

# Justice and Peace

## Issue 98 Summer 2017

### POVERTY IS MANY THINGS

Poverty is never being told what you're entitled to but always being told.

Poverty is being shown up then put down.

It's missed payments and mistrust.

It's always answering questions but never answering the door.

Poverty is hiding in plain view. It's hiding.

Poverty is high bills and low pay.

It's higher costs and lower self-esteem.

It's invisible scars and visible pain.

Poverty is cold. It's damp.

Poverty is ignored and abandoned.

It's sanctioned and sectioned.

It's late payments and early deaths.

Poverty is overworked, underpaid everyday people.

Poverty is people. It's children. Babies.

Not... 'them'. Us.

**Poverty is many things, but it is not acceptable.**



*Poem by Tony Walsh based on work with people in poverty. Available as a post-card from Church Action on Poverty*

[www.church-poverty.org.uk/posters/postcards](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/posters/postcards)

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

### Liverpool J & P Commission Annual Assembly

### "OUR COMMON HOME"

Using Catholic Social Teaching as our guide, with Tom Cullinan, Jenny Sinclair (T4CG), Nicholas Postlethwaite and others we will look for ways to respond positively to the signs of our times.



**Saturday 24th June 10.00 – 4.30**

LACE Conference Centre, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA  
Contact Steve Atherton 0151 522 1080 email: s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

### THE HOPE CHARTER

The charter has its origins in a church-led initiative in Merseyside that was a response to the increasing funding crisis that our city region is experiencing. Irrespective of our view on funding cuts for local authorities, many citizens do not realise that these disproportionately affect areas of significant social need. Given that one of the largest expenditure items for Local Authorities is social care, the impact on the vulnerable is obvious. The Hope Charter began as an initiative to highlight this reality, with no expectation that it would coincide with an election campaign. In the light of current reality, plans were amended somewhat, and before the election parliamentary candidates are invited to sign the charter to indicate their support.

The full text of the charter is available from the website, but in summary it recognises the importance of social care, the need for a proper and fair funding arrangement for social care, and better recognition of the value of care workers through realistic remuneration and working conditions.

As a potential partners in this initiative, church members have been invited not only to sign the charter, but also before the election to make representation to their local candidate to invite him/her to sign. The website will keep a record of all parliamentary candidates who have done this. The aim is not only to make sure that the provision of social care remains a key issue during the election campaign, but also to seek a significant contingent of MP's in the next parliament, who can be held account for their commitment to take

### GENERAL ELECTION JUNE 8

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have produced a letter which lays out broad principles to guide our thinking in the run-up to the election. The letter is an encouragement to all Catholics to play an active part in the election. While voting for any particular political party is a matter of conscience, the bishops encourage people to use their vote at this pivotal time for our nations, as we prepare to leave the European Union.



[www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/Election-Message](http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/Election-Message)

Pax Christi have also produced some

helpful pointers <http://paxchristi.org.uk/2017/05/05/pointers-for-the-general-election/>

### National Justice and Peace Network 39th Annual Conference

### SABBATH FOR THE EARTH AND THE POOR: THE CHALLENGE OF POPE FRANCIS



**Friday 21 – Sunday 23 July 2017 The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.**

Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world." (Laudato Si' para 237) The conference will seek to: help us understand current realities; find ways to live out and advocate a different value system; and provide a space for creativity, celebration and contemplation. More details of speakers etc. and a booking form to download can be found here : [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/)

To make a donation to **the Rosemary Read Bursary Fund** send a cheque specifying that it is for the bursary fund to: The Administrator, NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX Make a payment by BACS transfer to : National Justice & Peace Network, Sort code: 16-31-15 Account No 10089516. Put your name and BURS in the reference field. Please notify the Administrator when you have done so at: [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)



## A POOR CHURCH FOR THE POOR



*Steve Atherton writes:*

One of the first things Pope Francis said on his election four years ago was to wish that the church would be “a poor church for the poor”. What would a ‘poor church’ look like and what transformation will be necessary before we become such a church? Can we say we want to be part of the “Poor church for the poor” that Pope Francis spoke about?

When I look at the church in Rome, where I find great strength and great support, I don’t see a poor church. My own daughters tell me they are scandalised by the wealth of the Vatican. And it’s not just us RCs who have ostentatious wealth. The other week I walked past Lambeth Palace, the home of the Archbishop of Canterbury ... a bishop in a palace!

I look at my own parish in Wigan where we have two beautiful church buildings, two presbyteries, two sets of parish rooms and a school. I don’t see a ‘poor church’. Slightly shabby, seen better days perhaps but not poor.

I look at myself: I have a home, a car, a bank account, savings, etc. Am I living as a member of a poor church? I look around at the church in the archdiocese and wonder how many of us could feel comfortable with that question, with so much scrutiny. Do our lives match the things we say?

