

# ENLARGING THE SPACE OF OUR TENT



## SHARING FAITH IN THE DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER



Diocese of Westminster

AGENCY FOR EVANGELISATION



*Bishop Nicholas Hudson with Iraqi Asylum-seekers in Jordan 2023*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Published by the Agency for Evangelisation  
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February 2023

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# FOREWORD

Justice and Peace are at the heart of the Kingdom preached by Jesus. This much is confirmed by the Preface we hear every year on the Solemnity of Christ the King. There the Church prays that Jesus might accomplish in us:

*A Kingdom of Truth and Life,  
A Kingdom of Holiness and Grace,  
A Kingdom of Justice, Love and Peace.*

This is an echo of the Beatitudes that Jesus taught and which have at their heart a triple promise:

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied;  
Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God;  
Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.*

What is difficult to know is how to achieve this. This Faith-Sharing booklet offers part of the answer. It is an invitation to reflect with fellow-Christians on issues which are at the heart of the Kingdom in 2023: poverty, the impact of the cost of living, homelessness, racial justice, the care of creation, the welcome we extend to migrants and refugees, and peace-making.

It is a wonderfully comprehensive survey of all vital aspects of the Kingdom! We owe a deep debt of gratitude, as a Diocese, to its authors, Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, Chair of the Diocesan Justice & Peace Commission, and Ms Colette Joyce, Diocesan Justice & Peace Coordinator, for all the work they have put into creating such a fine resource. Deep thanks are due as well to the Agency for Evangelisation for making this edition possible; and for maintaining such a high standard of Faith-Sharing booklets.

I commend it to you wholeheartedly!

*+ Nicholas Hudson*

**Bishop Nicholas Hudson**  
Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster

# INTRODUCTION

*“Enlarge the space of your tent, spread out your tent cloths unsparingly, lengthen your ropes and make firm your pegs”*

*(Isaiah 54:2, Continental Stage Document)*

We have reached the ‘Continental Stage’ of the Synod process. Feedback has been received from the whole Church and we are entering the next phase of preparation for the Synod gathering in Rome this October. These Lent groups are another opportunity to respond to the Synod themes of communion, participation and mission. As we continue on our journey of discernment this Lent we are called to make more space in our hearts and our minds as a community of missionary disciples.

These five sessions highlight the work of Justice and Peace taking place around the Diocese. In reflecting on these challenges we keep our eyes on Jesus, travelling with him towards the cross and the eventual joy of the resurrection.

*Fr Dominic Robinson SJ (Chair) & Colette Joyce (Co-ordinator)  
Westminster Justice & Peace Commission*

## 5 SESSIONS

**Poverty, Cost-of-Living, Homelessness**

**Racial Justice**

**Care of Creation**

**Migrants and Refugees**

**Peace**





# SHARING FAITH IN A SMALL COMMUNITY

The Synodal Pathway has given many people a new experience of listening and being listened to, of sharing experiences and sharing faith, of understanding that we are pilgrims together on a journey. For some of you, these practical points will be well known, but for others, they will be new. To new members of the small community, we offer a big welcome, and to returning members, welcome back. Take time to read these few pages - they will be of great benefit.

**GATHERING** as a small community to share prayer, life and faith is an important part of parish life. This is a sacred time. It is important that you take the time to get to know one another, so always make room for the introductions of anyone new, and to ask one another how you are and what has happened since you last met.

**HOSPITALITY** and environment are very important. You should meet in a reflective atmosphere with as few distractions as possible. It would be helpful to have a central focus, such as an open Bible and a candle.

**TIMING** is important. The suggested time for each session is 60-90 minutes. Each session will have a balance of prayer, sharing experience, exploring scripture, reflection and talking about how we are living our faith.

**PRAYER** will take different forms, and we will make a suggestion for an opening and closing prayer. You can make other suggestions, too, as it is helpful to try varied ways of praying, such as playing some religious music. Silence is an important part of the process, so don't be afraid to pause during your prayer time or, indeed, during the reflection time for some quiet.

**EXPERIENCE** is essential to our spiritual life. As you reflect, ensure each person who wants to talk is given an opportunity to share. No one needs to talk unless they want to, and no one person should dominate the conversation. 'Synodal dialogue' depends on courage both in speaking and listening – speaking from the heart, and listening from the heart.

