

QUARTERLY REVIEW



Creation-Justice-Peace

*'Hear the cry of the earth,
Hear the cry of the poor'*

Third Order, Society of St Francis, European Province

February 2026

Issue 24

Editorial



Hello Welcome to issue 24 of the CJP Quarterly Review. This is a very full issue so I'll let you get straight on reading it. Do take note of the conference on peace and reconciliation advertised for the second time in this review and I hope you enjoy the mix of reviews and descriptions of the inspiring work of our fellow-Franciscans across the world.

Please do consider sending in a contribution to the newsletter (email cjp@tssf.org.uk or guywhitehouse@outlook.com). Typically articles should be 500-600 words long, but they can be shorter. The deadline for contributions to the next edition is Sunday 19th April. *Guy Whitehouse*.

Practical Peace-Making – from Global to Local

David White, Convener TSSF-CCN Group

A Conference on peace and reconciliation for our times, Coventry Cathedral – 22nd to 23rd April 2026

This important conference is jointly held by the Third Order and the Community of the Cross of Nails. It is a conference for our times as global conflicts take up so much attention and concern. It asks how we, as followers of Francis, can truly live out the imperative towards reconciliation.

The Conference starts at mid-day on 22nd April with the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation and will focus on the foundational Christian spirituality of both the Third Order and the Community of the Cross of Nails. Former Minister Provincial Pat Mossop and Coventry's Canon for Arts and Reconciliation Kate Massey, respectively, will outline how this spirituality sustains our work for peace. We will also spend time walking and reflecting on what Coventry's buildings have to tell us, and how they can bring inspiration and hope for the journey. In the evening, visiting speaker Revd Dr Isabelle Hamley (currently Principal of Ridley Hall, an Anglican college which trains women and men for lay and ordained ministry) will then be with us to share her insights on the nature of peace globally and locally.

On the 23rd April Revd Al Barrett (Rector of Hodge Hill Church, Birmingham who writes - usually with others - in the intersections of theology with gender, race, class and ecology) will help us to consider what peace-building looks like in the local context. Small group discussion and workshops will follow. The conversation broadens after lunch, with some of Coventry Cathedral's partners of other faiths joining us. The conference will close mid-afternoon on 23rd.

For more details as to cost and accommodation see

<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/events/practical-peacemaking>

or contact davidwhite28@gmail.com

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Francis 800 Interfaith Journeys

Andrew D. Mayes, AFG Wyevern, has led interfaith journeys in Jerusalem

As we celebrate Francis 800 our website www.spiritoffrancis.com urges us to mark this year by participating in pilgrimages: *“At the heart of these journeys lies a powerful call to hope, peace, and reconciliation. In a world often marked by division and unrest, walking together with open hearts can become an act of healing.”*

Can your area or local group consider a visit – actual or virtual – to a mosque, synagogue or temple in your region? In a time of heightened tensions, these visits can not only be educative for the participants but also an act of solidarity with those visited: outbreaks of islamophobia and antisemitism have created a climate of fear, so greater sensitivity – and determination – than ever are needed. We might note 3 P’s...

Plans - Begin by locating your nearest faith-community. Most dioceses have an interfaith adviser who can facilitate introductions. Starting points include the Jewish Small Communities Network <https://jscn.org.uk/>; <https://visitmymosque.org/>; <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/>. Contact the host place of worship well beforehand to arrange a guided tour with a faith leader, understand accessibility, and confirm any specific requirements. Hosts may need lists of visitors, each with ID, so people can’t just turn up! It is important to clarify with potential hosts the purpose of the visit and how it is made in the spirit of prayerful pilgrimage.

Preparations - learn what you can about the different faith communities in your region: their history, fears and hopes. [Christians Aware](#) publish a series of booklets including *Meeting Jews; Meeting Muslims*. Next month an exciting new resource comes out (from Wipf & Stock) that will help us practise listening. In my *Stars in the Same Firmament: Discovering St Francis’ Interfaith Contemporaries*, extracts from Jewish and Islamic writers of his time – some of which he came to know about – enable us to hear voices that will inspire and cheer us. David Walker TSSF, Bishop of Manchester is commending this: *“What a wonderful book! Seeing Francis in the context of other spiritual leaders and writers of his era has been a real joy, and resourced us for interfaith interactions today”*. Pat Mossop adds: *“To sit down with our Christian, Jewish and Muslim neighbours is Andrew’s exciting invitation. There we will listen and learn to navigate by the three Abrahamic faiths’ philosophers, theologians, mystics and musicians who shine like stars in the sky – meet the contemporaries of St Francis of Assisi.”* Such resources will also help us to clarify questions we might want to ask during our visit.

