

Climate change, arms and conflict: What does security mean in a time of climate crisis?

At a meeting convened by Middlesbrough Diocese J&P commission and facilitated by Aisling Griffin from Pax Christi we were challenged on many levels:

1. to consider our understanding of security and what makes us feel safe;
2. to assess our contribution to building peace;
3. to understand the effect on the climate and the environment, of the military, of arms manufacture, dispersal, and use in conflicts.

Climate Change causes war and war causes climate change.

Scientists for Global Responsibility have calculated that 6% of our noxious emissions comes from military activity – which is not included in general calculations and is not being accounted for.

Peace building affects every part of life. The increased militarisation of borders influences security in many ways – including food security and migration. Climate crises create more refugees which in turn creates more conflict. Everything is connected.

However, with increase knowledge and awareness of climate change and its place as the defining issue of our time, we were encouraged to see our time now as a turning point – an opportunity to do things differently and more sustainably in all areas of life, so it is an ideal time to:

- question deep-rooted assumptions about the inevitability and acceptability of armed conflict as a way of resolving disputes
- honestly address the underlying causes of conflict with serious funding for non-violent conflict prevention and resolution
- curb the rampant excesses of the arms trade and enforce proper controls
- divert some of the trillions of dollars of global military spending into climate transition needs
- support and strengthen the UN, promote its ideals, respect international laws and treaties

This year's Peace Sunday message from Pope Francis was entitled:

“Dialogue between generations, education and work: Tools for building lasting peace.”

There was an affirmation within the meeting of the importance of inter-generational dialogue; of investment in education, health care and welfare to increase world security; of using the natural enthusiasm and commitment of young people who care so deeply about these issues and of the importance of encouraging meditation and mindfulness as a way to inner peace.

Barbara Hungin

Further refs:

Pax Christi: www.paxchristi.org.uk

Scientists for Global Responsibility: <https://www.sgr.org.uk/>

Rethinking Security: <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/>

Laudato Si' Movement: <https://laudatosimovement.org/>

Green Christian: <https://greenchristian.org.uk/>

Movement for the Abolition of War: <https://abolishwar.net/campaigning/climate-change-military-emissions/>



Challenging the Prime Minister- Extracts from the first of four letters written by year 5 and 6 children from St. Wilfrid's School, York.

Dear Prime Minister

I know you recently went to the COP26 meeting and you know we need to act. Pollution, deforestation, global warming, this has to stop. Humanity is destroying this world.

People are dying, suffering from what we have done. We need to stop.

This is no time to sit back and watch. Our Earth can collapse

any time now. There are many reasons why.

Between January to December 2014 the temperature changed by 0.64 degrees celsius which is the record. 90% of scientists agree that the rise in temperature is caused by humans...

If this continues I am telling you there is no planet B. **So get ready because change is coming if this continues whether you like it or not.** Your sincerely, Alex

Living out Laudato Si in St. Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy Trust

The decision of our Trust's CEO, Amy Rice, to invest in my Sustainability Officer role back in 2020 at a very challenging time for a newly established Academy Trust demonstrates the importance of our commitment to the environment. We have always recognised the importance of Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si', and our children's interest and concern for environmental issues.

Over the last 24 months we have encouraged everyone to live out Pope Francis' Laudato Si' through their daily actions. Our 'Care for Our Common Home' bulletins (named after the Pope's work) and our children's Trust-wide Green Samaritan newsletter, written and edited by them, help to increase environmental awareness and inspire action. It's always encouraging to see so many of our students planting trees, developing neglected woodland, writing to companies and politicians (see extracts from the letters below) about environmental issues, and developing their own school eco action plans – they are truly leading the way.

Through our Trust wide events, such as celebrating Earth Day in 2021 and engaging with COP26 in Nov 21, we have come together to 'stand up and speak out' for the environment. Our Earth Day event last year was supported by several exciting environmental speakers (including Ashden who lead the national schools' campaign, 'LetsGoZero') who answered

some very challenging questions raised by our children. We are currently planning this year's event which we hope will be a further opportunity to enhance our children's climate education and inspire them to develop a deeper understanding of their role as global citizens.

To back up our environmental commitment, our Trust Board approved a very challenging Sustainability Policy in December 2020 and our central team is committed to working only with suppliers who are aligned to our environmental ethos. As contracts come up for renewal, sustainability is now a focus of new contracts and our Trust's financial policies reflect this.

Margaret Land, Sustainability Officer, SMCCAT

Sustainability has been a key pillar of our Trust's work since the beginning, inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'. Our children are passionate about caring for our common home and have had some wonderful opportunities to meet important and knowledgeable people from the UK and overseas and hear about their work. They've also made their own voices heard, including at COP 26 and to DfE policy leaders. Our next celebration will be for Earth Day, where we hope to bring fresh inspiration to our children through the amazing people who support us!

