

*The e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly within the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to [anneoc980@hotmail.com](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com)*

### LABOUR IS PROMISING A 'MISSION-LED' GOVERNMENT, BUT THE REAL NEEDS ARE RIGHT NOW

**Joseph Kelly** 5 July 2024: As the dust begins to settle on one of the most remarkable General Elections in living memory, the resounding plea from all quarters is for a sea change in the way that the business of politics is conducted. Whatever one's assessment of the past 14 years of Conservative rule, few would argue that we've seen a total collapse of trust and confidence in our legislators, and in a system of government that has failed to address any of the most urgent problems in contemporary British society.

It has been said today that Keir Starmer's victory is an historic landslide, but the voting results tell a rather different story. Labour won this election with 9,686,329 votes, which is actually 582,722 less votes than Jeremy Corbyn's 10,269,051 Labour votes in the 2019 General Election – and he lost! The reality is not so much that Labour swept the board, rather that their support has declined significantly – the result for Labour came because the Tory vote scattered to other parties, especially Reform.

At the bottom line, The Labour mandate to govern comes from a mere 22% of the voting electorate, which presents a heavy challenge to the party's desire to change fundamentally the political landscape of the UK, and for Keir Starmer to achieve his aspiration to be "an inclusive, determined prime minister who will look out for everyone in the country".

Whilst we are all desperate for the winds of change and decency to permeate the corridors of Westminster, the new Labour government is unfortunately going to find itself confronting the conundrum that has been the undoing of many a would-be legislator – what does the British public actually believe, and what does it really want?

One of the great complications of tampering with and dismantling established moral codes is that whilst liberation from conformity and strictures may seem like an attractive prospect, it's critical to the preservation of the social order to replace old norms with equally unambiguous mechanisms of behaviour, otherwise chaos and personal disorientation can accumulate.

Many of the great social changes of the 20th century brought badly needed improvements in the human condition but as the century closed we seemed to slip increasing into a kind of relativism that dismissed the notion of the human person as an essential part of a wider societal community, and increasingly swung the emphasis onto the centrality of the individual human experience of society and the world. Thus liberties, and certainly communal liberties, have been replaced increasingly with individual rights, with the consequence that society no longer comprises so much identifiable groups of people, but is fast becoming rather a collection of unique individuals all demanding to be respected and acknowledged equally.

For legislators this presents a particular difficulty. In generations past the population adhered vigorously to sharply defined political loyalties, to the extent that the impact of and reaction to virtually any political proposal could be anticipated, negotiated – or wisely avoided. In the present political climate it has become almost impossible to predict what the public mind is on any keynote issue; some would even argue that the public relationship with politics has become so fragmented that even the concept of 'public opinion' or 'public reaction' has become meaningless.

Add to this the systematic suppression of unpopular or controversial opinion that has been driven through society in the past few decades, and you have the most dangerous and unstable of all political dilemmas – a society that behaves and talks to one set of moral and societal standards, but adheres privately to entirely different value sets. This will be a central problem for the Starmer government, especially as the Labour Party has increasingly shifted its moral and legislative brief away from the Left of UK politics.

One of the main reasons given for the collapse of the Tory vote – even by Tory ministers themselves – was that the Conservative Party had drifted too far to the Left, and had abandoned those values and principles that everyday Tory supporters recognised and shared. As former Tory politician Dame Andrea Leadsom put it: "Perhaps it's that we've not been conservative enough", adding that in the pub a group of Conservatives had told her "they're sick of all this woke stuff, they're sick of all this trying to be more left-wing than Labour". This was undoubtedly what gave impetus to Reform, which has rapidly become a Right wing refuge for disillusioned hardline Tories.

Where does all this leave Keir Starmer and his new Cabinet? Well, frankly, still struggling to work out what's best for British politics and for the British public, at a time when no-one really has the faintest idea what the public sees as the most urgent priorities of the moment. In such circumstances, trying to chase the zeitgeist – which is what most political leaders have been trying to do for far too long – simply isn't a workable strategy. The political history books of the past half century are littered with examples of catastrophic misjudgements of this kind – the conviction that the British public would never vote for Brexit, the Iraq war, the handling of the Covid pandemic.

In the face of such a cloud of unknowing when it comes to public opinion and societal boundaries, it's no surprise that Mr Starmer has committed himself to a 'mission-led' government – where longer-term objectives and promises are made to deal with big issues and a government organises and conducts itself around the delivery of the final objective. So rather than becoming bogged down in trying to achieve smaller, domestic targets in pursuit of an ideal, the 'mission-led' government remains driven towards the final outcome, such that obstacles along the way are just there to be overcome in the pursuit of the greater objective. President John F. Kennedy declaring wildly in 1962 that America was going to put a man on the moon could be regarded as a textbook example of good mission-led government. Equally, Boris Johnson announcing in 2020 that HS2 was going ahead despite the spiralling costs could well be cited as an example of extremely bad 'mission-led' government.

Given the present economic and general global turmoil, opting for a 'mission-led' form of government might sound like wise counsel, but it's a strategy that becomes flawed fatally in a climate where the goalposts are moving constantly – and that's where we are embedded today.

Policies such as this have profound impact for people of faith also, as governments focussed disproportionately on larger, long-term objectives can often miss and fail to react to lesser shifts in public concern and circumstances. If one looks at the areas of moral and societal concern that faith groups talk about most, it's not long-term strategies that are needed, but the ability of government to react quickly to smaller, but desperately urgent needs. In blunt terms the poor, the homeless, the sick and the vulnerable cannot wait until longer-term visionary strategies for the reordering of society have been completed. Their need is of the moment, and it is in these places that our new government needs to be most pro-active.

You can see this disconnect clearly in Labour's Five Missions that Starmer announced in February 2023:

- Get the UK's economic growth to the highest sustained level in the G7 by the end of Labour's first term
- Make Britain a "clean energy superpower" with zero-carbon electricity by 2030
- Improve the NHS by reforming health and care service and reducing health inequality
- Create safer streets with 13,000 more neighbourhood police and police community support officers
- Improve opportunity for all citizens through improvements in childcare, schools, further education and lifelong learning.

Few would challenge the virtue of such bold and generalised aspirations, but the phraseology points to long-term tasks, at precisely a time when the need for intervention for the public good is at its most urgent.

Across the day we have seen a number of Catholic organisations, leaders and commentators calling for the government to 'act urgently' or to 'make it a priority' to address particular social ills and inequalities. After several months of asking Catholics to consider these issues when they came to vote, it is now down to faith communities to press the government hard to address urgent ground-level issues of human concern with as much priority as it's intending to devote to its longer-term goals.

Of course, we do need to build a better Britain for future generations, but this mustn't be achieved at the cost of ignoring present human sufferings and difficulties. The Samaritan may have been hurrying to Jericho ...

