



Pax Scotia

Issue 28

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Hope, Love, Joy and Peace - Pax Christi Scotland's Advent message



Advent is a very special time in the Church, preparing for the Nativity of Christ, Prince of Peace. It's also a special time for the Pax Christi network – our name says it all: 'Peace of Christ', and as Pax Christi Scotland begins a new year following our AGM, we pledge to continue to work hard to achieve what it says on the tin.

But of course, 2022 has been a year when peace has been out of the grasp of so many - not only in Ukraine, where the invasion by Russia has dominated headlines for so many months, but in many areas of the world where conflict may be the result of religious tensions, of the effects of climate change, or of the domination of cruel regimes.

Cop27 emphasised the links between peace and the climate emergency, and in this edition we have a reflection from Zambian teacher Kweche Chibansa on the effect that climate change is having on his country. We saw during the pandemic that the family tensions that were created dramatically increased the instance of gender violence. Perhaps those shocking figures from around the world – in some countries a rise of 25 per cent – were also down to the pressures people are increasingly subjected to as the climate crisis bites deep into national and personal economies.

The view from Zambia suggests that Christmas there will be difficult, that peace of mind is fragile and that nonviolence is now threatened in a country that just a couple of decades ago was hailed as one of Africa's most peace-loving.

Also in this issue is a reflection from a different part of the Global South. We are privileged to have words from Martha Inés Romero, who in January will take up the role of Secretary General of Pax Christi International, succeeding Greet Vanaerschot, who has been so supportive in getting Pax Christi Scotland off the ground.

Martha Inés is from Colombia, and she is engaging with us in our on-going dialogue with Police Scotland. As you know, we have questioned Police Scotland's role in training police personnel in Colombia, contracting to this work while the previous questionable regime was in power. We have been concerned that this allowed that regime to whitewash their human rights record. Now that the new government is in place there, with many of the human rights activists taking roles in the legislature, we will continue to monitor the situation and we are pleased that among other activists that will take part in our dialogue (including Justice For Colombia), we will have the voice of Pax Christi International's new Secretary General.

And as we prepare the pathway to our Pax Christi Scotland new year of peace, we will of course renew our grounding in our faith, in Catholic Social Teaching that seeks to offer dignity to every individual, embracing the marginalised – and so executive committee member Arianna Andreangeli will on December 8 lead an Advent Vigil. See the details on page 4 of this newsletter – we hope to share that special space with you all.

Marian Pallister (Pax Christi Scotland Chair)

Pope Francis writes, "In my encyclical *Fratelli tutti* I proposed that the money spent on arms and other military expenditures be used to set up a World Fund to finally eliminate hunger and to foster the development of the poorest countries, so that their inhabitants would not resort to violent or deceptive solutions and would not be forced to leave their countries in search of a more dignified life. I renew this proposal today, especially today. Because war must be stopped, all wars must be stopped, and they will only stop if we stop 'feeding' them." *Against War: Building a Culture of Peace* by Pope Francis



Peace depends on us working together...

Kweche Chibansa is a teacher at St Columba's Community Secondary School on the outskirts of the Zambian capital, Lusaka. In the wake of COP27, he explains how the climate emergency has affected his country, and how he hopes that the proposed reparation fund will support a country that has made little contribution to the crisis. His description of Zambian life suggests that Pope Francis's idea of a World Fund created from the expenditure currently spent on arms should also be swiftly enacted.

A Challenging Christmas

Every year the world celebrates Christmas, hoping to bring togetherness and peace among peoples across the world. Africa, however, is faced with division due to poverty and in the small landlocked country called Zambia there is discord as poverty levels increase like the wild fires burning the trees on our hillsides.

And so, people in Zambia will have a tough time this Christmas, born from poverty which increases gender violence as people struggle with their lives. Most people depend on farming to survive, but due to climate change, food security is limited. Inadequate investment in sustainable agriculture is a major block to enhancing food availability and the climate crisis has compromised the ability of people to support and feed their families.

