



# JUST NOW

DIocese of NOTTINGHAM  
**Justice**  
**+peace**  
COMMISSION

Catholic faith in action in the East Midlands

Winter 2020

## Letting love loose

Faiths meet in  
Leicester

Making a MESS  
in Marple

Caritas comes to  
Nottingham

The magazine of Nottingham Diocesan  
Justice and Peace Commission

**Free!**  
Please take one



# Reconciliation and resistance

The stories in this issue of *Just Now* seem poles apart—stories of listening between faiths, of civil disobedience, and, in the mix, our journey to becoming a *Caritas* diocese. But look deeper.

In our fractured world, reconciling differences also means resisting the human bias to division and suspicion. And a greater reconciliation sometimes requires disruptive resistance.

Pope Francis finds that these paths meet in Jesus. For disciples of Christ 'nonviolence is not merely tactical behaviour, but a person's way of being, the attitude of one who is so convinced of God's love and power that he or she is not afraid to tackle evil with the weapons of love and truth alone'.

Reconciliation and resistance alike are twin expressions of 'public love'—or what the Church calls *caritas*. Let's take that demanding kind of love as the charter for our diocesan Caritas.

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*There is too much violence, too much injustice [which] cannot be overcome except by countering it with more love, with more goodness. This "more" comes from God: it is his mercy which...alone can "tip the balance" of the world from evil to good.*

Benedict XVI

# INSPIred by ENCOUNTER



*In November 2019, Diocesan Interreligious Advisers from around the country met in Leicester—with each other and with people across city's faith communities. They were hosted by Bishop Patrick, who holds the brief for interreligious relations at the Bishops' Conference. As **Katharina Smith-Müller**, the national Interreligious Adviser, reports here, sharing each other's faith is a way to be inspired for social change, and to effect it.*

I wonder when you have last had the experience of coming away from a conversation angrier and more confused than before. There are few things that are more frustrating than not being understood – even worse when you suspect that it is down to the other person's unwillingness to try and understand.

I also wonder when the last time was that the state of the world left you sad or angry – it might be one of these complaints that never change, but it does certainly feel like (political) partisanship and growing inequality are issues that are staring us in the face.

Both are deeply linked, and both were addressed by a recent event on 12 November, held at Saint Martins House in Leicester: **What if the solutions lie right in the heart of our faith? And what if it was precisely our faith that enables us to engage**

## **and listen – and also to ask precisely the difficult questions that help tackle social injustice?**

It was particularly good to hold this event in the context of a diocese that is keenly aware of its calling to bring faiths together for change, in thought and action: only on 5<sup>th</sup> October, a conference took place at St Barnabas Cathedral entitled **Let Earth be Glad**, an interfaith exploration of our relationship with the Earth, with speakers from different faith traditions, and pledges from participants for action.

St Barnabas Cathedral volunteers also support a Jewish-Muslim organised soup kitchen, **Salaam Shalom Kitchen**, and the current chair of the Nottingham Interfaith Forum is a Catholic with close links into the diocese.

There can be a perception that faith, and in particular the differences between religions, can contribute to growing divisions – the evening panel **Can faith(s) save the world? People of faith on dialogue, social action, and the environment** brought together people from Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Christian traditions to show the audience otherwise.

**Bishop Patrick McKinney** evoked Saint Oscar Romero, and his observation that faith can be the power and the motivation to “ask the awkward questions”, and to ask “why do we have this situation” – a counter-cultural gift that religions can give the world, in the tradition of our prophetic figures.

**Celia Fisher**, chair of the Justice and Peace group at Blessed Sacrament parish in Leicester—to agreement from her fellow

*Continued on page 6*

*Bishop Patrick opens the event and introduces the panel, with an invitation to the audience:*

*'Let our worship be the motive for all that we do'.*



## ***Did you know?***

- Pope Benedict XVI spoke of “the spiritual wealth” that lies in other religions – can you imagine how relationships and attitudes would change if we saw conversations between people of faith as “treasure hunts”, and expect them to be enriching?
- Praying for each other across the religions is a great connector, and reminder that we are all children of the same God, to whom we all pray? You can find some resources to get you started at <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/other-religions/prayer/>
- Building good relationships between faiths can happen at any level, and we are all called, by our baptism, to take part in it? Sharing life events, working together, exploring our theology together, and being inspired from each other’s spirituality are all equally valid and valuable ways of building friendship.

