

Newsletter

June to August 2025



Habemus Papam

The Papal conclave that elected US cardinal Robert Prevost to become Pope Leo XIV, and succeed the late Pope Francis, was momentous for the entire Catholic church and especially significant for the justice and peace movement.

Pope Leo XIV, a native of Chicago, is the first person from both North America and the Augustinian order to hold the office. The 69-year-old, who spent 11 years in missions in Peru where he obtained citizenship, has stated he chose his name because of the inspiration of Pope Leo XIII, "whose historic encyclical *Rerum Novarum* addressed the social question in the context of the first great industrial revolution".

This 1891 encyclical is considered the foundation document for modern Catholic Social Teaching - which informs, along with the Gospels, all the work Justice & Peace Scotland does. Immediately pleading for "never again a war" in his first address as he called for ceasefires and just peace in Gaza and Ukraine, Pope Leo XIV has said he will seek to follow predecessors Pope Francis and Pope Benedict XVI in striving for a world governed by "truth, justice, peace and fraternity".

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Dignity Not Detention

The UK is the only country in Europe where people can be detained indefinitely for immigration purposes.

Dungavel is a symbol of that cruel and unjust practice, the only detention centre in Scotland, and the only one of seven across the UK where both men and women are housed. Currently running at close to its 150-person capacity, Justice & Peace Scotland urge your attendance at our latest solidarity gathering at the facility, under the banner 'Dignity Not Detention' that will take place on Sunday, 15th June, at 1pm, staged to lead into Refugee Week, which provides the focus of our latest newsletter.

J&PS President Archbishop William Nolan will provide a reflection, with other speakers on the day addressing an intolerable situation where fellow humans are held there without any knowledge of how long for. A predicament that has harmful effects for those subjected to it, many of whom already have a history of trauma.

The number of people detained in the UK for immigration purposes increased 10% last year to 20,919, across seven removal detention centres. Those detained can include: asylum seekers whose applications have been refused; people who have overstayed or breached the terms of their visas; people who have been refused permission to enter the UK, and foreign nationals who have served a prison sentence and been served a deportation order.

The UK government claim a main purpose of detention is to effect removal, but fewer than half of those leaving detention in the past decade have been returned. Yet, a third of those detained last year were held for more than a month, a number for more than six months. Join J&PS on 15th June at Dungavel to call for the preservation of human dignity with an end to detention.



Reflecting on our response to refugees



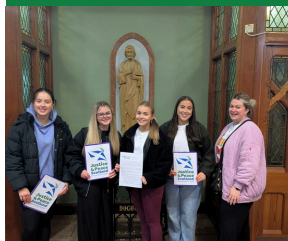
Catholic Social Teaching affirms the right of people to migrate in search of safety and a dignified life. This is not new. In 1963, *Pacem in Terris* taught that all humans have the right to emigrate when necessary to secure their basic rights. Various papal encyclicals - from *Populorum Progressio* to *Caritas in Veritate* - have consistently called the Church and society to treat migrants with justice and compassion, always upholding their human dignity.

Pope Francis continued this tradition, urging us to recognise Christ in the stranger: "Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ" (*Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 2018). Francis' consistent defence of refugees and migrants will endure as a defining mark of his papacy.

No one becomes a refugee by choice. People flee war, persecution, injustice, and increasingly, climate change. They seek sanctuary out of necessity. To respond justly, we must address these root causes while offering the sanctuary and welcome they seek, resisting the closing of hearts and borders to those impacted by crises they did not create. As Pope Francis wrote in *Fratelli Tutti*: "It is an act of charity to assist someone suffering, but it is equally an act of charity, even if we do not know that person, to work to change the social conditions that caused his or her suffering."

Our government could truly address the "small boats crisis" not by deterrence, but by creating safe, legal routes for asylum. Seen through the lens Catholic Social Teaching, this becomes not simply a political preference, but instead a moral obligation to ensure justice and the common good for all.

