

22 May 2021

Thank you from John Williams

Thank you, Arn. Thank you, Ann,

I would like to thank those closest to me for their support over the years. To Margaret, my wife. I would have done nothing at all without her support. I want to thank our children; Claire, Rachel, Hannah and Gabrielle and our grandchildren who bring such joy into our lives; Owen, Emily, Sam, Lara, Isabel, Darcy and Jude.

For the honour of receiving this award I would like to thank Matt and Hilary for their nomination, the awarding committee, my colleagues on the Education Trust and all members of Pax Christi for your wonderful witness.

I also want to congratulate you, Ellen, on your award. I must say, that to see my name alongside yours is a humbling experience when I consider all the work you do for justice and peace.

I must say a word of thanks to Natasha Radcliffe for the design of this medal. It's representation of the Holy Spirit is very special and for me to receive this image at Pentecost is even more special. (Rob, with Pentecost in mind, I must thank you for your excellent reflection in your parish newsletter today.)

Like Ellen, I would agree that travel has opened my eyes over the years. I am thankful for the opportunity to travel with Pax Christi on an educational visit to the West Bank in 2009. I am thankful to the Diocese of Westminster for the opportunity to travel Malta in 2012 on the Headteachers' conference. There, by way of an introduction from Bruce, I met Fr. (Dionysius) Mintoff, the Franciscan who was running the Peace Lab (camp) for refugees. To witness then, the movement of people from sub-Saharan Africa to Malta was certainly an eye opener. Then, on retirement in 2015, I travelled to Chile and Argentina. Fr. Michael McGlade (who worked so closely with the Columbans in Chile) was a friend and an inspiration to me in terms of justice and peace. To meet people, visit and remember to sites of oppressive regimes and dictatorships of the 1970s and 80s, was again an eye-opening experience.

If I am to receive this award on behalf of anyone, it must be on behalf of all who work in education - from preschool staff to university professors. This is because, peace is not just a topic or subject to be taught. It is not just about *what* is taught, it is also about *how* it is taught and *how* you relate with children, students, parents and staff colleagues. So much of that work is about conflict resolution.

Finally, that takes me back to my roots and I am reminded of the work my sisters, Ann and Ursula have done as teachers. And I am also reminded to be thankful to my mam and dad.

Thank you, Pax Christi.