panellists—urged the audience to “not feel threatened by difference”, hitting on a core contribution of interreligious dialogue, and a contribution we as people of faith can make to a better culture of understanding more widely: we who, in prayer, always reach out to the One who is just beyond our understanding, have the perfect training ground for dealing with otherness without a need to get defensive. After all, we believe in a Trinitarian God who is One and Three, the perfect example of relationship and difference.

**Yasmin Surti**, from the Federation of Muslim Organisations, also saw her duty to “notice things and speak up about them”, and linked this to the idea of being ready to continually learn – about each other, and also about the will of God, an idea which resonated with all participants. She also saw great joy in our shared motivations: “we have so much in common, we need to share that, celebrate that, and spread that”.

**Raj Chauhan**, from the Hindu tradition, took up the idea of learning about each other as a motivation to serve: to “find God in the face of the other”, and **Harbans Kaur Thiary**, the Sikh panellist, stressed the personal qualities that faith, and engaging with someone else’s faith, can bring about: “we should be humble in front of God” (which eliminates the need to work for personal gain, and frees us up to focus the greater good).

As this panel, showed, conversations between people of faith can be ideal places of true listening. Such listening in itself is a gift for our divided society. It also brings about change: when people connect, heart to heart, they discover our siblinghood in the One Father. If you are ready for change, here is a way to get inspired for it, and to make it happen.

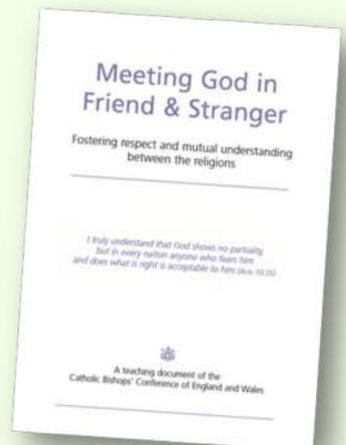


Subscribe to the **Bishops' Conference's newsletter on interreligious dialogue**: <http://eepurl.com/cavnJ9>, or contact Katharina at [Katharina.smith-muller@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:Katharina.smith-muller@cbcew.org.uk).

**The diocesan coordinator for interreligious dialogue in Nottingham** is Canon Eddy Jarosz (email [eddy.jarosz@dioceseofnottingham.uk](mailto:eddy.jarosz@dioceseofnottingham.uk)) – if you are interested in learning more, want to be kept informed of future events, or can imagine contributing to the diocesan efforts to strengthen relationships between people of different faith, do get in touch.

And don't forget local interfaith groups, such as **Leicester Council of Faith** ([lcof.org.uk](http://lcof.org.uk)) and **Nottingham Interfaith Council** ([interfaithnottingham.org.uk](http://interfaithnottingham.org.uk)). Leicester is also lucky to have the **St. Philip's Centre**, which offers training on dialogue and different faiths: [stphilipscentre.co.uk](http://stphilipscentre.co.uk).

For further reading and inspiration, the teaching document of the Catholic bishops, **Meeting God in Friend and Stranger** is available at [cbcew.org.uk](http://cbcew.org.uk).





come the core 'ministries' for which our new service offers support at a diocesan level:

- Safeguarding the Earth, our common home, including developing a diocesan environmental strategy
- Poverty and dignity, including tackling homelessness
- Modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation
- Support for refugees and asylum seekers
- Tackling social isolation.

**Caritas is for parishes too**—it's not just something for 'them in the diocese'. In 2013 Pope Benedict asked each bishop to encourage 'in every parish of his territory the creation of a local Caritas service or a similar body, which will also promote in the whole community educational activities aimed at fostering a spirit of sharing and authentic charity'. A local Caritas can help to realise Pope John Paul II vision of the parish, who said: 'What better building block for a community of hope than the parish, which becomes 'a home in the midst of homes', a living community, one that supports, accompanies, integrates and enriches'

Already one of our parishes is exploring what such an invitation might mean for them. St Norbert's in **Spalding** has an ambitious project to develop the former Methodist chapel next door as a centre for outreach and practical service. They're finding that the agencies and funders whose support they need are impressed to think that the parish might belong to one of the biggest humanitarian organisations in the world.

