

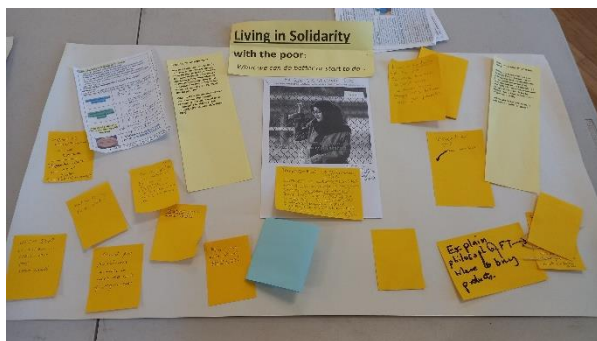


LiveSimply COMES TO JOHN MARY VIANNEY PARISH, LEEDS

By Tony O'Brian

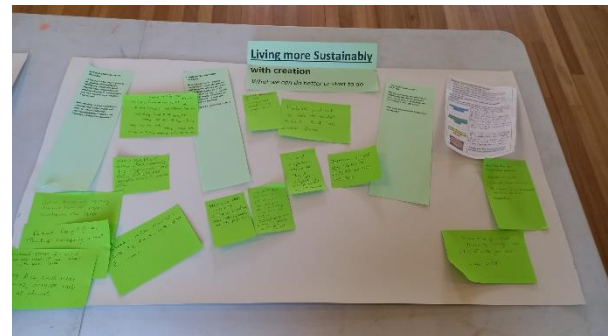
About 25 members of the parish of St John Vianney in north Leeds met on 20 June 2023 to take forward our action planning for our *LiveSimply* parish award application. Information leaflets on *LiveSimply* and *Laudato si'* had been distributed at Sunday masses each week during Lent and followed up by two further weekly leaflets in June, so that the purpose of the award, the message of Pope Francis and the three *Live Simply* ambitions could become widely known and understood across the parish.

Using many of CAFOD's suggestions, parishioners were asked to think about actions they could take to support living simply, living sustainably with creation, and living in solidarity with the poor.



Those present at the meeting on 20 June gathered successively around three tables, to discuss each of the three themes and to pool thoughts about actions that could be taken by the parish, including its two churches, three schools and various parish groups. Actions that "we are doing now" were noted on post-its, along with actions that "we can do better or start to do". Including several suggestions put forward in advance and submitted via the offertory collection on the previous Sunday, a total of 67 positive actions were put forward and the group then

began to prioritise those which can form the basis of our *LiveSimply* Action Plan. The next step is for the parish's *LiveSimply* steering group to draft a plan for future actions which can be endorsed by the parish.



The intention is to finalise and submit the Action Plan to CAFOD by this September and be in a position to apply for the award in late summer/early autumn 2024.

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CLIMATE ACTION AND SCHOOLS

By Joe Burns, Commission member

Over the last few weeks there are two organisations who mainly work with schools that have come to our attention.

One is called RAFT. It's nothing to do with rising sea levels! It stands for Retrofit Action for Tomorrow.

One of their team, Debbie Adler, came along to the recent NDEG meeting at Wheeler Hall.

RAFT

She writes:

RAFT is a social enterprise committed to providing education & deep retrofit advice to communities and schools on the path to zero carbon. We are architects with over a decade of deep retrofit experience, based across London, Leeds and Birmingham. We work with individual churches, schools, and other community organisations.



RAFT take a whole school approach to retrofit. We combine practical experience and technical expertise with thermal performance and energy modelling, to inform options and provide a detailed retrofit plan. A RAFT retrofit plan can be used for Heat Decarbonisation plans and funding applications.

RAFT

RETROFIT ACTION FOR TOMORROW

We help organisations to decarbonise their buildings and make them more comfortable, and we carry out engagement workshops to spread education, awareness and action on the climate crisis and climate resilience. Our engagement audience has so far ranged from primary and secondary school pupils up to building premises managers and those managing wider estates.

A common finding across all our projects is organisation's feeling like they want to act but don't know where to start without support. Some of our work is building specific, such as work with individual schools and churches, while some is more strategic or research based, such work we do with the Department for Education or the Church of England.

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Retrofit Plan (illustration only)



We also do workshops in schools. For example, to explore with students how heat loss in buildings occur and what changes can be made that will reduce the heat loss.



