



Pax Scotia

Issue 3

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On September 21 we celebrate World Peace Day – a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. The UN has also dedicated October 2 (the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi) as The International Day of Non-Violence. Gandhi was a pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence.

**“Happy are the peace makers:
they shall be called the children of God”**

By Arianna Andreangeli
Pax Christi Scotland
Executive Committee

The Season of Creation, from September 1 to October 4, seeks that we give our common home a 'jubilee' – a rest from all that we subject it to. Here, Arianna Andreangeli reflects of the links between exploitation of the earth and the threats to peace.

This Season of Creation calls us to reflect upon our apostolate. How can we be peacemakers in a world where nature is exploited and where poverty and injustice breed new wars?

In his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls us to an ecological conversion, built on justice and love and care for our mother Earth and for our brothers and sisters, starting from the weakest (LS: 216-219).

Athena Peralta, World Council of Churches Lead on Economic and Social Justice, says “...the concept of jubilee holds together economic and ecological justice; and how it reveals the truth that our redemption from financial indebtedness and material poverty is inextricably intertwined with the redemption of the land from wanton extraction and exploitation in pursuit of profit and economic growth.”

Let us be nourished during this Season of Creation by the Holy Spirit and guided by our Lord Jesus.

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, here am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20). He is in our midst as we seek to be open to others, especially those whose homes are no more; He is in our midst as we look for new words to speak peace and justice, especially to those in power. He is with us as we stand in the face of our Mother Earth and listen for that still small voice through which our Lord will speak. *Arianna Andreangeli*

Making our voice heard in lockdown



Left: The “Non-Violence” (or “Knotted Gun”) sculpture by Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd on display at the UN Visitors’ Plaza. UN Photo/Fan Xiao



Under the magnifying glass: the arms trade

Some companies - and countries - may have thought that the preoccupation with the pandemic would allow transactions to go unnoticed.

They weren't reckoning on the power of social media to spread the word, and so it has been possible to continue to put the arms trade under the magnifying glass.

Of course, because of the pandemic, Pax Christi Scotland's number one method of getting our message out has been social media and we hope that you are following us on Twitter and Facebook and sharing the information we are able to offer there.

It was shocking – and deeply disappointing – to learn earlier this month that Switzerland is selling arms that are exacerbating both the catastrophic situation in Yemen and the conflict between India and Pakistan. Caritas in Switzerland has raised the issue, reporting that in 2019, this country which likes to be seen as a protagonist in peace building has exported war material worth €728m to 71 countries worldwide.

Patrik Berlinger, head of the Swiss Caritas Development Policy Department, asked "Is Swiss policy still compatible with the goals of development cooperation in poor countries?" On Scottish soil, we learned that the arms industry may use spaceports, which are scheduled to be built in Sutherland and Orkney, for military purposes. Andrew Smith of CAAT (the Campaign Against the Arms Trade) is seeking scrutiny of the plans – a move we support.

In August, I attended a Zoom meeting hosted by Don't Bank On the Bomb with Rosalyn Mauchline, a member of our executive committee. We heard about DBOTB's campaign, in tandem with ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which won a Nobel Peace award), to divest from nuclear and conventional weapons.

We probably all imagine that none of our investments are in nuclear or other weapons – but it was shocking to learn how much of our pension funds, insurance premiums and savings (£6billion in 2019) are actually invested this way.

On October 2, one of our International Day of Non-Violence Zoom guests will tell us more – please join us, and keep raising awareness by sharing our social media posts.

Marian Pallister, Pax Christi Scotland chair

Peace and the Nonviolence Strategy

International Day of Peace

This newsletter is being distributed on the International Day of Peace – a day that must be special to all who are involved in the Pax Christi movement.

Just as we went back into a stricter lockdown situation, we were asked to provide a video clip to be included in a longer video celebrating Pax Christi International's past, present and future. The idea was to gather some fun and creative contributions from people across the movement saying **"Let's build peace together!"** The limits on numbers able to mix rather curtailed some of the fun, but a clip has been sent. Watch out for the full video on Pax Christi International's website – we'll share on our own social media.



On the much more serious note of the intentions of the day, the United Nations (sharing its 75th birthday with Pax Christi International this year) asks us to celebrate "by spreading compassion, kindness and hope in the face of the pandemic".

The UN suggests we stand together "against attempts to use the [corona] virus to promote discrimination or hatred. Join us so that we can shape peace together".

The UN General Assembly declared September 21 as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire.

