



PARISH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

# JUSTICE & PEACE NEWSLETTER

No 27 - January 2025

The Justice and Peace Group meets to *pray*, educate ourselves, and to raise awareness that we may all act on Catholic Social Teaching. You are welcome to join us. We meet at 8pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in PNL Centre Redhill. Details from [pnljandp@gmail.com](mailto:pnljandp@gmail.com)

## Practical Action dignifying women in waste management

The Waste Management and Recycling programme in Faridpur, Bangladesh which has been driven by **Practical Action** is due to come to an end in 2025. The initiatives and benefits, however, will continue and develop. We hope that our PNL parish, which has supported the programme as an **adopted charity** for the past two years, has played a part in funding and promoting the work of Practical Action.

**As a result of this involvement have we become more aware of the need to manage and reduce waste?** Do we now think more realistically about the consequences of excessive use of plastics and the impact on the lives of people thousands of miles away?

**Practical Action is working with female waste pickers in Faridpur, Bangladesh, to improve their work conditions and get their voices heard by the authorities.**

The inspiring and courageous stories of Mukta and Tasleema demonstrate how the endeavours of local women are making Bangladesh's streets cleaner and improving the health and wellbeing of their city's poorest people.



**Mukta Bashfore** is just 25 years old. She leads a cooperative in the slums of Kalaroa, where many families live in one-room homes. Through her cooperative, she supports other female waste workers and promotes gender equality.

**Tasleema Begum**, a 32-year-old waste picker, has transformed her life with the support of Practical Action. While cleaning rubbish from Faridpur's streets, Tasleema faced the dangers and discomforts of working with dirty and dangerous materials, often getting injuries. Now, as a member of the cooperative, she has access to protective clothing and has tripled her income.



*"I sell the collected items and earn money. I'm now a small entrepreneur."*

*"They used to call us 'sweepers' now they call us 'sanitation workers.' They give us respect now."*

To read the whole account of these two brave women go to [practicalaction.org](http://practicalaction.org)

## Please do all you can to support the two final fundraising events in the parish for Practical Action.

On **March 1st** there will be an **Afternoon Concert in St Joseph's Church** with a huge variety of music. If you would like to perform in the concert or help out: contact: [pnljandp@gmail.com](mailto:pnljandp@gmail.com)

And as in previous years there will be a Plant Sale after all Masses on **April 26/27**. If you are planting some seeds for flowers or vegetables this spring drop a few more in for Practical Action and bring them along and help the fundraising.

There is not enough room in a two page newsletter to give space to all the articles submitted but happily there is more to see in the online edition which has an excellent piece by RS about her home parish's (Minnesota in the US) help for **refugees in South Sudan**. Another thought provoking article on **Child Poverty** from the National Board of Catholic Women challenges us to face and address this issue where in 2022-23 around 30% of children in UK are living in poverty.

The full issue is on the Parish website: [Justice and Peace](http://Justice and Peace)

**Our Parish application for the Award was submitted to CAFOD in May 2023 and now it is time to ask for an assessment to see if we qualify.**



The Live Simply Award is an opportunity for Catholic communities to respond to Pope Francis' invitation in *Laudato Si* to "work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God entrusted to us"

The Live Simply Award is earned by communities which show how they have been living -

- ⇒ **Simply**
- ⇒ **In solidarity with people in poverty**
- ⇒ **Sustainably with creation**

The major elements of our application came under three headings - **Parish Charity** (Practical Action), **Laudato Si engagement** and **CAFOD**.

The work of SVP groups, Fair Trade commitment, support of local charities such as Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group and the Winter Night Shelter were also included in the list of other initiatives. A full report of what has been achieved in the last 18 months can be found on the PNL website on the [Justice and Peace](#) page.