<https://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk/11349>

- Joseph Kelly is a Catholic writer and theologian

## A FORCE FOR GOOD AND A FORCE FOR CHANGE – LET’S HOPE SO

So, 14 years of Conservative rule has finally ended. Years that have seen untold damage to the UK, starting with David Cameron’s disastrous decision to call a referendum on the EU in a misguided attempt to crush the right’s stranglehold on the party, exacerbated by Boris Johnson’s false promises on the side of the leavers, boosted by his celebrity status, and further compounded by a lacklustre campaign by the remainers; Theresa May’s largely ineffectual term as Prime Minister; Johnson’s disastrous premiership, a mix of bluster, scandal and sleaze; Covid; Partygate; one rule for those in power and a contemptuous disregard for the rest of us; Liz Truss’s reckless crashing of the economy during her 49 day reign; Rishi Sunak out of his depth amidst a struggling economy, a crumbling health service, the Rwanda scheme to combat the small boats – a white elephant that has squandered vast amounts of money; escalating world crises such as the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, the rise of the tiger economies; misjudging the mood of the country over leaving the Normandy D-Day commemoration early in the build-up to election day; the rise of right-wing nationalism across Europe and the last minute opportunistic entry into the fray by Nigel Farage. Although Reform won only five seats their influence split the vote with devastating effect for the Tories. This was the case in my constituency resulting in a Labour win in for the first time since 1924.

One of the enduring images of the 2024 Election campaign was Sunak’s announcement to call the General Election, given outside No 10 Downing Street in the pouring rain – a potent metaphor for the mood of the country. As a backdrop to his statement, the track ‘Things can only get better’ by D:Ream, used in 1997 by Tony Blair as an anthem of hope, was heard blaring out, almost drowning Sunak’s words. By then it was game over.

And what now?

Labour’s victory heralds a new era. Sir Keir Starmer has said he wants to persuade people that Labour and politicians can be a “force for good and a force for change”. Already he has brought fresh thinking to the challenges ahead by looking outside the box. Despite having a massive number of MPs at his disposal, he has chosen three ‘outsiders’ for key roles: James Timpson, Sir Patrick Valance and Richard Hermer KC have all been ennobled to fulfil briefs where their expertise will be used to best effect (more on this below).

But over the promise of a new dawn lurks the dark shadow cast by the Reform party which has gained massive ground during this election with 4,106,661 votes representing a staggering 14.26% of the vote. Due to the UK first-past-the-post system this only translated into 5 seats but it still means a considerable success for the party. Compare this with the Green Party’s 4 MPs with 1,943,258 and 6.75% of the electorate, the Liberal Democrats who gained 3,519,163 votes or 12.22% – markedly less than Reform – yet resulting in 72 seats and the Scottish Nationalist Party with only 734,258 and 2.52% but 9 seats. The Conservatives gained 6,827,112 votes, 23.71% and Labour 9,731,363, 33.80%. Or, to look at the figures another way, Labour has gained power with only one third of the vote, hardly a resounding mandate.

Reform’s results indicate an alarmingly successful surge to the right that mirrors the trend in other European countries and, of course, the big beast Trump who looks likely to win another term as US President. The populism so carefully whipped up by the likes of Trump and Farage seems to be on the rise.

Added to concerns about the damage Reform may inflict in the life of the new Parliament is loss of trust from the Muslim community, with several new MPs winning seats in formerly traditional Labour areas on the single-issue platform of the war in Gaza. Starmer was criticised by many in his party, including councillors, for an interview with LBC in October in which he suggested that Israel “had the right” to withhold power and water in Gaza. His spokesman subsequently walked back the remark, saying that the Labour leader had only meant to say Israel had a general right to self-defence. But when Labour MPs were told by the party leadership in November to abstain from voting on an SNP-led motion calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, some Labour councillors resigned and, for many Muslims, trust in their Labour MP was lost.

At the local hustings I attended, which was refreshingly civilised with no one talking over their opponent, the candidates all agreed that social care is such a big issue that it would be best addressed by cross-party co-operation. And so it’s encouraging to see the Liberal Democrats’ chief whip, Wendy Chamberlain, saying she believes her party can exert power by building relationships and working together with MPs from all parties. Social care was at the core of the Lib Dems’ manifesto, and Chamberlain says: “We need to work on a cross party consensus to deal with social care.” Chamberlain also says that voters always “want to see their politicians working together for the best”. A force for good indeed.

**Anne O’Connor** 8 July 2024

- Sir Keir Starmer has elevated James Timpson to the House of Lords to take on the role of Minister of State for Prisons, Parole and Probation. Timpson is CEO of the retailer which bears his name and provides dry-cleaning, watch and shoe repairs. The company is known for supporting the unemployed, offering free dry-cleaning if they have a job interview coming up, as well as supporting ex-prisoners back into work. Timpsons employ more than 600 prison leavers, making up more than 10% of the company. James Timpson was awarded an OBE in 2011 for the training and employment of disadvantaged people. His move to the Lords, as well as his new position as cabinet minister, has been praised as shrewd appointment. Timpson is widely regarded as someone who 'actually' deserves a place in the Lords.

Prior to his new appointment Timpson was chair of UK charity the Prison Reform Trust, which aims to reduce imprisonment and improve conditions for inmates and families. As the Prison Reform Trust is a charity independent of government or any political affiliation, Timpson was obliged to stand down immediately. He has previously expressed the view that only a third of people in prison should be there.

**Text from a discussion between Timpson and Krishnan Guru-Murthy on Channel 4's Ways to Change the World podcast:** <https://metro.co.uk/2024/07/06/james-timpson-becoming-prisons-minister-important-many-21175540/>

Nazir Afzal, former chief crown prosecutor for North West England and an advocate of the new government, called Timpson's appointment "ground-breaking". "We can see a significant sea change in how we deal with crime and offenders in this country," he said. "We've had a culture for far too long of putting people inside who shouldn't be."

Last week, the Prison Governors' Association (PGA), which represents more than 95% of all prison governors and managers working in England and Wales, said the entire criminal justice system "stands on the precipice of failure" as it called on the next government to tackle problems "without delay".

In his first press conference as prime minister, Sir Keir Starmer said too many people found themselves back in jail "relatively quickly" after being sent there. He added that intervening to prevent young people committing knife crime would be an early priority for his new government. But he said there would be no "overnight solution" to prison overcrowding, adding: "We've got too many prisoners, not enough prisons."

The new Labour government has promised to review sentencing. Plans are yet to be unveiled, but Mr Timpson's appointment may signal a change of approach in this area.

