

# Newsletter

June-August 2026



## Scottish Bishops express “gratitude” for Pope Leo’s consistent calls for peace

Pope Leo’s commitment to preaching the Gospel of peace and nonviolence in response to those who seek to present war as a moral mission has been recognised in a statement from the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland.

Reflecting on the scars borne by the world and the human suffering caused by current conflicts, particularly in the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan and South Sudan, the Bishops “call on those in positions of authority to reject the path of escalation and instead commit themselves to meaningful dialogue, patient negotiation, and the difficult but necessary work of peacebuilding.” In this context, they also “express their gratitude to Pope Leo for his clear and consistent voice in calling for peace. His leadership continues to be a guiding light for the Church and the world at this critical time.”

Read the full statement on the Justice & Peace Scotland website [here](#).

## Stay in touch



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## Support Dungavel solidarity witness

There has never been a more urgent time to take a stand against the UK government’s increasingly pernicious immigration system.

The opportunity to do so is provided by Justice & Peace Scotland’s Dignity Not Detention solidarity witness which, along with our friends in the Scottish Peace Network, we will hold at Dungavel IRC on 14th June at 1pm. You are urged to make the effort to support the only regular gatherings at the site organised by Scottish organisations, demonstrating solidarity with those inside and opposition to a cruel and unjust system – with the UK remaining the only country in Europe where unlimited detention exists.

Pope Leo has been unequivocal that the Commandment to “love thy neighbour” takes no account of borders, passports, or circumstances. Yet for some in Dungavel, technical errors with visas can see them locked up and subjected to the mental torture of not knowing for how long.

Immigration is a matter reserved to the UK Parliament, and Dungavel is Scotland’s only detention centre. The centre will close over the summer for refurbishment and an expansion of its capacity from the current 150 places to nearer 200. That means more people having their humanity disregarded. As the only facility of its kind in the UK to house both men and women, it also creates further discrimination against female detainees, who are denied the basic freedom to move around the centre unless accompanied by a staff member.

Join us on 14th June at 1pm, when J&PS President Archbishop William Nolan will give an address, with all others in attendance also welcome to share reflections.



# Magnifica Humanitas: Pope Leo's first encyclical

Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas* ("Magnificent Humanity"), is a well-timed reflection on what it means to be human in an age increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and technological change. While the Holy Father primarily addresses the advance of AI in today's world, the document is not simply about the pros and cons of technology. Instead it asks how developments in this area can help or hinder societies in placing the dignity of the human person at the centre of political, economic, and technological life.

While exploring the opportunities and risks presented by AI, Pope Leo also addresses some of the most pressing justice and peace challenges of our time: war, forced displacement, inequality, and exclusion. He warns of the dangers posed by autonomous weapons and the growing distance technology can create between decisions and their human consequences. He simultaneously calls for renewed solidarity with migrants, refugees, and all those whose dignity is threatened or overlooked.

*Magnifica Humanitas* challenges us to ensure that technological progress is not something that is sought after as the goal in itself but rather serves the human person, the common good, and the advancing of justice and peace.

To read the Holy Father's encyclical in full visit [The Holy See - Magnifica Humanitas](#).



ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER LEO XIV

## MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS

*On safeguarding of the human person  
in the time of Artificial Intelligence*

### WHAT IS IT?



The first Encyclical  
of Pope Leo XIV



It was signed on 15 May 2026  
in Rome, at St. Peter's.

**"AI SHOULD MAKE  
LIFE MORE HUMAN,  
NOT MORE  
EFFICIENT"**

- Pope Leo XIV,  
*Magnifica Humanitas*



Scotland's Catholic bishops have warmly welcomed *Magnifica Humanitas* describing it as a timely contribution to one of the defining questions of our age: the impact of artificial intelligence on human dignity, society, and peace.

The encyclical on 'safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence' was launched on May 25<sup>th</sup> at the Vatican, where Pope Leo warned that "artificial intelligence needs to be disarmed" and called for technology to remain at the service of the human person and the common good. Speaking to scientists, Church leaders, and public officials, the Holy Father reflected on the dangers posed by autonomous weapons, injustice embedded in algorithms, and the risk of reducing people to "mere data."

At the heart of *Magnifica Humanitas* is a call to ensure that the dignity of every human person remains the guiding principle for all technological development. Pope Leo urged the Church and wider human family to become "artisans of hope" in building a more human and fraternal society.

The Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has produced a range of useful summary resources and infographics as well as a video to accompany the encyclical. We encourage you to explore and share these materials: [Magnifica Humanitas Resources](#).

# EAST KILBRIDE INTEGRATION NETWORK

The humanity so distressingly absent from discussions around the realities faced by asylum seekers in this country was at the heart of an event held to learn about the incredible work of the East Kilbride Integration Network.

Organised in March by J&P Scotland's Motherwell Commission and the local branch of the Society of St Vincent de Paul Scotland, the event was hosted by Kiem Doyle, CEO of EKin. The Christian charity — the only one of its kind in South Lanarkshire — welcomes, connects and supports people seeking asylum and refuge in the area, valuing each individual and recognising their potential to contribute to a flourishing, authentic and diverse community. It also works to counter the misinformation and negative far-right narratives so prominent online and in the media.

Moving testimonies were shared by Abdulsalam Yonis, who fled war in Sudan, and Liban Aljomai, who was forced to seek political asylum from Yemen. Both are pictured here with J&PS's Anne-Marie Clements, alongside EKin's Eddie Morrison and Kiem Doyle.



**EKin welcomes anyone with a heart to love and support our migrant community. Find out more about involvement and donating [here](#).**

## REFLECTION

**God is with those who die in war, not with those who abuse his name. The abuse and manipulation of God's name to justify this and any other war is the gravest sin we can commit at this time. War is first and foremost political and has very material interests. We must do everything we can to leave no room for this pseudo-religious language, which speaks not of God, but of ourselves.**

*Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, speaking at a recent webinar on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.*



## Sign petition for Sudan ceasefire

The current situation in Sudan is desperate and demands global attention. Estimates of the death toll from the four-year conflict range from 61,000 to 150,000, while nine million people have been internally displaced - the worst displacement crisis in the world.

Concerned citizens across the world must urgently speak out against the ongoing atrocities, and you are asked to stand with the people of Sudan in demanding an immediate ceasefire, the protection of civilians, and humanitarian access so that lifesaving aid can be rushed to families in need. **Sign the petition [here](#).**

## Why beauty matters in Catholic education

Aesthetics as a central tenet of the life of faith was the fascinating thesis explored by Dr Jem Sullivan in the St Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Education Cardinal Winning Lecture 2026.

Dr Sullivan, of the The Catholic University of America, addressed the assembled audience at University of Glasgow in March. The university itself came into existence through a Papal Bull in the 15th century. She challenged those present to think of beauty not as an extra or add-on within the curriculum of Catholic education.

She also highlighted the importance of continuing to promote beauty, recalling how for centuries the Catholic Church was the world's greatest artistic benefactor, with the legacy of that patronage still found among the most prized works in galleries and the most celebrated buildings on earth.





## Taking faith into politics

Christians are compelled to engage in politics by the Gospel commandment to “love thy neighbour”.

That message was at the heart of the keynote speech delivered by Tim Farron MP at the recent Logos Scotland conference, Faith In The Public Square.

Attended by representatives from Justice & Peace Scotland, the conference heard the former Liberal Democrats leader and committed Christian contend that any attempt to “rub out Christianity from the public square” erodes society’s value system and is both illiberal and pernicious. Equally, he denounced the appropriation of Christianity for hateful purposes.

The packed conference programme also included talks on the importance of engaging on social media platforms where Christian values can appear scarce, and on engaging publicly without rushing to judgement.

## Success for election Q&A evenings organised by local J&PS groups



Across the two months leading up to the Scottish Parliament elections, parishioners and members of the general public in St Joseph’s, Milngavie; St Andrew’s, Bearsden (both East Dunbartonshire); and Immaculate Conception, Maryhill, Glasgow were able to hear from individual candidates representing the country’s six main political parties.

Each of these parties provided representatives to answer pre-set questions composed by the local J&P groups, in liaison with Justice & Peace Scotland and SCIAF, on how their party would address the issues of poverty, addiction, migration, net zero, environmental protection, and developing a better world with dignity for all.

To ensure fairness, the same questions were sent to candidates in advance. The expectation was that having only one party representative at each meeting would avoid political point-scoring between different parties, and in that respect the meetings were a great success.

Indeed, three of the candidates openly said that they were much more relaxed and comfortable in what was a conversational rather than a confrontational context, and expressed their appreciation of being given this platform to speak. The meetings were well attended and considered by many to be very informative and worthwhile in learning about the candidates and their responses (or lack of them) to the six set questions. ... though it also underlined the task J&P has in combating fake news and misinformation, and in building truthfulness and compassion in our communities and politics.