**And ultimately Caritas is for each of us**—it enables us to be touched by the Gospel and take up



Christ's invitation to follow him in the adventure of missionary discipleship.

So we are offering **parish workshops** with a trained team of animators, who can visit your parish and help you hear and act on your vocation. Let's become parishes where we encourage each other to follow the call Jesus makes uniquely to us, asking questions like:

- How might God be calling you to use my gifts?
- What does the world need from you?
- How might we in the Church encourage and equip each other?
- How can we build the Church as a movement of faith and compassion for a world in need?

## JOIN THE JOURNEY

We'd love to hear how you are finding you are called to live the gospel—and together let's discern together what Caritas might look like in our diocese. You are invited to Nottingham Cathedral on **28 March 2019** to explore with us how a Caritas service should focus its efforts and promote a renewal of 'faith in action' in our parishes. Further details are provided opposite. Put the date in your diary now, and look out for details—or contact us if you'd like to book as soon as registration opens.

Shortly beforehand, instead of the next issue of *Just Now*, we'll publish a **Caritas prospectus**, which you can use in your parish, chaplaincy or Catholic group during 2020 to share in building a movement for Gospel life here in the diocese of Nottingham.

***We'll see you on 28 March!***



*"The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments and exercising the ministry of charity. These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable"*

Benedict XVI, *On the service of charity*

## Building Caritas in the Diocese of Nottingham

Advance notice – put the date in your diary now!

# Saturday 28 March 2020



**10.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.**  
**Cathedral Hall, Nottingham**

Nottingham Diocese is joining **Caritas**, the Church's worldwide ministry of charity. Soon we'll be part of one of the biggest providers of voluntary services on the planet.

**Come and be part of it!**

Join Bishop Patrick, the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, Caritas Social Action Network and representatives from parishes, chaplaincies and organisations all round our diocese, for a day to:

- nourish the work we do for the common good
- build our parishes as outward-looking communities
- make common cause and achieve more together
- be inspired for the adventure of missionary discipleship.

Watch out for more details. In the meantime, to find out more, or make sure you get an early invitation, contact Paul Bodenham, the diocese's Programme Leader for Social Action, who'll be happy to hear from you:

✉ [justice.peace@dioceseofnottingham.uk](mailto:justice.peace@dioceseofnottingham.uk)  
🌐 [dioceseofnottingham.uk/faithintoaction](http://dioceseofnottingham.uk/faithintoaction)  
☎ 07470 907656



**caritas**  
social action network



***Pax Christi's Icon of Peace tells stories of peacemaking from Scripture and ancient Christian tradition. It is a beautiful aid to reflection for parishes and schools, and comes with a rich variety of ideas for learning, prayer and outreach. More details in the Resources section at [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk). Peace Sunday is on 19 January 2020—how is your parish marking it this year?***

# MAKING a MESS

*Maureen Matthews reports from the north-western tip of the diocese*

For some thirty years I have been part of our local Justice & Peace group. After a period when I was chair of the local Churches Together it became an ecumenical group. Over this time we have looked into and worked on many issues both at home and abroad. We put on events covering homelessness and unemployment, modern slavery and debt. Because we represent many of the churches in the area we have been able to raise the issues and work on them across the various denominations. A day with the **Pax Christi icon** (pictured opposite) was one of several spiritual events that were appreciated across all churches.

Our most recent achievement has been to help set up a **Dementia Drop-In** where I think we volunteers gain as much support as we try to give.

Ten years ago our special topic was the Environment. We spent nine months planning the whole EcoDay. We started the day with a video of the Passionist priest **Fr Thomas Berry**, and we had two speakers from A Rocha and Mike Monaghan, a diocesan 'expert'. Along with quizzes and questionnaires, a couple of pieces of drama, calculating our carbon footprint and Question Time, we kept the eighty people who attended busy all day—and they wanted to form an environmental group to look at the issues more fully. Thus **MESS** (Marple, Mellor & Marple Bridge Energy Saving Strategy) was formed.

