



# Justice & Peace

Summer 2024

News from the National Justice & Peace Network

## Reflection

A church that doesn't provoke any crises, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed — what Gospel is that?

-St. Oscar Romero



Save the Date!

## NJPN AGM AND OPEN NETWORKING DAY

'NEW DEFINITION OF  
EXTREMISM 2024'

-WHAT WILL IT MEAN IN  
PRACTICE?

Saturday 11th May  
10.30am-4pm

CAFOD, Romero House, 55  
Westminster Bridge Road,  
London SE1 7JB

[www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)

Save the Date!

OPEN EVENING MEETING

27 June 2024

Online

7pm onwards

Keep an eye out for details!

NEXT ISSUE DATE

September 2024

Articles required by

August 2024

## Just Politics

The 46th annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network will be held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire from Friday 19 — 21 July 2024. Building on the work of Conference 2022 with its focus on active hope, participants at Conference 2023 expressed great concern about the standard of honesty and integrity in public life, where the statement issued on behalf of all participants included a commitment **'to challenge all locally and nationally so that, in pursuit of future sustainability, no -one is left behind.'**

Conference 2024 will seek to explore the need for truth and integrity in the public space. How to work towards dialogue and respectful listening in all seats of power—local, national, and global—using the theme of Just Politics.

We need accurate information and knowledge grounded in Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching, to help us discern what is factually true, and how—as people of faith—we consider authority and power. As campaigning groups, we must also challenge the narrative of all those who seek to influence us. As a faith network, theological reflection will help us discern how we are called to action by our beliefs. In a year when our elected representatives will be calling for our support Conference '24 will seek to address these critical issues through our speakers, workshops, Just Fair and liturgical celebration. In his recent declaration on Human Dignity *'Dignitas Infinita'* Pope Francis concludes that:

**'Indeed respect for the dignity of each person is the indispensable basis for the existence of any society that claims to be founded on just law and not on the force of power'** (para. 64)

The conference will open after the evening meal on Friday, finishing after lunch on Sunday afternoon. Chairing the conference will be **Sir John Battle**, NJPN Patron, who will bring his vast knowledge and experience of Catholic Social Teaching in action—both in the political sphere and community engagement. The weekend Mass will be the Vigil Mass on Saturday evening, with **Fr Dominic Robinson SJ**, parish priest at Farm Street and Chair of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission; and music and liturgy will be led by members of the **Lay Community of St Benedict**.

During the weekend, we will hear from keynote speakers, take part in workshops, find resources and information in the Just Fair, and listen to the voices of young adults as they share their hopes and concerns for the future of our world.

**Rt Revd. Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani**, Bishop of Chelmsford, will explore some of the dynamics of public discourse, the implications for individuals and society, some possible solutions, and opportunities for Christians and the Church to play a positive role.

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**Molly Scott Cato**, former Green MEP and currently Finance and Economy Spokesperson for the Green Party will speak about how untruth is undermining democracy. **Steve Whiting**, former manager of the Quaker 'Turning the Tide' Programme, will start to pull together what we have learnt from speakers and workshops and help us identify common themes. **Colette Joyce** of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission will facilitate a discussion with young people sharing their concerns, what actions they can take and what they look for from others, especially those with the capacity to effect change.

The final sessions will be facilitated by **Fr Chris Hughes and Sara Bryson**, who will share and describe how they have used community organising in campaigns in Tyne and Wear Citizens. They will focus on how participants accept the challenges raised during the weekend

and how we move forward in our action for peace and social justice.

Workshops related to the conference theme will offer space for sharing as well as access to resources and ideas for practical action. The Just Fair will provide an opportunity for increasing our knowledge and raising awareness of the many organisations and groups who need our ongoing support to further their work for peace and social justice for all people.

**[We look forward to seeing you there]**

For further information please contact Sharon at: [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)

Regular updates at:  
[www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/njandpnetwork](https://www.facebook.com/njandpnetwork)

**Anne Peacey, Chair — NJPN**

## The National Justice and Peace Network Conference July 2023

Retirement is great, honest: one of the best things about it is you can do things you always really wanted to do but never had the time. I had had for some time (pomposity alert here) a nagging wish to do something, anything, to further social justice but what exactly and how, were difficult to visualise. Happily, I started volunteering three years ago with the Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan Justice & Peace group where I have worked mainly in the refugee project; working with like-minded people and meeting people from all over the world, cheerful and dignified despite their predicament, has been a humbling, yet enjoyable, experience. I've been able to do stuff which I find fulfilling and at my own pace.

