

GLASGOW CATHOLIC WORKER

'Faith, Works, Love, Mercy'

Catholics, climate change and 'Extinction Rebellion'



Whole Earth badge

IN LAUDATO SI, Pope Francis called for action to protect and renew the life of the earth. He wrote that the earth is our neighbour which is being abused, and our mother that provides us with the nourishment and conditions for life that we need. But carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions are warming the planet and changing the climate. On current trends, global temperature will rise at least 3 – 5 degrees by the end of the century, with unimaginably cat-



astrophic consequences within the lifetimes of people alive today. We are crucifying the life of God's earth, God's creation. We are cutting down the tree

of life while we are sitting in the branches.

Vatican and IPCC agree

To prevent this catastrophe, the UN IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) states global temperature rises need to be kept 'well below' 1.5 degrees above the 'pre-industrial average'. At the 2015 Paris Climate Summit, the Vatican was already pushing for a 1.5 degree target. Since October, the Presidents of the Continental Catholic Bishops Conferences issued an unprecedented statement calling for "urgent...rapid and radical" change, to meet the 1.5 degree target. Time is very short. The IPCC now say we need net-zero emissions globally by 2050 to meet the 1.5 degree target. Drastic changes are needed to achieve this. Annual increases have slowed, but emissions are still rising, by about 1% in 2017, and they are forecast to rise by about 2% in 2018.

As one of the world's richest countries and the first to industrialize, the UK has to act much faster. People in countries like India and China say 'you have had your carbon fuelled industrialization – now we want ours. Why should we change and our poor miss out on

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A year to remember

AS WE BLUNDER on into the chaos of Brexit it is appropriate to look back at the past twelve-month.

First, the Bad News. In the UK, the replacement of Trident, which will be called Dreadnought, is driving relentlessly on, at the eye-watering cost of £205 billion. You can work out for yourself what that means in terms of nurses, teachers, hospitals, schools, etc.



Nuclear trigger

All the other 9 rogue nuclear states are playing copycat, updating and improving their nuclear weapons - thus making them more usable. This is called "modernization", a nice comfortable word to conceal the reality of humanity's race to suicide.

Meanwhile, it has been revealed that 505 safety incidents have taken place at the Faslane naval base, where Trident is based, in the last 12 years. The Ministry of Defence disclosed the information in a letter by Stuart An-

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Winter in Pollock Park, Glasgow

development, when you are not willing to change and make sacrifices'. So we have to act first and show another way is possible, by aiming for UK net zero emissions by 2030 at the latest – just 12 years away. As Christians, we are called to act in defence of our neighbour and mother earth. We are called to witness to God's sacrificial love for His people and His creation. The words of the prophet Ezekiel come to mind: "Repent and live" (18:32). This might seem incredibly bad news we can do nothing about. However, we have the ability to 'repent and live'.

What can we do? The good news.

We have the technical ability to make rapid changes to the economy through a 'World War 2 style' mobilisation of the economy: reducing energy use, installing renewable power, decommissioning fossil fuel power plants, retro-fitting housing and heating, replacing fossil fuel transport, changing farming practices, etc. But it would require a massive political earthquake to create the will for fundamental change in

our economic system and investments in renewable energy.

A plan

Part of the problem is the lag effect between emissions and warming of between 10 – 30 years. This makes it hard for us to realise the reality of the crisis now. So action is needed to create a political crisis, to bring the future into the present. This sounds impossible. However, research from the last 100 years around the world shows that only 3.5% – 4% of the population is needed to commit to civil, nonviolent resistance to create a serious and real political crisis. The 'Extinction Rebellion' is a serious attempt to create a mass, international, civil resistance movement over the crises of

As Christians, we are called to act in defence of our neighbour and mother earth.

the climate emergency and mass species extinctions which human activity is also creating. It is aimed at a fundamental change to the current system to prevent catastrophe, which could even possibly cause human extinction. Extinction Rebellion have already organised relatively large scale, nonviolent protests as the first stage. The plan may not be perfect, but it seems to me the best worked out approach there is to try to create the needed political earthquake.

For more information, see the Extinction Rebellion website: <https://rebellion.earth/>

and the Glasgow face book group:
<https://www.facebook.com/XR Glasgow/>

Martin Newell

Laudato Si

"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord". In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs".

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. (1-2) *Pope Francis*

drew MP, a minister in the department, in response to a Parliamentary question.

259 of these safety incidents directly involved the nuclear-armed submarines, while 23 had a 'high potential' for leaking radioactivity.

