

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

COLOMBIA REFERENDUM: VOTERS REJECT FARC PEACE DEAL

3 October 2016: Voters in Colombia have rejected a landmark peace deal with Farc rebels in a shock referendum result, with 50.2% voting against it. The deal was signed last week by President Juan Manuel Santos and Farc leader Timoleon Jimenez after nearly four years of negotiations. But it needed to be ratified by Colombians in order to come into force. Addressing the nation, President Santos said he accepted the result but would continue working to achieve peace.

Colombians were asked to endorse or reject the peace agreement in a popular vote on Sunday. The "yes" campaign had the backing not just of President Santos but of a wide array of politicians both in Colombia and abroad, including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, but there was also a vocal campaign for a "no" vote, led by former Colombian President Alvaro Uribe. Polls conducted ahead of Sunday's vote suggested a comfortable win for the "yes" campaign. But in a surprise result, 50.2% of voters rejected the agreement compared with 49.8% who voted for it. The difference with 98.98% of the votes counted was less than 54,000 votes out of almost 13 million ballots. Turnout was low with fewer than 38% of voters casting their votes.

Most of those who voted "no" said they thought the peace agreement was letting the rebels "get away with murder." Under the agreement, special courts would have been created to try crimes committed during the conflict. Those who confessed to their crimes would have been given more lenient sentences and would have avoided serving any time in conventional prisons. This, for many Colombians, was one step too far. They also balked at the government's plan to pay demobilised Farc rebels a monthly stipend and to offer those wanting to start a business financial help. "No" voters said this amounted to a reward for criminal behaviour while honest citizens were left to struggle financially. Many also said that they simply did not trust the rebels to keep their promise to lay down arms for good. They pointed to previous failed peace negotiations when the rebels took advantage of a lull in fighting to regroup and rearm as evidence that the Farc had broken their word before. Others were unhappy that under the agreement, the Farc would be guaranteed 10 seats in the Colombian Congress in the 2018 and 2022 elections. They said this would give the newly created party an unfair advantage.

President Santos said that the bilateral ceasefire between government forces and the Farc would remain in place. He has told government negotiators to travel to Cuba to consult Farc leaders on the next move. President Santos has promised to "continue the search for peace until the last moment of my mandate because that's the way to leave a better country to our children. I won't give up," he said.

The Farc leader known as Timochenko also said that the rebels remained committed to securing an end to the conflict. "The Farc reiterates its disposition to use only words as a weapon to build toward the future," he said after the result. "Count on us, peace will triumph." But before the vote, President Santos had told the BBC that there was "no Plan B" for ending the conflict, which has killed an estimated 260,000 people. He said he would meet all political parties on Monday to discuss the next steps and "open space for dialogue".

The main proponent of the vote against the agreement was former President Alvaro Uribe. Former President Alvaro Uribe said the deal offered rebels who had committed crimes "impunity". Following the "no" vote, Mr Uribe insisted that he was not opposed to peace but that he wanted to renegotiate some of the agreement, which he said needed "corrections". Among the "corrections" he has demanded are, among others: that those found guilty of crimes be barred from running for public office; that Farc leaders serve time in prison for crimes committed; that the Farc use their illicit gains to pay their victims compensation; that no changes be made to the Colombian constitution. He said he wanted "political pluralism which can't be perceived as a reward for crimes committed, social justice without risk to honest enterprise". "We want to contribute to a national accord and be heard," he said. However, it is not clear whether the Farc would agree to the "corrections" Mr Uribe wants or if they would even consider renegotiating the deal which took four years of formal negotiations and two years of secret talks to reach.

The reaction has been one of surprise, as even Mr Uribe, the main backer of the "no" vote, had predicted that the "yes" vote would win. Some of those who had gathered to watch the result on giant screens expressed their disappointment. One woman in Medellin told Caracol radio: "I never thought I could be this sad. I haven't got any victims in my family, nor any siblings who've joined the guerrilla, but I think of my country, of the young people and my heart breaks into a thousand pieces."

Farc leader Timochenko expressed his disappointment with the result which he blamed on "the destructive power of those who sow hatred and revenge" and "have influenced the Colombian people's opinion". Opponents of the agreement, however, took to the streets to celebrate their unexpected win. Many said that "justice has won" and expressed their relief at the result. One Colombian woman told BBC Mundo that Colombians had not forgotten that the path of the Farc was "paved with kidnappings, killings and drug trafficking".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-37537252>

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

President Santos has been awarded the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his attempts to bring to an end Colombia's 52-year civil war. On learning of the prize he said it gave him "the strength to succeed." He added: "The message is that we have to persevere and reach the end of this war. We are very close, we just need to push a bit further."

COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES PLEDGE TO DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

3 October 2016: The Columban Missionaries have pledged to divest from fossil fuels. They have issued the following statement for the feast of St Francis of Assisi.

Inspired by Pope Francis and in honour of September's Season of Creation and the Feast of St Francis, the Missionary Society of St Columban pledges to take steps to divest from fossil fuels. In addition, we commit to putting resources into Positive Impact Investing alternatives.

Pope Francis is leading the way for Catholic institutions to choose a Divest - Reinvest strategy when he writes in the encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, that "technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuelsneeds to be progressively replaced without delay" (par. 165) and "A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear of those who wield political, economic, and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products" (par.206).

Columban Superior General, Fr. Kevin O'Neill, said: "Columbans have a long history of commitment to caring for the Earth as part of our missionary identity. We see our Socially and Environmentally Responsible Investment policy as an important expression of that commitment and therefore are exploring ways to direct our investments towards funds which respond positively to our issue priorities such as renewable energy, community-based microenterprise, and peace initiatives."

Columban Fr Sean McDonagh, leading international eco-theologian, advocates for divestment and corporate responsibility, said: "For religious people, the aim of divestment is to bankrupt the fossil fuel industry morally, not financially. Hopefully, because of their duty to manage their resources, these companies will invest in renewable forms of energy."

From moral, environmental and financial perspectives, fossil fuels are not the way forward. Over the next five years, the Missionary Society of St Columban will begin divesting away from fossil fuels, as well as putting resources into Positive Impact Investing alternatives. This is a concrete step we can take as missionaries to demonstrate our commitment to the care of and respect for the earth as well as faithful stewardship of the goods entrusted to us.

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31049>

FRACKING IN LANCASHIRE GIVEN GO-AHEAD BY GOVERNMENT

6 October 2016: Horizontal fracking can go ahead, the government has said, in a landmark ruling for the UK shale gas industry. Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has approved plans for fracking at Cuadrilla's Preston New Road site at Little Plumpton in Lancashire.

Environmentalists and local campaign groups reacted angrily, saying it was a denial of local democracy. It means, for the first time, UK shale rock will be fracked horizontally, which is expected to yield more gas. A second site, Roseacre Wood, has not yet been given the green light amid concerns over the impact on the area.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) refused permission to extract shale gas at both sites last year on the grounds of noise and traffic impact, but Cuadrilla appealed. In response to the decision, LCC has called on the government to do more to address people's concerns about fracking. "It is clear the government supports the development of a shale gas industry, but I would ask them to do more to address the concerns of local communities and the councillors who represent them by supporting the best environmental controls," it said.

Anti-fracking protests were held when the county council debated Cuadrilla's plans in June. Cuadrilla chief executive Francis Egan said: "We have been through an exhaustive environmental impact assessment on this. We have assessed everything; noise, traffic, water, emissions, etc. The Environment Agency are entirely comfortable with it."

Mr Javid said the shale gas industry would support thousands of jobs and reduce the UK's reliance on energy imports. "When it comes to the financial benefits of shale, our plans mean local communities benefit first," he said.

Responding to the ruling Councillor Judith Blake, from the Local Government Association, said: "It should be up to local communities to decide, through their locally democratic planning systems, whether or not to host fracking operations in their areas." She said residents' safety concerns should be "adequately addressed". "People living near fracking sites - who are most affected by them - have a right to be heard," said Councillor Blake.

Friends of the Earth campaigner Pollyanna Steiner said: "Fracking goes against everything we need to do to tackle climate change. "The government must end its fixation with dirty fossil fuels and focus instead on harnessing the UK's huge renewable energy resource."

Pam Foster, co-founder of Residents Action on Fylde Fracking, said: "This is a total denial of democracy. Our parish council, our borough council, our county council all threw out this application. We have pursued every democratic channel we can do, there's nothing left for us. We're pretty disgusted and very upset." She said the campaigners would continue to fight fracking "peacefully and legally".

However Lee Petts, from Lancashire for Shale, said the decision was "excellent news for Lancashire's businesses and our future prosperity". "We believe today's decision means that Lancashire is now back on track for the future investment and employment opportunities that would flow from a successful shale gas industry in the county."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-37567866>

STEP UP TO THE PLATE - Join the Big Conversation about how we can End Hunger in the UK

Church Action on Poverty joined many partners and allies to launch the campaign to End Hunger on World Food Day, 16 October. It started with a Big Conversation, going on across the UK until March 2017. Individuals, churches, food banks and other projects are all invited to join in the Conversation and ask the question: What does our government need to do to End Hunger in the UK?