BUT, are we actually asked to be poor? Are we required to give away all our money and become poor ourselves? Aren’t we rather called into solidarity, into a way of thinking and feeling that asks us to treat our possessions as a gift that we can share? That’s how Jesus lived his life. His kingdom was a place where people thrived, where lives were transformed, where sickness was cured, where the blind could see, the lame could walk and the dead could live again. Our faith invites us to be part of such a life-giving movement. We can help people out of poverty, we can make a difference, we can show solidarity. We can put our resources to good use. It’s not a cop out to seek to be ‘poor in spirit’.

When I look around I see that it is already happening: Pope Francis has installed showers for rough sleepers in Rome and given a home to some Syrian families; the archbishop of Canterbury has put some Syrian families into Lambeth Palace; our archdiocese is preparing to be part of the Community Sponsorship Scheme; the two cathedrals run the Hope+ food bank; the churches in Liverpool have set up Feeding Liverpool (see page 11); church people are involved wherever there is struggle against poverty.

I don’t let myself off too easily because I know that I am not as involved as I could be. In January, Rev Raj Patta, a Dalit Lutheran currently studying for his doctorate at Manchester, gave our Memorial Lecture. He said that in our times Reformation translates as Hospitality. I like that. We are called to care and to show that we care ... not just for ourselves and our families but for our neighbour – and we all know what an inclusive word that is for Jesus and should be for us. The focus of our hospitality is not to be ourselves, our families or people who are like us but must include those who are most in need. We know this as ‘the option for the poor’.

It is good fortune and God’s grace that have placed us where we are, rather than some worthiness or virtue of our own. ‘The poor’ is what we would be if it wasn’t for all the support structures that hold us up. I am convinced that ‘the poor’ reflect back to us how fragile we all are.

This realisation is followed by a call to action. We have been helped and we can be part of this virtuous circle of help. We can get involved with national organisations such as CAFOD, NJPN, Church Action on Poverty, Housing Justice, and Pax Christi or we can volunteer locally with an asylum seeker organisation, a Food Bank or a Credit Union. That way we can help to work with vulnerable and excluded people. At this particular moment in the UK as I write, we can ask ourselves and others what our votes can do to make our country a fairer and less unequal place. And if the current political system doesn’t offer the answer maybe we need to look seriously at how the church can be a positive influence at a local and national level.

### **Sunday 4th June HOPE CHARTER LAUNCH**

Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5TQ  
with Cardinal Nichols and church leaders from across Merseyside

The Hope Charter is an ecumenical initiative to encourage proper funding of effective social care (see P.2)

2.00 Refreshments in Piazza café    2.20 explanation of Charter

3.00 Ecumenical Service including official launch



*Susan O'Halloran writes:* St Anne's parish in Ormskirk have been studying Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* for the last two years – we have followed the Lent 2016 and 2017 J&P Commission/CAFOD Lent Courses and 2016 Creation Time course, all based on *Laudato Si'*, and also watched and discussed Fr. Dan Horan OFM Conv's series of short talks *Understanding Laudato Si'* on You Tube:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzyYPJLhZjc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzyYPJLhZjc)

We felt that we wanted to take our studies further into practical action and decided, after much thought, to attempt the Live Simply award, which has been developed by CAFOD in response to *Laudato Si'*.

There are three themes to the award - living Simply, Sustainably and in Solidarity with the Poor. To gain the award church or school communities - or both - need to undertake one large action - something that is a big change or involves a lot of people - and two small actions in each category. Activities already happening in the parish can be included but we need to do more too. On enrolment CAFOD send a certificate to show that a Parish is taking part and at the end, after a visit by a CAFOD assessor, award a wooden plaque - but the best result, in parishes which already have the award, has been the bringing together of the parish community.

We began by forming a core group of six members of the parish Justice and Peace Group and two other parishioners, who have generously joined us. They have been a great asset as they are involved in many parish activities and know everyone! The group meets every few weeks to plan and review. We have had excellent support from Fr. Godric our Parish Priest, and have been able to have regular meetings with him to discuss our ideas. We have also been able to attend the Pastoral Council meetings, again getting enthusiastic support.

We began in earnest in February 2017, with a talk by Ged Edwards from CAFOD about the award, and finally signed up with CAFOD in April. We decided that our big actions should be in **Solidarity** – support for local refugees and asylum seekers, **Sustainably** – energy use and the wildlife habitat in the church buildings and grounds and **Simply** - a Live Simply week-

end. It was much harder to think of big actions than small ones – and we hope that the ones we have chosen will be achievable.