Most people in Zambia live in small communities that survive by the unity of sharing, but that culture of sharing is slowly fading away and causing division among people as poverty levels increase. The educational sector is faced with so many challenges; learners are not fully focused in school because they leave home hungry.

The struggle is real

As a teacher, I see the struggles learners go through, which massively affect their foundation for a better future.

Part of my work is to educate people about climate change, and how man-made activities have caused the crisis by releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and how that contributes to the changes in the weather. Our people don't really know about the importance of maintaining natural resources such as trees, rivers, and lakes, even though they see extreme climate events like wildfires and droughts that are leading to environmental disasters affecting people here in Zambia. My fear is that people will resort more to violence if they are not educated about mitigating the climate emergency and how halting the crisis could lead to a better, more peaceful world.

Christmas will bring so many challenges for many people here in Zambia. Lack of jobs means people fail to pay electricity and housing bills. Life is hard, and with fuel prices going up, things are becoming too expensive. The struggle is real and unemployment is causing men to assert their masculinity through violence – especially gender violence.

A teacher like me is said to be the foundation of a child and the environment contributes to form the personality of a child. Zambian people depend on nature to survive and its resources are so much a source of income for many individuals.



Kweche Chibansa

Restoring our common home

The change in weather patterns is increasing poverty and many families now depend on World Food Programme donations to survive. The climate emergency has affected Zambians in such a negative way that people are giving up their dreams and goals.

Working together is the only tool we have to change our planet for the coming generations. The COP27 resolutions suggest we *could* be on the right path to save the earth - but we have such a limited time. The reparation fund may help nations like Zambia, but the peace of the world depends on us working together to restore our common home.

Kweche Chibansa

Against War: Building a Culture of Peace by Pope Francis
<https://amzn.eu/b11zg7A>

Watch out for news of an online Pax Christi Scotland reading group - this will be our first text.



The Pax Christi family: Working together for a nonviolent world and the transformation of lives

A reflection from the Global South

Martha Inés Romero, is currently Pax Christi International's Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, and from January 2023 will be the movement's new Secretary General. Here she reflects on Pax Christi's work around the world. She says she would 'especially like to greet the Pax Christi Scotland Community'. We welcome her reflection...

I take the appointment as the new Secretary General as an opportunity to serve the global community, but also as a validation of Pax Christi's cultural diversity. Being a woman from the Global South shows the commitment of the movement that, with 77 years of life, continues raising the issues of armaments, the promotion of nonviolence and climate justice.

At our roots is outrage at what the Second World War meant for people, their dignity, and the world economy. Today, member organisations such as Pax Christi Scotland, the International Secretariat, and the Pax Christi International Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (which promotes nonviolence within the Church and in the world), work tirelessly to seek ways for reconciliation and just peace, and to promote nonviolent responses to complex conflicts around the world.

It is understandable that Ukraine is receiving so much attention – more than 7.2 million refugees and almost 7 million internally displaced persons in just nine months, according to the UNHCR. In other parts of the world there is also much suffering: Israel/Palestine, the recent tensions between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, the unresolved situation in Yemen, the violation of human rights in Nicaragua, to mention just few...

In the midst of the tragedy, there is always the powerful force of active nonviolence, which is not widely reported in the media, but which Pax Christi members around the world implement: there is *pastoral accompaniment*, humanitarian aid, work with agents of change; *coalitions* are formed at local and global levels; there are persistent actions of *diplomacy for peace*, based on the needs and demand of communities' victims of injustice; *statements* advocating for just public policies; *the solidarity of civil society organisations* opposed to wars; *vigils*; presence in place – known as *shared physical risk*, or interfaith delegations, peace caravans, humanitarian corridors.

I believe that we, as the Pax Christi movement, have the task of spreading more the narratives that resist, that re-humanise, that promote conscientious objection, that question and monitor - as Pax Christi Scotland does with Police Scotland - economic cooperation or technical assistance to other countries, demanding the full guarantee of human rights.

