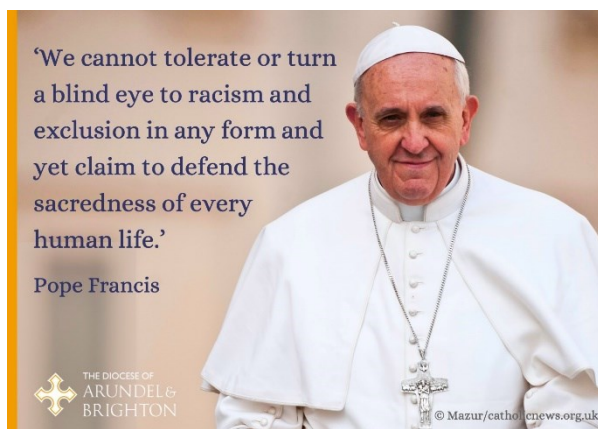




RACIAL JUSTICE: AN URGENT CHURCH PRIORITY

By John Battle, Commission Chair

In March 2023 on the UN International Day for the Elimination of racism Pope Francis denounced racism. He likened it to a "virus that quickly mutates and instead of disappearing goes into hiding and lurks in waiting".



Disturbingly, recent so called "protests", particularly in northern towns, left without real "levelling up", and in Northern Ireland, broke out into violence against refugees, asylum centres and hotels, mosques and immigrants generally. Moreover, racism came out in public, onto the streets. The abusive "P..." word was scrawled on the Rotherham asylum seekers hostel and a Hindu Temple in Leeds received similar graffiti. Direct vile personal insults re-emerged in passing in public places.

The great Leeds historian Professor H.A.L Fisher wrote in "A History of Europe"(1934) :*" Progress is not a law of nature. The ground gained by one generation may be lost by the next. The thoughts of men may flow into channels which lead to disaster and barbarism"*. I didn't change the out of date gender as the great majority of perpetrators in the recent events were notably men.

Those disturbing violent events were detonated by lies and misinformation banking on the deliberate political and media construction of a "hostile environment" for refugees and asylum seekers. This has careered back into a confused hostility to all those perceived to be migrants and particularly those of colour :black and Asian. Licence has effectively been given to public and personal racial abuse reinforced by "X" and far right campaign promoters and even a prime minister's slurs against Muslim women and African children. Newspaper columnists can now describe asylum seekers as "vermin".

Politician Enoch Powell stirred up fears of "rivers of blood" in his 1968 speech which saw the emergence of the violent National Front. In 1981 there were the Brixton riots and street trouble in Leeds. In 2001 there were disturbances in the Lancashire Mill towns and again in 2011 in London. The American billionaire head of Twitter(X) Elon Musk joined in predicting "civil war" in Britain to fuel the flames. In Leeds, the Citizens Organising movement quickly responded in acts of supportive solidarity by turning up with inter-faith representatives at weekend prayers at local mosques.

Forty years ago this Summer, in 1984, the Catholic Association for Racial justice was founded (by Yogi Sutton) as a black-led independent organisation where ethnic minorities in our Church could find support and a voice and where people of all backgrounds could work together for racial justice. The mission was to struggle for a more just and cohesive society in which all God's children can be truly sisters and brothers in Christ.



Not long ago, in a government-commissioned report, Tony Sewell announced that Britain was no longer "systematically racist", a view that evoked an eruption of criticism. Following this summer's events, perhaps at best, it is a case of "not yet". Deep racist attitudes and processes remain. Nor can racism be dismissed as a case of a "few bad apple". As CARJ has courageously, carefully and patiently spelt out over the years "racism and racial injustice exist both in society and in the Church."



Therefore, CARJ's fortieth celebrations consisting of two events, one held in London on 25th May and a second coming up at St Patrick's Foundry St in Oldham for the northern Archdiocese of Liverpool on 21st September, are not a signing off but rather a prescient relaunch of a "Racial Justice Agenda for Change" that is urgently needed.

This day led by Fr Phil Sumner, who has long campaigned for community cohesion, will introduce a new structural agenda addressing "Belonging", "Information" and "Accompaniment" with experienced speakers and practical workshops. Importantly it will sketch out the development of a practical "strategy"; consulting with those directly affected; outlining a timetable of realistic measures to be carried through which need to be developed. In the past, as Yogi Sutton points out, the Church has tended "to lag behind secular mainstream society on diversity issues". Encouragingly, Westminster Diocese is already working on "Rooting out racism" and the Archdiocese of

Southwark led by Archbishop John Wilson is developing its own "Racial Justice Strategy". Other Dioceses can learn from their lead and the Catholic Bishops Conference should now be emphasising the urgency.

