

# Justice and Peace

## ISSUE 81 SPRING 2013

Pope Benedict XVI writes:

"There are times when the burden of need and our own limitations might tempt us to become discouraged. But precisely then we are helped by the knowledge that, in the end, we are only instruments in the Lord's hands; and this knowledge frees us from the presumption of thinking that we alone are personally responsible for building a better world. In all humility we will do what we can, and in all humility we will entrust the rest to the Lord. It is God who governs the world, not we. We offer him our service only to the extent that we can, and for as long as he grants us the strength. To do all we can with what strength we have, however, is the task which keeps the good servant of Jesus Christ always at work: "The love of Christ urges us on" (2 Cor 5:14)."



*God Is Love - Deus Caritas Est : Encyclical Letter*

"A society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized."

*Charity in Truth - Caritas in Veritate: Encyclical letter*

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Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice & Peace Commission

Diocese of Shrewsbury Commission for the Promotion of Justice, Peace & Social Responsibility

## Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice & Peace Commission

### ROMERO MASS

Celebrant and speaker: Fr Joe Bibby (Former LAMP priest)

**Sunday MARCH 17th**

**10 am** (Parish Family Mass)

**St Michael's, Ditton Rd Widnes WA8 8T**

Refreshments after Mass, and Mrs Pat Peel will show images from her recent CAFOD sponsored visit to El Salvador.

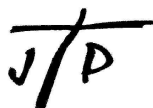
### THE RELICS OF OSCAR ROMERO and the work of preserving them

Talk by Jan Grafius,  
curator of relics at Stonyhurst College

**Thursday MARCH 21st**

Talk begins at **7.30pm**

**Our Lady's, Mayfield Ave, Widnes WA 8PR**



### 'COPING WITH CUTS'

Main Speaker: Sir Bert Massie, CBE (Disability campaigner)

**Saturday May 25th 10 am—4pm**

**LACE Conference Centre, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA**

Liverpool J & P Annual Assembly in partnership with Nugent Care and SVP

Further details to be confirmed

## FURTHER THOUGHTS ON CHARITY AND JUSTICE

*Margaret Cook writes:*

Steve Atherton's thoughtful article on the distinction between charity and justice\*\* deserves some further consideration, both in general and in how distinguishing between the two could apply in parishes.

We might start by considering how these words, charity and justice, are perceived in our contemporary society. In both cases, common usage defines them in ways which, from a Christian perspective, are based in a distorted view of what our ideal world should be like. We dread 'having to accept charity' because that defines us as failures; we seek justice for wrongs because justice will publicly identify the wrongdoer, and perhaps result in retribution and compensation. In both these cases, we implicitly define our role in society as being essentially to do with success and failure, and ourselves and others as victims and oppressors. If we include 'peace' in our consideration, that, too, is often defined negatively as an absence of conflict, whether or not issues are resolved and wrongs settled.

But the Christian society- God's Kingdom (or Republic, if you follow Philip Pullman) isn't conceived of as based in success or failure or getting one's due. Steve Atherton is right to instance both the apparent failure of the Crucifixion and the permanence of hope as essential to the Christian enterprise. In human terms, the Crucifixion was a disaster, the failure of someone who took on both authority and public opinion and lost. But it was only a failure in human terms: in God's terms it was the ultimate

success story which pointed the way we should proceed in rebuilding the Kingdom.

The perception of failure is a mark of our marred creation: our task is, through the grace of God, to create a new society where love and understanding ensures that no one can be defined as a failure. It is not enough to see others as the rightful recipients of other people's surpluses or as having earned the right to survive. We have to give as equals in the hope of redressing the imbalance in the world. But we also have to build a society in which hunger will not recur and people will not be ill-treated for who they are and what they believe in. Such a society is not a judgemental one, no one is deserving or undeserving, because everyone is truly equal in God's eyes. And in order to build this society we have to address first our own sense of what constitutes, not success, but fulfilment.

The National Justice and Peace network's statement of its values suggests what Christian fulfilment might be like. A summary of these characterises a fully Christian life as marked by simplicity, love, hope and compassion, wonder at God's creation of the world and every human being. We have a responsibility for this world and its people, since we are God's partners in restoring creation to its initial glory in which everyone has the physical and spiritual means for fulfilment. It is as partners, not as donors or recipients, that we act in this: solidarity with all others ensures that the church's 'option for the poor' becomes not just an act of giving but of receiving, of learning from others how to exist in a Western society which has still some way to go in approximating to a Christian value system, for all its progress towards the implementation of human rights and international aid programmes.

*Continued opposite.....*

\*\* Editor's note: Steve's article appeared on pages in MouthPeace 80 Winter 2012-13 pages 4 & 5. see [www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk](http://www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk)

Shrewsbury Diocese Commission for the Promotion of Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility invite you to a study afternoon and discussion on



## RECEIVING VATICAN II

led by **Brian Davies**

Brian is a former head of education at CAFOD and remains active in Justice and Peace.

He is an engaging and insightful speaker with a wealth of wisdom to share.

There will be an opportunity afterwards for questions and discussion

**Saturday May 18th**

**2.15pm to 5.30pm**

**St Columba's Hall, Plas Newton Lane, Chester CH2 1SA**

The hall will be open from 1pm for people to socialise .