Ten years on we are still meeting each month. We started with promoting cavity wall and loft insulation, double glazing and solar panels. Lately we have been working on issues to do with refugees and asylum seekers, about conditions in Yemen, Syria and Burma and pestering our MP about fracking and care of the environment; and encouraging our banks to dis-invest in fossil fuels. We have a small **Incredible Edible** group who tend planters full of herbs in the town precinct. And we have planted and tend an eighty tree community orchard in the centre of the town.

After many years of trying to raise awareness of environmental issues, David Attenborough and others have finally made people wake up and realize the urgency of the situation. On Sunday 29 September we held our biggest event to date. An afternoon with speakers from the **Tyndall Climate Research Centre** at Manchester University and local environment groups. There were stalls, displays and an art competition for the local schools. Some young people were involved in presenting the programme and the afternoon concluded with people encouraged to make community and individual pledges to alter our lifestyles to benefit the environment.

So whether it is never again buying cling film or wet wipes, or abandoning the tumble dryer and the car, or growing our own vegetables and only eating meat once a week, our group's aim is to help people discover the changes we can all make to cut our carbon emissions to zero by 2038, the target Manchester has set.

*More at [marplemess.org.uk](http://marplemess.org.uk)*



**As the Commission develops Caritas in the diocese, there is a growing range of opportunities to get involved.** Here are just a few of them.

**Be a parish contact:** Is there someone in your parish who is a point of contact for the church's social outreach? If not, why not you? Take on as little or as much as you like: we have suggestions about the role you could play, and the support which the Commission and fellow contacts around the diocese can provide.

**Train as a facilitator:** As explained on page 10, if you'd like to develop skills in helping other parishes develop their social outreach, we can let you know how to get involved.

**Shape our mission:** Join our teams who are developing new work on modern slavery, communications, formation for missionary discipleship, or a new diocesan environmental strategy.



To get in touch, contact Paul Bodenham, Programme Leader for Social Action:

- Email [justice.peace@dioceseofnottingham.uk](mailto:justice.peace@dioceseofnottingham.uk) or call 07470 907656
- Write to Palmer House, Pelham Court, 2 Pelham Road, Nottingham NG5 1AP
- Or follow us on Twitter @SaltForTheEarth and on Facebook at /nottinghamjusticeandpeace

# The Heat is Rising

It seems that every month sees a new report on the dire need to act on climate change. In November scientists reported that several 'tipping points' which could trigger runaway climate change, such as unprecedented ice melt and forest fires, were already 'active'.

Catholics, including some from Nottingham Diocese, have been among those taking to the streets to demand action at **school strikes** and **Extinction Rebellion** (XR) protests.

**Sr Katrina Alton**, one of our resident Sisters of St Joseph of Peace (pictured) was arrested at London City Airport, but charges were dropped after the High Court ruled that police acted unlawfully in banning the protests.

Sr Katrina told the *Nottingham Evening Post*, 'Climate change is one of the big drivers for forced migration. So in terms of climate justice, it's already the poorest people in the poorest countries who are suffering the brunt of this climate emergency.'

'I believe, as a Christian, who has power and privilege as a white,



Picture courtesy of  
Christian Climate Action

middle-aged, middle class woman that I have to pay my dues because it's the poorest of the poor who are suffering. This is a tiny sacrifice for me to make compared to the devastation of life and livelihood that the poorest in the global south are already living.'

Sr Katrina called on the government to do more to tackle climate change: 'What we want is for the UK Government to respond now to actually bring about legislation that will tackle this climate emergency in 2025. Because 2050 is too late.' She added: 'We also want people's assemblies to be created so, together, everybody is invested in this process.'

**CAFOD** commented that 'non-violent direct action has an honourable place in Christian political involvement and a history of bringing about change where other methods have failed', and noted that 'many who have engaged in XR's non-violent direct action so far are CAFOD supporters and people of the Catholic faith. And we should respect those who decide, in conscience and painfully, that they must disobey the law in this case, provided their actions are non-violent and proportionate.'

