



Pax Scotia

Issue 10

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COP26

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY



What does Cop 26 have to do with peace? Absolutely everything. Famine, floods and other unseasonal weather patterns are driving migration and threatening social stability. The decision makers who come together for Cop 26 must act decisively and speedily to bring the climate emergency under control.

Don't feel you know enough? Pope Francis's *Laudato Si* document is an excellent guide. Pax Christi Scotland welcomes the 'Laudato Si Book Club' initiative, which will meet on line for seven fortnightly one-hour sessions each starting at 7.30pm from June 1. Before each meeting, participants will read a chapter of *Laudato Si*, and there will be presentations and discussion.

To join, email Eileen at laudatosibookclub@gmail.com

It really IS good to talk...nicely

By Marian Pallister
Pax Christi Scotland
chair

Kit Fry, a member of our executive committee, wasn't able to join our last Zoom event (*The Role of Dialogue in Engendering Peace*) and was delighted to be able to catch up on our new Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uz5PGG05rek&t=155s>). That facility doesn't, of course, allow catch up questions, and Kit said he would have liked to ask our speakers how to deal with those situations when our hackles rise and dialogue doesn't seem to be the option for gaining peaceful ground.

He told me of a couple of 'silly' situations when it was all too tempting to respond with a smart remark, and of a more serious circumstance when two drunks on a bus were abusive racially and in religious terms. Kit admits he was ready to intervene but that the victim of the aggression talked the two men down into peaceful conversation.

Addressing discrimination and marginalisation of any kind is part of Pax Christi Scotland's remit. And nobody said it would be easy. We're living in difficult times, emphasised by the pandemic, when people are tense and emotionally fragile. In the arena of social media, where it is all too easy to respond dismissively, patronisingly, or aggressively to people scarcely known to us (who has 672 friends in 'real life?'), moderators are having to talk people down even on pages dedicated to seemingly 'gentle' pursuits such as gardening and wild life.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes: 'Digital relationships, which do not demand the slow and gradual cultivation of friendships, stable interaction or the building of a consensus that matures over time, have the appearance of sociability. Yet they do not really build community; instead, they tend to disguise and expand the very individualism that finds expression in xenophobia and in contempt for the vulnerable. Digital connectivity is not enough to build bridges. It is not capable of uniting humanity.' (43)

Our last Zoom reminded us to think first, to put ourselves in the shoes of the vulnerable, to dialogue to unite humanity. Pax Christi Scotland uses social media. May the Holy Spirit guide us – and those who 'follow' us – to use it only for peace and justice.

Marian Pallister



Pax Christi Scotland Taking Action

A World Free Of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Arianna Andeangeli-Clark reminds us that divestment is action we can all pursue

Responsible or “ethical” investment has become a buzzword in today’s economy. In the past few years, campaigners have worked steadfastly to lobby institutions and businesses to encourage them to invest in assets that pursue the common good and to stop financing activities that instead defy this broad purpose.

Concerted actions aimed at pushing local councils and universities in Scotland away from investing in fossil fuel production have often made headlines. This year the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) came into force, making nuclear weapons “controversial” investments, and potentially contrary to international law. However, the UK Government is still committing significant resources to fund the Trident nuclear programme and investment in the nuclear weapons industry by private sector actors remains rife throughout the world.

As long ago as 2018, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) highlighted in its [Global Report on the Financing of Nuclear Weapons Producers](#) that there were 329 institutions - banks, insurance companies, pension funds and asset managers - based predominantly in North America and Europe investing in the nuclear production industry. These investments made available a staggering \$525bn to these producers. ICAN partner Don’t Bank On The Bomb released its 2021 guide in May and put Scotland’s investors in nuclear weapons production at £7,262.7m (<https://nukedivestmentscotland.org/>).

