

The 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

CARDINAL NICHOLS REFLECTS ON A “STRANGE, STRANGE” MOTHERING SUNDAY

22/3/2020: Well it's coming to the end of Sunday morning and I'm here at Westminster Cathedral... what a strange day. What a strange, strange Sunday. The first Sunday when we've not been able to gather to celebrate Mass together. I've spent some time in the cathedral. It's quiet. In fact, it's rather beautifully quiet. It's deeply peaceful. There are some people there. They're well, well spaced out. They're observing the social distancing and they're all resting in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Praying, resting. Finding peace. And there's something lovely about that. But I know also there have been Masses celebrated by the priest and streamed online from quite a few of our churches. And I hope people have been able to join in those and join in their prayer and make a spiritual communion. Today here in Westminster Cathedral, there's been a very, very strange but rather reassuring atmosphere and activity measured with plenty of distance between people. And yet all of us turning to the Lord. So we'll have to see how these weeks develop. And I thank all the priests for their care.

So I hope today that many of you have found ways of creating in the day a time of prayer. A time of prayer may be linked to a streamed celebration of Mass; a time of prayer together in your family. What's important these days is that we give our life at home a rhythm, a timetable, a regular pattern. So we don't just watch telly all day or sit on the sofa all day. But we have things that we do at certain times of the day. And one of those should be to have a time of deep silence together. We might fall asleep, we might read, might say a decade of the rosary together. But it's important that we leave that space so that God finds our hearts more open to him. So he can give us his peace and his compassion. Then we'll offer that compassion to those around us and be more attentive to those in need.

So may God bless us on this first Sunday of this oh, so strange way of Catholic life. But we'll adapt and we will find our ways of being together spiritually. And God will guide us through this time – a bit like being in a desert – and yet we know it will come to an end. And then we will rejoice ever more fully to be back together again as a physical community, drawing together to praise God. So God bless you all today. And stay safe.

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/cardinal-nichols-reflects-on-a-strange-strange-mothering-sunday/>

PANDEMIC

*What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath –
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.*

Cease from buying and selling.

*Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.*

*Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Centre down.*

*And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.*

*Promise this world your love –
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.*

Lynn Ungar 3/11/2020

www.lynnungar.com/poems/pandemic/

PRAYER FOR OUR CLERGY AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME

Loving Creator God,
You always lead your people
in ways of loving kindness,
even in times of struggle:
turning Exile into Exodus,
bringing desert places into bloom,
rekindling hope in broken hearts.

You sent your Son, the Good Shepherd,
the pattern of all ministry,
to lay down his life for his flock
and so to gather the lost and stray,
leading us home rejoicing into your eternal Kingdom.

We pray for our Bishop (Name),
our priests and deacons
and all who have a ministry of leadership
in these difficult days.

Keep them safe and well.
Give them the heart of the Shepherd
and the smell of the sheep,
with a passionate care for the people entrusted to them
and a deep trust in your goodness.

Give them words to encourage,
gestures to soothe,
imaginative ways to keep
their scattered flocks as one
in faith and hope and love.

Grant them rest from their labours
in these shuttered days.
And in all things give them joy,
the joy of the Gospel,
and a deep trust that our road ends
not on Good Friday but at the Easter Dawn.

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As a relatively healthy, young person, I am not feeling personally threatened by the virus yet. It is older people, those with under-lying health conditions, and those who are more exposed and vulnerable (such as homeless people) who are most threatened. Noticing this, I feel my priorities being reoriented. The most fragile among us move to the top of my list of concerns, where they should be in good times and bad times.

Communion of only one kind, no sign of peace, and, in the parish where I go, no hymn books – many Catholics will be familiar with these measures already – and now there is to be no public worship at all. This is the experience of worship in times of isolation, in the wilderness, perhaps. Through the absence of the sensory features we are so used to and perhaps have even taken for granted, I'm learning again what ordinarily makes Mass a celebration of communion.

The Church's calendar of events might be cancelled, but the doors of churches will remain open. Perhaps in craving the gathering, the performing and the celebrating offered by churches, I am forgetting the dwelling-places that they offer for people seeking comfort and often safety. Is worship exclusively a "doing"? Perhaps it can simply be a being, an abiding, a dwelling and a waiting in God's presence, which no virus can thwart. CAFOD's support for humanitarian programmes in Syria, where people daily confront a life-threatening crisis, reveals the crucial role of local religious organisations to abide with people, to be dwelling places and sanctuaries for the wounded.

I'm confronted with the illusion we had of complete control. Something unpredictable in our midst demands vigilance but also marks a limit to our certainty about what to do. Hopefully, we fall back on common sense and diligence to hygiene, and, most of all, a gentleness towards others, restraint and attentiveness. We also have to learn how to respect distance and meet people authentically, though perhaps virtually, especially if we have been asked to stay at home. The temptation to double-down on control is sharpened. Panic prompts stock-piling and uncharitable attitudes when there is actually all the more reason to share our reserves with the poor. In spite of constant reassurance that there is enough to go round, we are afraid, and we hold on tight to what we have. In these times how we can reflect on Jesus' words?

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" (Matthew 6: 26)

I was recently watching goldfinches flit from house to house from the kitchen window. Their busy, joyous disrespect for whose window it is whose seems to display a trust that the heavenly Father will feed them. We can't flit like the birds in these times, but nor can we simply clamp down and hold tight to our control over what we have. There are many in our communities who are in need. Jesus' first temptation in the wilderness was, in a way, to demand "fast food" from his Father, bread from a stone. That temptation to want everything now might be our temptation too, especially when we enter the supermarket. But we don't live on bread alone.

The food banks are struggling. Those who have little are left with even less. But during Lent in particular, self-denial must surely at some point yield charity, as faith must yield works.

... continued on page 3

LOCKDOWN

*Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.*

*But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
you can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
the sky is no longer thick with fumes
but blue and grey and clear.*

*They say that in the streets of Assisi
people are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.*

*They say that a hotel in the west of Ireland
is offering free meals and delivery to the
housebound.*

*Today a young woman that I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
so that the elderly may have someone to call on.*

*Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.*

*All over the world people are slowing down and
reflecting.
All over the world people are looking at their
neighbours in a new way.
All over the world people are waking up to a new
reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.*

*So we pray and remember that
Yes there is fear,
but there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation,
but there doesn't have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying,
but there doesn't have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness,
but there does not have to be disease of the soul.
Yes there is even death,
But there can always be a rebirth of love.*

*Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breath.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
the birds are singing again.
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
and though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.*

Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM 16/03/2020
<https://columbans.co.uk/lockdown>

So I am reminded by a fellow parishioner of the words from the letter of St James: *"If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace, keep warm and eat your fill, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?"* (James 2: 15-16)

Finally, I'm confronted with the crisis of the global commons: the shared space where goods, services and people criss-cross. The vast potential of connection was unleashed, but without the adequate global regulating authority to make this fair and sustainable. Already for years we have seen how a "winner takes all" system facilitates the exploitation of the poor and the earth. Are we left to rely on local organisations to hold-off panic and hold-fast to charity, and to hope that churches can continue to keep open their doors? Or is this also a prime-time to globalise our own caring, salvaging some good from this pandemic, whilst we wait patiently for the time when we can exchange the peace, share space and drink from the same cup? • **Francis Stewart is a member of the CAFOD Theology Team**

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/1369/things-i-m-learning-during-lent-from-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

REFLECTION: LIGHT AND DARK IN THE WAKE OF COVID19

Tina Beattie 20/3/2020: I wonder if others here share the complex emotional intensity of these strange times? The darkness is all around - not just the crisis created by Covid19, but the knowledge of all those people in the vast ocean of human suffering who are no longer of interest to the media - particularly Syrian refugees on the borders of Europe. I'm kept awake more by those neglected people right now than by worrying about Coronavirus. I know that's because for now I have the good fortune to be healthy, and to know that my loved ones are healthy. I know not everybody is so lucky and that untold suffering and anxiety are being unleashed on many, and that our time might yet come. But even so ...

I'm experiencing epiphanies of joy which well up at unexpected moments, and I think this has something to do with the sudden challenge to all that is crushing and exploitative about the lives we live and the structures we've created. I suspect history might record that this was the best thing that could have happened for future generations, redeeming values worth living by in western culture and saving the planet from unbridled consumption. Maybe that's too optimistic, but we're being given an opportunity that may never come again.

The canals in Venice are home to many forms of aquatic life which can be seen for the first time in years. The freneticism of our modern lifestyles has been halted and we're having to find creative new ways of experiencing solitude and solidarity. Our little island community has formed a WhatsApp group to support each other, and even our Tory government is having to put people before profits as the extent of the crisis becomes known. I mourn that my beloved family is so far away, but we can stay close thanks to social media, and that too is inspiring new ways of being creative in our togetherness.

