



PARISH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

JUSTICE & PEACE NEWSLETTER

No 22 - July 2022

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

Turning Concern into Action



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

All of us face difficulties in our lives which we only get through with the support from each other, by the grace of God. The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) was founded in 1833 by a 20 year old French student, Frederick Ozanam to offer person to person help and for the spiritual development of its members.

In England and Wales alone there are about 9,000 members, not including members of the “Mini Vinnies” groups in primary schools, Young Vincentians in secondary schools and members of 1833 groups at universities.

Our parish has two small groups called Conferences – at St Teresa’s and St Joseph’s. The members meet fortnightly to pray together and to provide help within our community (not just our parish community). This is primarily through friendship, visiting and listening (including to local care homes) and by offering practical help, for example with shopping, lifts to appointments, referrals to other agencies and sometimes with a little financial assistance (our income is solely from donations). All discussions and information given remains totally confidential and visiting members of the SVP have appropriate safeguarding approval as well as access to a comprehensive on line Knowledge Hub for ongoing training and support for themselves.

At national and international levels there are bigger projects like SVP Centres, Children’s Summer Camps, charity shops (our nearest one is in Crawley), campaigning for social justice and overseas Twinnage programmes, including student sponsorships which are all part of the work of the SVP. Through our two Conferences our parish currently supports two students in India studying for degrees, three following vocational training and four primary school age children, as well as being “twinned” with three Conferences in India.

Requests for help as well as new members are always welcome. There is a website to explore for more information – just search for ‘SVP England and Wales’ – or contact one of our Conference Presidents – Joanne Ellerbeck for St Joseph’s or Pamela Schwenk for St Teresa’s – by leaving a message on the SVP mobile phone number 0791 898 0330.

African faith leaders' statement on a People's Vaccine

For many of us, vaccines have meant that the pandemic seems to be slipping into history but the pandemic is still with us. Most people in low-income countries still haven't had the jab. Billions of people are unprotected and at risk of illness and death.

Rich countries have made multiple pledges to provide vaccines to poorer nations but they've failed to properly deliver on those pledges – and are even supplying vaccines which are too close to their expiry date to be used.



As part of the People's Vaccine Alliance, CAFOD recently signed a joint statement by African faith leaders calling for immediate action on the global pandemic response. Part of the text reads:

“The global pandemic is far from over. More than 6,000 people are dying from Covid-19 each day and cases are on the rise. We urge world leaders to act with compassion and ensure the world's most vulnerable people have access to lifesaving Covid-19 vaccines, tests and treatment... Only 20% of the population on the African continent have had their first vaccine, which is in stark contrast to many wealthy countries where over a third have received their third dose. We urge world leaders not to see this statistic as just a number, but as a reminder that each statistic represents a human being and as a human being deserving dignity and the ability to thrive in a post-pandemic world.”

Care for our common home

It is now seven years since Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'* on care for our common home, addressed to “every person living on this planet”. This year's anniversary celebrations, *Laudato Si'* week, took place from 22-29 May. The theme was “Listening and Journeying Together”. Each day global, regional and local events took place tied to the seven *Laudato Si'*



goals. These redefine and rebuild our relationship with each other and our common home. Topics included looking at how to combat biodiversity collapse; the role of fossil fuels in conflict and the climate crisis; how well we can embrace the poor in our daily lives.

A new film “The Invitation” featuring Pope Francis was also previewed during the week and is due to be released at the end of 2022. What the makers want to achieve in the film is that all the people of the world understand the Church's concern for the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. It is hoped that this may be shown within our parish once it is available.

The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform continues to encourage us to undertake, in a synodal spirit, a seven year journey to what Pope Francis calls “ecoconversion.

Please go to laudatosi.actionplatform.org to begin the journey with your own self-assessment as an individual/family/group.

The “Season of Creation” is the annual ecumenical celebration of prayer and action for our common home and runs this year from September 1st to October 4th. The theme will be “listening to the call of creation”. Individuals and communities are invited to participate through prayer, sustainability projects and advocacy. See seasonofcreation.org

The Synod - what does our Church think?

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales

National Synthesis Document - 22nd June 2022

The first paragraph of the introduction is :

“This synthesis describes the diocesan phase of the synod on synodality between November 2021 and March 2022, seeking to capture the essence of what emerged from the unprecedented participation by the People of God in England and Wales in a world-wide synod process. It is drawn from over 700 pages of reports from the dioceses and other church organisations, associations and movements that were sent to the national synthesis team.”