- Sir Patrick Vallance, the government's former chief scientific advisor, is also joining the Lords to become Minister of State for Science in the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. Vallance has previously backed Labour's flagship manifesto pledge to set up a publicly-owned energy firm. He has stated: "I am often asked which of Britain's many pressing public policy challenges need a vaccine-style approach. I believe that one such priority is the urgent need to end the era of excessive carbon emissions, high energy bills and energy insecurity by accelerating the net zero transition to clean, homegrown energy. With a determined effort using currently available technologies and those that are close to being deployable, a clean power system by 2030 is achievable."

- Richard Hermer KC, who has 31 years of experience in human rights, public and environmental law, has also been given a seat in the House of Lords to become Attorney General.

Prime ministers appoint ministers from outside of parliament for a range of reasons. Experts from industry or academia are often appointed on account of their experience or specialist knowledge. This was particularly common in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, when Gordon Brown and David Cameron appointed experts on economics, banking and finance from outside parliament to their governments.

In other cases, prime ministers can appoint former MPs, including those who have stepped down from parliament or lost their seats, in order to allow them to carry on in an existing ministerial role. Other individuals may be appointed as advisers to government rather than as full ministers, often referred to as "tsars".

Jill Rutter, senior fellow at the Institute for Government, told the BBC: "I think there are potentially big benefits to a government having people who can bring genuine expertise. Someone like Patrick Vallance has actually been inside government so he knows what it's like. It's a really interesting appointment. It is useful and the big task is to make this work both for the government and for the new incoming minister as well - to make sure they are properly supported in all their new duties and make sure they don't find themselves distracted from what they think they've been brought in to do."

## XO BIKES: THE CHARITY FIGHTING AGAINST RISING REOFFENDING RATES IN BRITAIN'S PRISONS

Prisoners at Pentonville prison are being trained as bike mechanics by a cycling shop that hopes to employ them one day. XO Bikes, a business run by ex-offenders, opened a workshop in the category B prison in North London at the start of last month to provide skills for prison leavers and reduce re-offending. The four-week course, which five men have already passed, involves four or five hours a day towards achieving an accredited bike maintenance qualification.

Stef Jones, founder of XO Bikes and its parent charity, Onwards & Upwards, hopes to train 50 prisoners a year in Pentonville and, if logistically possible, expand to other sites, including a Young Offenders Institute Feltham.

Two XO Bikes shops, in Lewisham and Wandsworth, have trained about 50 mechanics already and Jones' long-term aim is to train 400 a year. Several have stayed on at the shops in full-time employment as mechanics or in operational roles. The business has received more than 1,000 donated bikes so far, refurbished 700 of them and sold 500. The majority come from the Metropolitan Police, who collect unclaimed stolen or abandoned bikes.

Not only does the initiative provide training in a useful skill that can lead to employment; it also gives the trainees a sense of purpose and a sense of community to help them reintegrate into society.

### THE XO MISSION

We want to free ex-offenders from the cycle of reoffending by creating jobs that change lives for good. Our aim is to bring employment rates up and reoffending rates down. By creating trusted brands and small businesses, we mean to prove that employing ex-offenders makes business sense, so shifting attitudes towards employing them. Not every offence should lead to a life sentence.

### HOW IT WORKS

To make this happen, we provide training on the inside, employment on the outside and pastoral support on all sides. We set up viable businesses that make proper use of the talent and determination of our employees. We are always practical and commercial in our proposals. We believe that to be meaningful our businesses must be profitable. And our businesses are sustainable. They are built to last.

Founder Stef Jones ran his own ad agency for 20 years. Voluntary work in HMP Brixton led him to the realisation that he had a passion for prisons and specifically, helping keep people out of them. Stef set up Onwards & Upwards in 2021 with Rob Love and together they created the first of their planned ventures, XO Bikes in May, 2022.

**Buy or donate bikes:** [xobikes.com](http://xobikes.com)

<https://www.onwardsandupwards.uk/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/xo-bikes-prisons-charity-reform-b2530717.html>

## CAFOD WELCOMES NEW GOVERNMENT

**Source:** CAFOD 5 July 2024

The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development has issued the following statement in response to this morning's UK election result. Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD, said: "We welcome our new government who take power at a critical time of growing global inequality and multiple crises, both domestically and internationally.

"We face a global debt crisis with 3 billion people living in nations where debt payments exceed their spending on education and health. The Labour party has a strong tradition of action on global debt, they answered the call of the Jubilee year in 2000 as we hope they will do for the Jubilee year 2025 by supporting fair debt settlements through UK law.

We hope we can work urgently with the new government to act on Sudan where 750,000 people are on the brink of famine with millions more displaced and in Gaza which is desperate for a just and peaceful solution to the conflict and urgent humanitarian assistance.

Pope Francis has called politics a "lofty vocation" we look forward to working with the new government and all new Members of Parliament to ensure we heed his call to work for the common good and be "good Samaritans and not indifferent bystanders".

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/50133>

**CAFOD:** <https://cafod.org.uk/>

## GROWTH: A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT?

Ian Linden 28 June 2024

The word “Growth”, endlessly repeated by politicians during the present election campaign, is doing a lot of heavy lifting. Faith, Growth, but rarely Charity, are the cardinal virtues displayed for the mass media. When all the promises are “fully costed” but fall short of balancing, Growth is the shared panacea.

The trouble is growth post-BREXIT, Covid and Putin’s war looks feeble. No politician is reckless enough to explain exactly what they mean by Growth – though there are clues in the “Kick-start Economic Growth” section of the Labour Party Manifesto. Obviously, something organic and getting bigger - not to be mistaken for the magical money tree.

Economists created a value they could express as a single figure or how would we all know if the economy, more precisely GDP, (Gross Domestic Product) was getting bigger, smaller or remaining unchanged? Not that there has ever been a clear consensus on what should be included in GDP.

We still hang onto something of Margaret Thatcher’s homely simile that the national economy is like a huge domestic budget and managed in the same way. It isn’t. And, incidentally, domestic labour is one of the productive activities that economists leave out of GDP measurements. Were it to be included, the ILO, International Labour Organisation, estimate unpaid domestic work and caring to amount to be 9% of global GDP (\$11 trillion) of which women’s domestic labour makes up more than two-thirds or 6.6%.

Surprisingly, despite their prominence today, Growth and GDP are a relatively recent concern of economists. The history of Growth as a concept is set out in the opening chapters of Daniel Susskind’s brilliantly accessible *Growth: The Reckoning* Allen-Lane 2024. It was the economic crisis of the Great Depression (1929-1939) that triggered the search for some simple measurement of economies.

During the Second World War the question of what proportion of the overall economy could safely be devoted to war production became pressing. “The American people have learned during the war the measure of their productive capacity’, President Roosevelt triumphantly declared to Congress in January 1945”. And it was not long before measures of Growth expressed as GDP were regarded as important indicators of who was winning the Cold War. Now, as the current election campaign nears the end, Growth has been established as the panacea for national decline.