Please bring your own packed lunch. Fairtrade tea and coffee will be provided This follows on from our October 2012 Open Meeting which highlighted the value of people from the different parishes and groups getting together and exchanging ideas

*Further thoughts on Charity and Justice continued.....*

If we accept this view of what the Christian enterprise entails, we need a vocabulary which truly represents the complexity of what we are called upon to do and which has not been hijacked for another purpose. For example, the Westminster Diocese uses the word 'Caritas' to label the website which admirably pulls together all the diocesan charities concerned with the relief of poverty and distress, but distinguishes between this and the separate link to Justice and Peace activities. Yet 'Caritas' comes from a Latin root meaning 'affection', love in its human sense of fellow feeling for another: are we to assume that the pursuit of Justice and Peace is inspired by something other than love and solidarity with those suffering? The means of alleviating that suffering may differ, but they all arise from the same Christian intention, to realise the vision of God's Kingdom. 'Caritas' may be a useful umbrella term for the relationship between the two but it cannot be made to apply to only one of the partners.

So our parishes may, for practical reasons, have separate groups aimed at the alleviation of individual suffering or the effects of unjust systems but they really all belong to-

gether and our experience supports this: war breeds hunger and destroys homes; dissension between neighbours impedes the benefits of cooperative living. Initiatives such as Cafod, the SVP, care for the homeless and hungry, justice for refugees, address immediate need and, for many people, it is their vocation to help in this. But we also have a duty to repair the disruption which has been done to God's creation through policies and actions which lead to injustice and conflict. These are not activities separate from care: both are inspired by love and responsibility to repair a failing world; both can be seen as part of 'Caritas' and both are necessary to the implementation of the meaning of that word.

In all this, we have to have a coherent view of what kind of society, including our worshipping one, would qualify for being truly Christian and act to make our parishes in some sense reflective of this, founded in love and peace, as Steve Atherton says. It is, after all, not only those in distant societies with whom we have to show solidarity; our neighbours also include those with whom we may have little in common except that we share with them the Kiss of Peace. We will often fail in this enterprise but, in the end, we can only continue in hope.

### **March 24 Anniversary of the Death of Archbishop Oscar Romero**

Before he was appointed Archbishop of El Salvador in 1977 there were few signs that the conservative Bishop Romero would challenge the status quo and speak out on behalf of the poor. But seeing his friends and colleagues murdered and their killers protected transformed his views. Romero became a prophetic 'voice for the voiceless,' ceaselessly calling for an end to the repression. On 24 March 1980 he was shot dead whilst saying Mass.

*Many would like the poor to keep on saying that it is God's will for them to live that way. But it is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing. That cannot be of God.*

Oscar Romero [www.romerotrue.org.uk](http://www.romerotrue.org.uk)



from THE J & P CALENDAR FOR THE YEAR OF FAITH other extracts throughout MouthPeace are marked by the Year of Faith logo. The full updated calendar can be found on [www.jpshrewsburydiocese.org.uk](http://www.jpshrewsburydiocese.org.uk)



## WELCOMING THE STRANGER

*Cameron Younis writes:*

Exactly five years have passed since the day we arrived in Liverpool as asylum seekers: we now call it home, red or blue is still to be decided! Not in our wildest dreams had we thought of becoming refugees. Two newly married university graduates with hopes of high flying careers hardly fit the image of "typical" asylum seekers.

Sufficient to say that as husband and wife, we were persecuted by both the Muslim and the Sikh communities. We fled to Ireland to seek protection in the relative isolation of that beautiful Emerald Isle. The Irish people true to their nature were a friendly and welcoming bunch and we shared a lot of laughs and happy memories with ordinary Irish folk. Sometimes the governments have to follow rules and refugees can become mere file numbers rather than normal human beings with emotions who deserve human dignity and protection. We were deported back to England and ended up in a house in Asbridge Street, Liverpool, near St Bernard's, a blessing in disguise.

It would be appropriate to mention Michael and Elizabeth Maloney a committed Catholic family of Port Loaise Ireland. Michael, a local politician and brother of the then Member of Irish parliament John Maloney, used regularly to visit Iraqi refugees. Meeting us and hearing our story of religious persecution the family developed a special bond of friendship inviting us not only to one of the biggest Christmas carol celebrations in Dublin but also to Irish Parliament, a thing which would be unthinkable in the United Kingdom. Just before we were sent back to the UK as deportees we had spent a lovely Christmas in their family home near an Irish castle.

Once in Liverpool afraid about our safety and security, someone gave us a leaflet of MRANG charity run by Father Peter Morgan at St Bernard's. I vividly remember the big hug and smile that Fr. Peter gave me while I was waiting in a queue at doctor's surgery at Bentley Road; that was our first meeting and the rest as they say is like the home coming of a prodigal son. I was baptised in St. Anne's in April 2009. Someone said to me "welcome to the original and biggest family in the world, the Catholic family". We remain forever grateful for the loving welcome of this lovely family that is Saint Anne's Parish. Allow me to express our gratitude to some special men and women of faith, their prayers and efforts which have sustained us in our new home, Father Peter, Rev. Francis Bowman, Margaret Kane, Dr. Terry & John Phillips, Neil, Lily Clarke, Bernie, Pheana, Esther, Seema and another one hundred names, we all know who you are, God bless you all.

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT WELCOMING THE STRANGER** taken from both the Old and New Testament.

**Deuteronomy 10: 19** You shall love the stranger, for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt.

**Luke 10:27** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.

**Matt. 5:43-44** You have heard that it was said, 'you shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy'. But I say to you, love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.