A quote from Amy Rice, CEO, SMCCAT

Dear Mr Johnson,
'I shouldn't need to write this, but I am! Is this what you wanted our world to be like? Ice is making sea levels rise and what are you doing?! You have the power to change what is happening, but you're not, why?! The planet is in our hands and you should be helping. Soon everything will hit you. You must change what we are doing. Just telling us to buy electric cars is not enough. They are too expensive. Change this! We're cutting down acres of trees and not planting more. Change this! We need to help, you need to help.

Changing our world is not as hard as you think. But you're making it too easy for yourself. Although little things can help, you are making your steps too small. You must start making more of our wild spaces supported. You must start donating money to people in every corner of the earth to help save our world. This planet is not just ours, it is home to every living species, but we have conquered it and not treated it's other residents as we should. We cut down about 2.47 million trees each day, why?'

The planet is in our hands, and yours. Lessen the huge amount of deforestation, lessen the amount of plastic going in the ocean, lessen the amount of fossil fuels and most of all HELP! I'm waiting for you to change what we're doing, they are too.

Yours sincerely, Lilia

Dear Boris Johnson,
We demand change. We need change. The world needs it. Without change, the world will crumble down to the last ashes. For years and years, climate change has risen up to this day. It's getting out of hand and if we don't do anything about it, our world will become a dead-land. Animals are going extinct like ringed seals, monarch butterflies, atlantic cod, koalas and most importantly, polar bears. Water levels are rising. Since 1900, sea levels have risen up 26cm. Climate change will finish us if we're not careful. You are in charge. It's up to you to make a choice. If you don't make changes, then in 28 years, the world will run out of food! And that means death. That means we will all starve and... die. Climate change might cause world war 3 because of resources. Countries will probably fight over materials. Countries will invade and steal from others. They will steal things we need to survive. We will get destroyed. We are in very much danger... all of us are. If we don't act now, it might just be too late for us to do anything about it.

I want 'you' Mr. Johnson, to act fast, stop deforestation, plastic, and use of diesel cars. This is important because if we don't, then we will run out of resources. So that is why we all need to make big changes and do something about this. Do something Now!

Yours sincerely, Oliver

Dear Prime Minister,
I have decided to inform you about the fatal dilemma, climate change. Do you genuinely think that this is the type of planet everyone should be living on? Is this honestly the correct future for our earth? Right now, over half of the world is having to deal with floods, droughts, wildfires, deforestation and just a collapsing ecosystem. It has been scientifically proven that in ten years there will be a fifty percent chance of staying below 1.5 degrees celsius. This shouldn't be the state of our planet. I am convinced that change has to occur immediately, with no hesitation.

One of the greatest hindrances in my opinion are cars, and more specifically diesel cars. Diesel cars produce the gas carbon dioxide. However, electric cars are different but they are certainly not affordable for everyone and this is possible for you to change...

I am optimistic that as a country we can make a significant difference. I think that we should take advantage of the technology we have and use it in a more efficient way. If we do this it will cause us to use less paper. Palm oil products are another reason trees are being demolished and I also believe that palm oil products are not essential to our earth. This shouldn't be the state of our planet.
I am convinced that change has to occur immediately, with no hesitation.
Yours sincerely, Karina

Our Synod, Lived Synodality- Reaching out to the people on the margins, those who feel excluded. How does our Church need to change to serve all of its people?

The basis of the lived Synodality which Pope Francis envisages, is that of the Church as the pilgrim People of God journeying together. This was expressed in a profound way by the Holy Father in his *Statio Orbis* address on 27th March 2020 when he stood alone in the rain in St Peter's Square and said:

“We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying “We are perishing”, so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this”.

The Global effects of the Covid Pandemic and the existential threat of Climate Change are affecting us all but especially the poorest and most marginalised amongst us. Can we help to shape a Church that is more welcoming and inclusive? Pope Francis reminds us how Jesus strengthened the early Christian Community to serve those most in need, like a “field hospital that takes in the weakest people, the infirmJesus calls each of us to look after these wounded people, to support them, and to heal them”.

One of the best ways to do this is to **listen with compassion** to someone who feels marginalized and excluded. There is something profoundly healing about giving our time and full attention in whatever way we can, and to acknowledge what a person is actually saying to us. Such compassionate listening can play a major part in beginning the process of healing wounds, and in helping to re-build a person's inherent sense of dignity.

Pope Francis is offering us an opportunity to re-shape our Church to be much more **inclusive and welcoming**. We all have a part to play in this. We will all know someone who is feeling estranged from the Church. It might be someone who is materially poor, or someone who lacks a sense of worth in themselves. It might be someone who is feeling lonely, who has been divorced or is in a same sex relationship and fears that the Church has historically been un-sympathetic towards them. It may be a female who feels that the Church is too patriarchal and dismissive of her views as a woman.