### How are things going so far?

We have begun by publicising the award – posters have been put up in the church, the award has been written about by Fr Godric as the main article in the church bulletin and the Live Simply logo has appeared on the front of every bulletin since we began. There has been an article in the Pastoral Area 14 newsletter and an item about Ged's talk appeared in our local free paper. There is a dedicated Live Simply section prominently displayed on the homepage of the parish website: [www.st-annes-ormskirk.org.uk](http://www.st-annes-ormskirk.org.uk)

### Events

For our **Solidarity** section we have held our annual Fair Trade Breakfast during Fair Trade Fortnight. We serve toast with Fair Trade fruit and preserves with the regular coffee after Mass on Sunday mornings. There is also a Fair Trade stall and Fair Trade tombola and games. This event is popular with parishioners and a good chance to highlight the fact that St Anne's is a Fair Trade Parish and that the donations for the refreshments are regularly sent to Marian Care in Southport. One of our deacons, Philip McDermott, organised a talk about refugees and asylum seekers in the area and is involved in plans to support Syrian families. We held a collection of toiletries after Christmas and will soon will be having a collection of shoes and socks – Save your Soles – both for Asylum Link Merseyside.

For **Sustainability** we have had a tour of the church and parish centre to look at how energy use is being kept to a minimum, This is challenging in a Grade 2 listed Victorian church with a leaky roof and a 1960's parish centre, but it was heartening to see how much has been done to install energy efficient boilers and low energy light bulbs. Recycling bins have been introduced in the church and parish centre and we plan to put signs up encouraging people to turn off lights and use the bins. An audit of how many bulletins we need to print is being undertaken to save paper. We have had a talk about a local organic farm and how to develop our own gardens to make them good for wildlife.

*Continued opposite*

*'Livesimply' continued from opposite page :*

A botanist, who lives opposite the church and spotted a rare plant in the graveyard, has taken the parishioners who manage the grounds on a walk round to look at the plants and habitat issues. He will undertake a detailed survey and advise about what else we can do, including the offer of plants from his own garden.

Our big plan for **Simply** is to hold a Live Simply weekend when we will invite parishioners to make their own Live Simply pledges, hold a shared lunch and a book swap and include Live Simply themes in the music, bidding prayers and homily at all Masses. We have also produced small nuggets of information on different aspects of Living Simply which appear in the bulletin and on the website.

### **What has gone well?**

It has been very encouraging to have such good support from the parish – our two priests Fr Godric and Fr Boniface, our Deacons Rev. Philip McDermott and Rev. Des Bill and the Pastoral Council - and to find out how much is already going on which we did not know about. We have been shown the energy conservation measures and all the work in the grounds, but our intrepid new colleagues have also found out that the flower arrangers have started mixing silk flowers with fresh ones, to give good displays in a big church but also to recycle some of the flowers. The displays look very good and no-one would know all the flowers were not real. The prayer group has carried out the Lampedusa Cross Pilgrimage. The parish secretary Colette has been very helpful in the bulletin audit and in using our information nuggets, as well as patiently booking rooms for our events. The people who do the coffee after Masses have generously come to do the refreshments for our events and Steve the website maestro has established and updates the Live Simply section. We have also had

great support from people outside the parish and the church – Neil and Graham from the organic farm and Peter the botanist for example, which brings home the fact that climate change is an issue for all mankind, as Pope Francis makes clear in *Laudato Si*, and that many people apart from Catholics are concerned about the future of our planet. (see page 7)

### **What has not gone so well?**

Some of our ideas have fallen flat or never taken off. We put an ideas box in the porch of the church and invited people to submit their Live Simply Ideas, but there have been only two. We also appealed for vegetarian recipes, to promote the idea that eating less meat is a good way to help with sustainability, and hoped to produce a small booklet of simple recipes, but again we have had very few. We thought of doing soup and bread hunger lunches during Lent, but, as the parish centre has no kitchen, this was a doomed idea and needs revisiting. Some of our events – including the Lent course - have been poorly attended.

### **Has it been worth it?**

Definitely! CAFOD suggest that most parishes take a year to eighteen months to achieve the award. We are only part of the way through and, although some of ideas have not come to fruition, many have worked well and it has been very heartening to realise how much is already going on in the parish and to have so much support from so many people. Other parishes who have succeeded have commented that the best thing about going for the award has been how it has brought people together, and we are finding this. Along with the other parishes in Liverpool Archdiocese who are doing the award, we feel that the taking part is much more important than the award itself – although it would be nice to have it – and that the result we seek is a long term change and continuing Live Simply activity into the future.

## **THE SEASON OF CREATION SEPTEMBER 1- OCTOBER 4**

The Season of Creation, originally launched by the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople in 1989 has been progressively joined by other Christian churches, with the Pope announcing the Roman Catholic Church's participation last year.

Beginning with **the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation** (September 1), the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) will be joining Christian churches and faith communities around the globe in praying, celebrating, and taking action for creation.

There are suggestions for activities and prayer resources at:

<http://seasonofcreation.org/>      [www.columbans.co.uk/creation-time/](http://www.columbans.co.uk/creation-time/)





## 'WHAT CAN WE DO?'

St Agnes West Kirby was the venue for a topical conference which attempted to answer the question 'What Can We Do?' when faced with something as momentous as the refugee crisis. It is a question that cannot be answered in a few hours, but we left with some ideas and a clear message – that, in order to respond in a truly Christian way, we ourselves must be altered by the experience.