But it's not just that. Dave and I are on the houseboat and people have urged us to leave London before lockdown, but if we have to stay socially isolated there's nowhere I'd rather be. Dave spends his days cycling in the glorious parks and riverside tracks, working on his allotment, and going on recces to the local supermarkets with their empty shelves to buy daily supplies for us and our housebound neighbour. I'm working from home - which I tend to do most days anyway - and paddling across the river for a walk in the late afternoon. Walking outdoors is a way to encounter other people without being at risk of spreading the virus. Walking today I felt full of life and thankful for every moment in which it's possible to feel joy and a sense of freedom, knowing that these are fragile and fleeting gifts. And I could tell from the way we smiled and greeted each other and shared an unspoken sense of camaraderie that I wasn't the only person feeling that way on my riverside walk today.

I wish joy were a virus that could be spread easily by human contact, but I hope these photos from this afternoon's walk allow for a little sharing of the luminous sparks that light up the dark.

ANGELS IN OUR MIDST

Anne O'Connor 21/3/2020: On Friday evening my husband and I went to the last Mass in our parish for the next weeks, perhaps months. It was a bittersweet occasion which brought to mind all those who have been deprived of the Eucharist over the centuries due to religious persecution or even nowadays in remote parts of the world where vast distances mean Mass may be celebrated infrequently. A stark reminder of what we often take for granted, especially here in the North West of England where there are several Catholic churches within a few miles' radius.

That same afternoon a flyer popped through our door offering help if we were isolated, elderly or lonely. We are not, but I was incredibly touched by the kindness of the two strangers who gave their phone numbers to contact should we need them. I texted to thank them for their care and concern. I was reminded of Dorothy Day, co-founder in 1933 of the Catholic Worker movement to minister to the poor in the United States - a movement that exists in the US to this day with a thriving community house in London too. Inspired by Daniel 3: 28 "He has sent his angel to rescue his servants," Dorothy said, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

This unexpected act of kindness from strangers moved me to share the news with prayer friends in our WhatsApp group. It turns out they have received similar leaflets in neighbouring towns. In the face of disaster, uncertainty and, for some, despair, there is charity, unconditional love and hope. Wouldn't it be wonderful if this initiative carried on once life gets back to normality - communities pulling together and looking out for the most vulnerable in their midst. Scrolling through the link my 'angels' sent me, the local help group had offers of shopping, gardening, dog walking and students whose courses were now cancelled volunteering to tutor children off school - so many different people volunteering for one or two streets' worth of help each. Yesterday I discovered a host of angels in my community and now I know their names.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39178>

SUNDAY REFLECTION WITH FR ROBIN GIBBONS - 22 MARCH 2020

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Two distinct phrases leapt out at me from John's Gospel story of the man born blind, both take me into the heart of the maelstrom that is surrounding our world at the moment, here is the first and it is Jesus who is speaking:

"We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (Jn9: 4-5)

Think of the import of that first sentence, for at the moment it seems as if the dark of Covid 19 is about to engulf us, yes, maybe, but look towards that second statement, if the light of the world is there, Jesus is with us.

We know that, we proclaim it often, we hear it preached from the pulpits and ambos, yet never more is that phrase needed to be heard now, as the structures of institutional Church close except for emergency, as we suddenly find ourselves really thrown back on Jesus present in us, our homes and friends. The truth is we have been living in the dark, part blind to what is being shown to us, the light of the world shines his rays on all that we have done which is pitiful, destructive and downright dishonourable.

There is no one person to blame for the pandemic rather all of us are complicit in tearing down the gentle, carefully balanced planet, we should love and call, especially on this rather battered mothering Sunday, 'Mother Earth'. It has had enough of us and is giving us a final, terrible warning, convert, change, repent, rise up and see the light of the world that will help us renew the face of this earth! So my first thought, on both Mother's Day and our National Day of prayer is that when we light our candles at 7pm, we shed an inner tear not only for those now dead and violently sick, but for this beautiful home we have so carelessly trashed and promise in our hearts that we will not stay in the dark but walk in the light.

The second phrase is spoken by the healed man, who now can see, read it slowly and hear him speaking to you: The man answered and said to them:

"This is what is so amazing,
that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes.
We know that God does not listen to sinners,
but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him.
It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind.
If this man were not from God,
he would not be able to do anything." (Jn 9:30-33)

Can you find yourself there, are you with the blind man or maybe you feel linked to the questioners? That is for you to decide. I saw myself in two stages, at one point in my life very much the cynical questioner, but now, stripped of all you and I have had to prop up our faith another blinded one, slowly beginning to see.

What then do I see, what is this Gospel calling me to do? Easy answer, to be creative, to look again at our faith, to realise that this is also a time of salvation, of new ways of celebrating, hearing sharing God's Word and sacraments, for though we do not have a building to celebrate in and many of us are isolated, our homes with us in them are the Domestic Church, the light has not left us, Jesus has come to be our guest. Be of good cheer even as things get difficult, for even in this the Lord is here, his spirit is with us! Amen

• **Fr Robin is an Eastern Rite Catholic Chaplain for Melkites in the UK.** He is also an Ecumenical Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. During this time Fr Robin will be putting prayers and thoughts up on his twitter feed. You can follow him @RobinGibbons2

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39179>

Lectio and meditation

"The beauty of the world is the mouth of a labyrinth. The unwary individual who on entering takes a few steps is soon unable to find the opening. Worn out, with nothing to eat or drink, in the dark, separated from his dear ones, and from everything he loves and is accustomed to, he walks on without knowing anything or hoping anything, incapable even of discovering whether he is really going forward or merely turning round on the same spot. But this affliction is as nothing compared with the danger threatening him. For if he does not lose courage, if he goes on walking, it is absolutely certain that he will finally arrive at the centre of the labyrinth. And there God is waiting to eat him. Later he will go out again, but he will be changed, he will have become different, after being eaten and digested by God. Afterward he will stay near the entrance so that he can gently push all those who come near into the opening." **Simone Weil - Waiting For God**

Psalm of help Psalm 23

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the in the valley of the shadow of death,*

*I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

NOTTINGHAM: PAX CHRISTI DIRECTOR LEADS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PEACE EVENT

8/3/2020: Pax Christi director, Theresa Alessandro, led a group of women in the Nottingham Diocese in an afternoon of reflection and discussion about peace on International Women's Day. The gathering took place at St Thomas More church in Wollaton. The liturgy began with the *Magnificat* which the women read together. Then they reflected on three texts: the first was from Leymah Gbowee who worked with women in Liberia to end a civil war using the power of nonviolence; then from Joy Mead of the Iona community who wrote about '*Personal Peacemaking*'; and finally Katarina Kruhonja a member of the board of Pax Christi International who made a choice for nonviolence in the midst of war in the former Yugoslavia.

The women shared their responses to these powerful texts. This phrase stood out for several participants: 'If I'd had an AK47 right then, I would have returned to the conference room and slaughtered everyone inside.' The women talked about managing and using their anger in the struggle for peace. This phrase also resonated: 'I shall choose words and images carefully'. The women talked about how much influence we can have when we really do choose carefully. The discussions continued over a cup of tea in the beautiful church Hall. Contact details were shared and plans were made to build on the event next year.

During Lent, Pax Christi is providing some useful opportunities to deepen your own reflections on peace and nonviolence.

Read Pax Christi's NonvioLent blog: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/lent-blog/>

Join the NonvioLent Facebook group www.facebook.com/PaxChristiUK/ to share your thoughts and ideas with others.
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39084>

'THE WORLD WILL BE SAVED BY BEAUTY'

Theresa Alessandro writes: We had a wonderful evening with Kate Hennessy on the 4th March where she talked of her Grandmother Dorothy Day and her book '*The World Will Be Saved By Beauty*'. Have a look on our website to download the audio for this event. We now have more copies of Kate's book if anyone would like to order - we should be able to send these out. **Purchase here:** <http://paxchristi.org.uk/product/dorothy-day-the-world-will-be-saved-by-beauty/>

The Pax Christi office will be closed until further notice – for more information on the effect on our events, please visit: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/2020/03/15/event-updates-coronavirus/>

LETTER: TIME TO ABANDON £205 BILLION TRIDENT PROJECT

22/3/2020

Bruce Kent, vice president of CND, writes:

Our Chancellor says that this is the time to be bold. Hence billions of pounds of extra extra spending to get us through the current crisis. Some of his boldness makes good sense. Those unemployed as a result of this crisis will get some protection.

One more obvious piece of boldness would be to cancel the Trident submarine nuclear replacement project, now costed at £205 billion. A clear national vanity project because we have to borrow the missiles from the United States on which to put the warheads. Hardly an independent nuclear deterrent. Worse it is one that requires our sailors to be willing to commit mass murder if ordered to do so. This vast sum would be more intelligently spent on NHS intensive care beds, ventilators, and other needs arising from this current invisible threat to us all.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39181>

JESUIT FATHER RUTILIO GRANDE DECLARED A MARTYR

Ignatian Solidarity Network 22/2/2020

Fr. Rutilio Grande, S.J., is a step closer to eventually becoming a saint. According to *The New York Times*, Pope Francis approved a decree Friday proclaiming Fr. Grande "a martyr for the Catholic faith." *Analysis by America* notes that such recognition of martyrdom means that Grande may soon be beatified— declared "blessed." Numerous outlets have suggested that beatification could take place in El Salvador later this year. The process for Grande's beatification was opened in 2015.

