



## **AN INVITATION TO CATHOLICS OF COLOUR**



We recognise that there is deep injustice affecting people of colour. Racism affects individuals but it also is institutional and systemic. That means it is present in and damages all our

communities and churches.

The Diocese of Leeds is a diverse and significant body and has an important part to play in influencing for racial justice and the Common Good.

We can strengthen this by exploring change internally in ourselves, our parishes and our Diocese. Then we can look outwards and seek to influence wider society.

Whilst racial injustice has made the headlines in recent years, we know that experiences of racism are longstanding. Many statements have been made in response to injustice. However, the J&P Commission wants a commitment to racial justice to be more than well-meaning statements and occasional gestures

We also believe that addressing racism is a matter for us all and not just for people of colour. However, we want to begin by listening to the experiences and views of Catholics of colour. So, our first step in becoming an effective and inclusive anti racist organisation is to create a platform for Black and minority ethnic Catholics in the diocese to share their experiences, needs and gifts, with the aim of forming a Racial Justice Action Group. We are only too aware that, as a Commission, we do not reflect the existing diversity within the Diocese.

We have asked Leeds Citizens to work with this group to offer a way of organising which moves from listening to bring lasting change. This will involve training, reflection on current experience,

building a team and then developing a plan for action to bring change.

So, we will create – on line or, where it is practical, face to face – listening workshops where your voices and experiences of racism in society and in the church will be heard. We want to get to a better understanding of what life is like for Catholics of colour, and ensure that in the Leeds Diocese all are safe, seen, heard and respected.

Through this process, we believe three things will happen:

- Those who take part will develop their skills, confidence and leadership.
- Our parishes and Diocese will be strengthened and have a more vibrant and clear voice in society.
- We shall see positive change for racial justice in our Diocese and in society.

This is not an indefinite commitment, nor is it a vague effort. We are asking people to join a group with a focus and work with us over the coming months.

We have an important, exciting and practical plan- but we need you, as an individual, family, parish or organisation in order to carry out this plan .

### **FIND OUT MORE / DO MORE**

Simply send an email to

[jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)

If you would like to find out more or be a part of this initiative

This listening and working together will strengthen inclusion and welcome among us and enable the diocese to have a stronger influence for racial justice and the common good in wider society.



## COP26 EVENTS AROUND THE DIOCESE Together for the Planet @ St Benedict's Garforth

*By Trish Sandbach, Commission Member*

A couple of months ago the Faith and Justice Action Group from St. Benedict's in Garforth were discussing how to start bringing people together after the separation and isolation of lockdown and restrictions while continuing to observe Covid safety - as the pandemic is far from over. We needed a celebration. The idea that developed was of an event that would bring many of the local green groups together, as well as raise the profile of both COP26 and what is happening at a local level.



It took place on October 30<sup>th</sup>. A local Councillor welcomed everyone and said he was glad to see so many green organisations getting together and sharing information, experience and more importantly their vision. He went on to say that he recognised the huge challenge facing COP26 but if politics was the art of the possible then COP seemed to be impossible but he hoped there would be real change. He found hope in the change in the wider population who are concerned about the reality of climate change: not just the activists. He pointed out that Leeds City Council were doing a great deal on many fronts with regard to the Climate Emergency especially improving houses by installing insulation and solar panels under the Better Homes Scheme. Over the years he has been in the Council he noted the growth in Garforth of formal green groups, ranging over more issues and the increased support from local schools. He encouraged us to lobby our local councillors and MP to make the necessary changes that we want to achieve a more sustainable world.

The stalls covered different aspects of sustainability. Incredible Edible is a national organization whose vision is to create a kind, confident and connected community through the power of food. In Garforth, they have volunteers who grow vegetables, herbs, and fruit in boxes in public places for the community to use. People are just encouraged to take anything they fancy from the raised beds that are scattered throughout the community. Garforth Hedgehogs fosters and rescues hedgehogs which are in dramatic decline in recent years.

Eco-Friendly Garforth is a lottery-funded project under the umbrella of Climate Action Leeds (which is itself a multi-partnership organization that includes Leeds City Council). It is in the process of developing a climate action plan for Garforth. It is one of 4 'climate action hubs' that have been provided funding to employ workers on a part-time basis to help develop and implement these plans.

Labelled comment boxes were available and it was great to see children confidently writing on issues such as transport, waste, energy, placing them in the boxes. They will be taken to COP26 by bicycle, ridden by Walt, a member of Eco-Friendly Garforth. Some of the displays made earlier by a locals school were carried to Glasgow by another member. Adults' comments were also welcome! It was great to have a CAFOD stall with information about the effect of climate change on communities in the global South as well as examples of alternatives to plastic in everyday life. It witnessed to the Catholic Church's concern about and action on climate change.