Here's how you can be part of it

- **Hold your own Big Conversation event:** It can be a forum, a coffee morning or an informal gathering. It could be at a church, a food bank, another food project, or any other venue. Ask everyone at your event to write their answer to the Big Conversation question on a paper plate, and post a picture of them holding it on social media using the hashtag #EndHungerUK. Send all your plates to your local MP and invite them to step up to the plate as well.

- **Step up to the Plate yourself:** Take your own paper plate selfie, share it on social media, and show your support for the campaign.

Click to get started: http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/endhunger/bigconversation/group?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=endhunger&utm_content=2016+10+10+End+Hunger+launch+CAP+supporters

When should I do it?

Join the Big Conversation any time between October 2016 and March 2017 to add your voice to our national call for action.

Why am I doing it?

Do you share our vision of a country in which everyone has access to good food and no one needs to go to bed hungry? Do you want to add your voice to thousands of others, and help build a groundswell of pressure on politicians and government to take the issue of hunger in the UK seriously?

Help us achieve our goal by joining the campaign and ensure that people don't go hungry for whatever reason.

Source: Church Action on Poverty 2016 www.church-poverty.org.uk

COULD YOU GO WITHOUT FOOD OR SOCIAL MEDIA FOR 24 HOURS?

By taking part in the 24 hour sponsored Concern Fast on Thursday 24 November you could make a real difference. Concern's Fast is all about choosing a personal 24-hour challenge, such as going without food, and raising as much money as possible to support our life saving work.

Not interested in fasting? That's no problem. How about giving up Facebook or Twitter for a day? Or going 24 hours without something you love? Once you register you can fundraise online or we will send you a pack full of information, and advice to help you raise as much money as possible.

Register now or call us on 0800 032 4001 and we will send out your Concern Fast fundraising kit.

https://www.concern.net/en/fast-registration-2016?dm_i=4NI,4I5UW,BSPJJ0,GNL5I,1

CARDINAL NICHOLS REAFFIRMS CHURCH COMMITMENT TO COMBATING MODERN SLAVERY

In an address given at a service to commemorate the work of William Wilberforce and to inaugurate the office of the Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner at Westminster Abbey on 12 October, Cardinal Vincent Nichols reaffirmed the Church's commitment to combating modern slavery.

Comparing the current situation with the one facing Wilberforce, the politician who campaigned to abolish the slave trade in the 18th century, the Cardinal explained that then, as now, it "disfigures our society and calls for an unremitting effort to bring it to an end."

"Human trafficking and modern day slavery are perpetrated by large, criminal international networks," he said and he emphasised that the Catholic Church is "slowly mobilising its considerable, international networks, contacts and resources' in an effort to eradicate this trade."

The Cardinal paid tribute to the work of religious sisters, working in the Talitha Kum network, who "put their lives at risk every day to get close to the victims of human trafficking in the most dangerous of circumstances."

He expressed his confidence that the Government would work with the Government of France, to tackle child exploitation in the Calais camps and 'very urgently improve the effectiveness of the asylum-seeking procedures, especially for children there, who may well have a right to be here and are certainly at terrible risk in the coming weeks."

Speaking of the Santa Marta Group, the international effort of the Catholic Church working with law enforcement agencies and the Church of England World Wide, he said that the progress it has made has been "effective and measurable" and said that when it presents its progress reports to Pope Francis in two weeks time, he felt confident that the Holy Father would be "greatly encouraged."

Also speaking at the service and reaffirming their commitment to combating human trafficking and modern slavery were Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, Prime Minister Theresa May and Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner Kevin Hyland.

Read the full text of Cardinal Vincent's address here: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31143>

TEENAGE SUICIDES RISE TO A 17-YEAR HIGH IN THE UK

6 October 2016: The mother of a Worcester teenager who took his own life after being bullied online has penned a powerful open letter calling on people to do more to prevent other young lives being lost. Felix Alexander took his life, aged just 17, when he placed himself in front of a train at Abbotswood Junction, in Norton, just outside Worcester, in April. Senior Worcestershire coroner Geraint Williams recorded a verdict of suicide during an inquest into Felix's death in July.

Now Felix's mum, Lucy Alexander, has written a letter shining a light on some of the suffering her "wonderful" son had to endure and appealing for youngsters, parents and teachers to ensure other families don't have to go through similar grief. She tells how Felix was bullied online by people who he had never even met and how the cruel abuse became "overwhelming" and too much for him to bear.

Mrs Alexander said everyone has a "collective responsibility" to prevent other young lives being lost.

"I am appealing to children to be kind always and never stand by and leave bullying unreported," she said. "I appeal to teachers to look out for signs that children are struggling. They all have smart phones at a very young age and it is vital that they are guided on how to use them responsibly and kindly. Finally I appeal to parents. Please take an interest in what your children do online. We don't like to think that our children could be responsible for being cruel to another child, but I have been shocked by the 'nice' kids who were responsible in part for Felix's anguish. On several occasions we removed all form of social media from Felix as it was causing so much distress, but that just isolated him further. Our lives have been irrevocably damaged by the loss of our wonderful son; please don't let it happen to any other family."

Mrs Alexander and the family have been fundraising for the Place2be charity, which offers mental health counselling to young people. The charity's director of communications, Jennie Meadows, said: "We are inspired by Lucy Alexander's commitment to bringing about positive change from such a tragic and heart-breaking situation. The support that we have received as an organisation in memory of Felix is both overwhelming and unprecedented. Through our work in 282 schools across the UK, this support will help us to reach children, parents and teachers so that school communities can thrive and be emotionally resilient." http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/14781036.Mum_s_powerful_open_letter_to_bullies_after_teenage_son_s_suicide/#article
[Continue](#)

HOW TO SPOT AND PREVENT BULLYING AND WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED

It's a major form of communication but with the rise of social media has also come the rise of cyber bullying. The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as 'the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power'. It can involve everything from name calling to spreading hurtful stories. Cyber-bullying has the same effect as face-to-face verbal or psychological bullying, taking place via mobile phones, emails or texting.

Anti-bullying charities offer a variety of advice to youngsters and their parents and carers, to tackle the problem:

- Everyone should think twice before they post anything online because once it's out there it can't be taken back. It is easy for comments and posts made online to be taken out of context, and these can be damaging to the poster and victim in the long term.
- Anyone who posts abuse or sends threats can be traced by the police without any difficulty, as every time a website is visited it leaves digital footprints. Even an anonymous email address can still be traced.
- Parents and carers are advised to look for signs of stress or changes in a child's behaviour. They might make excuses to miss school, or seem upset after using the internet or their phones. Their eating habits could change or they could start sleeping badly.
- A parent who suspects their child is being bullied is asked not to panic. They should listen to the child and provide calm reassurance things can get better. Assure them the bullying is not their fault, and you are there to support them. Talk to the child's school who can provide help and support.
- For more info go to <http://www.bullying.co.uk/> or talk to a family support worker on the confidential helpline 0808 800 2222.
- The Place2Be charity website has a list of crisis contacts offering help <https://www.place2be.org.uk/crisis-contacts>
- The Samaritans offer confidential advice and support 24-hours a day- call free from any phone on 116 123.

Speaking after the publication Lucy Alexander's heartfelt letter and the funeral of 11 year-old Bradford boy Asad Khan who hanged himself in his bedroom after allegedly being bullied, Stephen Habgood, chairman of the charity Papyrus, which runs a helpline for young people who feel suicidal, said that he would welcome an updated suicide prevention strategy from the government. "But a strategy with no plan for implementation, no money and no targets will not achieve anything. Young people are in distress and are needlessly dying, leaving behind families who are broken and devastated," he said. "The poor state of mental health services for children had to be addressed urgently," he added, "so that parents seeking help for distressed children who do not want to live are no longer told that they have to go on a waiting list. If you have a child who has broken a leg, you would not be told to bring them back in six months. It's just not acceptable." <https://www.papyrus-uk.org>

Jeremy Hunt, the Health Secretary, has told officials that they must "improve" the existing 2012 nationwide suicide prevention strategy as a priority, with a focus on the young. (*The Times* 7 October 2016)

IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Rachel Treweek, the Anglican Bishop of Gloucester, is highlighting the issue of body image among children to challenge perceptions that physical appearance determines self-worth. This follows a report from the Children's Society last month that found one out of three girls aged 10 to 15 was unhappy with her appearance and felt ugly or worthless. The study highlighted the growing pressure of social media with regard to body image. The proportion of girls with negative feelings about their bodies increased from 30% to 34% over five years; among boys it remained unchanged at 20%. The report paints a bleak picture of young people under pressure to look good, and feeling depressed if they think - or are told - that they don't.

Read the report here: http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/pcr090_summary_web.pdf

Bishop Treweek told *The Guardian* that the issue urgently needed addressing. "When I talk to girls, it strikes me how much of how they view themselves and their self-worth is caught up with appearance and the way that society sees them," she said. "Issues of health and mental health are more and more linked with how people are viewed by others, and much of that begins with external appearance." A typical comment is: "You see all these perfect people, they look really pretty and they are really skinny and I want to look like them. And then I look at myself and I feel really insecure about myself." Bishop Treweek says she finds those sentiments "heartbreaking."

