



# JUSTICE & PEACE E-BULLETIN

## November 2023

Welcome to the e-Bulletin from the Westminster Justice and Peace Commission. Please send Events for inclusion to [justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk). The deadline for the next e-Bulletin is 29 November 2023.

### War in the Holy Land

*Colette writes:* As Israelis mourn their murdered love ones and await news of captured hostages, the world watches in horror as the death toll rises from retaliatory actions in Gaza and the situation becomes intolerable for people living there in constant fear of bombing and dwindling resources. Where will it end? What can we do? Below we publish statements from Pope Francis, Cardinal Vincent, Mgr Jim Curry, Pax Christi and the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and invite you to read the more detailed texts in full.



*Photo: Independent Catholic News*

*Pope Francis:* "We... say Ceasefire. Stop, brothers and sisters: war is always a defeat – always, always." [More](#)

*Cardinal Vincent Nichols:* "Weeks into the terrible conflict in Israel and Gaza, I urge Catholics to sustain their prayers for peace. I echo Pope Francis' appeal for a ceasefire... At home I appeal for restraint and the total avoidance of hateful language and action, as the impact of this conflict is felt in communities here." [More](#)

*Mgr Jim Curry, Parish Priest at Our Lady of Victories, Convener, West London [Friends of the Holy Land](#):* "The call of Cardinal Vincent for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip gives us all an opportunity to stand with our Christian sisters and brothers in Gaza, Palestine and Israel. These brothers and sisters of ours who belong to the Holy Land need us to stand with them in prayer, solidarity and a commitment to a just peace."

*The [Network of Christian Peace Organisations](#), which includes Pax Christi, has written to the UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly MP, urging the UK government to use its influence to help create space for de-escalation and meaningful dialogue in the coming days and weeks, to urgently avert a deepening humanitarian crisis and military conflict:*

"We condemn the Hamas attacks on civilians and the taking of civilian hostages. We also condemn the response of the Israeli Government in bombing of Gaza and targeting of the civilian population. The increased restrictions and complete cutting off of water, electricity, food and fuel constitute collective punishment and will create an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza, exceeding that which already exists as a result of the 16-year blockade.

We are deeply saddened by the continued violence in the region and urge you work for dialogue and de-escalation. We ask you to support measures for the immediate protection of civilians including a ceasefire, adherence by all parties to international law, and the UN's call for humanitarian corridors"

[NCPO Letter to the Foreign Secretary in full](#)



## LETTER FROM THE LATIN PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO HIS DIOCESE

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
May the Lord give you peace!

We are going through one of the most difficult and painful periods in our recent times and history. For over two weeks now, we have been inundated with images of horrors, which have reawakened ancient traumas, opened new wounds, and made pain, frustration and anger explode within all of us. Much seems to speak of death and endless hatred. So many 'whys' overlap in our minds, adding to our sense of bewilderment.

The whole world views this Holy Land of ours as a place that is a constant cause of wars and divisions. That is precisely why it was good that a few days ago, the whole world joined us with a day of prayer and fasting for peace. It was a beautiful view of the Holy Land and an important moment of unity with our Church. And that view is still there. Next October 27th, the Pope has called for a second day of prayer and fasting, so that our intercession may continue. It will be a day that we will celebrate with conviction. It is perhaps the main thing we Christians can do at this time: pray, do penance, intercede. For this, we thank the Holy Father from the bottom of our hearts.

In all this uproar where the deafening noise of the bombs is mixed with the many voices of sorrow and the many conflicting feelings, I feel the need to share with you a word that has its origin in the Gospel of Jesus. That is the starting point which we set out from, and return to, time and time again: a word from the Gospel to help us live this tragic moment by uniting our feelings with those of Jesus. Looking to Jesus, of course, does not mean feeling exempt from the duty to speak, to denounce, to call out, as well as to console and encourage. As we heard in last Sunday's Gospel, it is necessary to render "to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." (Matt. 22:21). Looking to God, we therefore want, first of all, to render to Caesar what is his.

My conscience and moral duty require me to state clearly that what happened on October 7th in southern Israel is in no way permissible and we cannot but condemn it. There is no reason for such an atrocity. Yes, we have a duty to state this and to denounce it. The use of violence is not compatible with the Gospel, and it does not lead to peace. The life of every human person has equal dignity before God, who created us all in His image.

The same conscience, however, with a great burden on my heart, leads me to state with equal clarity today that this new cycle of violence has brought to Gaza over five thousand deaths, including many women and children, tens of thousands of wounded, neighbourhoods razed to the ground, lack of medicine, lack of water and of basic necessities for over two million people. These are tragedies that cannot be understood and which we have a duty to denounce and condemn unreservedly. The continuous heavy bombardment that has been pounding Gaza for days will only cause more death and destruction and will only increase hatred and resentment. It will not solve any problem, but rather create new ones. It is time to stop this war, this senseless violence.