I attended the National Justice and Peace Network Conference at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire between 21st-23rd July 2023. The J&P aim is to "inspire hope, encourage informed choices and foster a commitment to work for a more just and peaceful world for all of God's creation." The theme of this particular conference was "Sustainability, Survival or ... Shutdown?"

Now, I knew already that a great many organisations are involved in our project to improve society, but I was amazed at just how many and how diverse they are. And though

Justice and Peace is RC in origin and ethos, there were groups representing other faiths – Anglican, Methodist, Quaker and no doubt others and not a hint of religious tribalism. I don't think any secular groups were present, but I could be wrong about this.

We heard some excellent speakers, took part in some enlightening workshops always with relevant, practical and often locally focused goals – one that I attended was organised by CAFOD to discuss their "Live Simply" project.

A congenial and useful function of these get-togethers are the chance meetings and conversations with people you haven't seen in ages, or you've never met before – it was clear that I wasn't the only one to enjoy those opportunities at the conference – and you'll (probably) be pleased to hear there's a bar to encourage such contacts.

A wide range of people were there from varied backgrounds: while there was more than a smattering of oldies every age group was represented including the young who were not short of ideas on how to move our society in the direction we all want it to go – most reassuring.

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The venue, a Christian Conference Centre, is excellent with comfortable accommodation, tasty food and pleasant lounges – overall tip-top.

I found the two days enjoyable, useful, informative, refreshing and, dare I say it, uplifting.

I'm looking forward to this year's conference where the theme will be "**Just Politics**".

Now there's something we can all of us get our teeth into!

**Paddy Harrigan, March 2024**

## Interfaith Prayer Vigils at the Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre

For over two and a half years, at 3PM on the first Sunday of each month, around 30 to 40 people gather at the barrier to the Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre in Medomsley, Co Durham for an interfaith prayer vigil. The vigil, which is co-ordinated by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle's Justice and Peace Co-ordinating Council is attended by people from a range of Christian denominations, and people from the Jewish faith.

We first heard of the proposed Immigration Removal Centre at Medomsley back in 2021. The then-proposed centre would be for 80 women, whose right to claim asylum had been refused and who were waiting to be removed to their place of origin. They would be placed in a detention centre. Unlike a prison, people can be held in a detention centre indefinitely...the thought of women who may well have been traumatised, trafficked, and exploited ending up being held in such conditions appalled us.

As a volunteer with our Justice and Peace refugee project, I had supported a woman in detention by phone during the pandemic, and I know the unbearable effect it had on her. I also know that other ways of treating people due to be returned to their country of origin, without using detention centres have been trialled successfully, so there is an alternative.



The words of one of the people I knew through our refugee project, who was returned forcibly to

Albania, haunt me: "Bad things happened to me there, Liz. I just cannot return." That had really brought home to me that, just because a country is deemed "safe" by our government, it does not mean it's safe for everyone.

Our interfaith liturgy, which lasts about 45 minutes, has been put together by a small group of participants from faiths represented there. As well as praying, we collect toiletries and cash for phone cards for the women in detentions and try to get updates on the current situation so we can inform people of any developments. One interesting fact is that when we get started, we used to get some abuse from passing cars. Now we are much more likely to get encouragement.

It is wonderful to meet with others at the vigils. In a worsening hostile environment for people seeking asylum, it gives me hope that I can meet with others once a month, and stand united in prayer for a better, more tolerant world. We will never know the full effect of what we do. But we know that by doing this small act, we can commit the women to the care of our Lord and God, raise awareness in our local communities of their situations and in some small way break through the rhetoric of the hostile environment. As Pope Francis said in May 2023:

***"We are called to show maximum respect for the dignity of each migrant; this entails accompanying and managing waves of migration as best we can, constructing bridges and not walls, expanding channels for safe and regular migrations. In whatever place we decide to build our future, in the country of our birth or elsewhere, the important thing is that there always be a community ready to welcome, protect, promote and integrate everyone, without distinctions and without excluding anyone."***

**Liz Archibald — Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Justice and Peace Co-ordinating Council**

# CALENDAR

May 2024 — September 2024

<b>6 May 12:00pm</b> <i>Dioceses of Brentwood, Southwark &amp; Westminster</i> <b>Mass for Migrants at St. George's Cathedral, Southwark.</b> This is an annual event, giving thanks for the contributions of migrants to London and the Southeast. All welcome.	<b>11—19 May</b> <i>Urban Tree Festival</i> <a href="http://www.urbantreefestival.org">www.urbantreefestival.org</a>
<b>12—18 May</b> <i>Christian Aid Week</i> <a href="http://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week">www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week</a>	<b>13 May 12.45pm—2.00pm</b> <i>Southern Diocese Environment Network: <b>Climate and Elections</b></i> Reps from CAFOD and SVP will present their materials for upcoming elections to help reflect on democratic involvement. <a href="http://www.westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/southern-dioceses-environment-network/">www.westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/southern-dioceses-environment-network/</a>
<b>15 May</b> <i>International Conscientious Objectors Day</i> <a href="https://nationaltoday.com/international-conscientious-objectors-day/">https://nationaltoday.com/international-conscientious-objectors-day/</a>	<b>19—26 May</b> <i>Laudato Si' Week</i> <a href="https://laudatosiweek.org/">https://laudatosiweek.org/</a>
<b>25 May</b> <i>CARJ 40th Anniversary Day</i> <a href="http://www.carj.org.uk">www.carj.org.uk</a>	<b>25—31 May</b> <i>Living Laudato Si': Your Parish and Your Planet</i> Residential Retreat at Boarbank Hall <a href="https://boarbankhall.org.uk/whats-on/">https://boarbankhall.org.uk/whats-on/</a>
<b>1 June</b> <i>Pax Christi AGM</i> Quaker Meeting House, Liverpool <a href="https://paxchristi.org.uk/agm/">https://paxchristi.org.uk/agm/</a>	<b>5 June</b> <i>World Environment Day</i> <a href="https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/">https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/</a>
<b>8—16 June</b> <i>Great Big Green Week</i> <a href="https://greatbiggreenweek.com/">https://greatbiggreenweek.com/</a>	<b>16 June</b> <i>Day for Life</i> <a href="https://www.cbcew.org.uk/day-for-life/">https://www.cbcew.org.uk/day-for-life/</a>
<b>26 June</b> <i>International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (UN Observance)</i> <a href="https://www.un.org/en/observances/torture-victims-day">https://www.un.org/en/observances/torture-victims-day</a>	<b>14 July</b> <i>Sea Sunday</i> <a href="https://stellamaris.org.uk/seasunday/">https://stellamaris.org.uk/seasunday/</a>
<b>19—21 July</b> <i>National Justice and Peace Network Annual Conference: 'Just Politics'</i> <a href="http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk">www.justice-and-peace.org.uk</a>	<b>21—26 July</b> <i>Christians Aware Summer School: 'Faith in Life; Care for Creation by the World Faiths'</i> Parcevall Hall, near Appletreewick, Yorkshire Dales <a href="http://www.christiansaware.co.uk/ss24.html">http://www.christiansaware.co.uk/ss24.html</a>
<b>1 Sept—4 Oct</b> <i>Season of Creation: 'To Hope and Act with Creation'</i> <a href="https://seasonofcreation.org/">https://seasonofcreation.org/</a>	

## Welcome to our New Administrator

NJPN is really pleased to welcome Sharon Chambers as our newly appointed administrator. Prior to her appointment Sharon had been working on coordinating the comprehensive and much appreciated NJPN E-bulletin. During Geoff's illness, Sharon stepped in and took on the role of acting administrator, including the organising of the very successful NJPN Conference in July 2023. Sharon brings to the role a wealth of administrative skills from previous employment as well as a commitment to justice and peace in her parish and her area. We are extremely fortunate to have Sharon as part of NJPN and wish her the very best of luck in her new appointment.



### Become a Member:

Membership is open to local groups, families and individuals. Individual Subscription only £25 a year (but you are welcome to give more!) Low Income £15. Download a membership form from the website or contact the administrator.

[admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)

**DONATE TO NJPN: Online** via our website. **By cheque** payable to NJPN. **BACS** to NJPN Sort Code:16-31-15 Account No: 10089516, put your name and Donation in the reference field. To make a regular donation by **Standing Order**, contact the Administrator or download the Membership Form on the website.

**The National Justice & Peace Network** welcomes all who share a vision of a world in which people live in peace and harmony, where our common humanity is respected and all are able to contribute freely to the common good. NJPN seeks to encourage work for justice and peace by promoting communication and shared action between members, supporters and partners.

*This newsletter is produced three times a year by the Network*

*The views expressed are not necessarily those of the National Justice and Peace Network.*

Editorial Group: Michael Chambers, Sharon Chambers, Stephen Cooke. Ann Kelly, Anne Peacey.



### National Justice & Peace Network (NJPN)

39 Eccleston Square London SW1V 1BX Tel: 020 7901 4864  
Email: [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk) [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)  
A UK Registered Charity no. 1114947 A company limited by guarantee: Company no. 5036866  
Registered Office: 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX