



Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

# Justice and Peace News

## Autumn 2019

Head of Justice and Peace Dept: Fr. Chris Hughes 0191 2575801

[chris1707hughes@live.co.uk](mailto:chris1707hughes@live.co.uk)

JP Co-ordinating Council Chair / newsletter: Liz Archibald

[lizarchibald.justiceandpeace@gmail.com](mailto:lizarchibald.justiceandpeace@gmail.com)

*Welcome to the Autumn 2019 edition of the Justice and Peace Co-Ordinating Council newsletter. There seem to be 2 very strong themes emerging.....the call to care for our common home and the need to develop community organising. I hope the articles on these subjects will inspire you as they have me.*

*We are also very fortunate to have had some fantastic Advent resources written by and generously shared with us by Anne O'Connor.*

### Articles in this newsletter are as follows:

- Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful God. Seán MacNiallais
- Our Precious Planet....a Positive Response. Audrey Marshall
- News from a CAFOD Climate Change Champion. Elizabeth Bennett **PLEASE NOTE THE UPCOMING EVENTS**
- CAFOD Our Common Home Campaign Update...a call to action! Maria Elena Arana
- Citizens for Outreach as Mission. Kath Wade
- Common Good Training Workshop. Pat Kennedy
- HeartEdge. Jeremy Cain
- News from Justice and Peace Refugee Project (JPRP). John Dowling
- News from the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Project (RASPS). Rachel Wing
- A meditation. Sr. Vianney, Jesuit Refugee Service.
- Advent Resources from Anne O'Connor

***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](mailto:lizarchibald.justiceandpeace@gmail.com).*

***We do not share your details with any third parties***

# Our Precious Planet - a Positive Response

There surely cannot be many people who are unaware of the perils of climate change. The news is jam-packed with information and opinions about how our behaviour is impacting on the wholesale destruction of our planet. From David Attenborough to Pope Francis with an army of experts in between, we are being urged to change our habits before it is too late.

It would be only too easy in the face of all this to panic, to feel helpless - that the problems are just too big to solve! Please do not fall into this trap. Do not lose hope.

Some of the problems of course are out of our direct control. These include industrial pollution, politicians dragging their feet etc. These issues will require much campaigning, petitions and other forms of direct action, and thankfully a number of good people are leading the way on that. For the rest of us, what we can do is change some of our own wasteful habits.

So, where might we start? We could personally resolve to change a couple of things like switching off lights when not needed and turning off taps rather than let them run wastefully. Most of us could easily fill a page with the more obvious small actions we might take at once, as individuals, and this is a good start, it might even make you feel virtuous for a while. However it's hard to get away from the feeling that it's all too small - even a bit futile. Maybe it's time to go a bit further. Perhaps persuade other people to join you. In this way your collective actions can start to feel more significant - a problem shared etc.

You might start by trying to live a greener lifestyle as a family, setting yourselves more and more challenges, hopefully. The opportunities are endless once you start really thinking about it. So you as a family can cut down on waste, share car journeys when possible, or use public transport etc. Great, you can congratulate yourselves on having made a good start.

Now, if you really want to make more impact, how about increasing the number of people involved? You could try persuading friends, neighbours and wider family. Maybe your parish if you're up for a challenge. Why not? You could perhaps begin by approaching some of the existing groups in your parish. The school would likely want to be part - young people are often quite passionate about green issues - you only need to watch the news to see that.

If you feel that any of the above makes sense and you'd like to give it a go, it might be an idea to consider working towards gaining the Live Simply Award. You will find many excellent ideas to help you if you decide to do this.



How might it work? Most importantly, every person who wants to be involved in a steering group should be encouraged. If too few come forward others might respond better to an individual invitation. Initially, everyone attending the first meeting could be asked to contribute just one lifestyle change that they personally might make, things like using charity shops - donating, buying and volunteering, buying Fairtrade where possible, and then perhaps something that the parish as a whole might undertake such as conserving energy and water, with notices to remind people or maybe something bigger. Cost would likely be a factor here. Not all parishes can afford solar panels!

It is important to remember that every person will be starting this project at a different point - some will be well-versed in environmental issues (vegetarians and vegans), others will be new to them. Nobody should be made to feel that their contribution is worthless.

As you discuss the contributions offered you will want to consider which ones are likely to work. As you listen and learn from one another you will need to decide who is prepared to do what. A different person could take charge of each small part e.g. a bidding prayer every Sunday, a green "tip of the week", a dedicated noticeboard, posters to advertise events, notices next to taps, light switches around the parish - all with the 'Live Simply' logo if you decide to go along that route.