Here are a few examples of what it includes:

- ◆ Fundraising through plant sales, cake sales and musical events
- ◆ Showing of films such as "The Letter" and resulting discussions. Our response to the challenge to reduce and recycle waste. The reduction of fuel usage in our churches.
- ◆ Lent and Advent Fast Days, soup lunches and signing of "Fix the Food System" petition
- ◆ Food bank collections in Yellow Buckets and community events

### Mary's Meals & St Bede's School

On 7th December, the St. Bede's School community, including students and the Justice and Peace group, came together to raise funds for Mary's Meals through a festive Christmas charity quiz. The event successfully raised over £360 and attracted approximately 55 attendees over the two hours.

The quiz featured five engaging rounds with themes ranging from Christmas trivia to sports, flags, Christmas song guessing, and Geography. We also organised snacks and raffles, which were very popular and raised additional funds. The aim was to create a fun and interactive way to raise awareness and funds for children without access to daily nutritious meals.

While learning more about the work of [Mary's Meals](#), I discovered their recent "Double the Love" campaign, which began on 12th November 2024. Through this initiative, donations to Mary's Meals are doubled, thanks to the generosity of a group of supporters, up to a total of £1.1 million. This means that a

donation of £19.15, which typically feeds one child for an entire school year, now provides meals for two children.



This campaign highlights the growing urgency of Mary's Meals' mission in light of rising costs, climate change, and conflicts that leave many children in desperate need of nutritious

school meals. Events like our Christmas charity quiz remind us of the impact we can make together to support these vulnerable children and contribute to a brighter future for them.

### The Renewed Hope Winter Night Shelter opened on December 11 2024

The night shelter gives 10 homeless people a hot meal, bed and breakfast every night in winter through to early March. It is held in church halls across Reigate, Redhill, Horley and Merstham.

Last year, the night shelter provided a safe and welcoming space for 30 people who could have otherwise been sleeping rough. With the help and dedication of a large team of trained volunteers, they enjoyed a hot evening meal, good company in a non-judgmental environment and a good breakfast the following morning.

The Night Shelter will be held at St Joseph's on Tuesdays in February and early March this year. Many parishioners have already volunteered at other churches and will be at St Joseph's. For more information see [www.renewedhope.org.uk](http://www.renewedhope.org.uk)

### Laudato Si' Caring for Our Common Home

**The extreme weather events across the globe confirm that our planet is suffering and scientific research points to the source of most of that suffering as man-made.**

What is that I can do – what is it God is calling me to do – at this time, in this place, to take responsibility for creation and my impact upon it?

In his message for the World Day of Prayer for the care of Creation last September, Pope Francis called us to resolve to transform our hearts, our lifestyles and the public policies ruling our societies, by seeing creation as a sacred gift from God, to gaze on it with grateful wonder and with repentance for the damage we have caused, and not as an object to be exploited.

At the end of January there is an opportunity for a private members Climate and Nature Bill to be debated in Parliament. It is designed to strengthen the last Climate Change Act of 2008. It will only get time with the support of at least 100 Members of Parliament. One of our local MPs, Rebecca Paul, currently will not support it, citing the last government's progress (the same government that agreed new oil and gas exploration in the North Sea). Please join the lobby of MPs to prioritise the Climate and Nature Bill : <https://www.zerohour.uk/climate-and-nature-bill/>

## Seeds of Wisdom in South Sudan

Rachel Soland, with John Lasuba

Seeds of Wisdom in South Sudan is a nonprofit Catholic organization based in Rochester, Minnesota in the United States that provides education to children from South Sudan. Most of these South Sudanese children now live in refugee camps in northern Uganda. Each student either receives educational aid in the form of scholarships to attend Catholic boarding schools, or if they remain living in the refugee camps with their families, they receive tutoring.

Seeds of Wisdom in South Sudan was founded by Father John Lasuba, a Catholic South Sudanese refugee priest who moved to the United States in 2004. John was just a small child of around five or six years old when his family was massacred by the oppressive Islamic government in Northern Sudan.