CARITAS CAMPAIGNERS

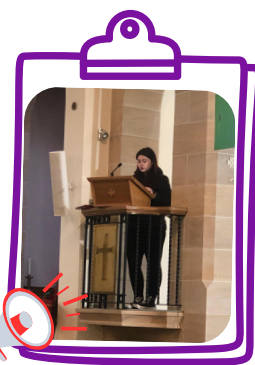


Hundreds of sixth year students from across Scotland will gather in Glasgow in June to receive their Caritas Award. Justice & Peace Scotland has been proud to support participants from two parishes to "Learn - Pray - Act" in response to a justice and peace issue to fulfil the award's requirement of contributing meaningfully in their parish community.

Young people from St Joseph's Parish, Blantyre, explored the challenges faced by refugees and how these connect to Catholic Social Teaching. They learned why people are forced to flee, why some resort to dangerous journeys like crossing the Channel in small boats, and the difficulties they face on arrival, such as being barred from working while awaiting asylum decisions. In response, the group hosted a parish Holy Hour during Advent to pray for those seeking sanctuary. They then led a campaign in their parish, speaking at Sunday Masses and encouraging parishioners to sign a petition in support of the right to work for people seeking asylum, gathering nearly 300 signatures.

In Rutherglen, the participants focused on the issue of human trafficking, learning about how the exploitation of people for labour or profit is a grave violation of their human dignity and directly contradicts Catholic Social Teaching. Working with the Justice & Peace Group of St Anthony's and St Mark's and supported by an input from Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland (SOHTIS), they learned that trafficking exists in all thirty-two local authorities in Scotland. They also hosted a holy hour, this time praying for victims and survivors of human trafficking and reflecting on the life of St Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese woman who was sold into slavery and later became a nun. The young people then launched an awareness raising campaign during which they spoke at weekend Masses and used parish social media to inform others about the reality of trafficking.

These are inspiring examples of young people living out Catholic Social Teaching and fostering justice and peace activity in our communities. Well done to all!



Support service for New Scots

There has never been a more important time to commune with and celebrate New Scots, who have made their home in our country often to escape desperate circumstances.

Together for Sanctuary, a special ecumenical Christian worship, offers this opportunity. Held as part of Refugee Festival Scotland, it will take place in Church of the Immaculate Conception, on Thursday, 19th June, at 7pm. It is a service we urge all who can to participate in.

Organised by Justice & Peace Scotland, in partnership as a member of Scottish Faith Action for Refugees (SFAR) and churches from across Scotland, this gathering will bring together people of all backgrounds to stand in solidarity with those who seek sanctuary.

The service will be a time of prayer, worship, and reflection, offering space to:

- *Reflect on our shared calling to welcome the stranger*
- *Hear powerful testimonies from people with lived experience of displacement*
- *Pray for refugees and displaced people across the world*
- *Express a shared commitment to justice, compassion, and welcome*

The service will last approximately one hour and involve music, prayer, and contributions from a diverse range of voices, including those with lived experience of seeking sanctuary. This will be followed by time to share in conversation, connection, and community, with food and refreshments provided.

This is an open and inclusive gathering; friends of all denominations and faiths are welcomed to join us as we stand in solidarity and renew our commitment to hospitality and hope in the face of displacement and injustice.

Together for Sanctuary

An ecumenical service of worship,
prayer and fellowship for Refugee
Festival Scotland.

7:00 PM
Thursday
19th June 2025

Church of the
Immaculate
Conception
2049 Maryhill Rd
Glasgow
G20 0AA



SCOTTISH FAITHS
ACTION FOR REFUGEES

REFLECTION

“...So if you're broken, if you don't believe, if you're tired of the lies...come anyway. With your anger, your doubt, your dirty backpack. No one here will ask you for a VIP card. Because this Church, as long as I breathe, will be a home for the homeless, and a rest for the weary.”

Pope Leo XIV



A perfect Pancake Day

There was plenty of chomping and chat at our latest lead-in to Lent networking event, which this year took the billing *Pancakes, Prosecco and People*.

All three were to the fore as more than half a dozen organisations operating in Justice & Peace Scotland remit areas were represented at the informal gathering held in Eyre Hall, in Glasgow's diocesan offices. Some robust conversations were had between attendees with different worldviews. Those present were even treated to the sight of J&PS President Archbishop William Nolan testing out his pancake flipping skills, as evidenced here.

The event would not have been possible without the hard work of Galloway Commissioners Anne and Maureen Maguire and teenage helpers Giovanni Piacentini-Smith and Sylvie Smith, the pair pictured left with J&PS Chairperson Jill Kent and Campaigns, Communications and Events Coordinator Andrew Smith.



Clearer thinking required to eradicate child poverty

Child poverty is the greatest scourge in modern-day Scotland, one of the world's wealthiest nations. The deprivation causes generational and inter-generational trauma, denying so many so much of what we consider should be norms for living in human dignity.

First Minister John Swinney has described eradicating child poverty as his government's "top priority", but interim targets have been missed towards 2030 objectives of 10% of children living in relative poverty and 5% in absolute poverty. Child poverty has reduced, but in the most recently published figures these rates stand at 22% and 18% respectively.

As members of the Poverty Alliance, Justice & Peace Scotland have inputted to consultation events in Glasgow and Edinburgh that will help produce recommendations for the next Child Poverty Delivery Plan, to be published next year. In Glasgow, the chief executives of Poverty Alliance, Aberlour and Children First, in the form of Peter Kelly, SallyAnn Kelly, and Mary Glasgow, (pictured from right above) set out the need for whole family approaches where families are given agency and not forced to find themselves in a vicious cycle of organisational referrals. "Malevolent managerialism," as Mary Glasgow, who has four decades of experience in the child sector, described it.

J&PS backed the general consensus that there was a requirement for more targeted funding on evidence-based projects and long-term commitments to solutions that do not find them at the whims of political agendas. All speakers did not shirk from the despair that can set in from the pace, level and depth of change. But SallyAnn Kelly implored that pessimism must never be allowed to overwhelm efforts to pressurise those in power to see the potential in the poorest in our society. "We must never lose our hope and belief in the gifts of human beings," she said.

Turn Debt Into Hope

No fewer than 54 countries across the globe are experiencing a debt crisis - forced to spend more on repayments than healthcare, education and climate adaptation combined. A system that afflicts billions of the planet's most vulnerable.

In this Jubilee Year - with its Biblical origins in debt forgiveness - use your voice and add your name to the *Turn Debt Into Hope* petition demanding debt justice that places people and planet before profits. **Sign here**



PM is urged to rethink 'devastating' cuts to overseas aid budget

Justice & Peace Scotland shared the profound dismay over the UK government's decision to reduce the overseas aid budget to its lowest level this century to fund an increase in defence spending. These actions will have catastrophic consequences for some of the most vulnerable on our planet, and grievously damage the UK's standing in the Global South.

Below, we reproduce in full, a letter by J&PS chairperson Jill Kent that has been delivered to both Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and International Development minister Baroness Chapman pressing them to reconsider this callous move. We await their responses.

Dear Prime Minister,

I write as Chairperson of Justice & Peace Scotland, a Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland.

I do so with profound concern and deep regret over the effects of the cuts to overseas aid to fund an increase in defence spending that have been announced. The potential for them to have devastating consequences for so many of the most vulnerable people on our planet is becoming ever clearer in our communications with agencies working in the heart of this space. We often work closely with SCIAF, the Scottish Catholic overseas and development agency, who have stressed that the cuts will "absolutely undermine the UK's standing with Global South countries". Echoing the words of Annaliese Dodds, in her resignation letter to you from the position of International Development Minister, that the cuts will "remove food and healthcare from desperate people - deeply harming the UK's reputation".

The UK should be rightly proud of our record over international aid. As should your party, with Labour having a past commitment to meeting the UN recommended level of 0.7% of gross national income. A commitment to returning to this level was expressed by you in opposition. It feels a dereliction for that to be followed by a reduction to 0.3% of GNI by 2027 that will result in overseas aid dropping to its lowest level since 1999. In reality, the aid flowing overseas will be much lower with more than 27% of the current aid budget being retained for international citizens in the domestic context. This is particularly egregious at time when the USA has ended 88% of their foreign aid programmes.