You might of course decide not to go for the Live Simply Award and just do your own thing, adopting the ideas you like and find do-able, without applying for the award. Your efforts would still be worthwhile. However, and speaking from personal experience, working towards and eventually gaining the little wooden Live Simply Award can spur you on to undertake more and more actions.

Whichever way you decide to go with your project, it will almost certainly be a lot of fun, as well as being environmentally friendly, and from my experience it will make you feel that you are making the effort to save the planet. You are indeed doing your very best. No one can ask more of you. Go for it!

**Audrey Marshall**

The logo for 'Live Simply' features a small green circle with a white plus sign inside, positioned to the left of the text 'live simply' which is written in a lowercase, cursive-style font.The logo for CAFOD consists of the word 'CAFOD' in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. The letter 'O' is replaced by a green circle with a white plus sign inside. Below 'CAFOD' is the tagline 'Just one world' written in a lowercase, cursive-style font.



## **“Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful God”**

Every week brings a new story about the sorry state of the natural world and the injustice which we humans inflict on each other and on nature. It gets a bit overwhelming if, for a moment or two, we forget that we are a people of hope. Then we remember that we are not called to save the whole world but to do the very best we can to save the parts we can reach. We can leave the rest up to God.

We are fortunate that Francis is our Pope at this difficult time because he ‘takes after’ Francis of Assisi. His 2015 teaching document *Laudato Si’* has inspired many people across the globe. According to Martin Rees, astronomer royal and cosmologist, it “helped towards consensus” at the Paris climate conference that year (*The Observer*, 18 August 2019). If you have not studied LS already, you should really do so. And, ideally, you should study it with others. Many people think that *Laudato si’* is about climate change. It does deal with the harm we are inflicting on the planet, but it is also about justice, co-operation, solidarity and the other things that will help to make the world a fairer, better, safer, ‘greener’ place.

Public bodies such as Northumberland County Council have declared that there is a ‘climate emergency’. Should our diocese do the same? And each parish or partnership? Various groups are active, trying to raise awareness of the climate emergency, eg Extinction Rebellion. Are we who are called ‘the faithful’, who know that the Earth is a gift from God, lagging behind?

Has your parish/partnership heard a homily or talk – preferably both – about *Laudato Si’* recently? Or watched one of the new documentaries? Has it thought about taking up the Cafod challenge to Live simply? Has it asked your local supermarkets, other shops and businesses to use less plastic and reduce waste?

Have you attempted to change your own habits in order to reduce your harmful impact on the natural world? If you have, you will have discovered that it ain’t easy! It takes planning and effort and a wee bit of extra time and money to change our ways. I heard of a woman who started on the 1st January, a year ago, with the intention of eliminating plastics from all her food and cleaning purchases. She finally managed it by the following August. Delighted with herself, she decided that she would check her clothing. A little while later, she phoned a friend in despair: she had found that a lot of her clothing labels mentioned ‘man-made’ fabrics. She is persevering.

It takes a bit of courage and a bit of determination to keep on doing your bit. The big satisfaction comes from trying your hardest, knowing it is the best way to show your love for other people, and for the Creator, and your appreciation of the gift of Creation. Like the poet, you will discover that:

**“Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful God  
Was breathing His love by a cut-away bog.  
(The One by Patrick Kavanagh)**

**Seán MacNialluis**

## News from a CAFOD Climate Champion

Since Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si (on care for our common home) back in 2015 I have been looking for opportunities to take action in response to what I read and back in February I stumbled across an opportunity to become a 'Youth Climate Champion' with CAFOD.

Since having our introductory meeting in April I have undertaken monthly challenges relating to reducing my (and my family's) personal environmental impact, worked with the environment group of St Francis' Church in High Heaton to hold a climate justice stall at Heaton festival and joined thousands of others, including students from St Mary's Catholic High School, in lobbying our MPs in person in Westminster on the 26<sup>th</sup> June.

I'm now on my way back from 4 days on retreat with CAFOD and CIDSE at Alton Castle learning more about Climate Justice following the See, Judge, Act, Celebrate formula (one day for each!) We were blessed with contributions from 'Climate Adam' a physicist with a PhD in the field of climate science who now works as a journalist and professional 'climate communicator'; Father Martin Poulson; and activists from both India and Peru working with communities experiencing the impacts of environmental degradation, climate change and poverty on the 'front lines' so to speak. There were also many inspiring individuals amongst the 50 or so young delegates with many ideas and resources shared.

## Upcoming Events

My next project as a Climate Champion is to support my parish of St Teresa of the Infant Jesus, Heaton, to celebrate a Creation Celebration Mass on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> of October**. There is much planning still to be done, but the **Mass will be at 11am and we would be delighted to be joined by visitors** from other parishes who wish to join with us in celebrating God's wonderful gift in Creation and reflecting on how we could better care for our Common Home.

