to make contact. Please get in touch with [Sara Harris](#), the Project Co-ordinator.

Until parishes are able to fully resume food collections, we continue to find it difficult to meet the demand for food from donations and are purchasing additional items weekly. Anything further that can be done to assist with parish collections would be very much appreciated.

The list of items we are currently collecting is available [here](#). Priority items have not changed but our stock levels of these items can vary dramatically. Currently it is chopped tomatoes, chickpeas, sugar and toilet rolls that we need to replenish most often. The miscellaneous items which are in most demand are cooking oil and long-life milk. We continue to receive donations of food, clothing and footwear on Mondays between 10.30am and 1.30pm; unless an alternative prior arrangement has been made with Sara.

Receiving and transporting deliveries at St Vincent's is a physically demanding volunteer role and we are keen to hear from people who feel this could be suited to them, either on a regular basis or as and when able to assist, on a Monday morning.

We very much welcome financial contributions too and details of our new bank account (DHN, Justice & Peace Refugee Project) can be found on our webpage. Gift-Aiding your donation where possible makes a big difference; thanks to those who did so in the tax year 19/20 we were able to claim back £1620 from HMRC which increases the support we can offer. If you haven't thought about doing this, even for a one-off donation, please do consider it. The process is simple and doesn't cost you anything other than the time to complete a form. There is a Gift Aid Declaration form [here](#) or you can request one from marjory.knowles@gmail.com or 07929343418.

For more details about our work and how you can support it, please contact Sara Harris, Project Co-ordinator by [email](#) or mob: 07407 091184 or [visit our webpage](#).

Thank you so much for your on-going support, it is very much appreciated

Tony Sacco

A Story of Detention

Many of you will be familiar with our current campaign in protest at the planned Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre (in essence a detention centre) which is due to open in the autumn of 2021. We have already held one online prayer vigil and many of our parishes across the diocese held a vigil on May 27th in their own churches. We are now planning a monthly in person vigil at the barrier to Hassockfield at 3pm on the first Sunday of each Month, starting on August 1st. The vigil will last about 30 minutes. Please contact me at lizarchibald@justiceandpeace@gmail.com for

further information you would like to join us there. If you cannot join us there please join us in prayer from your home.

Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* calls on us to ensure that “all migrants are entitled like others to participate in the life of society”, and reminds us “that they possess the same intrinsic dignity as any person.” Seeking asylum is a human right. Thus there is no such thing as an illegal asylum seeker. The UK immigration department has said Hassockfield will be for women whose appeal for asylum has been refused either because they are time served offenders or because they have been refused leave to stay but refuse to leave

Often the refusal to grant asylum is based on there being insufficient evidence to validate the circumstances of their asylum claim. Women repeatedly share how the process of being disbelieved and accused of deception has a devastating impact of their well-being and mental health, which even if their claim is later accepted and they are granted asylum, leaves them emotionally scarred. It is recognised that most women held in immigration detention are known to be survivors of trafficking, torture, or sexual violence. They are often refused asylum because they cannot prove their right to asylum due to lack of documentation.

Over the last couple of months the human impact of being held in detention has been brought into sharp focus for me. One of the young women who regularly used our Justice and Peace Refugee project was put in a van and taken into detention on Friday, May 21st, without warning. She was first sent to Dungavel in Scotland, about 40miles from Glasgow after being told that her claim for asylum was exhausted and she would be deported. I only found out because I had phoned her to arrange a home delivery of food from the project.

I managed to stay in telephone contact with her throughout so was able to follow the process she endured over the next 6 weeks. In Dungavel, through the Justice and Peace Network I was able to get her telephone support from their local group. Working with the Scottish Detainees Visitors, she was given a small amount of cash and her phone credit was topped up.

After 2 weeks in Dungavel she was moved to a detention centre in Manchester for a couple of nights, then onto Colnbrook Detention Centre, near Heathrow where she was told she would be deported on June 10th. Due to Covid, frightened and at times despairing, she was held in isolation throughout. Once she was removed to Colnbrook I contacted the Jesuit Refugee Service and she was supported by them. On June 9th, ***the day before she was due to be removed***, her deportation was postponed. She was then moved to the infamous Yarl's Wood, where despite her having clear medical needs, she was scheduled to be deported on July 1st. The Yarls Wood visitors, The Jesuit Refugee service supported her and she subsequently, through the intervention of another charity, Medical Justice, was given another last minute postponement of her deportation on July 1st. ***She found out at 11pm on June 30th.*** I was able to stay in regular telephone contact with her throughout. However, it was difficult to know what to say. I could only empathise with her and assure her that she had not been forgotten. She was distraught, confused, stressed, and terrified of being sent back to her home country and also, due to her significant medical needs, in pain. At times it felt like I was talking to someone on Death Row.