Reducing heat loss from a baked potato!

To find out more about RAFT head over to their website:

<https://www.retrofitaction.org.uk/>



SAMHE

This is another acronym-based organisation!

This one stands for Schools Air Quality Monitoring for Health and Education.

This project brings together scientists, pupils and teachers. SAMHE (they pronounce it Sammy) is establishing a network of air quality monitors in schools across the UK, to generate an dataset which will help researchers better understand schools indoor air quality.



The air quality monitor

Schools get a free high spec air quality monitor that measures carbon dioxide (CO₂), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) particulate matter (PM), temperature and relative humidity. Teachers and pupils can access their data through a specially designed interactive Web App, seeing how air quality changes over the course of hours, days or weeks and months. There are also a number of curriculum resources available for schools to use as well.

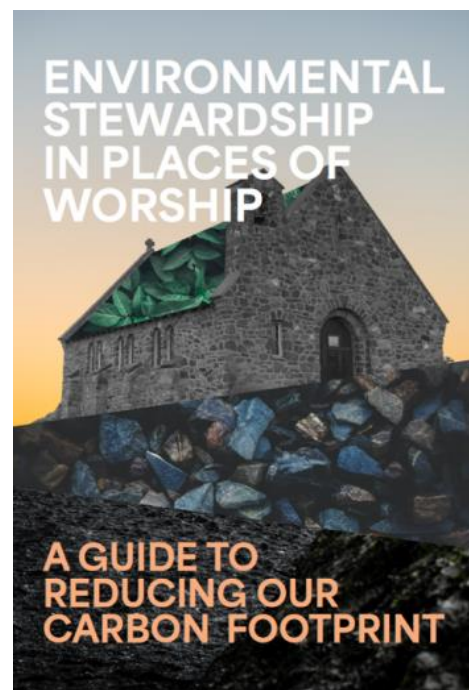
The SAMHE organisation gets the air quality data from the school automatically via the school's WiFi connections- enabling the academic institutions to build a large dataset about air quality in schools. Spread the word!

For more information, head over to their website:

<https://samhe.org.uk/>

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Salford Diocese has partnered with Manchester University and the Tyndall centre for Climate Change Research to produce a new guide entitled "Environmental Stewardship in Places of Worship."



This booklet covers ideas over 4 areas:-

- Reducing Heating use
- Changing heating supply
- Generating electricity on site
- Travel to places of worship

The booklet can be downloaded from the website of the Laudato Si Centre in Salford Diocese.

Use this link to download the guide:

<https://laudatosicentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Decarbonisation-Guide-Electronic-Hi-Res-002.pdf>

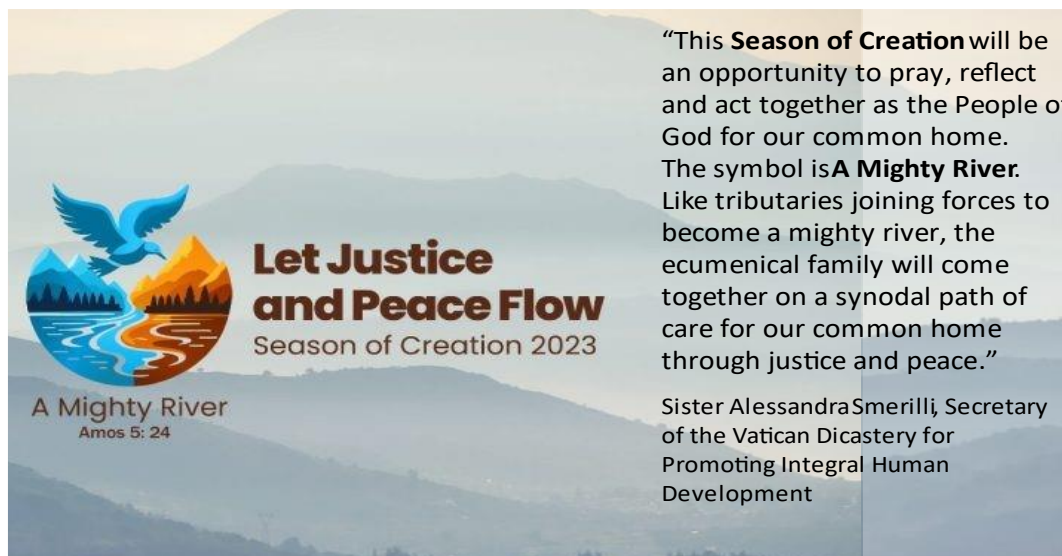
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2023 SEASON OF CREATION 01 SEPTEMBER TO 04 OCTOBER

What will you be doing in your church community to mark this season of the Church's Year?