A watchdog responsible for investigating the safety of Britain's nuclear weapons system has recently been censored, with annual Trident safety ratings no longer published for MPs and members of the public to scrutinise. The Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR) monitors the safety of the refurbishment, transportation and storage of nuclear warheads. It is also responsible for monitoring the operation of the nuclear submarines at Faslane. When the MoD took this decision, CND feared that safety at Faslane was worsening. The figures in the defence minister's letter confirm our fears.



After the bomb, 1945

But now, the Good News. As I have already reported, the United Nations have agreed on the international Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, (TPNW) the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons. It took

Nuclear safety incidents with submarines at Faslane

Year	Hunter-killer submarines	Trident submarines	Total
2006	12	12	24
2007	32	11	43
2008	12	29	41
2009	13	18	31
2010	14	18	32
2011	4	20	24
2012	9	12	21
2013	15	17	32
2014	17	22	39
2015	40	25	65
2016	41	39	80
2017	37	36	73
Totals	246	259	505

this momentous decision on 7 July 2018, when 122 states voted for this. The UK - naturally - boycotted this, as did the other rogue nuclear states.

The Vatican was one of the first states to sign this new Treaty.

Thus, the Pope thinks we should "Ban the Bomb". 122 states at the UN want to do this. The British government thinks we should carry on regardless. What do you think Jesus would say to this?

This is a matter of such over-riding moral importance that it dwarfs all other ethical problems. Will you by silence, be complicit in this on-going sin, or will you cry out "No, not in my name"?

Brian Quail

Get involved:

Round Table Discussions : On the 3rd Tuesday of every month we meet to discuss a topic and help us together to clarify our thoughts.

We meet at 6:15. Please email us for details of where we'll be meeting.

Soup Kitchen: Help out at our weekly Soup Kitchen in Cadogan Street, Glasgow City Centre

Place of Welcome for Refugees: Saturdays 9am-1pm

Help teach English at Garnethill Multicultural Centre (Basement) 21 Rose Street Glasgow or just socialise.

Monthly Witness at Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base

Join us on the first Saturday of each month at 2:30pm outside the South Gate.

Website: www.catholicworker.org.uk

Email: glw@catholicworker.org.uk

Twitter: @CatholicWorkerG

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/glasgowcatholicworker

Ammon – a difficult man?

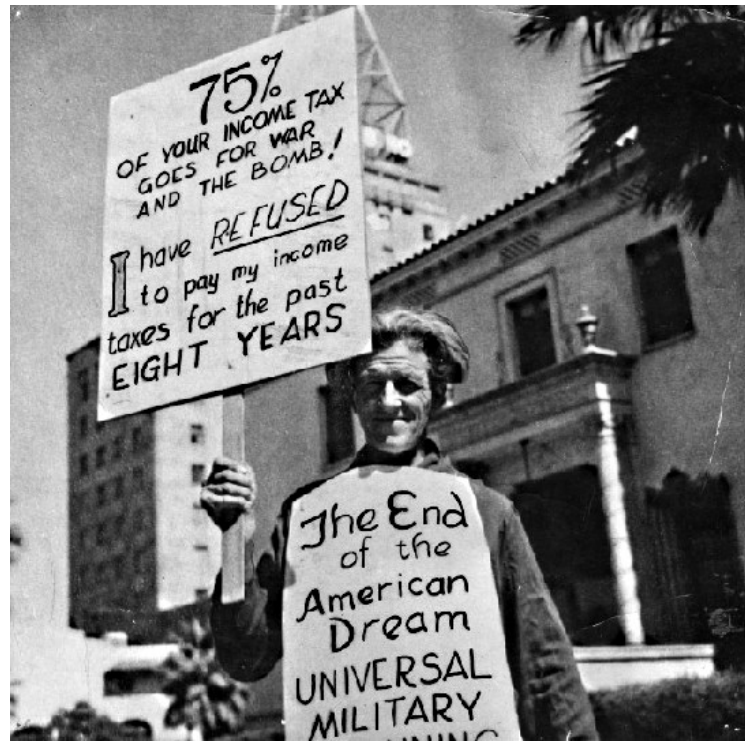
AMMON HENNACY always struck me as one of the most extreme and single minded of those who associated with Dorothy Day. Having read a bit about him I always felt he would be a difficult person to live with. He was born on 24 July 1893 in Neglio, Ohio and his parents were both active politically. His own political activity against the U.S. entering the World War I, particularly his posters and leaflets brought him up against the Government:

YOUNG MEN
are you going to
REFUSE TO
REGISTER
for military service in a
foreign country
While the rich men
who have brought on this
war
stay at home
and get richer by gambling in
food stuffs?

