



FAITH AND FOOD

By Joe Burns, Commission Member

This is the title of an event that has been organised by the Northern Dioceses' Environment Group (NDEG). The NDEG first met in 2017 to bring together people who are concerned about the environment and who are also active in their own dioceses. It was inspired by Pope Francis's *Laudato Si* encyclical and created an opportunity to bring together people who care about creation, climate change and poverty. The objectives of the NDEG are:

- **Solidarity** – between enthusiastic practitioners who are active in the field
- **Sharing** – knowledge, experience and good practice
- **Networking** - emphasis on diocese, parish and schools
- **Safe space** – to raise concerns and find support

Last year they held their first in-person day event after the pandemic in Leeds - with the support of the Commission.

This year the event will be held on **Saturday 18 May** in Preston at St. Wilfrid's parish centre.

NDEG is inviting parishes and individuals from across the North of England to come along to this day. One of the keynote speakers will be Francis Stewart who is part of the Theology team at CAFOD. He will be exploring how issues about the way we obtain our food relate to our faith. There will also be speakers who will explain what is happening in Lancashire to create a more sustainable food system as well as a speaker exploring how food insecurity affects those experiencing poverty.

There will be a Fairtrade stall and a plant and



Northern Dioceses' Environment Group

seed swap stall. If you have any excess seedlings or seeds then you can bring some along and swap them for something else! There will also be a stall about how microplastics are affecting our food. Everyone coming is invited to bring some food to share with others at lunchtime (nothing that requires cooking or heating up) – something that people on t'other side of the Pennines apparently refer to as a 'Jacob's Join'.

St Wilfred's Parish Centre is a 5 min walk from Preston train station. There is also ample parking in the shopping complex opposite the train station (the shopping centre complex is called St George's and is accessed from Lune Street). Avenham Car Park (PR1 3XA) is cheaper (£5.50 compared to £8) – and still only a 5 min walk to St Wilfred's Parish Centre.

There are direct trains to Preston from several West Yorkshire stations. The Commission will reimburse train travel expenses for anyone who wants to attend this event. Make sure you take a photo of your tickets (if they are paper) and email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk for an expense claim form. For more information and to book a place please use the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-in-food-tickets-879396337117>



NJPN 2024 CONFERENCE: JUST POLITICS

This year's annual conference of the National Justice & Peace Network could not be more appropriate.



NJPN describe the conference like this:

How do we work towards dialogue and respectful listening in political and social engagement and promote good governance in all seats of power, local national and global?

We need accurate information and knowledge grounded in Catholic Social Teaching to help us discern what is factually true. As campaigning groups we must also challenge the narrative of all those who seek to influence us. As a faith network, theological reflection will help us discern how we are called to action by our beliefs. In a year when our elected representatives will be calling for our support, Conference 24 will seek to address the

critical issues through our speakers, workshops, Just Fair and liturgical celebrations.

As if that wasn't enough, the conference will be chaired this year by our own John Battle!



SPARK is offering up to 4 people **full sponsorship (£225 cost of conference plus public transport travel costs reimbursed)** to attend this conference. Anyone aged 18 to 30 and living or studying in the Leeds Diocese area is welcome to apply.

If you know someone who might be interested, then please pass on this information. To apply simply email <mailto:info@sparksocialjustice.org.uk> for the details. After the conference all that we ask is that you do a write up for this website or tell us about the conference in a short video that can be shared on social media.

It's an expensive weekend but an excellent way of meeting people from across the country who share an interest in creating a more just and peaceful world. The J&P Commission is offering to pay public transport costs to the conference for up to 4 other people (older than 30!). Please email <mailto:jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk> if you are interested in taking up this offer.

Follow this link to find out more about the conference: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/category/conference-2024/>



LEEDS LIVES: BISHOP TONY PARRY

By Emma Temple, LCI

On Thursday 14th March, Christians around Leeds gathered to hear Bishop Tony Parry tell his story of faith at New Testament Church of God.

As Dr Helen Reid introduced him, it was clear from the extensive list of communities he'd served and titles he'd held that this was a life whose impact created ripples throughout Leeds.