Decisions on investment are not economically or morally neutral. They are the expression of values and attitudes ingrained in the investing entity and therefore should be open to scrutiny. Corporate decision-makers should be held accountable, especially when they are entrusted with public money. Don’t Bank on the Bomb’s [Hall of Fame](#) lists “virtuous” investors who have stepped away from financing the nuclear weapons industry, showing that funding this industry can be reversed.

In his Encyclical [Pacem in Terris](#), Pope John XXIII deplored the arms race as “crying out” against peace and human life and singled out nuclear weapons as incompatible with the peaceful existence of mankind and with the “ethics of solidarity” that the Gospel teaches as a basis for human relations (para. 112). In [Laudato Si](#), which celebrates its sixth anniversary this year, Pope Francis reiterates the prescient message of *Pacem in Terris* and highlights the threat that nuclear weapons pose for our Mother Earth and for peace. His words add greater urgency to the call for disarmament and for withdrawing any form of support, especially financial, from the nuclear weapons industries. In [December 2017](#) Pope Francis called explicitly for a world free of nuclear weapons to avoid a humanitarian and natural catastrophe that would devastate the Earth and destroy the livelihoods of many.

On May 20, Lloyds Banking Group, which includes the Bank of Scotland, held its AGM in Edinburgh. Don’t Bank On The Bomb’s 2021 report shows the group holds investments of £3,409.2m in the nuclear industry. The other major investors in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction, making up that £7,262.7m, are Nat West (formerly the RBS Group), Standard Life Aberdeen, Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme, the University of Glasgow and the University of Strathclyde.

If you have links with any of these organisations, don’t hesitate to write asking them to divest. To make it easy, Don’t Bank On The Bomb Scotland has template letters at <https://nukedivestmentscotland.org/template-letters-2/>

Reflections on Peace

A tale of two boys

Ceasefires are fragile. As the world holds its breath and prays for peace in the Holy Land, Pax Christi Scotland has been given permission to publish this report by a trusted source (who we are asked not to name) in Palestine, written while the conflict continued.

It is very hard to write these days. I remember the times when HIRN (**Hebron International Resource Network**) was producing two to three emails per day to provide updates on its projects and the general situation under occupation. The current idiotic "conflict" has made us glued to our TV screens, Facebook, Insta and WhatsApp with devastating effect on our psychological and mental health.

That is not to say that HIRN's work did not continue in the meantime. It is to say that we are so drained to the point that we cannot report anymore.

Nevertheless, as Palestine has always made us accustomed to its ironies and immaculate cynicism, we came across two pictures in the last couple of days that paint two different stories for two different "boys".

The first boy is Obaida, the eldest son of a friend of ours who has been working for the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in Hebron for the past 20 years. Akram, the father, has such a sweet, calm and beautiful soul. I know for sure that he is devastated by this news, especially knowing that his son has received three bullets to the heart during low-level clashes with Israeli soldiers manning the military tower that hovers heavily over the entrance of Al Arrub Refugee Camp.

Obaida's life was shaped by the occupation; the omni-presence of soldiers in and around the camp has painted his life with darkness, especially after being arrested twice. He speaks about his ordeal in a seven-minute video that was produced by Defence for Children International (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjAsFhYOwGc>)

The video really does offer a unique look at the mindset of Obaida (and teenagers like him) and the lack of hope they feel when the occupation dominates their lives.

I saw another video when his body was transported in the ambulance. His father, Akram, was there. He must have aged ten years on that day. God be with him, as I know that his gentle spirit cannot bear this big loss.

In the midst of the sadness caused by the death of Obaida, Palestine surprised us with another story of a boy who lives 40 minutes south of Al Arrub in another frontline community.

It is the story of Ala Hathaleen who lives in the Bedouin community of Umm Al Khair. You actually may know Ala as HIRN and the Village's Group have been fundraising for his expensive studies for the past four years. He informed us that he successfully defended his research paper titled "Characteristics, assessment and management of Patellofemoral pain syndrome [pain at the front of the knee] from the Palestinian physiotherapists perspective". Sounds complicated, no?