WE WOULD RATHER DIE
OR BE IMPRISONED
FOR THE SAKE OF
JUSTICE, THAN KILL
OUR FELLOW MEN IN
THIS UNJUST WAR

Signed.....Young
Men's Anti-Militarist League

His anti-war activity ended up getting him sent to prison for several years where he spent a long period in solitary confinement. It was here he turned towards Jesus: "Gradually, I



Ammon Hennacy

came to gain a glimpse of what Jesus meant when he said, "The kingdom of God is within you." In my heart now after six months, I could love everybody in the world but the warden, but if I did not love him then the Sermon on the Mount meant nothing at all. ... Now the whole thing was clear. This kingdom of God must be in everyone; in the deputy, the warden, the rat, and the pervert – and now I came to know it – in myself. I read and reread the Sermon on the Mount: ... I tried to take every sentence and apply it to my present problems."

I asked Jim Forest on his visit to Glasgow about Ammon and he sent me his account of meeting Ammon around the time he met Dorothy for the first time. Jim was questioning his own participation in the war.

"I stayed two nights at the

Catholic Worker on that (first) visit. Once again Jack Baker offered me sleeping space on the floor of his apartment on Spring Street.

Sharing Jack's apartment at the time was Ammon Hennacy, a lanky man of sixty-seven with a lion's mane of greying hair. Ammon had gravitated to the Catholic Worker despite his searing critique of hierarchies in general and the Catholic Church in particular, finally becoming a Catholic chiefly thanks to his ardent devotion to Dorothy.

An anarchist whose sentences rarely ended in question marks, Ammon saw himself as an icon of what others should become. He was, he declared, "a one-man revolution." He had been imprisoned during the First World War for his refusal to submit to conscription and — thanks to a Bible in his cell —

been converted by the Sermon on the Mount to non-church Christianity.

When I told Ammon that I was in the Navy, his eyebrows flew upward and the corners of his mouth fell downward. "As long as you put on a uniform and obey orders, you're a yellow-bellied chicken," Ammon informed me before setting off to sell copies of *The Catholic Worker*. A corner on Wall Street was one of his regular locations, the entrance to Fordham University in the Bronx another. By biting my tongue I managed to get along with Ammon but made no attempt to win his seal of approval."

It's interesting to compare this with Dorothy's response to Jim's predicament.

"Back at the Worker for Christmas, I told Dorothy of the tension I was increasingly feeling about being in the military, employment that had nothing to do with the works of mercy. "Ammon Hennessey," I said, "told me I should take off my uniform, refuse to obey orders and go to prison, but I hope that's not necessary. My work at the Weather Service doesn't involve weapons. Do you think I should follow Ammon's advice?" "Ammon has a gift for making everyone, but especially men, feel guilty if not cowardly," Dorothy responded. Then she told me about Martin of Tours, a saint of the fourth century who became a Chris-

tian while in the army and only stopped obeying orders when a battle was due to commence the next day, saying to Julian (not Julius) Caesar, "I am a soldier of Christ. To kill is not permitted to me." When the battle failed to happen, the emperor saw it as a sign from the gods and gave Martin his discharge. He went on to be one of the great missionaries of European history. I took Dorothy's telling the Martin story as meaning I could continue in uniform until events forced me to withdraw my obedience."

I think my opinion of Ammon as a difficult character is probably right but I think he was inspirational and I would have loved to have met and talked with him.

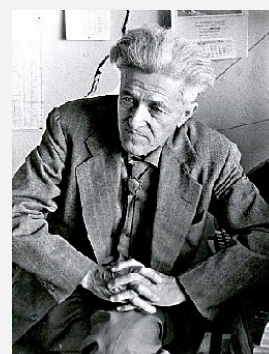
I leave the final words on Ammon to Dorothy Day :

'Ammon is a man of vision, of which there are too few. Sometimes he may seem to be hoping against hope, but I prefer to remember that other quotation of St. Paul's. He has the charity that "rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

Let us pray that he will abound in Charity which "never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away" God bless him. '

Michael Sutherland

Christian Anarchism



Christian Anarchism is based upon the answer of Jesus to the Pharisees when He said that he without sin was to cast the first stone; and upon the Sermon on the Mount which advises the return of good for evil and the turning of the other cheek. Therefore when we take any part in government by voting for legislative, judicial and executive officials we make these men our arm by which we cast a stone and deny the Sermon of the Mount.

