



Pax Scotia

Issue 15

NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE BANNED NOW

But Strathclyde Pension Fund still invests millions in nuclear weapons producers.

Profiting from the production of banned weapons is unacceptable!

If you live in **Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire or South Lanarkshire**, ask your local councillors to support our model resolution on divestment. Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire and Inverclyde have already passed a resolution.

Check out the **CAMPAIGN** page of our website for a copy of the model resolution and our template letter:

<https://nukedivestmentscotland.org/local-authority-divestment-resolutions/>



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Pax Christi Scotland works closely with Don't Bank On The Bomb. Together we can stop local authorities 'banking on the bomb' through pension funds and other investments. DBOTB has done all the hard work, with an updated report & a template letter to send to local councillors. <https://nukedivestmentscotland.org/tell-cop26-sponsor-natwest-to-stop-financing-nukes/>

November: the month when we just might save our common home

By Marian Pallister,
Pax Christi Scotland
Chair

We have tried to make our voices heard. We have signed the petitions, joined the pilgrimages, planted the trees, listened to the speeches, and taken part in the webinars. Now the decision-makers are (in reality or virtually) lining up in this so-called 'last chance saloon' called COP26.

If nothing else, Greta Thunberg's emotional 'How dare you!' must surely have hit home with some of those who put profit ahead of the health of the planet. Pope Francis's growing *Laudato Si* movement, and the advice he will continue to offer, must surely convince those decision-makers that people of faith around the world can't all be wrong.

'We don't have time to wait,' Pope Francis said earlier this year. We really don't.

As a peace organisation – a Catholic peace organisation – we are deeply concerned that the effects of climate change are creating emergency situations around the world. Situations that threaten peace of mind and peace itself. We pray for those who can no longer produce enough food for their families. We pray for those whose houses, villages, crops and livelihoods have been destroyed. We pray for those living in disputed territories, where deserts have replaced fertile plains and floodwaters have created an alien environment. We pray for those who migrate, seeking a peaceful future and instead encountering hostility. By 2030, 118 million extremely poor people in Africa will experience *greater* drought, floods and extreme heat, hindering all progress towards growth & peace.

Pope Francis prays for our earth in his *Laudato Si* document, asking God to 'Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.'

As we enter this decisive month, may all of us Pax Christi Scotland members look on this as a beginning, not an end – a time for continued action as well as for prayer.

Marian Pallister

Pax Christi Scotland Peace issues

Our Children – Teaching Them Peace

According to Save the Children, more children than ever are now living in areas impacted by conflict – some 357 million around the world. In the past decade, the number of UN-verified cases of children being killed and maimed has gone up by some 300 per cent. In the Middle East, two in five children live in a conflict-affected area.

Tables collated by Defence for Children International listing the number of children killed in Palestine, updated in September of this year, give a total of 73 this year alone (there have been years since the start of this century when as many as 546 children have died, others when as few as five were lost in this particular conflict).*

A 2019 report from Save The Children noted that 24 million children affected by conflict need mental health support, and of course in the past two years, children's mental health even in peaceful countries such as Scotland has been adversely affected by the COVID pandemic.

How do we teach our children about peace in a world that seems so hostile to their wellbeing?

At the Pax Christi Scotland AGM on Saturday, November 20, we hope to address this challenge, recognising that peace in the future depends on the mindset of today's children. We will welcome Dr Abdelfattah Abusrour from the Alrowwad Community Centre in Palestine. He will be in conversation with Callum and Roisin Timms, Scottish teachers and members of Pax Christi Scotland. And of course, there will be an opportunity for wider discussion.

Abdelfattah is the inspirational founder of Alrowwad, the arts and culture organisation set up in Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem in 1998 and registered as a not-for-profit organisation in 2003. The driving force behind the organisation is the aim to empower children and women by targeting behaviour, knowledge, concepts and practices through creative and non-violent means. Alrowwad is primarily the 'home of hope, dream, imagination and creativity'.



