

PAX CHRISTI AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

KIA TAU TE RANGIMARIE KI A TAATOU KATO A / WORKING FOR PEACE FOR ALL EVERYWHERE



THIS MONTH'S NEWS....

UN Sustainable Development
Goal's Summit
24 - 25 September

UN Climate Action
Summit 2019

Pax Christi Asia-Pacific
Statement for International
Day of Peace

Kia ora koutou

The last week of September was known as 'The Global Week of Peace and Action'. It began with the International Day of Peace on the 21st, incorporated action by students and supporters for climate justice and included two UN Summits that had a focus on peaceful initiatives within their programmes.

It was a week to reflect on peace action - where we had come from as well as what is needed now to make peace work. During this week - while media focus was on climate strikes and politicking at the UN, tragedy and human rights abuses continue to escalate in West Papua. We need to remember all the West Papuans in their struggle for self-determination and hold the Government of Indonesia to account on the human rights abuses they inflict...

As we move further into Spring, admiring spring flowers and fresh new growth - take a minute to reflect on how many people around the world who are protesting for their right to self-determination, identity and general freedom to live life. Many may not have, or are prevented from, pausing and just appreciating for a moment the gifts of creation around us.

Bridget Crisp rsm

UN Sustainable Development Goal's Summit, 24th – 25th September 2019, New York.

For two days (24th & 25th September), Heads of State and Government will gather in New York to comprehensively review progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In preparation for the summit, the Secretary General, António Guterres, has written a report on progress so far.

Within the introduction of the report. António Guterres begins with the positives:

'Progress is being made against disease such as hepatitis where the incidence of new chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infections have reduced considerably. Certain targets regarding gender equality are seeing progress including the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting. Electricity in the poorest countries has begun to increase. Globally, labour productivity has increased, and unemployment is back to pre-financial crisis levels. The proportion of the urban population living in slums is falling. The proportion of waters under national jurisdiction covered by marine protected areas has more than doubled since 2010. And progress on some means of implementation is moving rapidly.' (p i.)

However, in the rest of the introduction he acknowledges where areas have not progressed as planned and where more work needs to be done. Within the critique he mentions:

'Conflicts and instability in many parts of the world have intensified, causing untold human suffering, undermining the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and even reversing progress already made. With developing countries hosting more than 85 per cent of the 68.5 million people who were forcibly displaced in 2017, pressures on existing support systems are immense.'

Direct economic losses from disasters have increased by more than 150 per cent over the past 20 years, with losses disproportionately borne by vulnerable developing countries. Without a surge in mitigation, global warming will continue at a rapid pace, amplifying the challenges of adaptation and entrenching a sense of vulnerability and insecurity among large population groups.' (p ii.)

To read the UN progress report go to https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24978Report_of_the_SG_on_SDG_Progress_2019.pdf

Prior to the commencement of the summit, countries are asked to submit their progress reports. New Zealand has submitted their first voluntary National Review, titled *Kaua Tetahi e Whakarērea Leave No One Behind*. Within the review, the NZ Government acknowledges the issue of child poverty and hopes that the family's package that they have implemented will help alleviate poverty. They also mention their focus and commitment to the region of the Pacific. The NZ Government have increased their commitment to Pacific aid and development with an emphasis in assisting in the areas of climate change, health, education, gender and youth issues. To read the New Zealand 2019 report go to <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/newzealand>

United Nations Climate Action Summit 2019

On the 23rd September, the United Nations is hosted a Climate Summit. World Leaders were encouraged to come to the summit, where according to the Secretary General António Guterres, they share their **concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020, in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent over the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050.**

With technology and communication constantly improving; the world has a clearer picture of the state of the planet – from major fires through to melting tundra and extreme weather events – the world is seeing vast changes to the planet that have long term consequences for life. Pope Francis has made that clear in his message on the 1st September for Care Creation, where he states: *'Our prayers and appeals are directed first at raising the awareness of political and civil leaders. I think in particular of those governments that will meet in coming months to renew commitments decisive for directing the planet towards life, not death. The words that Moses proclaimed to the people as a kind of spiritual testament at the threshold of the Promised Land come to mind: "Therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live" (Dt 3:19). We can apply those prophetic words to ourselves and to the situation of our earth. Let us choose life! Let us say "no" to consumerist greed and to the illusion of omnipotence, for these are the ways of death. Let us inaugurate farsighted processes involving responsible sacrifices today for the sake of sure prospects for life tomorrow. Let us not give in to the perverse logic of quick profit, but look instead to our common future!'*

The full message of Pope Francis can be read at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20190901_messaggio-giornata-cura-creato.html

Climate Activist Greta Thunberg aged 16 years...

"Wherever I go I seem to be surrounded by fairytales. Business leaders, elected officials all across the political spectrum spending their time making up and telling bedtime stories that soothe us, that make us go back to sleep. These are 'feel-good' stories about how we are going to fix everything. How wonderful everything is going to be when we have 'solved' everything. But the problem we are facing is not that we lack the ability to dream, or to imagine a better world. The problem now is that we need to wake up. It's time to face the reality, the facts, the science. And the science doesn't mainly speak of great opportunities to create the society we always wanted'. It tells of unspoken human sufferings, which will get worse and worse the longer we delay action – unless we start to act now. And yes, of course a sustainable transformed world will include lots of new benefits. But you have to understand. This is not primarily an opportunity to create new green jobs, new businesses or green economic growth. This is above all an emergency, and not just any emergency. This is the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced."