She plans to listen to the concerns of teenagers over the coming months before considering what action can be taken. "I want to challenge the subconscious messages we're giving," she said. "We need to look at the language we use as adults and how it shapes our culture. For example, when adults engage with girls, nearly always the first thing we say is a comment on appearance. We need to find out who they are, what they enjoy, what they're good at, what makes their souls sing." She acknowledged that as one of a handful of female bishops she had a different perspective on society than her male colleagues. "The church doesn't always appear in touch with people's everyday lives. This faith stuff has got to connect with people's lives – and if this is shown to be an issue affecting girls' mental health and happiness, then we have to be listening to that, the church needs to engage with it." <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/sep/18/bishop-gloucester-rachel-treweek-campaign-children-body-image>
<http://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2016-09-26/bishop-talks-to-students-about-self-esteem/>

KEEP SEXTING CASES OUT OF COURT, URGES TOP QC

There may be better ways to deal with young people "fooling about" than putting them in the dock, the chairman of the Criminal Bar Association has suggested. Sexting offences should usually be dealt with outside courts to spare young people a "full-on prosecution" and criminal record, the leader of the criminal bar has suggested. Francis Fitzgibbon, QC, who has taken over as chairman of the 4,000-strong Criminal Bar Association, has said that there is an argument for removing cases where "young people are fooling about" from the trial process. They could be dealt with through "restorative justice," where victims meet offenders - as long as victims consent. "It's a matter of proportionality: each case would have to be scrutinised extremely carefully," he said.

A COMMON DECLARATION FROM POPE FRANCIS AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

5 October 2016: "Wider and deeper than our differences are the faith that we share and our common joy in the Gospel. Christ prayed that his disciples may all be one, "so that the world might believe" (John 17: 21). The longing for unity that we express in this Common Declaration is closely tied to the desire we share that men and women come to believe that God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world to save the world from the evil that oppresses and diminishes the entire creation. Jesus gave his life in love, and rising from the dead overcame even death itself. Christians who have come to this faith have encountered Jesus and the victory of his love in their own lives and are impelled to share the joy of this Good News with others. Our ability to come together in praise and prayer to God and witness to the world rests on the confidence that we share a common faith and a substantial measure of agreement in faith.

The world must see us witnessing to this common faith in Jesus by acting together. We can, and must, work together to protect and preserve our common home: living, teaching and acting in ways that favour a speedy end to the environmental destruction that offends the Creator and degrades his creatures, and building individual and collective patterns of behaviour that foster a sustainable and integral development for the good of all. We can, and must, be united in a common cause to uphold and defend the dignity of all people.

The human person is demeaned by personal and societal sin. In a culture of indifference, walls of estrangement isolate us from others, their struggles and their suffering, which also many of our brothers and sisters in Christ today endure. In a culture of waste, the lives of the most vulnerable in society are often marginalised and discarded. In a culture of hate we see unspeakable acts of violence, often justified by a distorted understanding of religious belief.

Our Christian faith leads us to recognise the inestimable worth of every human life, and to honour it in acts of mercy by bringing education, healthcare, food, clean water and shelter and always seeking to resolve conflict and build peace. As disciples of Christ we hold human persons to be sacred, and as apostles of Christ we must be their advocates.

Today we rejoice to commission them and send them forth in pairs as the Lord sent out the seventy-two disciples. Let their ecumenical mission to those on the margins of society be a witness to all of us, and let the message go out from this holy place, as the Good News was sent out so many centuries ago, that Catholics and Anglicans will work together to give voice to our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring relief to the suffering, to bring peace where there is conflict, to bring dignity where it is denied and trampled upon."

Read in full: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/10/05/full-text-common-declaration-of-pope-francis-and-the-archbishop-of-canterbury/#.V Y-51iroec.facebook>

MICHELLE OBAMA DENOUNCES TRUMP'S RHETORIC: 'IT HAS SHAKEN ME TO MY CORE'

14 October 2016: ... I think we can all agree that this has been a rough week in an already rough election. This week has been particularly interesting for me personally because it has been a week of profound contrast.

See, on Tuesday, at the White House, we celebrated the International Day of the Girl and Let Girls Learn, and it was a wonderful celebration. It was the last event that I'm going to be doing as first lady for Let Girls Learn. And I had the pleasure of spending hours talking to some of the most amazing young women you will ever meet, young girls here in the US and all around the world. And we talked about their hopes and their dreams. We talked about their aspirations. See, because many of these girls have faced unthinkable obstacles just to attend school, jeopardizing their personal safety, their freedom, risking the rejection of their families and communities.

So I thought it would be important to remind these young women how valuable and precious they are. I wanted them to understand that the measure of any society is how it treats its women and girls. And I told them that they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and I told them that they should disregard anyone who demeans or devalues them, and that they should make their voices heard in the world. And I walked away feeling so inspired, just like I'm inspired by all the young people here – and I was so uplifted by these girls. That was Tuesday.

And now, here I am, out on the campaign trail in an election where we have consistently been hearing hurtful, hateful language about women – language that has been painful for so many of us, not just as women, but as parents trying to protect our children and raise them to be caring, respectful adults, and as citizens who think that our nation's leaders should meet basic standards of human decency.

The fact is that in this election, we have a candidate for president of the United States who, over the course of his lifetime and the course of this campaign, has said things about women that are so shocking, so demeaning that I simply will not repeat anything here today. And last week, we saw this candidate actually bragging about sexually assaulting women. And I can't believe that I'm saying that a candidate for president of the United States has bragged about sexually assaulting women.

And I have to tell you that I can't stop thinking about this. It has shaken me to my core in a way that I couldn't have predicted. So while I'd love nothing more than to pretend like this isn't happening, and to come out here and do my normal campaign speech, it would be dishonest and disingenuous of me to just move on to the next thing like this was all just a bad dream.

This is not something that we can ignore. It's not something we can just sweep under the rug as just another disturbing footnote in a sad election season. Because this was not just a "lewd conversation". This wasn't just locker-room banter. This was a powerful individual speaking freely and openly about sexually predatory behaviour, and actually bragging about kissing and groping women, using language so obscene that many of us were worried about our children hearing it when we turn on the TV.

And to make matters worse, it now seems very clear that this isn't an isolated incident. It's one of countless examples of how he has treated women his whole life. And I have to tell you that I listen to all of this and I feel it so personally, and I'm sure that many of you do too, particularly the women. The shameful comments about our bodies. The disrespect of our ambitions and intellect. The belief that you can do anything you want to a woman.

It is cruel. It's frightening. And the truth is, it hurts. It hurts. It's like that sick, sinking feeling you get when you're walking down the street minding your own business and some guy yells out vulgar words about your body. Or when you see that guy at work that stands just a little too close, stares a little too long, and makes you feel uncomfortable in your own skin.

It's that feeling of terror and violation that too many women have felt when someone has grabbed them, or forced himself on them and they've said no but he didn't listen – something that we know happens on college campuses and countless other places every single day. It reminds us of stories we heard from our mothers and grandmothers about how, back in their day, the boss could say and do whatever he pleased to the women in the office, and even though they worked so hard, jumped over every hurdle to prove themselves, it was never enough.

We thought all of that was ancient history, didn't we? And so many have worked for so many years to end this kind of violence and abuse and disrespect, but here we are in 2016 and we're hearing these exact same things every day on the campaign trail. We are drowning in it. And all of us are doing what women have always done: we're trying to keep our heads above water, just trying to get through it, trying to pretend like this doesn't really bother us maybe because we think that admitting how much it hurts makes us as women look weak.

Maybe we're afraid to be that vulnerable. Maybe we've grown accustomed to swallowing these emotions and staying quiet, because we've seen that people often won't take our word over his. Or maybe we don't want to believe that there are still people out there who think so little of us as women. Too many are treating this as just another day's headline, as if our outrage is overblown or unwarranted, as if this is normal, just politics as usual. But, New Hampshire, be clear: this is not normal. This is not politics as usual. This is disgraceful. It is intolerable. And it doesn't matter what party you belong to – Democrat, Republican, independent – no woman deserves to be treated this way. None of us deserves this kind of abuse.

And I know it's a campaign, but this isn't about politics. It's about basic human decency. It's about right and wrong. And we simply cannot endure this, or expose our children to this any – not for another minute, and let alone for four years. Now is the time for all of us to stand up and say enough is enough. This has got to stop right now.

Because consider this: if all of this is painful to us as grown women, what do you think this is doing to our children? What message are our little girls hearing about who they should look like, how they should act? What lessons are they learning about their value as professionals, as human beings, about their dreams and aspirations? And how is this affecting men and boys in this country? Because I can tell you that the men in my life do not talk about women like this. And I know that my family is not unusual. And to dismiss this as everyday locker-room talk is an insult to decent men everywhere.

The men that you and I know don't treat women this way. They are loving fathers who are sickened by the thought of their daughters being exposed to this kind of vicious language about women. They are husbands and brothers and sons who don't tolerate women being treated and demeaned and disrespected. And like us, these men are worried about the impact this election is having on our boys who are looking for role models of what it means to be a man.

