



Pax Scotia

Issue 31

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Introducing Fr Jim Clarke sx

Joining the Peace Team



I am Jim Clarke, a priest with the Xaverian Missionaries and have now been assigned to the Xaverian Community in Coatbridge. I have been a member of the Congregation since 1981 and a priest since 1989. My missionary life has seen me spend many years in England, Brazil and Scotland. My theological training was done in London and then Chicago and in many ways, it was at this time that I was exposed to the issues of peace, justice, community organising and campaigning.

As Xaverians in the UK we are vowed to work on the margins, trying to build the Reign of God wherever we can. In Chicago, I remember that the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday was a demonstration, and each station was at buildings, offices, banks, and organisations who supported the arms trade or the gun lobby. In Brazil it was standing against the violence and assassinations meted out to the indigenous and landless in the Amazon.

My first assignment after Ordination was to the community in Preston. One of my community members was an Italian priest, Sebastian Tedesco. He had been jailed twice for refusing to pay his fines after being arrested protesting at the Samlesbury and Warton sites where BAE make fighter planes, and the UK Government were selling them to Indonesia, which was at war with East Timor. In the '90s, whilst this was going on, we hosted campaigners and protestors in our community in Preston. Among them were the Ploughshares activists and, God rest him, Bruce Kent.

*We were sad to have to say goodbye to our first chaplain, Fr John Convery sx, as he heads on the next step of his mission. In his place, we extend a **very** warm welcome to **Fr Jim Clarke**, who introduces himself here. He may not realise how much Pax Christi Scotland will ask of him in his new role! We know, however, that he will be as patient and loving as our chaplain as Fr John has been.*

I became aware that war and conflict are about power and money... both anti Gospel values. My seven years in Brazil, amongst the Basic Christian Communities, taught me that empowerment and simplicity are the way forward and how our God wants us to be.

"Peace, I leave you, my peace I give you."

These words are His parting gift to us.

Today, individuals are anxious, communities are separated, societies fractioned, countries in conflict and a world divided. We need peace more than ever.

I am well aware of the sterling work that Pax Christi Scotland has already achieved and am delighted to be part of the team and look forward to the challenges ahead.

Fr. Jim Clarke sx



Photos courtesy Church of Scotland



The deafening call for peace & reconciliation

Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields is Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He made history in February of this year when he travelled with Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to South Sudan, where they took part in peace moves. Dr Greenshields says this was the first time in 500 years that the three faith traditions have come together on such a mission. Here he reflects on the visit to the troubled East African country.

Changing Heart & Minds

Extraordinary, surreal, humbling and hopeful.

These are just a few words that sum up my Pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan with Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It was an historic moment – three Christian denominations standing shoulder to shoulder for the first time and wrapped in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

It was a moment more than 500 years in the making and we went as servants in Christ with humility, unity and love, to encourage changes in hearts and minds.

It was a privilege and a liberation of the spirit of God and the rapturous reception of the tens of thousands of people who lined the streets and filled the venues was astounding.

But the joy and happiness etched on their faces hid a crushing reality, for the brave and resilient people that we stood alongside are desperately tired of suffering profoundly from continued armed conflict, violence, corruption, floods and famine.

We heard their cries and anguish and their hopes and dreams loud and clear.

The world's youngest country has great potential and the call for peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, stability, prosperity and justice is deafening and we truly hope that those in power are really listening.

This is no stronger than among young people who are the future and they are the ones who will write this nation's next chapter.

Between 60-70% of the country's 11 million population identify as Christian and the churches – Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian – work closely together to try and make a difference.

It was an honour to represent the Church of Scotland which was invited to take part, along with members of the Presbyterian Church USA, due to its partnership with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan.

Since 2015, the Kirk has helped South Sudanese church leaders work at both a grassroots level and political level to try and bring unnecessary conflict to an end and build lasting peace.

We took that mission a step further by drawing the light of the world's press on South Sudan and speaking truth to power.

Uneasy allies since the country became independent in 2011, President Salva Kiir Mayardit, and his First Vice-president, Riek Machar, both indicated a willingness to encourage people to move forward in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields



I believe that it is within their reach to extend justice and compassion to all and the door is now open to signing a peace agreement that stalled in 2018. Inaction is unconscionable because more than 400,000 people are said to have lost their lives through civil war, 9.4 million people need humanitarian aid and an estimated two million are living in makeshift camps whilst others have fled abroad.

An estimated eight million people are expected to experience food insecurity in 2023 and women and girls are extremely vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence.

My colleague Rev Fiona Smith, Principal Clerk to the General Assembly, spent time with some of them and said their beaming smiles and air of hopefulness took her breath away, while their cries of pain left her heartbroken.

They have no voice and the international community has a responsibility to speak up for them and call for an end to the barbaric treatment of women and girls.

My brothers in Christ and I will continue to hold the people of South Sudan in our prayers and highlight their plight and it is now up to those in power to turn warm words into meaningful action for the world is watching.

But South Sudan needs help and I would strongly urge the UK Government to restore its international aid budget to South Sudan, cut by 59% in 2021, to its previous level to help humanitarian aid agencies swimming against a tidal wave.