Greta Thunberg, Sept 17, addressing US Congress

Pax Christi Aotearoa is a part of Pax Christi Asia Pacific. All Pax Christi organisations and affiliates, in the region, worked on the statement below and it was released on the 21st September, International Day of Peace...

PAX CHRISTI ASIA-PACIFIC



International Day of Peace 2019 Statement

The International Day of Peace is turning 31 years this 2019. Established by a unanimous resolution in the UN General Assembly, Peace Day is an opportunity and reminder for humanity to continually and actively commit to Peace above all differences.

Pax Christi-Asia Pacific wishes everyone a Happy International Day of Peace!

Being the regional arm of Pax Christi International in the Asia Pacific, we continue to work on interfaith and intercultural cooperation, decolonization, education and peacebuilding; and address issues on environmental degradation, disarmament, and human rights violations.

This year the UN celebrates Peace Day with the theme “Climate Action for Peace” focusing on the global climate emergency. Extreme weather events as well as more frequent and severe disasters raise the risk of dispute over resources, and other climate-related conflict.

We affirm this year’s theme on Climate Action and emphasize that Climate Justice is a critical aspect in long-lasting peace. The Asia Pacific region is vulnerable and is at the receiving end of the harsh effects of climate change. Our geographic position puts a lot of pressure on being proactive actors to protect livelihoods, to prevent resource-related conflicts, and maintain peace where it exists.

Regional tensions, militarization, weapons proliferation and armed violence also continue to challenge peace in our region. Hence, we welcome the gradual decommissioning of firearms in the recently created Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) as well as the arms amnesty being carried out by the government in New Zealand as a consequence of the Christchurch massacre. This arms amnesty asks people with guns capable of intense automatic fire to hand them in for compensatory payment, with the aim of limiting their presence in the community and availability for mass murder as in Christchurch. As we continue to find hope in significant steps made towards peace in the BARMM and in New Zealand, we continue to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons in the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia, and in the world. As Fr. Paul Lansu, Senior Policy Advisor to Pax Christi International wrote:

The time has come to embrace the abolition of nuclear weapons as an essential foundation of collective security. A major task still to be done is encouraging all Governments of States who adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to sign and ratify... We need a worldwide dialogue, including both the nuclear and non-nuclear States and the burgeoning organizations that make up the civil society, to ensure that nuclear weapons are banned finally to the benefit of our common home.

On this Peace Day, we wish to remind governments in the Asia-Pacific and the world to safeguard laws within their constitution that promote international peace and renounce war, such as Article 9 of Japan’s Constitution. We also ask our policy makers and governments to remember the human dimension in making or changing policy – emphasizing on life, human dignity, human rights and human security. Democratic practices such as the right to dissent and free expression must be fully respected.

Pax Christi is grounded in the belief that peace is possible, and that vicious cycles of violence and injustice can be broken. May we live out the values of peace and nonviolence on this Peace Day, and continually in every single day.

NEWS SNIPPETS...

The **David Wakim Lecture** for 2019 was well received on the **20th September**. The guest lecturer was Susan Healy and the topic for the lecture was *'Building a Community of Communities. Challenges for Aotearoa New Zealand'*. A transcript of Susan's Lecture will be made available on the Pax Christi NZ website (www.paxchristiaotearoa.nz) in early October.

There are a number of events coming up:- **Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa (PSNA)** President John Minto and the Israel Institute's Dr David Cumin are having a **public debate** related to the conflict between Palestine and Israel. The debate is happening on **Thursday 3rd October at 7pm** in the University of Auckland Owen Glenn building (OCGB5/260-051), off Grafton Road.

On **Wednesday 9th October** (6.30 -8.30 pm) at the Vermont Street Mosque (Ponsonby, Auckland) and again on **13th October** (6 -8 pm at St Columba Centre, 40 Vermont Street), **Gaza based Kiwi journalist and war crime investigator Julie Webb-Pullman** will begin her speaking tour that will go throughout NZ. Julie will talk about war crimes in Gaza. The purpose of the nationwide speaking tour is to raise funds for extra war crimes investigators in Gaza. Visit the PSNA website (www.PSNA.nz) to find out where in NZ Julie will be speaking.

Dr Salmon Abu Sitta, President and founder of the Palestine Land Society will be giving a public lecture at Auckland University on **Thursday 17th October** at 7 pm, in the Clock Tower Lecture Theatre Lower ground, room 039 in building 105s. The topic of the lecture is 'Right of Return is the Only Road to Peace'.



Images from the School Strike 4 Climate in Auckland 27th September 2019 (photos B Crisp)

Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand

Pax Christi is an independent Catholic social justice organisation. We work hard to address issues of peace and justice at a local, regional and global level.

If you want to know more about Pax Christi, to join meetings, or to set up group meetings in your area, please contact paxnz@xtra.co.nz or ring 09 377 5541.

Pax Christi relies on volunteers & donations to enable the work to continue.

To make an online donation our a/c name and number is:
Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand
03-01730353-867-00
Please contact us for a receipt.
Your support is greatly appreciated.

DIARY DATES

- 3rd Oct PSNA Public Debate*
 - 9th/13th Oct Julie Webb-Pullman Speaking tour begins in Auckland*
 - 17th Oct Public Lecture by Dr. Salmon Abu Sitta*
 - 5th Nov Parihaka Day
 - 16th Nov Pax Christi NZ AGM
- * see News Snippets for more info.