Protocols - visitors will need, of course, to know the etiquette requirements: in synagogues men cover heads with a kippah, often provided; women wear modest clothing. In many places of worship, such as mosques, gurdwaras, and Hindu or Buddhist temples, you remove your shoes before entering the main hall. Check too whether there is a fee to cover costs of hosts/guides or whether a donation would be appropriate. To increase the pilgrimage element, you might gather in a local church for prayer and walk to the place of worship.

Following the visit, find an opportunity where participants can discuss their experiences, thoughts and feelings. Maybe identify similarities and learnings about the faith tradition to dispel negative stereotypes and deepen understanding.

Your time and effort will be amply rewarded. As spiritoffrancis.com says: *“Whether you walk for forgiveness, understanding, or new beginnings, each step becomes a prayer for peace—within ourselves and in the world.”*

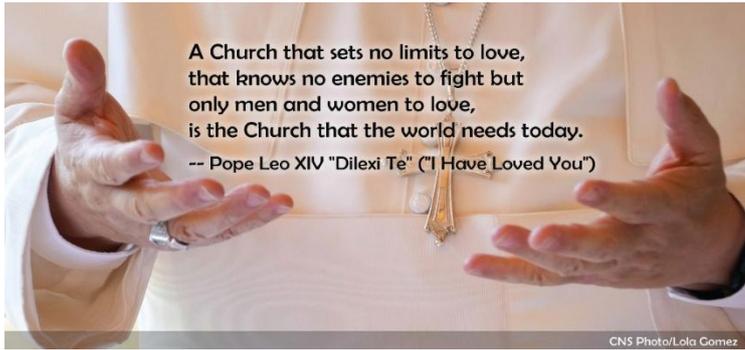


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Introducing Dilexit Te

John-Francis Friendship is a tertiary based in London

'... when the Church bends down to care for the poor, she assumes her highest posture.' [79]



IN the last issue of the Quarterly Review Guy Whitehouse introduced Pope Francis' final Encyclical, *Dilexit Nos* (meaning: 'He loved us'). Informed and inspired by the Sacred Heart – its sub-heading being: On the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ – and *il Poverello* it is of importance to us because we trace our roots back to a Society dedicated to the Heart (Society of Divine Compassion).

A year after its publication, on the Feast of St Francis, Pope Leo XIV issued his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi te* ('I have loved you') and revealed his own respect for the saint. It is a teaching document building on the work of his predecessor and addressed: 'to all Christians on Love for the Poor'.

'... contact with those who are lowly and powerless is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history. In the poor, he continues to speak to us.' [5]

That makes clear that those who are poor minister to those with plenty by aiding in their true understanding and worship of God. Nevertheless, despite the importance of what the Pope is saying and his clear ecumenical intent, it seems to have received little publicity by the Church of England. Yet at a time when it can seem as if the church has become a little lost and vast amounts of money are being spent on 'evangelism' it reveals what 'good news' can enable:

'I am convinced that the preferential choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society, if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry.' [4]

It explores this matter of God's 'preferential choice (option) for the poor', an expression which arose in the context of Latin America and in particular the 1979 Catholic episcopal conference in Puebla, Mexico. That conference shaped the Latin American Church by focusing on liberation, inculturation, and evangelization whilst also influencing liberation theology. It subsequently became part of teachings of the Catholic Church.

In adopting this theme, the Exhortation offers reflections on God's enduring love for humankind and the Church's mission to share that love with the world, especially the neediest. The Pope points out that we cannot regard them a social problem – those who are poor are 'one of us'. So the document also refers to the theme which touched the heart of St. Francis - that '(o)n the wounded faces of the poor, we see the suffering of the innocent and, therefore, the suffering of Christ himself' [9]. Yet in a world where the poor are increasingly numerous the Pope points out that we also see the growth of a wealthy elite, 'living in a bubble of comfort and luxury, almost in another world compared to ordinary people' [11].

But this isn't just a social critique, it is clearly rooted in the person of Jesus Christ exploring what it means to have a Saviour who came among us poor and weak rather than one who exercised great secular power. It would, therefore, make excellent Franciscan reading for Lent or at other times especially in connection with the 8th Centenary of the Transitus, not least because:

'When the Church kneels beside a leper, a malnourished child or an anonymous dying person, she fulfils her deepest vocation: to love the Lord where he is most disfigured.' [52]

The full document can be accessed here:

https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html

and a useful short summary here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/dilexi-te-explained>

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Franciscans International working for ordinary people

Richard Paeden, *Franciscans International Promoter and CJP Advocate, Northants*

Just when you thought it safe to leave your homes the world seems to have been thrown into turmoil again. In the midst of speculation about what powerful nations will do next let us remember what life is like for the ordinary people of the world.



Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations

In the swirling Geopolitics around [Panama](#), Franciscans and other church based organisations are providing respite for migrants, coming from the Darién jungle, fleeing conflict, persecution, poverty and the escalating impacts of climate change. In November 2025 Panama had its Universal Periodic Review (UPR). To prepare for this Franciscans International, together with the Franciscan Network for Migrants – Panama and other partner organisations, submitted a joint alternative report documenting serious human rights violations against migrants. These included violence against women and against LGBTIQ+ people.

In 2023 there were more than half a million people crossing the Darién Gap an area of south Panama and Columbia. Instead of safety, migrants face further dangers: robbery, extortion, kidnapping, disappearances, and sexual violence are all frequent. These risks are even greater for those in already vulnerable situations, particularly women & girls, who are disproportionately affected by sexual violence. These people find it hard to get justice - 88% of crimes go unreported according to the Panama Ombudsman. The Authorities have responded, not by strengthening protections, but with punitive measures. Under “Operation Controlled Flow,” migrants exiting the Darién Gap were confined in Migrant Reception Stations (ERM), which UN experts and regional human rights bodies denounced as *de facto* detention centres with inhumane conditions.

Franciscan and church networks remain committed to providing assistance. Yet as Vivian Cianca, volunteer psychologist at the Franciscan Network for Migrants – Panama noted: “The lack of a comprehensive State response based on human rights, including care for people in return situations, leaves the vast majority in a state of vulnerability.” Panama’s migration crisis reflects regional and global patterns: borders are increasingly militarised, migrants face criminalisation, and humanitarian organisations encounter growing restrictions. Bilateral agreements to control migration made without transparency and specific human rights monitoring clauses risk undermining international protection standards. FI and its partners have used their presence at the UN to amplify grass roots voices. Their joint UPR submission urged Panama to:

- Adopt a human rights–based approach to migration.
- End *de facto* detention and ensure dignified, open shelters.
- Guarantee access to justice, especially for survivors of violence.
- Make asylum accessible, fair, and efficient, including work permits for applicants.

Building on this momentum, FI has facilitated multiple platforms for civil society to present recommendations on behalf of migrants, asylum seekers, and people in transit. These efforts have created opportunities for grass roots organisations and States to engage in constructive dialogue, turning local realities into concrete advocacy at the international level.

Our world has been shaken up in recent times, tensions have arisen and international norms have been sidelined and ignored. We need, more than ever, to have organisations that stand up to those who ruthlessly exploit our planet's resources and the people on it. The United Nations is such an organisation and Franciscans International are able to gather information for the UN to use to make the lives of ordinary people better. If you would like to submit feedback on this article or anything you have read you can do so at richardpeadencjp@gmail.com.

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First and Third Order work in the Pacific

Christopher John, Minister General SSF

In Solomon Islands the environmental mission is central for both Third and First Orders. Brother Worrick led the team of seven First Order brothers who have just returned from the Advent / Christmas mission to Russell Island. *“We went from village to village with three topics: hope for the New Year of 2026, the root causes of Christian faith, and care of creation with understanding climate change.”* He describes the role of the different brothers in the team.



“Br Terry (image left, planting a kerosene tree) talked on environment issues such as the effects of mining, logging, burning of plastics, especially on marine life and the ways to help reduce the impacts on both land and sea. Br John Junior, talked about understanding climate change and the impacts of climate change with the understanding weather patterns on long-term change and short-term. He talked also on the biblical terms on the nature for illustrations. And I talked on the Theological meanings on the

creation and their purpose in summary of the topic. based on scriptures; Abraham in Genesis, Philip and Nathaniel, Zacchaeus and the Mount of Olives.” They also helped in practical ways, such as planting coconuts along beaches to help prevent coastal erosion.

In November I was in Brazil with Solomon Island Tertiary Br Robson Hevalao as part of the Franciscans International delegation to COP30. At this COP there was a large and visible presence of indigenous peoples. The message was clear—there’s a voice often neglected but which is speaking out and needs to be listened to. That’s the voice of those who often live close to the forests, the rivers, the oceans, and who observe with their own eyes the changes in seasons, water levels, crops, etc.