Every Catholic should read this as it is very interesting and honest, sometimes startling in this honesty.

The full document is [here](#).

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton Justice & Peace Assembly Jan 15th 2022

Though the Assembly took place six months ago the questions it raised are ever relevant. For a second year the conference took place on Zoom. Whilst it was a shame not to meet people, exchange opinions and browse the interesting stalls which are the pleasure of the traditional Crawley venue the attendance numbers were exceptional. The talks and discussion were no less inspiring.

Fr. Rob Eskdale set the scene with quotations from "*Fratelli Tutti*" and reflections on universal brotherhood. This was followed by a very personal account delivered by Karen Goldsmith of her experience on the island of Chios where she worked as a volunteer with a refugee agency. She highlighted the frustrations and helpless situations common to thousands of refugees of any nationality – they are in a "no-mans land" where welcome has often changed to resentment and refusal of entry at every turn.

Aidan Cantwell described the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Wapping where they offer to "accompany, serve and advocate" for refugees who arrive on their doorstep seeking hospitality and a safe space. They give hope to Asylum Seekers who have no other support while they wait weeks and months for their cases to be dealt with. The practical nature of what the JRS offer was heart-warming – football with West Ham club, a drama group, a writing space, acupuncture therapy etc. They also run a Hosting scheme where short-term accommodation is offered by local residents. They have an ongoing legal Project (publiclawproject.org.uk) they accompany those in detention and have produced a report "*Being Human in the Asylum System*" which proposes radical reform to an inhuman asylum system. JRS work closely with SVP. Details of their toolkit can be found on www.jrsuk.net.

The final speaker was Jean Paul de Quay who made powerful references to Laudate Si and Journey to 2030. He was looking at migration as a whole world problem and alerted us to the adverse effects of consumerism and nationalism in the context of refugee exclusion. He urged us to think kindly of all people, see the beauty of creation and to shed the "armour of sownatism".

The J & P group met Crispin Blunt MP

Members of the J & P group met online with the MP for Reigate and Banstead to discuss a bill that a number of major businesses and groups including CAFOD are hoping will be introduced in Parliament in the next few months.

People around the world are experiencing human rights abuses, environmental destruction and the impacts of the climate crisis. British businesses are linked to these abuses through their supply chains, subsidiaries and investments.

A new Business, Human Rights and the Environment Act would hold companies to account when they fail to prevent human rights abuses and environmental harm.

This legislation would help the UK to:

- **Guarantee a level playing field for all businesses operating on the UK market, with the law mandating companies to conduct human rights and environmental due diligence (i.e. to identify and manage the risks that their activities pose) across their operations, subsidiaries and value chains.**
- **Provide mechanisms to hold to account companies which fail to prevent harm, including through sanctions and liability provisions.**
- **Ensure that the environment and rights of the most vulnerable are respected and that victims have access to justice.**

Retain its leadership in business and human rights, be a force for good in the world and lead the way on making COP26 pledges a reality.

Mr Blunt listened carefully to the arguments put forward and although he did not agree with all that was said he did agree to consider signing an Early Day Motion on the matter and to participate in a back bench debate on the matter if it was brought forward in Parliament.

There is more about this proposed legislation on the Cafod website [here](#).

The Medaille Trust

Sister Ann Teresa, founder of the Medaille Trust died in March this year. As our parish project in support of Medaille Trust comes to an end it is inspiring to read of her amazing work and her attitude to life.



The following extract is taken from

Trafficking for sexual exploitation by Sr Ann Teresa published on Thinking Faith, 19th November 2008.

I am a Sister of St. Joseph of Annecy and we were founded by Jean Pierre Medaille SJ in 1650, to help the poorest and most marginalised people. I see my ministry with women in street-based prostitution which led to the trafficking work with The Medaille Trust, as responding to the core of my vocation.

Trafficked women are treated as 'non-persons', and in the UK they are invisible, voiceless and treated as commodities, as things. Many of our Congregations were founded to work with the most vulnerable people, and the victims of trafficking certainly fall into this category. When I first sensed that God was calling me to leave my work with street-based prostitution and to move into the unchartered waters of providing safe housing for trafficked people, I felt overwhelmed.