Grande was born in 1928 into a poor family in El Paisnal in El Salvador; he began pursuing his vocation to be a pastor at a young age, getting to know Luis Chavez, the Archbishop of San Salvador, as a teenager and entering the Jesuits at age 17. Father Grande was ordained in 1959 and served as the prefect of discipline and the professor of pastoral theology in the diocesan seminary from 1965 to 1970. He became the pastor of Aguilares in 1972 and encouraged the local population to fight for land reform and justice; he also became a member of the priests' senate in 1974. Father Grande understood that as a priest, what was demanded of him was an example of loving service and self-sacrifice, an understanding exemplified in his most famous sermon on February 13, 1977.

On February 13, 1977, Father Grande said mass in honour of a Colombian priest who had been recently arrested in El Salvador and deported without charges. In his sermon, he declared: "I'm quite aware that very soon the Bible and the Gospel won't be allowed to cross our borders ... because all the pages are subversive. And I think that if Jesus himself came across the border at Chalatenango, they wouldn't let him in ... without any doubt, they would crucify him again." As a direct result of this sermon, on March 12, while driving from Aguilares to El Paisnal with 15-year-old Nelson Rutilio Lemus and 72-year-old Manuel Solorzano, his car was sprayed with gunfire and he died instantly.

<https://ignatiansolidarity.net/blog/2020/02/22/grande-martyr/>

MULTIPLE LEGACIES OF ST. ÓSCAR ROMERO REFLECT HIS IDENTITIES, 40 YEARS AFTER DEATH

Chris Herlinger 16/3/2020: When Salvadorans mark the 40th anniversary of Óscar Romero's assassination on March 24, it is expected they will march in processions, attend Mass, listen to homilies and reflect publicly and privately about a man who has come to define their church and their nation. But in a country where Romero's visage is seemingly everywhere — in churches, on street corners, in shops and living rooms — one question hovers at the sidelines: which Óscar Romero is being honoured? The saint? The humble priest? The martyred Catholic? A man entombed in history at a particular time and place, or a living example for a country still struggling with the legacy and after-effects of a decade-long civil war?

These questions kept coming to the surface during an assignment that took me to El Salvador in the late summer of 2019 to report on the work of Catholic sisters, particularly those working in communities where gang-related violence is prevalent.

Tellingly, in between visits to those neighbourhoods, I kept returning to a point of pilgrimage: the grounds of the Hospital de la Divina Providencia, where Romero lived and where he celebrated his last Mass on March 24, 1980. The hospital is run by the Missionary Carmelites of St. Teresa.

One of those I spoke to was Carmelite Fr. Paul Henson, visiting from Los Angeles. We met just a few yards from the altar where Romero was felled by a gunman who, from outside the chapel, shot the cleric with a rifle. Henson finds Romero's legacy continuing in the ministry of Pope Francis — a ministry dedicated to facing "the suffering of the poor," such as those at the U.S.-Mexican border. "His [Romero's] theology was always 'God first,'" Henson said, leading him to reflect and question whether in the current crisis, borders "are absolute."

A few days later, in the same chapel, I met Carmelite Sr. María Julia García, the current hospital administrator. She was 28 when Romero was assassinated and saw him occasionally. She recalls a modest and quiet man who sought peace with an eye for practical solutions. With Romero's assassination, "people felt lonely and unprotected because nobody would stand up for them." "He lived the word of God and made it come alive," she said, adding that Romero, like Jesus, offered his life as a sacrifice for those he loved. But at the same time, García believes Romero did not "fly a political flag. His flag was the Gospel."

At a moment when people in El Salvador were being killed "for nothing," Romero's prophetic stance against violence — and his specific call the day before his assassination that those in the military stop their killing — is what ultimately caused his death, García said. "He was like a stone in the shoe," she said, noting that even today not all Salvadoran Catholics believe Romero is a saint. "But people with a social consciousness believe he was a saint," she said.

Even so, those who have resisted the adoration of Romero still have the power to provoke.

On my first morning in the country, I accompanied Salvadoran Sr. Hilda Alfaro, a member of the Guardian Angel congregation and Raquel Orellana, the San Salvador-based program leader for the Colour Movement, on a visit to the hospital grounds. (The Colour Movement supports the work of Catholic sisters in Salvadoran communities facing challenges like gang violence. It is a joint initiative of Alight, formerly the American Refugee Committee, and Sisters Rising Worldwide, both Minnesota-based organisations.)

As we walked through the small residence that has been turned into a museum, Alfaro and Orellana both noted that followers of the late right-wing political leader Roberto D'Aubuisson, who a United Nations truth commission named as the one who ordered Romero's assassination, "still believe he was in the right to order the killing," Alfaro said. "They still believe he [Romero] was a terrorist," Orellana added. Such comments bubbled up a bit in the process of Romero's canonisation, Orellana recalled. Some on the right said the Salvadoran left wanted Romero killed "so they could have a saint, a martyr." Such comments were hurtful, she said, but showed that "evil is still alive in a lot of people's consciousness," she said, "to justify a horrible thing that happened and turn it into a good."

It is not easy to find such people willing to speak publicly on this theme. Sergio Leonel Estrada Massis, a Salvadoran businessman who worked with North American journalists during the war as a "fixer" in the 1980s and who helped me with translation and arrangements during my assignment, asked someone he knows on the right if he would be willing to be interviewed. The man thought it over but eventually opted not to, saying that his words might be misunderstood or misconstrued.

Estrada told me that is a common reaction in the right wing — after all, when news spread of Romero's assassination, celebratory fireworks went off in some of San Salvador's wealthy neighborhoods. The wealthy called Romero a communist who, they believed, should have "tended to pastoral concerns," Estrada said. Yet Estrada noted that Romero, who never fully embraced liberation theology, also criticised leftist guerrillas for their killings during the war. "He was also a stone in the shoe of the left," Estrada said.

Marisa de Martínez, the sister of D'Aubuisson, told me in an interview, [see below — Ed.] "There is a sector that is still in a bubble and won't accept Romero." Martínez reveres Romero and her work as a social activist continues his legacy. "They reject him. They say, 'He was a communist, like the Jesuits,'" referring to the Jesuit priests whose murders by a Salvadoran military unit in 1989 were initially justified under the guise of national security. "They say those killings were justified — and they say the same thing about Romero."

But the extent of anti-Romero sentiment is hard to gauge. "Romero spoke," Martínez said of the public-at-large's view of Romero, "and the subject is over." In other words, Romero's preeminence is not in question. Yet, it was not always that way. In the midst of the war of the 1980s and even through much of the 1990s, the church and the country itself didn't know quite how to commemorate the memory of Romero. "For many years the church didn't talk about him," she recalled. It is likely that the debate over Romero's legacy will never be fully settled. Orellana recalls a Facebook reaction to a post she made when Romero was canonised in Rome in 2018. " 'I don't know why you brag about this person,' " Orellana recalled the reaction saying, " 'He was just another person.' "

Romero himself, known for his humility, might not have disagreed with that assessment — his former residence on the grounds of the hospital is a model of simplicity and frugality. But Orellana — whose parents were married by Romero in 1979 — believes his accomplishment is remarkable, but not his solely. It is a piece of a martyred but proud country. "To me, he's a saint. He made the ordinary extraordinary. He spoke the truth, and with that, changed lives and made a social transformation."

If Romero were alive today, I asked Orellana, what would he say about the present Salvadoran context? "He would see gang members as humans meant to be loved and that what they are doing [in committing crimes] is due to the lack of love in their hearts," she said. "I think Romero would say, 'You are people who need love, but you need to stop hurting and killing people.' "At the same time, Romero would probably fault the structures of Salvadoran society that have made gangs so prominent", she said. "You need education, health care, jobs." Put another way, Orellana said, Romero would say this: "People need dignity."

Romero certainly affirmed that dictum. García recalls that once over breakfast Romero and the sisters' superior, a Mexican sister, had a major argument — over what exactly García doesn't recall. But it was an unpleasant moment and both left the breakfast table angry. At 7 p.m. that evening, as the sisters settled in for their dinner, the doorbell rang; Romero said he wanted to see speak to the superior. "I ask for your forgiveness," he told the woman. "I can't go to sleep tonight if I'm still angry." García recalls the story with quiet relish. And there's good reason why. "It's important for us," she said, "to continue his legacy."

● **Chris Herlinger** is international correspondent for *Global Sisters Report*.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/multiple-legacies-st-scar-romero-reflect-his-identities-40-years-after-death?clickSource=email>

MARISA DE MARTÍNEZ, SISTER OF ROBERTO D'AUBUISSON, SPEAKS OF ÓSCAR ROMERO AND HER OWN SPIRITUAL CALLING

Chris Herlinger 16/3/2020: When Salvadoran human rights activist Marisa de Martínez speaks about Óscar Romero, the subject inevitably becomes personal — deeply and tragically personal. She finds in Romero a model and beacon for her own social activism. But mingled with that inspiration is a sadness borne from family history: Martínez is the sister of Roberto D'Aubuisson, the late death squad leader and political figure whom a United Nations truth commission in 1993 named responsible for ordering Romero's 1980 assassination.

Though she has discussed her brother publicly many times, Martínez says it is never easy. "It's difficult to think that he died in total peace," Martínez said of her brother, who died of cancer in 1992. She spoke with NCR (US-based *National Catholic Reporter*) in Spanish through a translator. "A day before his death, I asked him to seek forgiveness to Monseñor Romero so that could let his spirit out," Martínez said in an interview in San Salvador, where she lives and works. "I don't know what happened in his mind. But he did cry." The image of a vulnerable D'Aubuisson crying on his deathbed goes against the popular image of a political leader loathed by the Salvadoran left and revered by the Salvadoran right. In the midst of the Salvadoran civil war of the 1980s,

D'Aubuisson was a fixture on Salvadoran television, calling out enemies he labelled as communists. "Many people died [after] Roberto mentioned them on television," Martínez said in a Spanish-language interview with the BBC in 2018. Rumours of D'Aubuisson's preferred method of torture helped earn him the notorious nickname "Blowtorch Bob." The *New York Times*' 1992 obituary of D'Aubuisson quoted Robert White, the United States Ambassador to El Salvador from 1977 to 1980, as describing the right-wing political leader as having the "sick mind" of "a "pathological killer." But even such a feared figure was a member of a family who experienced differences, disagreements and contradictions with relatives. Martínez herself is a bit discreet and even reticent about her famous brother, saying, "We didn't have a close relationship." But she does say that, "in any family, each sibling has an option — your own path."

Her and her brother's path started with life in the commercial city of Santa Tecla, outside of San Salvador. The D'Aubuisson family had French roots, the *Times* noted. The family was not wealthy, but solidly middle class: her father, Roberto D'Aubuisson Andrade, was a businessman, and her mother, Joaquina Arrieta Alvarado, a local civil servant, the *Times*' obituary said. Martínez was the youngest of four children; Roberto the second oldest.

Religious influences came early to Martínez. Her teachers included the Ascension sisters — the Hermanas de la Asunción — and she recalls that even as a little girl she was fascinated by stories of their mission work. In her teens, Martínez took up an invitation by the sisters to help teach young children in the crowded working-class community of Soyapango, where Carmelite sisters also worked. "I don't remember what we taught them, it must have been horrible," Martínez recalled of her teaching experiences. "But it did open up to me a reality about my country I didn't know about." She credits the Ascension sisters for instilling in her values she still upholds and affirms: commitment, solidarity, and the importance of history and social context.

No surprise, then, that at age 18, Martínez volunteered for mission work in Guatemala and considered consecrated life herself, even taking the initial steps of joining the congregation. But eventually she decided to forego that and embrace work seeking social change in El Salvador. "I preferred a secular life," she said. "The Lord has his ways with every person," she said. "I know I've been 'called' since I was little." And in being "called," Martínez was, as the BBC profile described it, "the rebel of a right-wing conservative family fond of olive green." Her family took it for granted that the "military would dominate the country for years," she said.

In that sense, her brother Roberto's life took a more expected path: joining the military, rising through the ranks and attending the School of the Americas. Eventually he became the president of El Salvador's Constituent Assembly in the early 1980s — but only after involvement and leadership in right-wing death squads. D'Aubuisson always denied he had connections to the death squads, the *Times* obituary reported.

He became a pivotal figure in forming the right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance party known as ARENA. That party still has a strong identification with El Salvador's Catholic right. Martínez's experiences with the church, however, were wholly different. With seeds planted by the Ascension sisters, she was influenced by the burgeoning movements of liberation theology that marked much of Latin America in the 1970s and stressed the church's need "to make a preferential option for the poor."

"I believe the Salvadoran church even now needs to follow the suggestions of the Medellín Conference," she said, referring to a landmark 1968 meeting of Latin American bishops in Colombia that showed the growing influence of liberation theology in the region. "We're still behind the times."

Yet in the 1970s and 1980s, the church in El Salvador began to change some — no easy thing for a church that had been tradition-bound, conservative and, as Martínez said, "committed to the upper class."

Óscar Romero was a catalyst for such change, and Martínez believes that Romero's "conversion to the church of the poor" was not, as some have argued, a sudden change caused by the 1977 murder of his friend, Jesuit Fr. Rutilio Grande. Rather, it was a path that emerged slowly but strongly as Romero witnessed "the reality of his country." "He always wore the clothes of a priest and maybe that was conservative," Martínez said of Romero. "But that was just a style. I'm convinced he was really a prophet, with all of the biblical characteristics of a prophet like Jeremiah."

She said Romero's example was to point toward a conversion to those, like her family, who knew some affluence and privilege. Martínez's own conversion has resulted in work with the Óscar Romero Foundation, an organisation dedicated to continuing Romero's work, and her own humanitarian group, the CINDE Association, or Children's Development Centres. Its mission is "to promote a comprehensive education to girls, boys, adolescents and young people from excluded social sectors," in underserved areas, such as Mejicanos, a poor area in San Salvador.

Martínez's work in areas like Mejicanos has not gone unnoticed. The former Passionist priest Antonio Rodríguez, a human-rights activist involved in ministry to current and former gang members and known in El Salvador as Padre Toño, has known of CINDE's work for more than 20 years. He calls Martínez "a woman full of faith and great 'Romerist' spirit." "She is a woman who has known how to live and practice the values of Romero, which for Marisa is a reference for her personal and professional life," he said, adding that her late husband and three children share her "deep commitment to justice and the truth. I think Marisa is an example of life and practice of the values of Santo Romero."

A different story emerges from the other side of the family: one of her late brother's sons, Roberto José D'Aubuisson Munguía, is a prominent ARENA member and has been mayor of Santa Tecla since 2015. Martínez said she is "not close" to her brother's son but said that is simply due to the circumstance of her family's different paths. "We don't talk to each other," she said of her politician nephew. "He denies that that his father had Monseñor Romero killed."

The name D'Aubuisson proved a burden, especially during the war, which is why she always uses her late husband's family name. (Her husband, Edin Martínez, the former Salvadoran minister of housing and urban development, died in 2017.)

Martínez would rather not dwell on her brother and his place in Salvadoran history. She would rather focus, instead, on the work that still needs to be done in El Salvador. She continues her association with the Ascension sisters and their work, as well as hers, is about real and concrete challenges — challenges that date back to Romero's time and earlier.

"Insecurity, violence — in some areas you don't see it," she said of ongoing violence in the country. "But that's not true in 'unprotected' neighbourhoods like Mejicanos. There, it's more insecure than it was during the war."

Martínez wants those who still call Óscar Romero a communist to visit areas like Mejicanos. "They are afraid," she said. "I challenge them and ask, 'What do you know about your country?'"

She knows her country's history is inexorably tied to Romero's life and death. Martínez recalls seeing Romero at public events and writing him a letter after he won an international human rights prize. He responded with an appreciative "thank you" letter. Martínez received the letter on March 25, 1980 — the day after Romero was assassinated.

• **Chris Herlinger** is international correspondent for *Global Sisters Report*.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/marisa-de-mart-nez-sister-roberto-daubuisson-speaks-scar-romero-and-her-own-spiritual?clickSource=email>

EL SALVADOR: FORMER COLONEL TO BE CHARGED FOR JESUIT MURDERS

Source: Ignatian Solidarity Network/ Guernica Centre 3/3/2020

A former colonel in El Salvador is set to be charged with the murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter on November 16, 1989, by the Salvadoran military's Atlacatl Battalion. The search for justice following the murders of Ignacio Ellacuría SJ, Ignacio Martín-Baró SJ, Segundo Montes SJ, Juan Ramón Moreno SJ, Joaquín López y López SJ and Amando López SJ, with their housekeeper Elba Julia Ramos and her daughter Celina, has been long and arduous.

After 30 years of seeking justice and 10 years of litigation, the Spanish National Court will begin the trial of former colonel and Vice-Minister of Public Security, Inocente Orlando Montano, on June 8, 2020. Montano is charged with murder and terrorism for his alleged involvement as one of the key decision-makers behind the murders. The Guernica Centre for International Justice, part of The Guernica Group, and Spanish co-counsel Ollé & Sesé Abogados will lead the prosecution on behalf of the victims. This trial represents a key moment for universal jurisdiction, a crucial element of transitional justice for El Salvador and international criminal law.

From 1979-1992, the Salvadoran military carried out a reign of state terror and repression against the civilian population as they fought a bloody ten-year civil war with the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The Jesuit priests at the University of Central America (UCA) advocated for the end of the civil war through a peaceful and negotiated solution. They condemned openly and repeatedly the human rights violations committed by the Salvadoran Armed and Security Forces.

Following the 1989 massacre, the Jesuit community and the relatives of the victims began searching for a way to establish truth and justice. The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights investigated, at the request of Salvadoran groups, as did a high-level US Congressional commission; and at the end of the conflict, the UN sponsored a Truth Commission mandated to investigate war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other human rights violations committed during the armed conflict.

