



JUSTICIA Y PAZ

BOLETÍN DE LA COMISIÓN GENERAL DE JUSTICIA Y PAZ DE ESPAÑA

58 FIFTH STAGE

Poverty, climate emergency and peace

This November, the Church celebrated the **Sixth World Day of the Poor**. With the theme **"For your sakes Christ became poor"**, the Pope intends to provoke a reflection on our lifestyle and the poverty of the present time.

The message begins with an allusion to **wars**, especially the one that Ukraine is suffering, defined by the Pope as a complex conflict, among other reasons, because of the intervention of a superpower that acts against the principle of self-determination of the people. Wars always affect the weakest, especially children that are often deported and forced to adopt a new identity. Those who remain behind live in fear of bombs, lack of food, water, basic services and, above all, lack of affection. In short, wars generate large numbers of poor people in addition to the existing ones.

The Pope, like the Apostle Paul invites us to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus that *"though he was rich, yet for [our] sakes became poor, so that by his poverty [we] might become rich"* (cf. 2 Cor 8:9).

The community of Corinth **has organized itself to help** its sister community of Jerusalem, which has been experiencing great hardship. With the passage of time, the initial enthusiasm faded, and it is the apostle who encourages the generosity of each person according to their possibilities. The same may be happening among the families who take in the victims of wars in so many parts of the world: as the conflict extends over time, they begin to experience situations that go beyond the first emergency. For this reason, **the original motivation must be renewed**.

Solidarity is **sharing** what little we have with those who have nothing so no one suffers. To this end, it is urgent to

develop a sense of community and communion as a way of life. As a part of civil society, let us keep alive the values of **responsibility, fraternity, and solidarity**; and as Christian believers, let us find a way always **in charity, faith and hope** the foundation of our being and our actions.

The apostle Paul does not force the community to exercise charity, but wants it to be a **sign of love**, just as Jesus himself attested to the fact that he made himself poor.

In the face of poverty we have to get **directly involved**, without delegating it to no one. Indifference can only be explained a weak faith and a weak and blind hope. The problem with our involvement is not money itself since it is part of our relationships in daily life. We must reflect on the value money has to each person or community. When the idol is wealth, our vision is clouded and we end up not perceiving the needs around us. It is not a matter of having an assistance-oriented behavior, but of **making an effort so no one lacks what is necessary**.

No one is exempt from caring for those who live in need, from reaching out to awaken us from the lethargy into which we have fallen. It is not activism that saves, nor is there any excuse for thinking that other activities – academic, business or even ecclesiastic – occupy us. Neither are social politics conceived as help to the poor, but without taking into account a project based on them. *"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).

We encounter a paradox preached by Jesus Christ: **poverty enriches**. True wealth does not consist in storing up *"treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves*

break in and steal" (Mt 6:19). **True richness is in the mutual love** that makes us bear our shared burdens so that no one is excluded or abandoned. **We are not in this world to survive, but so that all people may enjoy a dignified and happy existence.**

There is a poverty that kills, that humiliate, daughter of injustice, violence, exploitation, unjust distribution of resources. When the only logic is focused on profit, the exploitation of people is not stopped, there are no fair wages or decent working conditions. It is a desperate poverty, with no future.

On the contrary, there is a **poverty that liberates**, that lightens our burdens and help us focus on what is essential. Living in poverty, feelings of dissatisfaction, worries, anxieties, and fears lose their relevance because they are placed at the centre of what it is essential: true and gracious love. Poor people, before being the object of our charity, are subjects that help us free ourselves from our fears and dissatisfactions.

If we follow Jesus, we have to look at his life. He became poor and gives us his richness: **a love that does not close itself to anyone and goes out to meet all people, especially those who are marginalized and deprived of the minimum**. Thus, our path must be to share life out of love, especially with the poorest and neediest people, *"this is the way to create equality, to free the poor from their misery and the rich from their vanity, and both from despair"*.

We must reflect individually and communally whether the poverty of Jesus Christ is our companion in life.

