

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE



Report to the Bishops' Conference of Scotland November 2024

HIGHLIGHTS

“HOPE FOR PEACE FOR GAZA: A CONVERSATION WITH FR GABRIEL ROMANELLI”



Fr Gabriel Romanelli, the parish priest of the only Catholic Church in Gaza, visited Glasgow on Friday 26th April 2024 for a series of events organised by Justice & Peace Scotland and SCIAF. Fr Gabriel joined a host of panelists, including Archbishop Nolan and the then Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev. Sally Forster-Fulton, at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall for a sold out event where he shared his personal testimony of what life is like in Gaza and across the region of Israel and Palestine. Fr Gabriel’s main message was to ask us all to do anything we can to stop the war in Gaza. He also asked for governments to pursue measures that bring lasting peace and justice for all who call The Holy Land home. He emphasised that a ceasefire should not be the final goal, but a precursor to a lasting peace.

Prior to the public event, Fr Gabriel engaged in various media interviews including a live interview on Sky News where he issued a simple message to the public: pray and work for peace in whatever way you can. Following the discussion at the Concert Hall, a public mass for peace was celebrated in St Andrew’s Cathedral by Archbishop Nolan who was joined by Bishop Toal, Bishop Dougan and a number of priests from across Scotland. Both the mass and the earlier gathering were attended by numerous leaders and representatives of other Christian denominations.

We were honoured to organise these opportunities for Fr Gabriel to share his story. As a result of the promotions, media coverage and the events themselves we succeeded in further raising the profile of Justice & Peace Scotland. This was particularly evident in a significant rise in followers across all social media platforms.

I come to Glasgow with only a simple message: I am the parish priest of the only Catholic church in the Gaza Strip of Palestine – to ask everyone to (do) anything to stop this war.
-Fr Gabriel Romanelli



Pray in whatever way you can, work for peace in whatever way you can. - Fr Gabriel Romanelli

FASLANE PEACE VIGIL - AN ECUMENICAL CHRISTIAN WITNESS



Supporters of Justice & Peace Scotland and other peace organisations such as Pax Christi Scotland, SCANA, and Christian CND came together once again at Faslane Naval Base in August to hold a peace vigil for a world without nuclear weapons. The event, organised by Justice & Peace Scotland, served as an opportunity to reaffirm our Christian opposition to the existence of weapons of mass destruction on the site of the UK's nuclear arsenal with prayer, hymn and reflection. We were led in our liturgy by Archbishop William Nolan, President of Justice & Peace Scotland; Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev Dr Shaw Paterson and Bishop Andrew Swift, Bishop of Brechin Diocese, from the Scottish Episcopal Church.

VISIT OF MARTHA HENNESSEY- GRAND-DAUGHTER OF DOROTHY DAY



The works of war destroy the human family. The works of mercy unite the human family.
-Martha Hennessey

Martha Hennessey, the grand-daughter of Servant of God Dorothy Day, visited Glasgow in May and we collaborated with the Glasgow Catholic Worker to hold a round-table discussion on Catholic Social Teaching and how we can be inspired by the life and witness of Dorothy today. Discussion on how CST allows us to respond to injustice were led by Martha and Archbishop Nolan.



OTHER EVENTS

OSCAR ROMERO ANNUAL LECTURE: ROMERO AND UKRAINE - RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF INJUSTICE

The annual Oscar Romero lecture was held this year on the 18th of October at the Edinburgh Jesuit Centre. This event was hosted by Edinburgh Jesuit Centre, Justice & Peace Scotland, SCIAF, Pax Christi Scotland, The Romero Trust, and Independent Catholic News. The keynote speaker, Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, provided a thought-provoking address on the parallels between the church leadership provided in the face of Russia's war in Ukraine and Saint Romero's stance against the injustices his people faced in El Salvador. St Oscar Romero, a relic from whom was on display, was an inspiration for peace-building. The event attracted a healthy attendance of around 60 people, with more watching on the live-stream organised by J&P Scotland. This is another example of the fruitful year we have had through collaborations between Bishops' conference agencies and church-affiliated groups.



SEASON OF CREATION CONFERENCE



The first ever Season of Creation Conference, hosted by the BCOS Office for the Care of Creation, was held on the 7th of September at St Margaret's, Raploch, Stirling. As members of the Office, Justice & Peace Scotland were invited to present to delegates alongside SCIAF. The Conference provided an opportunity for members of various agencies across Scotland to discuss how they put Care of Creation work and Laudato Si principles into practice. The gathering also provided guidance as to how supporters could do the same. Our own Anne-Marie Clements and SCIAF's Ben Wilson gave talks at an event that exceeded expectations with the almost 40 attendees comprising representatives from every diocese.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