Although the Truth Commission Report reminded El Salvador of its duty to investigate and prosecute crimes under international law, in 1993, the Salvadoran legislature passed a General Amnesty Law, which operated as an instrument of impunity and prevented all investigations and prosecutions of violations committed during the war. Despite the Amnesty Law, efforts to pursue justice never ceased. The then Director of the Human Rights Institute at the UCA (IDHUCA), Benjamin Cuellar, brought a case in the Salvadoran courts on behalf of the victims, which, despite a positive ruling in the Salvadoran Supreme Court, never went to trial.

After three legal decisions in United States courtrooms on behalf of the Salvadoran victims, on November 13, 2008, the Centre for Justice and Accountability, under the leadership of Professor Carolyn Patty Blum, and International Attorney Almudena Bernabeu, with Spanish co-counsel Manuel Ollé, filed a complaint, using Spain's universal jurisdiction laws, before the Spanish National Court as private and popular prosecutors on behalf of the family of Ignacio Martín-Baró and the Spanish Pro Human Rights Association. The complaint was admitted by Chamber No. 6 of the Spanish National Court and the investigation began, led by Judge Eloy Velasco. The support of the National Security Archive at Stanford University and Cardozo Law School in New York secured the extensive declassified documentation on the Jesuit Massacre as a rich resource for the case.

The work of journalists, such as Carlos Dada from the Salvadoran newspaper El Faro, led to Ms Bernabeu locating the former colonel, Inocente Orlando Montano, in Everett, Massachusetts. US authorities apprehended Montano, and, thanks to the persistence of John A Capin at the US Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts, Montano was sentenced to 21 months for immigration fraud and perjury and sent to a federal prison in North Carolina due to a medical condition. Subsequently, the legal team, along with US expert co-counsel from the law firm of Mintz, supported efforts leading to the February 2016 order by the US District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, which resulted in Montano's extradition to Spain. After all appeals were exhausted, Montano arrived in Spain on November 29, 2017. He is currently being held in pre-trial detention while awaiting his trial, due to commence in June 2020.

The trial for the murder of the Jesuits and the two women they employed is extremely significant. This trial has the potential to reopen the discussion in Spain about the necessity and importance of an effective universal jurisdiction law. It also supports the ongoing realization that countries like Spain need to ensure that victims of human rights violations can find redress when legal avenues have been foreclosed in other jurisdictions due to restrictive legislation, corrupt judiciaries, impunity, or political opposition. This trial also comes at a time when Salvadoran civil society is struggling to push forward investigations and prosecutions in El Salvador, following the Supreme Court's repeal of the Amnesty Law in 2016, while simultaneously political sectors in El Salvador threaten to enact legislation that once again could shield those most responsible from prosecution and criminal sanctions.

Carlos Martín-Baró, brother of Ignacio Martín Baró, SJ commented: "In the end, justice will be done, if only with one member of the high command of that Salvadoran army. No one is ever going to give us back Nacho and his companions, but neither can anyone stop their legacy or the example of their lives, which they dedicated to make this world a more habitable place. Justice, like every human institution, is embodied in concrete beings that make it possible and humane. From here, our thanks once again to Almudena Bernabeu and her team, for whom there is neither dejection nor impossibility, and to all those who continue trying to ensure that the balance of countries rests on justice."

Watch a video about the Martyrs of El Salvador: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkFHD34oXwk
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39045>

FR ERNESTO CARDENAL, REVOLUTIONARY NICARAGUAN PRIEST, DIES AT 95

Ellen Teague 3/3/2020: Ernesto Cardenal, the radical Latin American priest, poet and revolutionary has died. He was famous for defying the Catholic Church in the 1980s by serving in the revolutionary Sandinista government of Nicaragua. His suspension from the priesthood by St John Paul II lasted over three decades.

Known for his trademark black beret and loose white peasant shirts, the author of works such as *'Epigrams'* and *'Zero Hour'* was one of the most important and honoured poets in Nicaraguan history. He was hospitalised in Nicaragua's capital of Managua a couple of days ago with respiratory and heart problems. The Vatican's ambassador to Nicaragua visited him at the hospital and joined him in celebrating Mass, a moment that Cardenal's personal assistant described as "very moving" and said it made him "very happy".

Clare Dixon of CAFOD said: "Nicaragua is a nation of poets and artists, and none come greater than Fr Ernesto Cardenal, Trappist monk, mystic and revolutionary. He was a worthy successor to the national hero, Ruben Dario, one of the greatest poets in the Spanish language. Whether Minister of Culture during the first Sandinista government in the 1980s, or strong critic of the Sandinista leadership since 1994, Padre Ernesto never wavered in his passion for social justice, for his life among the artisans of his community in the Solentiname islands."

Julian Filochowski chair of the Romero Trust met Fr Ernesto during his time as director of CAFOD. Julian said: "I admired him hugely. He was one of the world's greatest poets."

Born in 1925 to a wealthy family, Fr Cardenal became a prominent intellectual voice of the Nicaraguan revolution and an ardent proponent of Liberation Theology, a Christian movement committed to social justice. On the Solentiname Islands in Lake Nicaragua, he founded a community of peasants, poets and painters in 1966 that came to symbolise artistic opposition to the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza, who was overthrown in 1979 by Sandinista rebels.

Cardenal actively supported the revolution and served as culture minister during the first government of former Sandinista guerrilla Daniel Ortega - causing him to have a run in with the then-Pope John Paul II, now St John Paul, who firmly held that clerics should not hold political office. The pontiff was also wary of some elements of Liberation Theology. In 1983, John Paul publicly upbraided Cardenal at Managua's international airport at the beginning of a tense visit. When Cardenal knelt in front of the pope and moved to kiss his hand, the pontiff withdrew it and pointed his finger at him in a moment caught in a widely circulated photograph. "You should regularise your situation," the pope scolded. Later that year he suspended Cardenal from the priesthood, along with his brother Fernando, who was then serving as minister of education. Only late in life was Cardenal's suspension lifted by Pope Francis.

The former supporter of Ortega distanced himself from his former Sandinista sympathisers under the increasingly corrupt and tyrannical rule of current President Daniel Ortega. After Ortega returned to the presidency in 2007, Cardenal denounced what he called the beginning of "a family dictatorship". And in 2018, when anti-government protests broke out that posed the biggest challenge to Ortega's increasingly authoritarian hold on power, Cardenal aligned himself with the opposition. Yet, the Ortega government has ordered three days of mourning for Fr Cardenal.

Cardenal was supportive of Pope Francis and his calls to build a better world for those on the margins of society.

The Parrots by Ernesto Cardenal (translated from Spanish)

*My friend Michel is the military leader in Somoto,
there near the border with Honduras,
and he told me he discovered a contraband shipment of parrots
set for export to the U.S. to learn to speak English there.*

There were 186 parrots, and 47 had already died in their cages.

*And he sent them back where they'd come from,
and when the truck reached a place they called The Plains
near the mountain homes of these parrots
(the mountains looked huge, rising from these plains)
the parrots began to stir and beat their wings
and jam themselves against their cage walls.
And when the cages were opened
they all flew out like arrows in the same direction, toward their mountains.*

*The Revolution did the same thing for us, I think:
It freed us from the cages where they trapped us to talk English,*

It gave us back the country from which we were uprooted,

Their green mountains restored to the parrots by parrot-green soldiers.

But there were 47 that died.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39052>

FATHER JOHN SHERRINGTON RIP - A HIDDEN LIFE

13/2/2020

Father John Sherrington was a designer, Passionist priest-worker, street sweeper and trade unionist, anti-apartheid activist and domestic carer, friend of Catholics and other Christians living with HIV and AIDS, Passionist Provincial and finally a good neighbour in Byker estate, Newcastle. He was gentle, sensitive and quiet. He was also a passionate, determined and radically prophetic presence who inspired and challenged many of those he encountered. His faith fired in him a total commitment to the God of justice, present for, with, among and in the poor. In his final years he was living with Parkinsons disease before his death on 4 February.

Baptised Peter John, he was born into a working class Catholic family in Blythe, Northumberland, in 1947. His father was a miner, but their son was a creative artist and designer who went to art school and worked as a designer before joining the Passionists in his 20's.

After joining the Passionists in 1974 John was influenced by another well known Passionist, Fr Austin Smith cp. Austin had been a key figure in leading Passionists and others to respond to the call for an 'option for the poor' emanating from the Second Vatican Council, liberation theology, and the French worker priest movement. These had led Austin and Fr Nicholas Postlethwaite cp to found the Passionist Inner City Mission (ICM). In 1971, they moved to Toxteth, Liverpool, the area that became notorious for the 'Toxteth Riots' in the 1980's. Along with Michael Bold, John started 'ICM London' counterpart. However, whereas in Liverpool the ICM had a community focus, John and Michael followed the lead of the worker priests into the world of low paid manual work.

John found a job as a street sweeper for Islington Council, despite his future colleagues warning about the boredom they and he would share. At the same time, John and Michael lived in and ran a project providing accommodation, support and life skills for young homeless people in New North Road, Islington. During the 1980's, their home was the top secret drop address for mail coming in from around the world for the South Africa Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF), as revealed in the Channel 4 programme "Secret History". Each day the mail would be picked up by IDAF reps. John was a link in a chain of support for families of political prisoners in apartheid South Africa that was a vital part of the struggle for justice there.