In our society that has welcomed 28,000 Syrians and 180,000 Ukrainians fleeing war and destruction, and in which between 2011 and 2021 the number of mixed race households actually increased by 25%, we are not "sleep-walking into segregation" as the head of the Commission for Racial Equality suggested in 2005.

More encouragingly, the recent prophetic witness of Imam Alan Kelwick (a Muslim convert) and worshippers at the Abdullah Quillam mosque in Liverpool, engaging with those threatening the mosque by offering food and an open welcome not only won through to the hearts of the attackers, their action hopefully went viral. See <https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2024/aug/07/the-imam-who-reached-out-to-rioters-podcast>

More details about the conference are available by following this link

<https://www.carj.org.uk/2024/07/24/carj-2nd-anniversary-event-sept-21st-oldham/>

The Commission will repay public transport travel costs for anyone from the Diocese wishing to attend. Email us for the details.

A free lunch will be provided for all attendees so anyone wishing to go needs to email info@carj.org.uk so they cater for the right number of people



THE EVOLUTION OF LOVE

Sometimes it can be quite depressing when you realise how few people have actually heard of *Laudato Si*. The fact that it is rarely heard about from the pulpit is also distressing. Yet, the Christian underpinning to taking action on our Climate crisis is a wonderfully positive 'creation theology'.



The title of this piece is the title of our next Day of Reflection. It is focused on an exploration of Creation Theology and spirituality. It is creation-centred spirituality that invites us to recognise our role within the ongoing evolution of the universe. Do we see ourselves as planetary beings, the latest expression of God's continuing creation story?

What does this mean for how we relate to our world – our 'Common Home'? How can we nurture its flourishing rather than its destruction?

As a Commission we are always mindful of the need to balance prayer, reflection and action. Our climate crisis is one on which many supporters of the Commission continue to take action. It is so easy to get sucked into doing more and more action in the hope of changing the injustices of this world. Conversely, it is also easy to get sucked into closeting yourself away from other people and just praying that the climate crisis will get better. A balance is needed.

Since the publication of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* we have worked hard to balance out the need to raise awareness of the issues

around the climate crisis, actively pray, and encourage people to take part in events such as mass lobbies of Parliament. During Covid lockdowns we held more than one prayer and reflection session about the Climate Crisis and some of our previous Days of Reflection have taken our relationship with creation as a theme.

This particular Day of Reflection will offer insights from cosmology, theology and church teaching. But as well as some inputs there will be interactive workshops offering everyone who comes to the day an opportunity to deepen understanding, re-focus energies, generate hope and inspire shared action.



We are delighted that leading us in this exploration will be the 'Begin with the Heart' team. This is a group of people who are carrying on the work of spreading and

developing the insights of Fr Donal O'Leary of the Leeds Diocese, who died in 2019. He was a prolific writer and the team will only be able to scratch the surface of his work during this day. However, if you want to find out more about his thinking and see what this day might be like, then you can visit the website dedicated to his reflections:

www.astonishingsecret.org

Use this link to see more details about the day and to book a place (Booking essential)

[The Evolution of Love Tickets, Sat, Oct 19, 2024 at 10:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)



THE PEACE MUSEUM – IT'S TIME TO GO THERE!

By Joe Burns, Commission member

The Peace Museum re-opened its doors during August in its new location at Salt's Mill in Saltaire. The museum closed its former



location in central Bradford some time ago. The photograph above shows the bare space before they started working on it. It illustrates why it has taken them quite a while to sort everything out and make their new location ready to receive visitors.

The Peace Museum is the only one of its kind in the UK. In both its previous and current locations the exhibition space available to them only allows them to display a small proportion of the various documents, posters and other artefacts that they have in their collection.

I visited with other family members, including grandchildren, about a fortnight after it opened its doors on 10th August. Saltaire is a

destination that we go to every now and again. It is definitely a favourite spot to take any visitors we might have. The fact that the village is a UNESCO World Heritage site is one aspect. The mill buildings themselves are also interesting in their own right. From the artists' materials shop and the extensive bookstore (with books that you will not find on common high street bookstores), the cafes and restaurant to the magnificent 91m David Hockney mural at the top of the building, there is something for everyone.

Now, next to the third-floor restaurant, there is the Peace Museum.



Compared with some of the spaces within the mill, it is a relatively small space. However, the parts of the collection on display have been carefully selected. The permanent exhibition explores some of the stories and histories of peace movements and campaigns. They also have various interactive displays and activities for children and adults to creatively explore concepts of peace. Everything is engagingly presented with good interpretation materials.



They make the point that whilst the exhibition themes will remain constant, they will swap out specific items for others in their collection. They have an extensive collection of banners and also of posters. The one shown below is one of my favourites – though the first time I remember seeing this was not on a demonstration but in an episode of Fr Ted!



Hopefully, their new location will mean that they greatly increase the number of visitors to the museum (entry is free, incidentally).

Whilst there is a good nearby car park, Saltaire is very accessible by trains via both Leeds and Bradford. If you haven't been recently then it is time to think about going again!

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WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

By Kathy Shaw, SPARK Project Manager

The Church has been celebrating the World Day of Migrants and Refugees on the last Sunday in September since 1914. It is always an occasion to highlight the need for global unity in supporting refugees; to pray for different vulnerable people on the move as

they face many challenges; and to increase awareness about the opportunities offered by migration.

This year the Holy Father has chosen "God walks with His people" as the title for his annual message; this theme connects us to the message of World Refugee Day celebrated in June "Everyone is Welcome". "God not only walks with his people, but also within them, in the sense that he identifies himself with men and women on their journey through history, particularly with the least, the poor and the marginalised. In this we see an extension of the mystery of the Incarnation." *Pope Francis*



From Syria to Yorkshire – A Refugee Story is an inspiring event that has been planned for 29th September starting at 2pm, at Wheeler Hall in Leeds where you are invited to hear the story of one family; their journey and resettlement in Yorkshire and sample some delicious Syrian food. The event is a partnership between SPARK Social Justice and Caritas Catholic Care. Leeds Church Institute will also provide a unique experience of faith and creativity.

Community Sponsorship is a successful scheme allowing refugees to enter the UK and Catholic Care has been recognised by the Home Office as a Principal Sponsor since 2022. Sponsorship is a unique opportunity for volunteers supported through Catholic Care to welcome and resettle refugee families, putting local communities at the heart of a



family's journey to a new life, and helping them to rebuild their lives. The Catholic Bishops publication "Love the Stranger" inspires us to "look beyond labels and see the person who has left their homeland".

World Day of Migrants & Refugees

FROM SYRIA TO YORKSHIRE: A REFUGEE STORY

Come and hear the incredible story of a refugee family's journey from Syria to Yorkshire - their struggles, triumphs, and the power of community.

...And taste some Syrian food!!!

Book online via Eventbrite using our QR code!

Sunday 29th
September 2024:
2.00pm to 4.00pm
(arrive at 1:45!)



Wheeler Hall,
St Annes's St.
LS2 8BE
(alongside
the Cathedral,
opposite the
Light for
parking)



SPARK is the faith informed social justice group for people aged 18 to 30 years in the Yorkshire area. It was set up by the Justice & Peace Commission in 2019 with funding from the Porticus Trust. We are continuing to provide safe spaces for younger people of faith through helping individuals to follow

As this event includes a taste of Syrian food, please reserve a place by using our Eventbrite page

[From Syria to Yorkshire - A Refugee story Tickets, Sun 29 Sep 2024 at 13:45 | Eventbrite](#)

their social justice concerns, organising events like this one and providing

opportunities for them to explore the faith basis for taking action on social justice issues.

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WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN A DIOCESAN ENVIRONMENT POLICY MAKE?

By Joe Burns, Commission member

The Northern Dioceses' Environment Group are organizing 3 Zoom meetings during this Autumn. The first one on **Sep 26 @7pm** is about Diocesan Environment Policies.



Bernadette Jordan and Emily Cahill (Laudato Si' Centre Environment and Learning Officer, Diocese of Salford) will do an initial presentation headed 'Diocesan and schools Laudato Si developments; responses to having a Diocesan Climate Strategy in Salford'. This will lead to a wider discussion on the work in progress across the northern dioceses. What lessons can we learn from each other?

