



JUBILEE YEAR 2025

By John Battle, Commission Chair

2025 is to be celebrated throughout the Catholic Church as a Jubilee Year. Announced by Pope John Paul II back in 2000, telling young people they would be “the leading players”, the theme for 2025 is “Pilgrims of Hope”.



There is even a cartoon mascot to encourage the young, named “Luce” (“light”). Pope Francis has declared his ambition to draw in and meet this year as a priority with young people all over the world starting on the feast of the Epiphany.

In the early Church there were no “Christians”. Followers of Jesus Christ were known as “people of the way”; pilgrim people, mobile, on the move, journeying with purpose. The Old English word “pilgrim” includes “a person always seeking new adventures with an open and hopeful mind” and more deeply implying a person who is constantly changing and developing to “become the best version of themselves”. But what world are young people now expected to journey through?

The challenges facing us in today’s troubled, often confusing and fast-moving world, reflected in daily dark headlines, are real.

Climate change events, a world increasingly steered by new technologies, the high-speed growth and power of artificial intelligence and quantum computing, new connectivities,

are all radically changing the way we do things and live together.

Global environmental and ecological challenges, waste and pollution, issues of resources, fair trading, and migration, living standards and inequalities, uneven human development and sadly increasing conflicts, violence and wars.

To make hope possible, rather than despair inevitable

The critic Raymond Williams said the task of this century will be “To make hope possible, rather than despair inevitable”. Traditionally the Jewish “Year of Jubilee” was a time to wipe the slate clean especially for the poor by cancelling debts, and practical actions to restore life to the poor whose lives had been “accumulated by the rich”. It was a time of restorative economic justice.

Translating the ‘signs of our times’ into economic and political actions is far from an easy task today. But as a disillusioned WB Yeats in 1891 commented on the death of the leader Parnell, “now after politics has utterly failed us, the imagination can come to the fore”.

Our pilgrim task in this Jubilee year is to “be people of hope”, developing hope, not least in the Spirit of that most challenged and dramatic of the prophets, Ezekiel. Indeed, we are called to be “prophets of hope”, “not afraid”, as Pope Francis tells us “to dream big”. He writes, “In a climate in which politics is discredited, young people who share their perspectives in new ways to mobilise leadership are a breath of fresh air. It is young people who have the energy and courage to go beyond that which is socially correct”.



“Hope” is therefore not false optimism or presenting a lovely picture of the world. As the German theologian J.B. Metz stressed, hope is not primarily about our own survival but rather “giving hope to others, “and living out that hope”.



In this Jubilee year of “Pilgrims of Hope” perhaps that much neglected key concept of Catholic social learning, “Participation”, will take centre stage. It will include and engage us all, especially that majority who are poor, in the struggle for justice and peace at all levels to generate new prophetic leadership.

++++++

PEACE SUNDAY – 19 JANUARY 2025

by Lucy Irven, Commission Member

Pax Christi England & Wales is a membership organisation operating within Pax Christi International, the Catholic movement for peace and nonviolence. The work of Pax Christi – the Peace of Christ – is based on the gospel and inspired by faith, rooted in Catholic Christianity but open to all who share its values and work.



Being a member of Pax Christi England & Wales means giving financial support to their work and joining a network of likeminded people who will be taking the message of peace and offering resources to parishes,

ecumenical peace friends, and other networks. Members lobby their MP on issues such as the arms trade and the UK’s nuclear weapon programme and they take part in times of prayer and actions of solidarity. There are currently four key areas of work being supported by Pax Christi – Nonviolence, Disarmament, Palestine & Israel and Peace Education.

Pax Christi Logo

Having been a member of Pax Christi for many years, I have recently joined the Executive Committee which helps guide the work of the movement. Working with other members I am focusing on understanding better the spirituality of nonviolence and how we can develop and support a community of Peacemakers.

My interest in Justice and Peace issues grew after I joined the Catholic Church in my 20s, and my involvement over the years has included volunteering for the Youth Justice Service, running Skipton Foodbank, raising awareness about Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Diocese of Leeds, holding Family Poverty workshops for the Leeds Justice & Peace Commission in the Keighley & Skipton Deanery and as a Commissioner on the Diocese of Leeds Criminal Justice inquiry.

I am looking forward to exploring the key themes of Peace, Reconciliation and Nonviolence and working with others in nonviolent peace-making, nurturing the Peace of Christ in our world.