## NEWSLETTER November 2021

Sustrans and Active Leeds both had stalls. These are two organisations looking at ways to increase walking and cycling opportunities across the area. Free maps of traffic paths and cycle tracks were gratefully received by people. A local cycle shop offered health checks to any bicycles that people had brought to the event, offering advice on how to maintain and repair them.

Children were particularly intrigued by the Barrowby Hall farm stall which had 8 feet sunflowers (dead ones) tied to the sides of their gazebo. Joe, the farmer, explained that the sunflower seeds and the equally tall maize plants with corn cobs attached were actually food for birds and other wildlife. It was very heartening talking to him about the efforts farmers in the area are making to be more sustainable such as clover and grass lays which capture carbon and the clover – which is a nitrogen fixer which increases the fertility of the soil. He too had challenging quizzes about modern sustainable agricultural practice which were very enlightening.

One of the highlights was David from St. Benedict's allotment carrying around, actually cuddling, one of the hens they keep. It certainly broke the ice and promoted conversation with a number of people.

We did not attract crowds (the weather was poor to start with) but the people who came were interested and enjoyed it. There was a great atmosphere of hospitality, sharing concerns close to our hearts and learning from each other. Our thanks go particularly to all the stall holders and especially to the small team who planned it so meticulously. Thanks to everyone who made this event possible. We look forward to the next one!  
*Trish Sandbach, St. Benedict's*

### Other COP26 parish actions

St Benedict's also held a prayer vigil on the eve of the start of the conference. Other parish communities have also joined in praying for the success of the conference. A Holy Hour was held in Holy Name Church, part of **Our Lady of**

**Kirkstall** parish. **St John Vianney** parish in Leeds also held a vigil. In addition, they promoted to their parish joining with the local Churches Together



group (who have all signed a Climate Pledge) for the demonstration held in Leeds on 06 November.

The parish of **St Mary & St Michael** in Settle had special bidding Prayers during COP26 and also had an open-air Mass for Creation and a blessing of animals in October. **St John Fisher & St Thomas More** have a dedicated 'Tree of Life' group fostering action based on Laudato Si. They garnered 10 Top Tips from parishioners and are forming 3 groups to see how to put them into practice at individual, family and parish levels. Other church communities included the CAFOD COP26 prayer in their bulletins.

### Attendees at COP26



*Tim Devereux*

Some people from the Diocese actually went to COP26. David & Mollie Somerville from **St Cuthbert & First Martyrs** parish, and Bradford's Global Justice now group, attended. CAFOD sponsored Chuks Nwachukwu, from **Mary Mother of God** parish in Bradford to attend.

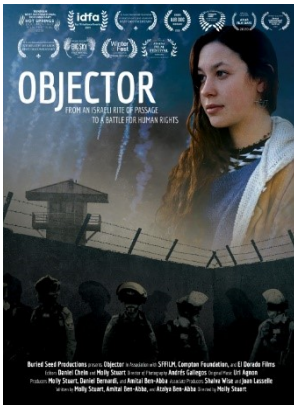
Tim Devereux, from **St Joseph's** parish in **Pudsey**, was able to attend in his role as Chair of the Movement for the Abolition of War.





## FILM SHOWING: OBJECTOR -PART OF THE LEEDS PALESTINIAN FILM FESTIVAL 2021

**26 November @ 6:30pm,  
Wheeler Hall, Leeds Cathedral**



Like all Israeli youth, Atalya is obligated to become a soldier. Unlike most, she questions the practices of her country's military, and becomes determined to challenge this rite of passage. Despite her family's political disagreements and personal concerns, she refuses military duty and is imprisoned for her dissent. Her courage moves those around her to reconsider their own moral positions and personal power. OBJECTOR follows Atalya to prison and beyond, offering a unique window into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the perspective of a young woman who seeks truth and takes a stand for justice.

We are showing this film in partnership with Pax Christi in the Leeds Diocese.

The film, directed by Molly Stuart, was released in 2019 and since then has garnered several awards at various film festivals across the world.

Free to attend but please click on the link to register and secure a place <https://lpff2021-objector.eventbrite.co.uk/>

or simply google 'Objector film Leeds' to find the Eventbrite page.

Leeds **Palestinian**  
**Film Festival**

If you are not able to make it for our film then it is well worth keeping an eye on the festival website for the full festival programme:

<https://leedsppff.org.uk/>

## STEPHEN COTTRELL WEBINAR

On the evening of 20 October we held the second in what we hope will be an occasional series of online meetings exploring the links between Justice & Mercy. It was given by Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York.