In fact, someone recently told me a story about their six-year-old son who one day was watching the news – they were watching the news together. And the little boy, out of the blue, said, "I think Hillary Clinton will be president." And his mom said, "Well, why do you say that?" And this little six-year-old said, "Because the other guy called someone a piggy and," he said, "You cannot be president if you call someone a piggy." So even a six-year-old knows better. A six-year-old knows that this is not how adults behave. This is not how decent human beings behave. And this is certainly not how someone who wants to be president of the United States behaves.

Because let's be very clear: strong men – men who are truly role models – don't need to put down women to make themselves feel powerful. People who are truly strong lift others up. People who are truly powerful bring others together. And that is what we need in our next president. We need someone who is a uniting force in this country. We need someone who will heal the wounds that divide us, someone who truly cares about us and our children, someone with strength and compassion to lead this country forward.

... In our hearts, we all know that if we let Hillary's opponent win this election, then we are sending a clear message to our kids that everything they're seeing and hearing is perfectly OK. We are validating it. We are endorsing it. We're telling our sons that it's OK to humiliate women. We're telling our daughters that this is how they deserve to be treated. We're telling all our kids that bigotry and bullying are perfectly acceptable in the leader of their country. Is that what we want for our children?

And remember, we won't just be setting a bad example for our kids, but for our entire world. Because for so long, America has been a model for countries across the globe, pushing them to educate their girls, insisting that they give more rights to their women. But if we have a president who routinely degrades women, who brags about sexually assaulting women, then how can we maintain our moral authority in the world? How can we continue to be a beacon of freedom and justice and human dignity?

... On November 8, we can show our children that here in America, we reject hatred and fear and in difficult times, we don't discard our highest ideals. No, we rise up to meet them. We rise up to perfect our union. We rise up to defend our blessings of liberty. We rise up to embody the values of equality and opportunity and sacrifice that have always made this country the greatest nation on Earth. That is who we are. And don't ever let anyone tell you differently. Hope is important. Hope is important for our young people.

Read the speech in full: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/oct/14/michelle-obama-speech-transcript-donald-trump>

WITH POPE'S CARDINAL PICKS, BERNARDIN'S 'SEAMLESS GARMENT' IS BACK

9 October 2016: Pope Francis on Sunday engineered what may prove to be a seismic shift in the Catholic hierarchy in the United States, elevating not one or two, but a full three new American cardinals seen as belonging to the centrist, non-cultural warrior wing of the country's hierarchy. The three Americans are Archbishops Blase Cupich of Chicago and Joseph Tobin of Indianapolis, as well as Bishop Kevin Farrell of Dallas, recently chosen by Francis to head his new "dicastery," meaning a Vatican department, on Family, Laity and Life.

While none of these three figures would be seen as "liberal" by secular standards, they are perceived as belonging to the more progressive camp in the Catholic hierarchy. Of the three, Cupich and Farrell were quasi-expected. Chicago is an archdiocese that's long been held by a cardinal, and Farrell's new Vatican post seemed to beckon a cardinal at the top. Tobin, however, is more of a surprise. Indianapolis is not a traditional "red-hat" see, meaning a diocese typically led by a cardinal, and his name had not featured prominently in much of the speculation leading up to the consistory announcement. While the choice of a relatively small American city to have a cardinal could be seen as consistent with Francis's passion for outreach to the peripheries, taken in tandem with both Cupich and Farrell, it seems more plausible that Francis was making a statement about the direction in which he wants the American church to go.

Had Francis held more to convention in his American picks, the logical candidates beyond Cupich would have been Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles and Charles Chaput of Philadelphia, both American cities historically led by cardinals. There also would have been logic in each case, as the Mexican-born Gomez would have been the first Hispanic cardinal in U.S. Catholic history, and Chaput was Francis's host when the pontiff visited Philadelphia last September for the World Meeting of Families. Both Gomez and Chaput, however, are broadly perceived as more "conservative," and thus would have reinforced what's already seen as a strong conservative majority among the American cardinals, who tend to have an outsize influence on setting the tone for the Church both in terms of media perceptions and also internal leadership.

For some time now, retired Cardinal Theodore McCarrick has been perceived as a fairly isolated figure among the U.S. cardinals in terms of his basic centre-left, social justice-oriented outlook, able to talk to Democrats as comfortably as Republicans. He was joined in that stance by retired Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, but Mahony's involvement in the clerical abuse scandals in the Los Angeles archdiocese has to some extent limited his effectiveness.

With Cupich and Tobin, however, what one might call the “McCarrick caucus” among the American cardinals has been swelled significantly. Cupich was well known at Francis’s two Synods of Bishops on the family for parting company to some extent with the more traditionalist bloc, signaling openness on issues such as finding new pastoral approaches for LGBT believers and also opening the door to divorced and civilly remarried Catholics to potentially receive Communion.

Tobin is a former superior general of the worldwide Redemptorist religious order, who served from 2010 to 2012 as the number two official at the Vatican’s Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, better known as the “Congregation for Religious,” during the time when the Vatican was conducting two separate investigations of American nuns. Tobin was publicly critical of those probes, suggesting they had been launched without dialogue or consultation with the women religious, and behind the scenes that didn’t always sit well with some of the prelates who had pushed for them in the first place. Many observers believed at the time his 2012 transfer to Indianapolis, before the usual five-year term in a Vatican office was up, reflected some unhappiness with his more conciliatory line. More recently, Tobin clashed with Indiana Governor and Republican Vice presidential nominee Mike Pence over Tobin’s determination to welcome Syrian refugees in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis despite Pence’s objections.

As for Farrell, over his years in Dallas he’s tried to steer the University of Dallas into a more centrist, mainstream position, at times running afoul of the sentiments of more conservative forces at the university. He’s also emerged as a leader in favour of gun control, something of a bold stance in the context of Texas, and also on immigration issues.

In one fell swoop, therefore, Francis has reshaped the character of the most senior level of the American hierarchy, steering it away from what some see as the partisan stance of the last two decades and back towards what might be described as the “consistent ethic of life” ethos associated with the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, also of Chicago. Bernardin also used the phrase “seamless garment” to capture that view. The outlook, while certainly defending Church teaching on matters such as abortion and euthanasia, is more inclined to see them as part of a spectrum that also includes immigration, the death penalty, the environment, concern for the poor, and so on.

In 2011, the widely respected American Catholic writer George Weigel penned an influential essay in *First Things* declaring “the Bernardin Era is over and the Bernardin Machine is no more,” after Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York defeated Bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson in the race for president of the US bishops conference, and at the time Weigel’s diagnosis was hard to dispute. What neither Weigel nor anyone else could have anticipated, however, was the rise of a Latin American pontiff who would revive that legacy in his neighbor to the north. While the realignment probably won’t have any immediate impact on the way the American Church approaches the election on November 8 since the consistory isn’t until ten days later, it likely will reshape how the Church engages the aftermath - both in terms of the kinds of issues it prioritises, and whom the Catholic leadership of the country is able to talk to about them. By naming Blase Cupich of Chicago, Joseph Tobin of Indianapolis and Kevin Farrell, formerly of Dallas, as cardinals, Pope Francis has moved the senior leadership of the American Catholic Church to a centrist, non-cultural warrior stance reminiscent of the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin’s “seamless garment.” **John L. Allen Jr. Editor *Crux***
<https://cruxnow.com/analysis/2016/10/09/popes-cardinal-picks-bernardins-seamless-garment-back/>

SOUTH AFRICA: BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

14 October 2016: By now most of you know that I was shot on Monday afternoon. I was standing, empty-handed in the gates of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Braamfontein, where I am the parish priest and university chaplain. I had throughout that day and the days before been exercising my priestly ministry by opening the church as a place of sanctuary, a safe and sacred space where dialogue and conversation might happen. Students had fled to Trinity after violence erupted again on campus. During the course of the day the police drove armed vehicles around Braamfontein. I had already prevented an armed vehicle travelling at high speed, from the entering church property endangering vulnerable students and street people, and had previously been shot with a rubber bullet. I had consistently prevented students who were carrying sticks or stones from entering church property, until they put down their weapons.

Let me be clear, there is no cause in which I can accept or condone the use of violence. I have been a lifelong pacifist, and my actions on Monday are congruent with the choices I have made my whole life in pursuit of peace. When I was 21 in 1979 I was court martialled by the South African Defence Force for refusing to kill people. My decision not to allow sticks, stones, home-made bombs, guns or armoured trucks onto Church property consummates my crusade for peace. Both times my decision has been costly to me. Earnestly to seek after peace is a costly endeavour. Yet the alternative is even more ghastly. I am profoundly humbled that I have been allowed to bear witness to the truth.

My interpretation of the Gospel is non-violent, for Christ himself embraced non-violence as a principle. As a priest my calling is to seek that justice which is requisite to peace. The church should be a place for peace, for dialogue between differing perspectives. The church is not owned by any faction. Those who recognise the intrinsic dignity of the other, however disparate their opinions, are welcome. For me the recognition of this inherent dignity rests at the heart of my non-violence. Therefore I had carried water to the policeman at the other gate, shortly before being shot.