Peace Sunday graphic with cross in window

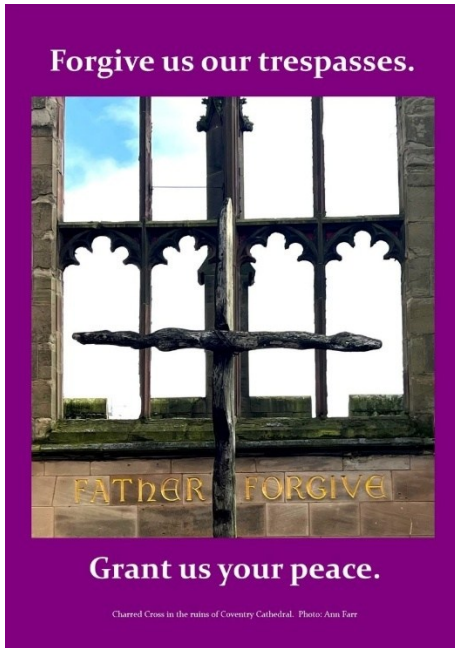
Every year, with the support of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference, England and Wales, Pax Christi promote Peace Sunday on the second Sunday in Ordinary Time as a way of observing the World Day of Peace and



promoting the Pope’s message for that year. This year, Peace Sunday will be kept on Sunday 19 January 2025 and the theme chosen by the Holy Father is “Forgive us our trespasses: grant us your peace”.

Sunday page along with other resources for Peace Sunday on the 19th January: paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2025/

+++++



3431 MILE FUNDRAISING RIDE

by *Tim Devereux*

Tim is a member of the Leeds Diocese pax Christi group and has recently stood down as chair of MAW (The Movement for the Abolition of War).

In 2024, I cycled 313 miles from Leeds to Brighton over five days in aid of Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP). In 2025, I intend to raise money for the same cause, but this time with a bigger mileage – eleven times bigger! – 3431miles, the distance from Leeds to Gaza.

The full message was released on 12 December 2024 and according to Pope Francis, the path towards “a true and lasting peace” in the world is rooted in the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer and requires a desire for change on a personal, cultural, and structural level “in order to confront the present state of injustice and inequality.”

I will just be riding around Yorkshire, aiming at an average of 10 miles a day, so starting on 1st January, my target finishing date is 10th December.

The message speaks of how we must listen to the ‘pleas of an endangered humanity’, how the year of Jubilee is an event that inspires us to seek the liberating justice of God in our world and how by ‘opening our hearts to our brothers and sisters, we will restore God’s justice on earth’ and ‘move forward to achieve the goal of peace’.



Tim wearing a cycle helmet on a towpath

A copy of the Pope’s message can be downloaded from the Pax Christi Peace

This year I will be using all of my bikes – 8 at the moment. I’m a bit of a collector! I’ll try not to use the same one on successive days,



and the ebike will feature – it's a legal one and I still have to pedal!

Over all my rides in 2024, I rode about 1800 miles, an average of almost 5 miles/day, so 10 miles/day will definitely be a challenge. Why I'm riding: The situation in Gaza, Palestine and the Middle East continues to be heartrendingly awful. As an elderly man in Yorkshire, there is not much I can do to influence the combatants. But as the saying goes, 'Better to light one candle than curse the darkness.'

I am still fit enough to cycle every day. So as I carry out the challenge, MAP will get funds to assist the victims of violence, and I will have a year or so of cycling for peace. Plus it's a great way to promote cycling!"

If you'd like to support Tim, the JustGiving page is here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/tim-devereux-map-2025>

(you can contribute at any time during the year!)

Follow Tim on Instagram: @tim_7x13 (you can contribute at any time during the year!)

Follow Tim on Instagram: @tim_7x13

+++++

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 26 JANUARY

We have received the following invitation from a group of people from several different faith and social activism traditions

Invitation to a Holocaust Memorial Day Citizen's Commemoration

12-1pm City Square Leeds

Sunday 26th January 2025

Never Again for Anyone.

We are a group of people from a number of different faith and social activism traditions; we have come together out of concern for what we see as a lacuna in the civic preparations for Holocaust Memorial Day.

We invite you to a quiet and respectful gathering to commemorate 80 years since one of the defining events of the 20th Century, the mass extermination of six million European Jews and other minority groups in the Holocaust. We also commemorate the many other genocides committed in modern history, including in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

Holocaust memorial day photo montage
We seek also to bear witness to the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has made it clear that it does not wish there to be any acknowledgement of the current Israel/Palestine conflict as part of the commemoration, even though 1,200 Israeli lives were taken on October 7th 2023, and over 45,000 Palestinian lives, including those of 17,500 children, have been taken since then, and continue to be taken every day. Numerous reputable Human Rights organisations recognise the attack on Gaza as being genocidal both in intent and in practice.



