



MEET OUR NEW LEEDS CAFOD COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION CO-ORDINATOR!

We're very happy to welcome Angela as the new Community Participation Co-ordinator for CAFOD Leeds:

I am CAFOD's community participation coordinator working alongside our volunteers and supporters in Hallam and Leeds dioceses. I feel privileged to be part of the Caritas International family, a movement that harnesses love and spiritual energy to tackle poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. In my role, I encourage and resource the Catholic community to engage in the mission entrusted to CAFOD. I support individuals and parish communities in the diocese to actively participate in acts of compassion that help bring about a better world for all. If anyone would like to find out more about CAFOD or get involved, please email apowell@cafod.org.uk or telephone 07779804247.

REFLECTION ON POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE ON THE WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

By Angela Powell, Leeds Community Participation Co-ordinator CAFOD

Pope Francis has declared Sunday 13 November 2022 to be the sixth World Day of the Poor, with the theme of "For your sakes Christ became poor" (2 Cor 8:9).



WORLD DAY
OF THE POOR

"Jesus Christ... for your sakes became poor" (cf. 2 Cor 8:9). With these words, the Apostle Paul addresses the first Christians of Corinth in order to encourage their efforts to show solidarity with their brothers and sisters in need.

The Pope's message encourages us to look into ourselves, the decisions we make and consider how best we can use our own talents and resources every day, to create a fairer world where no one suffers from emptiness or despair.

We may be wondering why we are called to celebrate a day of the Poor. In addition to highlighting the joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties of those who live in poverty, the [Pope's message](#) adds another important dimension. The words of Hope echoed from St Paul's address to the first Christians of Corinth, remind us of the opportunity we have to choose to enrich our own lives in solidarity with our poorest brothers and sisters. In his message Pope Francis highlights "***In a word, generosity towards the poor has its most powerful motivation in the example of the Son of God, who chose to become poor***". Here we have an invitation to make a personal decision to follow Christ's example and become living signs of love in our world today.

Pope Francis knows we are living through difficult times; he notes that the year comes "*as a healthy challenge*". We are all aware of the millions of women, children, and elderly people being forced to be brave in the face of extreme poverty and displacement from their homes. The lasting effects of the pandemic, war, conflict, and relentless cycles of drought and flooding affects us all. Many of our brothers and sisters around the world are living each day with fear and the lack of food, water, medical care. In his message, Pope



Francis warns everyone “*extreme material poverty also corrodes the spiritual dimension, which can be overlooked*”. He says “*When the only law is the bottom line of profit at the end of the day, nothing holds us back from seeing others simply as objects to be exploited; other people are merely a means to an end. There no longer exist such things as a just salary or just working hours, and new forms of slavery emerge and entrap person who lack alternatives and are forced to accept this toxic injustice simply to eke out a living*”.

In these times, it is easy for us to become overwhelmed and wonder how we can respond adequately to this grave situation. This is how the World Day of the Poor gives us hope and is cause for celebration. It’s an opportunity to share what we have with others, to speak out for those whose voices are silenced and to pray together. In doing so, we are choosing to be in solidarity with the poor, choosing to participate in a communal poverty in ways that will free us all, relieve suffering and lead to peace.

In his message, Pope Francis wrote “*the poverty that sets us free, is one that results from a responsible decision to cast off all dead weight and concentrate on what is essential. We can easily discern the lack of satisfaction that many people feel because they sense that something important is missing from their lives, with the result that they wander off aimlessly in search of it. In their desire to find something that can bring them satisfaction, they need someone to guide them towards the insignificant, the vulnerable, and the poor, so that they can finally see what they themselves lack. Encountering the poor enables us to put an end to many of our anxieties and empty fears, and to arrive at what truly matters in life, the treasure that no one can steal from us: true and gratuitous love. The poor, before being*

the object of our almsgiving, are people, who can help set us free from the snares of anxiety and superficiality”.

When St Paul directed the first Christians of Corinth to respond to the needs of the community in Jerusalem who were suffering from great hardship due to a lack of food, he was not asking for acts of charity but encouraging the Christians to make conscious decision to become materially freer, as Jesus had become free for us all. By taking concrete actions to live more simply and sustainably we can enrich our lives and, in the process, remain resolute in our need to share what we can to bring relief and peace to all.