The dictionary definition of a Christian is: one who follows Christ; kind, kindly, Christ-like. Anarchism is voluntary cooperation for good, with the right of secession. A Christian Anarchist is therefore one who turns the other cheek; overturns the tables of the money-changers, and who does not need a cop to tell him how to behave. A Christian Anarchist does not depend upon bullets or ballots to achieve his ideal; he achieves that ideal daily by the One Man Revolution with which he faces a decadent, confused and dying world.

Ammon Hennacy

Jim Forest in Scotland



*Jim Forest with Ross Ahlfeld
in Edinburgh*

JIM FOREST has been part of the Catholic Worker movement for decades and knew Dorothy Day personally so we were delighted he was coming to Scotland.

On Saturday 8th December in Edinburgh Jim kicked off his visit with a talk on his friend Thomas Merton. Jim along with his wife Nancy, was making a short visit to Scotland on the 50th anniversary of the death of Thomas Merton. On



the following Monday and Tuesday he gave talks in Glasgow.

The Glasgow Catholic Worker went with Jim and Nancy on the Tuesday to visit Faslane Peace Camp and drove to Coulport which stores and handles Trident nuclear warheads on the shores of Loch Long. We also drove round the perimeter of the expanding Faslane naval base.

My meeting with Jim Forest

ITS FAIR to say that meeting Jim Forest can only be seen as an extraordinary event for anyone involved with the Catholic Workers. It was, for us, a privilege and a blessing. For myself "star struck" might be the appropriate phrase.

There are so many aspects of Jim's visit worth noting – but I will focus on his generous discussions of Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. To get a sense of who these two legends were – from some one who knew them and loved them – was a privilege in the extreme.

Jim was able to offer a glimpse into the personalities of these two extraordinary thinkers, writers, peace activists, and to share insights we might not glean from books. My favourite of Jim's insights regarding Merton involves his statement that "Thomas had no brakes". No brakes? What did that mean? For Jim it meant that the famous monk was so passionate- so prone to living life to the full – that without the protection of life in the Abbey anything might have been possible...anything both miraculous, or, possibly, somewhat self destructive. But Merton chose the life of the monk where his internal passions could be expended in his prayers and in his writings. This creative and passionate man "with out brakes" chose wisely

...though one does wonder what another type of life would have brought both him and the world. Jim's deep love for Merton was apparent every time he teared up and said "I still miss him".

And Dorothy? I loved that Jim said "Dorothy cannot be tamed." If she is declared a Saint, we will not have a fake,

*"mercy within mercy
within mercy."*

pious Saint, but a woman so full of love she could give of

herself to the dying, the drug addicts, the criminals of all classes, no matter what time of night they appeared. Jim said her greatest trait was her true ability- with no pretence- to listen and care about the life stories of everyone who walked through her door and treat them with dignity. Her worst failing, he said, was her quick tongue and temper – but it always came with an apology. And he noted her heartfelt advice...to never be afraid to speak about God. Jim testified to the Church in favour of the cause for Dorothy's sainthood.

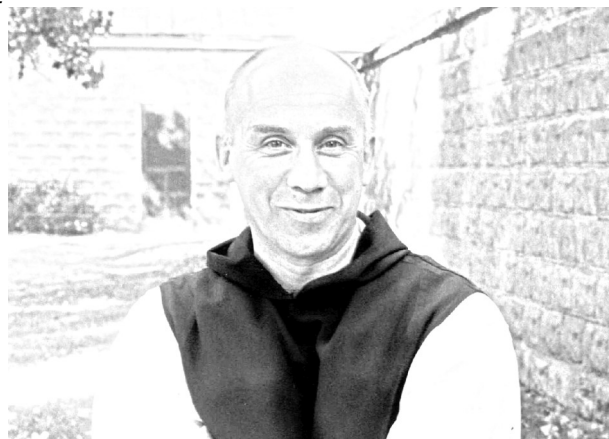
I am grateful to Jim Forest for sharing these beautiful insights. I am also grateful for the testimony of his life and the life of his wonderful wife Nancy. Their commitment to peace and prayer and to helping the poor is an inspiration to us all. His visit has motivated me to further action- less selfishness in this busy, selfish life of mine and more thought for others. As he quoted Thomas Merton: "mercy within mercy within mercy."

Tamara Horsburgh

Thomas Merton's Letter to a Young Activist

THIS IS a letter received by Jim Forest from Thomas Merton in 1966. Jim cited this letter often in his recent visit to Scotland, as an encouragement to those of us who work for peace. Sometimes it can seem like a futile waste of time when things don't change the way we want them to change.

This is the version that appeared in the Catholic Worker newspaper.