Christopher John, Robson and Sr Charity

They are the ones who live most immediately with the impact of this on their lives. The Franciscan delegation also had times of reflection on the events of each day, and on the situation in our own Orders. One need we saw generally was that the call to eco-conversion needed to be embedded more deeply in our formation programmes.

Another important part of our environmental mission in Solomons is the continuing work of engaging with the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights. This year the cycle of review returns to Solomons. We’ve made a joint submission with Sisters of the Church and the Dominicans and will be following up during the year in both Geneva and Solomons. In Papua New Guinea our work is through the Peace and Justice Mission, formed in response to the violence in the areas where we live in Oro Province.

Conrad, one of our Third Order brothers experienced a tragic event in his own village of Papoga in mid-2025. His brother went outdoors one night to talk to the drunken youths outside his house. They slashed across his neck with a bush knife, killing him on the spot. Members of Conrad’s clan then went to the family of one of the youths and killed the youth’s father. Two innocent lives taken. Conrad, who is also a local church leader, has taken the courageous step of calling for an end to such violence.



Welcome to Papoga Village, Oro Province, PNG

I was privileged to be on a visit to his village with others of the Peace and Justice Mission. Our mission is mainly to “preach peace”. We’re not experts. But in a world where police are too few and insufficiently trained, where government officials struggle with insufficient funding, and politicians are often more concerned for personal gain than humble service, then it’s church groups who at least are trusted. Police and judiciary, such as they are, can wield hard power, but we have the soft power to convert hearts and bring about renewed lives.

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Review of TSSF Advent Book – Making Room for Christ

Rebecca Abbott and Judith Russenberger, TSSF West London area

This book, made available to Tertiaries in the European Province just prior to Advent 2025, is designed to encourage a daily time during Advent of prayer and reflection based on the theme “Making Room” in our heart and lives for ourselves, for others, and for God. Compiled by Brother Samuel (who suggested the theme), Brothers Micael Chrisoffer and Finnian, Sisters Maureen, Beverley and Judi, and Tertiaries Sian Yates, Pat Mossop and Susan Pichford (Americas), this book has left a lasting hold on us both.



Our first impression of the book was one of wonderment. It is so beautiful to behold. The design work is excellent, the artwork stunning, and the front-cover “Franciscan Icon of Mary the God-bearer at Alnmouth Friary” a true window into heaven. Rebecca has framed the icon, and it now hangs in her dedicated prayer space, reminding her to create space within the busyness of her doing.

The book is arranged in three sections:

- Daily Advent Reflections. Each day, the reader is encouraged to reflect on various readings and is prompted to journal based on a number of prompts.
- Creating Space: An Advent Journey. This section provides a four-session course, that is not just about study of the materials offered but also about spiritual pilgrimage toward the crib and the cross.
- Making Space at the Table. Again, divided up into four themes for the four weeks of Advent: space to reflect, space to be kind, space to welcome, space for a Creative Tea. Lots of practical activities here, including cake-making, nature walks, star-gazing, and so on.

Rebecca writes: As a contemplative, I most enjoyed the first section (I love to journal). I also loved the cultural insights, one each day, taken from places all over the world where the Anglican Franciscans have a presence. I found it fascinating to learn how different cultures celebrate the incarnation of our Lord. But I wasn't quite so convinced by the daily detailing of the progression of a typical pregnancy and did wonder if it might have been uncomfortable reading for some.

I virtually ignored the third section, as I am a bit of a solitary and I do not cook! It made me realise that the last time I baked a cake was 29 years ago!

Judith writes: I too loved the image of the icon, and the image of “making room” - it is a theme that is open to so many different lines of thought and exploration. How do I “make room” for the divine in my reading and prayer life, in Advent, in my home, in my garden, in my relationships with others - and beyond me, how might we - as a third order, as church, as a nation - make room for the divine, and then, beyond humanity, how do we make room for the divine in creation?

I enjoyed the daily reflections picking up on experiences and practices from around the world, and I also liked that the book offered alternative formats - for a weekly discussion group or a whole day's workshop and for an all-age/family engagement. However, for some of these formats, advance notice (at least three months) would be needed (e.g. to put such events into a church diary) – so something maybe for next Advent? There is also more information on the Spirit of Francis website including instructions for making a crib.

Again, nit picking, vegan recipes would have been a nice touch.

We would encourage anyone who missed the opportunity of making use of this Advent book to consider using it for Advent 2026 by visiting www.spiritoffrancis.com and going to “Advent” in the Menu (top right). In this section, you will find everything you need. For example, if you click on “Advent Calendar”, and then on a star, it will bring up the resources for that particular day.

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