In the 1980's, John became first of all NUPE trade union shop steward, then a local union organiser on advocating and negotiating on behalf of his colleagues with local management. Through these connections, he became actively involved in solidarity for the miners during the year long confrontation with Margaret Thatchers' Conservative government.

After some years, due to reorganisation of street cleaning, John moved to work as a carer in an Islington Council residential care home, then as a home carer for the same council for people with HIV and AIDS. He also became involved with LGBT Catholics, being on a rota for celebrating the Soho Masses while living on the Pembury Estate in Hackney, and involved with the community there. John also became involved with a different community, Catholics with HIV and AIDS, particularly through the charity Catholic Aids Prevention and Support (CAPS). After another reorganisation, John took redundancy from Islington council, and later moved back up to Byker in Newcastle to be near his mother in her final years.

John's multifaceted ministry included many years involvement with vocations and formation ministry with his Passionist Province. In 2009, against his own inclination and desire, John was elected Passionist Provincial. During this time, he initiated what can be described as 'a new way of being Passionist', the 'Community of the Passion', a Passionist group open to all who share the desire to 'keep alive the memory of the Passion' by their commitment to 'the crucified ones of today' at 'sites of suffering', as well as 'the Crucified One'. However, after four years as Provincial John was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2013, at the age of 66. He continued all this time to be a faithful presence in his inner city neighbourhood, continuing the ICM spirit, including by being a good friend to members of the local refugee and asylum drop in centre run by Hexham and Newcastle Diocese.

With the progression of Parkinson's, John found himself the beneficiary of the very same home care he had given others in their hour of need. After some time in Newcastle Royal Infirmary, he transferred to the same St Joseph's Home his mother had died in, and to which he had offered support in a Chaplaincy role, where he died after a finally rapid decline. His requiem Mass was at Minsteracres Passionist Retreat Centre at midday on February 19th. May he rest in peace.

Fr John Sherrington

Born: 28 March 1947

Professed in the Passionist Congregation 5 January 1974

Ordained: 14 July 1979

Passionist Provincial: 16 April 2009 - April 18 2013 Died: 4 February 2020

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/38917>

REFLECTION: BETWEEN THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION

To all intents and purposes, by that ninth hour of that Friday before the feast of Passover began, the Jerusalem hierarchy and oligarchy, i.e. the religious and civil powers, had won. They, the opponents of Jesus of Nazareth, had disposed of a problem from Nazareth by means of publicly executing by crucifixion: culturally and socially the most shameful of deaths known, a death that epitomised failure at every level, being regarded as cursed by God and man.

At one stroke his insignificant group of followers were scattered: the "disciples" on the road to Emmaus, "apostles" petrified in an obscure upper room in the capital; disheartened, diminished, and defeated. What could they achieve?

No hope, no future, insignificant numerically, what could they possibly organise, they couldn't even constitute a cohort! Were they not a spent force, if they ever had been a force at all? What could they possibly achieve?

This motley bunch had challenged the system, the status quo, the "old ways", the powers that be, by contravening canons and conventions, sacred and secular, and social, cultural and political: consorting with tax collectors, sinners of all kinds, women and men of low repute, shepherds and lepers, beggars, the lame and the deaf, the dumb and the mad – all the rejects and miscreants of any "decent" civilised society. What could they achieve?

All "no hopers" the world of Jesus' followers, their hopes, and expectations would to all intents and purposes seem blown asunder. What could they achieve?

The disciples on the Road to Emmaus personify the depth of disappointment: "we had hoped that he ... (Jesus) was the one who would set Israel free" Luke 24:21: they treat with scepticism the women in their group talking about a vision of angels at the tomb of Jesus! Anyway, the two disciples on the road saw no future (N.B. "their faces downcast" Luke 24:17).

Preoccupied with themselves and their disappointments they fail to recognise Jesus being alongside them. Only when they asked him to stay with them, and in sharing the meal, that they recognised him in the breaking of the bread, their eyes were opened, they said "did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road?" Luke 24:32.

Are we not also on this road, where we walk with the sorrowful and dejected of this world; the poor and the powerless, those cast aside to the margins of life in whom Christ continues to suffer? ("When you did it to the least of these my brethren you did it to me" Matthew 25:31-40). Again, in Acts 9: 3-5; Jesus' words to Saul on the road to Damascus "Why do you persecute me?" Do we listen to them as Jesus listened to the woes of the two disciples on the road? Do we express solidarity with them ("heartfelt concern", "existing-with, accompanying") as the Lord did? As we walk with them do we recognise Jesus in them walking with us? Do we hear the Good News announced to us, the scriptures interpreted for us?

He stayed with them; the dejected, the failed, to share with them, to be-with. He made himself dependent on them, ("i was almost dark, he made as if to go on, they pressed him to stay"). How important this was and is because it was through this "staying-with" that the "hidden Christ" revealed himself to them in the sharing of the meal.

Like those two disciples on the road we also learn as we go along, we do not have a blueprint with everything set down for us. We are changed by the Crucified One and crucified ones of our world, and through them, we are challenged to reinterpret our lives in favour of them.

The Cross of Jesus is transformative. It is not a justification or canonisation of suffering. It transforms those who have eyes to see and ears to hear e.g. one of the two crucified with him, the centurion in charge of the execution, those who in Mark's account of the Passion "go away beating their breasts". In John's account, Mary the mother of Jesus being given the "beloved disciple" to care for, and for him to care for her (John 19:26-27) whilst in Mark we also have Joseph of Arimathea "a prominent member of the Council boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus" and in John we have Nicodemus along with Joseph burying the body of Jesus. They who previously had been secret disciples now bravely associate themselves with the "failure" and "damned" Nazarene. We must remember they did not know before the event that Jesus would be raised by the Father from the dead.

God chooses what is considered weak in the world's eyes to confound what the world thinks is strong; God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God's weakness is stronger than human strength (1 Cor 1:25ff). What could they possibly achieve?

Paul also reminds us, and the early followers of Jesus, that God chose them many of whom were not highly regarded by the world's standards, "God chose the weak to shame the strong, the common and contemptible, those who counted for nothing to reduce to nothing all those considered to count for something". (1 Cor 1:26ff). God's choice continues to challenge us, to be with those that the world counts as nothing. So, here we are proclaiming a Crucified Christ, we witness to his passion as it continues in our day in women and men at Sites of Suffering, our modern day Calvary. We witness to a Crucified Christ, in a crucified humanity, on a crucified planet.

These sites of suffering take many forms but are invariably marked by exploitation, exclusion, marginalisation, and the image and works of God are defaced.

One such "site of suffering" is our inner cities, which by the world's standards count for nothing. Life is a constant struggle for people who feel left behind, and like the Asylum-Seeker and, the refugee, have lost their history, and there is no future. Regeneration is a costly business and not likely to happen quickly and the usual mode of regeneration where it has occurred, entails the exclusion, disenfranchisement, dislocation and relocation of the resident community, so that "those who count for something" the economically and socially successful can benefit. Until such happens, many continue to be plagued by ill health and impoverished life-styles. Being that not many can get out, it is important that we are there, between the Cross and the Resurrection.

John Sherrington CP <https://indcatholicnews.co./news/38868>

See also <https://indcatholicnews.co./news/38917> (preceding this article) and <https://indcatholicnews.co./news/38967>

REV. PAUL NICOLSON

Paul Burnham writes: Rev. Paul Nicolson, who has died aged 87, was a longstanding and vocal supporter of housing and tenant campaigns in Haringey and elsewhere, as part of his devotion to the needs of the poor. Paul was a retired Anglican clergyman who came to the Ministry in early middle age, after twelve years in the Champagne trade.

He opposed the Poll Tax when he was a vicar at Turville in Buckinghamshire. From 1997 he sponsored research into minimum income standards, and from then on campaigned over housing and poverty. Paul was quite rightly outraged that land could be used to make massive profits, when as he often said, it was provided by God for the common use of all living things. Upsetting many people, but loved by many more, the Rev. Nicolson pursued what he believed to be right with an unswerving energy. He had no problem whatsoever with working alongside unbelievers, who in many cases learned from him big time as he role-modelled principle, determination and compassion.

The Rev. Nicolson set up the Taxpayers Against Poverty group to oppose government benefit cuts, and he bombarded the newspapers with letters and articles on the subject. When the Coalition government cut back Council Tax Benefit coverage, and local authorities began charging poor residents court expenses when they were unable to pay, Paul was in Court alongside them, charged with non payment himself and demanding to be imprisoned. I was with him at Tottenham Magistrates Court when he exposed the facts that Haringey Council charged back corporate overheads of £926,655 to poor residents for unpaid council tax in a single year, including finance (the cost of accounting), staff development and learning, policy (the cost of making decisions), communications, human resources, IT costs, customer services including call centres, and office accommodation including buildings insurance.

Paul was very deaf and was obviously struggling to hear what was being said as he mounted his defence. And yet when stating the reasons for awarding a liability order and full costs as requested by the Council, the Magistrate said 'all those in Court heard the evidence presented by Miss Greenish [the Council's witness], and there was no need to repeat what she had said'. I was so angry, in fact I went potty about it and wrote a letter of complaint, but Paul did not seem at all perturbed. As always, he did what he thought was right, and let others worry about the consequences if they chose to do so. The result was that Haringey Council changed its policy in 2018 to restore full Council Tax exemptions for the poor. Without any question, this was primarily Paul's doing.

Paul held a prearranged meeting at the Westminster Abbey Close on housing and poverty four days after the December 2019 general election, to launch a new Housing Bill he had prepared and to keep the campaigning work going, win or lose on Election Day. That was so typical of him, because he saw obstacles as simply there to be overcome.

To many people he was 'the Rev. Paul' or 'St. Paul', but to me he was just Paul. Many times we talked about the moral high ground, and I supported him in bashing the policy makers from that well-earned place, and encouraged him to wear his dog collar to all protests. He carried on wearing it when he felt like it – and not otherwise. Paul's sense of humour and delight in mischief making must also be remembered. When I told him I was going through a spiritual crisis, he said, 'What? What? Have you run out of money?'

Last month, already in very poor health, Paul begged on the doorstep of Church House, Westminster out in the cold in the role of a homeless person holding a piece of cardboard, for five hours from 9am to 2pm, in solidarity with the poor. There will be many other stories about Paul, and we hope there will be many events of remembrance and celebration of his life. The final time I spoke to Paul was last Sunday evening. He was planning a Deputation to a Haringey Council meeting about families in temporary accommodation. I updated him on the Council's latest proposals, we talked about the moral and religious basis of the case he was going to put to the Council's Cabinet – and then he gave me some reading to do. Now Paul will not be able to do his Deputation. We must and will be there to put his arguments for him. He will never be forgotten. Rest in Power, the Rev. Paul Nicolson.

<https://haringeydefendcouncilhousingblog.wordpress.com/2020/03/06/the-rev-paul-nicolson-rest-in-power/>

HOPE AND RESISTANCE

Hope and Resistance seeks to present artwork created by young people living on the Palestinian West Bank. The young people have responded to the question 'what do you want to tell the world about being a young person living in Palestine?' These voices are often hidden or ignored by the mass media. Visitors will be able to explore the history of the Palestinian conflict and the impact on the lived realities for the Palestinian communities, particularly young people. The exchange seeks to present the voices of Palestinian young people directly through artwork, photography and video. There will be an opportunity for TATE exchange visitors to engage with art workshops and produce material for an exchange residency at venues in Palestine in May 2020 as a response to the pictures from Palestine.

Academics from Liverpool Hope University will be in attendance each day to support the exchange and engage in debate and dialogue with visitors.

PROGRAMME

Monday 13 – Sunday 19 April 2020 11am–4pm

Daily Art Workshops to create material for Palestine Exchange

Monday 13 April 2020 2pm–3pm Opening event, welcome and introduction to the exchange.

Palestine exchange will take place in May 2020.

Email for further details: hopeforpalestine@hope.ac.uk @hope_palestine

Liverpool Hope University Tate Exchange Liverpool

Please note: this event is subject to confirmation and may be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic

COLUMBANS ANNOUNCE WINNERS OF 'THROWAWAY CULTURE' COMPETITION

Ellen Teague 16/3/2020

A pupil from All Saints School in Sheffield, Kit Bell, has won the writing section of the Columban Young Journalists Competition in Britain on the theme, '*Tackling our Throwaway Culture*'. John Vidal, former Environment Editor at The Guardian felt Kit's article was a "strong" entry with "good links made between poverty and environment". Ruth Gledhill of *The Tablet* liked that "it started with a personal behavioural anecdote and extrapolated from that, based on Catholic social teachings". Kit rounded off her article by saying that, "indifference and selfishness are the only true drivers of this throwaway culture - so maybe it's time for a change of heart."

Second place was Evelyn James from St Mark's School in Hounslow whose article was thought by John Vidal to get "to the heart of the dilemma". She was critical of lavish and wasteful lifestyles side by side with poverty, exacerbated by climate change. The articles of Gabriela Fanucciu, St Bede's, Lytham St Anne's and Maeve Ann Burrell, All Saints, Sheffield came joint third. They offered hope that if we shun single-use plastic, alongside reducing consumption, recycling and reusing, then we can be on the path to respecting God's creation once again. "We must alter our capital-driven mindsets to focus on the real importance and beauty of what is around us" suggested Gabriela.

The winning video came from Chloe Laberinto from St Paul's School in Milton Keynes. Nick Benson of The Universe applauded the link made in the video between recycling and action urged by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. He said, "she echoes his call to undergo ecological conversion". Jo Siedlecka of Independent Catholic News described the video as, "thoughtful and informative". All the judges commended second place video winner, Evie McCann, from St Bede's Catholic School, Lytham St Annes and the joint third place winners, Maureen Unwunali and Benjamin Cooper. Maureen, from St Paul's, Milton Keynes, "showcased her talented creativity in her poetic statement on our society's throwaway culture", according to Nick Benson. Ruth Gledhill said the dramatic video by Benjamin, from Bishop Ullathorne, Coventry, was "outstanding" and "beautifully storyboarded and produced".

The Columbans invited students to write an article or produce a short video on the topic of '*Tackling our Throwaway Culture*'. Two separate strands were held - one for students in Britain and the other for students in Ireland. They were encouraged to use their journalistic writing and mobile skills to look at a topical issue which is relevant to Catholic Social Teaching and resonates with Columban mission. Each had two categories, writing and video, and leading journalists in Britain and Ireland judged the entries. The subject matter recognised the Columbans' long established work on themes within *Laudato Si'* in all 16 countries where they work. Past competitions have focused on '*The Challenge of Climate Change*' and '*Migrants are our Neighbours*'.

Around 100 young people entered between Britain and Ireland, and in England alone more than 20 schools were involved, from Hartlepool and Warrington in the north to Brentford and Wimbledon in London. Their teachers and Britain's external judges - Nick Benson, Ruth Gledhill, Jo Siedlecka, and John Vidal - were warmly thanked for their support of the Columban competition.

Hannah Newsham, a teacher at St Bede's in Lytham St Annes, where two pupils won prizes, said the school is "incredibly proud of the hard work and commitment that Gabriela and Evie have shown in highlighting the serious concerns surrounding our throwaway culture". She added that, "at St Bede's, the teachings of Christ underpin all that we do, so thank you to the Columbian Missionaries for providing a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to put principles of Catholic Social Teaching into action".

Full list of winners at: www.columbancompetition.com/

The winning British articles and videos will appear on the website <https://columbans.co.uk/> over the coming week.
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39141>

BOOKS

THROUGH THE LEOPARD'S GAZE

By Njambi McGrath

ISBN13: 9781913090104 Format: Paperback Imprint: Jacaranda Publication Date: 02-04-2020 £9.99

Through the Leopard's Gaze is an amazing memoir chronicling the award winning comedian's difficult but inspiring life growing up in Kenya. Her book illuminates family abuse, racism identity and emotional triumph through the lenses of the author's personal history and the history of Kenya.

In her captivating memoir *Through the Leopard's Gaze*, Njambi McGrath details the harrowing circumstances of her life as a young girl in Kenya, who one fateful night was beaten to a pulp and left for dead. Thirteen-year-old Njambi, fearing her assailant would return to finish her, courageously escaped, walking through the night in the Kenyan countryside, risking wild animals, robbers and murderers, before being picked up by two shabbily dressed but safe men. She buries the memories of that fateful day and night, and years later ends up in London with a British husband and children. Then one day a simple unassuming wedding invitation arrives in her mailbox causing her to have to confront the remnants of a past she had thought was behind her.

This is a book about survival, and courage when all else fails. It's a searingly honest examination of human cruelty and strength in equal measure.

<https://www.jacarandabooksartmusic.co.uk/products/through-the-leopards-gaze>

TIME TO ACT: A RESOURCE BOOK BY THE CHRISTIANS IN EXTINCTION REBELLION

By **Jeremy Williams**

A timely, empowering and energizing resource book for Christian climate activists, as well as for those who support and encourage greater responsibility for the environment through their churches.

Written by members and friends of Christian Climate Action, a community of Christians committed to prayerful direct action and public witness in response to climate breakdown, including Green Christian board member, Paul Bodenham, and compiled by Jeremy Williams who works on our *Joy in Enough* project, this stimulating resource book sets out the moral and religious case for joining the struggle against climate change. It reflects on the Christian tradition of non-violent direct action, and offers deeply moving testimonies by those engaged in such protests today, along with powerful sermons, prayers, liturgies and other spiritual resources.

The climate crisis is the biggest issue facing humanity today and it is unjust that those least responsible for causing it are facing its full effects. The scale of the emergency facing our world demands a just response from every one of us. I am delighted to see this important coming together of people of faith passionate about engaging their heads, hearts and hands in meeting this crisis. It is only together that we can make a difference.

— Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, CEO Christian Aid

More than half a century ago, the Young Christian Workers organisation adopted *See, Judge, Act* to encapsulate their powerful mode of operating. Christian Climate Action by analogy has divided their excellent new handbook into three sections, with essays gathered under the titles, *The Head, The Heart* and *The Hands*.