The task of spreading these narratives falls to global civil society and the Churches in a matter of counterweight to the power of the States or the power of media that defend corporate interests. There are voices around the world, but we must magnify them

Martha Inés Romero

*Pax Christi
International's next
Secretary General*



strongly, so that advocacy succeeds in promoting justice, social cohesion and de-escalation of conflicts.

The Pax Christi Task

May I end with a reflection on the Synod on Synodality promoted by Pope Francis. For many who resist the changes promoted by Pope Francis, the synodal path could mean that "something changes so that nothing changes." Speaking from the experience in Latin America, the process has been participatory, ecclesial (not clerical), with a regional and cultural focus; this evidences an authentic intention that sensitive issues are addressed, such as the participation of women in decision-making spaces, or the acceptance of married priests, but also climate justice, the fight against human trafficking or the attention to migrants; perhaps not resolved, but definitely not evaded.

It is our task as part of the Pax Christi whole to question, to contribute, to advocate *ad intra* and towards States and corporate powers, to promote real transformations in people's lives. And this is achieved with persistence, organisation, and the certainty that the Kingdom is built from this land, the Pacha Mama for our ancestral communities.

Martha Inés Romero

For a reminder of our roots:

<https://paxchristi.net/about-us/>

Our website

Blogs, podcasts, past and future events – these are all on our Pax Christi Scotland website. All newsletters are archived there. You can pay your annual membership fee on the Membership page and make donations. Please explore and share:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org/>

Continued thanks to webmaster Chris Boles of Caledonian Websites:

<https://www.caledonianwebsites.com/>

Membership Reminder

Easiest method? Pay on the membership page of our website.

If you pay by online banking, please give your name to identify your payment.

If you wish to pay by cheque, send to the address below, cheques payable to Pax Christi Scotland.

You can also make regular donations on our 'donate' page - thank you.

Membership fees are £10 for waged, £5 for unwaged.

Explore the website for all our activities:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<http://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland)

[PaxChristiScotland](#)

[@PaxScotland](#)

Snail mail:

Pax Christi Scotland

c/o Xaverian Missionaries

Calder Avenue

Coatbridge ML5 4JS

YouTube Channel

You can find recordings of all our events at:

<https://www.youtube.com/>

[@paxchristiscotland](#)

Click on the word 'Subscribed' and you will be informed whenever a new recording is posted.

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Our Advent Vigil for a nonviolent world

Pace on earth. It's the eternal Christmas message - yet in this year of our Lord 2022, how many of us will take the time to consider what that means?

This has been a difficult year. The choice between heat and eat has become a reality for too many people in Scotland. Food banks and warm spaces have somehow become the rule rather than the shocking exception, and as we can see in the articles from the Global South, political problems, climate problems and financial problems beset our brothers and sisters throughout our common home.

We have written letters and signed petitions for peace in Ukraine. We have raised climate issues in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have dialogued to gain human rights for all in Colombia. We have liaised with Don't Bank On the Bomb to bring about divestment from nuclear weapons, and demonstrated with Justice and Peace Scotland at the Faslane nuclear base to emphasise the hideous cost (in financial and human terms) of nuclear weapons, and used social media to remind people that education, health, climate and peace all suffer because that cost is not used instead for humanitarian projects.

We've worked with Pax Christi International on issues of nuclear weapons and nonviolence.

And the sum of those activities reminds us how many people around the world are working for the same goal - for peace.

Our efforts are faith based. There CAN be peace on earth, and that's why we have invited Arianna Andreangeli, member of the Pax Christi Scotland executive committee, and our chaplain Fr John Convery to bring us together for an Advent peace vigil on December 8.

We wish you hope, love, joy and peace and we look forward to spending a short time with you in prayer and meditation.

You are invited to our Advent Vigil on Zoom on December 8, 2022 at 18.30 UK time

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZMkc-CoqTIsGdEyZTlex2PTypgCFBTB0ssl>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**** Register now for Pax Christi Scotland's Advent Vigil
December 8 at 6.30pm***