ISABEL CUENCA ANAYA
Secretary-general
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CLIMATE CRISIS AND HUMAN INSECURITY



Human activity and climate crisis

After a temporary decline due to confinements, fossil fuels emission rates today exceed pre-pandemic levels. **The ambition of emission reduction pledges for 2030 would need to be seven times higher** to meet the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5° above pre-industrial levels.

Only 25 state-owned and private fossil fuels producers are responsible for 51 % of **global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions**, and 100 producers are responsible for 71 %. At the state level, the 10 countries that generate the most emissions account for 68 %, while the 100 least emitting countries generate only 3 %. Militarism contributes at least 6 %.

These emissions **raise the temperature**, and there are different hypotheses about this increase. Most of them assume that +2°C is likely to be reached **during the 21st century**. The consequence is an **extreme change in climate patterns**, altering the balance of nature, the habitability of territories and the maintenance of decent living conditions.

From climate crisis to human insecurity

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates hundreds of **local species losses**. Approximately half of the species evaluated worldwide have moved to higher altitudes in search of safer spaces for their survival. As for the **human species**, the United Nations warns that the **new scenarios caused by the climate crisis**, such as air pollution, natural disasters, forced displacements and food insecurity, **kill some 13 million people every year**. Some basic subsystems will become

increasingly scarce, like water.

According to the Ecological Threat Report, some 141 countries will face at least one **ecological threat** between now and 2050, with the Sahel-Horn belt of Africa (from Mauritania to Somalia), the southern belt of Africa (from Angola to Madagascar), and the Middle East and Central Asia belt (from Syria to Pakistan) identified as the most ecologically hotspots and particularly susceptible to collapse. Thus we see how regions inhabited by the communities that have the least historical responsibility for the climate emergency scenario are those that will suffer the most from its consequences over the coming decades.

In terms of **food insecurity**, more extreme precipitations would increase the erosion of the topsoil, which would become less fertile for agricultural purposes and could lead to the desertification of vast areas that would no longer be cultivable. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) forecasts that the number of undernourished people by 2050 would increase by 343 million to 1.1 billion, a rise of 45 %.

Links between transnational corporations, the warmongering and the climate emergency.

Furthermore, the World Bank's updated report concludes that climate change is an increasingly powerful driver of **migration** and could force as many as **216 million people in six regions of the world to move internally by 2050**. Broken down by region, it is projected that sub-Saharan Africa could see up to 86 million climate internally displaced; East Asia and Pacific, 49 million; South Asia, 40 million; North Africa, 19 million; and Asia-Pacific, 40 million; Latin America, 17 million; and Eastern Europe and Cen-

Asia; 5 million. Although geography is a key factor in predicting the degree of impact that climate change will have in the security of populations, this impacted is influenced by other variables such as demographic or socioeconomics variables, including the type of territorial governance or the existence of tensions or conflicts, which will determine whether or not the resources and infrastructures necessary to adapt and cope with it can be activated.

From human insecurity to armed conflict

The current UN position and consensus is that climate change is a **"threat multiplier" for peace** and security. Many of the socioeconomic factors that increase the risk of armed conflict are also sensitive to climate change.

NATO's Madrid 2022 strategic concept cites climate change as a trigger for conflicts, including migration, as well as non-war threats to the economy, which will require military responses.

Military spending takes away resources that could be devoted to addressing climate change, investing in global justice, and promoting peaceful conflict transformation and disarmament. Moreover, the carbon footprint of this EU spending in 2019 was estimated at 24.83 million t CO₂, the equivalent of the annual emissions of 14 million cars.

It is essential to act jointly towards the reduction of emissions, economic degrowth, the denunciation of ecocide and the ecological transition.

From "Transnational corporations, warmongering and the climate emergency". Report 55 of Centre Delàs.



Peace, integral ecology and sinodality

The annual Seminar of the European Justice and Peace Commissions, organized by the Italian commission, **was held in Assisi** from October 7 to 10, and the ordinary Assembly was attended by representatives from 22 of the 30 countries that make up the organization. The Spanish delegation was represented by three people.