Leeds City Council and Leeds Arts are putting on an event which follows the guidance of the Holocaust Memorial Trust. There is no mention of Gaza in its list of modern genocides in the publicity for this event.

We honour the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust for continuing to commemorate this profoundly solemn day. We are not seeking to make comparisons between the Holocaust and the attack on Gaza: all genocides are different but all genocides lead to fathomless suffering and loss. We are merely asking Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to acknowledge that a genocide is underway, and that silence is a dangerously inappropriate response.

As people in solidarity with the people of Gaza we say:

“If we had been alive during the Holocaust, and we had known about it, we would have done everything in our power to stop it.”

We ask Leeds City Council, and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to do everything in its power to stop the current genocide.

Please join us.

+++++++

DISARMING THE HEART

by Carol Burns, Leeds Diocese Pax Christi

**Disarming the Heart
A liturgy of repentance in a Nuclear Age**

An Ash Wednesday service will be held on Wednesday 6th March at 12.30 outside Holy Trinity Church on Boar Lane in Leeds.

Since 1982, Christians have assembled on Ash Wednesday at the Ministry of Defence to pray for peace and a conversion of hearts and minds away from nuclear war preparations, the destruction caused by nuclear testing and the wasted resources that are invested in nuclear weapons and in all weapons.

Over those years services have been held in Liverpool and Glasgow and people from peace groups from different parts of the country have travelled to London.



This year 2025 the Leeds Diocese Pax Christi group are organising a prayer service in Leeds.

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of a time of repentance in the Church calendar and we will be praying for all those involved in nuclear war preparations to repent and have a change of heart.

We also recognise that we can all do more to speak out about nuclear war preparations



and to prayer to have the courage to carry on with our opposition.

We are inspired by Pope Francis in 2023 in his 'Urbi et Orbi' message where he said:

"The human heart is weak and impulsive; if we find instruments of death in our hands, sooner or later we will use them. And how can we even speak of peace, when arms production, sales and trade are on the rise?"

All are welcome to join us on 6th March
+++++++

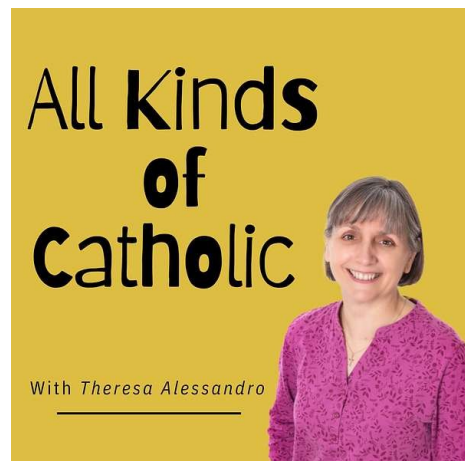
BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Commission member Sean Morris is featured in the New Year's Day edition of the podcast called 'All Kinds of Catholics', which is curated by Theresa Alessandro.



Sean is a member of the vibrant Good Shepherd church community in Mytholmroyd. He works for Manchester City Council but also worked for Leeds City Council for a number of years. Through his local government work he became involved with the Mayors for Peace programme which provided all sorts of opportunities to meet with people from across the world who are working for peace and nuclear disarmament.

Sean is the driving force behind the Commission's project '[Trees of Hope](#)'. Through his contacts we have obtained 15 seeds and 15 small saplings from a ginkgo tree that survived being in the blast zone of the Hiroshima atomic bomb. The tree survived and started to flourish again. Since then, the saplings grown from this tree's seeds (and a few other trees and bushes in the blast zone) have been planted across the world. The ones that the Commission has obtained are currently being nurtured at the *Laudato Si* centre at Wardley Hall in the Salford Diocese. The first saplings should be available sometime during 2026.



As the name suggests, Theresa Alessandro does, indeed, interview 'all sorts of Catholic' exploring the faith journeys of different people. Theresa was formerly Director Pax Christi in England & Wales and subsequent to that worked at PACT (the Catholic prisons charity).

Listen to the podcast:
Available on [Buzzsprout](#)
[Spotify](#) and on [Apple](#)
Or your your Podcast platform of choice
Follow *All Kinds of Catholic* on Social Media: [X/Twitter](#) & [Facebook](#)



LIVING TOGETHER IN HOPE

By Joe Burns, Commission member

This is the title for the first event organised in 2025 of the Northern Dioceses' Environment Group.