Dr Iain Greenshields



Holding the arms industry to account for a stable, safer and peaceful world

*During Pope Francis's visit to DR Congo in February, he told a meeting of Jesuit priests "Today it really seems that the main problem is the production of weapons," adding that people continue to manufacture & sell arms when "there is still so much hunger in the world." Here **Emma Cockburn**, Scotland Coordinator of CAAT, takes a hard look at the arms industry...*

The arms industry is one of the most lucrative businesses in the world, with companies like Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, and Raytheon generating billions of pounds in profits each year.

These companies all operate within Scotland, and not only do they receive funding from the Scottish government through their funding arm, Scottish Enterprise, but they also flood countries worldwide with weapons, regardless of the potential consequences, such as violations of International Humanitarian Law. Arms companies often attempt to justify their actions by claiming it is necessary to maintain global stability and protect citizens. However, the reality is quite the opposite, and the industry prioritises profit over human lives.

The UK government have licensed over £20 billion in arms to Saudi Arabia since the conflict in Yemen began in 2015. BAE Systems, one of the leading manufacturers of these arms, have made billions in profit from these licences, despite the Saudi-led coalition being accused of committing war crimes and human rights violations, including targeting civilians, which has led to thousands of deaths in Yemen directly related to the conflict.

Furthermore, the arms industry engages in lobbying and other forms of influence, including the revolving door, to ensure that governments continue to buy their products. This diverts resources from other critical areas, such as education, healthcare, foreign aid and infrastructure.

The industry's focus on profit often comes at the expense of human lives, exacerbating conflicts, fuelling war, and increasing global instability.

The conflict in South Sudan is another example of this, with the government and opposition being accused of committing human rights abuses and war crimes and often both sides using arms from the same source. This has contributed to the intensification of the conflict and the escalation of violence, resulting in the displacement of millions of people and the loss of countless lives.

With an immeasurable number of weapons in the region, reaching a genuinely peaceful resolution is more challenging, both in South Sudan and other active conflict zones.

Emma Cockburn
takes a hard look at the arms industry.



Even outside active conflict zones, the more weapons available, the higher the risk that they will be used violently to intimidate, harm and kill others, leading to an erosion of civil liberties and economic and social instability.

The arms industry must be held accountable for contributing to these issues, and action must be taken by the governments licensing these arms so we can hope to create safer, more stable, and more peaceful communities worldwide.

Emma Cockburn

Pax Christi Scotland liaises with CAAT (Campaign Against the Arms Trade) Scotland to campaign for peace worldwide.

To take action or find out more, email Emma (CAAT's Scotland Coordinator) at scotland@caat.org.uk

To read Pope Francis on the arms trade, see: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-02/pope-the-world-is-headed-toward-the-abyss.html?>



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:

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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>

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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/](https://www.youtube.com/@paxchristiscotland)

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

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What price peace for women in 2023?

Pace in 2023 seems under threat in so many ways. War in Ukraine has passed the one year mark, and there is conflict on every continent, creating more refugees fleeing to safety. The earthquake on the Turkish-Syrian border has been a cruel reminder that the forces of nature are beyond our control. Women survivors hold it together for the remnants of families trying to pick up the pieces.

On a more domestic level, it is women who are the voices of their own communities. On issues as diverse as gender violence, inadequate housing, and workplace inequalities, it is women who seek - and find - solutions.

But at what price? In seeking peace of mind and peace itself, what toll does that take on those who shoulder that burden?

We invite you to join two feisty women at our Pax Christi Scotland special online event for International Women's Day - women whose lives are witness to the fact that campaigning on the important issues that affect women throughout our common home is tough, but worth the price.

They are Sr Teresia Wamuyu Wachira, co-president of Pax Christi International, a member of the Loreto Sisters (IBVM), a Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader of the Peace and Conflict studies at St Paul University in Nairobi, Kenya; and Helen Martin, lecturer at the Glasgow University School of Education (People, Place and Social Change), whose credentials include successfully leading campaigns for better housing in Glasgow's schemes. We are honoured that they will share their thoughts with us.

Join us on March 8 for our online event:

International Women's Day: What Price Peace?

To register, go to: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtcOGorj4oHd0XJF9Y6ARfik830E-LCbm-](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83061223683)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email



Sr Teresia Wamuyu Wachira

**What Price Peace?
Our March 8
speakers**



Helen Martin

The next important date for our diaries is on Thursday, April 20, ahead of International Mother Earth Day.

Join us for *Mother Earth, the environment and peace*

Our speakers will be Fr Charles Chilufya, a Jesuit priest working for the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JCAM) as director of the Justice and Ecology Office, who attended both Cop26 & Cop27; Zambian journalist Mike Mwenda, who has written about the effects of the climate emergency throughout Africa; and Scottish climate activist and campaigner Zarina Ahmad, who can advise on how to care for Mother Earth.

For the April 20 event, register at:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAlcuirjgvGtx7sXcvgRP_iTddFRGUhdEH](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83061223683)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email