Do not depend on the hope of results.

When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on, essentially an apostolic work, you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect.

As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. And there too a great deal has to be gone through, as gradually you struggle less and less for an idea and more and more for specific people. The range tends to narrow down, but it gets much more real. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything.

You are fed up with words, and I don't blame you. I am nauseated by them sometimes. I am also, to tell the truth, nauseated by ideals and with causes. This sounds like heresy, but I think you will understand what I mean. It is so easy to get en-

grossed with ideas and slogans and myths that in the end one is left holding the bag, empty, with no trace of meaning left in it. And then the temptation is to yell louder than ever in order to make the meaning be there again by magic. Going through this kind of reaction helps you to guard against this. Your system is complaining of too much verbalizing, and it is right.

The big results are not in your hands or mine, but they suddenly happen, and we can share in them; but there is no point in building our lives on this personal satisfaction, which may be denied us and which after all is not that important.

The next step in the process is for you to see that your own thinking about what you are doing is crucially important. You are probably striving to

build yourself an identity in your work, out of your work and your witness. You are using it, so to speak, to protect yourself against nothingness, annihilation. That is not the right use of your work. All the good that you will do will come not from you but from the fact that you have allowed yourself, in the obedience of faith, to be used by God's love. Think of this more, and gradually you will be free from the need to prove yourself, and you can be more open to the power that will work through you without your knowing it.

The great thing after all is to live, not to pour out your life in the service of a myth: and we turn the best things into myths. If you can get free from the domination of causes and just serve Christ's truth, you will be able to do more and will be less crushed by the inevitable disappointments. Because I see nothing whatever in sight but much disappointment, frustration and confusion....

The real hope, then, is not in something we think we can do but in God who is making something good out of it in some way we cannot see. If we can do His will, we will be helping in this process. But we will not necessarily know all about it beforehand.

Thomas Merton

*From the book 'The Root of War is Fear: Thomas Merton's Advice to Peacemakers'
by Jim Forest*

Silence and hope

Looking back on Christmas

EVERY CHRISTMAS, I like to dig out this old newspaper front page from Christmas Eve way back in 2003: The headline proclaims 'Last mad dash to the shops!' while the photograph presents a dizzying scene of consumers in a blur, frantically trying to purchase last minute gifts.

It really could be a hellish vision of almost everything wrong with the dehumanising materialism of Christmas, with all its vacuous misery of spending money we don't have, on stuff we don't need. Fortunately, at the centre of this chaotic backdrop stands a beautiful little 2 year old boy, transfixed by his balloon, completely oblivious to the bedlam taking place all around him. It is indeed a powerful image, which has always helped me to reflect on how we might approach the celebration of Christmas. Specifically, the child's fascination with only his balloon causes me to contemplate Hebrews 12:2 – 'Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end'.

Equally, perhaps we might also say that this picture also encourage us to meditate on the biblical commendation to "become like little children, otherwise, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven". Of course, we are all very different; some of us take great

pleasure in buying gifts for loved ones amid all the hustle and bustle of Christmas. While others feel totally overwhelmed by the cacophony of sounds, the vast crowds and



bright lights, they are left feeling utterly detached from it all, just as the toddler pictured here remains disconnected from all the frenetic movement going on about him. Indeed, many of us feel that our senses are being flooded at this time of year and we end up quite distressed by the entire retail experience.

Yet, this same anxiety and sensory overload is the world which some (but not all) Autistic children and adults encounter every single day, not just at Christmas time. Undoubtedly, we have a great deal to learn from our friends and family members on the autism spectrum, especially within the Church. Not for nothing is it said that the Church is one of

the primary places where neurodiversity should be appreciated since 'Christians with Aspergers often offer Church the gift of truth-telling'. And so, perhaps the alternative to all the noise of secular Christmas is still to be found in the holy silence and stillness of the Church's preparations for Christmas during Advent. I should say that the little boy shown here is my oldest son, soon to be 18 years old. He's not just my son but also my friend.

I've learned a great deal about life from this little boy with the balloon.

Like all fathers and sons, we need each other, I need him and he needs me. We are both pilgrims

on the road together, navigating our way through this often overwhelming and sometimes cruel world. At times we stumble and worry about of what lies further along the road but it is always hope that drives us forward. Jim Forest describes living in hope as our Christian duty and responsibility, quoting Martin Luther in saying 'Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree'.

In truth, Christmas is a time of both silence and hope; the silence of waiting and the hope in God coming to dwell among us, illuminating the world with his love and the promise of life.

Ross Ahlfeld