Before then I will also be supporting the **youth strike for the climate on Friday 20th September**. The young people have asked for adult involvement in the 20th June protests ahead of critical meetings at the UN. **Protests in Newcastle have been arranged for outside the Civic Centre at 11am and I will be there to show solidarity to our young people, and possibly keep an eye on my teenage niece!** There will also be actions at **Cullercoats Beacon from 10am, Sunderland Civic Centre from midday, Durham marketplace from 11am and in Alnwick from 9am. Anyone can get involved, so please do join in if you are able**. The youth actions are planned to be peaceful and legal.

**Elizabeth Bennett**



## Our Common Home Campaign

[It is not too late to organise a Climate Celebration: A Mass and a meal! But if you can't manage that before the end of 2019 then please organise the Net Zero petition updated version as soon as possible!](#)

The UK government has announced that it will commit in law a by-2050 net zero emissions target. We now need ambitious and urgent policies to make this announcement a reality. See all the resources included updated petition here: [cafod.org.uk/climate](https://cafod.org.uk/climate)

<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate/Our-Common-Home>

### Harvest Fast day

Family Fast Day is on Friday 4 October. Let everyone know. No child should be attacked while collecting water.

### **CAFOD Faith and Action days in November across England and Wales**

From Trump to Brexit to climate, politics is everywhere. But when should we pray from the sidelines and when should we roll up our sleeves? The Church here and around the world has a proud history of encouraging Catholics' political reflection and action. With amazing results.

At this CAFOD day, we'll explore the links between faith and politics.

Join us and reflect on Scripture and Church teaching. Be inspired by others and CAFOD's campaigning and work overseas.

Sign up on <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Campaign-events>

**Working across the generations** On 20 September, the UK Student Climate Network is calling on everyone, young and old, to stand in solidarity with them. They are inviting everyone to take to the streets in hundreds of towns and cities across the UK to demand change. Climate breakdown is not the legacy we want to leave for future generations. The science is clear, and we know the next 18 months will be crucial if we are to protect the future of younger generations.

- Go along to your local mobilisation in your lunch break, or join for the whole day by taking a day of leave. *\*see Elizabeth's previous article for events taking place in Newcastle, Durham and Northumberland*
  - Pray for change and for those people who will be taking part in mobilisations

**Maria Elena Arana**



## Citizens as Outreach for Mission

I am a 'cradle catholic' and just accepted what my parents and the church told me. It was really only when I had children of my own that I began to ask questions because of their questions. Having been brought up in the fifties and sixties I was well-rehearsed in good old Catholic guilt. I could believe that God loved everyone – everyone else, that is! It was only when I realised that God loved me, warts and all, that I really understood that God loved everyone equally. After the initial euphoria, there came the need to find ways to serve. I now knew that to be an effective disciple, there had to be that personal relationship with God. So many times in the Gospel we are told that Jesus went away by himself to pray to his Father. Then recently, at a day of reflection, we were shown a depiction of 'Church as a Community of Disciples'. So I had the 'God-me' bit but what I had not fully appreciated was the 'me-us' circle before the links with those to whom we reach out. You may think it strange that it has taken so long for me to become aware of this, but there you go! I felt it was truly profound and speaks to the deepest yearnings of all of humanity – to be united with God and with the whole of creation.

There are three main things that motivate me:

- At my Baptism I was anointed priest, prophet and King.
- At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry he set out his 'manifesto': "The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord." Throughout his ministry he fulfilled this manifesto and as his follower it should be my manifesto too, however imperfectly I carry it out.
- And finally, personally, I cannot bear injustice.

So, over the years I have been involved in campaigns around climate change and global poverty and I update Wallsend Churches Working Together on current situations and actions being taken. These are extremely important issues which will continue to demand my attention. However, I felt that committee members could legitimately ask what about levels of injustice and poverty here in this country, the things affecting their congregations– surely these also need to be addressed. But the best way to go about it eluded me until there was an item in our parish newsletter about Tyne & Wear Citizens.

This is one of the Chapters of Citizens UK – an organisation for which there is no state funding and which was set up to empower people in local communities to challenge authorities on issues which matter to them. They provide training which enables communities to develop leaders so they can participate in public life and all can act together for social justice and the common good. And I am really proud that in this area the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle (RCDHN) was a founder member.