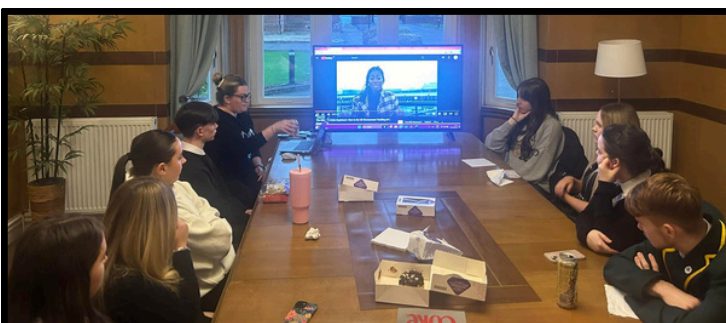
CST PARISH WORKSHOP SERIES

From September - November of this year we have been working with the Justice & Peace Group in St Anthony's and St Mark's in Rutherglen to pilot a three-part seminar series on Catholic Social Teaching. Anne-Marie has been visiting the parish to deliver evening talks on the following topics: "Human Dignity as the Foundation of CST", "Striving for the Common Good and the Principles of CST" and "See - Judge - Act: Responding to Injustices as a Follower of Christ.". The intention of the pilot was to gauge whether a series of talks in this format is appealing to parishes and if so, to offer the series nationally going forward. With approximately 15 attendees at each session and positive feedback from participants and the parish priest, the pilot has been a success.



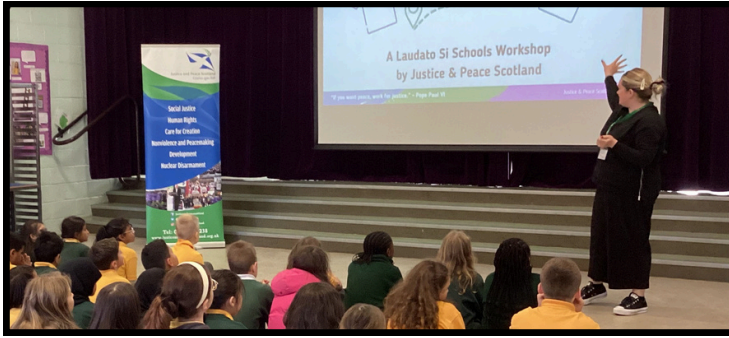
CARITAS PARISH PROJECT

Following last year's pilot of the Justice & Peace Caritas Parish Project in St Joseph's, Blantyre, the goal for 2024 was to finalise the structure of the project and host in a second parish in addition to St Joseph's to explore how it can be expanded going forward, and determine what adaptations or developments are needed before this can occur. The finalised design of the project consists of a Learn - Pray - Act model where young people facilitate parish activities under these headings in response to a justice and peace issue, guided by parish volunteers who have been trained by Justice & Peace Scotland. As part of the programme, Caritas students receive an input on the work of J&PS and on CST as a foundation for the activities they will carry out. To determine if the idea will work in practice, volunteers from St Anthony's and St Mark's have been working with Caritas candidates using the human trafficking resources that Anne-Marie developed for last year's group. Anne-Marie has continued to work in St Joseph's parish with a new cohort of students, this time on the topic of refugees and migration. By the end of 2024, feedback from young people in both parishes will be collated alongside feedback from parish priests and the volunteers in Rutherglen and used to identify the next steps. It is envisioned that over a number of years the project will be developed within the Diocese of Motherwell and subsequently rolled out to other dioceses.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

SCHOOL VISITS



We have continued to visit schools, both Primary and Secondary, all across the country to talk about the work of Justice & Peace Scotland, Catholic Social Teaching, and provide workshops on sustainable fashion and responsible consumption for schools involved in Laudato Si Schools Scotland. As well as engaging with pupils, we have also facilitated inputs for teaching staff as part of in-service days on three occasions. Further school bookings have been secured through networking with education colleagues at the CHAPS Conference and at the Laudato Si Schools Scotland Conference, which we co-facilitated with SCES and SCIAF. To date we have visited students and staff in ten schools in 2024 and have another four bookings in the calendar coinciding with Catholic Education Week. Anne-Marie has travelled to schools in five of the eight Scottish dioceses so far and will have visited six of eight by the end of the year.



SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CST INFORMATION EVENING

With the intention of raising awareness of the work of both our agencies among MSPs, Justice & Peace Scotland partnered with SCIAF to host an information evening on CST in the Scottish Parliament sponsored by Paul O'Kane MSP. Guest speakers included Fr David Stewart SJ and Duncan McLaren who gave an overview of CST and an insight into how it underpins the social action work of Catholic charities and agencies. Sixth year pupils from St Andrew's Secondary, Carntyne, spoke about their own experiences of putting CST into practice in their school and community.



YOUNG ADULT TALK AT EDINBURGH JESUIT CENTRE



We were delighted to attend the 'First Sunday Circle' young adults meeting at the Edinburgh Jesuit Centre where Anne-Marie was invited to speak about Catholic Social Teaching and the ways it can equip Catholics to engage with politics and injustice. We found this to be one of our most enjoyable talks of the year as the group were highly motivated to take part in discussion and a lot of ideas, questions and points of view were exchanged. Following the gathering, members of the group followed our accounts on social media and one or two have been present at Justice & Peace events since. We hope to return in the future and to connect with more young adult and youth ministry initiatives moving forward.