Our parish has joyfully fed the hungry, street people and students alike, given drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked and visited the sick. Joyfully we offer liberation to the captives, and when necessary we bury the dead. As I have said before, St. Ignatius believed in free quality education and so do I. Though I cannot condone violence and coercion from any side in the current conflict, by firmly putting it on the political agenda students are doing a service to us all. It is not just good for students, in the long term a highly educated society is good for everyone. The University cannot give us free education, only the government can. All parties to the conflict know this. This should be the basis of a genuine dialogue not violence.

Fr Graham Pugin SJ, Jesuit Institute, South Africa <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31131>

REMEMBRANCE DAY: WHAT WILL WE BE REMEMBERING?

Armistice Day which marked the day fighting stopped on November 11 1918 had to be cancelled when in October 1939 British troops landed on mainland Europe almost exactly 25 years after the last time. The public meaning of the Armistice after what came to be called World War One – victory and warning against future wars - was dependent on there being peace. With the declaration of another war this meaning was shattered but was subsequently reconstructed, the 'war to end war' forgotten, and the 'nobility' and 'necessity' of war burnished. In a new guise and periodically refreshed to meet new PR challenges, Remembrance Sunday came to serve as a justification of war and exhortation to eternal vigilance – the passing of the torch - and selling red poppies now the valuable corporate logo of the British Legion.

Today for some Remembrance Day has private significance; for the rest of us its public face is a spectacle appropriated for specific financial and political purposes.

By the time Armistice Day was cancelled in 1939 it had already changed profoundly from its original public conception as a time for mourning and reflection on loss of life to a self-validating day out for the military, a powerful recruitment tool for the War Office and lots of 'victory' parties.

In 1914 people may have thought they were fighting German militarism but not a year has gone by since when the British military have not been engaged in fighting somewhere in the world. No other country can boast of or be shamed by such a record.

Militarism is alive and well in today's Britain. Militarism is not just about the outward show of bellicose rhetoric, medals and soldiers proudly marching through towns when returning from wars, or parading in front of the monarch in serried ranks. It is the cast of mind and belief system that favoured the age old values embodied in war fighting. A cast of mind that sends princes and prime ministers to sell weapons to even the most unsavory despots, a cast of mind that funds research and production of ever more devastating weapons and associated technology. A cast of mind that believes that men and women trained to kill can provide an especially beneficial role model in schools and pass on their military values to young people. A cast of mind that without apparently us noticing is eyeing our cities as battlegrounds to be surveilled and patrolled where we are viewed with suspicion and have to prove our 'innocence'. As technology originally funded by and designed for the military is leaching into the civil sphere so is its originating mindset. The distinction between policing, intelligence and the military becomes blurred as does the distinction between war and peace and local and global operation.

War has become the dominant metaphor to describe much of the world around us – war against drugs and crime, war against terror, against insecurity. These are not just a sloppy use of language but reflections of stealthy militarisation of a wide range of policy debates as well as popular culture. War – the struggle for control - for people in Britain has mostly been a distant event. Today that struggle for control is in our streets.

The deeper inspiration for the white poppy lies in the widespread movement against war and militarism in the early years of the 20th century. It urges us to challenge militarism and work for a culture of peace. It urges us to have the courage of the conscientious objector of WW1 to resist the temptation to participate in the war machine. Otherwise as President John Kennedy observed:

"War will exist until that distant day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige that the warrior does today."

Taken from: <http://www.ppu.org.uk/down/popy/WhatToRemember.pdf>

PEACE PLEDGE UNION 1 Peace Passage London N7 0BT www.ppu.org.uk

For more information visit www.nomorewar.org.uk

WHITE POPPIES FOR PEACE

Frequently asked questions

1 What do White Poppies represent?

There are three elements to the meaning of White Poppies: they represent remembrance for all victims of war, a commitment to peace and a challenge to attempts to glamourise or celebrate war.

2 Where can I buy a White Poppy?

You can buy them from us online. There are also a number of shops, faith groups and other outlets that sell White Poppies. If you would like to sell them in your area, we would be pleased to hear from you. You can reach us at mail@ppu.org.uk.

3 How many White Poppies are sold each year?

The number of White Poppies sold each year varies and has risen steadily in recent years. In 2015, we distributed 110,000 poppies via individuals as well as shops, schools, colleges, churches, local authorities and museums. This number is a record high, but we are of course concerned with the message behind the White Poppy and not only the sales figures. We receive orders for White Poppies from around the world. Outside of the UK, White Poppies are sold most commonly in Canada, New Zealand and Belgium.

4 Who makes the White Poppies?

The White Poppy was first produced in 1933 by the Co-operative Women's Guild, who were worried by the growing militarisation of Remembrance events and the detachment between the Red Poppy and the need to work for peace. Today, White Poppies are distributed by the Peace Pledge Union (PPU). The White Poppies are made commercially and provide jobs for people who might not otherwise be in employment.

5 Where does the money go?

White Poppies are more about the message of peace and remembrance than about raising funds. We distribute White Poppies to promote remembrance for all victims of war and to challenge the view that war and preparations for war are necessary or inevitable. Money raised over and above the cost of producing, publicising and distributing the poppies goes to fund our education and campaigning work, thus promoting nonviolent approaches to conflict and challenging militarism. Such work regrettably does not attract much funding and so we rely heavily on the generosity of people like you.

Some argue that if you buy a White Poppy you are taking away money that would go to support wounded veterans if you bought a Red Poppy instead. This is not accurate. There is nothing to stop someone wearing a White Poppy while also donating to a charity to help those wounded in war. We want to see decent support for people affected by war. We believe, however, that such people should be able to turn to a well-funded welfare state rather than having to rely on charity. The UK government has been slashing the welfare state in recent years while maintaining the fifth highest military budget in the world.

6 Is the White Poppy a political symbol?

Both the White Poppy and the Red Poppy represent distinct values and perspectives. In this sense, they are both political symbols. It is sometimes inaccurately stated that the White Poppy is "political" and the Red Poppy is not. They are as political as each other. The debate should not be about whether a symbol is political (everything is political) but about the values it represents. People who wear White Poppies hold a variety of views and opinions and may well disagree with each other on many subjects. What they share is a desire to remember all the victims of war, to challenge militarism and to stand up for peace.

http://www.ppu.org.uk/whitepoppy/01white_faq.html

KEEP YOUR EYES ON WEST'S NEW TERROR IN THE SKY

Pat Gaffney writes: One of my favourite t-shirts is black and has in striking gold lettering, the words, "*Fly kites not drones*". It always attracts attention and opens the door for conversation. What are drones and what do they have to do with kites? Where are drones used? Who makes them? Why are they used? All excellent questions. The phrase was inspired by a young Afghan boy, a member of Afghan Peace Volunteers. In Afghanistan, clear blue skies mean perfect weather for flying kites (remember the film *Kite Runner*?) but they now also mean perfect weather for the use of armed drones too. So a season that once brought joy and laughter now brings apprehension and fear.

As the war in Afghanistan was winding down, new areas for their use opened in Libya, Iraq and Syria. Drone research, development and use began in the US and Israel but today the Remote Control Project estimate that 86 countries now have drones, many for surveillance but 19 have armed drone programmes. Drones are a new weapon of choice. The US is expanding its drone force and needs to train 400 pilots a year by 2019. The first operation from UK soil took place in April 2013 with an attack in Afghanistan. The Reaper programme, once operated on our behalf from the US, is now managed and run from RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire.

In his analysis of Ministry of Defence data the director of Drone Wars UK, Chris Cole reports that in the first half of 2016 British air strikes in Iraq and Syria increased by 85% over the previous six months. 249 strikes were launched from British aircraft and drones between July and December 2015, while 464 strikes were launched in the first six months of 2016. Readers may wonder why the UK is involved. In what they call '*Operation Shader*' the UK has been part of a military coalition carrying out airstrikes over Iraq since 2014 and Syria since 2015. The airstrikes involve a variety of weapon systems of which armed drones are a growing part. Drone Wars UK research indicates that 1,427 Reaper missions have been carried out by the UK since 2014. The NGO AIRWARS estimate that tens of hundreds of non-combatants are being killed in these air strikes – a figure disputed by Governments. However, Governments rarely seek to measure the human impact of military operations whereas AIRWARS gather and collate data from the region to capture the human consequences of these air strikes.

Keeping the real story under wraps seems to be the operating model of Governments. Getting things out in the open is one of the roles of NGOs and campaign groups. A new briefing from Drone Wars UK on the proliferation and dangers of armed drones, '*Drones: Out of sight, Out of mind, Out of control*', will be launched in London in early October. Others will gather, as they do on a regular basis, at RAF Waddington under the banner "*We are watching you*" with the intention of keeping the work of the British armed Reaper drone programme in the public eye. Concern about the accountability, secrecy, lack of international scrutiny of use of force in relation to drones will be raised by NGOs at the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security on 15 October.

In 2014 the Holy See made an intervention at the UN in Geneva on armed drones saying: "We are witnessing a certain proliferation of this technology and a growing use of it in various conflicts. The challenges are multiple and related to international humanitarian law, to human rights, and to international law. The ethical implications are not insignificant. The choice of indifference in relation to this question is counter-productive."

It is thanks to researchers and campaigners that the indifference of Governments will be challenged.