Most members are small institutions who can't afford to pay more than a few hundred pounds so our diocese and Newcastle University, recognising the need, pay more because they are large institutions and so are Strategic Partners. Their greater financial assistance enables Citizens to accommodate the smaller organisations. In recognition of their commitment, they are guaranteed seats on the leadership committee so that they have their say on strategic direction, planning etc

In terms of the Tyne and Wear campaigns on the areas of Poverty, Mental Health and Safer Cities:

- We were the first diocese to become real living wage employers encouraging (prompting) Durham and then Newcastle C of E dioceses to follow suit. In fact, our campaigning has trebled the number of Living Wage accredited employers in this area.
- We led the way on the mental health issues campaign, most notably students from St Thomas More RC Academy who have had successes eg in gaining public commitments to work with them from key decision makers in the NHS, local government and civil society and re-ordering the Reception area at CAMS, Riverside, North Shields
- And the Just Change campaign was given a huge kick-start when Bishop Seamus called on the diocesan director of education to look into what happened in our Catholic Schools. This led to one of the Darlington Catholic schools to become the first to change their system to ensure that children on free school meals received their full entitlement.

I chose to work with the group organised to tackle poverty which then sub-divided into one group who would promote and secure the real living wage for people in our area and another who would champion the cause of parity of treatment for those students entitled to free school meals. I chose the latter because to me, this was an area of clear injustice and it related to young people who are, after all, our future.

Every Chapter starts off by conducting a listening exercise and during this, students entitled to free school meals had highlighted the fact that, unlike their fellow students who paid for school meals, they were not receiving their change if they didn't spend the full allowance on any given day and if they were absent, the money did not carry over. They explained that it would be so helpful to be treated equally as this would enable them to buy extra food on days when, for instance, they were playing sports or to buy food at break times when they were involved in a lunch time activity.

We do not believe that there is any malice here, the situation has arisen simply due to oversight and inadequate systems. Carmel College, part of the Carmel Education Trust, Darlington became the first school to back our campaign, and ensure that pupils entitled to Free School Meals were able to use their allowances flexibly. And in this first school to change their system so that children on FSM could carry over change, an extra £5,000 has been spent on food in one term, proving that pupils are not hoarding the money but spending it because they are hungry. A few months after starting work on this campaign, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation expressed an interest and before we knew it, we were looking at a National Campaign that launched at the beginning of May this year.

The CEO of Carmel Education Trust Maura Reagan has been an amazing advocate for the campaign. Her unwavering support was instrumental in enabling our meetings in Westminster, the latest of which was with the Children's minister. This has really changed the dynamic and we are excited about the momentum created. There is still a long road ahead but we'll keep working at it...

One of the things that has impressed me hugely about Citizens is that meetings are proactive, not just talking shops and it is really encouraging to work with a dedicated and enthusiastic team.

And as well as being involved with this particular action group, belonging to Citizens has enabled me to show my solidarity with young people who experience mental health issues by attending assemblies at which successes were celebrated and further aims encouraged. I think that it is important that we demonstrate affirmation and solidarity in this way. I was also able to stand up with and for my Muslim sisters who are verbally and physically abused on a daily basis by attending their rally at the Monument and then travelling on the metro with them, the aim being to 'reclaim the metro'. I still have the T-shirt! This campaign has achieved a Hate Crime Charter on public transport signed by Nexus, Go-Northeast, Arriva and Stagecoach.

Listening to personal testimonies that make you want to weep for the victims that make you incredibly sad for those causing the problems, that make you stand in awe of those brave enough to speak out are all powerful motivators. But the deepest motivator of all, especially for us as Catholics, must surely be our love of God and our love of Jesus who came to show us how to live. And didn't he identify with the poor, the marginalised, the vilified?

It seems to me we need to keep going back to our roots. To where it all began. To Jesus himself. We need to ask ourselves, what would Jesus be doing today? Where would he be? I believe that Jesus would be out there in the shops and on the metro with our Muslim sisters, "writing in the sand" for those who hurl abuse at them. He would be sitting at the table of the mother who can just about put enough food on the table for her children, but who won't be able to eat herself, and "breaking the bread". He would be spending time with the people merely subsisting on low wages while speaking out about employers who exploit them to make their profits.

Working with Citizens has enabled me to play a small part in the way I see us bringing about the reign of God and fulfilling - again in a small way - my baptismal promises. I have seen what can be achieved by ordinary people when they work together on a shared vision. Nothing is impossible and we should not underestimate what can be accomplished.