So today we have figures for GDP per capita over time telling us whether there is growth or ‘degrowth’. And because economics dominate our political thinking about what matters, while economists keep at arms’ length other things that matter, which they label as ‘externalities’, public political debate does not engage with questions about the price paid for Growth.

Since the industrial revolution, whose origins lie at the end of the 18th century, what is now described as Growth brought unprecedented prosperity to much of the world, Africa is an exception, reducing poverty, dramatically improving education, enabling leaps forward in public health, feeding vastly increased numbers of people. But, looking at the UK – and not only the UK – nearly all these advances are now either stalled or going into reverse.

The damage arising from blinkered, ungoverned Growth includes the fast-approaching climate catastrophe caused by carbon emissions, the degradation of our natural environment, the possibility of nuclear holocaust narrowly averted at least twice in the last century, ill-health caused by industrialised food, and growing inequality. The Growth dilemma is never “fully costed” nor raised in the barrage of interviewers’ questions about the economy on radio and TV. Growth as economic panacea remains a deceptive proposition unless its hidden trade-offs are acknowledged, shared with citizens for deliberation, and mitigated by government action. This is not the only message of Susskind’s revealing book, but it is certainly the most important one.

Susskind sets Growth within the context of the common good, rather than in short-term party-political la-la-land. He poses fundamental questions about what kind of society in what kind of the world do, we, our children and grandchildren want to live in? Something you might have expected political leaders to talk about. And expected the electorate to want to hear about.

Where *Growth: The Reckoning* is doubly helpful it is in resetting Growth within a discussion of trade-offs, rather than a simple binary argument, more growth or degrowth, and in proposing a direction of travel for social and economic development. Perhaps it is most insightful in its vision of Growth as meaning more than increasing the production of material things - and money- by adding ideas and innovation to the mix and proposing other ends to pursue. Susskind wants to redirect and redefine Growth not get rid of it. He distinguishes this approach from the temptation to insert socially desirable activities into the old, tired model which is yielding diminishing returns.

What is considered socially desirable poses moral questions liable to be treated in a technocratic manner or left to market forces. This is not as theoretical as it sounds. As an example, Susskind uses the pool of networked ideas existing at the time of the COVID outbreak in early 2020 in the world of medical research which, with government funding, created COVID vaccines in an extraordinarily short time. And here the moral dimension of this innovation was evident in the failure to supply the global South adequately. Susskind delves more deeply into this terrain with an interesting discussion of intellectual property – the ownership of ideas – “the most important toolbox that societies have to shape the creation and distribution of ideas”. Balancing the costs of Growth, sacrificing one benefit for another, requires the widest possible deliberation and consultation.

To achieve Growth, Government must provide incentives the necessary means – such as a healthy educated workforce – and an enabling atmosphere. Yes, the other most repetitious campaign word “a plan”. It must include investment in research and development, and in public-private partnerships – which has some positive references in the Labour Manifesto and in James Naughtie’s exceptional exploration of Growth and innovation in *The World at One* on 23 June. Susskind also calls for citizen involvement in the form of civic assemblies to generate and evaluate new ideas but also to nurture comprehension of what is at stake, as well as support for progressive forms of government intervention.

Susskind’s believes in “the innovative genius of humankind”. His book sustains a refreshing balance of ideas, academic analysis and down-to-earth realism drawn from his work in the policy unit at No. 10. The gulf between his book’s clarity, understanding, and vision and the mind-numbing repetition of the word Growth that political leaders, right now, feel obliged to utter under questioning is shocking.

Have these six weeks locked in party-political-media inanity been democracy at work? If you don’t think so, send this book to whoever gets elected in your constituency.

<https://www.ianlinden.com/latest-blogs/growth-a-suitable-case-for-treatment>

- Professor Ian Linden is Visiting Professor at St Mary's University, Strawberry Hill, London. A past director of the Catholic Institute for International Relations, he was awarded a CMG for his work for human rights in 2000. He has also been an adviser on Europe and Justice and Peace issues to the Department of International Affairs of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. Ian chairs a new charity for After-school schooling in Beirut for Syrian refugees and Lebanese kids in danger of dropping out partnering with CARITAS Lebanon and work on board of Las Casas Institute in Oxford with Richard Finn OP. His latest book was *Global Catholicism* published by Hurst in 2009.

## CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE NEWS

28 June 2024: Did you miss the **CAAT@50 lecture** last week? Dr Sam Perlo-Freeman, CAAT's research coordinator, was invited to present a special lecture at the LSE Library entitled *Campaign Against Arms Trade at 50: Adapting resistance to a changing world*. The lecture is part of a series of events at the LSE Library this year – our 50th anniversary of resisting the arms trade – and we are grateful for the opportunity offered by them to share our story. We are also part of the LSE Library's exhibition *A Say in the End of the World: Solidarity and Nuclear Defence in the Cold War*; do visit this before it ends on 15 September. The LSE Library is now home to our extensive archive of written documents, images and campaigning artefacts; this important collection will be available for all to browse when cataloguing is complete. The launch should be around our birthday in mid-November.

The lecture was chaired by Dr Luc-Andre Brunet, Senior Lecturer in Contemporary International History at the Open University and Co-Director of the Peace and Security Project at LSE IDEAS. If you weren't able to be part of the lively audience, you can now watch the recording on YouTube by clicking here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDLTDXD1QsA>

**Farnborough Arms Fair (Farnborough International Airshow)** returns this year, and resistance is expected. The fair runs from 22-26 July 2024.

Exhibitors we are expecting to be at the arms fair include:

BAE Systems – makes Typhoons warplanes that the Saudis used to bomb Yemen; makes 15% of F35 warplane used by Israel to attack Gaza; Lockheed Martin – F35 and F16 manufacturer. Used by Israel in Gaza; RTX Raytheon – Paveway bombs, used in Yemen; Leonardo – Typhoon maker; guidance system for F35; Boeing – major warplane supplier, F15, Chinook, Apache Gunship; Israeli arms companies, linked to the Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza; Elbit – drones, missiles, weapons used in Gaza, Israel's largest privately owned arms company; Rafael – missile maker, weapons used in Gaza; IAI – Israel Aerospace Industries, major supplier to Israeli defence forces (mainly does e.g. aircraft maintenance, upgrades, drones)

Find out more about who is exhibiting this year on CAAT's FIA 2024 Data Page: <https://caat.org.uk/data/arms-fairs/farnborough-2024/>

## GRACE, TRUTH & THE COMMON GOOD: A LECTURE IN HONOUR OF FRANK FIELD

“Church-based social action has grown significantly in the last 20 years, but it needs an appraisal. Too often social action projects can become disconnected from efforts for justice, deepen a sense of dependency in those they serve, and end up drifting in a secular direction.”  
– Together for the Common Good

**Jon Kuhrt** 1 July 2024

I am very honoured to have been asked to give a lecture for Together for the Common Good in memory of the late MP Frank Field, about the future of Christian social action. The title is Grace, Truth and the Common Good. It will be held on Monday 15 July 18.30-20.00 and I am hoping that many readers of Grace+Truth can join online.