“The words of the Apostle chosen as the theme of this year’s World Day of the Poor present this great paradox of our life of faith: Christ’s poverty makes us rich. Paul was able to present this teaching, which the Church has spread and borne witness to over the centuries, because God himself, in his Son Jesus, chose to follow this path”.

- words in italic are **taken from Pope Francis’ message on The World Day of the Poor 2022.**

To help us to reflect on these inspiring words, we can [explore CAFOD’s prayers and resources](#) on poverty and solidarity.



ONE YEAR ON FROM COP26

By CAFOD's Youth Delegation to COP26 in 2021 and collated by Matty Maslen

Last year, CAFOD sponsored a youth delegation to travel to Glasgow to attend the UN Climate Summit COP26.



A year on, as COP27 occurs in Egypt, we reflect on what has come from the past year for us personally, and for the climate movement more generally.

One of our delegation, Alexander Ugoh, recently took part in a short film produced by Random Acts (Random Acts is Channel 4's home for the world's most creative short films): 'Climate Grief, Climate Groove feat. Billie Marten'.

During our visit to Glasgow, Alex worked on the CAFOD social media to highlight what our delegation was getting up to. It was from this social media promotion that he was given the opportunity to take part in the short film. "A contact got in touch with CAFOD asking to recommend any young adults interested in being part of a project revolving around climate grief and mental health."

Alex said he was "personally drawn for the project because I'm of Nigerian heritage so, the effects of climate change on the more

vulnerable developing nations really touches home for me."

While we were in Glasgow, we took part in mass civil society action. We were part of a crowd of 100,000 people who marched through the streets of Glasgow to demand

'Climate Grief, Climate Groove feat. Billie Marten' can be found on YouTube here:



Random Acts

40K subscribers

<https://youtu.be/65yHkUxmJRo>

"Thought-provoking short film focusing on a group of young people as they meet in a 'grief circle' to discuss climate change and the toll it takes on mental health"

climate justice.

A few weeks ago, Matty attended a 'one year on from COP26 march' in Glasgow. It followed the same streets through Glasgow as we walked as a group. This year's protest was organised by 'Fridays For Future Scotland'. Matty said: "There's no excuse to exclude young people from the conversation. We know what's at stake and we're ready to act – let us!"

On 12th November this year, there was again world-wide civil society action. Members of the CAFOD Youth Delegation participated in the March in London:

Visit CAFOD's website to find out more about COP27:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/COP27>



Another of our delegates, Chukwuemeka, has written a piece for us about the floods in Nigeria:

NIGERIAN FLOODING

By Chukwuemeka Nwachukwu

Extreme Weather events on every continent are causing mass devastation, loss of life and livelihoods everywhere. We have seen floods ravaging several countries this year from Australia to Uganda, Pakistan, Guatemala, Vietnam, Florida and now, Nigeria. We've also seen record-breaking temperatures across the Globe, here in the United Kingdom we had a record-breaking heatwave. South Africa and East Africa, particularly Kenya, are facing severe drought and famine.

But for Nigeria, due to the release of water from the Lagdo Dam in Cameroon, many communities along the courses of River Niger and River Benue have been affected by floods. The construction of the Lagdo Dam, located in Northern Cameroon, started in 1977 and was completed in 1982.

At inception, Cameroon and Nigeria had an agreement to build two dams such that when water is released from the Cameroonian dam, the Nigerian dam would contain it and prevent it from causing floods. So, to cushion the effect of possible flooding from the Lagdo dam in Cameroon, the Nigerian government agreed to build a shock-absorber dam tagged **Dasin Hausa Dam** in Adamawa State. The Dasin Hausa dam was supposed to be two-and-a-half the size of the Lagdo dam, which was built to supply electricity to the northern part of Cameroon and allow the irrigation of 15,000 hectares of crops downstream.

Like the Lagdo dam, the dam project sited at the Dasin Village of Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State, was supposed to

generate 300 megawatts of electricity and irrigate about 150,000 hectares of land in Adamawa, Taraba, and Benue states in Nigeria. But this Dam was never built by the Nigerian government, and funds meant for it were embezzled.

Released water from Dams are controlled. Imagine if Cameroon decides not to release water and the Dam bursts because of pressure? Half of Nigeria will be flushed into the Atlantic; the sooner Nigeria builds a dam the better.

There is a flood crisis now in Nigeria with over 33 out of 36 states affected. People are hungry, people are suffering. The cost of clean drinking water has gone up 5x the price. Nigeria is facing the most devastating flooding in the last decade! This will result to severe famine in most parts of the country next year as crops and food reserves have been washed away.