As the basis for his talk, he gave a quote from Psalm 85: "Mercy and Truth are met together. Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other."

In a highly engaging and thought-provoking 25 minutes he explored this subject in a way that then led to a full 30 minutes of questions and exploration with those taking part.

### You can still watch this talk!

The talk is available on the J&P YouTube channel. Follow this link

<https://youtu.be/R6nUVNBtt0Y>

The Q&A session that followed is also available and if you are interested in watching this as well then please email [jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk) and we will send you the link.



## **DIOCESAN SYNODAL LISTENING PROCESS**

*By Joe Burns, Commission member*



Everyone in the Diocese of Leeds is being asked to respond as part of this listening process. Some parishes may already have had a listening session by the time this newsletter is published. By the middle of December all the parish listening exercises should have been completed. By this time, all schools should also have had facilitated sessions.

Individuals can also respond by filling out a survey online. You are presented with ten statements and asked to put your view of how much you agree or disagree with them on a scale from 1 to 10. More importantly, you can then add some free text – quite a lot if you want!

I would encourage as many individuals as possible to complete this survey. If we do not join in then we can hardly complain when we find that the collated responses do not reflect our own views of what is happening in

our diocese and where our priorities as a Church should lie.

Our parishes clearly do a lot of ‘works of mercy’ as witnessed through the many SVP and other groups helping those in immediate need. Where in the priorities of our parishes and Diocese does working for justice come?

How often do you hear sermons that relate to justice issues: the scandal of food banks, the inaction over our Climate Emergency and so on? Are such issues reflected in our liturgies in our parishes? Are there parish groups that are actively reflecting on the Gospels and then taking action on justice issues?

Where do justice issues sit in the priorities of the Diocese? Do you feel listened to if you bring up such issues?

There are no questions that directly cover these points – but if you reflect on the statements in the survey you will find the opportunity to make your views known.

### **Take the Survey!**

Follow this link to take a look at the online version of the survey. You can print it out or just look at each section and think about it before filling it in.

<https://www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/parish-to-mission/online-survey/>



## Attending COP26 with CAFOD

*By Matthew Maslen*



At the beginning of the month, I was lucky enough to attend COP26 as part of CAFOD's Young Adult Mobilisation. From Friday 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> of November, we were among hundreds of thousands of people who had travelled from all across the globe to Glasgow for the climate conference.

On Friday, the CAFOD group began to arrive from across the UK. While some people got up at 4am to begin their journey, I had it easy: I already live in Glasgow. After my leisurely stroll into town, I was welcomed by some familiar faces from the National Justice and Peace Network's Annual Conference earlier this summer. As a group, we walked together to the Green Zone, which was in the Science Centre – a museum in the Southside of the city overlooking the River Clyde.

Once we were in, we split up as some of our group were taking part in an interview for CAFOD media. The Green Zone was busy. There were stands representing different initiatives, groups and companies from the COP26 Universities Network to Sainsbury's, to The Scouts, to Microsoft – almost anyone you wouldn't expect to be there, was. The canteen, on the other hand, was exactly what I expected: groups of people talking excitedly over laptops and notebooks and vegan soup.

This was where the action was, not on the green-washed stalls.

In the evening we walked through the city centre to the [Ignatian Spirituality Centre](#) for food and a debrief of our first day. We then headed over to [St Aloysius Church](#) where members of CAFOD ran a service as part of the Vigil '[24 hours for the Climate](#)' which was live-streamed from all across the world. It was strange sitting in a cold Church knowing that people I'd never met in countries I've never visited were listening to the same voices read the same prayers as me.

Saturday was the big one. I joined the rest of the group in Kelvingrove Park for the Climate March. After standing in the infamous Scottish rain for two hours for the Faith Block to be given the green-light to join the 100,000-strong march, we set off on our way to Glasgow Green. This was my highlight of the weekend. To be part of a movement as energetic, as urgent, and as important as the climate movement is inspiring. From 11am to 4pm we were surrounded by people who all agreed on one key thing: we must work together to stop the climate crisis. The Glasgow protest was huge, and was one of 250 that took place that day across the world.

For three days every conversation I had – whether it was with other young people in the CAFOD group, people I met in events and workshops, people I met on the street who just started conversations – left me feeling hopeful. It's easy to be overwhelmed in the face of a crisis as large as this one, especially when those we ought to be able to trust to



do the right thing on our behalf continuously fail. But perhaps we're looking at it wrong. Again and again I was reminded that it wasn't just the Blue Zone, where the officials were, that mattered. It was outside. It was in the streets. It was in little rooms across the city, across the world where 'ordinary' people were having extraordinary conversations. Change isn't always top-down – in fact, important changes rarely are. Having said that, we were lucky enough to have a question-and-answer session with the CAFOD delegates who had been in the Blue Zone all week. It was interesting to hear more about how the official conversations and mechanisms work in a UN conference like COP.

