

# Justice & Peace Matters

## Pax Christi – The Peace of Christ

This New Year's Day marked the 53<sup>rd</sup> World Day of Peace. Thank you to so many of you who joined us for Mass, followed by a shared lunch, which had a truly international flavour.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January** is designated as Peace Sunday & an opportunity for us to celebrate & support the work of **Pax Christi**, based on the gospel and inspired by faith. The vision of Pax Christi is of a world where people can live in peace, without fear of violence in any form. The organisation is rooted in Catholic Christianity but is open to all who share its values and work.

### Pax Christi works for

- **Peace** – based on justice. A world where human rights are respected, basic needs are met and people feel safe and valued in their communities.
- **Reconciliation** – a process which begins when people try to mend relationships – between individuals or whole countries after times of violence or dispute.
- **Nonviolence** – a way of living and making choices that respects others, challenges what is not fair or just, and offers alternatives to violence and war.

In his sermon on New Year's Day, Fr. Christopher drew on Pope Francis' message to mark World Day of Peace. It is a beautiful & inspiring document. Extracts of this Papal message have been reproduced overleaf but the full document can be found on the Vatican website: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

## Welcome

Welcome to this month's edition of J & P Matters. We met on Monday evening. Our next meeting will be on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at 7:30. All are welcome!** Topics for this month:

- Pax Christi
- Dates for your Diary
- Becoming a 'Live Simply Parish'
- Pope's message for World Peace
- CAFOD update

## Dates for your Diary

19<sup>th</sup> January - Peace Sunday / Pax Christi  
 18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> - Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity  
 27<sup>th</sup> January – Holocaust Memorial, Day venue TBC  
 8<sup>th</sup> February – Day for Victims of Trafficking  
 9<sup>th</sup> February – Racial Justice Sunday

## Creation Celebration - where do we go from here?

*In July we Celebrated Creation with Mass followed by a workshop, discussion & suggestions on how best to protect our common home. The challenges we face require a response on many levels, internationally, nationally, in our communities, in our families and as individuals.*

*Here are a few suggestions how we, as **individuals** can reduce our carbon footprint: -*

**1. Cut down or cut out meat** – Food production (breeding, rearing, farming, processing, transporting and cooking meat) represents 14.5% of all human induced emissions (Source: UN Food & Agricultural Organisation).

**2. Have a staycation** – There are big environmental costs to flying. Forgo the flights & visit some of the beautiful places in the UK. Chose trains over planes, much of Europe can be reached by train.

**3. Make your home more energy efficient** – By reducing the amount of energy we use at home we are lowering our carbon footprint. Team up with renewable energy providers to support a future free of carbon.

**As a parish community** we also need to reduce our carbon footprint & become a parish that 'lives more simply'. We hope to take this further at the next Open Parish Meeting with a view to setting up a parish environmental action group. Please think about becoming involved in this initiative. Further information will follow in due course.

**PEACE AS A JOURNEY OF HOPE:  
DIALOGUE, RECONCILIATION AND ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION  
Extracts from a Message from Pope Francis on 53<sup>rd</sup> World Day of Peace**

**1. *Peace, a journey of hope in the face of obstacles and trial***

Peace is a great and precious value, the object of our hope and the aspiration of the entire human family.

Hope is the virtue that inspires us and keeps us moving forward. Our human community bears, in its memory and its flesh, the scars of ever more devastating wars and conflicts that affect especially the poor and the vulnerable.

Even today, dignity, physical integrity, freedom, including religious freedom, communal solidarity and hope in the future are denied to great numbers of men and women, young and old.

War, as we know, often begins with the inability to accept the diversity of others, which then fosters attitudes of aggrandizement and domination born of selfishness and pride, hatred and the desire to caricature, exclude and even destroy the other.

War is fuelled by a perversion of relationships, by hegemonic ambitions, by abuses of power, by fear of others and by seeing diversity as an obstacle

We cannot claim to maintain stability in the world through the fear of annihilation, in a volatile situation, suspended on the brink of a nuclear abyss and enclosed behind walls of indifference. As a result, social and economic decisions are being made that lead to tragic situations where human beings and creation itself are discarded rather than protected and preserved.

How do we break the current dynamic of distrust?

We need to pursue a genuine fraternity based on our common origin from God and exercised in dialogue and mutual trust. The desire for peace lies deep within the human heart, and we should not resign ourselves to seeking anything less than this.

**2. *Peace, a journey of listening based on memory, solidarity and fraternity***

Many people in today's world are working to ensure that future generations will preserve the memory of past events, not only in order to prevent the same errors or illusions from recurring, but also to enable memory, as the fruit of experience, to serve as the basis and inspiration for present and future decisions to promote peace.

Peace emerges from the depths of the human heart and political will must always be renewed, so that new ways can be found to reconcile and unite individuals and communities.

Peace "must be built up continually"; it is a journey made together in constant pursuit of the common good, truthfulness and respect for law. Listening to one another can lead to mutual understanding and esteem, and even to seeing in an enemy the face of a brother or sister. The peace process thus requires enduring commitment. It is a patient effort to seek truth and justice, to honour the memory of victims and to open the way, step by step, to a shared hope stronger than the desire for vengeance.

In our Christian experience, we constantly remember Christ, who gave his life to reconcile us to one another (cf. *Rom 5:6-11*). The Church shares fully in the search for a just social order; she continues to serve the common good and to nourish the hope for peace by transmitting Christian values and moral teaching, and by her social and educational works.

**3. *Peace, a journey of reconciliation in fraternal communion***

When we learn to live in forgiveness, we grow in our capacity to become men and women of peace. What is true of peace in a social context is also true in the areas of politics and economy since peace permeates every dimension of life in common. There can be no true peace unless we show ourselves capable of developing a more just economic system.

**4. *Peace, a journey of ecological conversion***

"If a mistaken understanding of our own principles has at times led us to justify mistreating nature, we believers should acknowledge that by so doing we were not faithful to the treasures of wisdom which we have been called to protect and preserve

Faced with the consequences of our hostility towards others, our lack of respect for our common home or our abusive exploitation of natural resources – seen only as a source of immediate profit, regardless of local communities, the common good and nature itself – we are in need of an ecological conversion

This conversion must be understood in an integral way, as a transformation of how we relate, to our sisters and brothers, to other living beings, to creation in all its rich variety and to the Creator who is the origin of all life.

**5. *"We obtain all that we hope for***

The journey of reconciliation calls for patience and trust. Peace will not be obtained unless it is hoped for.

In the first place, this means believing in the possibility of peace, believing that others need peace just as much as we do.

The grace of God our Father is bestowed as unconditional love. Having received his forgiveness in Christ, we can set out to offer that peace to the men and women of our time. Day by day, the Holy Spirit prompts in us ways of thinking and speaking that can make us artisans of justice and peace.

**May the God of peace bless us and come to our aid.**

## CAFOD UPDATE

You may remember the focus of the last Lent appeal, Mahinur & her family from Bangladesh. Sadly her son, Rabiul has died of a fever. He was receiving treatment but the doctor at his local clinic was unable to save him. Mahinur has asked for our prayers for Rabiul.

***Loving God, We pray for Rabiul, that he may be at peace in the warmth of your great love. Please hold his family & friends in your loving care. Amen***