His work as a minister and bishop in his church, his powerful voice for social and civil rights, and his balanced approach to ecumenical unity all shone through, and told a story of a man with a love of God's word and passion for God's justice.

When asked about his calling to ministry, he said: *"I'm very shy and reserved, and most people don't believe that, but it's really true. So I wouldn't necessarily push myself forward for anything, but I did really love God's word. So I was always thrust into preaching, and, and it was from that people saw God's call in my life."*

Bishop Parry has worked tirelessly for racial and social justice in Leeds, leading a call for

transformation after the murder of George Floyd. He explained: *"I don't like confrontation, but because I like fairness, so sometimes you end up challenging, and trying to help those who may not have a voice."*

Helen Reid carried the interview with gentleness and sensitivity. She introduced the passion for racial justice that led LCI to host these interviews: *"At Leeds Lives events, we celebrate Black lives in Leeds, and the contribution made to church and city, to celebrate living by faith and challenging discrimination. These events are a chance to listen, and learn from one particular person telling their story."*

You can find the full interview on the LCI YouTube Channel here:

<https://youtu.be/Tr4we0huSx0?si=zgH0xZbuEsiNIMPK>

On Thursday 18th April, LCI are hosting Churches Against Racism, an opportunity for Christians in Leeds to come together and talk practically and theologically about action for racial justice in Leeds. Bishop Tony Parry will be speaking alongside local and national voices. Find out more here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/746933898397?aff=oddtcreator>

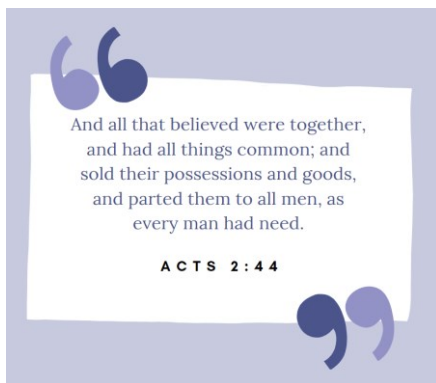




LESSONS FROM THE EAST: THE RADICAL POWER OF A COMMUNITY PANTRY.

By Rafael Antonio

Four years ago, in what seemed like a nightmare we all, the COVID-19 pandemic sent the world into a panic and crisis.



Sadly, many of us still carry the trauma. We remember the unease and dread of those days, of how uncertainty became a way of life, as the days of quarantine turned into weeks, then months, and before we knew it a year and a half had passed with no signs of things improving.

Those 'troubled times' became a true test of leadership. Elected leaders and chosen representatives around the world found themselves, perhaps for the first time, directly and entirely responsible for the lives and wellbeing for their countrymen.

Some leaders stood as examples, and answered their citizens' hopelessness and misery with kindness and compassion. But there were those countries, such as mine, the Philippines, in which a leader's answer was contempt and cruelty. For two consecutive years, the Philippines was found to be the worst country to be in during the pandemic.

While it pains me to write and recall these events, it must be heard and read as a lesson.

Our health workers were forced to work hours beyond the legal limit. They received none of the pay that had been promised to them, while being denounced by the leaders of the country as "lazy and unproductive", when they simply asked to be treated with dignity and respect.

In place of medical aid, the military and police pointed guns at those desperate enough to venture outside to ask for help. "Get back or be detained" many of them would shout.

In one truly horrific incident, a man, who had gone out to buy water for his family, was forced to perform physical exercises 300 hundred times, as punishment for breaking curfew. He died not long after returning to his family's home.

But from this hopelessness, someone had defied the failures of the Philippines' leadership not with anger, but with a message and an act. Ana Patricia Non, had opened a 'community pantry' with a simple message "give according to your ability, take according to your need".

For this, she found herself denounced by the members of the military and government, as an insurgent political militant who sought to undermine the government of the Philippines. Non was threatened with harassment and even death by the government death squads.

Many people stood up and defended Non, whose actions were inspired by the compassion and teaching of Christianity.

She had inspired the country to begin their own community pantries, even those from the farmlands or far off provinces began to



send in their aid asking their parishes to deliver and share their harvests.