It's a logical progression, after all, to do one's thinking first – to reflect on the accumulation of whammies that God's Creation is being made to absorb, and on the theology that can enlighten our present situation.

And then to consider – to take to heart – the experience and emotions brought to the surface by the climate emergency. I particularly liked the quote from Dr Renée Lertzman: "The more we can acknowledge openly and explicitly how we're feeling about what's going on, the more we can quickly free up a lot of that energy to be strategic, creative."

Finally, the Hands: here the book comes into its own with practical advice and links to resources – 20 pages, for instance, of "liturgies, prayers, songs and declarations".

Altogether, a most useful and inspiring collation, celebrating the rapid growth and success of Christian Climate Action and stirring us to greater commitment to challenge the status quo. — Martin Davis, convener, Cheltenham Green Christian

PRESS REVIEWS

In a remarkably short space of time, Extinction Rebellion has fundamentally altered the public discourse on climate change — *Tank Magazine*

Christians are called by God to show to the world what the divine image looks like — the image of a divine creator who brought the world to birth, called it good, and summoned human beings to reflect this divine care and delight through their own work in the world, animated by the gift of Christ's Spirit. This timely, moving and highly motivating book will help Christians of all ages to respond faithfully to that summons and grow more fully into the joyful responsibility we are made for — Rowan Williams, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge

You'd think that those who commune daily with the Creator of the universe would be most aghast by the devastation of the creation, but that hasn't always been the case. Sometimes Christians have invalidated environmental activism because our theology has been exclusively concerned with going to heaven rather than restoring the earth. Here is some really good news. This is a landmark book in the movement of Christians who care deeply about the earth. It is nothing short of an invitation to join the holy uprising of people sweeping the globe who will not be silent in the face of the destruction of God's earth — Shane Claiborne, author, activist and leader of Red Letter Christians

Order your copy here <https://spckpublishing.co.uk/time-to-act>

Paperback ISBN: 9780281084463 £9.99

eBook ISBN: 9780281084470

NEW BIBLE SERIES FROM DLT, WITH BOOKS BY VIRGINIA MOFFATT, FRANK COTTRELL-BOYCE

19/2/2020: 'The Bible,' says Pope Francis, 'is not a collection of books for the benefit of a privileged few. It belongs to those called to hear its message and to recognise themselves in its words.'

Launching on 27 February, the new *How the Bible Can Help Us Understand* series, inspired by the Revised New Jerusalem Bible, is designed to help us explore these words together, today.

Is death something to be feared? What is the point of a funeral? How should we prepare for one? Can it ever be right to allow, or even to help, someone to die? *Approaching the End of Life* by Virginia Moffatt - the first book of the series - explores the inevitability of death, preparing for death, the act of dying, controlling the end of life and life after death.

In *Forgiveness*, Frank Cottrell-Boyce asks why should we forgive? What if the subject of our forgiveness is underserving? What difference will being able to forgive make to our lives?

Accessible for both individuals and groups, the issues are discussed from personal experience, allowing the reader to connect directly with the authors and the text. *Approaching the End of Life* and *Forgiveness* will both prompt intelligent thought, reflection and guidance on the issues that really matter.

The author, Virginia Moffatt, is also the series editor. She is a writer, editor and the Director of Operations for People and Planet. Previously she was the Chief Operating Officer of the Christian think tank Ekklesia.

Frank Cottrell-Boyce is a screenwriter and novelist perhaps best known as the writer of the 2012 Summer Olympics opening ceremony, his sequel novels to *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, his collaborations with the film director Danny Boyle and scripts and screenplays for many films and television programmes, including *Goodbye Christopher Robin*, *Millions*, *Framed*, *The Railway Man* and *Doctor Who*.

Two further books, *Welcoming the Stranger* by Denise Cottrell-Boyce and *Illness, Caring and Disability* by Bernadette Meaden will be published at the end of May.

For more information see: www.dltbooks.com/
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/38953>

NEW SONG FOR SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

16/3/2020 **Simon Au, a parishioner at Holy Apostles, Pimlico, central London, writes:**

Music has always been a huge part of my life. I remember myself as a young boy watching my father play the guitar in church and thinking that it was so cool, and so after some persuading, I convinced my father to let the eight-year-old me join him in the Holy Apostles Folk Group. At that time, I think I only knew four guitar chords, and I probably couldn't sing in tune, but practicing and performing for church every week was the perfect environment to really grow as a musician and give something back to the Church. Who would have guessed that over fifteen years later, we would still be here singing in the Folk Group for Mass every Sunday? Though many members have come and gone over the years, I am blessed to have had the opportunity to sing with all of you and hope to do so for many years to come.

I was fortunate in my teenage years that I was able to work hard and obtain a place at Cambridge University to read Engineering. I am currently working as a Software Engineer for McLaren Applied, but I always try to find the time to keep my music going. In recent months I have been working hard on my YouTube channel, releasing a number of cover songs as well as original material.

Growing up in a mixed family with a father from Hong Kong and an English mother has given me an appreciation for both Chinese and Western cultures, and anyone who looks at my YouTube channel will find a number of Chinese cover songs on there. Although I only discovered my love for Chinese pop music later in life after attending university, I quickly found that music is a great way to learn about new cultures and meet new people, as well as being a great tool to learn new languages. In recent years I have been working hard to improve my Chinese and, in the summer of 2019, I actually went to China for five weeks to attend Chinese school. During my time there, I was blessed to be able to stay with a lovely Chinese home-stay family who were extremely talented filming and photography. We decided it would be fun to make a music video together as a way of documenting my travels, and so we spent the weekends filming in some of the most beautiful places I've ever been to in and around the city of Guilin, China. The video turned out so beautifully and I couldn't imagine a more perfect souvenir of my time there.

In terms of my own music, so far in 2020 I have released a new song each month. For January, I released a song called *Resolutions* which is about how bad we are at keeping our new year's resolutions. For February, I released a Valentine's day song called *My Valentine*, and then for March the most obvious topic was St Patrick's Day, which is also the name of the song. This was a very fun song to write and record because I was able to use elements of traditional Irish music - I had to make sure there was a catchy fiddle hook to make people want to get up and dance, as well as a flute. I also incorporated drum sounds to mimic the sound of a bodhrán (a traditional Irish drum), and even added a section that just has the sound of Irish dancing to add to the Irish vibe. Lyrically, I was inspired by a traditional Irish blessing:

*May the road rise to meet you,
may the wind be always at your back,
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
and the rains fall soft upon your fields,
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the hollow of His hand.*

I know everyone is going through difficult times at the moment, what with the coronavirus, so I wanted to write a song that would bring a bit of happiness, as well as give people hope that everything is going to be ok. I feel that the Irish blessing really captures that, and I hope that listening to the song might bring a smile to a few people's faces, and maybe even inspire people to get up and dance, even if they can't leave the house for a while.

LINKS: St Patrick's Day: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0hSsnMSt8k
Visit Simon Au's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCGj_c06kcEB94YvhS2-4RMA
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39143>

DIARY DATES – all public events are subject to confirmation and may be cancelled

MARCH

24 40th Anniversary of the murder of St Oscar Romero romerotrust.org.uk romerotrust@gmail.com

28 Earth Hour wwf.org.uk/earthhour

APRIL

4 International Day for Mine Awareness Mines Advisory Group <https://www.maginternational.org/>

12 International Day for Street Children: *Louder Together* <https://globaldimension.org.uk/event/international-day-for-street-children/2020-04-12/>

28 Film “On Her Shoulders” 6 -7.30pm Storyhouse, Hunter Street, Chester CH1 2AF. The documentary film “On Her Shoulders” is about Nadia Murad a young Yazidi woman who escaped from ISIS and has helped to publicise the plight of the Yazidi and women and children victimised by genocide and mass atrocities. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018. Further information: www.storyhouse.com or amnesty.chester.wrexham@gmail.com

MAY

15 International Conscientious Objectors Day. Annual event supported by Pax Christi, Peace Pledge Union, Quakers, Anglican Pacifist Fellowship and others <https://paxchristi.org.uk/event/international-conscientious-objector-day-4/>

JUNE

15-21 Refugee Week <https://refugeeweeek.org.uk/>

JULY

17-19 July 42nd Annual Justice and Peace Conference ‘2020 Vision – Action for Life on Earth’ The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick. Five years on from *Laudato Si’* we are learning that ecological conversion is a matter of life and death. Decisions at United Nations summits in 2020 on both climate and biodiversity will be critical for salvaging a viable future. Join us in Conference 2020 as we make common cause to face the choices, changes and consequences confronting us.

Book here: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PDF-Booking-form-1-1.pdf>

We are continuing to take bookings at the present for the conference and have arranged the AGM for Sunday July 19 at 1.45 after the conference. We will continue to review the situation in light of any future guidance from the government or action by The Hayes Conference Centre.

NJPN continues to have a weekly column in *The Universe*, and some of these are uploaded onto our website.

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

- Sign up for regular news and information from NJPN (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues) and resources at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk 020 7901 4864

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

Please note: Since going to press further restrictions have been introduced by the UK government in an attempt to curb the spread of Covid19 - all churches are now closed and not as stated in some articles in this bulletin