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# Justice and Peace

## ISSUE 84 WINTER 2013/14

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*The response to war is to live like brothers and sisters.  
 The response to injustice is to share.  
 The response to despair is limitless trust and hope.  
 The response to prejudice and hatred is forgiveness.  
 To work for community is to work for humanity.  
 To work for peace is to work for a true political solution: it is  
 to work for the Kingdom of God.  
 It is to work to enable everyone to live and taste the secret  
 joys of the human person united to the eternal.*

Jean Vanier 'Community and Growth'

*People come into our lives unbidden. Our only choice is how  
 we respond. We can view them as friend or foe, as inevitable  
 competitor or potential companion. And the choice to view  
 them positively isn't a matter of sentimentality or idealizing  
 them. Rather it's about what is going on in our own heart.*

Fr Bob Esdaile, homily reflection from PaxChristi resources  
 for Peace Sunday 2014 .....[www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)



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

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**Sunday 19 January 2014**  
**MEMORIAL LECTURE FOR PEACE SUNDAY**

with Pat Gaffney from Pax Christi

1.30 – 4.00 pm at Croxteth Drive Sefton Park Liverpool L17 1AA



**PEACE SUNDAY JANUARY 19th 2014**

The theme chosen by Pope Francis is “Living as one family is the foundation and pathway to peace”

Resources to help develop this theme on [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

Many parishes now have a collection on this Sunday for the work of Pax Christi—Does yours?

**FINAL CELEBRATION FOR SHREWSBURY JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION**

*Anne O'Connor writes:*

25 former members of the Shrewsbury Diocese Justice and Peace Commission, spanning the past three decades, met together on 5 October 2013 at All Saint's, Sale to celebrate past achievements and renew old friendships. We were delighted that our first lay Chair Charlie Burchell was able to join us, as well as newly retired Chair Tony Walsh. Joan Sharples, until recently J&P Co-ordinator for the diocese, was also present plus former Worker Ann Gill. The Commission's first paid worker, Mike Simpson, was not able to attend but sent warm greetings via Joan.

In an intimate and very moving Mass celebrated around the altar we shared memories and expressed our hopes for the future. The bond between us remains strong as does our continued commitment to work for justice and peace in our broken world. As one participant said: "the love between Justice and Peace people is deep-rooted and through that love we have revealed our love for others and for our world." Another member shared that he had become involved in Justice and Peace hoping to change the world, but he came to realise that the greatest change had been to himself.

In the quiet time after communion we listened to an extract from a homily by Oscar Romero who has a special place in our hearts and has been a source of inspiration to us all. We finished with a delicious buffet, prepared by parishioners, which was enjoyed by all with enough left for one of our group to take to a local shelter.

That day's celebration marked the end of an era but the work will carry on, by our own individual actions, in our parish communities and by the new Commission which will commence shortly. We wish them well and pray for the success of their endeavours.

**EDITORIAL NOTE:**

The last work of this 'old' Commission meeting in June was to prepare for the annual ADVENT REFLECTION— a popular event for all Shrewsbury Diocesan J & P supporters.

This is on Sunday December 8th 4.30 –6.30 pm at Wistaston Hall Crewe.....full details in Diary on page 12

As the 'new' Commission still has not met no programme has been prepared for 2014 . It seems that there are plans for an inaugural Mass for the new Commission, to be celebrated by Bishop Mark, at the end of January 2014.

In this context Paul Donovan's article on pages 8 & 9 particularly the last two paragraphs makes interesting reading.

**CONGRATULATIONS :** We send warmest Greetings to the Leeds Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission on their 40th Anniversary Celebration

**FOR ADVENT 2013**

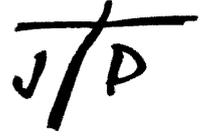
Anne O' Connor has again prepared ADVENT sheets that can be copied and used in parishes. The themes for the four Sundays are : Prepare the coming of the Lord's Kingdom ( focus on Peace), A Church for the Poor, Care of Creation and Preparing for the Birth.

They are available from Anne at [anneoc980@hotmail.com](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com) or our website [www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk](http://www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk)



## AN EMMAUS MEAL

A truly inspiring event took place at St Anthony of Padua's Parish Hall in Mossley Hill, Liverpool on the evening of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September. This was an 'Emmaus Meal' organised by a group of parishes in the South Liverpool Pastoral Area, as part of the CAFOD *Hungry for Change* Campaign. Just as the eyes of the disciples were opened by the breaking of bread at Emmaus it is hoped that those taking part in these meals will experience 'opening our eyes to the Hungry Body of Christ.'