She has subsequently been **temporarily** released but faces a very uncertain future.

What has this taught me about the detention system?

- The system is cruel and heartless
- People in detention are treated like commodities
- Their personal needs, their very humanity are ignored.
- They are made to feel isolated and forgotten.
- They are processed and not treated with any sort of dignity

And this is why we need to speak out. We need to use our networks and build them up. Expertise, experience and local knowledge are so important! We need to be the people speaking out for those who cannot.

In the midst of this, there have been glimmers of hope:

- People like Margaret from Glasgow J and P who has been campaigning for over 20 years against the detention in Dungavel of those seeking asylum.
- Those people I have met working for agencies and charities such as Asylum Matters, Jesuit Refugee Service, Scottish Detainees Visitors, Medical Justice and Yarls Wood Visitors who all go beyond the call of duty to support people in detention.
- The support of people in the Justice and Peace and the Caritas network both locally and nationally and who have not only prayed and supported this young woman but have also supported encouraged and advised me.
- The places of refuge and support around the world where people work with the rejected and marginalised in often dangerous circumstances to support and empower them.
- The groups and organisations that campaign for fairer treatment of those who seek asylum in our communities.
- Meeting all these wonderful people who are working to support detainees I keep being reminded of the prayer of St. Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, and you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.” Please continue to pray for all those held in detention centres; those whose names we know and those we do not know by name but are someone’s wife, husband, child or friend. And please join us in our campaign against the Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre.

Catholic Writers’ Guild competition to compose a hopeful prayer for the difficult days of COVID-19.

Prayer Competition

Schools throughout the diocese engaged enthusiastically with the Catholic Writers' Guild competition to compose a hopeful prayer for the difficult days of COVID-19.

No fewer than 186 entries were received from 12 schools, ranging from Berwick upon Tweed in the north to Newton Aycliffe in the south.

Guild secretary Veronica Whitty, who organized the competition, said, "Without the support of the teachers, this competition would never have attracted such a rich and expressive entry. The children wrote in pen and pencil. Some illustrated their entries. They were hopeful and resilient during the pandemic and certainly their faith helped them cope."

Veronica explained, "There were six judges from the Guild, all from different parts of the diocese, so we had to pass the 186 entries around. The seventh judge, who had the most experience from past competitions, had the casting vote for the second and third places."

The results of the prayer competition were as follows:

First prize, £50 voucher, to a pupil of St Patrick's RC School, Langley Moor, for the following:

Dear Lord,

Although the world may feel alone, we still have hope. The days are still coming, the moon is still rising, the lambs are still being born, the schools are still open, the flowers can still bloom. Even if we are still at home, the children still smile as they Zoom with their friends. Walking a dog or exploring a forest, you can still get fresh air. Thank you God for all you have given us. I still believe in hope in this challenging time. Thank you, God. Amen.

Second prize, £30 voucher, to a pupil of St Alban's RC Primary School, Walkergate, Newcastle, for the following:

We all stand together in these hard times, but we should still care and love one another. It doesn't mean our family and friends are not with us because they are always with us in our hearts. Every little thing we do each day reminds us that we are not alone, as God has given us strength and courage to get by. From the morning sunrise to the night sunset as God has given us some light and some love. Try and see the good in every day and forget everything going on be happy. Share happiness with someone who is sad and spread joy and cheer. Be kind because you never know what other people are going through, and have hope.