A mass of creation? Including prayers like the one below in your liturgies? -holding an event to promote Laudato Si? – the possibilities are endless. See <https://seasonofcreation.org/>



The Lord's Prayer

[adapted by Jim Cotter in the New Zealand Anglican Prayer Book]

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your communion of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on Earth....
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.
Amen.



FROM ASYLUM-SEEKER TO PRIEST – A JOURNEY OF FAITH

By Father Yemane Aradom

I was a stranger and you welcomed me... (Mt 25:35)

I am Father Yemane Aradom. I was born in Sudan and raised in Eritrea. My childhood was a happy one and I grew up in a loving Christian family. I will tell you the main events of my story which took me from Africa to Europe as a refugee. Forgive me for not being able to tell you the whole story.



My friend Gerezgher used to take me with him to Holy Mass every Sunday. Eventually, he encouraged me to become an altar server, and seeing my enthusiasm for this role, he planted the seed I should become a priest. I did not hesitate to say yes so he enrolled me in the junior seminary. This coincided with me starting high school. I felt uplifted and appreciated that this was a real call from God to serve him. I began to understand what a vocation is. I knew that it was God's will that I should become a priest. I was growing up both physically and spiritually.

However, life was to change dramatically for me. In 2013 a new law was passed in Eritrea requiring all seminarians to interrupt their training in order to do compulsory military service. I was just 21. I had to choose between love of my country and love of my faith. The idea of bearing arms to kill others was

repulsive to me. Therefore, I decided to leave my family, friends, and country behind. I would spend the next eight months risking my life to get to Europe. Consequently, in January 2014, I decided to flee from Alebu, my village, and make my way, with my close friend, to Sudan. This journey would be made on foot.

I could not say a proper good-bye to my family and friends. Only my sister knew where I was going. This decision was extremely hard for me.

The first stage of my journey from Eritrea to Sudan took us three days. Life in Sudan was very dangerous; we had to remain in hiding for fear of being deported back to Eritrea. After many difficult weeks in Sudan, we travelled to Libya with the assistance of a smuggler. We travelled by lorry through the Sahara Desert. The ten days in the desert were extremely harsh with some people dying of dehydration. However, I survived and managed to arrive in Libya. I had to remain in hiding in Libya at all times as I did not have a visa to remain as a refugee. I was under the constant control of the smuggler. I cannot share what happened there to me and my Eritrean friends. I witnessed many horrific things which I still remember vividly.

This smuggler got me on to a boat to Italy on the 5 June 2014; the journey took five days. After only two days the boat became unsafe, and we were rescued by Italian coast guards who took us to Sicily where we were put in a hostel. I did not feel safe and so I did not want to claim asylum in Italy. Some of my fellow refugees advised me to go to France and then to the UK.

On the 25th of July 2014 I travelled to France by train. It took me another day to get to Calais. We were not welcomed over there. We had no food, no accommodation, no shelter -



the area where we refugees stayed was called the Jungle. This is an appropriate name as survival there was difficult. Some nuns generously gave us some food and water and I slept in a run-down Lorry. However, our sleeping quarters were discovered by French police who filled the lorry with tear gas. One of the police officers told me to go back to Africa. He had no idea of what had made me leave my country. I reflected on Jesus's words on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Life is not always fair, but it is always better to forgive quickly, love truly for the sake of Christ. In 2014, Pope Francis spoke at the World Day for Migrants and Refugees. He said, "We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved." Pope Francis added his vision for a "humanity for which every foreign country is our homeland, and every homeland is a foreign country."

I spent twenty-four days in Calais and after a long journey finally arrived in the UK on the 19th of August, 2014. I immediately asked for asylum. This was the start of a happy new life for me. I was granted asylum and was able to work and survive in the UK. Jesus said, "Come to me all of you who are overburdened and I will give you peace and rest." (Matthew 11:28.) Having survived the gruelling desert and stormy seas, I now finally have peace. I am safe!