The evening began with a set of slides highlighting elements of Catholic Social Teaching and the plight of some of those whose stories we were about to hear. They told us that one in eight people of the world's population do not have enough to eat. Perhaps the most striking of the slides was a quotation from Archbishop Helder Camara, 'When I give food to the poor I am called a saint; when I ask why they are poor I am called a communist.'

We then divided into four groups to listen to stories from El Salvador, Bangladesh and two from Kenya. Each group began with a prayer. The stories we heard told tales of a woman struggling alone to provide for children after the death of a husband; of a woman being paid grossly inadequately for crops which were then sold on by shopkeepers for triple the price; of farmers being forced into abandoning growing native seeds by global companies who wanted them to grow hybrid or GM seeds which were more expensive to produce; of farmers being able, with financial support from CAFOD, to avoid having their crops destroyed by floods by raising them above ground and improving the soil quality. The groups also heard relevant quotations from scripture.

The groups then shared their thoughts. Participants spoke of their own lack of experience of real hunger, with no end in sight; of the horror of one woman's experience of only having enough food for two of her five children. Some people spoke about the scandal of obesity in countries such as Britain and the United States. Others spoke about the amount of food wasted in countries like ours. They were also moved by the way in which people in such poor countries looked after one another and shared the little they had. Groups recognised our responsibility as Christians who share in the Eucharist to our fellow human beings who experience such poverty. Some people were concerned as to whether money donated always reached the people it was intended for. They recognised that if producers are to be treated justly and given a fair price for what they produce this might mean that standards of living in more affluent countries may have to be a little less high. Cheap food should not be at the price of leaving others hungry.

Each group shared a small plate of food – just enough for a couple of spoonfuls for each person, which had been made from a recipe from the country they were talking about, and all agreed that the food was delicious. After the shared reflection the whole group shared a prayer. There was then a simple shared table which gave people the opportunity to meet old friends, make new friends and share ideas. There was a Fair Trade Stall provided from the Fair4All stall in Warrington market which sold £155 worth of goods. People were also given a menu of actions which included making a small donation to CAFOD there and then; visiting the online Grace Wall to add their own Grace; signing the *Hungry for Change* campaign card to send to David Cameron; calculating how much food they had thrown away over the last couple of weeks, and making an equivalent donation to CAFOD; committing to daily small actions and prayer; telling others, for example church groups about the *Hungry for Change* campaign. £279 was collected on the night in donations and ticket sales. Over sixty people came to the event which everyone agreed was both enjoyable and thought provoking, a truly enriching experience.



Action packs for holding an event like this can be obtained from CAFOD at Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB; email, [resources@cafod.org.uk](mailto:resources@cafod.org.uk) The organisers of the event gave a list of foods required for the shared meal in advance and participants who contributed were not charged admission tickets. We were anxious to avoid waste and doggy bags were distributed for remaining food. The event requires a little bit of organisation but is well worth it.

*South Liverpool J & P Group*

## INTEGRATING FAITH AND LIFE COURSE 2014

11 – 12 January

8 – 9 March

10 – 11 May

5 – 6 July

NB NEW VENUE: The Iranaeus Centre 32 Great George's Rd Waterloo Liverpool L22 1RD For more information or to book a place contact: Liverpool J&P Office: 0151 522 1080/81 [s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk) £60 per Module. Parishes are usually happy to offer financial support.



## A DISTURBING TRUTH

*Marian Thompson writes:*

Archbishop Oscar Romero was murdered because he spoke a truth that was intolerable to the leaders of El Salvador. His Sunday homilies, often longer than two hours, were broadcast every week on the diocesan radio station. The whole nation huddled around their radio sets to listen. The government, not liking what he preached, tried to get Pope John Paul II to remove him. But the Pope stuck by him. So to stop him preaching, he was killed.

Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP giving the annual Romero Lecture on **"A Disturbing Truth: the Church, the Poor and Oscar Romero"** at the Holy Name Church, in the centre of Manchester on Oct 31<sup>st</sup> went on to reflect on this disturbing truth. For Romero it was the truth of the Word of God. He did not regard the Bible as a set of instructions to be obeyed or as a weapon to use against others who did not agree with him (bible bashing). Romero experienced the Word of God as a way into friendship with God and, in conversation with Him, was personally transformed. As a seminarian he wrote in his notebook "Speak to me, Lord".