**RESPOND** Each week we have the opportunity to respond. It may be a good time to assess our priorities and see how we are living our faith in the totality of our lives: in our families, in our relationships, in our work.

We may not need to do more; we may need to do less.

This is the time to look at how we are living the values of Jesus and perhaps to identify new behaviours and attitudes.



## WHAT IS THE LEADER OF YOUR GROUP EXPECTED TO DO?

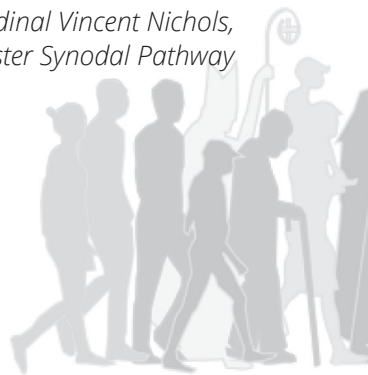
Each community will have its own leader, or facilitator. They are not someone with all the answers who is there to put everybody else right. He or she is a fellow participant but with particular responsibility for facilitating the community by:

- Preparing ahead of the session and developing a warm, accepting and open environment.
- Guiding the group and keeping it on track through the faith sharing process.
- Sharing the various tasks among the members of the group, like reading the text out loud or leading the prayers.
- Listening and, if necessary, asking questions to keep the sharing moving.
- Ensuring that each participant has the opportunity to speak.
- Encouraging members to see the meeting not as a discussion group, but as a time of listening, sharing, and learning together.

The same person could lead throughout or the leader could invite one or more other people to lead a session, if a particular person is known to have an interest in one of the themes.

*“Pope Francis is inviting us to listen again to each other, hearing experiences of faith with all its joys and disappointments, and to find new ways of strengthening each other. It is an opportunity for us to show our care for the family of the Church.”*

*Cardinal Vincent Nichols,  
introducing the Westminster Synodal Pathway*



# STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING

**WELCOME EVERYONE**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**INTRODUCE THE THEME**

**PRAYING WITH THE SUNDAY SCRIPTURES**

- Settle into this prayer time gradually.
- Take a minute to empty your mind of the day's thoughts and preoccupations and open your heart to listening to what God wants to say to us.
- Someone reads the passage out loud, slowly and meditatively.
- All read the passage individually in silence and reflect in a time of personal prayer (About 10 minutes is suggested.)
- Share what moved you: a word or phrase, an image, a thought.
- Reflect on the link between the Scripture and the theme of the session. How is God calling us to 'Enlarge the space of our tent'?

**READ THE REFLECTIONS**

**RESPOND BY DISCUSSING THE QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION**

**CLOSING PRAYER**



## WEEK ONE:

# POVERTY, COST OF LIVING & HOMELESSNESS

### WELCOME

At this first session, begin by introducing yourselves to each other. Share your names, a little bit about yourself and why you have decided to come along to be part of this group.

The group leader invites the group to pray the opening prayer together.

### OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,  
Open our hearts to hear your word  
and respond with our lives.  
Call us more deeply into communion  
with you and with one another,  
that we may travel with Jesus your son  
in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

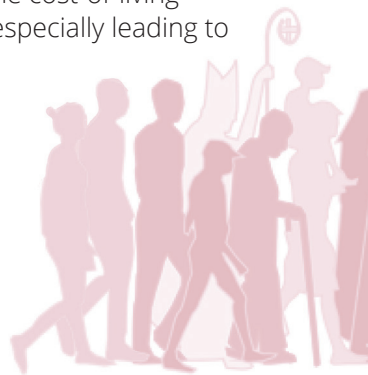
### INTRODUCTION

Each week we begin by reflecting on a piece of Scripture from the Sunday Masses in Lent and on how our faith can help us rise to meet the challenges of our contemporary world.

Today we start by calling to mind the current context of the cost-of-living crisis which is causing great difficulties for everyone, but especially leading to increased levels of poverty and homelessness.

### PRAYING WITH THE SUNDAY SCRIPTURES

*Please refer to the guidelines on page 6*



## GOSPEL OF 2ND SUNDAY OF LENT MATTHEW 17:1-9 - THE TRANSFIGURATION

*What does the passage say to us about the fears which lead us to domesticate God and our faith, and our call to be transfigured into the God who reveals himself in his poverty and passion?*

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun and his clothes became dazzlingly white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.' And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.