General comments and feedback were that the programme, while ambitious, was a fresh and different approach to hustings, and offered a model for future successful collaboration across Catholic agencies and local parishes.

**Rick Jackson, J&PS Glasgow Commissioner**

## Climate priorities for new Scottish government

It is incumbent upon the new Scottish government to prioritise its responsibilities to care for creation by working towards achieving net zero by 2045 - and delivering on all set out in the recent [Climate Change Plan \(CCP\)](#).

At Justice & Peace Scotland, we will continue to work as a partner agency within Stop Climate Chaos Scotland on holding the government to account on building a greener, fairer society. One that that provides a clear pathway for a just transition away from fossil fuels and wherein emission reductions are not dependent on unproven technologies.

Clean air, ability to heat homes through affordable energy costs and access to good public transport should be recognised as basic human rights for all.

In the words of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, “we know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels... needs to be progressively replaced without delay” (LS 165), underlining the urgency of a just transition rooted in both environmental and social justice.





# Upcoming Events

**Sunday 7th June - Glasgow The Welcoming City, Glasgow City Chambers, George Square, Glasgow - 3pm**

The skirl of the pipes will welcome all to the City Chambers for this annual event with the Lord Provost, church, and civic leaders. A celebration of the city's diverse cultures and of Glasgow as a welcoming city to those who are seeking refuge and asylum. Prayers will be said for peace in our world. Music and song with St Anne's Dennistoun southside fiddlers, the St Mungo ensemble, Ukrainian musicians and singers, and the St Mungo singers. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the Satinwood Suite. All are welcome to this free event.

**Saturday 13th June - Walk and Pray for Peace: SCIAF, St Joseph's Church, Blantyre - 9.15am**

Join SCIAF to Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral, Motherwell. The walk will take approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes (5.6 miles) with various stops for prayer along the way. On arrival, please join us after for refreshments in the hall. [Please register here.](#)

**Sunday 14th June - Dignity Not Detention, Solidarity Witness, Dungavel IRC - 1pm to 1.45pm**

See front page for all details.



**Monday 12th June - Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> June - Refugee Festival Scotland**

Various venues across the country. [Find events near you here.](#)

**Saturday 1st August - Faslane Christian Peace Vigil - 11am to 12.30pm**

The UN stated recently that the nuclear terror threat has never been so high. All are encouraged to attend this vigil then as J&PS president Archbishop William Nolan, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Gordon Kennedy and the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Most Revd Mark Strange, members of the Iona Community and other faith organisations will join in prayer for a world without nuclear weapons on a site where these affronts to humanity are housed. Join J&PS mailing list or follow our social media to receive details nearer the time of a free bus on the day with pick-ups in Glasgow and Edinburgh.



## Providing pastoral care to detainees



A beautiful and poignant celebration of Mass was offered at Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre during Eastertide.

Made possible through the efforts of chaplain Fr Jim Thomson and Justice & Peace Scotland Motherwell Commissioner Paul Foley, the service was also attended by seminarians Aidan Kelly and Mathew O'Neill, around 12 detainees, and a number of the centre's staff. Conducted by Fr Jim and held in the Faith Centre - the old chapel of the original lodge building at Dungavel - the Mass fostered a strong sense of prayerful community.

There was a real sense of welcome and gratitude among detainees and staff alike, with Easter eggs distributed and friendly conversations shared following the service. There is an appetite from all involved for more such services in future and, though it is still early days, it is hoped this can become something further developed across the J&PS Motherwell group.



## Stop UK courts suing poor nations over unjust debt

The world is in the grip of the worst debt crisis in three decades and the UK is being used to exacerbate these deep-rooted problems.

No fewer than 34 African countries spend more on debt repayments than on health or education. Many of the world's most climate-vulnerable states are spending five times more on debt repayments than on responding to the climate emergency, even as they face floods and famines.

Predatory lenders such as banks, hedge funds and oil companies have made billions from a debt crisis that wealthy nations continue to refuse to address meaningfully. Such lenders - who buy up debt to capitalise on the financial vulnerabilities of nations - are now suing Ethiopia in London's High Court after securing a deal with Ukraine that will deliver vast profits.

They are able to do this because UK law permits it. Nine in ten of these private debt contracts are governed by law here in the UK.

Sign the petition and call on the government to act [here.](#)