The numbers are staggering and increasingly worrisome:

- 1.3 million+ persons displaced
- 600+ deaths have been recorded
- 200,000+ houses destroyed/damaged
- 140,000+ hectares of farmland damaged.

Extreme weather events around the world this year show the reality of the climate crisis everywhere. The science is clear! Nowhere is safe until everywhere is safe. The time for action is now! We must drastically reduce the use of fossil fuels.

For the government in power, it is about photo-ops and election campaigns now and the citizens affected are left to manage. But with the rising sea level globally, this is a red-hot alert.

The flood has worsened the pre-existing humanitarian crisis in Nigeria. Millions of



people are struggling to meet basic needs, and many might not survive this latest shock. Our major economic centres like Abuja are at

Chuks has created a [GoFundMe](#) page to support victims of the flooding.

a standstill because supply routes in and out of the city are blocked or destroyed. People are having difficulty working due to long fuel lines; and moving to help those in need is becoming harder and more costly. Nigeria will experience the economic fallout of this flooding for many years.

Data from our [USAID](#) Feed the Future program - Rural Resilience Activity, shows that up to 150 farmers in the North East of Nigeria who are enrolled in the Activity have been affected by the flood, and 6000 hectares of farmlands flooded. This has led to the destruction of estimated yield worth of N3.1billion (\$3M) across Adamawa, Borno, Yobe and Gombe states. We're beginning to see a sudden rise (over 30%) in the cost of a bag of rice from N32-36k to N46k (approx. \$84 to \$107). The prices of bread, cereal, oil, beans continue to rise that the average person can no longer afford what we once took for granted. We are concerned that the flood will widen food insecurity, deepen farmer-herder crisis, and communal conflict over natural resources.

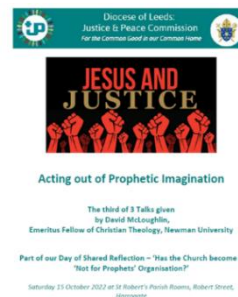
The water level is rising and it's scary. The economic, health and infrastructural disaster caused by the floods is of truly catastrophic proportions. The response from the Nigerian Government has been weak, extremely slow, and inadequate. Strong measures must be taken to deal with this and to avoid repeats.

This year's flooding proves that climate change is real. Rise in temperature, rise in ocean levels, excessive rains, are all indicative

of climatic changes. The poor, the well to do and the rich are affected alike.

We need to stop the blame game and save the planet together.

EXPLORING PROPHECY – OUR DAY OF REFLECTION IN HARROGATE



By Joe Burns,
Commission Member

It seems like there are not so many people who are labelled as 'prophets' in our times. That was one of the reasons why we decided to organise a Day of Reflection to explore what the prophets in Scripture were all about and where we see prophets in our own time. As David McLoughlin said in the introduction to the day, *"In times of complexity, confusion, false news, collusion, manipulation and oppression we need those in our midst who see clearly, who still believe it is possible to touch what is real and true, and who can share this vision of hope in the midst of the surrounding fog."*

For this day we made our first visit to St Robert's parish in Harrogate and were made very welcome in their lovely parish rooms by the parish priest, Fr Simon Bradbury.

The day was led by David McLoughlin, Emeritus Fellow of Christian Theology at Newman University. He gave 3 talks, interspersed with plenty of time for comments and questions, as well as liturgy segments integrated across the day.

David's talks adopted the YCW approach: See, Judge, Act. I would at this point try and summarise the main points that David made but he very kindly provided the full texts of his talks and has given permission for the



Commission to publish these as some short pamphlets.

Use this link to view the online version of this article where you can download the talks:

<https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/2022/10/27/27-oct-exploring-prophecy-our-day-of-shared-reflection-in-harrogate/>

The 3 talks were also recorded, and we hope to make these available as podcasts soon (just as soon as we have worked out how to do it!).

COMMISSION SUPPORTS 2022 LEEDS PALESTINIAN FILM FESTIVAL

In conjunction with the Leeds Palestinian Film festival and Pax Christi in the Leeds Diocese, we have agreed to host a screening of the final film in this year's film festival. This will take place on **Friday 9th December at Wheeler Hall. Doors open at 6pm.**



The film we will show is called Boycott. After the film there will be the opportunity for discussion and there will be a short input

from Ben Jamal. He spoke and did the Q&A at the UK premiere of Boycott in London. He is the chairperson of national PSC.

