

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 articles and diary dates to: anneoc980@hotmail.com

THE COMMON GOOD IN A TIME OF GLOBAL CRISIS

Ian Linden 18 March 2025

Prayers for a seriously ill Pope seem to have been answered. But will we hear his voice again, speaking from the heart, truth to power, at this critical time? It is so badly needed. For his words have often broken through the political gaslighting to illuminate truths that give hope, and could do so again. It says something when a Guardian editorial (17 March) describes Francis' pontificate as making the Catholic Church "one of the west's most combative defenders of the liberal democratic values".

We are in a global crisis with the moral, the military, the economic and the political intertwined. We have moved from low key realpolitik to different forms of strident proclamation, echoing across continents, that might is right. Or to use Francis' more pointed words in his 10 February letter to the US bishops: the imposition of "an ideological criterion that distorts the life of society and imposes the will of the strongest".

We have moved from an America imagined by President Kennedy, recalling the words of the first Governor of Massachusetts Bay colony, John Winthrop in his 1630 'city on a hill' sermon, to an America looked on in shock, dismay and apprehension by other democratic countries. To the modern forms of tyranny found in Russia and China is added the bizarre political dynamics of the present USA ruling clique at full throttle.

Kennedy, as a political not a religious leader, did not repeat Winthrop's appeal "to follow the counsel of [prophet] Micah: to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God. For this end", Winthrop continued, "we must hold each other in brotherly affection; we must be willing to rid ourself of our excesses to supply others' necessities; we must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience, and liberality". This inspiring vision of the Pilgrim Fathers stands in stark contrast to the current reality, a great country torn asunder, begging its neighbours.

Social division within the USA has increased the gulf between the values projected by political and religious discourses. Think of what Pope Francis has said about, Ukraine, Gaza and particularly about immigration: "The true common good is promoted when society and government, with creativity and strict respect for the rights of all — as I have affirmed on numerous occasions —welcomes, protects, promotes and integrates the most fragile, unprotected and vulnerable". You will not find such vision in any Party political broadcasts.

Some of the US evangelical Churches, and indeed many Catholics, demonstrate that there is an overlap between values claimed by Trump and some aspects of the Christian faith. Some Christian teachings, notably condemnation of the death penalty, solidarity with the poor, feeding and clothing the hungry, welcoming the stranger are rejected whilst those on abortion and gender are embraced. But there can be little doubt that, as far of the Trump presidency is concerned, this overlap is consciously fostered and, to a large degree - perhaps less cynically after his near-assassination - manipulated. On the President's passion for peace the jury is out.

Using religion to fool the masses, as Marx pointed out, works. A large part of Christian America is willing to overlook Trump's sense of entitlement to millions of dollars, unlimited power and sex, if he waves a bible, bows his head in prayer but expresses what they are feeling, makes them laugh, and promises to raise their standard of living. Some also seem to believe in a theology in which God, to preserve the nation's saviour, deflects a bullet.

As Europe's politicians are increasingly discovering, it is difficult to deal with the Trump Presidency. And a no less intractable problem is how should people of goodwill approach his followers. Or more pointedly what kind of theology might bring about a hang-on-a-bit moment, the beginning of a Christian prise de conscience amongst the MAGA millions, or indeed amongst populists in Europe. These are all people who have a right to the truth, and to a theology which speaks to their condition in a language they can understand. As Massimo Faggioli recently wrote in *La Croix* - and in correspondence with me - the problem is not just Trump's supporters, who mainly have missed out on college education, but also the many, particularly theologians, who seem unable to see that they have to turn from speaking to people who agree with them and talk to people who, for a variety of reasons, voted for Trump. As Faggioli wrote: "It's not just a moral problem but also practical, that is, how to save this country."

Pope Francis has been more than willing to take the lead in changing thinking. But if the UK is typical, very little of the Pope's teachings reaches mass-going Catholics. The "option for the poor" is a formative principle of Francis' pastoral concern as Pope. But talking recently with three committed, active, educated Catholics, I realized they were only vaguely aware of the term. Living in my own bubble, I thought for Catholics the phrase was common knowledge. But why should they have heard of it if expounding of the liturgy of the Word takes up all the sermon time and there is never any mention of papal guidance and seldom the contemporary relevance of the biblical texts? The persistent fear of being political isn't an adequate excuse. What could be more political than the Samaritan narratives, the Magnificat, the Beatitudes and the behaviour of the biblical Jesus, His incarnational identification with the Poor.

It is difficult to find the right language to engage with Christian Nationalism, its search for white dominance and exclusion, or exploitation, of other faiths and ethnicities. Although it could be called a heresy that wouldn't be a good start to the conversation. Without a shared respect for the moral teaching of the Gospels, it is difficult to engage with fascist-leaning populism. But here lies the rub. Trump has a powerful appeal. The practical politics of foreign policy requires treating him cautiously, sometimes obsequiously. In domestic politics, it means persuading the reluctant to go through the appropriate lobby whilst giving attention to "Border Controls", "Fiscal Rules" "Stop and Search", "Shrinking the costly State", "Defense Expenditure".

Amongst our residual political values, defending national security needs much wider thinking. What greater security threat than the consequences of climate change? But Gospel values, genuine stewardship of creation, loving your enemy as well as your neighbour, defending human dignity and all that entails, and yes, "pulling down the mighty from their thrones", aren't often practical politics.

So how to make the moral practical? The question needs asking. But the answer to that dilemma is a matter of pure faith: Gospel values will never be practical politics until Christians all around the world try, with great courage and in great numbers, to put them into practice, what theologians call building the kingdom of God. One of Francis' achievements to date is to have built the foundations by drawing on the spirituality and practice of Catholic Social Teaching for our troubled times. May he continue.

<https://www.ianlinden.com/latest-blogs/the-common-good-in-a-time-of-global-crisis>

• *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.*

DR GEMMA SIMMONDS CJ REFLECTION ON ST OSCAR ROMERO: PILGRIM OF HOPE

25 March 2025: *Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ gave the following homily on St Oscar Romero during Evensong at St Alban's Cathedral on Sunday, 23 March 2025, the anniversary of his martyrdom.*

Scripture Texts: Romans 8.35-end John 15.18-21

In his Letter to the Romans, Paul lists the things that people tend to fear the most: hardship, distress, persecution, famine, the nakedness of poverty and insecurity, danger and violence. He insists that none of these things can separate us from the love of Christ, but it can be hard to believe this when faced with the reality of them. It's precisely these disasters and God's apparent inability to remedy them or lack of interest in doing so that rob so many people of their childhood faith. Every day the media remind us of the cynical politics and ruthless business profiteering that ruin lives and threaten our planet's future for the benefit of a tiny few.

This year, the Roman Catholic Church is inviting all Christians to celebrate a Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope. How can we do so in the face of so much suffering?

St. Oscar Romero was a true pilgrim of hope. He didn't deny the harsh reality of oppressive violence, but named it for what it was, at the same time claiming that: 'Hope is not simply waiting for things to get better. Hope is the certainty that Christ walks with us, that our struggle for justice and dignity is not in vain.' He saw hope as a force enabling those threatened by oppression and death to believe that love triumphs through the power of Christ, crucified and risen. He encouraged his people: 'Let us not tire of preaching love; it is the force that will overcome the world. Let us not tire of preaching love, even when people see us as sowers of naivety and disillusionment. Love must win out; it is the only thing that can.'

Romero's kind of hope recognizes the brokenness of the world but refuses to surrender to despair. Hope, faith and love work together: Faith gives us knowledge of God's promises, hope sustains us in trusting that those promises will be fulfilled, and love is both the divine catalyst and the active human response which makes hope real in the world.

In his encyclical *Saved in Hope (Spe Salvi)*, Pope Benedict tells us that: 'The Christian message [is] not only "informative" but "performative" [...] the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known-it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing [...] The one who has hope lives differently'.

Romero saw that this 'living differently' was not only about the transformation of individuals but also about the transformation of the Church as a community. He claimed that: 'There is no dichotomy between faith and life. A true Christian does not leave their faith behind when they step out into the streets. Their faith gives them hope and calls them to transform the world.'

For members of such a Church, true Christian hope doesn't settle for an unjust world, lamenting that that's just the way things are. It insists with Romero that change is possible: 'The church would betray its own love for God and its fidelity to the gospel if it stopped being... a defender of the rights of the poor, a humanizer of every legitimate struggle to achieve a more just society, something to hope for'.

Hope believes that Christ has already overcome sin and death, therefore we can have confidence that suffering and evil never, ever have the final say. As Paul tells the suffering church in Rome, 'In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.'

As a missionary in Brazil, I remember a Pentecost celebration where we walked around the neighbourhood from the cathedral carrying processional crosses draped with white T shirts soaked in blood, each carrying the photo of a priest, sister, catechist or lay Christian who had been murdered for their faith. It challenges the reality of one's Christian witness to live in a church of martyrs. Christian hope can't eliminate suffering, but it does transform it. The Resurrection gives the Cross meaning. As Jesus found in the Garden of Gethsemane, hope is most necessary and most possible precisely in moments of despair. When injustice seems overwhelming, when suffering seems meaningless, hope insists that love is still victorious and makes that promise real.

Hope is dangerous to the status quo because it doesn't just offer placebo religious comfort - it demands change. That is why those whose power rests on dictatorship and oppressive systems have seen Christianity as a threat ever since Herod sought to kill the king of the Jews born in Bethlehem. Jesus tells his disciples, 'If they persecuted me, they will persecute you'. Romero found this to his cost. But hope is participation in the very life of God. To hope is to trust that God's love is at work in the world, even when we can't see it. And that hope moves us to act, to love, and to seek justice without ceasing and without compromise.

The grotesque injustices of our world don't generally stem from incomprehensibly demonic human beings. They're the accumulation and interdependence of all our failures of solidarity, our desperate seeking for security at others' expense and our doctoring of the truth. It's what we call the sin of the world, and every generation faces the life and death battle against this sin in its own way. God invites us to engage tirelessly in the battle against the powers of darkness. It is likely that our reward, in this world at least, will be to be crucified with Jesus. But in the face of his own death, he assured his disciples that he had overcome the world.

Shortly before his assassination in 1980, Romero claimed, 'If they kill me, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people.' He believed that to live and die in faith, hope and love is to share in the life and death of Jesus. It is to share in his prayer which is the Cross and to share in the answer to that prayer, which is resurrection from all that is death-dealing.

It can be hugely painful to go on praying in hope in the face of so much that would convince us to despair, but to fail would be to fall into the idolatrous delusion of thinking that it is our efforts and our power that will change the world rather than the power of the crucified and risen Jesus, shining through our human weakness.

We pray in hope, not so that we can change God's mind, but so that God can change our mind to become attentive, to recognize God's power at work in the world. God has given each one of us in this cathedral gifts and skills to become a beacon of hope in the world, a transformed transformer. Every time we use those gifts to make a better world in God's name, we join Oscar Romero in being pilgrims of hope.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52015>

CARDINAL FITZGERALD: 'BELIEVE IN LIFE AS ARCHBISHOP ROMERO DID'

23 March 2025: Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald M.Afr. gave the following talk on the Day of Martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero, Saturday, 22 March, 2025, at St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square.

All my hope on God is founded. On this day when we are celebrating the anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Romero, which falls actually on Monday 24 March, we are concentrating on HOPE, because we badly need Hope in our world today and Archbishop Romero is a figure of hope.

We have heard a reading from St Paul to the Romans about Abraham who believed though it would seem that there was no room left for hope or belief. He was old, and his wife was old too, and yet he believed that she would bear him a child, since God had promised this.

We have heard recited a poem by a Palestinian about the people of Gaza: *My God is courage, patience, justice, the sumoud of a people*. We adore the same one God, though we understand this God differently.

Muslims say that God is *al-samad*, which could be translated "rock-like"; God is an all-encompassing refuge for us. In the midst of this world, with all its difficulties, we are encouraged to take refuge in God. As Christians, we say that this God has become one with us in Jesus Christ. So, we can truly say that our God is a stubborn refugee girl, her heart still yearning for the place she calls her own. We can say that our God is a Gaza refugee wishing to share freedom with all of us.

We are called to believe like Abraham, our father; we are called to believe in life as Archbishop Romero did, hoping against hope that conditions will revive, conditions in Gaza, in Israel and Palestine, in Tigray in the North of Ethiopia, in Sudan and Eastern Congo, in Myanmar and Yemen conditions in El Salvador, conditions all around the world where there is conflict. We are encouraged to continue praying for the people in these areas of conflict, following the example of Pope Francis who, every Sunday, at the mid-day prayer, mentions these places and prays for their inhabitants.

We are called not only to pray, but to work for a renewal of life, as the Qur'an reminds us: *Have you considered the one who denies the Judgement? that is the one who pushes aside the orphan and does not urge others to feed the needy. So, woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayer; those who are all show and forbid common kindnesses.* (Qur'an 107)

Many of us are familiar with the words of the Gospel:

Come... take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you...: For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me, in prison, and you came to see me; I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers [or sisters] of mine, you did it to me. (Gospel according to Matthew, 25: 34-42)

This year, Ramadan and Lent fall together in the same period. We can remember that their contents are similar: fasting, prayer and alms-giving, but the reasons for engaging in these practices are different.

To fast every day during the month of Ramadan, to abstain during the hours of day-light from every intake of food or drink or of any substance is very demanding. The Christian is not asked to observe this. The Christian would be expected to forego some food or drink during the 40 days of Lent; avoiding alcohol, which is allowed at other times; avoiding chocolate or sweets; having a simple meal such as spaghetti and cheese and being able to share the amount saved with people who are in need.

There are other ways of fasting that can be chosen: avoiding watching television, curbing one's use of social media. All this is voluntary, by way of free choice. Whereas I understand that Ramadan is observed as an act of obedience to God: *"You who believe, fasting is prescribed for you... so that you may be mindful of God."* (Q 2: 183)

Ramadan is practised more collectively; families gather together to break the fast. Lent is a more individual practice. Lent is really a way of preparing for the celebration of the greatest feast of the Christian year, Easter, the commemoration of the Passion of Jesus, of his death on the Cross, his burial, and his rising to New Life. Nevertheless, there are common prayers in both religious traditions. Special prayers are recited in the mosque, the tarâwîh, after the last prayer of the day. Christians have a custom of gathering in church on Friday afternoons or evenings for what we call the Way of the Cross, recalling the different ways Jesus suffered for us.

At this time when Ramadan and Lent unite us, I should like to let the voice of Archbishop Romero resound again:

As long as there are mothers who are crying about the disappearance of their sons and daughters, as long as there are tortures in the headquarters of our security forces, as long as there is horrible disorder... there cannot be peace. We need to be rational and listen to the voice of God, to organize a more just society once more according to God's heart.

(Through the Year with Oscar Romero, Daily Meditations CAFOD, D.L.T. Christian Aid 2006 p.14).

To return to our theme of Hope, we who believe in Hope, whether we are Christians or Muslims, or whatever religion we belong to, we pray earnestly to God for this gift of Hope, true hope which will generate justice-seeking solidarity, hope which may presage true peace.

In this way we shall be true to ourselves, true to our religions and true to Oscar Romero who has given us such a good example.

Michael Cardinal Fitzgerald, M.Afr.

Watch a recording of the service: www.facebook.com/stmartininthefields

Full programme for Romero Week: Archbishop Romero Trust: www.romerotrusted.org.uk/

London Oscar Romero service: Let us not tire of preaching love: www.indcatholicnews.com/news/51999

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52000>

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK CONFERENCE 2025



Speaker: Lister Tonge

Saturday 26th April

Irenaeus Centre, Liverpool L22 1RD

Listening to our Life will draw on what Richard Rohr says about God coming to us 'disguised as our life, which seems to be the last place we want God to be... It is just "me" and just "you" and just daily life. It is both the perfect hiding place and the perfect revelation place for the Holy One'. (Soul Brothers).

Many of us think that the blessing of knowing God deeply and living fruitfully in God's love is not for us. We don't see or celebrate our holiness because our lives feel too ordinary. Yet discovering ourselves to be the very people in whom God's life flourishes and bears fruit releases joy in us beyond our imagining.

We are called to respond to the rhythms of our living and dying as God's Spirit shapes us along the way. God's Spirit aches for us to see who we truly are, and to be free to love.

Listening to our lives makes it possible us to act in the power of God's Spirit. Alive in God's Spirit, we become those whose hearts sing, giving life to our families, our communities and our world.

For over forty years, Lister has been teaching, and continuing to learn, that God is to be found known, loved and served in every moment of everyone's life. First as an Anglican priest and now as a Roman Catholic priest, now based in Liverpool, he has accompanied people, at home and abroad, in retreats, spiritual direction and ordinary conversation as they explore their own experience of God. For anyone thinking of taking a look at that, he likes to say, "No previous experience necessary"!

The Conference will be 10.30am - 4pm at: Irenaeus Centre, 32 Great Georges Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 1RD (The Centre is a short walk from Waterloo train station on Liverpool Merseyrail)

Arrivals from 10am. Conference Fees: £30 / CSN members £25

Bookings: Margaret Palladino catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com

www.csnretreats.org.uk/conference.php

WHO ARE THE POSITIVE MALE ROLE MODELS?

Jon Kuhrt 22 March 2025

This week former England football manager, Sir Gareth Southgate, gave the BBC *Dimbleby* lecture about young men and the challenges they face. He delivered a brilliantly crafted talk based on his own experience, laced with humour and focussed on a critical issue for our country. Southgate framed his talk around what he had learned through experiencing the highest profile 'failure' imaginable. Back in Euro '96, when football's profile was at its peak, he famously missed the crucial penalty in the semi-final versus Germany at Wembley with the whole nation watching. Football was supposed to be *Coming Home*, but his fluffed penalty meant it never did... I remember watching the match and penalty miss in a pub in Croydon with my school mates. Shortly afterwards, the cocktail of disappointment and booze led to fights breaking out. It was a sad illustration of toxic male responses to failure and defeat.

Southgate has not allowed this experience to negatively define his life. But in many ways, his *response* to it *has* defined his life. As he explains, the penalty miss helped him develop two key traits which were at the core of his lecture: *belief* and *resilience*. These qualities are not intrinsic but need to be cultivated intentionally. And how we deal with the inevitable challenges and disappointments of life is critical.

As a teenager, Southgate faced the disappointment of being released by Southampton Football Club. He went to Crystal Palace as an apprentice and shared the hard words that youth coach Alan Smith said to him aged 16: "Look, you're a lovely fella, good manners and if you were my son I would be very proud of you. But you are weak and as a footballer you've got absolutely no chance." The fact that Alan Smith was in the audience to hear the lecture says so much. Because this tough love was what Southgate *needed*: Smith did not say them because he wanted Southgate to fail, but because he wanted him to *succeed*. Later, Stuart Pearce, who had also missed a crucial penalty for England, would be a great help too because he told Southgate the truth about the abuse and vitriol he had to expect. Pearce's honesty 'forced me to ask the hard questions' which put things in perspective and helped him become 'a stronger, better man'.

Southgate believes that boys especially need 'to fail often and learn fast' because this is how belief and resilience are cultivated. As he said: "If we make life too easy for young boys now, then we make life harder for them as young men." It's a powerful example of the importance of grace and truth. But we have to face the truth that we live in a culture which does not foster a healthy sense of belief and resilience. Social media cocoons young people in an unreal world: "Today, young people are targeted with images of the perfect body, the perfect career and the perfect life. A beautifully crafted highlights reel where success appears to be instant and effortless. How can this make them feel good about themselves?"

Too many young men today have lost many of the traditional family and community role-models that are so critical. As the Centre for Social Justice report *Lost Boys*¹ says, 2.5 million children live with no father figure at home. Teenage boys today are more likely to have a smartphone than a dad at home.

The effect on boys' well-being is devastating: "As real-world communities and mentorship declines, young men end up withdrawing, reluctant to talk or express their emotions...They spend more time online searching for direction and are falling into unhealthy alternatives like gaming, gambling and pornography." And into this vacuum come other influences: "And this void is filled by a new kind of role model who does not have their best interest at heart...callous, manipulative and toxic influencers, whose sole drive is for their own gain. They willingly trick young men into believing that success is measured by money or dominance, never showing emotion, and that the world, including women, is against them."

Gareth Southgate's lecture has sparked similar discussions to those prompted by the Netflix drama *Adolescence*. It is a vitally important national conversation. And it's not a problem we can simply blame on the government but one we can all do something about. Everyone, whether as a parent, uncle, neighbour, colleague or volunteer, can take steps to be a better, real-life role model and help fill the void in boys' lives.

Read article in full: <https://gracetruth.blog/2025/03/22/who-are-the-positive-male-role-models/>

¹Lost boys <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/library/lost-boys>

Watch Sir Gareth Southgate's *Dimbleby* Lecture: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0029315/the-richard-dimbleby-lecture-sir-gareth-southgate>

Watch *Adolescence*: <https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/81756069>

• Jon Kuhrt 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*.

TRADE MATTERS: CAMPAIGN FOR A FASHION WATCHDOG

25 March 2025: *Chester World Development Forum* has circulated a follow-up to a presentation that Dr. Rebecca Collins (University of Chester) gave at a CWDF Forum meeting a while ago on the phenomenon of "Fast Fashion"

Since she gave her talk, Rebecca has been appointed as Deputy Head of the Division of Humanities, Cultures and Environment, and Director of the University's Sustainability and Environment Research and Knowledge Exchange Institute (SERKEI).

Trade Matters: Campaign for a Fashion Watchdog is asking the government for regulation of the fashion industry both in the UK and globally. In 2025, they will be launching a new report as well as promoting a '10-minute rule bill' in the House of Commons.

The suggested action is to ask your MP to support the call for a Fashion Watchdog, and to stand up for the people who make our clothes. In Rebecca's talk, she gave a breakdown of the financial breakdown on a garment retailing for (say) \$30 which would only generate the equivalent of a few cents for the workers in the Far East who actually made it.

For further information on the campaign, go to: www.transform-trade.org/fashion-watchdog

CHESTER WORLD DEVELOPMENT FORUM

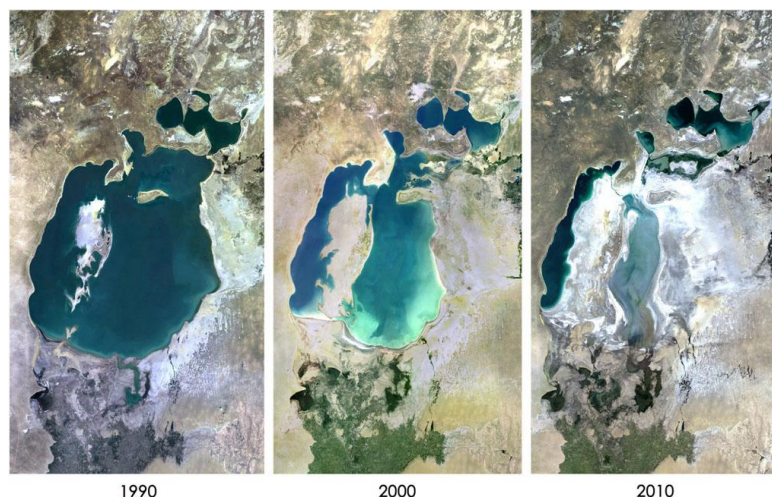
At the CWDF Forum Meeting held on Tuesday 14 March 2023, 7pm at The Unity Centre, Chester, Dr Rebecca Collins, Senior Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Chester, gave a talk on "Current Trends and Challenges in the Global Fashion Industry".

The following account of Dr Collins' presentation, compiled by CDWF member Ann McCarthy, is reproduced here by kind permission. Ann's excellent account was approved by Dr Collins and circulated at the time:

According to a 2019 UN report, global clothing production **doubled between 2000 and 2014** which has led to significant social and environmental impacts.

Environmental impacts:

- The industry is "responsible for 20 percent of total water waste on a global level".
- Water depletion: it takes 2,700 litres to produce enough cotton to make ONE T-shirt. For context, modern toilets use about 5 litres of water per flush, older ones use about 10. So anywhere between 270 and 540 toilet flushes of water just to make one T-shirt.



Aral Sea on the border of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan – showing water depletion

- Use of pesticides – it is estimated that around 8 ~ 10% of global pesticide use is related to the production of cotton. In developing countries, around 50% of all pesticides used are for cotton cultivation. (WWF 2013). Excessive, unsustainable extraction of water and increased pesticide use both contribute to habitat and biodiversity loss and soil degradation.

Social impacts:

- Pesticide related sickness – in Pakistan around 50% of cotton farmers report pesticide related sickness in their families. This clearly affects workers' livelihoods.
- Gender inequality – many of the workers are women.

For more detail: <https://ergonassociates.net/publication/social-impacts-of-cotton-production/>

However, the “Better Cotton Initiative” (BCI) has been introduced in some countries and aims to improve working conditions and environmental stewardship.



Countries in which the BCI is working

There are other organisations tackling the negative social and environmental impacts of clothing production in general across the globe. Two such organisations are “Labour Behind the Label” and “traid”.

Labour Behind the Label supports garment workers' efforts worldwide to improve their working conditions and change the fashion industry for the better. They represent the Clean Clothes Campaign in the UK.

For more information visit: [https://labourbehindthelabel.org/what-we-do we-do](https://labourbehindthelabel.org/what-we-do-we-do)

traid tackles the negative social and environmental impacts of producing, consuming and wasting clothes by:

- Increasing our use of second-hand clothes
- Providing people with reuse services to stop wearable clothes being thrown out into the waste stream or left unused
- Putting wearable clothes back into use in charity shops
- Running education programmes and campaigns to raise awareness of the socio-environmental impacts of clothes, and to persuade and inspire people, businesses and policy makers to take action to keep clothes in use for longer. This includes wearing more second-hand rather than new, passing on unworn clothes for someone else to use, buying less, buying better quality, caring for and repairing clothes
- Funding, supporting and promoting global projects to establish more sustainable production and safer, fairer conditions for people in the supply chains making our clothes: supporting organic cotton production and stopping child and bonded labour

This work, in close collaboration with UK and global partners, is striving to:

- Reduce consumption
- Reduce the overuse of increasingly scarce natural resources
- Reduce waste and carbon emissions
- Extend the life cycle of wearable clothes
- Source clothes in more socially beneficial ways
- Support and champion the creation of a safer, fairer and more sustainable clothing industry

For more information visit: <https://www.traid.org.uk/our-vision-and-mission/>

The Global Garment Economy: explained through the Garment Value Chain.

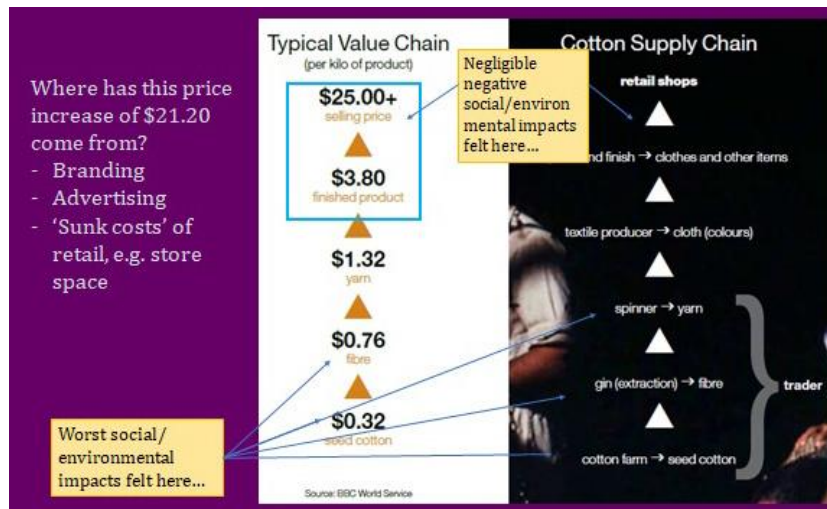
Capitalists (capitalism is the current world economic system) want to turn raw materials into finished goods in order to make a profit. With cotton, picking the cotton is just the start of the global garment journey...

Which is worth more – raw cotton, spun cotton, cotton fabric, T-shirt? Through each stage, more value is added. As a garment moves through stages of production to becoming jeans, a t-shirt, etc, there is more money to be made...

Global **commodity** chains trace the movements of raw materials through production processes to the point of consumption.

Global **value** chains go a step further, identifying **how additional value is produced at each stage in production**.

The following diagram shows a typical value chain.



Clearly the worst social/environmental impacts are felt in the early stages of production, coupled with the least added value – usually in the global south. At the top of the chain, where the social/environmental impacts are negligible, is the highest concentration of wealth – in the global north. This “value” creation comes from the use of “branding” and advertising – the idea of “I must have.....” – and “how soon can we make our customers dissatisfied so that they will look to buy something else”.

The accumulation of material goods is part of our culture, but increasingly the trends in “Fast Fashion” and “Haul Culture” are contributing significantly to global inequality – in addition to the environmental and social impacts already mentioned.

Rebecca has been researching ‘esteem’ as a critical kind of ‘value’ to young people, and how we might refocus this. There is a pervading mentality that “people have seen pictures of me wearing this, so I can’t wear it again”. It’s a sort of showing off.

This mentality results in an estimated £140 million worth of clothing being sent to landfill in the UK each year (WRAP 2022). In weight terms, that’s about 336,000 tonnes and would fill about 28,000 double-decker buses. So how do we cast more light on closing the gap between ‘esteem’ and using clothes for longer? What happens to clothes we put away for a bit? Do we forget about them? How can we renew the novelty and promote re-use?

There are initiatives/companies aimed at “Divesting in Global Garments” such as “Vinted, eBay, depop, freecycle, marketplace, and Gumtree. These companies have become culturally accepted. And of course, clothes can be resold in charity shops. But much of the stock from charity shops is exported to low-income countries. Take the case of a pair of jeans...



Source: *The Journey of Jeans: An Infographic*, Katelyn Toth-Fejel and Andrew Brooks

This reselling of our discarded clothes has meant some local factories in the global south have closed after being undercut by cheap second-hand imports from the global north!

So, whilst there are undoubtedly some good things about the 'charity shop' economy for garments, we shouldn't paint an overly-rosy picture, because our good intentions can also have unexpected negative impacts.

There is still, however, an awful lot of clothing going to landfill, and it is creating problems on a global scale. Synthetic fabrics, or natural fabrics treated with chemicals, can take 200+ years to biodegrade and can be as toxic as discarded tyres or plastic materials.

Looking to the future, there is cautious optimism with research going firstly into using different materials to make clothing such as pineapples, coffee, mushrooms, spider's webs and orange peel which of course are all biodegradable, and secondly into future systems such as the "Design for Circularity"..... Source safe Materials.....Cradle to Cradle Certified.....Use and Re-use.....Return to Earth

The need is to ensure that, whilst environmental impacts are embedded in via 'design for circularity', processes don't continue to contribute to unequal and unjust systems of production...

<https://teemill.com/circular-fashion/> - designing products and systems for product return

Want to find out more?

Visit these websites:

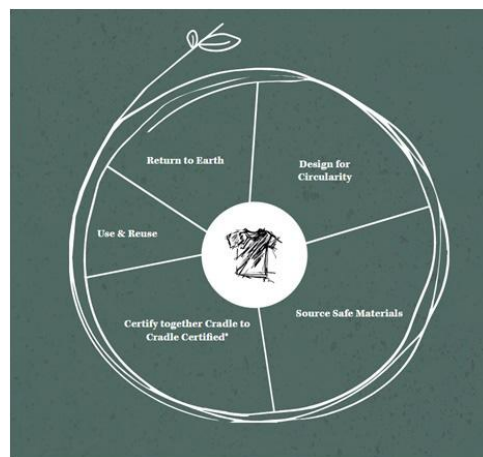
<https://bettercotton.org/>

<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/>

<https://fashionfictions.org/>

<http://mistrafuturefashion.com/>

<https://www.wrap.ngo/takingaction/textiles>



ETHICAL SHOPPING AND THE FAST-GROWING RISE OF CHINA'S ONLINE BRANDS

Anne O'Connor 14 March 2025

Dear friends

I thought you might like to see this reply from my MP – I hope 5 months isn't going to be the norm for replies! This issue is still pressing – it concerns me that young people are swayed by popular influencers who promote super cheap fashion by these firms – I notice their products come up first on internet searches for clothing.

I sent my original article on this issue to Connor Rand (see below)

Let's keep plugging away.

Anne

MESSAGE FROM: Anne O'Connor

Sent: 09 October 2024 15:48

Subject: RE: Ethical shopping and the rise of the Chinese online fast fashion retailer Shein

Dear Connor,

Many congratulations on your appointment as our new MP for Altrincham and Sale West. I was very impressed by your comments at the hustings at St George's Church, Altrincham and delighted that you were able to end many years of Conservative dominance in my constituency.

I'm contacting you about the alarming rise of the Chinese online fast fashion retailer Shein. Please pass this request to the relevant Government department to urge them to block their planned flotation on the Stock Market.

I recently put together a report (July 15, 2024) for the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) Environment Group about Shein and another similar online retailer, Temu which I am happy for you to pass on.

See also: Superdry boss Julian Dunkerton says Shein allowed to 'dodge tax' BBC Business 24/09/2024

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgny3vm6d1o>

I hope this issue can be made better known – it concerns me that most consumers are probably not aware of the poor ethics behind these companies – tax ‘dodging’, environmental damage, poor working conditions, low pay, etc, – especially teenage girls who are susceptible to recommendations from influencers on social media and tend to buy cheap, throwaway clothing. These concerns are addressed in more depth in my report with the relevant links provided.

I’d appreciate you keeping me updated. Although I never voted for your predecessor, I must give him credit for always replying to any issues raised.

Best wishes
Anne O’Connor (Mrs)

REPLY FROM: Connor Rand MP

Sent: 14 March 2025 14:26

Subject: RE: Ethical shopping and the rise of the Chinese online fast fashion retailer Shein (Case Ref: CR03618)

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your email. First of all, I’m very sorry that it has taken this long for you to receive a response. I’ve had a huge number of emails since becoming an MP and I have been in the process of hiring a team to help me work through them. Now we are fully staffed, our response times will improve in the months ahead. Thank you for your patience during this period.

Thank you for sharing your report for the National Justice and Peace Network Environment Group with me, it is a very insightful read. When discussing ethical shopping with my colleagues in Parliament I will be sure to mention the points you raise in the report.

As you will know, decisions on whether a firm can list in the UK are taken solely by the Financial Conduct Authority as the independent regulator for the listing rules. The Government has therefore said it does not comment on individual companies.

However, I welcome that the Prime Minister has highlighted the importance of high standards on these issues, particularly when it comes to workers’ rights. In January 2025, the House of Commons Business and Trade Committee held evidence sessions in its inquiry ‘Making Work Pay: The Employment Rights Bill’. The Committee has questioned Chinese global online retailers Shein and Temu on labour rights in their national operations and international supply chains. This evidence will be taken into consideration when shaping legislation.

More widely, I can assure you that I am committed to ensuring that businesses do not use forced labour or contribute to other human rights and labour rights abuses and violations within their supply chains, no matter where they operate in the world. I welcome that in the UK we address forced labour in global supply chains under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which requires commercial businesses that operate in the UK and have a turnover of £36 million or more to report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. This aims to ensure businesses monitor their supply chains rigorously, are open about their risks and mitigations, listen to their workers, and act where they find issues.

I also welcome that, in light of recent EU legislation on corporate sustainability and due diligence, as well as import bans such as those introduced in the US, the Government continues to review how we can best tackle forced labour and environmental harms in supply chains. I note that it has said that it continues to assess emerging policy tools to understand their effectiveness in tackling these issues.

I can assure you that I will continue to monitor this issue, keeping in mind the important concerns you highlight. This Government are committed to working with international partners and businesses to ensure that global supply chains are free from human and labour rights abuses.

Kind regards,
Connor Rand MP, Member of Parliament for Altrincham and Sale West.

• **Read Ethical shopping and the fast-growing rise of China’s online brands**

A report by Anne O’Connor on pages 7-10 in the August 2024 issue of the NW NJPN E Bulletin:

<https://jpshrewsbury.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/nw-njpn-justice-and-peace-e-bulletin-august-2024.pdf>

UK FAITH LEADERS UNITE IN MORAL CALL AGAINST WELFARE REFORMS

Hannah Fox 25 March 2025: With the debate continuing on government welfare reform, senior faith leaders from across the country joined forces on Sunday in an urgent call for the government to go further and be 'bold and ambitious' in its forthcoming Child Poverty Strategy. The call is shared in an open letter to the co-chairs of the Ministerial Child Poverty Taskforce, Bridget Philipson, Secretary of State for Education, and Liz Kendall, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. The letter is signed by 35 faith leaders from all six of the major faith traditions represented in the UK, including Rt Rev John Arnold, Bishop of Salford, Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford, former Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg OBE, Director of Islamic Relief UK Tufail Hussain, Director of the Network of Sikh organisations UK, Lord Singh of Wimbledon, President of the Hindu Forum of Britain, Trupti Patel, and President of the Buddhist Society, Dr Desmond Biddulph.

It states: "We write to you as faith leaders from communities across the UK, to encourage you to be bold and ambitious in your upcoming Child Poverty Strategy." Currently three in every 10 (4.3 million) children in the UK are living in poverty and without further action a further 400,000 are likely to be pulled into poverty by the end of the decade. The Prime Minister promised during the last election that his government would introduce an ambitious plan to lift 'millions' of children out of poverty.

The letter continues: "While we come from different faith traditions, we share a belief that working to end poverty should be a hallmark of any decent, compassionate society. We also believe that transformational change is possible. We are hopeful that the Child Poverty Strategy could be a turning point for the communities we serve, and we are ready to work in partnership with people of goodwill across society to ensure that every child has the start in life they deserve. We anticipate your strategy and pray that it will rise to the challenges we face."

The letter highlights the findings from '*Paying the Price*', a new report from Action for Children released this week, which sets out a comprehensive range of measures that would lift 1.2 million children out of poverty by 2030. These measures include action to reform and invest in a more effective social security system, and steps to boost social housing and improve opportunities for income from employment. The research found that the single most cost-effective policy option the government could take towards ending poverty is scrapping the two-child limit and benefit cap, which, whilst not enough to achieve the necessary scale of reduction, would immediately free 400,000 from poverty and lift a total of 600,000 children out of poverty by 2030 at a cost of £3.9 billion per year.

Revd Helen Cameron, President of the Methodist Conference, said: "The levels of child poverty we are seeing in communities across the UK cannot be acceptable. With communities trying to pick up the pieces and support families who are struggling, it's time for the government to step up too. We know it is possible to significantly reduce child poverty, and a social security system that enables families to afford the essentials will be a central pillar. The government must demonstrate that tackling poverty is a priority and make ambitious choices. We pray that the government's strategy will rise to the challenges we face."

The Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow, who is the Church of England's lead on poverty, said: "Every child is a precious gift and should have the opportunity to flourish. Yet the scourge of poverty we see in our country today has profound implications on their health, wellbeing and life chances. Churches will continue to play their part in supporting children and their families experiencing hardship, meeting need where we find it, and advocating for policies which address structural challenges. An ambitious child poverty strategy would make a significant difference in the communities we live in and among."

Tufail Hussain, Director of Islamic Relief UK, said: "In one of the world's wealthiest nations, no child should go hungry, lack warm clothes, or live in a freezing home. Yet, we know from our work across the country that rising costs are pushing the poorest families to breaking point, forcing parents to choose between heating and eating."

"Charities and faith groups will always try to support those in need, but food banks and emergency aid cannot be substitutes for a welfare system that fails to provide families with enough to afford even the essentials. The government's Child Poverty Strategy must ensure every child has the essentials they need to thrive and be a step towards bold, transformational change to tackle rising poverty in the UK. This is about more than financial hardship - it is about dignity, fairness, and the kind of society we want to be."

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg OBE, Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism UK, said: "There is no doubt we are facing a crisis of child poverty in this country. With nearly one in three children living in poverty today - a number that is rising - it is clear that ambitious and urgent action is needed. As faith leaders, we believe that a better future is possible, where everyone can live full lives. The government must take steps to invest in this future."

Louise (24) from London, faced poverty in childhood before going into foster care from the age of 11. She continues to struggle financially as a care-leaver, particularly as a young, single mum to her four-year-old daughter, battling child care expenses and the high cost of living. She said: "The impact of growing up in poverty is huge. It affected me physically, mentally and emotionally. Not eating enough food as a child affects your health, weight and concentration. You feel angry and confused. A child can't understand why they're excluded from school trips with their friends, or why they don't have new clothes. You feel different. I felt like I was being punished. I didn't understand we just didn't have the money.

"As a care leaver, breaking the cycle of poverty and finding financial independence can be overwhelming and feel impossible at times. There are often barriers you don't know how to overcome on your own as a young adult without the family support and guidance that others may take for granted.

"As a mum, I want the best for my daughter and to give her opportunities I didn't have. It is motivation, but it also brings its own pressures. Even though I worked as much as I could, before she went to school, I was in my overdraft every month and relying on Universal Credit just to pay for childcare so I could keep my job. That isn't right. I think there is more support needed not just for young people leaving care, but also for families with young children on low incomes, to help people stay in work, care for their children and thrive."

Read the letter and list of signatories here: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52013>
www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-2025-the-essential-guide-to-understanding-poverty-in-the-uk

Action for Children (March 2025) 'Paying the Price', available from Matt Cornish at the Action for Children press office on 07779 866 847/ matt.cornish@actionforchildren.org.uk or out of hours on 020 3124 0661/ mediateam@actionforchildren.org.uk

CHANGE OF NAME FOR THE BALFOUR PROJECT

13 March 2025: **Andrew Whitley, Chair, Britain Palestine Project writes:** Today the Balfour Project becomes the Britain Palestine Project. At this crucial moment in the history of the Middle East, as we witness attempts to eliminate international law from international relations, we believe this is the right time for our charity to evolve. After thorough discussions and valuable advice from our stakeholders, we have decided that from 13 March we will be known as the Britain Palestine Project (BPP).

This was no easy decision. Since the charity was formed eight years ago, the Balfour Project name has become widely recognised and, I hope, respected both in the UK, where our advocacy and educational work is focused, and elsewhere. But greater public awareness brought with it controversy. Some people assumed – wrongly – that the name implied we were apologists for the 1917 Balfour Declaration, when Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour promised the Zionist movement British support for a Jewish homeland in the Ottoman territory of Palestine. Now is not the time to be operating with a name that requires explanation.

In reality, our charity stands for something very different. We demand redress for the historic injustices done to the Palestinian people during the period of British imperial rule and subsequently, after Britain abandoned Palestine in 1948. At the same time, we endorse Britain's recognition of the State of Israel in 1950.

Our charity deplores the many grave human rights violations inflicted on Palestinians, not least the continued illegal Occupation of 1967 denying their right to self-determination, and now the brutal onslaught on Gaza. We also acknowledge the right of Israelis to live in peace and security within the pre-June 1967 boundaries of their state. Security and peace must be a two-way street. Our approach will remain evidence based, historically informed and rooted in upholding international law.

What distinguishes the Britain Palestine Project is our emphasis on British responsibility and with it the duty to compensate for past mistakes by leading efforts to achieve a just and peaceful resolution, commensurate with Britain's current positions as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council and self-declared upholder of international law world-wide. We aim to make Britain's historic responsibility and contemporary role in the region a permanent part of our national conversation.

With your support, the Britain Palestine Project will work tirelessly to advance the cause of a just peace with equal rights for both peoples. We will be holding screenings of our new documentary, from Nakba to Camp David, including special sessions for our supporters, running podcasts on international law and holding our annual conference on the 8th May. Full details will be shared in the coming weeks and will appear on our new website.

<https://britainpalestineproject.org/> Enquiries to: Info@britainpalestineproject.org

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION CONFIRMS LAUNCH OF NATURAL HISTORY GCSE

21 March 2025: The Department for Education (DfE) today (21 March) confirmed plans to move ahead with the new qualification in a Parliamentary Question.

Read more here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-03-10/36968>

OCR, the UK exam board of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, has coordinated the campaign for the new qualification and worked with experts to develop potential content, after the campaign was instigated by environmental campaigner Mary Colwell in 2011. The qualification has gained cross-party political support and endorsements from Bear Grylls, Chris Packham and Floella Benjamin, as well as institutions like the Eden Project and Natural History Museum.

The GCSE in Natural History is intended to give all students – wherever they live – the time, skills, and knowledge to appreciate nature, as well as develop important practical skills in data analysis and observation. It is designed so it can be delivered as effectively in city centres as it can in the countryside. Students will develop a rigorous understanding of the natural world: from their own local wildlife, environment and ecosystem to critical global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity and sustainability.

<https://www.cambridge.org/news-and-insights/new-gcse-to-bring-nature-climate-conservation-to-classrooms>

Mary Colwell commented, "Education is the most important thing we can do for the planet at the moment. To start to create a society that knows and understands the natural world is the biggest step forward we can take."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/mar/21/departement-for-education-confirms-natural-history-gcse>

COLUMBAN SCHOOLS COMPETITION: WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Ellen Teague, Source: Columban Missionaries 9 March 2025

Winners have been announced in a media competition for young people in Britain and Ireland on the subject 'Jubilee: Pilgrims of Hope.' The competition attracted a record 272 entries across Britain and Ireland, the highest number in the eight years the Columbans have run a Schools Competition.

Young people 13-18 years were asked to produce a piece of writing or image that highlighted a community or groups bringing hope in the world in this Jubilee Year, making a difference locally, nationally or globally.

In Britain, entries from 22 schools were judged by media experts who praised the high quality of all the entries shortlisted: Ruth Gledhill (Assistant Editor at The Tablet), Josephine Siedlecka (Founder and Editor of Independent Catholic News - ICN). Also judging were Andrea Speranza (CAFOD Campaigns Manager), Columban Father Ed O'Connell (now back in Britain after many years on mission in Peru, James Trewby (Columban Education Worker) and a group with lived experiences of Migration from Hope Garden in Birmingham.

Success for Loreto, Altrincham

In Britain, the winning article came from Armance Young of St Catherine's in Twickenham. Runners Up were 14-year-old Aleksandra Niklewska from Loreto School in Altrincham, a school which had three winners, and Elsie Healy from Bishop Challoner in Birmingham.

Read Aleksandra's essay here: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/51929>



The winning image came from Arianna Boardman, also from Loreto Grammar School in Altrincham, with runners up being Favour Eze from All Saints, Dagenham, Cassi Walisiak from St Paul's, Milton Keynes, and Alice Holt from Loreto. Arianna drew bubbles highlighting diverse environmental problems, with Earth at the centre and celebrating the Laudato Si Movement. The Head of RE at Loreto, Ann-Marie Bridle, said, "this competition has provided us with a fantastic opportunity to engage with such an important theme in the wider context of our Catholic faith."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/51897>

In last year's competition on the theme 'Biodiversity Matters,' Loreto student Chidera Anyakora's striking image of a heart wrapped in nature was awarded first prize and Sarah Ashcroft came third in the essay category:

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/49386>

Arianna Boardman (Loreto, Grammar School Altrincham) won first prize for her beautiful image celebrating the Laudato Si Movement

PODCAST: ALL KINDS OF CATHOLIC

All Kinds of Catholic with Theresa Alessandro A new episode, a different conversation, every Wednesday!

Email me: theresa@KindsOfCatholic.co.uk Facebook and X/Twitter Give me a follow @KindsOfCatholic

Listen to all the episodes here: <https://kindsOfCatholic.buzzsprout.com/>

Episode 43: Speaking from America, Judy shares honestly how she has moved from saying the rosary in childhood, through working for social justice and peace, to finding regular Mass attendance 'really hard' because of the marginalisation of women in the church. She describes living in the midst of brutal US political upheaval, as 'horrifying' yet she still finds hope in the Gospel and in other people.

<https://kindsOfCatholic.buzzsprout.com/2333035/episodes/16823412-43-the-light-shines-in-the-darkness>

Read more here: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/52019>

Episode 42: Trying to practice love every day

March 18: Jack shares how he was first 'grabbed by youth work' as a young adult. Rather than any liturgical-style-tribalism, he explains that it is our identity as children of God that inspires him and is something he brings to youth ministry today in the Diocese of Lancaster - via the Caribbean.

<https://kindsOfCatholic.buzzsprout.com/2333035/episodes/16751704-42-trying-to-practice-love-every-day>

Episode 41: To celebrate the fullness of humanity

March 11: Brid and Lorna (a mother and daughter) share their experiences of Catholic People's Weeks and the community they find there. They explain how taking seriously Jesus' words, 'I was in prison and you visited me,' has led them to witness, and be humbled by, the humanity of people on death row in America - and in Lorna's case, to work for change.

<https://kindsOfCatholic.buzzsprout.com/2333035/episodes/16746089-41-to-celebrate-the-fullness-of-humanity>

RESIDENTIAL GROUP EVENTS AT BOARBANK HALL

All our events take advantage of the rhythm of our community prayer, the comfortable facilities of our Guest House and the beauty of the local area. We offer a unique mix of prayer, study and opportunities for social and quiet time. We welcome bookings from school or student groups or any religious or other groups who may benefit from our hospitality. We also work with schools to provide INSET days, with the option of overnight stays. If you would like help in arranging a programme for a retreat or residential event please get in touch. For residential courses we only ask the standard Guest House price plus an optional donation in lieu of a course fee. For students, the low-paid or anyone who needs it to attend, payment by donation only is available. Please don't hesitate to ask!

For further information or to book please contact Sr Margaret Atkins: Tel: 015395 32288

margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk Boarbank Hall Allithwaite Grange over Sands CUMBRIA LA11 7NH

Craft Weekend 2nd-4/5th May 2025. Bring your own arts or crafts, enjoy working and sharing together. Optional trip to the Quaker Tapestry, Kendal.

Two Wings and Some Prayers 12th-17th May 2025. Prayer, walks and birdwatching, with a focus on learning birdsong.

Celebrating Creation 27th-31st May 2025.

Time to explore how to live out *Laudato Si'* fully in our personal lives and within the Church. Talks, discussions, art, liturgy, gardening, walks. All welcome.

Thinking Faith 26th July-2nd August 2025. Theme: *St Paul* Time out for working Catholics.

St Augustine's Confessions 18th-22nd August 2025.

An introduction to St Augustine's classic spiritual autobiography. All welcome.

Celebrating Creation 4th-10th October 2025.

Time to explore how to live out *Laudato Si'* fully in our personal lives and within the Church. Talks, discussions, art, liturgy, gardening, walks. All welcome.

Magnificat! 24th-26/27th October 2025.

Follow up to Our Lady in Latin, exploring the Latin and the music of the canticles from the birth narratives in St Luke. For those who know just a little Latin!

Hope in Health 5th-7/8th December 2025 For all who support or care for anyone who is sick, professionals and others.

<https://boarbankhall.org.uk/whats-on/>

DIARY

APRIL

3 CAFOD and Pope Francis' call to fraternal love guest speakers Francis Stewart, a member of CAFOD's Theology team, and Diana Trimino, CAFOD's Head of Latin America and the Caribbean Region. All welcome. Organised by the St Vincent's CAFOD/Justice and Peace Group. 7.30–9pm in the parish centre Westleigh, Groby Road, Altrincham WA14 2BQ (next to the Church)

5 Day of Reflection on the Jubilee Year CAFOD together with Lancaster Diocesan Faith & Justice Commission 11am to 3.30pm at Our Lady & St Michaels Catholic Church, Banklands, Workington CA14 3EP. All welcome to 10am Mass beforehand. Please bring your own lunch; tea, coffee and biscuits provided. Keynote speakers: Bishop Paul Swarbrick, Stephen Garsed and Sr. Margaret Atkins, with workshops led by CAFOD and Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission. You are most welcome to attend for some or all of the day. The Day will culminate with a short afternoon Pilgrims Walk by the Solway Firth and Closing Prayer at 3.30pm. If you would like to attend, please contact Sue Grubic, Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission by email – sue.grubic@lrcd.org.uk or by text on 07791 444417.

6 Jews, Christians and Muslims to gather for peace outside Parliament at 4pm (just a few days after Eid, and before Passover (12 April) and Easter (20 April)). Campaigners from all faiths and ethnicities will share a moment of solidarity with the Palestinian people. There will be prayers, speeches, poetry and songs from diverse voices. Everyone is welcome.

7 Christian Aid Lent Lunch Soup, bread and cheese 12 noon to 1:30pm Hoole United Reformed Church, Hoole Road, Chester CH2 3NT Donations to Christian Aid.

7 Opening Doors to Refugees and Asylum Seekers open meeting - Evening via Zoom. Part of the NJPN Focus for the year of Jubilee. Speakers will include Bishop Paul McAleenan, the lead Bishop for migrants and refugees, staff from the Jesuit Refugee Service talking about policy and actions and Azad Hasan, co-ordinator at the Justice and Peace Refugee project here in Newcastle who will be sharing some testimonies from people seeking asylum. Free event. Register here;

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZmHuHe6HFEIrbIlgQqOPDGsFQQv_WlpPIbh8NW3YUUpX6o9Q/vi_ewform

8 Cenacle Time Out on Tuesdays 10.30am-4pm. Join us for a time of prayer and quiet. Suggested offering for the day is £10 Tithebarn Grove, Lance Lane, L15 6TW LIVERPOOL +44 (0)1517 222271 cenacle.liverpool@gmail.com

10 Merseyside Pax Christi meeting 1.45 for 2.00pm start. Venue usually St.Michael's Parish Room, Horne St Liverpool L6 5EH. Contact sheilacogley@yahoo.co.uk

26 Quiet Saturdays at the Cenacle 10.30am-4pm. Join us for a time of prayer and quiet. Suggested offering for the day is £10 Tithebarn Grove, Lance Lane, L15 6TW LIVERPOOL +44 (0)1517 222271

cenacle.liverpool@gmail.com

26 Catholic Spirituality Network Conference 2025 Speaker: Lister Tonge at the Irenaeus Centre, 32 Great Georges Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 1RD 10.30am - 4pm (see p.5) Conference Fees: £30 / CSN members £25 www.csnretreats.org.uk/conference.php Bookings: Margaret Palladino catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com

MAY

10 Opening Doors to a sustainable future for all people NJPN Networking Day in London (Romero House)

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

● See current NJPN news here: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/news/>

● 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 or contact ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org 020 7901 4864

● Read the SPRING issue of *MOUTHPEACE* the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses: <https://jpschrewsbury.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/mouthpeace-spring-2025-2.pdf>

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