



Justice and Peace Scotland

Ceartas agus Sìth

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President: Archbishop William Nolan

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Astronauts share a unique experience, for they have been able to go into outer space and look down in awe and see the beauty of the earth. The astronauts see the earth as God gave it to us, one earth, one world.

But for us, when we look at our maps, we see a world that is divided by lines, indicating the borders and the barriers that partition this one world into territories and countries. We put up walls, we erect fences of barbed wire and we say to our fellow human beings “this is my land, this land and its resources are not yours but mine”.

But God has given this one world to all of humanity, so that all human beings can live and flourish and grow, sharing its resources.

We have, of course, got to manage creation, and organise it. We cannot have chaos. But can we say to someone living where it is arid and barren, that they have no right to come here where the soil is good and the food is plentiful, because this is my territory? Do migrants and refugees not have God-given rights to move to a better life?

And the borders we create are often the cause of friction. How many wars are fought over disputed territory, both sides claiming it as their land? How much conflict as people seek to claim for their own the oil, the gas or the mineral wealth that lies under the surface? How many countries grow wealthy, keeping for themselves the riches of the earth and see no obligation to share with the poor?

We are a long way from living in a world where all benefit from the gift of creation given by God to all. We are a long way from peace when countries continue to fight for what they claim is theirs.

We are a long way from a united world where we work together for the good of all humanity.

We are not the owners of God’s earth, we are its stewards. The astronauts in space see a world that is beautiful and so it is. It is also rich and plentiful, with resources given to us by God for the good of everyone. Poverty will only disappear when the earth’s resources are fairly shared. Only when we act as stewards and not as owners of creation will there be peace and justice on earth.

May Jesus the Prince of Peace inspire us to work for justice and so establish a peaceful world.

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+William Nolan

Bishop President of Justice and Peace Scotland



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