



PARISH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

JUSTICE & PEACE NEWSLETTER

No 23 - January 2023

The Justice and Peace Group meets to *pray*, educate ourselves, and to raise awareness in the Parish so that we may all act on Catholic Social Teaching. You are welcome to join us. We meet online for now at 8pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month details from 01737 216128



**LAUDATO SI'
MOVEMENT**

formerly Global Catholic Climate Movement

The film “**THE LETTER**”, based on Pope Francis’ letter to everyone in the world, was screened in the parish on 1 December. It highlights the impact of climate change on our poor and marginalised sisters and brothers and calls for us to respond as a community as well as individuals.

The film is a beginning not an end in itself, and we invite you to a follow up meeting on **Thursday 26 January at 7.45pm** in St Joseph’s Church hall. If you were not able to come to the screening, please watch out for more screenings in the parish or access it on theletterfilm.org. If you haven’t read “*Laudato Si’ – Care for Our Common Home*” – it is freely available on the Vatican website.

Please also watch out for Deanery activities being developed by the Diocesan “*Journey to 2030*” team in 2023.

Turning Concern into Action



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

Thank you for listening and responding to our appeal in the autumn for more active members to continue our befriending service and offering practical support for those in need and for the generosity in the September parish collection for our local SVP (£747.42), the Parish poor fund and other donations in response to the cost of living crisis. With these we have been able to respond with small scale financial assistance to those in need locally, especially in the lead up to Christmas.

Supporting the foodbank at St Matthew’s through the parish’s contributions in our Yellow Buckets at the back of the churches continues. There has been an increase of about 20% in demand at the foodbank in recent weeks, so the increase in our food donations is greatly appreciated and needed. See www.redhillfoodbank.org.uk for the list of on-going essentials.

Requests for help as well as new members are always welcome. Find us via the ‘SVP England and Wales’ website svp.org.uk or our local SVP by message on 0791 898 0330.

Let's think about plastic waste - our NEW Parish Charity

Our New Parish Charity aims to transform the lives of informal waste workers in Faridpur, Bangladesh by creating a market for plastic waste that currently has no commercial value.



This project, directed by **Practical Action**, has several hugely advantageous effects:



Bangladesh is facing a serious waste management issue. The population generates about 800,000 tons of plastic waste per year, along with rubbish shipped to its shores from wealthier countries. With frequent urban migration and ever-growing informal settlements the mountains of rubbish are increasing. Local authorities do not have the money to provide adequate waste services. The informal waste workers are poorly paid, unrecognised within society and subject to unhygienic, dangerous conditions and discrimination.

Without suitable disposal means, plastic waste blocks up drainage systems, thus polluting neighbourhoods and creating health

risks. As plastic is not biodegradable it finds its way into the river and eventually the Indian Ocean, where it is a significant threat to marine life.

Practical Action is piloting and trialling a social, technical and business model for reducing plastic waste pollution in the local environment and the ocean, which will improve the lives and livelihoods of waste workers. It will ensure removal of plastic from the waterways while creating local employment and better incomes at each stage of the recycling process.

Besides supporting the residents of Faridpur we can play our own part in improving the environment and we hope that this project will stimulate us all to review and question our own



use and disposal of plastic and other waste.

For more about Practical Action and Managing Our Waste see here:

practicalaction.org/knowledge-centre

We will be taking this project forward over the next two years and your thoughts and ideas will be welcome.

Donate the Rebate

What is the Energy Bill Support Scheme?

Energy bills are rocketing to unprecedented levels and this winter will likely to leave millions more people in fuel poverty.

In response to the unaffordable energy bills people across the country are now facing, the Government is giving every household a £400 grant toward the cost of bills over six months.

While the Government has also announced additional support for vulnerable and low-income households, for many, this simply isn't enough and there needs to be more support for as many people as possible through this difficult winter. No one should have to suffer in a cold home.

Donate your rebate?

With every household in the country eligible for the £400 grant, many are asking those who feel they can manage without this grant to donate it to provide crisis support to people in need.

By making a donation, you will be supporting and helping the most vulnerable stay warm and safe at home.

There are many local and national charities who are ready to help.



Action for Warm Homes

Donations made to National Energy Action can be made [here](#). The Community Foundation Surrey is also ready to receive donations [here](#). However, you could donate your rebate to any charity supporting those in need.

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

Many of you who knew Jim Howley who died at New Year would have also known that he was a long term and dedicated visitor to the Immigration Removal Centres at Gatwick Airport. Jim's kindness, his concern and his love of football helped many of those held there to cope with their situation. He is a much missed member of the team of volunteers who continue to make weekly visits to the centres to befriend and support the often bewildered men held in Brook House and Tinsley House next to the runway.

GDWG is always looking for new volunteers as visitors or to support in the other ways. The Group was founded over 25 years ago and offers a comprehensive training scheme for volunteers. It is also possible to support the charity by becoming a 'Friend'. The GDWG website is [here](#).