Sean Ryan, Refugee Resettlement Officer with Caritas, Salford, and Mary Kilcoyne, CEO of Caritas Shrewsbury, outlined very different, but complementary, ways we might respond. Sean started by outlining the Home Office's Community Sponsorship Scheme, based on the Canadian model which has been running successfully for over 20 years, and has successfully resettled 288,000 refugees. This can be implemented by any parish or community group and has been formally adopted by Caritas Social Action Network and the Catholic Bishops' Conference. Sean's own parish – St Monica's, Flixton – was the first parish to welcome a Syrian family under the scheme. In this model, one family is supported by a parish, which provides and prepares a suitable family home, raising some additional funds, and delivering a programme of wrap-around support to the family for up to two years. This could include, befriending and orientation, arranging access to healthcare, school places, ESOL tuition, benefits advice and support and helping the family's journey to employment and self-sufficiency. Sean spoke eloquently of the benefit to the sponsoring parish as well as to the refugee family. This is definitely not a "do-gooder" approach: sponsors can expect to be transformed by the experience of "welcoming the stranger" and making them true community members. In the process we discover and expand our own community.

Mary Kilcoyne then outlined what is probably the experience of most of us: disparate acts of kindness towards the stranger in our midst, from the collection of baby clothes, the work of the SVP with refugees, listening projects in which we are called on to hear the experiences of others to the sharing of a presbytery by two parish priests so that a refugee family could live in the empty house. These individual acts are sometimes linked to organised local authority and national structures such as Wirral Change and the involvement of Mike Kane at the time MP for Wythenshawe and Sale East. In outlining these two different approaches, Mary described what is much more like most people's experience of how to respond to the refugee crisis; Sean a structured way of responding. Neither response is superior but the latter depends on the former – without those individual and community initiatives, that at St Monica's could not exist.

Sandwiched between the two main speakers was the contribution of Rasha Youssef, a Syrian archaeologist who fled Syria when her husband was in danger of being conscripted into the army\*. Rasha spoke not of that flight, but of her life here as a member of the Liverpool community, the welcome she has experienced there and her contribution to the L'Arche community. Her contribution made us all realise that we can do something about any problem just by living as better people. But the transformation involved in ourselves would not be simple or painless. Most of us, as then and far away D H Lawrence pointed out, fear new experiences and seek the comfort of the old. Welcoming strangers and making them part of our community is a new experience for most of us. Let us embrace it with open arms and disregard the fear.

*Margaret Cook, St Agnes J & P group*

*For a description of the community sponsorship model as embodied in St Monica's, Flixton, see Megan Cornwell's article in The Tablet, 19 July 2016.*

*\*Since the conference, Rasha has been appointed Caritas Shrewsbury's first refugee project worker and Sean has been appointed National Coordinator for Community Sponsorship for CSAN and the Catholic Church*

### "TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS" June 13th, July 11th, not in August, Sept 12th.

An Ecumenical Quiet Day for everyone at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 6TW 10–4pm Input and time for individual quiet prayer and reflection. Cost £10

Tea & coffee provided. Bring your own lunch. For more information or to book: Tel 0151 722 2271

email: [winniecenacle@mail.com](mailto:winniecenacle@mail.com)



**A CELEBRATION MASS for volunteers Saturday 10 June**

At the end of Volunteers Week CAFOD Shrewsbury will be holding a Celebration Mass and a shared table for all our volunteers and their families. Please come and celebrate the amazing work our CAFOD volunteers do. Mass will be at 11.30am at Blessed John Henry Newman, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE.



**WIRRAL COASTAL WALK Sunday June 18th**

From Seacombe Ferry to Thurstaston Country Park Visitor Centre to raise funds for CAFOD'S SYRIA AND YEMEN APPEAL. Please join us—you can walk 4, 10 or 15 miles along the Wirral Coast or sponsor others.

For further information please phone 0151 632 5504, 0151 647 9124, or 01244 677594

**HELP WANTED!**

CAFOD Shrewsbury are urgently looking for volunteers to go in to schools in Sale, Altrincham and Wythenshawe areas to help children think about poverty, its causes and solutions through assemblies and workshops. We train, provide all resources and support you.

To find out more email: [shrewsbury@cafod.org.uk](mailto:shrewsbury@cafod.org.uk)

**WEEK OF ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE Sat 1st – Sun 9th July**

A national/international initiative to highlight the strength of community concerns about climate change, and the crucial role that community energy projects can play in reducing carbon emissions. This year the aim is to engage with MPs in the wake of the election, inviting them to champion the commitment in parliament. To find local events or to organise your own see [www.theclimatecoalition.org](http://www.theclimatecoalition.org)



**SEA SUNDAY July 9th**



On this day the Catholic Church, along with other churches, especially remembers seafarers and prays for them, their families and those who support them. Seafarers are commonly recruited from poorer countries where wages are lower.