- **Fly Kites not Drones education pack here:** www.flykitesnotdrones.org/home
- **Drone Wars UK:** www.dronewars.net/
- **Airwars: monitoring coalition air strikes in Iraq, Syria and Libya:** www.airwars.org

Pat Gaffney is General Secretary of Pax Christi, the international Catholic peace movement www.paxchristi.org.uk

• This article first appeared in *The Universe* September 2016 as part of the weekly series of articles by NJPN members.

http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Universe_September_Drones2016.pdf

BOB DYLAN WINS NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 2016

Bob Dylan, the only rock musician to appear in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, is arguably a surprise recipient of this year's Nobel Prize for Literature. Born Robert Zimmerman in 1941 his career has spanned more than five decades. Early songs such as *Blowin' in the Wind* from his second album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963) and *The Times they are a-Changing* became anthems for the American civil rights and anti-war movements. *Masters of War*, from the same album, reveals Dylan's protest against the Cold War and the arms build-up of the early 1960s. The lyrics are still relevant today:

*Come you masters of war/ You that build the big guns/ You that build the death planes/ You that build all the bombs/
You that hide behind walls/ You that hide behind desks/ I just want you to know/ I can see through your masks /
You that never done nothin'/ But build to destroy/ You play with my world/ Like it's your little toy.*

MHAIRI BLACK'S POWERFUL SPEECH EXPLAINING WHY SHE VOTED AGAINST TRIDENT

19 July 2016: SNP MP Mhairi Black has branded Trident part of the Government's 'long term economic sham' in a stirring speech. Ms Black, who shot to fame after her anti-austerity maiden Commons speech went viral, gave a typically emotive and analytical address to the debate on renewing Britain's nuclear deterrent.

Here's Mhairi Black's speech on Trident in full:

Government Members seem to have the idea that we in the Scottish National party are against nuclear weapons for some kind of romanticised reason, but the reality is that we are against nuclear weapons and renewing Trident for logical reasons.

First, we have to remember the fact that, fundamentally, Trident is a weapon. We have already established that we would not fire first, so the only time that we would ever use this weapon would be if somebody launched a nuclear strike against us. To be frank, that would mean that we were all dead anyway. If I am dying, I do not care if we send a weapon back; I am more worried about the one that is coming towards me.

We keep hearing the phrase, "We can't predict the future", but if we are going to make defence policy, surely we have to think wisely about what we are deterring. What are the threats that we face? The 2015 national security strategy set out the tier 1 threats faced by the UK: international terrorism, climate change and cybercrime. How many terrorist attacks have nuclear weapons protected us or France from? The answer is zero. They have got hee-haw to do with climate change or cybercrime, so that brings us back to the argument that they are a deterrent, but only nine countries in the world have nuclear weapons. How come the other 180-plus countries do not feel the need to have this deterrent?

What other arguments are there for keeping Trident? We keep hearing that we need to keep it for the sake of jobs. Yes, it involves skilled engineers, scientists and workers who work very hard and are very talented, but why do we not invest the billions of pounds that we are proposing to spend on it in our energy and engineering sectors? Why do we not use that money in our renewable energy sectors? Climate change is a tier 1 threat to us, so why do we not spend that money on trying to tackle it?

If these weapons are not a security necessity and they are not necessary to save jobs, that prompts the question: what are they for? The fact of the matter is that this is all really about the UK maintaining a permanent place on the UN Security Council. As the hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Tom Tugendhat), who is unfortunately not in his seat, made clear, these weapons serve no purpose other than satisfying the ego of the British establishment. This is about us putting our stamp on a world from which we are isolating ourselves more and more.

Too many times, I have sat in this Chamber and heard, as my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (Drew Hendry) eloquently said, that we cannot afford to look after the disabled, we cannot afford to look after our unemployed and we cannot afford to pay pensions on time. We have heard Conservative Members say that they are the Government making the difficult choices, but the very same people who made the argument for austerity are now telling us that we can afford to write a blank cheque for these useless weapons. And for what? To preserve Westminster's self-indulgent image of importance. This is all part of the Government's long-term economic sham.

I want to provide some context about the reality of what this means. Paisley Gilmour Street, in my constituency, is the busiest railway station in Scotland outside Glasgow and Edinburgh, and it is one of the main routes on which nuclear waste is transported. Used nuclear rods come through my constituency, not in the dead of night but during the day when people are standing on the platform waiting to go to work in Greenock, or wherever else. If a mistake was made and an accident happened, it would be the equivalent of a dirty bomb. I put it to the Government that they, and their obsession with nuclear weapons, are one of the greatest threats facing my constituents.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=thVc6U25gOl&autoplay=1>

HARD RAIN: Our headlong collision with nature

Another song from *Freewheelin'*, *A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall*, written around the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, featured a veiled reference to an impending apocalypse.

In a startlingly original book by Mark Edwards (Third revised edition, with an essay by Tim Smit, founder *The Eden Project*) each line of Dylan's poetic masterpiece, *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*, is illustrated by leading photographers. *Hard Rain* brings alive our global problems and shows how they are all connected by cause and effect. Poverty, the wasteful use of resources, pollution, the loss of habitats and species, and the summation of our problems, climate change, are all understood by decision-makers but they typically continue to be addressed as separate issues. *Hard Rain* shows that we need to tackle all our problems together if we are to solve any one of them.

Normal price £14.99 - Offer £10 plus P&P from: <http://www.hardrainproject.com/book>

LOVE AND LOSS AFTER THE BATACLAN MASSACRE

On November 13, 2015, journalist Antoine Leiris's wife H  l  ne was one of those killed in the mass shooting at the Bataclan theatre, Paris. Three days later he published a letter on Facebook to the attackers. Leiris wrote: "On Friday evening you stole the life of an exceptional person, the love of my life, the mother of my son, but you will not have my hatred ... You would like me to be scared, for me to look at my fellow citizens with a suspicious eye, for me to sacrifice my liberty for my security. You have lost ... There are only two of us, my son and I, but we are stronger than all the armies in the world. All his life this little boy will defy you by being happy and free. Because you will never have his hatred either." The open letter, which went viral, was one of several extraordinary acts of defiance and bravery that have emerged in the aftermath of the murderous attacks.

Now Leiris has written a book, in diary form, detailing the emotional journey he went through from November 13 to November 25, the date of his wife's funeral. His book is not about terrorism or the motivation of the attackers. It is a memoir about loss. He admits there can be no tidy endings. The book "will not heal me. No one can be healed of death. All they can do is tame it.

***You Will Not Have My Hate* by Antoine Leiris**, translated by Sam Taylor Harvill Secker, 144pp £10 published 20 October 2016
<https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/1112706/you-will-not-have-my-hate/>

AUTHOR ATTACKS AMAZON

Mark Haddon, the award-winning novelist best known for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, has hit out against the retail giant Amazon by instructing his publishers to give a superior edition of his latest book to 'bricks-and-mortar' bookshops only. His personal illustrations on his short story collection *The Pier Falls* will be absent from the edition available on Amazon because of his views of the company as a "merciless commercial engine." He says he is unhappy about the way they treat their staff and also their competitors.

Haddon also feels bookshops and physical books, as opposed to e-books, are a force for good. He says: "I love being in a physical place to talk about books to people in their town ... sharing books with people. I love that books have afterlives. Often when people come up to you at book events, they don't always give you new books to sign. You sometimes get coffee-stained things that have passed through several hands."

DOCUMENTARY: 'WHATEVER THE PENALTY: TAKING A STAND'

You Tube documentary on WW1 Conscientious Objectors

This short film tells the story of an almost forgotten gathering of Conscientious Objectors in World War One at the old Quaker HQ, Devonshire House in Bishopsgate. They represented a small minority who defied the 1916 Military Service Act - the law that introduced Conscription to Britain for the first time. Members and supporters of the 'No Conscription Fellowship', they were determined to stand by their religious and political convictions, whatever the penalties. In doing so they faced intense public hostility, ridicule, violence and even death. Our current anti-war struggles owe a lot to their pioneering courage.

Feel free to share this film as you wish. A DVD of the film, including an interview with historian Cyril Pearce, is available price £4 including postage from heroes@watfordquakers.org.uk.

More films on the theme of war and peace are available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBVWk2xJ1sGjmv5ks2qDDbWPC-m6x086l>

THE BATTLE OF CABLE STREET: 80 YEARS ON

4 October 2016: Eighty years ago today, the people of the East End of London united to halt Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists (BUF) from marching through Stepney. The fascists were subjected to a humiliating defeat as the police found themselves unable to clear a path. We're honouring what came to be known as 'The Battle of Cable Street', the most popular anti-fascist victory to take place on British soil, with a brand new website: www.cablestreet.uk

Our new site profiles Stepney and rising tensions leading up to 4th October 1936, examines the Jewish community of the time, looks at the battle itself and then its legacy, and includes interviews with historians and Cable Street veterans. The website contains eyewitness interviews, old TV footage and lots of anti-fascist, fascist and police documents to help piece the day together.

Generations of activists, including ourselves, have been inspired by the courage and example set then. Yet eight decades on, hate groups and populist political parties are attempting to blame and target recently-settled communities and vulnerable minorities. Our campaign today seeks to expose these flag bearers of hate and emphasise what unites rather than what divides us. Just as those present at Cable Street did so, so courageously, 80 years ago.