# HeartEdge

HeartEdge is a network of over 60 churches in the UK and overseas, facilitated and resourced by St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Its aim is to revitalise the Church by bringing people and churches that are looking for creative ideas together with people who are already practising them. It's ecumenical and focuses especially on helping churches to develop their:

- CONGREGATION: liturgy, worship and common life
- COMPASSION: social outreach
- CULTURE: cultural offering to the local community
- COMMERCE: ability to generate finance through commercial activity (e.g. social enterprises)

They are already active in the north-east and the following projects give you an idea of what's going on:

- St. Michael's Church of England, Byker have erected a marquee inside their church so they can still worship there in spite of a leaking roof. By doing this they provide a clear symbol of Christian presence in the estate (an example of the Congregation focus).
- Café Together, Easington, provide a hot, tasty meal and friendship in the local community (Compassion).
- The Ryhope Community Pantomime brings people together to stage an annual show about the local community (Culture).
- South Tyneside Churches Key Project provides advice, support and accommodation to young people aged 16 to 25 who are experiencing hardship and / or threatened with homelessness. It is a chosen provider for South Tyneside Council and, as such, receives significant public funding (Commerce).

If you are interested in finding out more or joining the network, go to <https://www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/life-st-martins/mission/heartedge/> For advice on how to set up a social enterprise go to <http://www.socialenterpriseacumen.co.uk/>

**Jeremy Cain**

# Common Good Training Workshop.

## “Here, Now; Us People!”

I recently attended this training Workshop organised by The National Board of Catholic Women highlighting the Bishops' Common Good Document printed in 1996.

This was rooted in the Encyclical Rerum Novarum released by Pope Leo XIII in 1891- The Rights and Duties of Capital and Labour! The rights of the Working Class.

- Here-because it's important to be rooted where we are.
- Now- because we are at a critical point of History where we as Church have a vital role.
- Us- because we as Christians are called to take action and bring reconciliation with our unique gifting and callings.

The original Initiators- were Bishops David Sheppard, Derek Warlock and free church leaders in Liverpool.

During our Day's meeting we concentrated on how even more relevant this is for us today. We began by asking ourselves how can we bring Common Good into our Churches, neighbourhoods, workplaces and everyday lives?

We looked at stories of people's lives today- we reflected on how we, individually, as groups and as Church could support and change the situation for the better.

We reflected then on what principles embedded in this document we have put into practice in our actions and decisions- and we asked ourselves where the barriers were which prevented this happening in our lives, workplaces and society today ?

We looked for bridges which would assist us and we challenged ourselves as to our own personal involvement , our Church's involvement , employers and society's involvement and willingness to bring about change - and we looked at our individual gifting, asking where it could be valuable if linked with others, forming teams, taking responsibility in my Faith and encouraging subsidiary, that is encouraging those in need to take responsibility also.

In all the changes in our Diocese and Parishes, this workshop would be very valuable to bring people together, to fulfil so many needs around us today. I found it very helpful, thought provoking and also affirming as to what we are doing, but there is always so much more. If I can help with further information or support let me know. There are many resources on line to help to deliver [workshops.www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/](http://workshops.www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/)

**Pat Kennedy MPS.**

# News from the Justice and Peace Refugee Project (JPRP)

The Justice and Peace Refugee Project continues to grow. We had over 700 active clients at the end of August, of which we see over 300 of them most weeks. We are now distributing approximately 330 bags a week, which equates to almost 18000 bags, or 137000 food items, in a year. We are kept going by the goodness and kindness of the donating parishes, for which we continue to be extremely grateful.

I have to make a special mention for the Emmaus Youth Village. At their annual youth festival in July, they asked everyone who attended to bring one food item for the project. The result was humbling in its generosity. We had to send four cars to collect it and still needed to co-opt the people at the Village who used their mini bus to help us transport it.

But the fact remains that we are still not getting enough food, and increasingly we are having to buy some of what we need. We are managing at the moment but the direction of travel is one way and without added donations, something will eventually have to give. **If you are from a parish which does not yet donate to the project, please consider helping us. We are in constant need of biscuits, tinned tomatoes, rice and tinned fish in particular.**

The light at the end of the tunnel may be that the organisation responsible for providing accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers in the North-East has recently changed. As readers of previous newsletters will know, the driver for the huge increase in the numbers of refugees coming to our region has been the inexpensive accommodation, relative to most of the rest of the country. Hopefully, the new accommodation providers will look to a more equitable distribution.

**John Dowling**

*Anyone wishing to know more about the project can contact John Dowling on 07427837813.*

# News from the Refugee and Asylum Seekers' Project, Stockton (RASPS)

## 1. Visit to Minsteracres

In July asylum seeker families stayed overnight at Minsteracres. Everyone including the volunteers who went enjoyed the experience despite the weather (several activities had to be moved indoors). We are hoping to organise a longer stay for next year.

## 2. Stockton Riverside International Festival

Another successful participation

Adults and children made costumes for the big parade under the guidance of Jane (a member of the RASPS committee.) a refugee who was one of the creative artists for the event. Lovely weather and a colourful turnout.

## 3. We have had several new volunteers helping with various activities and they are very welcome.

## 4. We had to close for one week over August whilst repairs were taking place in the building. Luckily it only took a week and we were able to open the doors as many of the Asylum Seekers' drop ins were closed over the month of August.

