



# Pax Scotia

## Issue 40

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## Human Rights: For ALL the human family

**Delia Chatoor**, Pax Christi Scotland's ear to the UN in Trinidad and Tobago and member of the Caribbean Climate Change Network, reflects on the anniversary in December of the Declaration of Human Rights.

December 10<sup>th</sup> 2023 will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (The Declaration). To commemorate the event, the United Nations (UN) will convene a High-Level event, December 11-12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 which will mark the culmination of a year of activities.

The Declaration has served as a bulwark on issues touching on the **"recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family"**. It was adopted in the aftermath of the horrific events of the Second World War and was viewed as a **"statement of principles"** which most of the international community thought should be elucidated.

Even though the Declaration is merely declaratory, the UN Charter states in Article 55 (c) that the Organisation "shall promote, *inter alia*, universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." Every UN Member State, therefore, is called upon to respect this provision.

Over the past 75 years, many legal instruments have been adopted which cover a range of rights which include civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, elimination of all forms of discrimination, rights of women and children.

The recognition and implementation of these instruments have not been without challenges as they call for domestic measures to facilitate their application.

This year's anniversary, therefore, opens the door for the international community to adopt the goals set by the UN to achieve an enhanced awareness of the promotion and protection of human rights.

In his encyclical letter of 1963, ***Pacem in Terris***, St. Pope John XXIII stated that the Church recognised a number of rights which included the right to life, freedom of speech and publication, the right to bodily integrity and the means necessary for the proper development of life. Many of these concepts have been codified in individual international and regional treaties on human rights.

In 1998 on the commemoration of the Jubilee of the Declaration, it was noted that in many parts of the world, human rights **"are in crisis."** The view was expressed then that there appeared to be an overconcentration **on rights** rather than **the duties** which were equally necessary to ensure the protection of the vulnerable.

Twenty-five years later, we must pause and consider whether this has changed so that there is an improvement in the recognition and implementation of fundamental rights and freedoms. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary should be the appropriate occasion to examine critically whether the international community has been successful in raising awareness of and commitment to the promotion of human rights **for all**.

The Church must continue to collaborate with civil society and international organisations and "remind men of good will of these rights and to distinguish them from unwarranted or false claims." (CCC #1930). The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary must examine the past but also seek ways to address the challenges which could emerge over the next twenty-five years. The tools and systems used in the past may not be adequate more so as we are witnessing new threats to humankind and the call, for example, for the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

In his 2023 Report on the work of the UN, the Secretary-General reminded the international community that human rights were **"central to our development"** with the expectation that no-one would be left behind.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the Declaration remains **"a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations."** The rights and freedoms **must** be taught, disseminated, recognised, and above all observed by **WE THE PEOPLES** of the world.

*Delia Chatoor*



Jenny  
Manson

*Pax Christi Scotland joined Pax Christi International's call for a ceasefire in the Middle East. The Scottish National Party's efforts to get the agreement of all MPs for a call for a ceasefire failed. Those efforts led to a number of Labour MPs leaving the Opposition Front Benches. It is a contentious issue. However, people around the world have marched in support of a ceasefire. We are privileged to share Jenny Manson's speech & thoughts...*

## This war is not in my name

**Jenny Manson** is a member of Jews for Justice for Palestinians and Co-Chair of Jewish Voice for Labour (JVL). At the March for Palestine in London on 11th November, there was a large Jewish Bloc. Jenny was asked to speak by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Here she shares that speech and reflects on the on-going situation

This was my speech:

*"These are not hate marches. Instead, I have found an atmosphere of solidarity, even love between us all. This is not a battle between Jews and Muslims as our leading politicians seem to want to frame it, forgetting the Palestinians altogether! This is a march against collective punishment.*

*I am also proud to be marching on Armistice Day, a day designated to be devoted to the pursuit of global peace. As Lord Soames reminded us all on Radio 4 this morning, this day was intended to reflect our right to live in freedom. And this march, not a hate march, but a march to protest the rights of Palestinians.*

*I was born on this day, the eleventh of November, in 1948 - the year of the creation of Israel and the year of the Nakba.*

*This was shortly after the full horrors of the holocaust emerged. I was told that my father took to his bed and covered his face with a sheet - as he did in 1982 when it emerged that Israel stood back and allowed the Sabra and*

*and Shatila massacre in Lebanon.*

*This day, the eleventh of November, has never seemed to me so bleak. We are marching because Israel has been given the go ahead by our government, among others in the West, to wage this war on Palestinians in Gaza and on the West Bank, to justify war crimes in exchange for war crimes by Hamas with no reference to the illegal occupation, the build-up of illegal settlements and the murders of Palestinians on the West Bank.*

*It is not disrespectful to Jews that people of all backgrounds walk in mutual loving support to call for a ceasefire in Gaza.*

*After all, what does a ceasefire mean? Simply a plea to end the killing.*

*Antony Blinken said yesterday far too many Palestinians have been killed; far too many have suffered these past weeks.*

*How can he have only realised this now? What can he and our leaders do to repair things? Well, at the very least follow on from France and call for a ceasefire today. As for all the Jews marching today or supporting from home, I call aloud again: this war is not in my name."*

JVL was formed in 2017 to campaign for Jeremy Corbyn's policies and to challenge recognisably false allegations of anti-Semitism, used to attack Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters.

We understand and fear the reality of anti-Semitism; all have family who have survived persecution. One clear purpose of these allegations however has been to silence voices supporting Palestine; there has been a conflation of criticism of Israel and of Zionism with antisemitism. Reflecting this you are six times **more** likely to be investigated by Labour following claims of anti-Semitism, if you are Jewish than if you not. Jews have questioned Labour's apparent weaponisation of antisemitism.