Meanwhile young people are taking to being absent from school for a day to protest for their own futures. The **Youth Strike** on 29 November 2019 saw a record number of events, including Loughborough, Matlock, Stamford and Horncastle, as well as Nottingham, Derby and Leicester.

The previous strike in Leicester featured a heartfelt performance of spoken word by 16 year old **Erica Lees-Smith**. Read extracts overleaf—and ask your conscience, how will you respond?

# Tick Tock

by Erica Lees-Smith



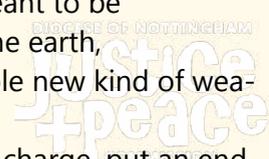
I don't know about you  
But I've already started counting  
down to  
The year-consuming, stress-  
inducing four letters  
G C S E  
Nearly sixteen,  
Why would I be truanting, why  
would you be truanting,  
Why should we be truanting?  
Well you see, my government's  
environmental policy  
Is causing me to write apologies  
To my school  
For missing a day of education  
Because instead we've got to  
educate the nation.

A year ago...  
Something  
Snapped  
Inside me...  
We've got time, they said,  
It's okay, they say,  
a few centuries left to pass yet,  
Not our problem but for our great-  
great-great-great  
Grandkids to deal with

But as it's become a great-great-  
great and even greater problem  
Yes, we're fit to burst  
A deep, growling passion  
A washing machine churning a sick-  
ness inside us  
So we cry out in anguish  
Despite muted adolescent voices  
And millions more that won't be  
represented...

How different things would be  
If we hadn't chosen change over  
catastrophe:  
In a bleak dystopia.

We've not lost this war yet but  
young people  
Were never meant to be  
defenders of the earth,  
we need a whole new kind of wea-  
ponry  
As we lead the charge, put an end  
to all this chaos, our world leaders  
need to take up the mantle to dis-  
mantle a system which doesn't  
get what's at stake,  
And at last make us all take  
Action.



# ANiMated pariSheS

*Annette Brindle reports from our 2019 Assembly.*

On 2 November 2019, parishioners from around the diocese gathered at St Thomas More Church in Leicester for the annual Justice and Peace Assembly. The theme was **Leaves for Healing: Rebuilding the common good together.**

Our day started with Mass for All Souls Day celebrated by Bishop Patrick. He blessed a painting of **St Oscar Romero** who was a great inspiration for the day ahead—pictured here.



The morning session was led by **Jenny Sinclair, director of Together for the Common Good** and facilitated by **Theresa Alessandro, director of Pax Christi**. Jenny is the daughter of the late Bishop David Sheppard. In the 1980's Bishop David Sheppard worked closely with Archbishop Derek Warlock to bring healing and reconciliation to Liverpool at a difficult time in the city's history.

Jenny challenged us to live prophetic lives and to transform the world so that all may flourish. In a world where there is so much division, Jenny encouraged us to develop good relationships with all in our local communities and build a society where all can feel loved and have a sense of belonging. Her talk can be



Where could the gifts of your parish be directed, for the flourishing of your neighbourhood?



found on the website at [dioceseofnottingham.uk/jpassembly](http://dioceseofnottingham.uk/jpassembly).

After lunch, we focussed on our diocese and how we can put our faith into action. **Fr Joe Wheat** led us in a session about **Communities of missionary disciples: the diocesan pastoral review**. We discussed plans for supporting dynamic parishes when there will be fewer priests in the diocese.

Afterwards, **Catherine Brady** from St Mary's parish in Loughborough shared how parishioners worked with local churches to set up a **Grub Club**. To prevent hunger during the long summer holiday, hot meals are offered to school children, their parents and carers – see *Just Now*, Spring 2019. It is successful and fills a valuable need in their community.

For the final part of our gathering, we discussed the results of the parish social audit (which can be found at [dioceseofnottingham.uk/faithintoaction](http://dioceseofnottingham.uk/faithintoaction)). We joined workshops to share ideas for the future. Theresa Alessandro urged us to witness to the importance of promoting a culture of peace in our parishes and communities.

There was a short AGM, then a closing liturgy led by Fr Tony Furlong. It was an enjoyable day and a brilliant opportunity to meet with others from across the diocese.