Abdelfattah says, 'Everybody is a change maker. Nobody has the right to say, "I can't do anything," because otherwise every day that comes will continue to be worse than the day that goes. This is not a heritage that anyone can be proud to leave to our children and the generations to come.'

That is of course, hugely testing in Palestine. But is it less so in our own society, where our children are troubled, isolated and conflicted by situations other than those affecting the kids empowered by Alrowwad?

Callum, Roisin and Abdelfattah will discuss how we teach children peace. We hope you will join them and contribute to this core issue of Pax Christi Scotland.

Peace Round-up

Pax Christi Scotland has produced a peace prayer card with a very meaningful meditation composed by board member Hugh Foy. If you would like to share these in your parishes and other networks, please email through the website with a number (perhaps 20-60 as a starter?) and an address. If you are able to give a small donation towards costs, that can also be done safely through the website (<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org/donate/>).

New Pax Christi International Nonviolence Tool

The nonviolence tool (available at <https://paxchristi.net/2021/10/19/new-publication-policy-makers-tool-for-nonviolence/>) was launched on October 21 at an online event.

One of the inspirational speakers, American David Grosso from the District of Columbia, Washington DC, explained a successful project that took nonviolence approaches into schools, changing policies that had included sanctions and exclusions which impacted most negatively on black students' attendance and achievements.

Mr Grosso admitted that it had been harder to change minds than to change policies, but with a 'spirit of respect and love as an alternative to pushing students out', all suspensions and expulsions were banned – leading to fewer violent actions.

Training to enable restorative practices has now been provided for teachers and systemic racism is being successfully addressed. A school mental health programme has been created, putting a mental health practitioner into every school. Teachers, Mr Grosso said, now recognise their own role in loving not chasing their students as a result of embracing nonviolence in the school system.

Every society – perhaps every school – has its different challenges. At our AGM on November 20, we will hear how educators in Palestine and Scotland approach those challenges in order to teach children peace – to bring peace to children (see Page 2).

Here is the link to the online Nonviolence Tool launch event, where you can hear David Grosso and the other speakers: <https://www.facebook.com/paxchristi.net/videos/1061251591302474>

Register for our AGM at the link on P4.

Book Corner

On November 25, Pax Christi Scotland will hold a Zoom event to mark the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

One of our speakers is journalist and author **Frances Harrison**, whose book ***Still Counting the Dead – Survivors of Sri Lanka's Hidden War*** is a powerful scene-setter for our event.

Told through a series of interviews with those who lived through the hellish end of Sri Lanka's civil war, there are lessons here about how any society could become brutalised, and yet how individuals can offer a generosity of spirit even in the most horrific situations (Portobello Books).

Pax Christi Scotland member Francis Flynn recommends David Torkingham's ***Wisdom from the Western Isles: The Making of a Mystic*** (John Hunt Publishing & also available on Kindle). Francis calls it a 'gem of a book', leading towards a 'complete thinking about prayer and closeness to Jesus'.

Is there a book that you would recommend to fellow members that explores issues of peace and nonviolence? Email your suggestion/reviews through the website:

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

Membership Reminder

Most membership fees are due in November at the time of the AGM (if you joined recently, renew **next** November).

You can pay on line on the membership page of our website. There you can set up an annual payment so that we don't have to remind you.

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

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

Explore the website for all our activities: www.paxchristiscotland.org

Sri Lanka and Police Scotland

Don't forget to send our letter (written jointly with Human Rights Watch, Freedom From Torture, & the Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace & Justice) to your MSPs. The letter seeks to end Police Scotland training Sri Lankan police personnel, despite continued human rights violations. Copy the letter on the correspondence page then go to

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

Scroll to 'Contact your politicians', enter your postcode and choose the 'list MSPs' link. Paste the letter into the box & send.

Some MSPs have already responded and Mercedes Villalba MSP continues to keep the issue live in the Scottish Parliament and with Police Scotland. Thank you for **your** support.

Gender violence is a major issue in Sri Lanka, which our November 25 event (see P4) will address.



Some important dates for your diary

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