## 5. The Drop In has been facing a difficult challenge this summer as the Housing Association in Stockton (Jomast) where nearly all the asylum seekers have homes ended their contract with the Home Office.

## 6. We are confident that the new housing association (Mears) will give a much improved and caring service in the future. The period for our asylum seekers and the volunteers has been quite traumatic. Several members of the committee attended numerous meetings to enable the transition as easy as possible for the asylum seekers, however very little went as planned and a lack of consistency and accurate information meant many of our asylum seekers were quite stressed.

We are unsure how the move will affect the Yarm Road Drop In.

**Rachel Wing**

*Anyone wishing to support the refugee project in Stockton, or who would like more information, get in touch with me on [lizarchibald.justiceandpeace@gmail.com](mailto:lizarchibald.justiceandpeace@gmail.com) and I will pass on your details to Rachel*

## Meditation from Jesuit Refugee Service

In Spring this year I met a newly-ordained vicar whose first step, when entrusted with his first parish, was to walk the boundary of his multi-cultural housing-estate bare-foot. Yes, there was rubbish and broken glass, but to his delight - from between some cracked paving stones - the face of a little yellow flower looked up at him.

This action of Reverend Ed is a forceful reminder to me, a JRS Detention volunteer, of the need for humility. Each Thursday afternoon I can expect no burning bush, no great Epiphany in the wilderness of the Immigration Removal Centres alongside Heathrow airport. What is certain though, for all of us in the JRS Detention team, is that the Lord will be there. We step out in faith to accompany, serve and advocate because the Lord is saying “*Come*”. I need to look and listen humbly, mindful that we’re walking on Holy Ground.

Once escorted into the Sahara Unit, the short-term holding facility for women, I look into the eyes of the first woman who approaches me, or whom I approach, offering my hand at the same time as a “sign of peace.” Every face is beautiful, fashioned lovingly by the God who gives us life, and I tell each one how beautiful and loved she is.

“*How do you come to be here?*” I trustfully ask in English. It’s no good wishing I was fluent in Portuguese or Albanian or Ukrainian... Sometimes language defeats us and we turn to the computers for help. Most times miming with hands is sufficient. My accompaniment will be through prayer. I give a hug - we’re on an equal footing.

Over the last 6 months I have been involved with collaboration between JRS UK and Campion Hall focusing on accompaniment. It was during one of the conversations on accompaniment at the JRS offices in Wapping that the role of the accompanist in music hit me forcefully. Again the need for humility. Centre stage is the singer: introducing and supporting, adapting the pace and sensitive to the crescendo and diminuendo is the pianist or the orchestra. They “accompany” and allow the song and the singer to touch our hearts.

“*He was despised, despised and rejected..... a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...*” Stretched string instruments - violins and cellos - prepare for this deeply sorrowful aria by Handel, and then echo the rejection and humiliation of the Messiah.

And indeed how many of our friends in detention are undergoing or have undergone this same humiliation, their hopes for a better life slipping from them!

I leave the Detention Centre, with a few jottings in my slim book to keep each individual in my heart and prayers.

*“Walk with them, O my Lord,  
through the darkest night and brightest day.  
Be at their side, O Lord,  
hold their hands and guide them on their way.”*

**Sr. Vianney**

*Sr. Vianney is a volunteer at JRS UK and visits women held in the Sahara Unit, the short term holding facility near Heathrow airport.*

***This reflection from Sr. Vianney was produced by JRS UK as part of their monthly Praying with Detainees e-mail, where you can accompany people held in detention through your prayers. You can subscribe to receive the e-mails directly at: [www.jrsuk.net/subscribe](http://www.jrsuk.net/subscribe)***



Lord Jesus,

Give us courage to **accompany** others,  
for in walking at their side we find you there present  
with us.

Give us joy that we might **serve** others,  
for in tending wounds of those who suffer, we sense  
your healing grace at work in us.

Give us wisdom as we **advocate** for others,  
for in defending the downtrodden we hear your voice  
speak up for us.

Grant that in all we do, we may give you glory Lord;  
we return all we have in love to you, for you have  
given everything to us.

Amen.

# ADVENT REFLECTION 2019

## Week 1: Be alert

'The call to Advent is a call to live wide awake so that we can be alert to God working in us and in our world to bring about the Kingdom. Awareness is another way of talking about being awake. Work today to be aware of the needs of people around you.

Philip Berrigan and Elizabeth

McAllister

- What prevents me from coming closer to God?
- How can I focus on what is truly important?
- How can I respond with love to the needs of others?

### SCRIPTURE

*As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up until the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing until the Flood came and swept all away.*

**Matthew 24: 37-39**

### REFLECTION

Studies have indicated that over-use of natural resources has led to a dangerously high increase in global temperatures. Greenhouse gases, released into the earth's atmosphere, trap the sun's heat, warming up the earth and causing sea and air currents to change. Already the impact has been felt: ice caps melting; unpredictable weather patterns adversely affecting the lives and livelihoods in many of the poorest regions; the extinction of some species with more feared. It is vital that the emissions we put into the atmosphere are no greater than the ones we remove.

*'Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environment, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principle challenges facing humanity in our day.'*

### ACTION IDEAS

- Buy green electricity
- Turn off unnecessary lights
- Use less plastic
- Recycle all paper and card
- Reuse, Repair, Recycle
- Keep a compost heap
- Turn down the heating by 1 degree
- Don't overfill the kettle
- Re-use water bottles
- Mend rather than buy new
- Buy locally grown produce
- Grow your own fruit and vegetables
- Dry washing outside
- Only use one appliance at a time
- Insulate buildings to conserve heating
- For each item bought give one to charity
- Eat less meat
- Showers save water but keep them short

### NJPN PRAYER

*Lord, you call us to discipleship and loving service.  
In prayerful response  
may we be beacons of your light  
where there is darkness;  
may we bring hope  
where there is despair;  
fostering love and compassion  
where there is hatred and division.  
May we strive at all times to live simply:  
finding joy in small things;  
content to have less  
so others might have more.  
Mindful of our responsibility  
as stewards of creation,  
may we tread lightly on the earth,  
respectful of all living things.*

*Rooted in faith,  
may we work together to make  
your kingdom of peace and justice  
a reality for all people.*

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National Justice & Peace Network 2014

### SOWING SEEDS OF PEACE

Plant 3 rows of squash seeds:

- squash anger
- squash criticism
- squash gossip

Plant 3 rows of lettuce seeds:

- let us be unselfish
- let us be loving
- let us be forgiving

Source unknown

# ADVENT REFLECTION 2019

## Week 2: Repentance

### SCRIPTURE

The wolf lives with the lamb,  
the panther lies down with the kid,  
calf and lion cub feed together  
with a little boy to lead them.  
The cow and the bear make friends,  
Their young lie down together.  
The lion eats straw like the ox.  
The infant plays over the cobra's hole;  
into the viper's lair  
the young child puts his hand.  
They do no hurt, no harm,  
on all my holy mountain,  
*for the country is filled with the knowledge  
of the Lord  
as the waters swell the sea.*

**Isaiah 11: 6-9**

### LIVE SIMPLY PRAYER

*Compassionate and loving God,  
you created the world for us all to share,  
a world of beauty and plenty.  
Create in us a desire to live simply,  
so that our lives may reflect your generosity.*

*Creator God,  
you gave us responsibility for the earth,  
a world of riches and delight.  
Create in us a desire to live sustainably,  
so that those who follow after us  
may enjoy the fruits of your creation*

*God of peace and justice,  
you give us the capacity to change,  
to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom.  
Create in us a desire to act in solidarity,  
so that the pillars of injustice crumble  
and those now crushed are set free.  
Amen.*

**LiveSimply/CAFOD**

### ACTION IDEAS

- Become a member of the Catholic Peace organisation Pax Christi ([www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk))
- Find out more about the work of the Campaign Against Arms Trade ([www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk))
- Join Green Christian – formerly known as Christian Ecology Link ([www.greenchristian.org.uk](http://www.greenchristian.org.uk))

### BUILDING BRIDGES, NOT WALLS

This Sunday's first reading paints an idyllic vision of harmony and mutual co-operation between all living creatures – a stark contrast to the world around us today. God weeps to see the lack of tolerance – racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, scant regard for the weak, the poor, those who are physically or mentally infirm, and the mindless destruction of the beautiful planet He has entrusted to our care.

Is this the world we want for ourselves and future generations? Let's direct our efforts and prayers towards building bridges between communities and groups of all kinds rather than building walls that foster hate and division. Let's also do everything possible to reduce our carbon footprint and try to conserve natural resources by adopting a 'greener' lifestyle.

### REFLECTION

- Is there hostility in my local community, especially towards newcomers from other countries?
- Can I help foster peace and harmony?
- Do I treat everyone with respect and stand up for the rights of others?
- Do I look out for the stranger and offer friendship and support?
- Can I join a neighbourhood interfaith group?
- Is there tension within my own family? What can I do to resolve it?

### ACTIVITY

- Everyone is invited to take 2 paper leaves: one a green holly leaf on which to write a word or phrase that expresses personal regret or concern for an issue in the wider world, the second a red poinsettia leaf for their hopes and dreams
- Florist's wire is attached to the leaves and they are displayed in a vase for everyone to see.
- Pray for our concerns and think of ways to make our hopes and dreams for a fairer world become a reality.