We are being encouraged to become a church where ALL are welcome, where we are indeed ALL seen to be in the same boat trying to navigate stormy waters,

ALL journeying together for the Common Good. So, please be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to guide you into becoming a **listening ear, a compassionate friend, a Good Samaritan**, and to help to welcome anyone who is feeling marginalized and excluded to begin to feel accepted and whole just as they are in the eyes of an ALL-LOVING Creator God. We just have to show a little willingness to extend some comfort and support to anyone we may come across within our own families and communities. Everybody feels marginalized and wounded to some degree or other. May the Holy Spirit work with us and through us as we Journey Together towards a truly Universal, ALL – inclusive Catholic Church for our times. Terry Doyle

Pat McBride, co-founder and trustee of the CAUSE Foundation, with Terry leads our Diocese Synod group in asking how are we reaching out to those on the Margins in our communities. At a recent Synod meeting she spoke about identifying those on the margins and asking how we reach out to them? She stresses the importance of listening, not judging and showing them that someone cares.

With David Cross they have described some simple steps that we can take to help identify and reach out to those who we term as “on the margins” of our communities. You don't need to do all these steps in order.

Step One: Think about who these people are, remembering all the time that they are “people” with names, families...

Step Two: Are any of these people already present in our parish community? If so, how do we relate to them? Do we make them feel welcome or do we keep our distance? How might we draw them in and involve them?

Step Three: Ask ourselves, are we a welcoming parish? How do we extend a warm welcome to visitors or strangers? Who might the marginalised be in our community? (wider than parish)

Step Four: What are the concerns in our area? What challenges are people facing? Get to know your area/community. Who can help us, what organisations or groups work with those on the margins? This may involve some degree of parish outreach if it's not already being done.

Step Five: Getting to know people, take time to get to know people. Begin by just saying hello and introducing yourself with no agenda, ask nothing of them other than their name.

Stella Maris—Shoe boxes, woolly hats and gift bags making a great difference to seafarers

Stella Maris (formerly know as Apostleship of the Sea) is the largest ship-visiting network in the world, and the official maritime charity of the Catholic Church. Seafarers often have to work away from their families and local communities for nine to 12 months at a time. Stella Maris chaplains and volunteer ship visitors, visit up to 70,000 ships in a normal year to look after the wellbeing and welfare of seafarers and fishers - regardless of their race, creed or faith. They listen and chat, they arrange Mass onboard ships, they offer practical help in a crisis and bring free Wi-Fi onboard so seafarers can call home. Often, these simplest practical kindnesses make the greatest difference.

In the Middlesbrough diocese we are blessed as chaplains to have the support of great volunteer ship visitors and the support of local parishes and schools who have for many years supported our ministry and especially at Christmas when seafarers are often separated from their loved ones.



In Hull we gave out this year over 400 woolly hats stuffed with Christmas presents supplied by local schools and parishes in Beverley (St John of Beverley) Hull (Our Lady of Lourdes Hessle and Sacred Heart) and Ampleforth.(Our Lady and St Benedict's parish and primary School)

“The Chaplaincy Team from St Cuthbert’s Multi Academy Trust work across the seven primary schools and one secondary school. For a few years now some of our primaries have supported Stella Maris with their Woolly Hat Appeal, but last year was the first time that all seven schools were involved. It was so successful that we repeated it this year with children collecting items for the hats across the whole city of Hull. For us as chaplains, the great advantage of this appeal is that each family can tailor their involvement to suit their own circumstances, providing as little as a single

toothbrush, or as much as a multipack of soap or shower gel. As a port city it also gives us the chance to link to our heritage and to consider the sacrifices that seafarers make so that we can have what we need.” **Micki Coyle Chaplain with St Cuthbert’s MAT**

“With the generosity and hard work of people in the Middlesbrough Stockton Hartlepool area local churches , social groups and schools Stella Maris, with the help of Santa, were able to give 874 seafarers a Christmas gift. A shoe box or a bag full of goodies and useful gifts for those spending up to a year away from home. The kindness of the local people means a great deal to the seafarers as we explain that people give all these items free of charge. In an area of high unemployment and with essential food and fuel items going up in price its humbling to see people sharing what they have with people, from all over the world, who they will never meet. A Croatian seafarer summed up what it means to receive a gift as after shaking my hand and thanking me he said, “thank you for not forgetting us.” **Peter Barrigan Regional Port Chaplain Tees Hartlepool and Seaham**



a group of women to a Belgian Nun working with new mothers and babies asking for help.

At the suggestion of the National Board of Catholic Women, helped by members of the Catholic Women’s League and the Union of Catholic Mothers they promoted a yearly Family Fast Day within our churches, where families were encouraged to only eat one meal that day, children were asked to give up their sweets and donate what they saved to help feed undernourished babies on the Caribbean Island of Dominica.

This year, CAFOD is celebrating it’s 60th anniversary. It began with a response from

Today, sixty years later when we consider all the advances we have made in so many areas with technology and science, it is a sobering thought that hunger and malnutrition are still prevalent and more worryingly, increasing in many countries around the world, including our own country.

This Lent, our focus is on Sierra Leone, once again helping a Nun, Sr Anthonia Ekong, addressing malnutrition in babies.

Now, it is our turn to respond to the needs of the world through our acts of prayer, action and generosity. I hope you will feel inspired to join in our activities this year.

Carol Cross –Community Participation Coordinator CAFOD

Please pass on your ideas for future Newsletters and share what is happening in your community. *We also welcome letters, requests for more information and comments.*

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