It is vital to keep the memory and spirit of the event alive and to ensure that the timeless lessons of 4 October 1936 are not forgotten. And vital to keep supporting that spirit of struggle. **Nick Lowles HOPE not hate**

NEW FILM 'THE WHITE HELMETS' LAUNCHES ON NETFLIX

Released on 16 September this Netflix original documentary set in Aleppo, Syria and Turkey in early 2016 follows three White Helmets as they put everything on the line to save civilians affected by the war, all the while wracked with worry about the safety of their own loved ones. Moving and inspiring, *The White Helmets* (by Oscar-nominated    team Orlando von Einsiedel and Joanna Natasegara) is both a snapshot of the harrowing realities of life for ordinary Syrians who remain in the country, and a humbling portrait of the power of the human spirit.

www.netflix.com/title/80101827

FILM: *I, DANIEL BLAKE*

BBC Films, Director: Ken Loach, Certificate: 15, Running time: 100 mins, UK release date: 21 October 2016

For all the headlines about zero-hours contracts, food banks and the benefits system, many Britons stand comfortably outside the sphere of direct influence of policy and practice in any of those areas. Some might be led to outrage or even action by what they perceive to be failings of the system, but for many, ignorance is bliss.

Not so for Ken Loach, who has chosen once again to express on screen his outrage at society's propensity to slam the door in the face of those in honest and sincere need of a helping hand. His latest commentary on modern Britain is the all-too-real fictional story of Daniel Blake, a carpenter whose doctors won't let him go back to work after a heart attack but whose sickness benefit application has been refused. Loach follows Daniel as he jumps with good but fading humour through all the hoops that stand between him and a resolution of his predicament, forming an unlikely but authentic friendship along the way with Katie, a single mother-of-two who feels similarly bewildered by the system.

There is no way around politicising this film – especially not since Jeremy Corbyn lent his voice to its message by attending the film's premiere – and nor would Loach want there to be. There's no room for subtlety here, though its shock factor is not entertainment-driven as was that of Benefits Street and such shows. The call for a welfare system that actually serves those for whom it exists is as raw and unfiltered as the filmmaking which somewhat incongruously earned *I, Daniel Blake* this year's Palme d'Or: the glamour of the Cannes film festival is completely at odds with the film's visceral presentation of poverty in modern Britain.

One scene in particular in which Katie visits a food bank will – and should – cement itself in your long term memory. The same goes for her jarring plea to Daniel: 'Don't show me any more love'. When St Ignatius encourages us in the Spiritual Exercises to imagine what it would mean to know but still reject God's love, if such a thing were possible, he is leading us towards contemplating what Hell is like. With that in mind as we hear Katie, it is hard not to see the depth of despair in which she finds herself as her own personal hell on earth.

Even within the narrow dramatic parameters that bureaucracy allows, there is still a potent and emotive battle being fought all the way through this film. It's not hero versus villain, but everyman versus system. As Daniel discovers, it is all but impossible to defeat one's nemesis when the only weapon available to you is an endless series of forms and appointments. So with a faceless enemy and the absence of any effective combat techniques, what is there to do? Reset the rules of engagement. Define yourself in terms that your opponent cannot understand. I am not a customer, client or service user, says Daniel. I am a citizen. I am a good neighbour.

'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus answered that question with the Parable of the Good Samaritan. We take away from the parable something which this film celebrates with its cast of Samaritans, Daniel Blake chief among them: the value of kindness and generosity, of mercy. But there is a flipside to that coin in both parable and film – a blistering critique of institutions that try to calculate the monetary value of human dignity and that see genuine need as an inconvenience. And that is what audiences will take away from this harrowing yet superb film.

Reviewer: Frances Murphy.

Posted on: 20th October 2016 **Thinking Faith: The online journal of the Jesuits in Britain**

https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/i-daniel-blake?utm_source=Thinking+Faith&utm_campaign=3377030862-TF_2016102010_20_2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_620a4d7197-3377030862-87591565&mc_cid=3377030862&mc_eid=ffd117de3f

FILM: *TODAY THEY TOOK MY SON*

Dan Bergin writes: Feature films usually get most of the attention at film festivals, but one short film that is gaining recognition from global influencers is *Today They Took My Son* (TTTMS), by Palestinian-human rights advocate and film maker, Farah Nabulsi. Following recent screenings at film festivals in New York, Edmonton and Vancouver, TTTMS is now premiering in the UK at the Edinburgh Shorts Film Festival on October 28.

The film that artistically blurs the lines between fiction and reality, tells the story of a mother struggling to cope when her young child is taken away by the military system. Her helplessness in the face of the cruel and inhumane treatment she knows he is experiencing is more than any mother can bear. Based on a UNICEF report and thousands of painfully true stories, the film offers insight into the blatant violation of children's human rights in a place that touts itself as the only democracy in the Middle East. The harrowing topic is one that the world will sit up and take notice of.

Written, produced and narrated by Farah Nabulsi, an ex-investment banker who was born and raised in London, and directed by Pierre Dawalibi, a passionate Lebanese director, the short film has politicians, academics and other notable figures in full support. Farah says: "It's a privilege to be in the position to raise awareness of the harsh injustices Palestinians have and continue to experience. The opportunity to screen *Today They Took My Son* to audiences around the world is the first step in my ongoing campaign to inform people using the artistic and powerful medium of film. As people become informed, they become empowered to bring such atrocities to an end.

Sometimes we can choose to make a film, other times we have to. *Today They Took My Son* is a short film I felt I had to make." <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31142>

MARGARET ROPE: THE 'GENIUS' STAINED GLASS ARTIST WHO BECAME A NUN

Who wouldn't love an ancestor who rode around England on a motorbike in 1918, smoking cigars and getting herself arrested; who was one of the first women to make her living from art; who left all to become a Carmelite nun? Margaret Rope's cousin has been finding out about her, and features in this short programme which introduces an exhibition of her work in Shrewsbury.

Video of Margaret Rope's work: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0493hfy>

'Heavenly Lights: The Untold Story of Shrewsbury Stained Glass Artist Margaret Agnes Rope' at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, The Square, Shrewsbury SY1 1LH 12th September - 15th January 2017

See poster for the exhibition: <http://www.shrewsburycathedral.org/What's%20On/MargaretRopePoster.pdf>
<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31012>

MARK RYLANCE HITS OUT AT RSC IN BP SPONSORSHIP ROW

23 October 2016: Award-winning actor Mark Rylance says he is unlikely to perform at the Royal Shakespeare Company unless it drops a sponsorship deal with BP. Asked if he would work at the theatre, Rylance said "no, probably not." The oil giant is not "behaving ethically given the dangerous increase of climate change", Rylance told BBC Radio 4's Broadcasting House.

BP says it is "proud to have supported UK arts and culture for over 50 years". But Rylance accused the oil giant of trying to present itself as a "society-loving organisation, which I don't think they are." Rylance, who is an associate artist at the RSC, says artists are "being used to whitewash" the energy company.

In July 2016, BP pledged £7.5m over five years to the Royal Opera House, British Museum, National Portrait Gallery and Royal Shakespeare Company from 2018. The RSC says sponsorship is an important part of its "diverse funding mix" and helps it "reach the widest possible audience." "BP is a publicly listed company," says Peter Mather, BP head of UK. "We balance our responsibilities to our employees, shareholders and the communities in which we operate."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-37501105>

THEATRE

The LOWRY Salford Quays

E15 in The Studio Fri 18 November - Sat 19 November. Post show talk Friday 18 November.

Lung | Associate Artist Developed with The Lowry and Barnsley Civic. Commissioned by Battersea Arts Centre

'We want social housing, not social cleansing.'

Facing skyrocketing rent and forced relocation out of London, 29 single mothers united to confront Newham Council's gentrification of their hometown. From the streets of Newham to the Houses of Parliament, this bold and pertinent piece of documentary theatre is adapted from the real-life testimonies of the most under-represented and prominent voices on the political spectrum – providing a truthful retelling of the Focus E15 Campaign, Britain's housing crisis and how one group of women refused to be marginalised. This is the beginning of the end of the housing crisis. Suitable for age 13+

Read more at <http://www.thelowry.com/event/e15#Tm2CtpIMziTsotuf.99>

The LOWRY Salford Quays

Who Cares? Commissioned by The Lowry & Salford Young Carers Tue 22 November

A gripping verbatim theatre production based on a year of interviews that offers a rare insight into a year in the lives of three young carers from Salford.