Refugee Tales

Refugee Tales, an outreach programme of GDWG, is an annual walk over 5 days in southern England to take the stories of those who seek sanctuary in this country to towns and villages along the way. From the **8-12 July 2023** the Walk will be from **Three Bridges to Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill, Preston Park, Shoreham and ending in Worthing**. Join us and walk the whole five days or join for a day. There are evening events at every stop with Tales and music.

Book to walk or join one of the evening events. Full details will be on the [RT website](#) in late January.

New Leaf Zero Waste Shop Reigate



New Leaf Zero Waste is one of Reigate's newest retail shops. It sells groceries, fresh produce, toiletries and gifts but with a twist – Everything is PLASTIC-FREE. New Leaf Reigate is a local business started

by two local people who wanted to make it easier for other locals to take their own steps to reduce their own plastic waste and their impact on the environment.



3 Prices Lane RH2 8BB Reigate

Customers bring their own reusable containers or return containers (glass jars, Tupperware, and empty plastic bottles) and purchase the exact amount of the products they want or need – saving waste, eliminating plastic and saving money.

New Leaf try to source as many of their products as possible from local suppliers whose production and distribution processes and sustainability are carefully considered before choosing to use them.

“A small change in the way that we all shop can and is making a huge difference to our community's impact on the environment, global warming and the plastic pollution crisis we are facing.”

[facebook.com/newleafreigate](https://www.facebook.com/newleafreigate)

Renewed Hope Trust

There's a lot going on at Renewed Hope and their work is needed more than ever.

Drop-In is now the support hub they always wanted it to be with many partner agencies connecting with people who

come to the Shrewsbury Rd Chapel. The homeless outreach service ESOS hold triage sessions here, SES Water come to check people are getting the discounts they are entitled to, the NHS have held health clinics and there is more planned.

The demand for Renewed Hope has never been higher. About 50 people come to the Drop-In regularly in each month. More and more, the guests are struggling with mental illness, addiction, financial difficulties. RHT are currently putting resources into expanding Drop-In services further. They are planning a 'rough sleeper' morning service from 9am-11am and they offered a Christmas Day meal again in 2022.

In February 2022 a supported house for four previously homeless men was opened and they are given tailored support to prepare them for independent living. Renewed Hope's long-term ambition remains to open a larger property for homeless men with higher needs – a gap in local provision identified by many agencies. This requires funding, expertise, not to mention a property in the right location.

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council are presently finding there just aren't enough beds to meet the needs of those homeless people presenting to them and has asked RHT to look into the possibility of opening an emergency winter night shelter. Look out for developments on their website.

There are lots of opportunities to get involved. Get in touch with RHT if you can help during the day on weekdays and Saturday lunchtimes. Helpers are needed to support the guys in the supported house with cleaning and gardening. Please spread the word and if you would like find out more about fundraising, volunteering or anything else, please get in touch on info@renewedhope.org.uk or 01737 886997.



A Preferential Option for the Migrant

Mauricio Silva

The Columban Interreligious Dialogue Coordinator in Britain manages Fatima House and ministers in projects supporting asylum seekers and refugees across the West Midlands. His family came to the UK from Chile as missionaries in 2001.

Migration has become a central issue in current political and economic narratives in the UK and elsewhere. Correspondingly, the Church's work among migrants has become more intense and intentional. This work has been carried out by countless lay and religious, and most recently by Church leaders making it an institutional pastoral priority. The way that Pope Francis has addressed the rights of migrants in official pronouncements and actions reveals that he sees migration as an urgent *locus for mission*.

I would like to see here a parallel with the historic attention the Church started to pay to the so called '*social question*' at the end of the nineteenth century. This awareness prompted the development of Catholic social thinking and action on issues related to the complex relationship between capital and labour: the dominating concern in socioeconomic discourses at the time. The engagement with that *social question* eventually led to the emergence of *liberation theologies* in diverse contexts and corners of the world. They have sustained and nurtured the Church's action and reflection among the vulnerable and that have translated into intentional action its '*preferential option for the poor*.'

Now I see the Church confronted with a new emerging '*social question*' which could be called the '*migrant question*.' On the one hand, it is inextricably linked to ecological, economic, and political issues; on the other, it requires urgent attention because its deep existential dimension: millions of people on the move today are being denied their basic human rights. Following Pope Francis' invitation to see Migration as a *locus for mission* today, it could also be said that for current liberation theologies, there is a need to uphold a '*preferential option for the migrant*.' But what does this mean?

Columbans - always working in partnership with *like-minded* people and organisations - have engaged for decades in seeking and offering a meaningful response to the issues of migration in Britain and elsewhere. They have met the complexities of a ministry among migrants. In Birmingham, for instance, Columban volunteers, missionaries, and co-workers both lead and support projects which help asylum seekers and refugees. With the intention to empathise with this reality, my family and I have moved into '*multicultural areas*,' where waves of refugees and other migrant groups are constantly arriving. In those areas we have gained first-hand experience of those complexities.

In addition to the political hostility experienced by most refugees while processing their asylum claims, those who eventually gain protection find themselves living amongst communities stricken by underfunded services, poor accommodation, lack of green spaces, elevated levels of crime, unprotected employment, and so on. These are the communities that are *handed down* the challenging task of welcoming refugees.