This story does not have a happy ending, it is, however, a hopeful one.

“

no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common

Acts 4:32

”

Here in the UK, food insecurity continue to rise. In February 2024, the Trussell Trust released a report that found that:

55% of people receiving Universal Credit ran out of food last month (Dec 23/Jan 24) and couldn't afford more.

780,000 people claiming Universal Credit have needed to use a food bank in the last month.

If you're looking for ways to help locally visit the ['Your Local Pantry'](#) website.



STOP ARMING ISRAEL

By David Somerville, Our Lady & St Cuthbert parish

On the 2nd April, around 200 people joined a march organised by the Bradford Friends of Palestine in Baildon, Shipley to the gate of Teledyne who make high-tech weapons for use by the Israeli military.



They are on the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) list of suppliers to the so-called defence industry and are our most local here in West Yorkshire – now that Chieftain tanks are no longer made at Crossgates in Leeds.

Teledyne are situated in a quiet industrial area off the Otley Road. Over recent years they have been highlighted as taking an active role in the armaments industry.

A number of Catholics, Quakers and other Christians joined the protest in conjunction with Muslims from various groups.

People are tired of being ignored by current political party leaders.

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NJPN JOINS CALL FOR PERMANENT GAZA CEASEFIRE

On the 26th March 2024, in Holy Week, the National Justice and Peace Network joined [140+ Global Christian Leaders in](#) calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza:

As Christians around the world prepare to commemorate the final suffering in the earthly life of Jesus Christ during Holy Week, we stand in solidarity with all in the Holy Land who suffer. During Passion Week, Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox alike engage in prayer, reflection, and repentance. **We repent of the ways we have not stood alongside our Palestinian siblings in faithful witness in the midst of their grief, agony, and sorrow.** Christian witness and engagement with the world must be marked by faithfulness to God, love of neighbor, and mercy toward those who are suffering and in need. For the Holy Scriptures teach, “Uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.” (Psalm 82:3).

As the ongoing devastation, bombing, and ground invasion in Gaza continue into their sixth month, Palestinians, including our Palestinian Christian siblings, cry out to the world, asking, “**Where are you?**” World leaders have responded with empty rhetoric and political volleying about addressing the “humanitarian crisis” in Gaza while ignoring the direct causes of the catastrophe. Those causes are the daily bombing and ground invasion by the Israeli military, in addition to the shutting off of basic life-sustaining services to more than two million people who are suffering the consequences of crimes not their own.

As of March 25, 2024, at least 32,333 people in Gaza have been killed, and more than

74,694 have been injured, the vast majority of them women and children. Gaza has been declared one of the most dangerous places in the world to live, where “**no place is safe**” according to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The World Health Organization (WHO) describes the situation as desperate, as children are dying from hunger and dehydration. The WHO reports that 15 percent of children under the age of two in northern Gaza show signs of wasting, suggesting a serious and rapid decline over just a few months, which is **unprecedented globally**. The horrific actions Hamas committed on October 7th **in no way justify** the massive deaths of tens of thousands of civilians in Gaza at the hands of the Israeli military.

The average number of people killed every day in Gaza is just under two hundred people a day, with roughly one person dying every eight minutes. The slaughter continues every day even as more and more men, women, and children are pulled out from underneath the rubble, and **more than 1.8 million people remain displaced**. As of late January, reports indicate more than **half of Gaza’s buildings have been damaged or destroyed**. All of this compounds the devastation that Palestinians have experienced during Israel’s 16+ year blockade of Gaza and the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza since 1967.

Palestinians, South Africans, and experts around the world have said what is happening in Gaza is nothing less than a genocide. South Africa asserted that the Israeli government engaged in action with “genocidal intent” in its complaint at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ’s preliminary ruling found it “**plausible that**



Israel's acts [in Gaza] could amount to genocide and issued provisional measures to seek **to prevent further deaths**. By the end of February, human rights groups around the world asserted Israel had already violated the ICJ ruling by intentionally limiting humanitarian assistance to Gaza. The global church—and world—**cannot be silent** as people continue to die in Gaza by military assault, lack of adequate medical care, hunger, and disease.