Third prize, £20 voucher, to a pupil , of St Joseph's Catholic School, Blaydon, for the following:

Lord in Heaven

*in these most difficult times,
show us Lord the light we should follow.
Give us the strength to carry each other
down this turbulent road
when our friends can't cope.*

*Please give us the wisdom to make the right choices
that will warm a frozen heart or dry a falling tear.*

*And please help us O Lord to put a smile on the faces
of those we can't touch but can light up nonetheless.
Guide us with love our Lord
so that we will get through these times together.
Amen.*

Runner-up, £10 voucher, to a pupil of , of St Bede's Catholic School, Washington, Co. Durham, for the following:

*What I hope for
God I hope for returning to my school
God I hope for more education
God I hope for my kind teachers even though I thought I'd never miss them!
God I hope for being with my school friends
God I ask for playgrounds
God I ask for nice long walks around Britain
God I ask for a chance to go swimming
God I pray for a time when I can see my cousins
God I pray for celebrations with my family
God I pray for the health of my family, friends and pets. But God I also thank you for support, the NHS, kindness, charity, love, nature, science and everyone I love.
Amen.*

Runner-up, £10 voucher, to a pupil of Berwick Middle School, Berwick upon Tweed, for the following:

*Dear Lord,
Thank you for the rainbow that you put in the sky,
It's kept everyone's hopes high.
Through this difficult time you have kept your light shining,
Help us to keep ours shining too.
Amen.*

Report by Gerry Loughran, Catholic Writers Guild, North East:

Review of Books on the theme of Justice and Peace

Love-Labour-Lost?

[Labours of Love: The Crisis of Care - Madeleine Bunting London: Granta Books, 2020](#)

The Dignity of Labour- Jon Cruddas Cambridge: Polity, 2021

It may seem incongruous to put together a book exploring how care throughout our society is lived out and perceived, with a book looking on the future of work in our society. But I hope that the reviews of these two books will show they have much common ground and how current discussions on ensuring justice, adequate incomes and acknowledging the dignity of people at a time of great social, demographic and technological change are relevant to both these books.

Cruddas has been an MP for Dagenham and Rainham for twenty years. The Ford Motor plant has been a crucial employer in that area. It is through his encounters with these workers and the decline in their industry that he has seen that is challenging and yet has great significance and meaning to people in his constituency Like many in the Labour party, he would argue that the roots of the movement owe more to the Christian roots of workers in the late 19th century such as Methodists and Irish Catholics (of which Cruddas comes from) than to Marx. In placing the emphasis on virtues instead of a scientific view of technology or human progress, Cruddas argues that the dignity of the human person is linked to the dignity of work. With strong echoes to the Benedictine tradition he argues, that it is essential to what it means to be human.

He thinks that predictions that technology will replace work have not come true and that future predictions that we can become people of leisure are blind to what has happened in the past. The challenge is create an economy where work is valued and people given a decent wage in contrast to the gift economy and zero-hour contract of today. He has concerns that an idea such as the Universal Basic Income will devalue the importance of work and are not take into account that work is central to what it means to be human.

It is interesting to note that the foreword of the book is written by Kier Starmer and that one of the roles his deputy Angela Rayner has been given is 'The Future of Work', which indicates that Cruddas's has influence over its leaders. It will be interesting to see what they propose

One of my concerns of Cruddas' book is that most of the focus on work is on paid employment. There is some but not much reference to the fact that so much of work we do is unpaid and most of this work is done by women. This is not a criticism that can be made of Bunting's exploration about care in our society. She sees Care as an invisible presence that holds our families, societies and nation together. In spending time over a five-year period in various contexts including care of children, the sick, the elderly, people with disabilities and with the dying, with reference to the death of her own father, Bunting highlights that this essential activity is overlooked, for many, it is incredibly demanding, for lots of people it is poorly paid and for hundred of thousands, it is lovingly provided for not cost at all with little support.

Three points really struck home:

It is such a vital part of life yet it is given little recognition. She quotes the 19th century economist, Adam Smith, who saw market forces as the 'invisible hand'. For Bunting, there is the 'invisible heart', that keeps society together. If care is not recognised for being so central to our society with little support given to carers, then for all our scientific and technological progress, society will be regressive.

Care is poorly resourced, especially for the care of the elderly and children. How as a society will we be prepared to give care the resources it needs. What does it say about our culture if this is seen as an afterthought or something that politicians are not brave enough to have policies which makes it clear that this is something that needs paying for and that we all have to take responsibility?