**Romans 13:10** Love does no wrong to a neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

**Romans 12:13** Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

**Hebrews 13: 1** Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

**Colossians 3:11** In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.

**Matthew 25: 35** I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

### 17-23 JUNE REFUGEE WEEK



*Human interdependence is increasing and gradually spreading throughout the world. The unity of the human family, embracing people who enjoy equal natural dignity, implies a universal common good. The common good calls for an organisation of the community of nations able to provide for the different needs of men and women. This will involve the sphere of social life to which questions of food, hygiene, education ... and ... alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world and assisting migrants and their families to belong.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church n.1911 [www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

**Asylum detention in the UK** The UK has 7 immigration detention centres with a capacity to hold 2,650. Expansion plans, that are already agreed, will increase this space to 3000. Asylum detention continues to rise. In May 2007 there were 2060 detainees: 1435 had sought asylum and 120 were held in criminal prisons. A significant percentage of asylum detainees are bereaved, tortured, traumatised - even suicidal. Legal Aid for asylum has been severely curtailed and so many detainees now get perfunctory legal representation, with neither time nor resources to prepare evidence or expert reports for the courts.

(Source [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk) Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)

**THANK YOU** to all who responded to questionnaire included in last MouthPeace for those of you in Shrewsbury Diocese and/or to those of you who sent donations. All the information was very useful to keep our data base up to date. It is still not too late to reply to Michael Crawley 5 Riddings Court Timperley Altrincham WA15 6BG

## LUDLOW UNDER PRESSURE

### Extract from report of Churches Together around Ludlow on urgent social needs

*In many ways Ludlow is a place of plenty. It is widely known as an attractive tourist destination . But that is only half the story.....*

#### Summary of report

Despite its alleged affluence, Ludlow has areas of significant poverty and deprivation. Severe cuts to local authority services are being implemented. So far only 20% of them have been made, and more severe cuts to welfare budgets are in the pipeline. Two groups most affected – though not the only ones – are older people at risk, and young people , particularly those in the 16 - 24 age group who are experiencing low employment options and limited housing options . Two key problems affecting these two groups, and many others, are limited community transport and the lack of affordable and social housing .

This report focuses on these needs and problems, but recognises that local unemployment and inequality are closely related to them. Increasing inequality, between rich and poor, and between those who can cope and those who are vulnerable, is morally wrong. Although our country now has to find ways to live within its means, we still have choices we can make about our priorities. Making adequately decent provision for the poorest and most vulnerable people should be a top priority.

More can be achieved with existing social -service resources and voluntary organisations, if there is greater co -ordination and effectiveness between services and

greater use of volunteers. But alongside this it is the responsibility of us all to help each other and to work to create a more cohesive local community. We can help our neighbours. We can be involved in responsible political action, engage in social action, and collaborate with other bodies which are trying to create a supportive community. In all of this, the churches must demonstrate their commitment by playing their part.

Justice must be global as well as local. Like all industrialised communities we in Britain, particularly many of us in Ludlow, have more than our fair share of the world's limited resources. We have a duty to take action to protect the environment and make it more sustainable. For example, the more affluent amongst us need to give up aspirations to continually rising standards of living. All of us need to reconsider our values, our assumptions and our actions.

#### The Churches Together Around Ludlow working group recommends:

- targeting priority help to older people at risk
- targeting priority help to young people in the 16-24 age group who are experiencing low employment options and limited housing option
- increasing the resources for community transport and for social and affordable housing.

*Editor: Thanks for this extract to Ged Cliffe who is on the Diocese of Shrewsbury Commission for the Promotion of Justice, Peace & Social Responsibility and also Secretary of Churches Together in Shropshire*

*Ged writes: The original report is 46 pages long! It can read more on the CTAL website <http://www.ctaludlow.org.uk> In many ways, the findings are similar to most of the larger market towns in the county, they certainly ring true to some of the issues we are addressing through Churches Together in Oswestry, and I know that C T Groups in Bridgnorth, Market Drayton and Shrewsbury would concur.*



### CLOSING THE GAP - tackling poverty in an age of austerity

Talk by Niall Cooper ( National Co-ordinator Church Action on Poverty)

**Thursday APRIL 18 7.30 pm** Christ Church Finney Lane Heald Green.SK8 3D  
Organised by Heald Green J & P Goup All visitors welcome

#### The Blame Game Must Stop

Everyday people who are struggling to make ends meet are demonised and blamed for their poverty. Politicians and the media use abusive language and images which dehumanise and degrade people who are already struggling to survive. If as Christians we believe that every person is made in the image of God and has value we are called to speak out the truth. To help us Church Action on Poverty have produced a report of the facts. It can be downloaded from [www.church-poverty.org/stigma](http://www.church-poverty.org/stigma)



## WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT in Development?

Talk by Duncan Green, Senior Strategic Adviser for OXFAM, hosted by the University of Chester's Department of Geography and Development Studies in association with the Chester World Development Forum, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

A gratifyingly large, mixed-age audience heard Duncan deliver a talk covering key issues in his book ***From Poverty to Power, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. October 2012***. The full significance of the book's subtitle: ***How Active Citizens and Effective States Can Change the World*** emerged gradually, as did the concept of **Power**. The first edition of his book (written 2007, published 2008) coincided with the unfolding global financial crisis and an accelerating rate of climate chaos. All this underlined the problem of keeping up with events and getting quick feedback. Producing this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition was very necessary - but now the exchange and development of ideas through blogging is a tempting alternative.