The U.S., the U.K., Israel, and other countries must uphold their responsibility as signatories to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The United States and other nations' further militarization of the conflict makes no one safer and instead prolongs suffering and causes more death and destruction. We call on the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, and France to join the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy, and Japan **to halt additional military support and arms to Israel and not be complicit** in the ongoing military campaign that is having such devastating effects on civilians in Gaza.







We say, "Enough killing!" and together demand a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire.

On October 7th, Hamas attacked southern Israel and killed approximately 1,200 Israelis and internationals, and took more than 240 people hostage in Gaza. We have been clear in our condemnation of these actions of Hamas, which were an atrocious crime. It is believed 100 hostages or more could still be held captive in Gaza. We have consistently **called for the remaining hostages to be returned home** to their families.

We, as global Christian leaders, stand with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Palestine and around the world and say **the killing must stop**, and the violence must be brought to an end. We ask world leaders to exercise strong moral courage to bring an immediate end to the violence and to open a pathway toward peace and an end to the conflict. We call for a **permanent and comprehensive ceasefire** where all combatants lay down their weapons and **Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners** held without the due process of law are **released**. **Immediate and adequate humanitarian assistance** must be provided for the more than two million Palestinian people in Gaza who have such desperate needs. We support efforts toward a **negotiated settlement** that addresses the core causes of the current crisis and brings an end to the decades-long violations of the rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with international law, such solutions must advance security and self-determination for Israelis and Palestinians. As we prepare for Holy Week, we lament and pray for comfort for all who have lost loved ones over the past months in Gaza, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Israel. We know that Jesus himself was among those who suffered, and he comforted the brokenhearted. We say, "Enough atrocities in Gaza; enough violence, death, and destruction! May love triumph over hate." **We hold onto the hope that peace is possible even in the midst of this darkest hour.**



EVENTS

 Mon 22nd Apr	<p>Listening to People with Disabilities <i>ONLINE @7:00pm to 8:30pm</i> Zoom conversation with Lisbeth Raeside, Director of Glasgow SPRED. SPRED's vision is to work within the Church to nourish accepting and inclusive communities for people with learning impairments and their families. http://www.spred.org.uk/ To register, click: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hearing-the-voice-of-people-with-disabilities-in-the-leeds-diocese-tickets-868454038407</p>
 Thu 25th Apr	<p>Preparing for the General Election Training Webinar <i>Online @ 6:30pm to 8:30pm</i> CAFOD and the SVP have joined together to help prepare the Catholic community for the upcoming general election. Click here: https://svp.org.uk/encounter%20</p>
 Sat 27th Apr	<p>Listening Event: UK poverty <i>Our Lady and St Joseph of the Aire Valley, Cottingley, Bingley, 11:00am to 1:00pm</i> The calls on foodbanks and the SVP just seem to be going up and up. 'How do we respond to it as a Church?' – what are your experiences and what more can we do? ALL WELCOME https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/listening-to-the-signs-of-the-times-people-living-in-poverty-tickets-872105118887</p>
 Sat 4th May	<p>Preparing for the General Election Training Webinar <i>Online @ 11am to 1:00pm</i> CAFOD and the SVP have joined together to help prepare the Catholic community for the upcoming general election. Click here: https://svp.org.uk/encounter%20</p>
 19th – 26th May	<p>Laudato Si Week The theme is inspired by the symbol for the Season of Creation 2024 : Let us all be <i>seeds of hope</i> in our lives and our world, rooted in faith and love. What is happening in your church community? – get some ideas by following the link. Click here: https://laudatosiweek.org/</p>
 19 -21 Jul	<p>National Justice & Peace Network Conference 2024 – Just Politics. <i>Swanwick Christian Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire</i> A great opportunity to meet people from across the country who are passionate about issues of social justice. The Commission can afford to pay the public transport travel costs of up to 4 people to help with the costs of attending this conference. Just email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk if you are interested in taking up this offer. More details about the conference, and booking, can be found by using this link https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/category/conference-2024/</p>

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.