## PERSONAL REFLECTION – FR DOMINIC ROBINSON SJ

“Here in the centre of London, with wonderful teams from across the Churches getting to know many on the streets during the pandemic, and sharing their very particular fear, anger, desperation, I feel those mixed emotions too.

The streets are a place of heartache, and yet those who live here in this community speak volumes about hope, hope and faith in a world that can be transfigured. God has been here too. We are all part of the fragile line between flourishing and despair, between life and death. We could all be left alone in our city of so many opportunities, yet so much potential for darkness and isolation.

Some ask why the Church should focus on caring for the rough sleeping community? Are we just do-gooders? When it is really the job of the local authorities and national government? It is often framed as part of a larger question of why the Church should be involved in politics, or be involved in the real world, or have a mission. The answer relates to how we view our faith in Christ. For me, I hope to find Christ and my calling right in the heart of the now, in the midst of a world where the gap between those who flourish and those who struggle is getting wider and wider. Where human civilisation is under threat. Christ would have been there on the streets. Jesus is there - and to do all we can is simply the call of the Gospel.”



*'Homeless Jesus' by sculptor Timothy Schmalz in Farm Street Church, Mayfair, where Fr Dominic is parish priest.*

## POPE FRANCIS ON POVERTY

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. At times, however, a kind of laxity can creep in and lead to inconsistent behaviour, including indifference about the poor. It also happens that some Christians, out of excessive attachment to money, remain mired in a poor use of their goods and wealth. These situations reveal a weak faith and feeble, myopic hope.

We know that the issue is not money itself, for money is part of our daily life as individuals and our relationships in society. Rather, what we need to consider is the value that we put on money: it cannot become our absolute and chief purpose in life. Attachment to money prevents us from seeing everyday life with realism; it clouds our gaze and blinds us to the needs of others. Nothing worse could happen to a Christian and to a community than to be dazzled by the idol of wealth, which ends up chaining us to an ephemeral and bankrupt vision of life...

Consequently, “no one must say that they cannot be close to the poor because their own lifestyle demands more attention to other areas. This is an excuse commonly heard in academic, business or professional, and even ecclesial circles... None of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 201). There is an urgent need to find new solutions that can go beyond the approach of those social policies conceived as “a policy for the poor, but never with the poor and never of the poor, much less part of a project that brings people together” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 169). We need instead to imitate the attitude of the Apostle, who could write to the Corinthians: “I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance” (2 Cor 8:13).

*From Pope Francis' Message for World Day of the Poor 2022, 7*



## QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

What struck you in Pope Francis' Message?

How is the current cost of living crisis affecting your faith community?

How can your parish or chaplaincy or community model better the Church of, with and for the poor?

## ACTION

Review what your faith community is doing to respond to the current crisis.

Explore the ways in which you can advocate on behalf of the poorest in your local community. Engage with your Justice & Peace Contact or Caritas Representative if you have one.

## CLOSING PRAYER

O Lord, God of life, who cares for all creation, give us your peace.

May our security not come from arms, but from respect.

May our force not be of violence, but of love.

May our wealth not be in money, but in sharing.

May our path not be of ambition, but of justice.

May our victory not be from vengeance, but in forgiveness. Open and confident, we want to defend the dignity of all creation, sharing, today and forever, the bread of solidarity and peace.

In the name of Jesus, your holy son, our brother, who, as victim of our violence, even from the heights of the cross gave us all forgiveness.

Amen

*Prayer from an Ecumenical Conference in Brazil*



# WEEK TWO:

## RACIAL JUSTICE

### WELCOME

Begin by introducing yourselves to each other again and welcome anyone new to the group.

The group leader invites the group to pray the opening prayer together.

### OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,  
Open our hearts to hear your word  
and respond with our lives.  
Call us more deeply into communion  
with you and with one another,  
that we may travel with Jesus your son  
in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### RECAP

Recall last week's session on poverty and homelessness and share any thoughts you have had in the last week about 'enlarging the space of your tent' to include people in need.

### INTRODUCTION

Today we explore the importance of racial justice and how racism lies at the root of so many other social injustices. We cannot honestly work for communion, participation or mission unless we are tackling it. As Martin Luther King said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

### PRAYER WITH THE SUNDAY SCRIPTURES

*Please refer to the guidelines on page 6*



## GOSPEL OF 3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

### JOHN 4:5-14 - WOMAN AT THE WELL

*What does the passage say to us about our encounters with people who are from racial backgrounds different to ourselves? How might we share in the 'living water' of Christ by following his example?*

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'

### REFLECTION

This passage is part of a much longer Gospel read on this Sunday (you might choose to read it all, if you prefer) and shows us Jesus seeking out conversation with someone his society had taught him to avoid - a Samaritan woman. He invites her to receive the same gift of life-giving water that he is offering to all his other disciples. Jesus is not prepared to go along with discrimination and, in fact, we are told towards the end of this story that he went on to spend two days in the Samaritan city, accepting the hospitality of the people there.

Racism in the UK has a long and bitter history and is far from over. Four centuries of the slave trade and imperialism cast a long shadow. Catholic churches are not immune and suffer from the same unexamined prejudices as other sectors of society.





Our churches are probably better at celebrating diversity than at directly tackling racism, but this is equally necessary. One parish that has taken this lesson to heart is Our Lady of Fatima in White City, West London, who last year produced a book documenting their efforts.

### **'ROOTING OUT RACISM IN OUR PARISH' (2021)**

"Following the killing of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 and the resulting wave of Black Lives Matter protests, we like so many communities around the world, were finally awakened to the urgent need for us to talk together about the reality of racism both in the wider world but also crucially in our own community." (Introduction)

"Outside the church after each Mass that weekend [after preaching on racism for the first time] there were groups of parishioners, especially black women, talking together..... There was a powerful sense of relief that the issue of racism was finally to be addressed." (Fr Richard Nesbitt, p7)

"It is not enough to say 'I am not a racist' – no, we can't just be passive in this, we need to work actively together to stop and uproot all forms of racism. It is clear that now is an ideal time for change. As Christians, we also need to remember that prayer is an important part of this change, especially as prayer constantly gives the power to heal.

We are united through Baptism to love and serve God, and to live this mission in our own lives, our own Church and in our society. The racial issues and inequalities, identified locally, nationally and internationally in 2020 – and shared so frankly by Our Lady of Fatima parishioners – had the potential to derail this mission, as differences can breed division and discord. But the journey of sharing and healing which our parish anti-racism group has travelled shows that God can bring light out of any darkness." (Elizabeth Uwalaka, p41)



Led by their anti-racism group, White City committed to changing various aspects of their parish life, including :

- Greater transparency to ensure leadership roles in the parish reflected the racial profile of parishioners.
- Ensuring different racial groups were equally represented in ministries such as Readers and Eucharistic Ministers.
- Including a greater diversity of religious imagery in the artwork of the church (illustrated below).
- Offering a greater variety of skin colours in the items on sale in the Repository such as books and cards.
- Ensuring a diversity of musical styles in their Masses to reflect their multicultural community.
- Calling out racist behaviour such as white parishioners refusing to shake hands with black parishioners (something particularly shocking that has happened).



## QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

What struck you in the 'Rooting Out Racism' testimonies?

Are there any similar changes you would like to see made in your own parish or chaplaincy or community?

## ACTION

Conversations about racial justice can be difficult, emotional or painful. In Synod-style conversation be prepared to listen deeply to what each person has to say, so that it is safe for everyone to share and be heard.

Read more about the history of racism and the struggle for racial justice or share with others the experiences, books or videos that have informed you.

Find out what is being done in schools and parishes in the Diocese and through the Catholic Bishops Conference. What more needs to happen? How might you contribute?

## CLOSING PRAYER

You made us, God,  
in your own image,  
and then became one of us,  
proud of those you have made.

Make us proud of being part of that worldwide family,  
and eager to discover and celebrate your image  
in every person, every culture, every nation  
that we are privileged to encounter.

*CTBI Prayer for Week of Christian Unity 2023*



# WEEK THREE:

## CARE OF CREATION

### WELCOME

Check you know everybody's names and welcome anyone new to the group.  
The group leader invites the group to pray the opening prayer together.

### OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,  
Open our hearts to hear your word  
and respond with our lives.  
Call us more deeply into communion  
with you and with one another,  
that we may travel with Jesus your son  
in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### RECAP

Recall last week's session on racial justice and share any thoughts you have had in the last week about 'enlarging the space of your tent' to include others from every ethnicity.

### INTRODUCTION

Today we think about the care of creation and the call to sustain all life on earth. God longs to lead us to 'green pastures' and 'restful waters'. Yet we know that a heart for environmental justice will be vital in the next few years if we are to tackle the multiple approaching crises of environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, pollution and climate change.

### PRAYING WITH THE SUNDAY SCRIPTURES

*Please refer to the guidelines on page 6*



## RESPONSORIAL PSALM 4TH SUNDAY LENT

### PSALM 22 – THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

*What does the passage say to us about God's gift of creation?*

#### **R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me,  
To revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff;  
With these you give me comfort.

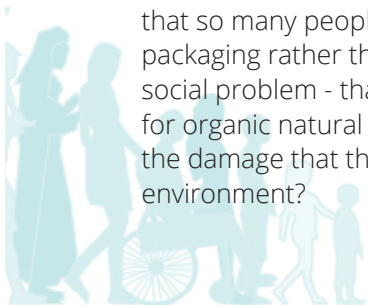
You have prepared a banquet for me  
In the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
My cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me  
All the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell  
For ever and ever.

### PERSONAL REFLECTION – COLETTE JOYCE

"When I say I work on environmental matters for the Diocese people usually start talking to me about one of two things – litter or boilers! Though different in scope, I see an intimate link between the two.

Today, I extracted a plastic wrapper from a hedge and placed it in a bin just six inches away. On other days, I find cans or plastic bottles stashed under bushes or food containers dropped in flower beds. It always distresses me that so many people choose nature as the appropriate place to dispose of packaging rather than human collection systems, but it also points to a wider social problem - that we have failed to pass on a love and understanding for organic natural processes. Why is it that so many people cannot grasp the damage that these materials will do if simply placed back into the environment?





CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases from our boilers (among other sources) I have come think of as invisible litter in the sky, the 'packaging', if you will, from our energy usage which we thought was okay to just dispose of into nature. Now our output is more than the earth can absorb and it is still growing. Increasing our supply of renewable energy will make absolutely no difference unless we finally start drastically reducing these dangerous emissions that are warming the planet.

We have, I fear, prioritised convenience and immediate gains over long-term sustainability and the care of our eco-systems. Responsibility does need to return to developers, businesses and government regulators, but we can all play our part, caring for our corner of God's earth and urging others to do theirs.



© Diocese of Westminster

## Diocesan Commitment to Carbon Neutrality

"The Diocese of Westminster has committed to do its utmost to become carbon neutral by 2030 in its parishes and curial buildings. It has also expressed its commitment to working with schools to encourage them to follow the same path."

*Statement of Trustees, July 2021*



## CAFOD Live Simply Award

At their Autumn 2022 gathering, the Bishops of England and Wales commended the Live Simply Award to schools and parishes as a sign of their solidarity with the poor and their desire to live in harmony with God's creation. Seven parishes in Westminster have achieved the Award already and we hope many more will set out to work towards it this year. It can be a great aid to making and implementing carbon reduction plans.

## QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

How would you describe your relationship with nature? Have you made any changes to your own lifestyle in response to the need to care for creation? Are there changes you would like to make?

Has your parish or chaplaincy engaged yet with the Diocesan commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030? What support can you give to others to act personally, locally, nationally and internationally to protect our world?

## ACTION

Include the Earth as a partner in your Synod conversations.

Complete an environmental audit of your Parish, community or home.

Help your Parish or group to work towards the Live Simply Award. If you have it already, share your learning with others.

## CLOSING PRAYER

All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognise that we are profoundly united

with every creature

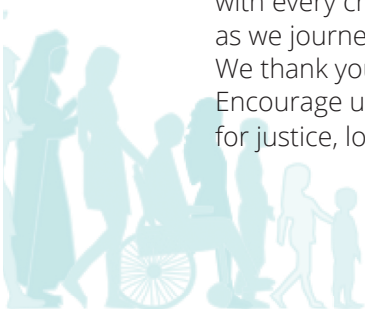
as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle

for justice, love and peace.

*From A Prayer for the Earth, Laudato Si', 246*



# WEEK FOUR: REFUGEES & MIGRANTS

## WELCOME

Check you know everybody's names and welcome anyone new to the group. The group leader invites the group to pray the opening prayer together.

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,  
Open our hearts to hear your word  
and respond with our lives.  
Call us more deeply into communion  
with you and with one another,  
that we may travel with Jesus your son  
in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## RECAP

Recall last week's session on the care of creation and share any thoughts you have had in the last week about 'enlarging the space of your tent' to include all of life.