There is a strong connection for many Jewish people with Israel. My mother lived in Palestine in the 1930s after escaping a pogrom in Russia; it was a haven for her then.

But the oppression of Jewish people over centuries, cannot justify the occupation, the siege of Gaza, the Nation-State Law and the settler aggression. Nor can it justify the war crimes carried out by Hamas and by Israel.

The UK must call for an immediate ceasefire.

*Jenny Manson*



# The struggle against poverty?

## A struggle for peace

***Peter Kelly** is the Director of the Poverty Alliance, the national anti-poverty network in Scotland. He joined the Alliance as Policy Manager in 2002, becoming Director in 2004. Peter also represents the Alliance in a variety of forums and networks, including Scottish Drugs Forum and the Living Wage Foundation's Advisory Council. He was Vice President of the European Anti-Poverty Network from 2012 to 2018. worked at the Scottish Low Pay Unit, helping to campaign for the introduction of the National Minimum Wage.*

At the Poverty Alliance we get to see some of the best aspects of Scottish society in action. Given our focus this may seem surprising, but everyday we get to see and hear about the compassionate ways that our members and others across civil society support people who are experiencing poverty. Whether it is making sure everyone has enough to eat, helping those who are homeless to find suitable accommodation, or providing connection to those who are isolated, organisations demonstrate the compassion required to create a society that is free from poverty.

These countless daily acts of compassion by organisations and individuals are matched by their desire for justice for those who experience poverty. Members of our network know that compassion on its own is not enough, will not lead to the change in our society that we need.

***It is justice that will end poverty, not charity. Justice will be delivered through change to the systems, structures and political choices that sustain and reproduce poverty.***

In Scotland we have taken some steps towards the kinds of changes that we need to address the deep roots of poverty. We have begun to develop a social security system that prioritises the dignity of those who use it. Our system has backed up warm words about dignity and respect by introducing policies such as the Scottish Child Payment, which has helped stem the tide of child poverty here.

We have also ensured that Scottish schemes to support people into employment are free from the conditions, better known as compulsion, this are a prominent feature of the UK social security system. Our programmes are voluntary and are likely to have a bigger impact as a result.

These are important steps, but they are initial and somewhat faltering. It would be hard to look at the the priorities we have set in Scotland and conclude that we are doing all we can to address poverty.

A recent report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that destitution in Scotland was increasing at a slower rate than elsewhere in the UK. This is hardly something to celebrate.

That we are even discussing destitution shows how far we have to go.

But the steps that have been taken here should give us some hope for bigger change in the future

**Peter Kelly**, Director of the Poverty Alliance



There is growing support for the idea of a Minimum Income Guarantee in Scotland, a potentially transformational policy that would ensure that paid employment, social security and services guaranteed a decent level of income below which nobody would be allowed to fall.

The Scottish Government is exploring the idea, and an increasing number of groups and organisations are backing the concept. It is the kind of policy that if fully implemented would be the foundation for a society grounded in justice that we desire.

***Just as poverty and inequality are at the heart of conflict around the globe, so it is at home in Scotland. Our appalling levels of poverty and inequality in Scotland are directly linked to violence, both physical and psychological, in our communities.***

The struggle against poverty is genuinely a struggle for peace in our communities affected by poverty. It is a struggle that we must all join, and it is a struggle that can be won.

*Peter Kelly*

Director of the Poverty Alliance

[www.povertyalliance.org](http://www.povertyalliance.org)



## 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

**Please pay by the invoice sent out (see below) - OR**

**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 or by standing order - 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>

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

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

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

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)

[@paxchristiscotland](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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Could we remind you to pay membership dues by standing order as per the invoice circulated at the start of October. Thank you for all your support - we look forward to you signing up once more and to you joining together at the AGM.

# Pax Christi Scotland AGM 2023

As you know, our AGM will be held on December 8 and 9 at the Conforti Institute, home of our chaplaincy, the Xaverian Missionaries. For your satnav information, the address and postcode are in the column on the left and below. And we will also be on line, for those who are unable to get to Lanarkshire. You could even have a hybrid experience, joining us online on the Friday evening for the business part of the AGM and then in person on the Saturday to hear our interesting and inspiring speakers and sharing time with other Pax Christi Scotland members.

Whatever your choice - and we know how busy everyone is and that we are very widespread - we hope you will be with us that weekend.

## The practicalities:

You are invited to the Pax Christi Scotland 2023 AGM, December 8 & 9, on line or in person.

December 8 – AGM business

December 9 – Speakers and discussion.

## ON LINE

Dec 8, 2023 19:30 UK time

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81234567890>

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

Dec 9, 2023 09:30 UK time

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81234567890>

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

## IN PERSON

You are very welcome to attend in person at Conforti Institutes Missionary House, Calder House, Calder Av, Coatbridge ML5 4JS.

The cost for the Friday evening and all day Saturday (Supper Friday 6.30pm, overnight, Saturday breakfast and lunch) is £55. Non-residential (Saturday only) is £20. Please book with

Anna Sweeney

Tel: 01236 707 901

Email: [anna.sweeney@xavs.org](mailto:anna.sweeney@xavs.org)

**Guest speakers on the Saturday include Bishop Brian McGee, recently returned from the Synod in Rome, who will discuss the role of dialogue in seeking nonviolent outcomes, and anti-war activist Jonathon Shafi.**

*There will be a Vigil Mass at 3.15pm (15.15h) UK time and our weekend will come to an end at 4pm.*