It is deeply troubling, too, that the cuts to the aid budget have been effectively used to increase defence spending. Further destabilising of the precarious geo-political situation comes from ramping up armaments, as the late Pope Francis made plain, and this can only but increase the millions across our planet who will be dependent on our aid - which has been lifesaving in so many environments.

These proposed cuts, aimed at boosting the defence budget, will only wreak more injustices on the world's poorest and amplify the harmful consequences of weapons production and armed conflict. On behalf of those without a voice in this context, I urge you to honour the leadership and responsibility entrusted to you by virtue of your position and reconsider these measures.

I look forward to your considered response.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Kent

Chairperson Justice & Peace Scotland



Coming Events

Friday, 30th May - 'Raising Hope', *Laudato Si'* week 2025 on-line, 7pm to 8.30pm

A special event, organised by Justice & Peace Scotland along with the Bishops' Conference of Scotland Care of Creation Office and various other Christian organisations, to celebrate the Jubilee Year and to reflect on a decade of *Laudato Si'* and its legacy in light of the death of Pope Francis. Bishop John Arnold of Salford Diocese, the Spokesperson for the Environment of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales will provide the keynote address.

[Click here to register and receive access.](#)



Don't Bank on the Bomb action day

Profiting from the production and maintenance of weapons of mass destruction is a multi-billion pound industry. Banks, pension funds, asset managers and other financial institutions worldwide continue to provide enormous financial backing to the nuclear weapons industry. It has been calculated that investors hold almost \$514 billion in shares and bonds in these companies, while just under \$270 billion was provided in loans and underwriting.

Justice & Peace Scotland, together with friends from Pax Christi Scotland and the Scottish Peace Network, gathered in Glasgow city centre at the end of March to raise awareness of the backing for these immoral armaments from major high street lending institutions. The Don't Bank on the Bomb Scotland event took the form of engaging with members of the public - many unaware of the links - and delivering letters to Barclays, HSBC and the Royal Bank of Scotland urging them to divest from the nuclear weapons industry.

Call to Action

Scotland United for Climate Action campaign - final push!

We have the power to help shape Scotland's climate future. As a member of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS), Justice & Peace Scotland are giving full support to the *Scotland United For Climate Action* campaign. This includes an e-action now in its final few weeks.

By speaking up now, we can push the Scottish Government to take fast and fair action — that protects our communities, creates good green jobs, and secures a healthier planet for all. When we act together, we make change happen. Let's show our leaders that Scotland is ready.

Write to your MSPs: <https://sccs.eaction.org.uk/climate>

DUNGAVEL SOLIDARITY GATHERING



DID YOU KNOW?
Every country in Europe sets a limit on immigration detention, except the UK.

**Sunday 15th June
1.00PM Dungavel House**

Join us for readings, reflections and to advocate for human dignity over indefinite detention.



Guest speaker:

Archbishop William Nolan,
President of Justice & Peace Scotland



Sunday, 15th June - Dignity Not Detention Solidarity Gathering, Dungavel IRC, 1pm to 1.45pm

See above and also item on page 1.

Thursday, 19th June - Together For Sanctuary, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Maryhill Road, Glasgow, 7pm

See page 3 for all the details of an ecumenical service of prayer, worship and fellowship for Refugee Week Scotland.

Saturday, 2nd August - Faslane Christian Peace Vigil, 10.30am to 12 noon

J&PS president Archbishop William Nolan, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a clergy representative from the Scottish Episcopal Church and members of the Iona Community will join in prayer for a world without nuclear weapons on a site where these affronts to humanity are housed. This vigil will be held in the very month of the 80-year anniversary since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. All are encouraged to attend. [Join our mailing list or follow our social media to receive details nearer the time of a free bus on the day that will have pick-ups in Glasgow and Edinburgh.](#)



Save the date

**SCOTLAND
DEMANDS
BETTER**

THE MARCH FOR A BETTER SCOTLAND
BEYOND THE INJUSTICE OF POVERTY

EDINBURGH - 25 OCT 2025

povertyalliance.org/SDB