The Apostleship of the Sea (AoS), the official maritime welfare agency of the Catholic Church in Great Britain, reaches out to seafarers that visit our ports each year, offering pastoral and practical support and care. It is our principal fundraising and awareness raising event of the year. See [www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/about-sea-sunday](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/about-sea-sunday) for more information and resources. Watch our Sea Sunday video and do feel free to share it with family, friends, fellow parishioners and church groups: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhIEXFgxMQI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhIEXFgxMQI)

For non-Catholic support see Sailors Society: [www.seasundayhero.org/](http://www.seasundayhero.org/)

**CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF QUIET GARDENS**

The Quiet Garden Movement nurtures access to outdoor space for prayer and reflection in a variety of settings, such as private homes, churches, retreat centres, schools and hospitals – and creates opportunities for people to experience silence, restfulness and contemplative practices, with regular quiet days and retreats being offered in many Quiet Gardens. There are over 300 gardens worldwide and several in our area - Bridgenorth, Chester, Crosby, Disley, Frodsham, Heswall, Leintwardine, Nantwich, Prees, Sutton. They vary considerably in size, facilities offered and opening times. More details can be found on [www.quietgarden.org](http://www.quietgarden.org)

*Editor : My thanks to Green Christian magazine for alerting me to this year of celebration.*



**APRIL 2017 Friends of Sabeel UK and Kairos Britain Merger** was announced. It is hoped the organic growth that the merger will bring will make our support of our Palestinian sisters and brothers stronger and enable each of us to play a full part in ending the 50-year occupation in Palestine today. Full details on

[www.kairosbritain.org.uk/](http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk/) [www.friendsofsabeel.org.uk/news-2/](http://www.friendsofsabeel.org.uk/news-2/)



## VISITING VIETNAM

*Ann McCarthy \* writes:*

John, my husband, and I visited Vietnam in November 2015 – so quite some time ago - but the memories of this wonderful country are still very vivid. Vietnam has the fastest growing economy in Indo-China and tourism plays a significant role in this development. Though tourism may bring valuable income into the country, it sometimes comes at an ethical, ecological and environmental cost.

We began our journey in Hanoi with all the trappings of a modern developing city with great skyscrapers and bustling streets. But amongst the fancy shops selling beautiful crafts for the tourists were many, many people selling just about anything to eke out a living. Many of these vendors were women and they carried unbelievably heavy loads in baskets on a yoke from dawn until dusk. Bearing in mind that they are only between 4ft – 5ft in height, they must have great strength and steadfastness.

If in Hanoi you have to see the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, a vast imposing structure which houses the embalmed body of Ho Chi Minh who is acclaimed as the leader and primary force behind Vietnam's struggle for independence. He was a gentle and unassuming man who led a very simple lifestyle as we saw from the basic rooms where he held meetings with foreign visitors. Although very respectful of the man, our guide admitted that Ho Chi Minh would not have approved of this building .

Whilst in Hanoi, we visited a charity named Blue Dragon which takes in very vulnerable street children and youngsters who have been abandoned by their parents. Blue Dragon clearly did some wonderful work as evidenced by some of the youngsters we met whose lives had been turned around. They were all very keen to learn English!

We then travelled to the coast, to the beautiful Halong Bay with its pinnacle-shaped limestone and dolomite outcrops and stayed overnight on a houseboat. The scenery out to sea was truly spectacular but sadly, because of the vast numbers of boats, the waters were becoming somewhat polluted which was having an impact on marine life. This was also affecting the floating fishing villages, which clearly relied very heavily on the sea for their livelihoods. However, we were told that steps were being taken to limit the number of vessels.

The next place we visited was Hue, a fascinating old

city, and here we felt the full force of the monsoon – but at least it was warm rain! What struck us both here and in the next town, Hoi An, was how hard the people worked to make a living and how inventive they were in their ideas. For instance, by far the most important means of transport in Vietnam is motorbike/scooter and so they used this as a tourist attraction taking tourists on rides round the villages. We really enjoyed the ride and saw some traditional village life in the process even though we were soaking wet on our return.

Of particular note in the villages was the way the people made the best use of what was readily available and they did not waste anything. As an example we saw a lady making spring rolls out of rice flour. The countryside is full of paddy fields and the best rice is sold at market with the smaller grains being used to make rice flour. The husks from the rice grains are used to fuel the stove and the remains of the grains after the flour is made are used to feed the pigs. Hence, no waste.

The markets were also a great attraction for the tourists as well as being so much a part of everyday life. They were open from dawn until dusk with many of the vendors sleeping at the back of the stalls. It seemed so different to our shopping habits where we stock up at the supermarkets. In Vietnam they seem to shop every day for fresh produce.

And certainly the food we ate always seemed very fresh, healthy and locally produced. Often the best food to be had was from the street vendors. They would hand pull a trailer full of everything needed for a “popup” cafe with tables, chairs (always plastic ones ), cutlery and, of course, the food. In fact in the major cities you can do a tour of the best street food – another creative way of earning a living through the tourist trade.