Finally with all the talk of being ‘consumers’ care and meeting efficiencies and targets, the relational aspect of care has been forgotten. Even if there were enough resources and care was given the attention it deserves, if we forget that central to any caring of anyone is the importance of the relationship of the carer and the person being cared for. In her five years of research Bunting is aware of when this is exemplified and has seen the damage done to carer and client if this is not the case.

I do hope that these two authors have read each other’s work. The dignity of work is central to what it means to be human as Cruddas points out, but so much of our work is caring for others, which is often over looked, reduces people to objects and is poorly paid for as Bunting shows the big issues of the future of work, the resourcing of adequate care for all who need it and ensuring that we all have an adequate income for to meet our genuine needs as humans, needs to be explored together for the fabric of our society to be maintained. These two books may not provide all the answer but they raise the important questions that collectively must be engaged with.

Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future Pope Francis London: Simon & Schuster, 2020

This book came about through some interviews with the English Catholic journalist and activist Austen Ivereigh. It is easy to tell that the books have come from conversations; as with a lot of Francis’ writings there is a bit a of streams of consciousness feel about them. Having said that, the book is worth reading, since it does dig deeper into some of the themes explored in Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti.

The model of ‘See, Judge/Choose, Act is used for the three chapters. Francis is acutely aware that the global pandemic is inviting us to stop, reflect and for us to discover our global solidarity and our need for grace. He shares openly about three ‘Covid Moments’ in his own life, difficult and challenging moments, where he has to stop and reflect on the direction of his life. There were difficult but also ultimately fruitful for him.

Being a Jesuit, we should not be surprised that he talks about discernment but this is not a rarefied self-obsessed process but one that is attentive to the struggles of the world and demands that we are aware and responsive to the signs of the time.

In the Symposium of Fratelli Tutti and Community Organising that I participated in on January 22nd, Ivereigh said that it was in the chapter on ‘Act’ that he asked Francis to explore what he means by the concept of the ‘people’. For Francis ‘People’ is when they working together in solidarity with the other so that together we can promote the ‘Common Good’. To quote from another participant in

the symposium, Angus Ritchie, it is an ‘inclusive populism’, where various movements work of social justice and the environment, straddle across belief systems to respond to the challenges that face us all. Francis is aware of these movements. He does not want the Church to be a separate movement but desires for the Church to work together with people in these movement to seek the Common Good. It is as Catholics how we witness to our Faith in the world today.

The profound realism, solidarity with the world’s weakest, and the joyful hope of Francis is what is weaved through these pages, that enables us to seek liberation from any lockdown blues and dream

Angus Ritchie, Inclusive Populism: Creating Citizens in the Global Age Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2019

I found this theological reflection on Community Organising to be very insightful. It has helped me understand why the progressive left in this country is failing to gain popularity even though inequality is rising

For Ritchie, Inclusive Populism (IP) is not a politics with the emphasis on naked individualism that divides and leads to greater inequality. Nor is it a form of populism that gives the impression of representing the people, but actually reinforces the status quo and creates division, anger and ultimately violence, as seen with the events on Capitol Hill in January of this year. But IP is also not a politics where one group of people, no matter how well intentioned, impose their cultural values and their sense of what is right and good on others. No, for Ritchie, IP, is a politics that begins with listening to people and hearing their concerns. It then enables them to work for the change needed. It not only creates a more just society but builds up a sense of self-worth and confidence that is essential to basic human dignity and development. It also strengthens the institutions of civic society including Churches. Exploring different aspects of Community Organising through a theological lens, it this only when we are truly attentive to the needs of people and enable them to be agents of change that any dream of a more just and equal society will be fulfilled. This is one of the most important books I have read in linking faith to justice

Coming Home: A Theology of Housing Brown, M.& G. Tomlin (Eds) London: Church House Publishing, 2020

This book came about through a Commission established by the Archbishop of Canterbury after the Grenfell Tower disaster and scandal, to explore the issue of housing. With a number of essays, it is difficult to summarise them all but with some clear knowledge of the issues and some deep theological reflection I take away from the book the following points.

A home must be seen as far more than an asset that can accrue value and not just places to warehouse people. Homes are meant to be well designed places, respectful of the environment, that should give space for human nurture and development.

The notion of God becoming human, of making space for the whole of humanity, must inspire Christian as to how we can make the right space for individuals and communities to flourish.