We pray that, as Pope Francis has suggested, world leaders listen to the voices emerging from the many nonviolent protests expressing "growing disappointment" with critical "political and social situations". These protests, Pope Francis says, are "just aspirations for human rights and civil liberties".

Let's build peace together.

'Nonviolence' – What does it mean to you?

In Biblical terms, 'nonviolence' doesn't get a good press until Jesus said we should turn the other cheek, and it has to be admitted that this command did not become central to Christianity in the following centuries.

St Francis of Assisi attempted to use the strategy during the Fifth Crusade in 1219. In the midst of a bloodbath during the siege of Damietta, he and a companion who spoke some Arabic sought a meeting with al-Malik al-Kamil, the Muslim Sultan of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. Ushered into the presence of al-Kamil, Francis talked to him through interpreters about his faith, and made a plea in the name of God for peace between the warring factions. The bloodbath continued, but the two men emerged understanding that their 'otherness' was of value.

The Russian writer Leo Tolstoy (author of *War and Peace*) argued that governments and individuals should give up violence if they believed themselves to be true Christians. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr believed in the power of nonviolence. Pope Francis is its strongest current advocate.

In countries such as Scotland where peace prevails – in the sense that we are not at war, and have a democratic government – we may think of nonviolence in terms of protesting at Faslane or taking to the streets on issues of poverty, international debt, or the climate emergency.

The question was asked this month at a Zoom meeting of Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative.

One man from the Philippines spoke of his nonviolent response to torture and imprisonment. A woman from Palestine spoke of using song in the hearing of Israeli soldiers at the Wall as a nonviolent response to harassment and oppression.

We should not feel intimidated by the enormity of the nonviolence of others. Instead, let us work with our children, our fellow parishioners, with wider society, to create a societal understanding of the power of nonviolence to defuse endemic issues such as domestic violence and the toxic use of violent language on social media, in mainstream media, and in politics.

Pax Christi Scotland invites you to join our Zoom event to mark the International Day of Nonviolence

We will hold a **Zoom event at 7pm on Friday, October 2**, which is designated International Day of Nonviolence.

Please join us for presentations and reflections.

We will explore the following areas of nonviolence and you are invited to ask questions and share your thoughts:

- ✚ Divesting from nuclear weapons
 - Do you know where your savings and pension are invested?
- ✚ Seeking to change the violence of language
 - Encouraging a nonviolent vocabulary on social media, in mainstream media, and in the hostile world of politics
- ✚ Domestic violence
 - UN Women says 'Violence against women is a **human rights violation** that takes place every single day around the world. Globally, one in three women experiences physical or sexual violence. During COVID, there has been a dramatic increase in instances – in some countries by as much as 30 per cent.

Oct 2, 2020 19:00

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZ_EucO2pqzksEtXyTupVNTT6EEulzFQK9leT

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

Working with partners to achieve a world of peace

We suggested in the last newsletter that we should try to punch above our weight and add our voice on the international stage, as well as working for a nonviolent society within Scotland.

We have written to Dominic Raab, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs deploring the cut £2.9bn from the Government's Overseas Development Assistance this year (no reply). One of our members has written to the Westminster Government about nuclear weapons and received a response about the value of deterrence. We have added our voice to documents issued by Pax Christi International.

What the executive committee has seen as a valuable task in September was to join forces with Justice and Peace Scotland, writing a joint letter to the Scottish Bishops' Conference and to each of Scotland's eight dioceses asking if there was any possibility that Church pension funds or other investments involved nuclear arms. This was in the wake of our meeting with Don't Bank On The Bomb (see P2), and while it may seem unlikely that an organisation which has held an anti-nuclear position since 1982 could find itself in that position, such investments are rarely in plain sight. We have received some encouraging responses, but Pax Christi Scotland believes that our main responsibility has been in raising awareness that such investments in nuclear and conventional arms could lurk in a package advised by a broker (ICAN and DBOTB have helpful links - <https://www.icanw.org/> and <https://nukedivestmentscotland.org/>). An ethical financial adviser says that in the same way that divesting from fossil fuels is the best way to lessen carbon impact, divestment from nuclear and conventional arms would change the landscape. Quintin Rayer of p1-im says: "Engagement without threat of action can appear weak. Divestment sends a powerful societal and moral signal." With your help, we aim to send out powerful societal and moral signals on all issues of peace and nonviolence.

Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland> (Facebook)

www.paxchristiscotland.org (Website)

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

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