The lecture is one of a number of opportunities that has emerged since I published this longer article *Justice, Empowerment & Faith: the future of Christian Social Action* last December. I have had responses from a wide range of social action organisations and last week I had a fascinating meeting with a major NGO in Australia who wanted to discuss the points it raised in their context.

### **This is the way T4CG are describing the event:**

Christian social action plays a significant role in alleviating the symptoms of poverty. But are we on the right road?

‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.’ Jer. 6:16

Growing poverty, homelessness and destitution in the UK bring us to a crossroads. And with profound social and political change and increasing inequality, questions around impact, power and authentic Christian witness need to be addressed.

At such a crossroads, we want to prompt an examination of conscience. To help us engage with these important questions, we have invited Jon Kuhrt to deliver a lecture that opens up a conversation across the churches and beyond. Grounded in his extensive experience as a practitioner, Jon will interrogate the issues for us, drawing on the wisdom of the Christian traditions, including Catholic social thought and the theology of Lesslie Newbigin.

The lecture will be held in memory of the late Frank Field, MP for Birkenhead for forty years. A committed Anglican, Frank was an outstanding parliamentarian and social reformer, unequalled in his dedication to improving the lives of people trapped in poverty. His work ranged from the ground-breaking Child Poverty Action Group, to lobbying for jobs in Birkenhead, from legislation for the Minimum Living Wage, to co-founding Feeding Britain.

Frank thought deeply about putting Christian theology into practice in a way that balanced grace and truth, and it was this that connected Jon with Frank. Frank was a friend of Jenny Sinclair, Director of Together for the Common Good, and encouraged the charity’s work.

**Register Your Place Now** [https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/grace-truth-and-the-common-good-the-future-of-christian-social-action-tickets-930173212117?utm\\_experiment=test\\_share\\_listing&aff=ebdsshios](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/grace-truth-and-the-common-good-the-future-of-christian-social-action-tickets-930173212117?utm_experiment=test_share_listing&aff=ebdsshios)  
<https://gracetruth.blog/2024/07/01/grace-truth-the-common-good-a-lecture-in-honour-of-frank-field/>

- Regular readers of the NW NJPN E Bulletin will be familiar with Jon Kuhrt’s Grace+Truth blog. Jon has worked with people affected by homelessness for 30 years. He is a former government adviser on how faith groups address rough sleeping and is now CEO of Hope into Action.

### **LANCASTER DIOCESE FAITH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION**

**Save the date! Saturday, 12 October 2024**

Lancaster Diocese Faith and Justice Commission will be holding an event at the Lancaster Cathedral Social Centre, Balmoral Road Lancaster, LA4 3BT.

Speakers will include: **Bishop Paul Swarbrick, Sir John Battle and Clare Dixon** from CAFOD.

More details to follow but do feel free to contact me if you would like to register your interest to come:  
**Sue Grubic Faith & Justice Worker Diocese of Lancaster** [ldfsue@gmail.com](mailto:ldfsue@gmail.com) or by text on 07791 444 417



## SEA SUNDAY 14 JULY

### **Modern slavery, COVID-19 and missing loved ones: Stella Maris chaplain lifts lid on life as a seafarer**

5 July 2024: Ahead of Sea Sunday on 14 July, a chaplain for seafarers and fishers in the south of England has revealed the myriad of challenges that seafarers face, including threats of modern slavery, extended periods of time away from loved ones, and loneliness and isolation. Deacon Nick O'Neill, the Senior Area Port Chaplain for the South of England and Wales for Catholic charity Stella Maris, spoke to the Bishops' Conference about his experiences ministering to seafarers, which included seafarers trapped on a boat for over a year during COVID-19.

#### **Covid-19**

Speaking about his experiences during the pandemic, Deacon Nick said: "There was a crew of seafarers predominantly from Myanmar. And there were seven men that effectively just took a stance against the company and said we've been on the ship for 13 months now, and we really want to go home. So the company did get them off the ship and arranged for a hotel and a chartered flight. But it was a week until they could fly home."

He added: "One of my chaplains went to pick them up... effectively they'd been on a piece of metal, industrial-looking, with a tiny cabin, humming, vibrating, clanking for over a year. When he took them off the ship for the first time, they went to a place called Ports Downhill, which is near Portsmouth. And these seven men, the one thing they were desperate to do was to feel grass under their feet and in between their toes. So they took their shoes and socks off. They ran in the grass like children and they were so excited and so happy that they started making WhatsApp video calls to their family back home in Myanmar. They were finally off the ship and could feel the earth and were able to feel human again."

#### **Modern Slavery**

Deacon Nick also had an encounter with modern slavery, and staged a dramatic intervention to liberate the victims: "About three years ago, during COVID, one of my colleagues up in the north of England received a message from a Sri Lankan fisherman who he'd met previously on a visit and he mentioned he was on a ship with four other men and that they were all worried about their lives and how they were being treated and were asking for support."

Because the seafarers were in Shoreham, the south of England, Deacon Nick was asked to go and investigate. What he found was distressing: "The five of them had been part of a modern slavery ring. We contacted the police who went down to the boat with border force, took them into the police station, took the skipper and first mate into custody, and contacted Stella Maris again to ask how we could support the fishers. We managed to find them accommodation that first evening they were taken off the ship. We liaised with the police to get them to the hotel. We provided them with clothing, with toiletries, with some food. Everything they had was left on the boat because it was effectively a crime scene. So, the police had cordoned it all off and they were only allowed to come off in the clothes they were wearing."

With the help of a generous priest, Stella Maris looked after the five men for two weeks, eventually supporting them into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which is the government's system for looking after victims of modern slavery and trafficking. Deacon Nick said: "Sadly, they are still in that system. It's been about three years since they were taken off the boat."

#### **Missing family and isolation**

According to Deacon Nick, the biggest challenge that seafarers face is isolation, and being away from their family for a long time: "They're working to provide for their families, which is a noble goal to be able to work hard and earn money, which goes back to provide for the family. But of course, the trade-off for that career and that money is that they are leaving behind the people that they're closest to and people they love. The time away does impact on their mental well-being and their emotional state and I'd say that isolation is the biggest challenge we're seeing."

#### **Sea Sunday and how to help**

Deacon Nick also talked about Sea Sunday, "a day that we can specifically try to remember all those people that have worked at sea and all those people that are currently working at sea". He said Catholics can support the work of Stella Maris with prayer, volunteering, and donating money – or even knitting woolly hats. He finished saying: "Thank you to everybody who already supports Stella Maris."

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/modern-slavery-covid-19-and-missing-loved-ones-stella-maris-chaplain-lifts-lid-on-life-as-a-seafarer/>

#### **PODCAST**

You can hear more from Deacon Nick O'Neill by listening to a special Catholic News podcast. Download here:

<https://episodes.castos.com/catholicchurch/1780561/c1e-2n3pi8k2m9a55gig-5zgg7ddkbnzg-buhgqw.mp3>

Find out how you and your parish can help here: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/sea-sunday/>

## FRANK COTTRELL-BOYCE NAMED AS NEW CHILDREN'S LAUREATE

**Jo Siedlecka** 5 July 2024: The multi-award-winning author and screenwriter Frank Cottrell-Boyce has been named the Waterstones Children's Laureate 2024-2026. He was presented with the prestigious medal by outgoing laureate, Joseph Coelho, at a ceremony in Leeds on Tuesday.

Since his first book *Millions* won the CILIP Carnegie Medal, Frank has written a series of best-sellers - including *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again*. He dreamed up the London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony, co-wrote the Platinum Jubilee 'Paddington' sketch, and penned scripts for Doctor Who, Goodbye Christopher Robin and The Beautiful Game.

At the ceremony, Cottrell-Boyce pledged to dedicate his two-year tenure to starting a national conversation about the role books and reading play in transforming children's lives. His campaign, called 'Reading Rights: Books Build a Brighter Future', also includes plans for a national summit bringing together expert voices in the political, education, literacy and early years sectors.

He said: "Our children are living through the aftermath of a series of crises, the pandemic, a series of wars and an unfolding environmental crisis. The only public conversation is about how we can make our children 'catch up' - which seems to me a kind of code for forgetting this ever happened. None of us has the slightest idea about what the future now holds for them - but the one thing we do know is that they will need to know how to be happy."

He added: "Every child has to have the opportunity to begin to build the apparatus of happiness within themselves. I will use my time as Waterstones Children's Laureate to call for a reset in our attitude towards how we value children's books and reading - to start this story again - and to campaign for the millions of children living in poverty to be given the same life-changing chances... Whoever we wake up to Friday morning, they have the power to make a revolutionary change in children's lives."

He told the Press Association: "Other laureates have visited lots of libraries and lots of schools, but I want to be knocking on the door of Number 10 and saying its about time we did something about this nationally."

Coventry-based educational consultant Maeve Walsh, also known as the 'Reading Doctor' welcomed the news of the new Children's Laureate. She said: "Congratulations to Frank Cottrell-Boyce on his appointment as the new Children's Laureate! It's clear that there's an exciting journey ahead as he aims to tackle important issues. Frank plans to establish an environment in which to bring together key stakeholders to drive significant systemic change. His focus on leveraging power for positive impact is truly inspiring!"

In the course of her work as a reading specialist with children, Maeve has been concerned to discover that many of her pupils do not have any books at home - while other youngsters had "so many books that they don't know what to do with." Back in January, Maeve made an online appeal and was able to collect enough books to give one to every child in St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Coventry. Since then she has set up The Coventry Book Bank, collecting more than 14,000 books - and donated to over 20 schools and organisations - but is aware there are many more to contact - and many more books are needed.

Maeve says she hopes Frank Cottrell-Boyce might be interested in learning about the Book Bank. "It's an initiative that is steadily making a difference in our community," she said. "Every small change contributes to a larger impact, and it's heartening to see progress being made." Maeve told ICN she would love to expand the project, setting up branches in many other towns and cities, where there is such a great need.

In addition to donating books to children, Maeve said: "I'd like to see businesses sponsoring the same children to receive additional reading support in schools, therefore really equipping children with equal access to a full education and opportunities. This support could be offered by Reading Doctors nationally." (We'll be keeping you updated on her progress.)

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/50129>

### LINKS

**The Reading Doctor:** [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078484731128](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078484731128)

**Listen to an interview on BBC Radio with Maeve Walsh here:** [www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1051318819598029](http://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1051318819598029)

**Book bank to 'redress balance' between pupils:** [www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cv2i3ndyy57o](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cv2i3ndyy57o)

**Watch: Ch4 - New children's laureate explains why reading out loud is an act of love:**

[www.channel4.com/news/the-new-childrens-laureate-explains-why-reading-out-loud-is-an-act-of-love](http://www.channel4.com/news/the-new-childrens-laureate-explains-why-reading-out-loud-is-an-act-of-love)

## NEW CATHOLIC PODCAST AUDIENCE GROWS

3 July 2024: Last month saw the launch of All Kinds of Catholic, a new weekly podcast. The project has been created by Theresa Alessandro who hosts the episodes. A new conversation with a different Catholic guest is released every Wednesday. The dialogue focusses on how each person is living their faith in the world today. Theresa explained: "It is important that the podcast appears on mainstream platforms like Apple, Spotify, Amazon and Youtube, witnessing to the fact that Catholic people, and our faith journeys, are part of the fabric of society."

Five episodes in, the pod is drawing a growing following of many hundreds of listeners, including some in other parts of the world. Key elements of Catholic culture and practice come to the surface naturally in the conversations. Guests have talked about the Rosary, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the power of our conscience and of justice, the value of groups like the Catholic Women's League or Laudato Si' Animators, the witness of a beloved parish priest's Jubilee celebration and the challenge of talking about our faith at work. People have honestly shared their 'wobbles', or more serious concerns about their faith or about the church as well.

It can be difficult to put faith into words and the podcast guests are mainly people who are not in the public eye. Their courage and willingness to share something of their story and their own spirituality is deeply moving. The feedback received so far demonstrates how much the episodes resonate with listeners: "I really appreciated what [podcast guest] Maggie said about women in the church. That's where I am as well." "We all sat and listened to [Podcast guest] Peter. It was so lovely to hear him talk about Santo Nino." "Loved the wonderful conversation with Matthew. Such human warmth."

Upcoming episodes include: another Matthew, who has Nigerian heritage and was born during the civil war; Yvonne speaking from New Zealand; and Eleni, who is both a recent graduate and a recent convert.

Please search for All Kinds of Catholic on podcast platforms. 'Follow' the podcast so you won't miss an episode. Rate and review it, to help other people find it. You can follow the dedicated X and Facebook accounts too: [@KindsofCatholic](#).

Theresa has a wealth of development plans but in the meantime do tune in and keep sharing your thoughts, so you can be part of our deeper listening and conversation about Catholic faith in the world today.

### LINKS

**ALL KINDS OF CATHOLICS:** <https://kindsofcatholic.buzzsprout.com>

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/KindsofCatholic](http://www.facebook.com/KindsofCatholic)

**Twitter/X:** <https://twitter.com/KindsofCatholic>

**Find the transcript:** <https://kindsofcatholic.buzzsprout.com>

**RECOMMENDED: Episode 5 with Colette Joyce:** Colette reflects on the times she feels close to God, in nature and in quiet reflection but also a time when she felt strong anger and resentment towards God - so much that she stepped away from the Church for a time. Colette shares insights into her role as the Co-ordinator of Westminster Diocese' Justice & Peace Commission - and much more.

<https://kindsofcatholic.buzzsprout.com/2333035/15218695-5-what-takes-me-towards-god?t=0>

<https://westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/2024/07/05/westminster-justice-and-peace-co-ordinator-featured-on-all-kinds-of-catholic-podcast/>

## BOARBANK HALL PROGRAMME FOR 2024

**Thinking Faith Summer residential week** 27 July-3 August 2024. Theme: What Catholics *Really* Believe. Time out for working Catholics.

**Living Laudato Si' Residential week** 5-12 October. A week to explore how to live out *Laudato Si'* fully in our personal lives and within the Church. All welcome.

We welcome bookings from parish, school or student groups or any other groups who may benefit from our hospitality. We also work with schools to provide INSET days to suit each school, with the option of overnight stays. All our residential events combine talks and discussions with Mass, Prayer of the Church and opportunity for personal prayer, in a context of friendship and community in our beautiful Cumbrian setting beside Morecambe Bay. Any group who would like help in arranging a programme or speakers for any kind of retreat or residential event should contact Sr Margaret Atkins on [margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk](mailto:margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk) or 015395-32288

**Boarbank Hall**, Allithwaite, Grange Over Sands, Cumbria, LA11 7NH [www.boarbankhall.org.uk](http://www.boarbankhall.org.uk)

## THE BIG RIDE FOR PALESTINE: RIDE AGAINST GENOCIDE AND OCCUPATION IN 2024

**Calling all cyclists and supporters from Merseyside, Wirral, Cheshire and North Wales, for this year's Big Ride for Palestine.**

The Big Ride for Palestine started 9 years ago in response to the devastating loss of children's lives already happening in Gaza in 2015. Riding is a great way to show your solidarity for Palestinians and raise funds for Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) for children's projects and more recently, for Palestine Riders and for the Gaza Sunbirds paracycling team.

2024 has been very different from previous years with the horrifying genocide in Gaza and the unending harassment of Palestinians in the West Bank. Sadly, we have also witnessed the brutal destruction of playgrounds like the one The Big Ride funded in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza.

**Jane Marshall writes:** This year The Big Ride is going Regional. I'm contacting you as a member of the organising group for our Region. The ride will be in Liverpool on Saturday 20 July and we are busy getting the route sorted and planning a really good day for cyclists and supporters.

At present it's looking to be about 26 miles through city parks, a cycle way, some quiet roads and some busy roads where we can make an impact. There are opportunities to do a shorter ride by hopping on a Merseyrail train partway. There'll be a rally at the beginning from 10am at the Pier Head and a fund-raising social event with food from about 5 in Liverpool 8 - we're working on this now.

We're very much hoping that there'll be riders from across the region, and also volunteers for marshalling on the ride, providing support vehicles, mechanical and first aid, help with rider registration, support at the break stops, support with the evening event, food, offers of accommodation for those from afar, and generally to help raise awareness of the ride and get riders.

Email [janesbigride@gmail.com](mailto:janesbigride@gmail.com) to let us know how you want to be involved, with a tel. no. and email address and we'll put you on our supporters list. Any queries, do please ask. We look forward to meeting lots of riders and supporters from all over the Region.

**Jane Marshall, The Big Ride Regional Planning Group**

**Booking for this ride is now open:** <https://www.thebigride4palestine.com/big-ride-2024>

### REGIONAL BIG RIDES THIS SUMMER

#### Saturday 20 July

North of Ireland (lead city: Belfast)  
Yorkshire & North East (lead city: Sheffield)  
Merseyside & North Wales (lead city: Liverpool)

#### Saturday 3 August

Lancashire & North West (lead city: Manchester)  
Midlands (lead city: Birmingham)  
South Wales & South West (lead city: Bristol)

#### Saturday 10 August

London & South East  
with rides converging from North (Kings Cross), South (Croydon) and West (Paddington) London



## UK CHURCHES CHALLENGED TO PRIORITISE PEACE IN GAZA

**Pat Devlin** July 6, 2024

*Pat Devlin gave an online talk on 27 June to the National Justice and Peace Network on ways to support peacemaking in Palestine and Israel.*

As someone who first travelled to Palestine and Israel as an individual pilgrim, eager to see the land of the Gospels and then spent two terms as an Ecumenical Accompanier in the West Bank, I have been horrified to see, first the atrocities of October 7th and then the crimes against humanity in Gaza.

I was profoundly challenged by the sermon of Munther Isaac, the Lutheran pastor from Bethlehem which he delivered after Christmas in London when he proclaimed:

"if Jesus were to enter our world today it would be in Gaza among those under the rubble. Jesus under the rubble is the message of God identifying with humanity in its suffering and pain. It is about God who identifies with the oppressed, even being born among them as one of them."

And so he challenged the UK Churches about their response to the situation in Gaza saying:  
"We do not exaggerate to say that the credibility of the Churches, of our Christian witness is at stake"

My initial response was to return to the Kairos Palestine document, 'A Moment of Truth,' to see what Palestinian Christians were asking of the World Churches and International Community in 2009 which they felt was a critical moment.

The document starts by describing the daily reality of their situation stemming from the 1948 Nakba and exacerbated by Israeli Occupation since the 1967 including:

- The refugee situation which dates from 1948, and the deteriorating prisoner situation
- The Military Occupation since 1967
- The ever expanding Israeli settlement programme within Palestinian Territory
- Movement restrictions controlled by checkpoints and the separation Barrier resulting in
- Family disunification, deprivation of religious liberty and a truncated economy
- The Blockade of Gaza since 2007
- The status of Jerusalem

- The second class status of Palestinian citizens in the state of Israel  
(Now institutionalised through the adoption of the Nation State Law in 2018, leading to leading human rights groups including Amnesty international demonstrating that Israel now fulfils the legal criteria for an apartheid state)

It highlights Israel's **disregard for International law** and the ineffective response of the International Community, warning that it will lead to the law of the jungle.

It challenges Israel's use of '**self defence against a war of terror**' as a **justification**, saying this distorts the reality of resistance in a situation of dispossession, occupation and blockade.

However it is clear that "Love is the commandment of Christ our Lord to us.....but, seeing the face of God in everyone does not mean accepting evil or aggression on their part. Rather this love seeks to correct the evil and stop the aggression"

So, a creative, non violent resistance is advocated and economic sanctions are identified as the most effective means. Making clear the support for the Boycott, Divest & Sanction campaign first called for by civil society in 2002.

**Boycott** can be an individual or group activity but requires a mass response to be effective  
It can target\*:

- Israeli Settlements (illegal under international law)
- Any company profiting from the Occupation
- All Israeli companies, institutions, sporting & cultural entities (NB apartheid definition)

**Divestment** rests largely with institutions

The church campaign is led by Sabeel-Kairos UK\*, partnered by Christian Aid, Pax Christi, Embrace, Amos Trust and asks Churches to:

- identify any companies in their investment portfolio which are currently profiting from situations in which international law is violated, including illegal exploitation of natural resources, illegal construction of the separation barrier and its related infrastructure and illegal settlements.

- To put in place a comprehensive investment screening process, specifically relating to violations of international law to identify companies in their existing portfolio profiting from illegal activity and to prevent future investments in such companies.

The Quakers, Methodists, and URC have committed to the process and a motion has gone to the Anglican General Synod but as yet there has been no response from the Catholic church.

**Sanctions** require engagement from our government but we can

- Lobby new constituency MPs
- Hold new government to manifesto pledges
- Join parliamentary lobbies
- Join Demonstrations & Marches

These are "serious actions in order to achieve a just and definitive peace"

This is the goal of the many **Palestinian and Israeli peace building NGOs** especially those joint Israeli Palestinian groups who have clung on to their commitment to working together for a common future of mutual respect and dignity. With support from NGOs around the world they have finally achieved this commitment from the G7 last month, "to closely coordinate and institutionalize our support for civil society peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that such efforts are part of a larger strategy to build the foundation necessary for a negotiated and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace."

Can we support them by responding to their call for the above decisive actions?

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/50141>

#### LINKS

\***Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)** [www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/eappi](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/eappi)

**Christ Under the Rubble - Vigil for Gaza, with Rev Dr Munther Isaac:** <https://youtu.be/YKDK2UT63iU&t=667>

**Kairos Palestine:** [www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document](http://www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document)

**Who Profits:** [www.whoprofits.org/](http://www.whoprofits.org/)

**Investing for Peace:** [www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/category/taking-action/investing-for-peace/](http://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/category/taking-action/investing-for-peace/)

**Communique from G7 Summit:** [www.allmep.org/news/from-the-g7-summit-g7-heads-of-government-include-unprecedented-language-centering-civil-society-in-official-g7-leaders-communique/](http://www.allmep.org/news/from-the-g7-summit-g7-heads-of-government-include-unprecedented-language-centering-civil-society-in-official-g7-leaders-communique/)

#### NJPN 46th ANNUAL CONFERENCE: JUST POLITICS

**July 19 – 21 at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick**

The theme for the weekend is '**Just Politics**' and the aim is to explore the need for truth and integrity in public life.

- As people of faith, how are we called to work towards honest dialogue and respectful listening in political and social engagement and seek good governance in all seats of power; local, national, and global?
- What is our gut response when we hear, via our news channels, that the forthcoming election will be full of 'dirty tricks and muckraking'?
- How should we respond to such a depressing and alarming prediction?
- Is this the level of public discourse that we must accept?

**Sir John Battle** will chair the conference, bringing his vast knowledge and experience of Catholic Social Teaching in action both in the political sphere and community engagement. 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.

**Right 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.

**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 learned from speakers and workshops and help us identify common themes.

**Colette Joyce of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission** will facilitate the session with young people speaking about their concerns, what action they can take and what they look for from others.

The final part of the conference 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. <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/>

## DIARY

### JULY

**14 Sea Sunday** (see page 9) <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/sea-sunday/>

**15 Grace, Truth & The Common Good: A Lecture In Honour of Frank Field** by Jon Kuhrt CEO **Hope into Action** in conjunction with **Together for the Common Good. 18.30 – 20.00 online.** (see page 8)

**Free event, register here:** [https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/grace-truth-and-the-common-good-the-future-of-christian-social-action-tickets-930173212117?utm\\_experiment=test\\_share\\_listing&aff=ebdsshios](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/grace-truth-and-the-common-good-the-future-of-christian-social-action-tickets-930173212117?utm_experiment=test_share_listing&aff=ebdsshios)

**19–21 JUST POLITICS NJPN 46th Annual conference at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick.** Building on the work of the past two years' conferences this conference will seek to explore the need for truth and integrity in the public place. More details and booking form to download: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/>

**See also:** <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference-2024/njpn-conference-information/>

**20 Michel Monginda-Mondengele, CAFOD's country representative in Sierra Leone,** will be speaking at Our Lady & St Gerard's Catholic Church, Lostock Hall, Preston PR5 5TB on Saturday 20th July from 4.00 pm – 5.00pm, before the 5.30pm Vigil Mass. All are most welcome. Do come along. Contact: Patrick Gardner, Community Participation Coordinator – Lancaster Diocese Email: [pgardner@cafod.org.uk](mailto:pgardner@cafod.org.uk) Mobile: 07920 565 454

**20 and 21 Michel will also be speaking at all the weekend Masses at Our Lady & St Gerard's, Lostock Hall, and St Mary's, Brownedge, Bamber Bridge.** Contact: Patrick as above

**21-26 Christians Aware Summer School: 'Faith in Life; Care for Creation by the World Faiths'** Parcevall Hall, near Appletreewick, Yorkshire Dales <http://www.christiansaware.co.uk/ss24.html>

**22-26 Farnborough Arms Fair** (see page 7) <https://caat.org.uk/data/arms-fairs/farnborough-2024/>

**26 UN Day in Support for Victims of Torture** <https://www.un.org/en/observances/torture-victims-day>

**27 July-3 August Thinking Faith Summer residential week** Theme: What Catholics *Really* Believe. Time out for working Catholics. (see page 11) Details: Sr Margaret Atkins on [margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk](mailto:margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk) or 015395-32288 **Boarbank Hall, Allithwaite, Grange Over Sands, Cumbria, LA11 7NH** [www.boarbankhall.org.uk](http://www.boarbankhall.org.uk)

### AUGUST

**6 Hiroshima Day** <https://nationaltoday.com/hiroshima-day/>

#### SEASON OF CREATION 1 September - 4 October

Theme: 'HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION.' It urges campaigning for climate and ecological justice, and to speak out with and for communities impacted by climate injustice and biodiversity loss. <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

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● **READ NJPN E BULLETIN ON GAZA:** <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-ebulletins/njpn-e-bulletin-on-gaza/>

**See other NJPN bulletins here:** <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/category/njpn-ebulletins/>

● **Sign up** for regular news and information from NJPN (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues for NJPN North West) at [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk) or contact [ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org](mailto:ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org) 020 7901 4864

● **Read the SUMMER issue of MOUTHPEACE the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses:** <https://jpsshrewsbury.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/mouthpeace-summer-2024.pdf>

● Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News [www.indcatholicnews.com](http://www.indcatholicnews.com) an invaluable free resource for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles.

*The views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of NJPN*