CAMPAIGNS & ADVOCACY



FAIR PAY FOR CARERS

The campaign produced constructive talks with Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Neil Gray, in a meeting held at the Scottish Parliament in September. Attended by Justice & Peace Scotland Clergy Rep Fr David Stewart SJ, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Revd Shaw Paterson, and CEO of CrossReach Care Viv Dickenson, the ask of paying workers 10% above the real living wage was communicated to the Cabinet Secretary.

RIGHT TO RECOVERY BILL

We attended the Scottish Parliament to support the launch of the private members' Right To Recovery Bill, crafted by Faces and Voices of Recovery (FAVOR) CEO Anne-Marie Ward, in June. The bill is aimed at providing greater investment in rehabilitation for those with drug and alcohol addictions, and give these programmes equal standing to harm reduction treatments, such as methadone dispensing. Through our networks, we canvassed backing for the bill, which is scheduled to go before Parliament in the coming months, and ensured a Justice & Peace Scotland presence at the vigil for those lost to addiction in the past year, held at George Square in August.



SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTIONS FOR REFUGEES

We thank the Bishops' Conference for its continued support for SFAR. Working together with other faith groups, SFAR seeks to co-ordinate and promote action by faith communities in Scotland to support asylum seekers and refugees. It urges reform of the UK's asylum and immigration system to ensure more respect for human rights and human dignity. It also supports New Scots across the country and raises awareness of the humanitarian crisis' across the world.

FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

As an organisation, we have signed up to this treaty which seeks a concrete, binding plan to end the expansion of new coal, oil and gas projects and manage a global just transition away from fossil fuels. As members of the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalition, we have added our name to letters urging the Scottish government to join countries such as Colombia and Samoa in making this necessary step, committing to just transition and opposing Rosebank oil field.



FREE BUS PASSES FOR ASSYLUM SEEKERS

The Scottish government's decision in August to renege on their commitment to offer free bus travel for people seeking asylum led to us uniting with faith groups under the umbrella of SFAR to push for a rethink. Promoting the campaign through our social media channels, we attended both a meeting and debate in the Parliament, where cross-party support exists for reviving this measure. We have linked in with Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNET) to explore further action we could take to build the pressure for re-committing to the pilot.

PLANNING AHEAD

CONTINUE TO DEVELOP COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH ISSUING OF OUR JUSTICE & PEACE SCOTLAND QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER AND BY UPDATING OUR WEBSITE AND MAILING LIST PROVIDER.

EXPAND THE CARITAS PARISH PROJECT IN 2025 THROUGH REFLECTING ON FEEDBACK FROM THE PILOT SCHEMES, DEVELOPING NEW TOPIC RESOURCES AND DESIGNING A PLAN FOR TRAINING PARISH VOLUNTEERS TO DELIVER THE PROJECT.

OFFER THE CST WORKSHOP SERIES NATIONALLY TO CONTINUE TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF JUSTICE & PEACE SCOTLAND IN DIOCESES AND PARISHES ACROSS SCOTLAND. TO ENSURE THERE IS AN IMPACT FROM DELIVERING THE WORKSHOPS, SESSIONS WILL INCLUDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION PLANNING FOR PARTICIPANTS TO IDENTIFY HOW THEY CAN BE INVOLVED WITH JUSTICE AND PEACE WORK.

WE HAVE BEEN INVITED TO POTENTIALLY HOST A EUROPEAN COMMISSION MEETING IN 2026. WE WILL CONFIRM THIS IN 2025 AND SEND ANDREW TO ONE OF THE UPCOMING MEETINGS SO THAT BOTH HE AND ANNE-MARIE HAVE EXPERIENCE ATTENDING A JUSTICE & PEACE EUROPE GATHERING BEFORE WE PLAN TO HOST ONE IN SCOTLAND.

JUSTICE & PEACE SCOTLAND

DIOCESAN COMMISSIONERS

Jill Kent, Chair
Kenneth Sadler, Aberdeen
Marian Pallister, Argyll and the Isles
Nick Marra, Dunkeld
Susan McAllion, Dunkeld
Anne McGuire, Galloway
Maureen McGuire, Galloway
Richard Jackson, Glasgow
Deacon Brian MacKenzie, Paisley
Rosalyne Mauchline, St Andrew's & Edinburgh
Canon Brian Gowans, St Andrew's & Edinburgh

To be appointed, Motherwell Diocese

REPRESENTATIVE COMMISSIONERS

Archbishop William Nolan, Bishop President
Grace Buckley, European Commission, SFAR
Fr David Stewart SJ, Clergy
Marian Pallister, Pax Christi Scotland
Ben Wilson, SCIAF

STAFF

Anne-Marie Clements: Catholic Social Teaching Engagement Officer
Andrew Smith: Campaigns, Communication and Events Coordinator

THANK YOU

This year we have said goodbye to Frances Gallagher who served as Campaigns and Communication Officer for the past six years. We thank her for her steadfast service and dedication to the Commission.

We also said goodbye to Margaret McGowan who generously served the Diocese of Motherwell for many years.



More information on these and other activities of the National Justice and Peace Commission can be found on our website and social media. www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk