

For most of the past two years, this newsletter has publicised the work of the protest movement at Hassockfield Detention Centre.

On 26th April, a hugely successful fundraiser was held in Newcastle, which demonstrated the depth of support for the campaign. On the left you can see an extract from one of the leaflets distributed on the evening.

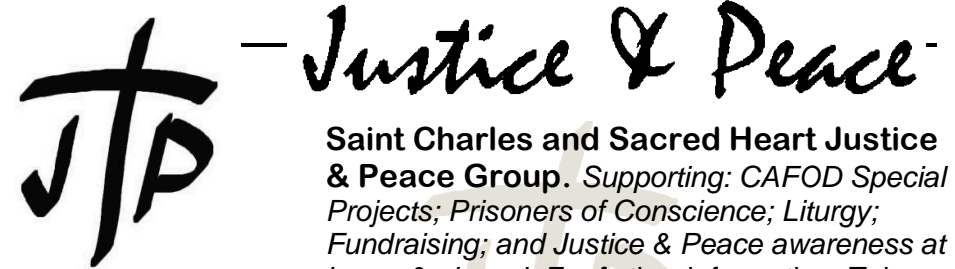
You can find out more by going to [No To Hassockfield -](#)



The DIOCESAN REFUGEE PROJECT [Justice & Peace Refugee Project - Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle \(diocesehn.org.uk\)](#) is always in need of help. Food donations can be left in the church porch. The full list of items that are needed is available [here](#). Azad Hazan, who manages the project, issues regular reports on the progress. The May 2024 report can be found on the project webpage by following the link [here](#).

Peace Vigils in the Diocese

Silent vigils take place every Saturday outside Hexham Abbey from 9.30am-10am. About a dozen people gather each week. There is also a vigil for Gaza/Israel at Our Lady Immaculate & St. Cuthbert, Crook, Co Durham every Thursday at 7pm. All are welcome



NEWSLETTER

May 2024

Saint Charles and Sacred Heart Justice & Peace Group. *Supporting: CAFOD Special Projects; Prisoners of Conscience; Liturgy; Fundraising; and Justice & Peace awareness at home & abroad.* For further information: Tel 07427837813 or visit the parish websites at www.stcharlesgosforth.org.uk

or
[Sacred Heart RC Parish, North Gosforth \(sacredheartng.org.uk\)](http://Sacred Heart RC Parish, North Gosforth (sacredheartng.org.uk))

The National Justice and Peace Network Annual Conference

This will take place at Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire from 19- 21 July 2024. The theme for the weekend is 'Just Politics' and the aim to explore the need for truth and integrity in public life. Sir John Battle will chair the conference. Joining details can be found [here](#).

Welcoming and celebrating refugees

An event to welcome and celebrate refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to our diocese at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle on Tuesday 18th June at 6.30pm. This event will celebrate the richness of our diocesan family by bringing together people of different nationalities who make their home here in the North East of England. We will have the opportunity to listen to people's stories, celebrate their talents and recognise that we are better off when we welcome the strangers and make them our friends. During the event Bishop Stephen will receive, on behalf of the whole diocese, a Lampedusa Cross donated by CAFOD. This will then be housed in the cathedral as a sign of our commitment and welcome to those who are enriching life in our diocese.

Chairman's Report 2023/24

The bookshop continues to roll on. The money raised is given to homeless charities. This is a very effective way of raising much needed funds and everyone's support is appreciated

We had a number of successful events over the year:

- Soup lunches were held at both churches and the money sent to the CAFOD Lenten appeal.
- A very well received One World Lunch was held at St Charles. This raised £262 and it will be repeated later this year.
- A well supported and very popular ceilidh took place in November. The music group from St Charles provided the music and a great night was had by all.
- Letter/card writing to prisoners of conscience was held on the coffee mornings in late November and early December in St Charles's church hall. This was very well supported.
- The Jo Cox event at St Charles in September attracted quite a lot of attention and we had people there to demonstrate the work of the numerous charities.

We have decided that, in 2024 we will concentrate our efforts on the following:

- Lenten soup lunches. These have already taken place in both parishes on 3rd March.
- A Jo Cox event will be held on the weekend of the 29th/30th June in both parishes. The event is likely to be a coffee morning after mass.
- The book sale on Gosforth High Street, last held in 2022, will be repeated, possibly on 13th July.
- The One World Lunch will be either on the 6th, 13th or the 20th of October
- If possible, the hugely successful ceilidh at Sacred Heart will be repeated in November.

I am going to finish by highlighting a few issues from the newsletters over the past year.

- Wealth inequality is increasing all over the world. The richest are becoming wealthier all the time and the poorest are either stagnating or becoming poorer. This is causing increasing friction in societies all over the world and has been identified as one of the drivers behind the rise of extremist political ideologies, especially in Europe.
- Many of the newsletters over the past year gave prominence to the increasing levels of poverty and deprivation in our society. In November 2023 the newsletter contained the following statement: *"The Joseph Rowntree Foundation hasrevealed that approximately 3.8 million people experienced destitution in 2022 (in the UK), including around one million children. The total figure is almost two and a half times that in 2017, and the figure for children shows an almost threefold increase."*

In October 2023, the newsletter provided a more upbeat view of the world: *Numerous organisations around the world strive for Justice and Peace and it perhaps worth reflecting on the huge scale of that work. One way to do so is to look at a calendar of important international Justice and Peace dates and to imagine the work that is going on behind the scenes by thousands of people to make sure that these dates are no longer necessary, that the need to be aware of these issues has disappeared.* We were then able to identify sixteen dates

It is difficult sometimes not to feel hopelessness at the state of the world. But it is worth remembering that we live lives that are infinitely better than our parents and grandparents. Most of the advances in our society have taken place because people like the people reading this newsletter refuse to shut up or give up. And sometimes we perhaps need to remind ourselves that, in the long run, we usually win. A quote which is frequently attributed to Ghandi goes as follows: *"When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall."*