## INTRODUCTION

Today we think about refugees and migrants. Migration to the UK is a common experience but safe, organised routes for refugees are strictly limited, leading to 45,756 people making the dangerous crossing of the English Channel in small boats in 2022, the highest number ever. Criminalising desperate people or sending them to Rwanda is not the solution. Instead, creating a better system should be an urgent priority.

## PRAYER WITH THE SUNDAY SCRIPTURES

*Please refer to the guidelines on page 6*



## FIRST READING 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

### EZEKIEL 37:12-14 – THE PROMISE OF RETURN

*What does the passage say to us about God's care for people in exile?*

Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

## REFLECTION

The Catholic Church in Westminster is a migrant people, coming together from all over the world. The community is served by 33 dedicated Ethnic Chaplaincies, plus 10 Eastern Rite Catholic Churches. People from many other countries are to be found in every congregation and among our clergy. Together we make up the body of Christ.

Every year around the Feast of St Joseph the Worker on 1st May, the three Dioceses of Westminster, Southwark and Brentwood come together for a Mass for Migrants to celebrate the huge contribution made to London and the surrounding counties by migrant communities. The Mass is supported by Caritas and Justice & Peace, in partnership with London Citizens. The Mass always features music from around the world and testimonies from people who have overcome adversity to settle in the UK. The Ethnic Chaplaincies also mark the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in September every year with an International Mass at Westminster Cathedral, which includes a colourful procession of banners and people wearing national dress.

As well as many support services, advocacy for refugees is an important contribution to justice made by people of the Diocese. On the third Monday of every month, Westminster Justice & Peace hold a Prayer Vigil outside the Home Office to pray for people on the move across the world and especially to remember those who died on the way to seeking sanctuary, including in the waters of the English Channel. Everyone is invited to sign petitions and lobby their MP to ask for a more compassionate and humane asylum system in this country.





*Bishop Paul McAleenan at the memorial plaque in Dover dedicated to those who died seeking sanctuary in the UK*

## EXTRACT FROM: THE LOVE OF CHRIST TOWARDS MIGRANTS

The love of Christ towards migrants urges us (cf 2 Cor 5:14) to look afresh at their problems, which are to be met with today all over the world. In fact nearly all countries are now faced with the eruption of the migration phenomenon; it affects their social, economic, political and religious life and is becoming more and more a permanent structural phenomenon. Migration is often determined by a free decision of the migrants themselves, taken fairly frequently not only for economic reasons but also for cultural, technical or scientific motives. As such it is for the most part a clear indication of social, economic and demographic imbalance on a regional or world-wide level, which drives people to emigrate.

The root of the phenomenon can also be traced back to exaggerated nationalism and, in many countries, even to hatred and systematic or violent exclusion of ethnic or religious minorities from society. This can be seen in civil, political, ethnic and even religious conflicts raging in all continents. Such tensions swell the growing flood of refugees, who often mingle with





other migrants. The impact can be felt in host societies, in which ethnic groups and people with different languages and cultures are brought together with the risk of reciprocal opposition and conflict. Migration, however, also helps people get to know one another and provides opportunities for dialogue and communion or indeed integration at various levels.

*Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi, 1-2  
Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants  
and Itinerant People (2004)*

## QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

What is your own experience of migration or meeting refugees?

How do you respond to the message of 'Erga Migrantes'?

What support is given to refugees in your area? How is your parish or community involved?

## ACTION

Attend one of the Vigils or Masses for Migrants and Refugees this year or hold an event of your own.

Read some news articles about refugees coming to the UK. Is the language humane and fair to people in difficult circumstances? If it not, write to the editor or your MP!

Donate food, money or your time to a Foodbank (which also help many migrants) or a project directly supporting asylum seekers and refugees.

## CLOSING PRAYER

We ask your blessing, O Lord,  
on this gathering today  
that our hearts become more and more open  
to your compassion for us,  
so that we can in turn show compassion  
for our neighbour the stranger. Amen

*Prayer from the 'To Accompany Refugees' Forum, 17 Sept 2022*



# WEEK FIVE: PEACE

## WELCOME

Check you know everybody's names and welcome anyone new to the group. The group leader invites the group to pray the opening prayer together.

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,  
Open our hearts to hear your word  
and respond with our lives.  
Call us more deeply into communion  
with you and with one another,  
that we may travel with Jesus your son  
in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## RECAP

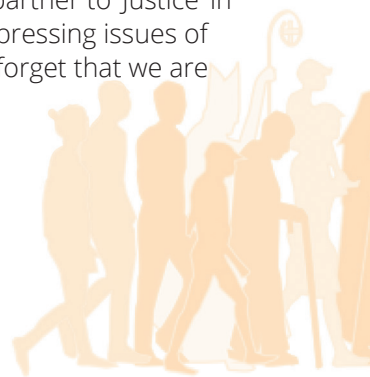
Recall last week's session on refugees and migrants and share any thoughts you have had in the last week about 'enlarging the space of your tent' to include people on the move.

## INTRODUCTION

In this, our final session, as we approach Holy Week and the great mysteries of Easter we turn our thoughts to peace. In the Justice & Peace network, we often pause to remind ourselves that 'Peace' is an equal partner to 'Justice' in our title and so deserves an equal focus. Amid the many pressing issues of the day this focus can be easily lost but we should never forget that we are working towards peace!

## PRAYER WITH THE SUNDAY SCRIPTURES

*Please refer to the guidelines on page 6*



## GOSPEL FOR PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION

### MATTHEW 21:1-11 - ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

*What does the passage say to us about Jesus as the one who brings us peace?*

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reach Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

'Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

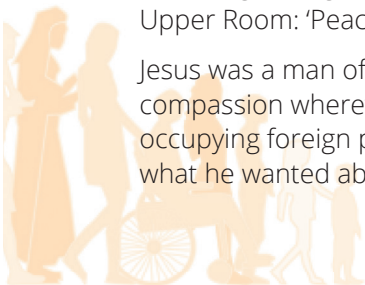
'Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

## REFLECTION

Easter is a good time to be thinking about peace. Two sentences from the resurrection stories speak intimately to our longing for the consolation that true peace in Christ can bring. The first is the words spoken by Jesus to Mary Magdalene in the garden, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' The other is the first greeting of the risen Jesus to the disciples gathered fearfully in the Upper Room: 'Peace be with you'.

Jesus was a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. He showed intense compassion wherever he saw it in others. He was put to death by a violent, occupying foreign power, his country no stranger to war and devastation. Yet what he wanted above all for his followers was peace.



The story of the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday tells us everything about the kind of leader Jesus was. In the midst of all the exuberant shouting and cheering he arrived humbly on a donkey, the same humility he would show just days later when the same crowd jeered and mocked him on the way to the cross. We too, can learn from his example and be people who remain humble amid our times of good fortune, faithful in our times of suffering, compassionate towards the suffering of others and builders of peace whenever we gather together with Christ as Church.

The Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in London is just a few streets away from Farm Street Catholic Church in Mayfair and the two communities have increased their links over the past year, as have many other church and secular groups who want to show their solidarity with Ukraine's suffering people.

## A VISIT TO UKRAINE

In September 2022 Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski, leader of the Ukrainian Catholic community in the UK, made his second trip back to Ukraine since the war began, visiting graveyards and shattered buildings in Irpin and Bucha.

'I don't think anything can prepare you for what I found in Irpin and Bucha,' Bishop Nowakowski reported back.

'We arrived on the outskirts of Irpin by the famous bridge that has been blown apart for tactical reasons and has still not been completely repaired and then saw the bombed-out apartment buildings.

It was a bright, sunny, beautiful Sunday morning and I was able to walk around all of these half-destroyed, blackened buildings.

I found a beauty parlour with the sign still on in English and Ukrainian saying "positive image of beauty". There couldn't be a greater contrast, my heart was just breaking, it was just overwhelming.'

*Source: Josh Layton, Metro, 7 Nov 2022*



## Refugee Hosting Diocesan Community of Support



*Charities from around the Diocese came together in 2022 to help us offer support to refugees from Ukraine and other countries.*

## POPE FRANCIS ON PEACE

“Certainly, after directly experiencing the fragility of our own lives and the world around us, we can say that the greatest lesson we learned from Covid-19 was the realization that we all need one another. That our greatest and yet most fragile treasure is our shared humanity as brothers and sisters, children of God. And that none of us can be saved alone.”

*Message for 56th World Day of Peace, 1st January 2023*

## QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

- What is your response to the words of Pope Francis?
- How is the current war in Ukraine (or another conflict worldwide) affecting you and your faith community?
- How can you and your Parish or chaplaincy or group promote peace and show others that they are 'not alone'?