Read more at <http://www.thelowry.com/event/who-cares#McYt0P23T5iffXDq.99>

NATIONAL JUSTICE AND PEACE NETWORK ENVIRONMENT GROUP RESOURCES/LINKS

- **On Care for Our Common Home Laudato Si': The Encyclical of Pope Francis on the Environment with Commentary** by Sean McDonagh is a new paperback. The eco-theologian and Columban offers a commentary on the Encyclical, the full text of which appears in this volume. Orbis books ISBN-10: 1626981736
- **Option for the Poor and for the Earth: From Leo XIII to Pope Francis** by Donal Dorr. Orbis Books. This classic on Catholic Social Teaching, with an emphasis on the option for the poor and economic inequality, has been expanded to include Catholic teaching on care for the environment. ISBN -9781626981621
- **Digging at our Conscience.** A resource aimed at raising awareness of the justice issues raised by mining activities around the world. It is produced by 'Future We Need', a faith-based group comprising members from the Columbans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Loreto, Mercy Family, Presentation and UNANIMA. Downloadable at: <http://www.columbans.eu/images/stories/digging.pdf>
- **Green Christian Resources Page** <http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/resources>
- **Laudato Si' Resources and Links for Parishes and Schools** <http://www.columbans.co.uk/news/laudato-si-resources-and-links-for-parishes-and-schools/>
- **CTS Pamphlet 'Catholics and our Common Home'** by Sr Margaret Atkins. <http://www.ctsbooks.org/catholics-and-our-common-home/>
- **Catholic Bishops' website Environmental section:** <http://www.cbcew.org.uk/environment.html>
- **Read more about climate change, theology, ethics, spirituality and advocacy** on the website of ECEN, the European Christian Environmental Network. <http://www.ecen.org/content/climate-change-and-climate-justice-ecumenical-ethical-approach>
- **The Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale** is at <http://fore.research.yale.edu/> You can sign up to receive their excellent monthly newsletters by e-mail.

FARM HEROES VS MONSANTO: NEW GAME FROM GLOBAL JUSTICE NOW

26 September: Recent news about Bayer's takeover attempt of Monsanto could create a mega agri-business who will be firmly in control of the world's farming and food. Now more than ever we need to raise awareness of the corporate takeover of the food system and act to end corporate impunity. That's why we've just released a new online game called *Farm Heroes vs Monsanto*, which puts you in charge of fighting the corporate monster and helping Farm Heroes reclaim their farms.

How to play

The game sees cute farm animals fighting against the giant agribusiness Monsanto (the fat cat) in the attempt to reclaim their farms from corporate-controlled seeds and chemical pesticides. The gameplay works a bit like Candy Crush – swapping and matching adjacent elements of the same kind, which are then cleared from the board. Your mission is to help Farm Heroes get rid of Monsanto patented seeds and chemical pesticides and free the farm from corporate control.

Play *Farm Heroes vs Monsanto* <https://www.farmheroesvsmonsanto.com/v2>

Take action and spread the message

Farm Heroes vs Monsanto comes at a crucial time. Recent news about Bayer's takeover attempt of Monsanto could create a mega agri-business who will be firmly in control of the world's farming and food. Now more than ever we need to raise awareness of the corporate takeover of our food system and act to end corporate impunity.

A month from now Monsanto will be facing a 'people's tribunal' in The Hague, where international witnesses will be giving evidence on the impacts of Monsanto in front of judges and lawyers. The outcomes will not be legally binding as there is currently no mechanism to bring criminal charges against a company like Monsanto. But that could all change. Countries from across the global south have come together to push for a UN treaty that will hold transnational corporations to account for corporate abuses under international human rights law. You have already added your name to our petition to demand that the UK government support this treaty. Please help us spread the message further. Play the game and share it with your friends.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

30 -5 November *Good Money Week*. An opportunity to ensure those you trust with your money are looking after it well and using it in ways that benefit society and protect the environment. Information: <http://goodmoneyweek.com/take-action>

NOVEMBER

4 Romero Trust Annual Lecture *Rutilio, Romero and Francis: martyrs for the faith* given by Fr Rodolpho Cardenal SJ at St Wilfrid's, Chapel St, Preston PR1 8BU 7-9pm. All welcome.

5 CAFOD Lancaster Annual Memorial Mass 6.30pm Vigil Mass St Bernadette's, 120 Bowerham Rd, Lancaster LA1 4HT

8 Time out on Tuesdays An ecumenical quiet day for everyone 10am-4pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 6TW. Input and time for individual quiet prayer and reflection. Tea & coffee provided. Bring your own lunch. Cost £10. For more information or to book: Tel 0151 722 2271 email: winniecenacle@mail.com

8 CWDF Forum meeting 6.45-9pm Regular bi-monthly meeting at The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN.

An open meeting, for all our groups and individual members to discuss future campaigns. Contact 01244 350323

www.chesterwdf.org.uk

9 Life under occupation: *Stories from the West Bank* All Saints Church, Carrington Lane, Ashton-on-Mersey M33 5WL at 8pm. Come and hear from Veronica Pasteur who recently returned from the occupied West Bank. In 2015 she was working as a human rights monitor there for three months. Find out what daily life under occupation is really like; what the Israeli peace movement is doing; and what you can do to promote a just peace in Israel/Palestine. Zaytoun oil and dates on sale.

<http://ourparishes.church/all-saints-rc-church-sale>

10 Christian and Jewish Holocaust Study Day 2016 Menorah Synagogue Manchester M22 4RZ 9.30-1pm. All welcome but advanced booking required - email office@menorah.org.uk or phone the Synagogue Office on 0161 428 7746.

17 Lecture by Oxfam's Duncan Green *How Change Happens (and how to make it happen)* – a return visit to Chester to coincide with the launch of his latest book which explores how political and social change takes place and the role of individuals and organisations in this. 7.30pm, Best Building on the University's Chester Campus.

18-20 Next year is the 'Year of Matthew' when the gospel of Matthew will be read in church. In preparation for this, Fr Chris Thomas is leading a weekend retreat '*Go and make disciples of all nations' Reflections on the Gospel of Matthew*. To held at Irenaeus 32 Great Georges Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 1RD. Further details are on the website www.irenaeus.co.uk or by phoning The Irenaeus project 0151 949 1199. The cost, by donation, can be as low as £20 for the weekend.

19 NJPN Open Networking Day, 10.30am-4pm, CAFOD, Romero House, London SE1 7JB. Pat Gaffney of Pax Christi will report on the Rome conference on Nonviolence and Just Peace. Plus opportunities to network with J&P activists from around the country and get updates from national agencies. Tea and coffee available, please bring your own lunch. Contact: NJPN 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX, Tel 020 7901 4864, Email admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

19 Church of the Poor? Church Action on Poverty's Annual Conference 10am-4pm Cross Street Chapel, Manchester. To book a place go to: church-poverty.org.uk/conference?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=conference&utm_content=2016+09+19+conference or call 0161 872 9294

19 Cumbria Churches Dementia Conference 10am -3.30pm at Carver United Church, Lake Road, Windermere LA23 2DB. Open to all. Tea and coffee provided but please bring your own lunch. To reserve a place contact the Secretary to the Dementia Reference Group, Margaret Irving: margaret.irving@alzheimers.org.uk 07540 920829

23 Garth Hewitt Concert 7.30pm Altrincham United Reformed Church – details logan-j@btconnect.com

24 Advent Reflection Day led by Garth Hewitt 10.30 - 3.30 – details logan-j@btconnect.com

25 Ellesmere Port LPA Justice & Peace Group CAFOD Quiz Night 7.30 pm Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port Town Centre. Entrance fee: £3.00 (children £1). Quizmaster Mr. Mike Ives. All money raised will go to CAFOD's Connect2 Ethiopia fund raising project. Fair Trade stall and Fair Trade refreshments provided at the interval. Details: Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419.

26 CAFOD Campaign Retreat Day 10am – 4pm Our Lady 7 St Edward's Parish Centre, Malborough Drive, Fulwood, Preston PR2 9UE. To book contact Patrick 01772733310 Lancaster@cafod.org.uk

26 ACN NW Benefactor's Mass Church of the Holy Name, 339 Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PG. Please join us for a Mass of Thanksgiving for the loyal support of ACN's past and present benefactors throughout the NW. The Main Celebrant will be Father Dominic Robinson SJ, ACN's National Ecclesiastical Assistant; Father Andrzej Halemba, ACN's Project Co-ordinator for the Middle East, will preach. The Mass will be followed by a reception. A collection will be taken for ACN's work with the Suffering Church. 07815 538425 caroline.hull@acnuk.org

27 Talk by Fr Andrzej Halemba, ACN's Project Co-ordinator for the Middle East. The Gibberd Room, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5TQ. Fr Halemba has spent years traveling around the Middle East and North Africa for ACN; he will share his recent experiences and his thoughts about the future for the most ancient Christian communities in our world today. A retiring collection will be taken for ACN's work in the Middle East. Following the talk, all are invited to attend a brief service led by Fr Halemba during which we shall pray together for our fellow Christians in Iraq, Syria and neighbouring countries. 07815 538425 caroline.hull@acnuk.org

DECEMBER

8 Service of worship, witness and solidarity for victims and survivors of domestic abuse St Andrew's Church, Penrith, 2pm. This service is part of CtiC's project to raise awareness of domestic abuse and support those who suffer from it. All welcome.

13 Time out on Tuesdays An ecumenical quiet day for everyone 10am-4pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 6TW. Input and time for individual quiet prayer and reflection. Tea & coffee provided. Bring your own lunch. Cost £10. For more information or to book: Tel 0151 722 2271 email: winniecenacle@mail.com

- Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com or from Ekklesia www.ekkleisia.co.uk both invaluable free resources for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles. Sign up for comprehensive weekly e-bulletins from National J&P Network 020 7901 4864 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

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