From a missionary's perspective, refugees usually arrive at areas in which Christian communities are '*in retreat*': shrinking congregations, with a focus on maintenance, struggling financially and crucially,

with little or no ability - and/or willingness - to syntonise and engage with the demands of living interculturally. But there is always hope and although it may sound paradoxical, in a *preferential option for the migrant* may lie an opportunity of enrichment for these ailing communities.

Through the years I have learnt of numerous examples of parishes across the country, which, confronted with the arrival of large numbers of migrants, have made this *option*. Some have adjusted their liturgies/celebrations to make them less monocultural; others have reached out to refugees with concrete help and assistance; while others have made Church property available to offer accommodation to destitute migrants. This is all positive, but we must not forget that an *option for the migrant* can be much more than a '*pastoral strategy*.' The mere *experience* of a migrant can help communities glimpse core qualities of Jesus' Kingdom: the seeking of sanctuary; the meaning of being pilgrims; the ability to become vulnerable and being a guest of the unknown; the perspective from the *margins*; the unconditional trust in God and so much more. Listening to the experience and journeying with migrants can lead our churches to real faith enrichment.

In my ministry among migrants and refugees I am reminded of Jon Sobrino's remarks that the '*God of Jesus is the God of preference towards victims*.' Today, *people on the move* are the main victims of a faltering socio-economic system colluded with hostile political policies and practices. God speaks through migrants. Let us listen. ■



Mauricio Silva and Columban lay missionaries lobby for refugees to be welcomed.

from the Columban newsletter "*Vocations for Justice*".

Fix the Food System



With East Africa facing its worst drought in over 40 years, the decades of inadequate action to address the climate crisis can no longer be ignored. **CAFOD** is urging the UK government to keep the promises it made at the COP26 climate talks and support agricultural systems that tackle the climate crisis as well as putting local communities first.

Our global food system is broken

Climate change, the pandemic and the rising prices of food and agricultural products as a result of the Ukraine crisis, have together revealed the fragility of our current global food system.

At a time of crisis these impacts are mostly felt in low-income countries, but they also have serious repercussions at home, where earlier this year 9% of the UK population were experiencing food insecurity despite living in the fifth-largest economy in the world.

Clearly, our current global food system is not working for both people and planet. But together we can play our part in re-thinking it, and challenging the imbalance of power so that it works for everyone.

Is there any good news?

Yes - alternatives to the current food system already exist. Small farmers like Suchitra in Bangladesh are growing food in ways that provide a decent income for their families, help local economies and are good for the climate. "All the stuff we need is homemade now, like worm compost. We don't use chemicals to kill insects on our plants anymore. When I take my stuff to the bazaar, even if I charge a bit more, people buy my goods first, because they know it is good and I use organic fertiliser."

Our food system can be transformed if more small farmers are better supported. But the UK government gives the majority of its support to big businesses.

The UK government must implement its COP26 commitments and support agricultural systems that put local communities first and protect the planet.

Farmers working together in Brazil

Paraíba in Brazil has become known as a leading example of economically viable, environmentally friendly farming.

When coronavirus arrived in Paraíba, north-east Brazil, customers stayed away from markets and tonnes of food was in danger of rotting in the fields. But rather than see their produce go to waste, farmers joined with local Church groups, unions and social movements to organise the donation and distribution of fresh healthy produce for vulnerable families.

As a result, farmers who might have gone under have been able to find a market for their produce, and their organisations and communities have emerged with greater resilience.

Look out for ways in which this parish can join the debate and support the Fix the Food System campaign



...and there is always something we can do to help mitigate climate heating

Meat-free Fridays ‘help the planet’

from The Tablet 5 November 2022

ONE IN FOUR Catholics in England and Wales changed their eating habits after the Catholic bishops asked them to return to forgoing meat on Fridays, saving more than 55,000 tonnes of carbon a year, according to a new study led by the University of Cambridge, *writes Ruth Gledhill*.

Researchers say that, in terms of CO2 emissions, this is equivalent to 82,000 fewer people taking a return trip from London to New York over one year.

Professor Shaun Larcom and colleagues from Cambridge’s Department of Land Economy combined new survey data with

that from diet and social studies to quantify the effects of a statement issued by the Catholic Church in England and Wales re-establishing meat-free Fridays as a collective act of penance from September 2011 onwards after a 26-year hiatus.

Commissioned survey results suggest that 28 per cent of Catholics in England and Wales adjusted their Friday diet. Of this segment, 41 per cent said that they stopped eating meat on Friday, and 55 per cent said they tried to eat less meat on that day.

The researchers argue that if the Pope reinstated meatless

Fridays across the global church, it could mitigate millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases annually. For example, they say that if Catholic bishops in the United States alone issued an “obligation”, environmental benefits could be 20 times larger than in the UK.

“The Catholic Church is very well placed to help mitigate climate change, with more than one billion followers around the world,” said Professor Larcom.

Meat-free Fridays date back to at least Pope Nicholas I’s ninth-century declaration requiring Catholics to abstain on Fridays in memory of Christ’s Crucifixion.