This news brought a bit of a smile, as it resembles a ray of hope of a better tomorrow...at least for Ala. We at HIRN and the Village's Group are very happy to hear that he's FINALLY done with his studies. This development should free us from having to worry about fundraising for him EACH semester. Imagine if he wants to continue his higher education!!!!!!!!!!!!

That is Palestine: sorrow and sunshine...sad present and a bright future...Deadly conflict and mutual cooperation across the divide.

And we are sure that the sorrow that has bombarded us since the beginning of Ramadan will be followed with better days. It is hard to see those days through the rubbles of Gaza. Yet, somehow, someday we shall overcome. Palestine has taught us that.

Examples? The tale of these two boys.

**To support the voluntary organisation HIRN: https://www.nonviolenceinternational.net/hirn_partner*

Solidarity with Korea & Exploring Clause 6 of the Treaty

We have two important events planned for this summer, which we hope you will **put in your diaries** now. We will give the details to register for them nearer the time.

Pax Christi Scotland was accepted as a member organisation of Pax Christi International at the same time as South Korea, a country that like Scotland hosts nuclear weapons that its people don't want.

Their situation is considerably more threatening than ours, of course. For decades, a treaty that would bring peace has gone unratified. The National Council of Churches in Korea has been exerting its strength on behalf of peace and reconciliation for the Korean Peninsula along with the ecumenical community and peace-loving forces in the world.

Pax Christi Scotland has been working ecumenically to promote the Korea Peace Appeal (see opposite), and on **Sunday, July 25 at 12 noon** our time, we will host an event at which **Sandy Sneddon**, Church of Scotland Asia Secretary, Faith Impact Forum, and **Anselmo Lee** of Pax Christi Korea will explore the current situation and the hopes for future peace.

Clause 6 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons focuses on compensation for victims of nuclear weapons and the testing of such weapons. It also seeks reparation of land damaged by testing of weapons of mass destruction. Many Scottish servicemen were present in the South Pacific when the US and UK military tested nuclear weapons. The UK government has refused to acknowledge that subsequent illnesses were the result of radiation exposure.

At our event at **7pm UK time on Sunday, August 29**, we will hear from a victim of exposure to radiation, the widow of a Scot who fought for compensation, and from Dr Becky Alexis-Martin, Lecturer in Human Geography at Manchester Metropolitan University. Dr Alexis-Martin's book **Disarming Doomsday** explores the human impact of nuclear weapons since Hiroshima.

Korea Peace Appeal

More than 350 South Korean and international civil society organisations last year launched a campaign calling for an end of the Korean War.



The Korea Peace Appeal campaign will last until July 27, 2023, the 70th anniversary of the Korea Armistice. It aims to collect **100,000,000** signatures.

The appeal makes four demands:

1. End the Korean War and establish a peace agreement.
2. Create a Korean Peninsula, and a world, free from nuclear weapons and nuclear threat.
3. Resolve the conflict with dialogue and cooperation instead of sanctions and pressure.
4. Break from the vicious cycle of the arms race and invest in human security and environmental sustainability.

We have a link to the petition on our website (<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org/>). Let us know if you sign so that we can update our Korean friends (use the contact page for this and to give us all your PCS news).

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 membership on the Membership page and make donations. Please explore and share:

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

Continued thanks to webmaster Chris Boles of Caledonian Computers -

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

Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

www.paxchristiscotland.org

<https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland>

[@PaxScotland](https://twitter.com/PaxScotland) (Twitter)

Pax Christi Scotland, c/o Justice and Peace Scotland, 65 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 2BX

Pax Christi Scotland now has a Youtube Channel where you can find recordings of past events. Find us at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCcmLpQv27Py_ul14szp95g

If you subscribe to the channel (just click on the word 'Subscribed'), you will be informed whenever a new recording is posted.