Whilst in Hoi An we went on a bike ride through some lovely little villages and we noted how many households grew their own food. Each household had a small plot full of vegetables and of particular note were the huge pumpkins which they use to make a delicious soup. Sadly though, vast areas have been cleared to make way for coffee growing which potentially is far more lucrative. Even some of the smallholdings are turning to coffee growing but as we know, coffee prices can fluctuate dramatically and so can production.

*Continued opposite*



*Continued ...*

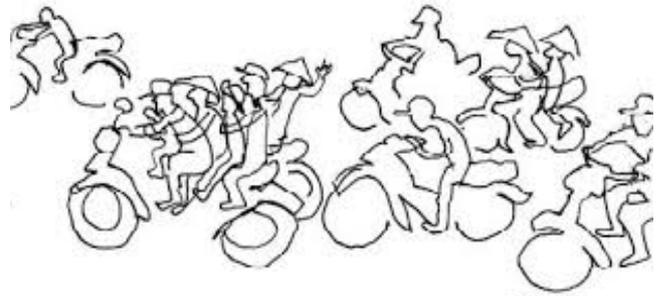
For the small producers, therefore, coffee growing may not be sustainable.

I have taken this information from Wikipedia which shows the uncertainty in the coffee market and the problems it has caused in Vietnam. The country's 2013/2014 coffee crop is expected to be a bumper harvest of around 17 million to 29.5 million 60-kg bags. Such a large production will add to a global over-supply of beans and will pressure coffee prices which have lost about 10 percent since October 2012. The country's coffee industry has taken a hit; of the 127 local coffee export firms that operated in 2012, 56 have ceased trading or shifted to other businesses after having taken out loans they can't repay. A few firms, such as Vietnam's top coffee exporter the Intimex Group, will benefit from the 2013 harvest. Intimex accounts for a quarter of the country's coffee exports and made \$1.2 billion in revenue in 2012. The amount of non-performing loans or debts in the coffee sector likely to go unpaid stands at 8 trillion dong (\$379 million), which is around 60 percent of all loans for the coffee industry in Vietnam. This from *The Wall Street Journal*: "The coffee market's worst fears may be confirmed: Coffee production in the world's biggest producer of Robusta beans, Vietnam, will likely fall by nearly a third because of severe drought, according to Vietnam's coffee trade group". Could this be as a result of climate change?

Our next stop was the seaside town of Nha Trang with its high-rise hotels, imported sand, fancy bars and massage parlours! It is a favourite tourist destination for wealthy Russians. Contrasting with this was our visit to a small island just off the coast of Nha Trang with its beautiful traditional fishing "fleet" and nursery school. On the other side of the island was an amazing coral reef where we were lucky enough to go snorkelling. We were horrified to find out later that a wealthy Russian wishes to buy the island to make it into a holiday resort! Who will benefit from that proposal?

Next we visited Ho Chi Minh (formerly Saigon), a city of some 8.426 million people, famous for the pivotal role it played in the Vietnam War. It's also known for its French colonial landmarks, including Notre-Dame Cathedral, made entirely of materials imported from France, and the 19th-century Central Post Office. It is also a city of some 7.43 million motor bikes/scooters which cause massive problems with pollution.

Some people wear masks but many do not and certainly not many of the children seemed to.



Just outside Ho Chi Minh are the famous Chu Chi Tunnels, an immense network of underground tunnels which were used by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. The tunnel systems were of great importance to the Viet Cong in their resistance to American forces, and helped to counter the growing American military effort. The space was in the tunnels was very limited indeed and yet the Viet Cong organised incredible defences in these spaces.

Whilst in Ho Chi Minh we also visited the War Remnants Museum displaying the most graphic photographs of the full horror and brutality of the Vietnam War. I only managed to go into one gallery and then had to leave.

Our final visit was to the area around the Mekong Delta where we again experienced local people tapping into the tourist trade. For instance we saw a small sweet making enterprise using all local grown ingredients including the rice paper used for wrapping – all edible.

Vietnam is a beautiful country and is well worth a visit. Tourism clearly makes a very significant contribution to the country's economy but sadly its promotion may come at a cost to the traditional way of life and to the environment.

*\* This is from a presentation that Ann made at the March 2017 meeting of the Chester World Development Forum. It was accompanied by many photographs. Version with photos (PDF) viewable [HERE](#)*

*The holiday was booked through Trailfinders, who are very good at finding companies who practice more ethical travel. The company in Vietnam was called "Intrepid".*  
**[www.trailfinders.com/](http://www.trailfinders.com/)**  
**[www.intrepidtravel.com/uk/vietnam](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/uk/vietnam)**

## **UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MOUTHPEACE ARTICLES**

### **FREE WEST PAPUA**

In Spring 2017 MouthPeace we highlighted the suffering of the people of West Papua and their call for independence from their Indonesian rulers. See <https://jpshrewsbury.files.wordpress.com/mouthpeace/>

2017 is their year of action with the petition launched in January to be presented to António the Secretary-General of the United Nations in August. The petition calls on him to address the human rights situation in West Papua and to ensure West Papua's right to self-determination through an internationally supervised vote. At time of printing over 29,000 worldwide have signed the petition. Have you signed it yet?