## ACTION

- Review what your faith community does to respond to news from war zones and promote peace initiatives at home.
- Be attentive to the words 'peace' and 'justice' in the Scriptures, our liturgy, our hymns and our prayers. See how often they occur!

## CLOSING PRAYER

Light a candle and pray for people experiencing conflict.

We pray for all who work,  
whether locally or internationally,  
for peace and justice;  
for all who will not be silent in the face of injustice or suffering; for all  
who take risks for peace.

Let us pray to the Lord: **Christ, be our light.**

As you close this final session we invite you to share Peace with one  
another with the words **'Peace be with you'**.

May your Easter Season be blessed and holy



## ABOUT JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THE DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER

The work of Justice and Peace in the Diocese is supported by a Commission of up to fifteen people who meet quarterly. Standing members of the Commission include the Chair, Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, the full-time Co-ordinator, Colette Joyce, and a member of staff each for Caritas Westminster and CAFOD Westminster. Other members bring expertise and experience from across a range of issues and geographical areas in the Diocese and are a mix of volunteers, charity staff or trustees, clergy and religious. The Commission has recently updated its terms of reference and is seeking additional new members who will reflect the diversity of the Diocese and build our capacity to respond to the many social justice issues facing our Church and society.

## PARISH AND CHAPLAINCY CONTACTS

Good causes often become associated with a few groups and individual activists who become high profile, but it is important to remember that the work of peace and justice is for everyone, not just a few. Your parish or chaplaincy might have a 'Justice and Peace Group' but equally these concerns might come under the responsibility of the Parish Council, SVP, Caritas, CAFOD, Live Simply or another group. Each Parish or Chaplaincy is encouraged to nominate one or two people to provide a link to the Commission and support for one another. If your community currently lacks a representative, perhaps you might consider volunteering for this role!

*"The Commission exists to promote action and reflection on peace and social justice in the Diocese of Westminster, in the light of the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching."*





## FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Here are some of the Catholic groups and organisations active in Westminster on the themes covered in this booklet:

### Poverty, Cost-of-Living, Homelessness

Caritas Westminster Quarterly Network Meetings  
Central London Catholic Churches  
St Vincent de Paul  
The Passage

### Racial Justice

Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ)  
Catholic Bishops Conference England and Wales – Racial Justice  
Diocese of Westminster Education Service – Racial Justice, Equality and Diversity

### Care of Creation

CAFOD Live Simply Award  
Journey to 2030  
Southern Dioceses Environment Network

### Migrants and Refugees

Caritas Westminster Quarterly Network Meetings  
Jesuit Refugee Service  
Notre Dame de France Refugee Centre

### Peace

Pax Christi

Find website links to these and many more at:  
<https://westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/links/>



## JUSTICE & PEACE CALENDER 2023

15 January	<b>Peace Sunday</b>
18-25 Jan	<b>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity</b>
27 January	<b>Holocaust Memorial Day</b>
5 February	<b>Racial Justice Sunday</b>
24 February	<b>1st anniversary Russian Invasion of Ukraine</b>
3 March	<b>CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day</b>
24 March	<b>St Oscar Romero, patron saint of Justice &amp; Peace</b>
1 May	<b>Mass for Migrants</b>
24 May	<b>8th Anniversary of Publication of <i>Laudato Si'</i></b>
25 May	<b>3rd Anniversary of Murder of George Floyd</b>
10-18 June	<b>Great Big Green Week</b>
20-26 June	<b>Refugee Week</b>
21-23 July	<b>National Justice &amp; Peace Network Conference</b>
6 & 9 August	<b>Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemorations</b>
1 Sept-4 Oct	<b>Season of Creation</b>
3rd week Sept	<b>World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel</b>
26 September	<b>World Day of Migrants and Refugees</b>
4 October	<b>CAFOD Harvest Fast Day</b>
8 October	<b>Prisoners Sunday</b>
10 October	<b>World Homeless Day</b>
19 November	<b>World Day of the the Poor</b>

More dates, events and actions are published every month in the Westminster Justice and Peace E-Bulletin.

Sign up online at <https://westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/>









For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

*“Enlarging the tent requires welcoming others into it, making room for their diversity. It thus entails a willingness to die to self out of love, finding oneself again in and through relationship with Christ and one’s neighbour.”*

Document for the Continental Stage, 28



**Diocese of Westminster**

AGENCY FOR EVANGELISATION