In 2018 God guided my steps to meet the Bishop of Leeds, Marcus Stock, who enabled me to go to the seminary and resume my journey towards priesthood. The Diocese of Leeds welcomed a stranger into their midst and I am not a stranger anymore. This is my home and you are home.

Last year on the 23rd of July, Bishop Marcus Stock ordained me to the sacred priesthood. The Lord has chosen an unworthy man to serve you who welcomed me in my time of need. Currently, I am a curate priest in North Leeds, at the church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. I am inspired by Mother Teresa's words, "We are not expecting you to do great things, but we can do small things with great love." I pray for peace and justice for everyone and thank God every day that I am able to live safely and peacefully in this country.

God bless,

Father Yemane.

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ANTI-BOYCOTT BILL

By Richard Burden

The following article was written by Richard Burden in his capacity as trustee of the [Balfour Project](#). It explains why the Balfour Project charity opposes the Bill. Until 2019, Burden was an MP chairing the Britain Palestine All Party Parliamentary Group at Westminster.



In June, the UK Government has published a Bill that will both jettison Britain's respect for international laws that ban the acquisition of territory by conquest and ignore UN rules



signed by the UK over a decade ago calling on businesses to ensure their commercial dealings abroad uphold human rights. The Bill will also uniquely shield human rights abuses by Israel from scrutiny by UK public bodies, giving it an open-ended impunity that the Bill does not apply to any other country in the world.

The Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill was published on Monday 19 June and is due to be debated by the House of Commons in the first week of July. Its stated purpose is *“to prevent public bodies from being influenced by political or moral disapproval of foreign states when taking certain economic decisions.”*

It means elected local authorities and other public bodies (e.g. universities and pension funds) will be forced to ignore ethical issues when deciding whether or not to invest in or procure services from companies whose overseas business dealings are complicit in human rights and other abuses abroad.

So, in other words – no questioning of companies operating in Russian-occupied Eastern Ukraine or in Myanmar; no scrutiny of companies working with Chinese authorities involved in the persecution of Uyghur Muslims; no objection to business dealings with companies involved in the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia: no concern about the import of goods from illegal settlements in the West Bank.

Britain’s existing international responsibilities to uphold human rights:

A. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

11. Business enterprises should respect human rights. This means that they should avoid infringing on the human rights of others and should address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved.

If passed, the Bill will drive a coach and horses through Britain’s compliance with Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights [published by the United Nations](#) to which the UK signed up over a decade ago. Both the UN Guiding Principles and an Action Plan to implement them [published by the UK Government](#) itself make clear that businesses have a corporate responsibility to uphold human rights and to monitor records of those with whom they have commercial dealings. Neither document suggests it is acceptable for businesses to simply look the other way on these issues.



Apparently stung by criticisms like these when they announced their plans over a year ago, the Government is now saying that people should have no fears that the new Bill will outlaw ethical investment action by UK public bodies against genuine human rights abuses abroad. The *“safeguard”* proposed is a provision in the Bill which will enable Ministers to exempt individual countries from the general prohibitions contained in the Bill. They are already briefing that such an exemption will be issued in relation to Ukraine.

But why should respect for human rights be the exception rather the rule for UK public bodies, particularly when the UK’s



endorsement of UN Guiding Principles requires businesses to uphold those rights as a matter of course in their commercial decisions? Do Ministers seriously believe that public bodies in the UK should have lower standards of corporate social responsibility than those expected of private sector companies?



Putting Israel and its illegal settlements above the law:

But there is an even worse sting in the tail. A clause in the Bill explicitly precludes Ministers from making any exemption in respect of Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, or the Golan Heights. No Minister, now or in the future, would have the power to vary the prohibition on ethical investment decisions by public bodies related to those territories, however serious the human rights situation there may be at the time. It's a clause that grants Israel an open-ended impunity – and one that the Bill does not give to any other country. At the very time that thousands of Israelis themselves are taking to the streets every week in protest against the threat posed to democracy by the most extreme government in their country's history, for UK Ministers to so blatantly try to exceptionalise Israel from scrutiny is nothing short of breathtaking.

Not only this, but the Government's Bill flies in the face of United Nations resolutions for which the UK has itself voted, and of international law as a whole. UN Security Council Resolution 2334, passed in 2016,

expressly calls on member states to distinguish in their dealings between Israel itself and its activities in the territories it occupies, like its illegal settlements in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. This Bill will penalise public authorities which try to comply with the UK's responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

By expressly including reference to the Golan Heights, meanwhile, the Bill ignores the fact that this territory has been formally annexed by Israel – a move that has been explicitly acknowledged as illegal by both the UN and every UK Government until now, irrespective of party. The same applies to East Jerusalem. Indeed, in its statements and actions, the current Government of Israel is transforming occupation of the West Bank into illegal annexation too – something on which the International Court of Justice will give an opinion next year. If passed, this Bill will also inhibit the UK from acting on the Court's opinion if it finds that Israel's ongoing domination of the West Bank and Gaza does indeed break international law.

A threat to freedom of speech:

And if all this was not enough, the Bill even threatens freedom of speech as well. It will prohibit members of public bodies even discussing ethical investment considerations in relation to their dealings with foreign countries. Indeed, one interpretation of the Bill's clauses suggests it may even become illegal for UK citizens to ask members of a public body to take moral or ethical issues into account when taking commercial decisions!



Why MPs and Peers should oppose the Bill:

So, this is a Bill that is wrong on so many counts. Will it go through? Any political party that believes in upholding human rights and the rule of international law without fear or favour will have no justification in doing anything other than voting against this dreadful piece of legislation. These are issues which should have personal salience for Keir Starmer as a former human rights lawyer himself.

Of course, Ministers will whip Conservative MPs to support the Bill and the current Parliamentary arithmetic probably means it will get through the Commons. Even so, let us hope that some Conservative MPs who respect international law will follow their consciences and say no. The public opposition to the Bill that has already been expressed by the Union of Jewish Students and other groups should encourage more MPs to vote against the Bill, irrespective of party. As citizens who remain true to the UK's respect for human rights, it is vital we lobby our constituency MPs to oppose the Bill when it comes to Parliament for its 2nd Reading debate in a few weeks' time.

Even if the Bill passes the Commons, that will not be the end of the story. There is every chance that the more independently-minded House of Lords will – across party

Protect the right to boycott
The government has tabled an 'anti-boycott bill' that, if passed, could dramatically affect our ability to campaign for social and climate justice in the UK and around the world.

lines – give this pernicious and unnecessary Bill the mauling it deserves.

<https://righttoboycott.org.uk/>

FOSSIL FREE PARLIAMENT

By Matthew Maslen, ENews editor

Last month, I travelled to London to attend the official launch event for Fossil Free Parliament (FFP). In the Friends of the Earth HQ, around 20 of us gathered to discuss what this new campaign would look like going forwards.



The day began with an overview of the work that's been done so far. As this was my introduction to the campaign, it was fascinating to hear about how movements such as FFP come into being, and the vast amount of work that goes on before a campaign is even ready to become public.

The campaign will focus around five demands:

1. **Block the money pipeline**
2. **Refuse invitations**
3. **Remove the seat at the table**
4. **Divest the pension fund**
5. **Break the revolving door**



The event also featured video talks from prominent voices in activism on the climate crisis. We heard first from Pascoe Sabido, researcher/campaigner with Corporate Europe Observatory and part of the Fossil Free Politics coalition. He talked about how to gain public engagement in new campaigns, and specifically that *“finding scandals is key”*. He went on to reinforce how important this campaign to cut the ties between the fossil fuel industry and the UK Parliament is. Talking mostly to the second demand, Sabido said: *“elected officials are really wedded to their access... [they] don’t want to be told who to meet and who not to meet”*.



The next was by human rights lawyer and consultant specialising in climate justice policy, research and campaigns, Harpreet Kaur Paul. She highlighted the huge disparity that exists in agency and access to political decision making between fossil fuel companies, and ordinary people *“at the expense of [...] planetary distress”*.

There was also a panel discussion between Dave Timms, Head of Political Affairs for FOE EWNI, and Hazel Healey, the [DeSmog](#) UK Editor. This was a brilliant discussion ranging from how divestment works, to the problems posed by misinformation, half-truths, and conspiracy theories, to the govt.’s recent extreme strategical limiting of civil society action while simultaneously turning a blind eye to corporate lobbying.

The day ended with a beautiful performance by Lauriem of their original music which you can find [here](#).

Having begun with a very limited understanding of what the campaign was, I left feeling it was an incredibly important part of people reclaiming power from destructive polluting corporations. People over Polluters!

To get involved in Fossil Free Parliament, email: info@fossilfreeparliament.uk

Or follow us on twitter: [@MP_FossilFree](https://twitter.com/MP_FossilFree)



A CELEBRATION OF GOD'S CREATION

By Michael Emly, Our Lady of Kirkstall parish

Nearly 200 parishioners of Our Lady of Kirkstall, Leeds, came together on June 25th for an afternoon that celebrated God's creation. Inspired by Pope Francis' teaching in *Laudato Si'* and organised by our parish Live Simply group, the event was intended to bring people from the parish together for a fun afternoon inspired by the beauty of the world around us.



Parishioners were asked to contribute an item illustrating their love of nature – a photo, a poem, a painting, an artefact – that we could organise into a display. Over 50 contributions were received, and the variety and creativity displayed was amazing: including needlework, ceramics, dried flowers and objects crafted from wood. There was even a poem in the form of a Japanese haiku! The display formed one of the focal points of the afternoon. One of our more senior parishioners told us: *"I was sceptical when I first heard about it, but it's really been an outstanding success!"*

People were also invited to try out various creative activities, all of them linked to the theme of nature – such as making bees and

flowers from paper, painting pebbles or sowing salad seeds. The children in particular threw themselves into this, and several told us that the afternoon had been *"Great fun!"*. Meanwhile those more advanced in years were able to sit down and chat while they enjoyed a cornucopia of cakes, scones and strawberries.






Perhaps the highlight of the afternoon was a visit by 'Wise Owl' birds of prey. The keepers brought five beautiful owls, varying in size and species, as well as a Harris hawk. Each was displayed in turn, while something of its rescue history was told. The children - and indeed the adults too - were rapt. Those who wished were able to don a leather glove and hold one of the birds. One grown-up told us: *"I'd always wanted to handle a bird of prey and it was such a pleasure to hold little Gizmo"* [the name of one of the owls].



Throughout the afternoon, there was a real party atmosphere and a feeling that parishioners were not just 'visiting' an event but were owning it by their enthusiastic participation in all that was happening. With all ages represented from across our 3 church communities, the celebration bore witness to a real sense of unity across the parish. Truly a gift and a blessing!



EVENTS

 Fri 21st Jul To Sun 23 Jul	<p>Sustainability? – Survival or Shutdown 21st @6:30pm – 23rd @2pm @ The Hayes Conference Centre</p> <p>45th National Justice & Peace Network Conference. What is sustainability? It is always a lively event with a combination of keynote speakers and a range of workshops with a good craic around the bar in the evening. Also running during the weekend will be a ‘Just Fair’ with stalls from many organisations working around sustainability and other social justice issues.</p> <p>It’s not a cheap weekend (full cost is £225) though there are low income options as well. Use the button to download the application form. STILL TIME TO REGISTER</p> <p>https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-NJPN-conference-WEB-Booking-Form-2023-11-2.pdf</p>
 Sun 6th Aug	<p>Hiroshima Bombing Anniversary Sunday 6th August</p> <p>Look out for locally organised events that you could join</p>
 Wed 9th Aug	<p>Nagasaki Bombing Anniversary Wednesday 9th August</p> <p>Look out for locally organised events that you could join</p>
 Fri 01 Sep – Wed 04 Oct	<p>Season of Creation <i>The newest Season of the Church’s year</i></p> <p>What will be happening in your church and parish community to celebrate this Season of the Church’s year? The theme for 2023 is ‘Let Justice & Peace Flow’ – so there must be some possibilities that come to mind about the interconnectedness of working for Climate Justice and working for justice more generally.</p> <p>If you need ideas then take a look at the Westminster Diocese J&P website: https://westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/season-of-creation-1st-september-4th-october/</p>
 Sat 9th Sep	<p>J&P Commission Planning Meeting 9th September @10am - 2pm</p> <p>To review what we are doing and to sketch out where we go from here. How do we best use our limited resources of money and people’s time over the next couple of years?</p> <p>This meeting is intended for Commission members and some invited guests. However, if you are interested in coming along then please just email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk and we will provide you with the details for attending.</p>

Please forward this email E-News onto anyone else who you think might be interested. Even better, get them to send us their email address so we can add them to our contact database. See our website for details of these and other events which may be of interest.