A memoir of Father John's life is currently being written. Here is an excerpt which details the religious oppression and tragedy his family faced:

*"There has always been very little religious freedom in Sudan. To be Catholic, or any religion other than Islamic, is very difficult. Anyone who practices a religion other than Islam puts their life at risk. To be born in Sudan is to find yourself automatically involved in the hostile struggle between the North and the South, regardless of your views or beliefs. Even today, to simply be in Sudan makes you a target for being harmed or killed. So many innocent people I know have been lost to this conflict, all because they were caught in the crossfire and dared to support freedom of religion. That is how the massacre against my own family came about.*

*According to my brother Gabriel who survived it, the massacre happened in the year 1968, probably in March. It was in the morning when the Sudan army came and raided our house. Everybody in the house was brought out and put in one place, me included. My father, who liked getting up early and going for a walk, was not in the house. When they put us all together, they started beating my older brothers. My father could have escaped this tragedy and ran for his life, but when he heard the beating and the cries of his children, he could not spare his own life over his family. He walked in and told them, "Leave my children, I am here."*

*After they killed my father and my brothers, the soldiers grabbed me with my head down and wanted to knock me down, but my mom ran and grasped me and cried, "Why don't you leave this one for me?" By the grace of God I was spared."*

A few years after moving to the United States, John Lasuba expressed his desire to help the people in South Sudan, specifically in his hometown of Yei. A school was built in Yei, but within six months of the

school being open, the war reached Yei, and the entire population fled to Arua, Uganda. Grass huts were set up in the refugee camps where students are able to receive an education, and any students who are able to attend the nearby boarding school have their expenses covered by Seeds of Wisdom in South Sudan. The students at these schools report that they are able to receive a quality education, and school fees are covered by SOW South Sudan for anyone who lacks the funds to pay for their own schooling, making education accessible to anyone.

Because of John's difficult life in Sudan and his devotion to his faith, he works hard to provide aid to the people still in South Sudan and Uganda who continue to face the oppression he faced. He regularly visits Uganda (and South Sudan when it is safe to do so) to check on the schools there.



Fr John in Uganda

His last trip to Uganda was in 2022, and he plans to visit again in 2025.

Reflecting on his trip in 2022, he said: *"In the refugee camps, life is not easy. I don't know how they're surviving, but it's a harsh environment. It's very hard to see how a human being can survive that. Those are the challenging moments. You don't see running water or toilets. It's a very hard life. Those are the challenges. The government just gives these refugees a tiny room the size of my office where an entire family must live. Even when I visited in 2022, I did not see much improvement. That's why I want to invest in the children. So they can build a better future."*

Seeds of Wisdom in South Sudan is always seeking donations and support for their ongoing missions to help build better futures for the children escaping conflict. Visit [sowsouthsudan.org](https://sowsouthsudan.org) or contact [info@sowsouthsudan.org](mailto:info@sowsouthsudan.org) for more information.



A young SOW student in Uganda

## Child Poverty: challenges and solutions

Report of

National Board of Catholic Women Webinar

9th October 2024

In the introduction it was stated that although no standard definition of child poverty exists it is generally accepted that this is 'an inability within society to meet minimum needs or to a lack of material resources.'

Figures are rising, especially for lone parents and the DWP estimated in the year 2022-2023 4.3 million (30%) of children were living in poverty in this country.

The aim of this meeting was to look at:

- ◆ Possible Drivers for these statistics
- ◆ Issues and major challenges facing parents and children
- ◆ What is being done and future solutions to address child poverty

A representative from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter- Day Saints spoke on behalf of the Beijing+30 Global Review and her key message was that this is a huge task working throughout the world but it is the work that we are all doing at local level which can have a huge impact not only at local but at international levels as well.

It is important to learn and share experiences with each other and to embrace greater diversity. There are opportunities to get involved in this process by joining various meetings of the Beijing+30 Global Review. Working with women impacts on everyone within a family. The work Beijing+30 will continue until they have overcome these problems.

A member of the Wilmette Institute said she brought her perspective as a follower of the Bahá'í Faith and a Magistrate of 38 years, to the issue of child brides and widows. She said one of the biggest threats to peace is not war it is poverty. The aim is to end poverty in all its forms by 2030 1.1 billion people in the world live in some degree poverty (1 in 11) This is a huge challenge.

