

# A Pastoral Letter from Archbishop Nolan for the Feast of Epiphany



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President: Archbishop William Nolan

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We begin this new year praying for peace and justice. As we look around we see a world that is suffering under human mismanagement. We should not question our need to pray nor doubt the power of that prayer - for only God can help us.

The present economic crisis means that we are all having to tighten our belts financially. But though all of us are suffering we are not all suffering in the same way or to the same extent. Those who are better off may have to cut back on some of the luxuries or pleasures of life: a night out or a foreign holiday. But others are now struggling to afford food to feed their family or to pay for gas and electricity to heat their homes.

Meanwhile war in Europe continues. The prospect of peace in Ukraine is remote. Syria, Yemen, and Ethiopia are just some of the other long-term conflicts where peace is a distant dream. There is no shortage of these conflicts, nor seemingly any shortage of arms to fuel them and keep them alive. And refugees continue to arrive on our shores, despite the efforts of government to blockade the English Channel. In a world where, at over 100 million, there have never been so many forcibly displaced persons, (1) the root causes of migration have yet to be tackled.

Nor has the climate crisis gone away. People in Africa and elsewhere already suffer from the destruction of climate change caused by our environmental pollution. Yet we continue to pollute, and our promises of compensation for loss and damage remain but fine words.

We need to pray for peace and be active in supporting those in need. Pope Francis says we need to roll up our sleeves and put our faith into practice. (2) And many are doing just that.

It is encouraging to see so many parishes involved in supporting food banks for the hungry and in providing warm places for those shivering with cold. And it is commendable that many people pressure those in power to respect the human dignity of all in need: whether it's the poor in our own country, the refugees seeking shelter from oppression, or those in foreign lands whose climate we have destroyed.

Prayer is needed not just to soften the hearts of those in power, but to soften our own hearts also. For when we are worried about our personal financial wellbeing it can be hard to be concerned for others. And when conflicts persist for so long compassion fatigue can set in.

Despite the problems that humanity has created and that weigh us down, there is so much goodness in the world, and so many good people showing concern and compassion for those in need.

May our prayer be that God will work with us and through us to bring about the peace and justice for which we all long.

With my prayers and best wishes for a peaceful and just world,

William Nolan, Archbishop of Glasgow  
President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland Justice and Peace Commission

*1 UNHCR estimates that global forced displacement has reached 103 million at mid-2022.*

[www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics](http://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics)

*2 "Where the poor are concerned, it is not talk that matters; what matters is rolling up our sleeves and putting our faith into practice through a direct involvement, one that cannot be delegated." Pope Francis's Message for the World Day of the Poor, 13th November 2022.*

# The National Commission for Justice and Peace have been active in the following activities in 2022

## Climate Change/ COP26-

- Worked collaboratively with SCIAF and SCES on Laudato Si Schools to embed the encyclical's message of 'care for the earth, care for the poor' in schools.
- Contributed to learning and development sessions for teachers and continue to support schools who have begun on their Laudato Si Schools journey.
- Encouraged parishes to pray for ecological conversion during the Season of Creation from September until October 2022
- Participated in the Climate March in Edinburgh while COP27 was meeting in Egypt.

## Nuclear Disarmament

- Participated in three peaceful witness events held at Faslane, home of the Trident nuclear submarine.
- Distributed posters containing the church's teaching on nuclear weapons to schools and parishes to mark the 40th Anniversary of the 1982 Bishops' statement against nuclear arms.
- Produced a video with a rereading of the 1982 statement in collaboration with Glasgow University Department of Education, secondary schools and justice and peace members across the country.
- Spoke at an online event for the Glasgow University's St Andrew's Foundation on the topic of Catholic Social Teaching and nuclear weapons (Archbishop Nolan).
- Signed an interfaith statement against nuclear weapons on the anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

## Poverty and Unemployment

- Amplified the Poverty Alliance daily messages on our social media during Challenge Poverty Week.
- Promoted Archbishop Nolan's statement urging benefits be raised in line with inflation.
- Campaigned for Universal Basic Income to help people recover economically from the pandemic and which Pope Francis called for in June 2020.

## Human Migration

- Worked with other faiths groups through Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR) to help support refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into the community.
- Spoke at school assemblies and worked with Caritas students and during Refugee Week.
- Participated in SCES schools Catholic Social Teaching Day attended by RE teachers and pupils.
- Created online resources for schools and groups to explore the themes of Refugees and Migrants as part of Scottish Refugee Week.
- Gave an online presentation to the University of Glasgow's St Andrew's Foundation for teacher education about Catholic Social Teaching and migration.
- Participated in 2 Peace Witnesses at Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre.
- Supported and promoted the #StopRwanda campaign to stop those seeking sanctuary in the UK from being sent to Rwanda by the UK Home Office.
- Attended #StopRwanda events in both Glasgow and Edinburgh marking the start of the High Court case to stop these deportations.

## Other Issues

- Joined in a day of action outside the Scottish Parliament calling for the provision of rehabilitation beds for those trying to recover from addiction in Scotland when the drug death figures were announced.
- Joined the anti-racism march in Glasgow in March.
- Celebrated the beatification of Rutilio Grande and his three companions by sponsoring the live-streaming of the event from Sacred Heart Church in Edinburgh.
- Promoted and sponsored the filming of the Romero Lecture exploring the lives, mission, and legacies of Saint Romero and Blessed Rutilio Grande.
- Hosted Dr Duncan MacLaren's three short talks on Pope Francis and Justice & Peace on our YouTube channel.
- Highlighted social teaching quotes themed around the scriptures for the Sunday Mass, Saint's Feast Days, or important international or national days on our website and through social media.