It will be an online event via Zoom. The focus will be on 'Hope' – appropriate given the theme of the Jubilee Year mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

However, instead of having a speaker this event will focus more on reflecting about Hope in caring for our Common Home through prayer, poetry and music. There will still be the opportunity to meet, in small groups, people from across the North of England and to share what it is that brings each of them 'Hope'.

The Climate crisis is exactly that – a crisis. However, every now and again we need to stop and go back to our roots and reflect on *why* we take the actions that we do. Equally, given the 'bad news' coming at us every day about the environment and the way that we are not caring for it enough, we need to share signs of Hope to refresh our motivation to carry on taking action.

Sign up to the NDEG Mailing list and they will send you details of this event, including the Zoom link. Use this link

<https://mailchi.mp/be1b2416161d/the-northern-dioceses-environment-group>

NEW COMMISSION MEMBERS WANTED



The Commission is a group of volunteers from across the Diocese of Leeds. We currently have members who live in Leeds, Bradford, Bingley, Skipton, Huddersfield, Mytholmroyd and Garforth.

The basic commitment for Commission members is to attend 4 meetings a year. Three of these meetings last up to two hours and are hybrid meetings – with some people joining via Zoom and some members gathering at Hinsley Hall. We also have one longer meeting every year where we reflect on what we have done, what our priorities are and try to sketch out what sorts of things we need to do in the 1-2 years ahead.








Many Commission members are also part of one of our Action Groups. These currently are UK poverty, Climate Change, Racism and Peace & Nonviolence. Some are involved in our Spirituality of Justice Group and others in the management of our SPARK Social Justice project.

Why not come along to a Commission meeting and see if you might be interested? ...or perhaps you could suggest it to someone you know. All that is needed is a passion about what we as Catholics should be doing in the light of Catholic Social Teaching.

Anyone interested should simply email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk and someone will get in touch.



EVENTS

 Sat 18 Jan	<p>Yorkshire CND AGM <i>Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade Huddersfield, HD1 5JP 1pm – 4pm</i> Non-members are welcome to come and hear their main speaker: Steve Barwick who has had a lifetime in politics with a strong interest in nuclear disarmament See our website for more details</p>
 Sun 19 Jan	<p>Peace Sunday 2025 <i>Everywhere in the UK!</i> Will this special day be marked in your church community? There is still time to get some ideas by using this link: https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2025/</p>
 Wed 22 Jan	<p>A Year of Hope: An Introduction to the Year of Jubilee <i>Online event organised by CAFOD 10:30am – 12:00</i> This is an introduction to the Jubilee, with highlights of how we’re celebrating locally, and see how we can build a better world together throughout this holy year. Use this link for more details https://cafod.org.uk/news/events/a-year-of-hope-an-introduction-to-the-jubilee-year</p>
 Wed 22 Jan	<p>The Problems with Corporate Courts in International Trade deals <i>7 Arts 31(a) Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, LS7 3PD 7:30pm – 9:00pm</i> It doesn’t sound interesting(!) but if you are concerned about climate change and haven’t heard about these then well worth considering going along!</p>
 Tue 25 Feb	<p>Gather Mini-Summit & Leeds Lent Diary Launch <i>Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane, Leeds, LS1 6HW 6:30pm – 8:00pm</i> An evening of discussion on how we can impact the city of Leeds. With guest speakers, stalls from Leeds projects (including our own SPARK Social Justice!), and round table discussions. Hear the voices of Leeds and have your say. Follow the link to register (though you could just turn up) https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gather-leeds-mini-summit-leeds-lent-prayer-diary-launch-tickets-1119057213249?aff=oddtcreator</p>
 Thu 27 Feb	<p>Living Together in Hope <i>Online Zoom event 6:30pm – 8pm</i> This Northern Dioceses’ Environment group event is an opportunity to reflect on caring for our ‘Common home’ through prayer, poetry & music and a sharing with people from across the North of England about the things that give us Hope. Use this link to register and receive the Zoom link.</p>
 Fri 25th – Sun 27 Jul	<p>National Justice & Peace Network Annual Conference: Just Peace <i>The Christian Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire</i> A weekend exploring peace with keynote speakers (including Dr Rowan-Williams) and workshops covering a range of aspects of Just Peace. If you are 30 or under then SPARK Social Justice has a limited number of sponsored places. More details to follow.</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.