Some of the main causes are: conflict (not just in the places we see in the news), climate change , food chain supply and price of foods, poor government throughout the world that can't solve the problem, education (cause and effect – lack of education means people can't get jobs or know how to think to find solutions), discrimination (whole communities face problems), natural disasters, social barriers (this creates more poverty as they don't have the opportunities/skills to improve.)

She felt that just using money is not going to solve these problems. Many of these problems are based on lacking spiritual qualities such as justice, trustworthiness, lack of honesty, patience and selflessness. We need to build these qualities into our system not just see them as sidelines. None of this will work without love. (true love)

We need to work together in unity throughout the world as one family to thrive and overcome our differences. WE need to call on Institutions to embed them in society and for us to follow them and not find excuses to avoid them. She said child poverty can be overcome but she was speaking to the converted. This is not expensive – it's visionary and free!

A member from SVP said they have 10,000 members who do a lot of work with the homeless in different communities throughout the country. Homelessness has increased across Europe (more than doubled) A million people are homeless across Europe but the real number is probably much higher as only visible forms are counted (eg only count a person on the streets if they are lying down, not if they're standing) France and UK have the highest rate.

There is no internationally agreed definition of homelessness but here are some examples: ex-prisoners (they are just given a rucksack and a tent), those leaving care, victims of domestic abuse, those with learning difficulties, refugees, drug addicts, young people who have rowed with their family and poverty. In the last 13 years the percentage of homeless people has doubled.

Some examples of what SVP offer: Vinnie packs – introduced by Siobhain Gabriel and costing £4 are given free to people, Centres such as the Kindness Kitchen and Night Stop, Wellness clinics and chiropodists and hairdressers. In Middlesborough different groups provide a hot meal one day a week. Respecting people's dignity is important – For one woman a hairbrush meant so much. For those who have so little they can't leave their sleeping bag because it might be stolen

The last speaker was from the Trussell Trust which is an anti-poverty charity. They have 36,000 volunteers. 71% facing hunger do not access support because of pride. They would rather go without than seek help. Some reasons for poverty: low income, high levels of debt, problems with accessing social security (have to wait 5 weeks for first payment), high cost of utilities, 58% of families facing poverty have one family member who is employed and they can't access support at the right time. Too many disabled people have to wait ages to get support.

The organisation works with the Joseph Rowntree Society and things like food banks and holiday groups etc can help but change won't happen immediately. They will continue to keep this on the government's agenda but it is vital that everyone keeps fighting for change so that this goal is achieved.

She finished by saying said that five years ago staff wrote postcards to themselves about the future. One of these postcards really resonated with her. It said: 'We now live in a place where no-one needs a foodbank because none of us will allow it.'

Vivienne O'Byrne

UCM National Welfare Officer

## Religion, peace, sustainability, climate and nuclear disarmament.

**This year Peace Sunday is on 19 JANUARY and here is some food for thought.**

*“The voices of religious, faith and values-based communities on issues of peace, climate protection and nuclear disarmament are vitally important. Such voices can transcend national/political differences and forge cooperative global solutions to make a real difference.”*

**Alyn Ware**, Program Director of the World Federalist Movement, Institute for Global Policy

The World Federalist Movement has much on its website which is both thought provoking and challenging. Particularly of interest in the light of Peace Sunday is the recently established **Transnational Working Group on Values, faith-based perspectives and global governance.**

<https://tinyurl.com/5n7x9xuc>

The following also give an examples of organisations involved and some reference eliminating all nuclear weapons by 2045.

<https://baselpeaceoffice.org/>

<https://www.unfoldzero.org/can-we-eliminate-nuclear-weapons-by-2045-or-before/>

<https://thebulletin.org/2016/11/oplan-2045-preparing-for-nuclear-disarmament/>

<https://www.nti.org/atomic-pulse/horizon-2045-nuclear-weapons-and-systems-thinking>