### **Changes in Development Thinking:** All about money?

Before the financial crisis it looked as if the problem of extreme poverty could be solved by transferring \$66 billion to the poorest – those living on less than \$1.25 a day. Food production was not a key problem – more its distribution. The world had progress on many fronts: great improvements in health, education, incomes, rights. Now the West is in meltdown, with physical scarcity of food. Are we entering an age of scarcity rather than an age of development? As for Aid, programmes were sometimes less effective than hoped for. NGOs were sometimes guilty of hubris - as in the campaign title *Make Poverty History*, which achieved significant improvements but surely did not “make poverty history” (the current “IF” campaign is perhaps more realistic). Duncan pointed out that remittances sent home by people working in rich countries now totalled more than Aid and were growing faster. But Aid is still useful and the UK can be proud of our 0.7% GDP commitment in contrast to other rich countries. The rich world still abstracts more from the poor world (by avoiding taxes etc.) than it donates. Then there are unexpected events.

The Arab Spring was one such, sparked off by the suicide of a desperate young man. The most carefully planned programmes which NGOs and governments commit to can be upset. They are trapped, having to set programme budgets, and to justify them to donors and client groups. NGOs may in future attempt to be quicker on their feet and not obsessive about specific strategies.

**The Financial Situation:** We are still suffering from a financial system which went crazy, too big to regulate and too fast moving. Transactions using digital technology have become 100 times larger than the real economy of people, products, services and the material world. After a brief show of apology the financial flows resumed their mad pace. The whole world is affected by the banking crisis and recession in the G8 countries, but the developing world is the most cruelly stricken. Financial chaos has coincided with climate chaos events: drought, flood and destructive storms, with less investment available to reduce the impact

**Food supply:** Between 2000 and 2008 food prices dou-

bled, fell back in 2009, rising again sharply by 2011. Duncan suggested “Few other than gamblers in financial markets stand to gain from price volatility”. In countries like Zambia and Bangladesh people spend 80% of their income on food, so when prices increase they can only eat less and worse. Volatility in food prices deters real investment by growers, leaving them not knowing when or what to plant and poor consumers unable to be sure of feeding their families. Anger is raised among the poor not just by a reduction in quantity, but a regime of unvaried, bad, boring food – and the effectiveness of medication is reduced by malnourishment.

Other problems include climate chaos and land misuse. Climate chaos is a huge obstacle to providing an adequate food supply –worldwide, but in the developing world especially. Previously stable weather patterns have gone and traditional planting rhythms fallen apart, with serious implications for valuable “indigenous knowledge” of farming practice. Better meteorological predictions are needed along with the means to adapt to flood, drought, tsunamis and other environmental events. Oxfam is working closely with local farmers on adaptation and diversification.

Land misuse includes a sometimes excessive switch to bio-fuels. Land grabs, about which Oxfam has been campaigning for some time, are another curse. This can happen very quickly in countries open to corruption, where the people are not consulted. Trading in African land has been, and probably still is, active in the UK. The worst situation is when land is used for profits which do not flow to the local people, and often very little to the state government. Korea obtained huge chunks of land in Madagascar for almost nothing; the contract was cancelled when people realised what was happening and kicked up a fuss.

**Where is Poverty?:** Most is in middle income states. This exacerbates inequality but makes change possible. **Fragile states** are a special problem, deep improvement being impossible. But if a state offers security, the rule of law, and the ability of the people to have a voice, there is hope of change. In such states politics matter. In **Effective States with Active Citizens** there is hope of empowerment. NGOs and local groups need to seek out the social instruments of power: faith groups, unions, associations. (Change can come from the ground up. Amazing work has been done by women's groups in Bangladesh with the simplest of means) Locals and NGOs need to use another source of power: the large multi-national corporation. Oxfam has done some very successful programmes with Unilever.

Women's rights are crucial. The oppression of women is not only unjust but a waste of half a nation's talent. However men need to evolve, to share some of the tasks that women are expected to handle – looking after children and

*Continued on opposite page*



*What's Hot and What's Not in Development continued*

house, while working to help support the family. Women need time to join political campaigns, run committees, get educated and informed—or be restricted to about 3 hours sleep a night

**What is poverty? :** Not just lack of money. Measurement of the success of a state by its GDP has long been thought crude. Other methods have attempted to calculate well-being. This would include human rights, access to education and information, freedom of speech and assembly, as well as access to work, food and health care. When poor people are asked what they dislike most about their plight it is the feeling of powerlessness, unfair discrimination, being looked down on as lesser mortals. The Dalits of India are an extreme example of this awful situation.

**Complexity:** Risk is a key characteristic of poverty and very difficult to assess. Duncan showed us a US military map of complex interrelated systems in Afghanistan revealing how a change in one sector could set off a chain elsewhere, not necessarily intended. By definition the unpredictable is just that, but there is some room for risk assessment. A quick reactive routine is preferable to hanging on to a failed plan.

**Global Issues:** **Active citizens** and **Effective states** can change their world and, to some extent, the globe. But the massive issues of climate chaos and financial chaos need combined global action. An unfortunate multipolar trend is no help. We have the G8 (limited vision), the G20 (a bit better), the useless IMF (dangerously out of date and stubbornly wrong-headed) and the failing WTO. Add collaborations between two or three states with a very limited horizon (the BRICS group are potentially powerful but currently clueless) and you get global stasis. A more effective UN might give one hope.

**People on the Move:** There is a world-wide tendency for people to leave the fields for the town. This is often described as a calamity, but there are positives: towns are

more dynamic and inventive and they have markets, without which the farms cannot prosper. Migration must be taken into account also.

**New technology:** There are waves of new technology which cannot be dismissed. Opportunities to be grasped and problems recognised. Products can become redundant overnight; this could sink a development programme intended, for example, to improve local incomes. One example of possible redundancy-creating novelty is nanotech which could replace cotton and copper as basic commodities. Another is mobile phones - seen as a blessing in Africa, unless you are near a mine supplying the crucial component.

Publication and Communication are changing shape all the time. Social media and blogging are having immense influences on the development of thought, rise of political movements – we need to understand and use them.

**Environment:** Environmentalists need to get to grips with Development issues, and vice versa. Environmental boundaries must be set on human activities as the earth's resources are not infinite, and ecosystems are fragile. Economics must change its frame of reference to allow policy-makers to see the full social, political and environmental impacts of their decisions.

Duncan's talk was rounded-off by a lively Q&A session and a well-subscribed book signing session. The final sentences of the book should inspire: *The fight against the scourges of poverty, inequality, and the threat of environmental collapse will define the twenty-first century, as the fight against slavery, or for universal suffrage defined earlier eras. Fail, and future generations will not forgive us. Succeed, and they will wonder how the world could have tolerated such needless injustice and suffering for so long.*

Duncan's blog, created in association with *From Poverty to Power*, is at [www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p](http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p)

*Note by Peter Byrne, assisted by other CWDF members*

## THE BIG ..... IF

Hunger is the greatest scandal and the greatest challenge facing our generation. That's why nearly 100 leading charities, including National J & P Network, CAFOD, Fairtrade Foundation and OXFAM want to make 2013 the beginning of the end of the global hunger crisis.

### THERE IS ENOUGH FOOD FOR EVERYONE .....

**IF** we force governments and investors to be honest and open about the deals they make in the poorest countries that stop people getting enough food.

**IF** governments keep their promises on aid, invest to stop children dying from malnutrition and help the poorest people feed themselves through investment in small farmers.

**IF** we stop poor farmers being forced off their land, and use the available agricultural land to grow food for people, not biofuels for cars.

**IF** governments stop big companies dodging tax in poor countries, so that millions of people can free themselves from hunger.

To find out who is involved and sign up yourself see [www.enoughfoodif.org/](http://www.enoughfoodif.org/) Encourage our government to advance trade, ensure tax compliance and promote greater transparency at the G8 Summit on June 17 - 18th at Loch Erne, County Fermanagh.



## END THE 'WAR OF WELFARE' - SIGN THE WOW PETITION!

*Bernadette Meaden writes*

On 18 December 2012, the WOW (War On Welfare) petition was launched. Behind the petition is a community of sick and disabled people, carers, friends and families, who have come together via social media to start a resistance. Spearheaded by actor and comedian Francesca Martinez, the petition aims to get 100,000 signatures to end the 'war on welfare' being waged by the government.

"It's a scary, dark time for disabled people," says Francesca "Already a third of disabled adults live in poverty. That's disgraceful and with the new cuts, that figure can only rise. It breaks my heart that some of the most vulnerable people in society are being demonised and used as scapegoats. It's something everybody needs to fight against."

The propaganda which has been used to win public support for welfare cuts in Britain has left many people feeling frightened, unwanted, and in some cases, suicidal. Time after time, the Work Capability Assessments (WCA) carried out by private company ATOS have been shown to be a grotesque farce, as seriously ill people die shortly after being declared fit to work.

Growing numbers of poor, sick and disabled people are threatening to take their own lives, and in some cases actually doing so.

Just before the petition was launched Ian Lavery MP tweeted: "Very busy day ending in great sadness, reading a 54-year-old man's suicide note blaming the #wca and zero score. Couldn't face another year." In the same week, the New Statesman's Laurie Penny penned an open letter to a reader, entitled, 'You are not a scrounger'. She wrote: "A few days ago you wrote to me and told me you were planning to take your own life. You told me that your reasons for this are: because you are frightened about what will happen to you when you lose the disability living allowance you rely on to live independently, and because you want to take a stand against the government's assault on welfare."

The very next day, Minister for Disabled People Esther McVey announced in the House of Commons that when Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is replaced by Personal Independence Payments (PiPs), more than 300,000 people will have their benefits cut or removed altogether. All of this indicates why the WOW petition initiative is so vital. You can learn more about the petition and sign it at [www.wowpetition.com](http://www.wowpetition.com)

### MAY 1 THE FEAST OF JOSEPH THE WORKER



This feast is also the anniversary of the founding of **the Catholic Worker Movement** by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933 in the US. Funded entirely by donations and run by workers who accept no pay but choose to live in a spirit of voluntary poverty, the Catholic Worker Movement in the UK offer hospitality, advocacy and friendship to destitute men and women (some with children), many of whom are refugees.

[www.londoncatholicworker.org](http://www.londoncatholicworker.org)

*What we would like to do is change the world – make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, the poor, of the destitute – the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words – we can, to a certain extent, change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world.*

*Dorothy Day*

**Pray that workers everywhere receive a just and living wage and that work be found for all who seek it.**

### COULD YOU SUPPORT DEPAUL UK IN YOUR PARISH?

Among the intentions of the Cycle of Prayer for the Lenten season are the needy and hungry of the world, and penitents and wanderers. Of course it is right to remember the needy and the hungry of the developing world but we should not overlook the needy and the wanderers who are closer to home.

**Depaul UK** works from London to Newcastle, specifically with young people. Started at the initiative of Cardinal Basil Hume in 1989 with a single 14-bed hostel in London, Depaul UK has grown to work with over 3,000 young people, from 16 to 25 years of age, every year. Certainly they are needy, frequently they are wanderers and often they are hungry.

Depaul UK's services range from emergency overnight accommodation to long term, high support hostel accommodation. Their goal is to offer homeless and disadvantaged young people the opportunity to fulfil their potential and move towards an independent and positive future. It is basic that no young person should have to sleep rough.