It is only by ending decades of occupation and its tragic consequences, as well as giving a clear and secure national perspective to the Palestinian people that a serious peace process can begin. Unless this problem is solved at its root, there will never be the stability we all hope for. The tragedy of these days must lead us all, religious, political, civil society, international community, to a more serious commitment in this regard than what has been done so far. This is the only way to avoid other tragedies like the one we are experiencing now. We owe it to the many victims of these days and to those of years past. We do not have the right to leave this task to others. ([Read in full](#))

+Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem

### **Petitions**

[Ceasefire Now](#)

[An Open Letter from Palestinian Church Leaders to Western Christians](#)

[CAFOD – Make Donations and Send a Letter to the Foreign Secretary](#)



## DIARY OF EVENTS

**2 November, 12.45 – 2.00pm: Westminster Institute Symposium – Hostility and Dignity.** Westminster Abbey, Cheyneygates. Speakers: Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil and Tim Livesey, Chief Executive, Embrace the Middle East. Chair: Dr James Hawkey, Canon Theologian, Westminster Abbey. [Free but Advance Booking Required](#)

**4 November 2023, 11am-4pm: Catholic Association for Racial Justice AGM.** St Thomas More Church Hall, 9 Henry Rd, London, N4 2LH. <https://www.carj.org.uk/>

**School for Synodality – Free Webinar Series. Monday evenings 7.30pm.**  
<https://www.schoolforsynodality.org.uk/news/practicing-synodality-webinar-series>

6th Nov **Group discernment** - how do we know it's the Holy Spirit? TBC

13th Nov **Moving to action** – TBC

20th Nov **Becoming a synodal community** – Prof Anna Rowlands, Office for Synod, Vatican and Durham University.

**9 November, 11am-1pm: Service of Commemoration for those who have died Homeless in London in the last year.** At St Martin in the Fields, Trafagar Square. The service is being organised by St Martin-in-the-Fields, The Connection at St Martins and the Museum of Homelessness. The Bishop of Willesden, Reflection by Rt Revd Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy.

**11 November, 11am-2pm: CAFOD young adults (18-30) gathering.** Pavilion venue. 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7JB. Free lunch and lots of info about climate action! [Find out more and register here](#)

**12-19 November: Interfaith Week**

**13 November, 12.45-2.00pm: Southern Dioceses Environment Network – Money.** Monthly online meeting for prayer, sharing and networking on the Care of Creation. Attend as a one-off or participate regularly. [Southern Dioceses Environment Network](#)

**13 November, 6.30-8.00pm: Tree planting by Rt Revd Dr Emma Ineson, Bishop of Kensington, followed by a talk on Women Leaders in Faith and Interfaith.** Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Alice Way, Hounslow TW3 3UA.

**18 November 10.30am – 2.30pm: CAFOD's annual Online 'Faith in Action' Conference.** Hear from CAFOD's partners in Bolivia and look ahead to the upcoming UN COP28 climate talks in the United Arab Emirates to discuss what urgent outcomes we need. (Fine to join for just some of the event). [Register here](#)

**18 November: National Justice and Peace Networking Day.** Focus on COP28. Zoom. [NJPN](#)

**20 November, 12.30-1.30pm: Monthly Prayer Vigil outside the Home Office** – Organised by Westminster Justice & Peace, London Catholic Worker and the London Churches Refugee Fund to pray for migrants seeking safe passage to the UK. Marsham Street, SW1P4DF. Contact Barbara Kentish [barbarakentish@talktalk.net](mailto:barbarakentish@talktalk.net)



**21 November, 6.30-7.45pm: Westminster Institute Symposium – Dignity and Imprisonment.** Lady Chapel, Westminster Abbey. Speakers: Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick CBE, Professor of Leadership, Utah State University and a guest speaker from His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. [Free but Advance Booking Required](#)

**22 November: Red Wednesday.** Break the Silence on the persecution of Christians worldwide. More details from [Aid to the Church in Need](#)

**22 November 5.30-9.00pm: Red Wednesday Mass and Reception at St George's Cathedral, Southwark.** Celebrant - Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia, Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain. Lambeth Rd, London SE1 6HR <https://acnuk.org/event/redwednesday-london/>

**23 November, 7pm: WHAT WE NEED TO HAPPEN AT COP28.** Join CAFOD partners and experts as we look ahead to COP28 and discuss what action we need to see at the UN climate talks. <https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/COP28>

**26 November, 2-3pm: Tree planting by His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Archbishop of London.** Interfaith event at St Mary and Pope Kyrillos V1 Coptic Church, Broad Walk, Hounslow TW5 9AB f

**28 November, 6.45pm: Catholic Union AGM and Reception.** Aula Magna (upstairs hall), London Jesuit Centre, 114 Mount Street, London, W1K 3AH, preceded by 6.00pm Mass in Farm Street Church. Guest of honour: Bishop John Sherrington. [More details and registration](#)

**30 November – 12 December: COP28** – United Arab Emirates. [COP28](#)

**2 December, 2pm: Pax Christi Advent Service** - Holy Apostles, Pimlico.

**5 December, 7pm: PACT Carol Service.** Our Lady of Victories Church, Kensington. Catholic Bishop Richard Moth and Anglican Bishop Rachel Treweek co-presiding.

**9 December: CAFOD's Nativity Fun Run is back! Clapham Common.** Walk, run, roll or stroll our 5km route with a difference. Come along to for lots of fun activities, dance warm-ups and a Christmas Choir. [Sign up here with CAFOD](#)

**11 December, 12.45-2.00pm: Southern Dioceses Environment Network – Advent Prayer and Christmas Party.** Monthly online meeting for prayer, sharing and networking on the Care of Creation. Attend as a one-off or participate regularly. [Southern Dioceses Environment Network](#)

**13 December, 7 – 8pm: Aid to the Church in Need Christmas Carol Service.** The Oratory, Brompton Road, London, SW7 2RP. Celebrate Christ's coming with uplifting traditional music by The Schola Cantorum of the London Oratory School, conducted by Charles Cole with organ and brass ensemble. Free. Collection taken for ACN's work with persecuted Christians. Book [here](#).

**14 January 2024: Peace Sunday**

**28 January 2024: Racial Justice Sunday**

**19-21 July 2024: National Justice and Peace Network Conference - 'Just Politics'**