*In due course John the Baptist appeared: he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message:*

# ADVENT REFLECTION 2019

## Week 3: Joyful expectation

### SCRIPTURE

*Let the wilderness and the dry lands exult,  
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,  
let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil,  
let it rejoice and sing for joy.*

**Isaiah 35:1**

The mood for the third week of Advent changes to one of joyful expectation as we reach the half way stage in our preparation. Known as Gaudete Sunday (Latin for 'rejoice'), its jubilant theme is echoed in the pink priestly vestments. Here is an opportunity to focus on all that is good in our lives and to give heartfelt thanks. We rejoice in anticipation of the birth of our Saviour and reflect on our responsibility to care wisely for all creation.

### PRAYER

Lord, there is so much bad news in our world: war; famine; natural disasters; cruelty; prejudice; self-interest; greed. And yet there is also much good: love; concern; solidarity; small, unseen, unselfish acts of kindness.

For the times I have focused only on the bad and failed to see the good, I ask your forgiveness.

For the times I have looked the other way because I was embarrassed and didn't know what to do, I ask your forgiveness.

For the times I have felt powerless to make a difference so took no action, I ask your forgiveness.

Open my mouth, Lord, to speak out boldly against injustice. May I be a willing advocate for those who live in despair. Open my eyes to see the careless waste of our natural resources. May I be a faithful steward of the world you have entrusted to us all.

### LIVING RESPONSIBLY

*Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last 200 years. We are not God. The Earth was here before us and was given to us.*

*The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem of poverty.*

*We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.*

**Pope Francis *Laudato Si'***

### PRAYER OF FRANCISCAN CONVERSION

*Living God, where there is waste,  
let us bring recycling;  
where there is recycling,  
let us bring reuse;  
where there is reuse,  
let us bring sustainability;  
where there is sustainability,  
let us bring justice;  
where there is justice,  
let us bring love.*

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### SCRIPTURE

It is the Lord who keeps faith forever,  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free.

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bowed  
down,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger  
and upholds the widow and orphan.

*It is the Lord who loves the just  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.*

**Psalms 145: 6-9**

### ACTION IDEAS

- Spend less on presents and donate to Church Action on Poverty ([www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk))
- Help serve Christmas lunch at a homeless shelter.
- Choose from the World Gifts catalogue (CAFOD [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)) to help fund a community project or provide a farm animal.
- Send a greetings card to a prisoner of conscience (Action by Christians against Torture [www.acatuk.org.uk](http://www.acatuk.org.uk))
- Visit an elderly neighbour who lives alone.
- Give the gift of your time and friendship.
- Avoid buying expensive new items - reuse or adapt.
- Swap skills and resources with friends and family.
- Give hand-made cards and gifts or bake Christmas biscuits.

# ADVENT REFLECTION 2019

## Week 4: Saying 'yes' to God's plan

### SCRIPTURE

*This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the power of the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.'*

**Matthew 1:18-21**

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,  
the world and all its peoples.

'''

It is he who set it on the seas;  
on the waters he made it firm.

**Psalm 24:1-2**

The psalmist reminds us that every living thing is part of God's creation; without him nothing would exist. As we pray Mary's great hymn of praise we are reminded of our responsibility to care for those less fortunate than ourselves and to nurture the world God has created for us all to share.

### PRAYING THE MAGNIFICAT

*Mary, advocate for the lowly and the outcast*

*Mary, advocate for the marginalised and disadvantaged*

*Mary, advocate for the undervalued and unloved*

*Mary, advocate for those who are displaced, dispossessed, forced to flee, living in fear*

*Mary, advocate for those who suffer prejudice due to ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality or creed*

*Mary, advocate for those who do not know where the next meal is coming from*

*Mary, advocate for those who lack clean water and proper shelter*

*Mary, advocate for those who sleep in shop doorways*

*Mary, advocate for those who only know poverty and despair*

*Mary, advocate for those who are in debt to loan sharks*

*Mary, advocate for those who are tired, lonely and depressed*

*Mary, advocate for those who find each day an unbearable burden*

*Pray for us*

*Mary's Magnificat – a joyful song of praise to God – announces a better way*

*Mary sings praise to God whose mercy is boundless*

*Mary sings praise to God who is constant in his love from generation to generation*

*Mary sings praise to God who has a special love for the poor and lowly*

*Mary sings praise to God who fills the hungry and sends the rich away empty*

*Mary sings praise to God who has promised to love and care for his people*

*Mary sings praise to God for whom nothing is impossible*

*Blessed be God*

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