You can contact the fundraising team on [fundraising@depauluk.org](mailto:fundraising@depauluk.org) or 020 7939 1270.



## SPEAKING THE TRUTH TO WEAKNESS IN HAITI

An evening with Fr. Francois Kawas SJ at St John's, Wigan, on 9th January, 2013

How do you help a people in poverty challenge their government and start to take charge of their lives when the government itself is so weak that it is in the hands of the few big families that own most of the land and control the economy? Three years after an earthquake which left 1,500,000 people in tents, Haiti is still struggling to organise some sort of normal political life and civil society. 300,000 still live in tents. The challenge is being met by, among others, the Jesuits and Progressio who are helping them. They began by handing out food, water and medical supplies, but then realised that much more was needed. Information was one of the most vital instruments to help people take charge of their lives. So they have set up a Social Centre which works to give people the facts about the country's situation.

They have a small research team that is called the 'Observatory of International Cooperation.' This gathers information about the money coming into the country (especially Aid) and what happens to it. They look at the NGOs, foreign governments and other contributors and inform T.V. and radio stations and local groups what is happening to the money. They publish a bulletin about this too. They then hold regular meetings to inform local groups and help them debate the issues. People are then able to tackle the government departments and demand fair distribution of resources. (The money supporting this Observatory runs out in March.)

The Centre helps people with advocacy too as over half are without schooling and need help. A particular need is with migrants and especially those who find themselves on the border with the neighbouring Dominican Republic who have many needs including legal advice. Workshops are also part of the Centre's work; gathering people to reflect on problems, and enabling them to network and support each other in the Metropolitan Capital area of Port au Prince. The Church has also set up a group called 'Fé et Alegria', faith and joy, which is helping provide skills training through the schools and which finances many young people through school.

Fr. François Kawas, who heads this Centre, and is the Coordinator of the Jesuit team after the earthquake (a man of considerable education and presence), gave the talk, sponsored by Progressio in association with Liverpool Justice & Peace and Lancaster Faith & Justice Commissions. He told us that the people of Haiti were surprised by our support after the earthquake. Our solidarity is very important to them. The work goes on in the face of corruption and the power of a few families. But there is great hope among the people. When asked what we could do, his answer was: tackle our government to ensure that our Aid money was well used; make sure the Haitian government accounts for its use; ask the government International Aid department (DFID) and our local MPs to make sure this is done.

What is the future of the country? With education and industry things can happen. Progressio and the Jesuits are a part of the work towards this.

Fr Hugh Pollock

*Editor* There is also more information about Haiti and you can see Fr Kawas speaking about his faith and work on [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)

*(200 people came to listen to Fr John Dear at the same venue in September. Why was the church not full of people to listen to Fr Kawas who is another modern prophet? Are we victims of celebrity culture?)*



### CAFOD Quiz Nights

Fridays MARCH 22nd & APRIL 19th

Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port Town Centre. 7.30 pm £3 (Children half price)  
All money raised to CAFOD'S 'Food for Thought'



### June 4 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression

The purpose of the day is to acknowledge the pain suffered by children throughout the world who are the victims of physical, mental and emotional abuse. This day affirms the UN's commitment to protect the rights of children. [www.un.org/en/events/childvictimday](http://www.un.org/en/events/childvictimday)

*Nine out of ten deaths due to modern warfare are civilians, half of them children - UNICEF*

### June 5 World Environment Day Let's Travel Together and Green Up the Planet

As many of us experience every morning, current transport models are not sustainable. If we stay on track with current trends, vehicle traffic will increase by 60% between 2005 and 2025 – and that means choosing between gridlock and fewer public urban spaces. Moving towards greener societies isn't just environmentally friendly but also economically and socially sound. In partnership with UNEP's GreenUp initiative, bus, train, metro and carpooling companies will show how sustainable transport is a first-class entry point to greener economies through the **Let's Travel Together** campaign. Supported by 22 transport companies across Europe, **Let's Travel Together** is about promoting sustainable transport and triggering new habits.



*Dave Swindells shared his experiences with Marple Churches Together J & P group in December 2012 and has since written this report.....*

I've just returned from a strenuous but very rewarding and thought-provoking visit to Palestine and Israel, as one of the Working Retreats which Quaker Voluntary Action organises. See their website [www.qva.org.uk](http://www.qva.org.uk) for more details of the QVA programme.

The main purpose of our visit was to provide practical help to Palestinian families on the West Bank who experience harassment and sometimes intimidation when harvesting their olives from residents in nearby (illegal under international law) Israeli settlements which continue to be built by the Israeli Government on Palestinian land. We were also there to meet people from both sides of what appears to be an intractable situation, to gain a better understanding of the issues and to share this on our return home.

We stayed at the Khouriya Palestinian Family Guesthouse in Jifna, near Ramallah. Rawda and Issa made us really welcome, providing transport to help us travel to Ramallah and the villages where we helped harvest identified family's olives. We visited the Friends International Centre in Ramallah, which has been there since 1910. However, a Palestinian Quaker Meeting actually was actually established there before that. The Meeting House was destroyed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada in 2001/2, reopening in 2005, 95 years to the day after it was first opened. At the Meeting for Worship we attended we all sang "A Song of Peace".

We practiced picking olives in the Meeting House's garden and carried out gardening chores, before talks on the Palestinian/Israel situation by local experts, including Jean Zaru, Clerk of Meeting; Kathy Bergen, Co-ordinator at FICR; Sam Bahour on the BDS (Boycott Divestments Sanctions) movement and Thuqan Qushawi, AFSC (American Friends Service Committee). We also met two World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniers from Norway and South Africa, who stand at checkpoints at crossing points along the concrete separate barrier/wall, monitoring the situation and reporting on anything which should not happen. Roger was from Norway and Jenny was from South Africa. Neither was on duty on the Sunday we met, and so had travelled to Ramallah to meet us and explain about their respective roles. We attended a Meeting for Worship at the FICR, and also visited the 100 year old Ramallah Friends Secondary School and met the Learning Support Staff and students, as well as speaking to other students during their morning break. A couple of us also did some basic woodwork repairs on the 90 year old wooden pews at the FICR.

Jean Zaru, the Clerk of Meeting at FICR was an inspiring speaker. She is a child of Quaker parents, born in Ramallah, married, had children and has lived there all her life. Jean has had a long commitment to Women's rights and been involved in political dialogue to help

different views be listened to by all sides. She stressed the importance of the 'spiritual' and to guard against 'exclusiveness' in any sect or religion. Sabeel, the Ecumenical Palestinian Liberation Theology Centre has offices in Jerusalem and Nazareth but now meets in FICR as travel has become increasingly more difficult. Jean has declined to be involved in political discussions while (in her words) 'Israel continues to dictate and dominate, continuing to build illegal settlements across the West Bank, uprooting olive trees, taking over control of water and appropriating land'. Jean also emphasised the illegal occupation of the West Bank was also harming Israeli people, with the separation wall/barrier bringing out the worst in human nature between people. She strongly supports the BDS (Boycott Divestments Sanctions) campaign, arguing human rights underpins the produce boycott as a non-violent response to the Occupation.

Sam Bahour provided us with a useful background to the political situation. (He is a Palestinian/American, who moved to Ramallah 20 years ago to establish the Palestinian Communications Company). We were reminded 750,000 Palestinians lost their homes in 1948 when the state of Israel was established. The Palestinian name for this event was the Nakba – The Catastrophe. We were also reminded the Israeli armed forces are the 4<sup>th</sup> most powerful in the world and that over 550,000 Israeli settlers now live on the West Bank in (under international law) illegal settlements. Encouragingly, the ex-deputy major of Jerusalem recently acknowledged equality for the original inhabitants in Palestine/Israel has to be the way forward. Sam is hopeful Enhanced Observer status will shortly be granted to by the UN General Assembly, which will help ensure Palestine is not forgotten in future wider Middle East discussions.

We were made extremely welcome by the Palestinian families where we picked olives in the El Jib, Rantis and Deir Ghasaneh villages. Although language was sometimes a problem we all worked together well and were provided with plenty of mint tea and Arabic coffee to quench our thirsts. The family members not only worked non-stop alongside us but also somehow managed to prepare beautiful hot food, which was sometimes brought out into the fields, where we all ate together. It was also great that as a group of Quakers we all bonded well, despite having only previously met on one day in Birmingham, prior to our visit.

We had a difficult conversation with an Israeli settler originally from Chicago, who has lived on an illegal settlement at Ephrat, between Bethlehem and Hebron on the West Bank since 1982. Ardie argued no Israeli settlements have been built on land owned by Palestinians.

*Continued opposite....*



### *A working retreat in Palestine & Israel continued*

He also disputed water is rationed to Palestinians, despite our citing U.N. and World Bank reports which confirm this. Ardie felt the separation wall/barrier is a passive means of defence, designed to protect innocent people. This meeting was very depressing. We felt Ardie must realise the falseness of his assertions. However, at the end of our visit he said Israelis are fed up with the continuing conflict and that they want peace.

We then visited Bishara and Amal Nassar, on a hilltop farm about 5 miles from Bethlehem, who are part of a Palestinian Christian family who have lived there for over 100 years. They are now encircled by five illegal Israeli settlements, who have tried several times to evict them, despite having the legal paperwork confirming their ownership. Some of their olive trees have been destroyed but they remain defiant they won't leave, even though ordered not to build any more houses and so are tunnelling into the rock to construct caves and have erected tents for the volunteers who are joining them from around the world.

We visited two Israeli kibbutzim from our base in Tel Aviv, who provided hopeful examples of an alternative to the military conscription which young men and women have to undertake, otherwise it will severely limit their lifelong career prospects in Israel. Both speakers were very impressive, standing up to the military establishment in wanting to live a pacifist life.

Our trip to the Jordan Valley was to see a project by Friends of the Earth – Middle East, where 10 Palestinian, Israeli and Jordan mayors have signed an agreement for the Good Water Neighbour Programme, to save the dwindling water now left in the River Jordan, so that all will benefit. This was an isolated but extremely encouraging development.

I strongly recommend anyone with an interest in Palestine/Israel to consider going on one of the QVA Working Retreats there. It was a wonderful, thought-provoking experience.

### **Some Background Reading/Resources**

#### **Books**

- Occupied With Non-Violence* by Jean Zaru.  
Pub: 2008 by Fortress Press
- Checkpoints and Chances* by Katherine von Schubert.  
Pub: 2005 by Quaker Books
- The Lemon Tree* by Sandy Tolan.  
Pub: 2007 by Bloomsbury Press
- Occupation Diaries* by Raja Shehadeh.  
Pub: 2012 by Profile Books
- The Wandering Who? A Study of Jewish Identify Politics* by Gilad Atzmon. Pub: 2011 by Zero Books
- Refusing to be Enemies: Palestinian and Israeli Non-Violent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation* by Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta. Pub: 2010 by Ithaca Press
- A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird.  
Pub: 2003 by Macmillan Press.
- Extreme Rambling: Walking Israel's Separation Barrier.* By Mark Thomas published 2011 by Ebury Press
- Once Upon A Country: A Palestinian Life* by Sari Neseibeh. Pub: 2007 by Picador Press
- Whose Land? Whose Promise?* By Gary Burge.  
Pub: 2003 by Paternoster Press

#### **DVDs**

*Budrus* – a 2009 Palestinian/Israeli/American film of a Palestinian village's non-violent response to the attempted destruction of their village.

See [www.justvision.org](http://www.justvision.org)

*Our Suffering In This Land*, documentary by Ed Hill

*Land Of The Settlers*, documentary series by Chaim Yavin

#### **Websites**

[www.ramallahquakers.org](http://www.ramallahquakers.org) - Friends International Centre Ramallah (FICR)

[www.justpeaceforpalestine.org](http://www.justpeaceforpalestine.org) - Kairos Palestine Document

[www.windowsforpeace.org](http://www.windowsforpeace.org) - Channels for communication in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories to promoting friendship, understanding and reconciliation

[www.eappi](http://www.eappi) - Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine & Israel (EAPPI)

[www.tentofnationals.org](http://www.tentofnationals.org) - The Palestinian Christian International Volunteer Camp near Bethlehem.

### **PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION**

Liverpool Friends of Palestine have been twinned for 4 years with the West bank village of Bil'in in the Occupied Palestinian territories. In September 2012 a photographic project was launched in which children of Bil'in took photographs to illustrate their everyday life, to be paralleled by children of Liverpool doing the same. The photographs now make up an exhibition that has already been on display at the Quaker Meeting House in Liverpool. From May 9-16 it will be on display at St Mary Magdalene Church, Alsager. Open on weekdays 10am—4 pm and on Sunday 1—4 pm. Admission free.that has already

### **PILGRIMAGE WITH CHRISTIANS AWARE**

Bryan Halson has just had a small book published: "**Hadrian's Wall & the Venerable Bede Pilgrimage**". As well as an account of the pilgrimage (undertaken in 2011) this includes the daily liturgies - many of them reflecting the Celtic Spiritual tradition. The book honours St.Oswald, St.Cuthbert, and Bede. Published by Christians Aware. Order from 2 Saxby Street St. Leicester LE2 0ND.Tel. 0116 254 0770 price £5 + £2 postage and packing.

[www.christiansaware.co.uk](http://www.christiansaware.co.uk)



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### MARCH

- 17 Romero Mass** 10 am St Michael's, Ditton Rd  
Widnes WA8 8TF see P.2
- 21 'The relics of Oscar Romero and the work of preserving them'** Talk by Jan Grafius, Our Lady's, Mayfield Ave, Widnes WA 8PR Talk starts at 7.30pm see p.2
- 22 CAFOD Quiz Night** Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port Town Centre. 7.30 pm £3 (Children half price) All money raised to CAFOD'S 'Food for Thought' Campaign
- 22 World Water Day** see p.10
- 24 Anniversary of death of Oscar Romero** p.3
- 31 EASTER SUNDAY**

### APRIL

- 4 UN Mine Awareness Day** see p,11
- 18 'CLOSING THE GAP - tackling poverty in an age of austerity'** Talk by Niall Cooper ( National Co-ordinator Church Action on Poverty) 7.30 pm Christ Church Finney Lane Heald Green SK8 3D All visitors welcome see p 10
- 19 CAFOD Quiz Night** see March 22

### MAY

- 1 Feast of Joseph the Worker** see P 8
- 9-16 Photographic exhibition** children of Palestine and Liverpool St Mary Magdalene Church Alsager see p 11
- 15 Conscientious Objectors Day**  
[www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)
- 18 'Receiving Vatican II' talk by Brian Davies,**  
St Columba's Chester 2.15—5,30 pm More details P 3
- 21 Feast of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter**  
[www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)
- 25 'COPING WITH THE CUTS' - Sir Bert Massie, CBE** (Disability campaigner) LACE Conference Centre, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA  
10 am—4pm **Liverpool J & P Annual Assembly:**  
Analysis of the situation and suggestions for response. (In partnership with Nugent Care and SVP)  
Further details to be confirmed

### JUNE

- 4 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression** see p 9

#### Liverpool

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*Copy date for next issue 1/5/ 12013 Don't forget to send in reports of events and dates for the diary*

### INTEGRATING LIFE AND FAITH

Craighead North West area is group of associates of The Craighead Institute. We believe that the **Integrating Life and Faith** course is a wonderful, life-enhancing experience that challenges participants to Examine their lives in the light of the mystery of God . It explores the role of Christians as citizens in society and the way in which, inspired by the Gospel and Ignatian Spirituality, they can make a difference.

The Course will be run over four non-residential weekends at Loyola Hall, near Liverpool  
Module 1 (20/21 April),  
Module 2 (22/23 June),  
Module 3 (14/15 September),  
Module 4 (16/17 November).

The cost of the Course is £50 per module. Bursaries are available. More details and application forms from Steve Atherton  
0151 522 1080 [s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk)  
[www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/justiceandpeace/ILF](http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/justiceandpeace/ILF)



**JULY 19 –21**

**"Breaking Open the Word  
– a call to faith in action"**

An opportunity to spend a weekend with Megan McKenna opening the door of faith at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire 35th National J & P Annual Conference. More information and booking form from Tel 020 7901 4864

Email: [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)  
[www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)

NB Adult bookings made after May 17 subject to £5 surcharge

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