



Pax Scotia

Issue 7

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Lenten Retreat 2021 – Saturday 27th March Negotiating the Paschal Journey Today Facilitated by Diarmuid O'Murchu



- ✠ Overview of Journey from Palm Sunday to Good Friday
- ✠ Walking the Way of the Cross Today
- ✠ Vigil for Holy Saturday - Journeying With the Women

To register email slaitynetwork@gmail.com

Supported by:



Pax Christi Scotland is among the organisations supporting the Scottish Laity Network's Lenten Journey of Hope. See details of weekly Zoom events on Page 4, which culminate in this Lenten Retreat on March 27. Diarmuid O'Murchu, social psychologist and priest in the Sacred Heart Missionary Order, will facilitate the day. Fr O'Murchu's latest book, **Doing Theology in an Evolutionary Way**, was published in February.

* Our next Zoom event will discuss modern slavery and human trafficking and will take place on Tuesday, April 13. Watch out for details.

A Lenten Journey in Lockdown Seeking peace through Zoom's lens

By Marian Pallister
Pax Christi Scotland
Chair

In my parish – and many more around Scotland – Lent began in a most unfamiliar way. I had picked up an envelope bearing my name from the church porch. Inside, four sheets of A4 detailing the 'Liturgy of the Word with Distribution of Ashes for Celebration at Home'. And ashes. The elements of a DIY Ash Wednesday. I followed instructions and waited for the Youtube alert that the online liturgy was about to begin.

That same day, Pope Francis imposed ashes in person, and said that 'Lent is the proper time both to journey toward God and toward our brothers and sisters.' In our enforced retreat from the normality of our lives, it has perhaps been easier to take some small faltering steps on the journey towards God – given this time by COVID-19 to reflect, meditate and pray – than it will be to journey back to interaction and loving relationships with our brothers and sisters.

For a year now, many of us have lived our lives – our work, our personal relationships, our spiritual existence – through Zoom, Teams, Facetime, Youtube and the rest. The brief respite when we were able to attend Mass in churches cordoned off like scenes from *Midsomer Murders* was a tantalising insight into a return to 'normality'. Many were tentative in post Mass outdoor encounters, in the same way that passing masked shoppers in the street or those taking their daily 'exercise' has become constrained. We are all unsure of 'the new norm', whenever that might come.

But Pax Christi Scotland will continue our journey on Zoom, because we are reaching so many more of our brothers and sisters than 'real' meetings would. We hope you will reflect that however alien this medium might be, it is helping us to promote peace, respect of human rights, and justice & reconciliation throughout the world – the heart of our existence.

Marian Pallister

Pax Christi Scotland's Action roundup

Writing letters and emails, signing petitions, and informing our MSPs and MPs of our concerns have been the most valuable actions we've been able to take since the start of the pandemic. Our Zoom meetings have also raised awareness of issues beyond our membership.

Campaigning needs patience and fortitude – responses can take forever (and sometimes, there are no responses), seem to say so little when they do come, and can make us all feel like Sisyphus pushing that boulder up the hill, only for it to come rolling down again.

We are most grateful to every member who takes some form of action, and very happy to hear the outcome because it helps us take the temperature on the issues important to Pax Christi Scotland and Pax Christi International: peace, respect of human rights, and justice & reconciliation throughout the world.

After Pax Christi Scotland contacted Neil Findlay MSP about the involvement of Police Scotland in training Special Forces from Sri Lanka, despite a history of human rights abuses, Neil raised the question in Parliament and *The Sunday Post* took up the story. Executive Committee member Rosalyn Mauchline has since raised the issue with her MSP and is waiting for further word from the police. You can see below the response Neil Findlay received to the written question we asked to be raised. We will be approaching Police Scotland again about this issue.

June Graham in Stornoway, meanwhile, has taken up the issue of divestment and approached both her local council and the Lloyds Bank Group about investments in nuclear weapon manufacture. Like the Pax Christi Scotland executive committee, she is waiting patiently for responses.

Please let us know the peace actions *you* take. In your letters and emails, say you are a member of Pax Christi Scotland. Raising awareness and putting these issues on the political and social agenda is what will achieve results. But we do need patience!

Humza Yousaf: *'The current training programme provided by Police Scotland in Sri Lanka focuses on improving community policing and gender equality. All training is underpinned by the aim of upholding and improving human rights and all Police Scotland's activities with the Sri Lanka Police Service are authorised in advance by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.*

The programme is currently suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic and Police Scotland will re-evaluate delivery of the programme when restrictions on foreign travel are lifted. It is a matter for the Chief Constable of Police Scotland to agree the details of any training programme in Sri Lanka, and Scottish Government ministers would also consider requests for further deployments of officers, taking into consideration a range of issues, including an examination of human rights implications.'



The Sunday Post article

Reflections on Peace

The Treaty – what next?

Pax Christi Scotland is represented on the Pax Christi International Nuclear Weapons Ban Working Group (NWBWG), which now seeks to find a pathway forward after marking the major milestone of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was activated on January 22.

Each country will now have to look at the context of the Treaty before setting new goals. In Scotland, we host nuclear weapons that civil society, the churches and the Parliament are against, but the UK government is one of the 'nuclear states' and with its intention to renew Trident, shows no hint of becoming a signatory to the Treaty.