The Christian concept of the ‘neighbour’ calls us to ensure that new build are places where the dignity and diversity of people is respected but that differences can be transcended so that new build create a deep sense of community with all the services available for a community to grow. The Biblical understanding of friendship and welcoming the stranger can help us in developing community

Attempts at regeneration and redevelopment must not only consult people but not be naïve to human weakness but must also be aware that creativity and grace can work in all people if given the opportunity. Building up relationships is important and working across the communities is important. A chapter exploring Pentecostal and Catholic communities is enlightening in this respect.

The book is a great example of theological reflection which show that the Christian tradition can make an important contribution to an urgent issue that impacts on all of society

Bread of Life in Broken Britain: Food Banks, Faith & Neoliberalism: Pemberton, C.R. London: SCM, 2020.

Through the keyhole of foodbanks this book discovers a whole range of issues that are complicated and interconnected but need to be addressed of ‘Broken Britain’.

Pemberton who lives in the north-east bases his book on research done at the County Durham Food Bank which has a number of distribution places in the country. It is clear that Food Banks are highly ambiguous. In addressing a need that is clearly present; Pemberton thinks Food Banks are acting as an unconscious ally to the neo-liberal mindset that created such vast inequality and the ‘precariat’ for whom many are working but still reliant on foodbanks. But Pemberton is still aware that so many foodbanks are motivated by Christians who have genuine compassion as they see the need of food poverty increase in our communities.

Pemberton puts forward 4 proposals for consideration.

He has no doubt that Universal Credit and low wages have to be addressed. These are the main drivers of the increase of foodbanks. The neo-liberal market has created this inequality and Foodbanks are ultimately inadequate if well motivated and necessary responses. In the light of this his second proposal is for a basic minimum standard. As technology takes over more jobs, finding enough paid secure employment will not be possible.

Pemberton who describes himself as a ‘reluctant Anglican’ believes that since it is part of the establishment it needs to be disconnected from the State, so that it has the freedom to challenge

political authority. Since the Church of England appears to be much more vociferous on social justice issues than the Catholic Church in this country, I am not sure if this freedom from the State is needed.

Finally, Pemberton is aware that Food Banks are dependent on big Agri-business that creates so much waste and yet is so destructive of the ecology. The irony of food poverty in this country is that food is too cheap. We are not paying for the cost it has on our fragile ecology. He makes extensive use of the writing of Wendel Berry and the 'Agrarian Movement' encouraging us as a nation, regions and as communities to be more dependent on locally grown food, that meets need rather than creates waste to be given to those who cannot afford it.

I am sure there will be debates as to whether Pemberton's proposal will be sufficient but his diagnosis gleaned through the keyhole of foodbanks, is of a system that creates millions of households that have to suffer the shame of admitting they cannot feed their themselves or children ,yet is so destructive our environment, is in need of radical reform. Just as Christian have been at the forefront of meeting the needs of the hungry, we also have to be brave and creative enough to seek reforms to our 'Broken Britain'

**The Time is Now: The Call to Uncommon Courage by Joan Chittister OSB New York:
Convergent Press, 2020.**

In this short book of c. 140 pages, Chittister digs deep into the prophetic tradition of the scriptures with a focus on Christ and the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) to glean 18 virtues and characteristics (such as risk, patience, failure, authenticity, confidence, voice, faith, vision) that are needed as we confront the injustices of the current age. There is much wisdom, clarity and courage in what Chittister is proclaiming

Principalities in Particular: A Practical Theology of the Powers that Be by Bill Wylie-Kellerman Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press 2017

This is in the tradition of the Radical Evangelical Protestant tradition following the likes of Walter Wink, Walter Bruggemann, Ched Myers and William Stringfellow.

He takes the biblical notion of 'Sovereignties and Power as a lens to looks at injustices in the USA and across the world. In these 28 chapters he looks at a wide range of issues such as globalisation, the war on drugs, Nuclear weapons and the arms industry, Hurricane Katrina, the Gulf Wars, the sports industry, surveillance, health care in the USA and Donald Trump. I guess from a tradition Catholic Social Teaching we would be more likely to talk of 'structural sin' as opposed to 'sovereignties' and powers' but in this wide range set of essays his analysis of a number facets of American life there is food for thought and a challenge for us to detect destructive forces in our own institutions and modern culture.

Fr. Chris Hughes.