We are also hoping to have a number of stalls selling Palestinian goods. Doors will open at 6pm and refreshments will be available until the film starts at 6:30pm

Boycott traces the impact of state legislation in the USA designed to penalise individuals and companies that choose to boycott Israel due to its human rights record. A legal thriller with "accidental plaintiffs" at the centre of the story, Boycott is a bracing look at the far-reaching implications of anti-boycott legislation and a tale of everyday Americans standing up to protect their rights in an age of shifting politics and threats to freedom of speech.

Not worried about this as it is about the USA? Then WAKE UP – the UK Government currently have legislation going through Parliament to enact some similar measures here!

Entry to the film is on a pay as you feel basis.

Not able to make this date? – take a look at the festival trailer to see if any of the other films might be of interest.

<https://leedsdff.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/TRAILER->

BOOK NOW!

Last year the film we showed played to a full house – so booking a place is recommended. Booking is via an Eventbrite page (no payment is necessary-there will be a voluntary collection when you come to see the film) – just follow this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/boycott-tickets-439930031567>



[MOBILE.m4v](#)

SPARK ADVENT ACTION

By Katherine Hogg, SPARK Project Manager



This Advent, join SPARK Social Justice for an act of kindness in the community. We will be going to St Monica's where women seeking asylum are living and invite you to join us on Thursday 1 and 8 December in the afternoon. We will do a craft activity or similar with the women and bring Christmas gifts and cards. Other opportunities with SPARK this Advent include going to St Vincent's Centre to join in their organised Christmas Kindness volunteering on Mon 12 Dec and Mon 19 Dec. If there is interest from young adults in the Diocese, we are happy to arrange a visit to St George's Crypt as well. Following on from this, 18-30s have the chance to reflect on their experiences and take up any appropriate campaigning activity such as writing letters to their MPs and using Twitter to draw attention to the issues raised. Those who don't want their SPARK journey to end there can apply for the paid opportunity to become an 'animator'.

What is an animator? Well, animators gather peers around them to make others aware of instances of injustice and exclusion in Leeds and Bradford initially. They will be trained in Catholic Social Teaching and Citizens' 'Broad Based Organising' techniques. Citizens' approach to bringing about social change is:

Step 1: Organising for Power,
Step 2: Listening for issues,
Step 3: Strategizing for Impact,
Step 4: Taking Action to get a reaction,
Step 5: Negotiating for Change.

Their community organising focuses on institutions rather than individuals although works with individuals using 'relational power' rather than the 'dominant power' of those in positions of authority. Animators will work with Citizens' organisers to campaign on more than one issue over time. They will receive training on techniques such as 'power mapping' as a way of understanding who has power in the community and who needs to be involved to create change. They will also learn effective negotiating and the value of one to one meetings in person which in these days of social media are a 'radical act'!

If you know any 18-30 year olds who would like to take part in Advent Action or who would benefit from leadership training and who have an interest in social justice, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

For more information, contact SPARK Project Manager, Katherine Hogg on email: sparks.jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk or mob: 07853260764

PTO For Paid work opportunity with SPARK!



SPARK SOCIAL JUSTICE PAID WORK OPPORTUNITY

Katherine will not be continuing in her role in 2023. So, we need an ***Outreach and Engagement Manager*** to take forward the activities of SPARK Social Justice.

We need the services of a person who is passionate about issues of social justice. They must have experience of developing small groups and an understanding of what makes for an effective group. A basic understanding and sympathy with the aims of Catholic





Social Teaching is also required. It will be the equivalent of about 2 days work per week (around £10k per annum) and we have funding until the end of 2025.

Full Details are available on our website – just go to our homepage and follow the link.

Closing date for submissions is 30 November

Please forward on these details to anyone who you think might be interested

EVENTS

 Sat 26 Nov	Peace & Craft Fair Victoria Hall: 10am-4pm Yorkshire CND's Annual Peace and craft fair – plenty of ideas for Christmas, as well as supporting efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons.... and a good excuse to also go to Salt's Mill or eat in one of the many places in the village.
 Fri 9th Dec	Film Screening: Boycott – Leeds Palestinian Film Festival 6:30pm – 8:30pm The film we will show is called Boycott. After the film there will be the opportunity for discussion and there will be a short input from Ben Jamal. He spoke and did the Q+A at the UK premiere of Boycott in London. He is the chairperson of national PSC.

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.