If you are interested in joining this zoom then simply email climate.ndeg@gmail.com and NDEG will send you the link for the Zoom.

The second of these Zoom meetings will be on **Monday 28th October at 5pm**. This meeting will be focussing on the LiveSimply award scheme managed by CAFOD. The aim



of this session is to give an update on how the Live Simply award is developing and equip people with practical suggestions for implementation in parishes or schools. There will also be time for discussion across the dioceses represented and general networking time.



Northern Dioceses' Environment Group

The third Zoom meeting will take place on **Wednesday 27th November at 12 noon** and will be led by Mark Wiggin of Salford Diocese. We are coming up to ten years since the publication of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*. What has happened in northern dioceses so far and where do dioceses go next in the *Laudato Si* journey. There will be short inputs from several dioceses along with the usual opportunity to discuss some of the points and to generally network.

WE NEED YOUR STORIES!



This newsletter has been going for over 40 years now!

There are always things that, as a Commission, we want to draw to your attention.

However, a key reason for its existence is to share what is going on about social justice issues across the Diocese of Leeds.

To do that we need your help.









What is happening in your parish? -is anything happening to celebrate the Season of Creation? Are you praying for Peace in Ukraine and other parts of the world? Is your parish working towards obtaining a LiveSimply award? Do you celebrate Peace Sunday differently in some way?

Whatever is happening in your parish, share it with the rest of the Diocese by writing a few paragraphs and emailing it to news@leedsjp.org.uk . If you have a photograph or two to share then so much the better!



NEWSLETTER September 2024

EVENTS

 01Sep – 04 Oct	<p>Season of Creation The theme for 2024 is 'To Hope and Act with Creation'. For more details and ideas about what to do in your church community use this link https://seasonofcreation.org/</p>
 Sat 21 Sep	<p>Racial Justice: Agenda for Change with CARJ <i>St. Patrick's Church, Foundry Street, Oldham, OL8 1FR</i> This one day conference is the Northern conference in celebration of 40 years of CARJ (The Catholic Association for Racial Justice). Public Transport costs to get there can be claimed from the Commission. Email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk if interested</p>
 Sat 21 Sep	<p>Caritas Day of Reflection <i>Hinsley Hall, Headingley Lane Leeds LS6 2BX 10:00 – 15:30.</i> An opportunity for all those interested in considering how 'Caritas' will be developed following Bishop Marcus' designation of Catholic Care as coordinator of Caritas. Use this link to sign up to this free event: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZYuadJt1Kn-XttJ9FBiHqxaC7xpy_MAGSJKiui0b5oPoZQ/viewform</p>
 Thu 26 Sep	<p>Zoom: Environmental Policies in the Northern Dioceses <i>Online 19:00 – 20:30</i> Join members of the Northern Dioceses' Environment Group to hear about how environment policies are changing the way parishes work across the North of England. Simply email climate.ndeg@gmail.com and you will be sent the link.</p>
 Sat 28 Sep	<p>Leeds J&P Extended Commission Planning Meeting <i>St Benedicts Church, Garforth 10:30 – 14:30</i> A time for the Commission to review its priorities and the way in which it works. Anyone is welcome to attend. Please email us if you would like to come along and we will send you the details.</p>
 Sun 29 Sep	<p>From Syria to Yorkshire: A Refugee Story <i>Wheeler Hall, St Anne's Street, Leeds LS2 8BE 14:00 – 16:00</i> The story of one family's journey from Syria to Yorkshire. There will be a taste of Syrian food provided – so please book using this link From Syria to Yorkshire - A Refugee story Tickets, Sun 29 Sep 2024 at 13:45 Eventbrite</p>
 Sat 19 Oct	<p>The Evolution of Love: A J&P Day of Reflection <i>SS Thomas More & John Fisher, Burley in Wharfedale 10:30 – 4pm</i> Come and join us for this uplifting Day of Reflection brought to us by the 'Begin with the Heart' team who try to carry on the spiritual and theological legacy of Fr Donal O'Leary of the Leeds Diocese. More Info & registration https://tinyurl.com/leedsjpaumn2024</p>
 Sat 16 Nov	<p>National Justice & Peace Network Open Networking Day <i>Save the Date! This will be held at Wheeler Hall at Leeds Cathedral times tbc</i> An opportunity to meet J&P activists from across the country. The theme of the day will be related to UK poverty.</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.