

JUSTICE & PEACE E-BULLETIN

January 2024

Welcome to the e-Bulletin from the Westminster Justice and Peace Commission. Please send Events for inclusion to justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk. The deadline for the next e-Bulletin is 29 January 2024.

Colette Joyce, Westminster Justice and Peace Co-ordinator writes:

"Blessed are the peacemakers," Pope Francis said as he spoke to a gathering of Ambassadors to the Holy See at his annual 'State of the World' address on 8th January.

The concerns shared by the Pope could aptly be said to summarise the agenda for Justice and Peace in Westminster in 2024 and for every Christian and person of good will.

In his address he referred to the escalating conflicts worldwide as a "third world war fought piecemeal". He stressed, "This is not the way to resolve disputes between peoples; those disputes are only aggravated and cause suffering for everyone." Rather, he urged the need for disarmament, asserting that weapons do not have a deterrent value but rather encourage their use. "How many lives could be saved with the resources that today are misdirected to weaponry?" he asked.

Instead, he urged that humankind should work to tackle the root causes of conflict and redirect resources to health care, food security and tackling the climate crisis. "Here I reiterate my proposal that a global fund be established to finally eliminate hunger and to promote a sustainable development of the entire planet," he said.

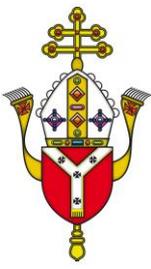
The December E-Bulletin included a timely welcome to James Holland, the new interfaith worker for the Diocese, as Pope Francis upheld the role of dialogue as a crucial element in the pursuit of peace. "The path to peace also passes through interreligious dialogue, which before all else requires the protection of religious freedom and respect for minorities."

[Independent Catholic News – Pope's 'State of the World' Address to Diplomats](#)

As we start the new year aware of so many struggles, conflicts and challenges, at home and abroad, we take heart from keeping our eyes fixed on Christ. Our faith gives us all the resources we need to meet them, as the Synod process continues throughout the universal Catholic Church and we embark on a year of prayer in preparation for the Jubilee Holy Year in 2025. This year we aim to focus on formation and supporting one another with the encouragement we need to persist faithfully in the work of justice and peace for the long haul. This provides me with the perfect opportunity also to thank the Parish and Chaplaincy Contacts, both those who have served for many years and those who have recently come forward as volunteers to be the liaison between their communities and the Commission. Do find out who is serving in this role in your parish or local area and give them your support so that we can increase our capacity to respond together across the Diocese to the many needs of the world facing us today. <https://westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/parish-contacts/>



Peace Sunday - 14th January 2024
'Artificial Intelligence and Peace'



DIARY OF EVENTS

13 January, 12noon: Ceasefire Now - Stop the War on Gaza. March to Parliament Square. Look out for the Westminster J & P and Pax Christi banners at Bank Station from 11.15am.

14 January: Peace Sunday – Theme: “Artificial Intelligence and Peace”. Pope Francis calls for an open dialogue on the meaning of new technologies. [Pope’s Peace Sunday message](#)

15 January, 12.45-2.00pm: Southern Dioceses Environment Network – Feedback from COP28. With Neil Thorns, Director of Advocacy, CAFOD. 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](#)

15 January, 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

15 January, 6.30-7.30pm: London Jesuit Centre – ‘Thinking with Pope Francis’. Five-week course on Monday evenings. Tutor Dr Nicolette Burbach. Suggested contribution £50. [LJC details](#)

16 January, 3.00pm: Balfour Project – ‘Jerusalem and Gaza: Taking Stock’. Free online webinar. With Daniel Seidemann. [Register with Balfour Project](#)

17 January, 7.00-8.30pm: Pax Christi Webinar for Peace Sunday - ‘Artificial Intelligence, the Military and Weapons’. On Zoom. Speaker Chris Cole, Director of Drone Wars UK.

18 January, 6.00-7.15pm: Caritas Westminster - ‘Finding a way through the Energy Crisis’. On Zoom. The session will be led by Olivia Mackay, National Energy Action Project Development Co-ordinator for London, and will include advice on how to help people deal with the increased cost of living, and of energy bills, available energy discounts, where to find support and financial assistance, energy tips to save money in the home. [Register with Eventbrite](#)

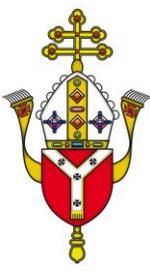
21 January, 12.00-3.00pm: Peace is Every Step – Multi-Faith Silent Prayer Vigil for Peace. Walk from Trafalgar Square to Parliament Square past Downing Street and back. [More Details](#)

24th January, 7.00-8.45pm: School for Synodality – ‘Synodality 101’ Workshop Series. A series of three free online evening workshops introducing the principles of prayerful, truthful and safe conversations – valuing gracious listening and courageous speaking. Continues on 31st January and 7th February. [Register with Eventbrite](#)

27 January, 10.30am: West London Justice & Peace Network online meeting. For everyone in West London parishes. Contact Maggie Beirne for the Zoom link maggiebeirne@googlemail.com

28 January: Racial Justice Sunday. [More details will be published here](#)

30 January, 7-9pm: Parish and Chaplaincy Contacts Zoom Meeting. Contact Colette for link.



DIARY OF EVENTS

8 February, 7.30pm: Catholic Union - Meet the President. Save the date for a webinar with the new President of the Catholic Union [Baroness Hollins](#)

12 February, 12.45-2.00pm: Southern Dioceses Environment Network – 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](#)

14 February: Ash Wednesday

14-24 February: 10-Day Vigil for the Climate outside Parliament for Lent 2024. Organised by Christian Climate Action, Green Christian and others. Save the date. [More Details](#)

19 February, 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

23 February: CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day [CAFOD Website](#)

11 March, 12.45-2.00pm: Southern Dioceses Environment Network. 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](#)

18 March, 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

31 March: Easter Sunday

19-21 July: National Justice and Peace Network Conference - 'Just Politics' [NJPN](#)

1 September – 4 October: Season of Creation. This year's theme will be announced on 2nd February. [Season of Creation website](#)

9-22 September: Fairtrade Fortnight. NB New dates!! It is the 30th birthday of the Fairtrade Foundation this year, so they want to use the occasion to highlight the life-changing impact of the Fairtrade mark for farmers and workers across the world. Fairtrade Fortnight will be part of celebrations yearlong and is expected to move permanently to September thereafter. This means that we will also be able to include it within our celebrations for the Season of Creation.



11-24 November: COP29 in Azerbaijan. UN Climate Change Conference, 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 29) [UN COP29 Website](#)