There were **60 people** in attendance, including national delegations and guests from other entities, with special mention to the “Catholic Climate Movement”.

The theme of the Seminar was “Peace, internal ecology, and sinodality” and the choice of location could not have been more appropriate: the city that was the cradle and stage of the reaching of St. Francis, the “Poverello”, the passionate singer of the beauty of creation as a gift and expression of God’s love, **the humble apostle of the care of the poor and the needy**. Various milestones of the “**Season of Creation**”, as well as Francis’s meeting on the Economy of Creation, were taking place in Assisi on nearby days.

We felt at every moment **the welcome of the Italian commission** that allowed us to pilgrimage through many places linked to the **Saint’s life itinerary**, with space for contemplative

walks and prayer, and also for information and discussions on the War in Ukraine, with the participation of a member of the delegation from the country.



The inaugural conference on “**Sinodality and integral ecology**” by **Giacomo Costa**, s.j., of the General Coordinating Committee of the Synod, highlighted the reciprocal “fertilization” between the two concepts, following the guidelines of the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*; and the reflection in four groups to explore the different **dimensions of peace** in its relationship with the **economy, energy transition, ecological conversion, and dignified labor**.

This group session was part of the visit we made on Saturday to the “**Citadel of Peace of Rondine**”, a very

good experience and project of coexistence and harmony among young people from different countries in situations of war or tension, created by **Franco Vaccari**, whom we had the opportunity to meet and listen to, and which is being maintained, with very hopeful results, in the recently restored old village/castle.

Finally, On Sunday afternoon and Monday morning, the **Annual Assembly** was held, in which the presence and message of the new president of Dicastery for Integral Human Promotion, **Cardinal Czerny**, played an important role, as he explained the lines of work and the support of the new team, demonstrating his closeness and harmony with our actions and projects.

Furthermore, although even with little time, the usual round of reports on the activities of each commission took place; the final communiqué of the meeting was prepared and approved, and **two members of the European Executive Committee were renewed**. From Spain, Ton Broekman replaced Isabel Cuenca, and represents the countries of the Mediterranean basin of Europe.

EUDALD VENDRELL
Vicepresident, GC Justice and Peace



Progress in the second human rights plan

Following the **1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights**, a commitment was made by States to develop national human rights action plans as evidence of their involvement in improving the promotion and protection of human rights.

Spain approved the First Human Rights Plan in 2008 with the intention that it could be developed through the 9th legislature. However, the implementation of the 172 measures contemplated therein was truncated as a result of the adjustment policies implemented by the outgoing government after the November 2011 elections, which **led to human rights violations**. This was stated in the report of the Working Group of the United Nations Human Rights Council, **of Spain’s second Universal Periodic Report (UPR), in 2015** or in the **report of conclusions of the Committee on ESC rights**, on the occasion of the presentation of the sixth report by **Spain in May 2018**.

It was on the occasion of the second UPR that the Spanish government announced its willingness to approve a new human rights plan that would form part of a State policy and would last for more than one term of office. However, **it has taken seven years, three elections and a new UPR for the Spanish Government to “get down to work” on the Second Human Rights Plan**.

This second Plan —**still in draft form**—coincides in time with the **European Union’s Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024**, which would seek to promote and defend human rights throughout the world and whose principles would bind all EU institutions.

The **Second Human Rights Plan** is based on **eight guiding principles** and its action is articulated around **four main axes: international obligations and cooperation, guarantee of human rights, equality of women and men** as a guarantee of human rights, and equal treatment and **protection of specific groups** as a guarantee of rights. The Plan’s actions are described in 357 measures, the draft of which is expected to be approved before the end of the current legislature after having undergone several public consultation processes—citizen, third sector entities— and after having received contributions from an advisory committee made up of people with proven experience, and from the Ombudsman’s Office.