When we interviewed the staff for our first safe house, we gave them three-year contracts, but we only had enough money for one year. At that time, the Medaille Trust wasn't really functioning and I felt that God was asking me to walk on water – to trust that the money would come at the right time. It did come, and not only the money, but so much more as well because Religious Congregations shared so generously.

Recently, I rediscovered Liberation Theology, in particular the work of Jon Sobrino and Gustavo Gutierrez. For me, this has been like finding the 'Treasure in the Field'. The work of these theologians resonated with my experience of working with women in street-based prostitution and with trafficked women. My life has been turned upside down and my reading has enabled me to experience God anew; the God who says 'Set my people free', Jesus who asks us to walk on water, to trust, to let go. In particular, I was struck by Jon Sobrino's statement: "Without the poor, there is no salvation. Without the poor, there is no Church. Without the poor, there is no Gospel". His understanding of "the poor" was not only the economically poor, but the outcasts of our society and those who are treated as 'non-persons'. I agree with his statement that conversion means seeing life through the eyes of those at the bottom of the pile, and that God can only be known through the poor.

More details about the Medaille Trust and tributes to Sister Ann can be found in their Spring magazine [here](#).

We were delighted to send a final donation to Medaille Trust of £110 thanks to the support at the plant sale held at Holy Family Church on 19th June. Many thanks to all who supported it.

Remember that if you have any spare or broken jewellery, odd earrings or watches, or if you have unwanted bank-notes of any currency and any age, you can recycle them for free and the proceeds will go to The Medaille Trust.

Let us keep the Medaille Trust in our prayers and remain aware of the signs and likelihood of human trafficking in our own local area.

You can contact the Modern Slavery Helpline in confidence on 08000 121 700.

Climate and Cooperation

In June 2022, members of [Christian Climate Action](#) Rev Helen Burnett, [Rev Sue Parfitt](#) and others held a public meeting at Reigate Quaker Meeting House on 'Our Responsibility at this Time' concerning the climate emergency and in particular the impact of starting new oil fields. There is more about Just Stop Oil [here](#). Helen is also a leader of the local [Extinction Rebellion](#) who speaks from the heart. *"When governments won't listen, when profit is the golden calf and we commodify every part of the planet, when we are crucifying our earth – a crucified earth will not have a risen life; on the current trajectory this crucified earth will come to an end and take with it millions of souls ..."* see more [here](#).

The Catholic Church has their rebels too. [Bruce Kent](#) was a tireless peace campaigner who died in June 2022. He spoke some years ago in the then new St Joseph's hall and also at Reigate Quakers. [Fr Gerard Hughes](#) another peace campaigner, councillor was the author of – God in All Things, God of Compassion/Surprises and much else.

Christian Climate Action is a community of Christians supporting each other taking meaningful action in the face of imminent and catastrophic anthropogenic climate breakdown. Since November 2018 they have worked closely with Extinction Rebellion and become known as the Christians in XR. People in CCA are also joining the Just Stop Oil campaign of civil disobedience. *"We have to act quickly. What we do, I believe, in the next 3-4 years will determine the future of humanity."* Prof. Sir David King, Former Chief Scientific Advisor, February 2021.

Since 2013 most major Christian denominations have made a commitment to divest from fossil fuels including the Quakers, the Church of Ireland, the United Reformed Churches, the Methodist Church, the Church of Scotland, the Church in Wales and the Baptist Union. More than 400 religious organisations worldwide have made divestment commitments in recent years. The Church of England has pledged to fully divest by 2023 and the Vatican and about 100 other Catholic institutions (but not all) have already divested, see more [here](#).

On a personal and public level we need to commit to the sharing of green technologies, the redistribution of military resources for tackling the climate threat and the promotion of alternative solutions to environmental problems. We must ensure justice for those nations most affected by climate change – through reparations, relocation, and support for climate-resistant infrastructure.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S RWANDA DEPORTATION POLICY

The UK's plans to forcibly deport to Rwanda some of those seeking refuge in our country is shamefully illustrative of what Pope Francis has called the 'loss of that sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters on which every civil society is based'.

The plan is presented as a humanitarian response to combat people trafficking and smuggling yet the result will compound the suffering of those who are already victims. Crime is defeated by confronting the perpetrators not by punishing victims. This scheme will increase the difficulties of those hoping for a new beginning, and it does nothing to address the problems which cause people to flee their homes.

Bishop Paul McAleenan, June 15 2022 ... see full statement [here](#).