There is to be a meeting of the signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in July 2021. The NWBWG suggests that we encourage those governments (which include the UK) to acknowledge that the TPNW reinforces Non Proliferation Treaty disarmament and non-proliferation obligations.

Could we persuade the UK government to attend the TPNW' first Meeting of States Parties in 2022 in an 'observer' status?

And of course, there is the route that Pax Christi Scotland is already pursuing, to seek divestment from pension funds, banks, etc. As associates of Don't Bank On The Bomb, we hope to encourage members to find out where their own money is invested (how ever little we have, the bank we use or the pension fund we are signed up to may be investing in nuclear weapons or their component parts).

There are some former service personnel in Scotland who were stationed in areas where nuclear weapons were tested. Their health was badly affected. The TPNW seeks both victim assistance and environmental remediation. There is much we can do.

Please read ICAN's 'How the TPNW Works' (https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ican/pages/1980/attachments/original/1611096264/How_the_TPNW_Works.pdf) and for divestment information go to <https://nukedivestmentscotland.org/>

Breaking the Cycle of Gender Violence – a response By Pax Christi Scotland member Carol Lalley

Pax Christi Scotland shone a light on the subject of *Breaking the Cycle of Gender Violence* through the eclectic voices of some of those currently working in this area. Reflecting on their projects, it seemed to me that their words and actions connected to the exhortations of Pope Francis in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*.

'Truth should not lead to revenge, but rather to reconciliation and forgiveness...Truth means recognising the pain of women who are victims of violence and abuse' (FT 227). '...Persevere in the struggle to promote a culture of encounter' (FT 232).

Each project showed perseverance in a 'culture of encounter', from the mentoring services provided for those on remand or release as detailed by Tom Halpin; to the workshops for men given through the work of Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre, explained by Safa Yousaf and Mahrukh Shaukat; to journeying with rape survivors and their families as described by Bishop Victor Phalana, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Klerksdorp in South Africa.

All required the truth to be acknowledged, all required drawing alongside others in that culture of encounter, all aimed at reconciliation and forgiveness. It was incredibly humbling to hear of their work and encouraging to hear of their successes.

It was also useful to pick up the web addresses from the chat to allow for the exploration of their work at a later date. (There are many opportunities for volunteering within the organisations.) I was inspired to share the information presented by the speakers with other local groups - our Justice & Peace parish group for example, and from there to the whole parish perhaps acting as 'an effective haven' (FT:231).

How can we, as Pax Christi Scotland members as a whole, take forward the intention to break that cycle of gender violence? Perhaps through prayer and perseverance to embrace the 'culture of encounter', the way will open up before us.

Carol Lalley, Cumbernauld, February 2021.

Scottish Laity Network's Lenten Journey

Pax Christi Scotland supports this journey of hope undertaken by the Scottish Laity Network this Lent. Marian Pallister, our chair, will introduce Katherine Trebeck's presentation on March 4.

To register for all of the talks, email slaitynetwork@gmail.com. Each talk will be from 7pm-8.30pm.

Below is a brief outline of those still to come – and you could ask for links to recordings of the first two by Jim Skea and Lorna Gold, each on different aspects of the climate crisis.

Katherine Trebeck - writer and wellbeing economy advocate who is a member of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance Team. **[4th March]**

Omar Haramy – a member of Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Palestine and also a member of the Kairos Palestine Steering Committee. **[11th March]**

Alison Phipps - UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts at the University of Glasgow and Co-Convener of Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNET) and **Hyab Yohannes** - an Eritrean refugee and researcher at the University of Glasgow and holder of the UNESCO RILA PhD Scholarship. He works formally for local charities and international organisations in Egypt including UNHCR, IOM, Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA) and Saint Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS). **[18th March]**

Tom O'Loughlin - Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Nottingham in England and an author of numerous works on the Eucharist. **[25th March]**

On Saturday 27th March there will be a retreat 'Holy Week – A Journey to Death and Resurrection' facilitated by Diarmuid O'Murchu

Pax Christi Scotland Event for your diaries Links for what you've missed

Following our *Breaking the Cycle of Gender Violence* Zoom event (see Carol Lalley's reflection on P3 and links below – note the sneaky dot at the start of the passcode), it was felt that the discussion led towards another conversation about human trafficking and modern slavery.

These are not easy topics, but they are at the heart of the tenets that drive the Pax Christi movement - peace, respect of human rights, and justice & reconciliation. None of us wants to acknowledge it, but gender violence, human trafficking and modern slavery exist in our own communities as well as in the wider world.

At 7pm on **Tuesday, April 13**, you are invited to join a conversation about human trafficking and modern slavery. Our speakers come from very different perspectives and may surprise us. They will include Carmen Artigas Moreno, joining us from Uruguay and with a UN perspective, and Dr Paul Rigby from Stirling University, a social work lecturer and a authority on child trafficking, who in 2020 joined the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Advisory Group.

A link to register for this important Zoom event will be sent out nearer the time, but please put the date in your diaries. Check with the website for recordings and Zoom dates.

The website

Don't forget - you can now see planned events & links to past ones on our website. The 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

Gender Violence: If you weren't able to join our discussion, the link to the recording is:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/7ojRv4c2XmP_fDhQ9idfgZlmfXWYBqF5VaETnhnLXs7DPwLRh9S-doMi4jFI1PXB.T_ssCnhe1ykJm5wG

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