EMILIO JOSÉ GÓMEZ CIRIANO
Human Rights Officer, GC Justice and Peace

Spanish Commission for J&P (GCJP) has been working for several years to raise awareness against the use of nuclear weapons and has been a member, since 2018, of the **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)**. In its unwavering commitment to a more just and peaceful world, for human rights and care for the planet, which necessarily involves a world without nuclear weapons, the GCJP has launched a campaign in March 2022: **"Support of the Spanish Church of the UN Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)"** and petition for the Government to sign and ratify the Treaty", by signing an "Open Letter". To date, we are grateful for the explicit support of the bishops of Astorga, Mallorca, Mondoño-Ferrol, Bilbao and two auxiliary bishops of Barcelona, as well as various parishes, communities, and groups. We urge more voices to join this commitment as it represents the recognition of the crucial role played by religious communities in the negotiation of the TPNW. A month ago, during a meeting for peace organized by the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Pope and other religious leaders united in a single sentiment: *"Let us free humanity from the nuclear nightmare"*.

<https://www.juspax-es.org/l/adhesiontpan2022/>

**One more step on the path to peace.
Support of the Catholic Church
for the TPNW.**

In 2007, the European Commission proclaimed October 18 as the European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings, with the clear intention of making people and governments aware of the serious problem caused by the expansion of this crime worldwide, so it is necessary **to denounce and raise awareness** about a practice that violates the most basic rights of people. In order to eradicate this slavery that acquires new faces and ways of presenting itself, the Spanish Episcopal Conference, from the team of "Weaving Networks against Trafficking" held a webinar on October 18. Under the title: **"Human Trafficking: Difficulties and Challenges"**, 3 experiences were presented that act in different fields against human trafficking: **in criminal activities and forced marriages, in labor exploitation and sexual exploitation**. Villa Teresita enlivened the space with their songs.

The challenges that were pointed out are marked by an increasingly hidden and **clandestine reality**, a lack of **comprehensive responses** beyond the necessary criminalization of those who denigrate the dignity of people, work on the **root causes that lead to trafficking**, greater **sensitivity** to this social scourge and the approval of a comprehensive **anti-trafficking law** that responds to the new spaces in which these exploitations are taking place.

European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings
Weaving Networks against Trafficking

Church for Decent Work (ITD)
www.iglesiaporeltrabajodecente.org

For the eighth consecutive year, ITD has joined the **World Day for Decent Work** with events in squares and parishes. With an unemployment rate of more than 12 percent, ITD denounces the situations of vulnerability linked to work in Spain. In its manifesto, **"No commitment, no decent work"**, published on the occasion of October 7 "to celebrate and reclaim work as a right and an activity for the care of people, the common good and the planet", it stresses that "there are millions of working people who are still unable to access quality employment". **"High structural unemployment and precarious employment** afflict thousands of people, especially **women and youth**". ITD also demands **that attention to the causes that lead to occupational accidents be incorporated into the political agenda**. In this regard, the Initiative urges an analysis of Pope Francis' proposal **to reduce the working day** (without resulting in lower wages). It also considers that the work carried out in the **field of care should be brought to the surface and become, now, decent work**.

Justice and Peace Day in Manresa

From November 18 to 20 we celebrated the **annual GCJP conference** in the Cave of St. Ignatius in Manresa, to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the **pilgrimage of the Saint of Loyola** to this city. This was the inspiration that symbolized the birth of the Ignatian apostolic mission through a new perception of the world, immersed in an ecological spirituality, being the theme that summoned us this year. **Learning to live differently** is the driving echo **to transform the predatory attitude**, which pushes us to break all relationships, into a caring one, which weaves bonds of mutual support with all that exists. We feel the invitation to build a world "more than human" in which the **human community and nature are integrated**. To this end, we must continue to respond to: the repeated injustices committed against individuals, families and peoples who are deprived of their human rights, housing, work and territory, seeking a balance between needs, desires and rights; inclusion, building a larger family that inhabits the common home; human and ecological structures for care, present in transversal way in all public policies, synodality, an open, Samaritan and dialoguing Church, in need of deepening and moving forward in ecological conversion.

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