



NJPN Comment

Good politics serves peace

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Pope Francis has a great gift for communication. It is evident from his engaging smile, to his gestures of being with the most vulnerable and his messages addressed to those who misuse their position or power to harm others.

Proclaiming the Gospel of peace in today's world is a key theme of his pontificate, powerfully illustrated in his words in 2015: "Peace involves work; it is not about staying calm and doing nothing. NO! True peace means working so that everyone has a solution to the problems, to the needs that they have..."

No surprise, then, that our New Year begins with a World Peace Day message, a day that has been a part of the liturgical calendar since 1967. In England and Wales, Pax Christi has disseminated this message to church communities, inviting parishes to reflect on the theme and celebrate Peace Sunday, which in 2019 is on 20 January on the theme, "Good politics serves peace". This is a much-needed call to challenge the 'bad politics' that creates division and hardship – a politics that cultivates greed and the pursuit of profit, often made through human exploitation and the arms weapons

Pax Christi has found that parishes show great imagination and freshness of approach in their celebration of Peace Sunday. Catechists, parents, teachers, liturgists and priests can work together to amplify a peace message into the Mass of the day through story, drama, art and dialogue. Young people in one parish used movement and fabric to create the idea of peace flowing like a river during the offertory procession. A London primary school created 3D paper candles, each bearing the name of a country that refugees have had to leave. These were displayed in the parish on Peace Sunday as a 'road to peace'. Exploring the theme through a dialogue model is another approach: two voices engaged in questions and responses as part of a homily slot.

These ideas and more are drawn from the resource booklet that Pax Christi produces every year. In addition, Pax Christi offers homily notes, thoughtfully prepared by Fr Rob Esdaile who has a gift for capturing the 'signs of the times' and weaving them into the readings of the day.

What can your parish do to celebrate Peace Sunday and support the work of Pax Christi? You can find a full range of resources, including prayer cards and leaflets, at <http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/peace-sunday/>

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