After June 8th consider lobbying your MP about the situation in West Papua and asking for him/her to sign the petition. [www.freewestpapua.org/petition/](http://www.freewestpapua.org/petition/)

### **Freedom of the Press**

Since the petition was launched things have become more difficult for the West Papuans. Two days before Indonesia hosted the UNESCO-sponsored World Press Freedom Day in Jakarta on May 3, 200 West Papuans were arrested, stabbed, 26 were tortured, and a journalist attacked.

Just days after, an Indonesian foreign ministry official confirmed the government has maintained a secretive interagency "clearing house" that has long obstructed foreign journalists from travelling to the provinces of Papua and West Papua. Despite promises to shut it down, Ade Safira, the director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Civil and Political Rights Protection division, said that the clearing house continued to vet requests of foreign journalists and researchers who want to travel to the two provinces, referred to as "Papua." Safira said the body makes its decisions in consultation with the Papuan provincial government.

Avaaz have set up a petition to the Indonesian President calling on him to "...grant immediate freedom of the press in West Papua and cease the killings against the West Papuan people. We call on you to allow foreign journalists into West Papua and that they be free from harassment and intimidation by Indonesian troops."

[https://secure.avaaz.org/en/free\\_west\\_papua\\_2/](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/free_west_papua_2/)

### **NUCLEAR WEAPONS - AN OUTRIGHT BAN**

In the final week of March, representatives from more than 130 governments began work on a United Nations treaty to prohibit the most inhumane and destructive devices ever created: nuclear weapons. These talks, which will continue in June and July, bring an end to more than two decades of paralysis in multilateral nuclear disarmament efforts – and mark a decisive turning point for the international community.

The chair of the conference, Costa Rican ambassador, Elayne Whyte, has conveyed her confidence that the treaty can be concluded by 7 July – the final day of the second round of negotiations – describing this as "an achievable goal". In light of today's dire international security environment, which places us within a hair's breadth of nuclear catastrophe, this is all the more crucial and urgent.

Throughout the week in March, campaigners organized vigils and other actions near or at the United Nations. They distributed hand-folded paper cranes – a Japanese symbol for nuclear disarmament – to government delegates and left them on the empty desks of nations boycotting the talks.



On the final day of the March session, representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Mexican and Irish delegations spoke at an ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) event assessing the progress made during the talks so far. Speakers noted the positive atmosphere and strong convergence of ideas among governments. They agreed that the week's debates had set the stage well for the negotiations in June and July. See [www.icanw.org](http://www.icanw.org) and [www.ploughshares.org/](http://www.ploughshares.org/)

See MouthPeace 96 for the background: <https://jpshrewsbury.files.wordpress.com/mouthpeace/>

## ACTION ALERT

## BREXIT NEEDS YOUR VIEWS

From: John Huff, Director, European Information Bureau 9 Bower Street, Stoke-On-Trent, ST1-3BH, United Kingdom Email: [euro\\_bureau@hotmail.com](mailto:euro_bureau@hotmail.com)

The European Parliament has the power to vote yes or no on any agreement between our country and the remaining countries of the European Union on Brexit.

### Background information on Brexit

Next year Members of the European Parliament [MEPs] from all the countries in the European Union will debate and vote on whatever is being proposed for our UK Brexit withdrawal. Get your voice heard before it is too late!

### Speak Now - Pray Now - Start Now – Email Now - You are Europe!

Please start a dialogue with three MEPs at the European Parliament; to increase the chances of getting what you want. This Action Alert asks you start on the road to being more assertive and email these three MEPs:

**1st. Email a UK MEP.** Please start with one of the MEPs elected in 2014 for the North West Region of England: Ms Theresa Griffin Labour Party Email: [theresa@theresagriffin.eu](mailto:theresa@theresagriffin.eu) Office in Liverpool

**2nd. Email a MEP from a non-UK country, using English.** This Action Alert prompts you to send an email to the MEP who is the Brexit spokesperson for the political group in the European Parliament to which the Conservative MEPs from the UK belong. Ms Helga Stevens European Conservatives and Reformists Political Group MEP in Belgium Email: [helga.stevens@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:helga.stevens@europarl.europa.eu)

**3rd. Email a MEP in the largest Political Group at the European Parliament – The European People's Party [EEP].** This Action Alert prompts you to send an email to the MEP who is the Coordinator for the EEP in the Constitutional Affairs committee on Brexit: Mr Esteban Gonzalez Pons MEP in Spain Email: [gonzalezpons@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:gonzalezpons@europarl.europa.eu)

## FEEDING LIVERPOOL ... 18 months on.

*Feeding Liverpool* is one of a twelve pilot projects that have been formed in response to the Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the UK published in December 2014 and called *Feeding Britain: A strategy for zero hunger in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland*.

*Feeding Liverpool* is an initiative of Churches Together in Merseyside and Region with member groups who are actively involved in practical projects, especially with food banks. *Feeding Liverpool* fills a strategic role, supplementary to the practical, hands-on work and creates a forum that brings together people who are concerned about food poverty.

Its aims are:

- \* to share good practice about emergency provision;
- \* to campaign for change in those policies that cause or reinforce poverty;
- \* to raise public awareness about the extent of food poverty and the damaging effects of austerity measures on welfare provision.

*Feeding Liverpool* also want to contribute to other efforts in the city to tackle food poverty such as the City Council's Food Poverty Strategy Group which has asked *Feeding Liverpool* to take a lead role in engaging with local communities and learning from people's lived experience. Many of the participant groups are those on the frontline of provision and *Feeding Liverpool's* key strength is to provide what Bishop Paul Bayes refers to as 'a line of sight to the street and back' to gain an understanding of the reality of food poverty and its implications – not just for providers and policy makers, but for all of us who aspire to live in a society that is built around fairness and the wellbeing of all.

*Feeding Liverpool* is co-chaired by Bishop John Rawsthorne, (retired Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hallam and former Auxiliary Bishop in Liverpool) and Professor Hilary Russell (Professor Emeritus at Liverpool John Moores University European Institute of Urban Affairs and leader of the *Together For The Common Good [T4CG]* research process).



## DIARY DATES

### JUNE

- 3 PAX CHRISTI ANNUAL MEETING** 10.45 - 4 pm  
Maria Fidelis School, Phoenix Road, London NW1 1TA  
<http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/events-calendar/>
- 4 HOPE CHARTER LAUNCH** with church leaders from across Merseyside and Cardinal Nichols.  
Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, see page 3
- 10 A CELEBRATION MASS AND SHARED TABLE**  
organised by CAFOD Shrewsbury. 11.30am  
at Blessed John Henry Newman, Knutsford Road,  
Warrington, WA4 1JE, see page 7
- 13 TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS** Liverpool Cenacle page 6
- 15 A POVERTY WITNESS** with Niall Cooper CAP Marple Methodist Church, Church Lane Marple SK6 7AY 7.30 pm  
arranged by Churches Together J & P group
- 18 WIRRAL COASTAL WALK** to raise funds for CAFOD Syria and Yemen appeals, see page 7
- 20 – 26 REFUGEE WEEK** <http://refugeeweek.org.uk>
- 22 FEAST OF ST THOMAS MORE** This feast day is an opportunity to remember in prayer the many people worldwide who suffer in prison for their beliefs.  
Amnesty International: [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)  
Christians Against Torture: [www.acatuk.org.uk](http://www.acatuk.org.uk)
- 24 OUR COMMON HOME** Liverpool Commission J & P Annual Assembly 10- 4.30 LACE Conference Centre, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA Contact Steve Atherton, see page 2
- 26 INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE** The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) offer a range of resources including a campaign guide, posters and logos, factsheets, a global reading, and other materials:  
[www.ircct.org/our-work/day-against-torture-on-26-june.aspx](http://www.ircct.org/our-work/day-against-torture-on-26-june.aspx)

### JULY

- 1 - 9 WEEK OF ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**  
[www.theclimatecoalition.org](http://www.theclimatecoalition.org) see page 7
- 9 SEA SUNDAY** see page 7  
[www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/about-sea-Sunday](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/about-sea-Sunday)
- 11 TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS** Liverpool Cenacle page 6
- 11 'THREE JUMBOS CRASH IN A DAY'** John Williams, retired hospital consultant, tells of some of his post-retirement activities overseas. CWDF Forum 6:45 - 9:00 pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN
- 21-23 ANNUAL NJPN CONFERENCE** "A Sabbath for the Earth and the Poor: The Challenge of Pope Francis"  
Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, see page 2

### AUGUST

- 6 & 9** Anniversaries of the first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima & Nagasaki More information and prayer resources from Pax Christi: [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk) or 020 8203 4884

### SEPTEMBER

- 1 DAY OF PRAYER FOR CARE OF CREATION**
- 1– 4 OCTOBER SEASON OF CREATION** see page 5
- 12 TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS** Liverpool Cenacle page 6
- 15 CAFOD QUIZ NIGHT** 7.30pm in Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port Town Centre, with Fairtrade refreshments provided at the interval. The entry fee £3.00 for adults £1 for children. All money raised will go to CAFOD's Connect 2 Ethiopia project. More details contact Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419
- 21 PEACE-ONE-DAY** An annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence is organised by Peace One Day, a non-profit organisation that raises awareness of peace issues.  
[www.peaceoneday.org/global-campaigns](http://www.peaceoneday.org/global-campaigns)

#### Liverpool

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*Copy date for next issue 1/8/2017. Don't forget to send in reports of events and dates for the diary*

The opinions expressed in MouthPeace are the views of the individual contributors or organisations concerned and do not necessarily reflect those of the Justice and Peace Commissions of the dioceses of Shrewsbury and Liverpool

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