On Sunday afternoon we attended mass in St Aloysius. In the evening, when most of the CAFOD group had left, I was invited by a friend to join an event she was helping to run. The workshop was hosted by [XR Youth Solidarity](#): 'a working group within XR Youth UK fighting for, creating and believing in a youth-led environmentalism in solidarity with resistances to all forms of oppression', and the [Global Alliance of Territorial Communities](#): who 'elevate the role of Indigenous and local communities as guardians of forests and biodiversity, and part of the solution to climate change'. The event aimed at building connections between the impacts of the climate crisis on Indigenous youth in the Global South and on young people here in the UK.

The workshop was hosted by a Mexican peasant youth organiser and a Colombian

youth activist in the UK. As we sat in a circle, the main topics that kept surfacing concerned food sovereignty and mental health. For example, in Indigenous communities in

Colombia, one key food sovereignty issue is the loss of seeds which are culturally important and often sacred to local people. While in the UK, lack of food sovereignty is most evident in our reliance on imports and the disconnect between people and their land. In both communities, youth mental health is inextricably linked to the climate: in Indigenous communities, suicide rates have increased, especially in young pregnant women, while in the UK the increase in what has been coined as 'climate-anxiety' has been widely reported among all ages but especially in young people. The conversation was in both Spanish and English with people translating for those who understood only one language. To sit back and watch other people my own age forging connections across borders, across language barriers in a small, upstairs room in central Glasgow was powerful. It reinforced the message I will be taking home from COP26: we all have a part to play.



Attending COP26 was a truly a unique experience. I

learnt a lot about the climate crisis, about the solutions we have open to us, but even more about the importance of solidarity. Together we are strong. We still have time, if we act now.





NEWSLETTER November 2021

Events

 <b>Fri 26 Nov</b>	<b>Film Showing: Objector – as part of Leeds Palestinian Film Festival</b> <i>6:30pm Wheeler Hall, Leeds Cathedral – free, but donations welcome</i> The film lasts about an hour and there will be a Q&A session afterwards. Register to ensure you have a reserved place: <a href="https://lpff2021-objector.eventbrite.co.uk/">https://lpff2021-objector.eventbrite.co.uk/</a>
 <b>Mon 29 Nov</b>	<b>Amos Trust : Beautiful Resistance Christmas carol Tour – Leeds</b> <i>6:30pm Left Bank, Cardigan Road, Burley, Leeds, LS6 1LJ</i> Amos Trust's Christmas tour stops off at Left Bank, Leeds in November when they will be joined by Amos friend and partner Abdelfattah Abusrour from Alrowwad Cultural & arts society in Bethlehem, plus special guest performers. Tickets are £5. Follow the link: <a href="https://app.donorfy.com/form/M1ZI3YVCZ8/christmas-leeds">https://app.donorfy.com/form/M1ZI3YVCZ8/christmas-leeds</a>
 <b>Tue 7 Dec</b>	<b>Exploring the Experiences of Young Women in the Catholic Church</b> <i>7pm – 8:30pm online</i> This is a webinar organised by the Million Minutes Organisation to discuss the experiences of young women in the Catholic Church. Panellists include Sr Gemma Simmons CJ. Follow the link to book a place <a href="https://millionminutes.org/events">https://millionminutes.org/events</a>
 <b>Thu 09 Dec</b>	<b>J&amp;P Commission Meeting</b> <i>7pm – 8:30pm online</i> All meetings of the Commission are open to anyone in the diocese who wants to attend. Please email <a href="mailto:jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk">jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk</a> if you are interested and we will send you the details
 <b>Fri Dec 10</b>	<b>CAFOD Human Rights Day online event</b> <i>6:30pm – 8:30pm online</i> Learn about and hear the stories of Human Rights activists from Peru, Brazil & Colombia in this online event. Follow the link to book a place <a href="https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events/CAFOD-2021-Human-Rights-Day">https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events/CAFOD-2021-Human-Rights-Day</a>
 <b>Sun 27 Feb</b>	<b>Church Action on Poverty Sunday</b> Join with other churches across the UK in giving, action and prayer. Celebrate the transformational possibilities of people coming together to reclaim their dignity, agency and power. See the CAP website for more details <a href="https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/">https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/</a>

*Please forward this email E-News onto anyone else who you think might be interested. Even better, get them to send us their email address so we can add them to our contact database. See our website for details of these and other events which may be of interest.*