From his dynamic friendship with God, Romero learned the second disturbing truth, that the poorest people, God's closest friends, endure a terrible violence. In El Salvador for the poorest and those who worked alongside them giving them a voice, this meant disappearances, arrests, arbitrary killings so their bodies were dumped to be found on the road side. This violence to the poor was the focus of Romero's preaching. He continued voicing this, well aware that one day he too would be killed.

Fr Timothy went on to ask, what is the violence that people in poverty suffer in our country today? Why, in the world's 6<sup>th</sup> wealthiest country, are food banks opening everywhere? Why are people in impossible debt to payday lenders? Why do children go to school hungry each day? Why do people disappear as the homeless on our streets?

Of many causes of this suffering he named two. Firstly everything is qualified, measured and administered; people become numbers and statistics and we lose sight of them as individuals. It was according to Luke the same when Jesus was born. The Romans were taking a census so everyone who mattered could be taxed. But the true Ruler of the world was first revealed to shepherds who were too despicable and unimportant to appear on any census roll.

The second cause of pain and suffering is the demonisation of poor people by the press and media. They are classed by the press and in the media as scroungers, workshy, parasites living off benefits, welfare junkies etc.

And yet the truth is that in this country many hard working people are not paid a wage they can live on.

How then can we open the eyes of Britain to the violence done to the poor in Britain? Fr Timothy had several suggestions. We can campaign for justice, tackle our politicians — or become politicians ourselves. We can make a stand for the common good and against the growing inequality that is tearing our country apart. Sometimes we need to be imaginative and make a grand gesture. We were reminded that Pope Francis's first trip out of Rome was to the tiny island of Lampedusa symbolically celebrating Mass for all those who continue to perish trying to reach Europe.

### 'TACKLING POVERTY' THE LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

As Fr Timothy was talking I was remembering my visit to Salford Cathedral Centre three days before where, as a representative of our ecumenical J & P group, I attended the Greater Manchester Churches Together (GMCT) AGM. The theme of the evening was **'Tackling Poverty'** inspired by the Greater Manchester Poverty Commission Report January 2013 which Church Action on Poverty (CAP) and the Anglican Diocese of Manchester had helped produce.

The elected Mayor of Salford City, Ian Stuart, introduced the theme by drawing our attention to the very recently launched Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign. He reminded us that many people are employed but living in poverty because they do not receive a fair wage for a fair day's work. The National Minimum Wage which many employers offer is at present £6.31 per hour for over 21s (substantially less for younger people). The Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation is currently £7.45 per hour. According to Ian Stuart, Salford Council was the first Council in the country to sign up to the Living Wage Campaign. His aim is to encourage the whole of Greater Manchester to become a Living Wage Zone acting as an inspiration to other areas throughout the country to do the same. He invited us a church members to sign up and to encourage our churches to do the same. He pointed out that the Living Wage idea flows from Christian values and resonates in the secular world. The denominational church leaders present, together with members of the GMCT Council, made a grand gesture by signing a large card which was photographed for local publicity, showing their support of the campaign.



The Living Wage Campaign is fully supported by CAP with its headquarters in Manchester. Niall Cooper from CAP then addressed the meeting emphasising that

## A DISTURBING TRUTH

*continued from previous page:*

working hard and yet living in poverty is a denial of the dignity that God has given to each of us. Niall went on to discuss more reasons why people end up in poverty. He wrote an article in similar vein for this Summer's MouthPeace. After Niall's address we chose smaller groups to attend. These included so called 'sticking plaster groups' relating to Credit Unions and Food Banks in the area; a study of the report 'The Lies we tell ourselves' about people in poverty and a presentation from Christian Aid to remind us that poverty is world wide. Then followed the business meeting and a time of Taizé prayer. The evening confirmed that values we share as Christians and things we can do together, in this case in tackling the problems of poverty, to give a most powerful witness to those around us of God's love for us all.

The two very different evenings shared a similar theme and message. How can we, who believe in a God of love who cares for the dignity of every individual, respond to the challenge that people whose lives are blighted by poverty offers to us all ?

*Useful follow-up websites:*

The full text of this Romero lecture together with previous lectures and homilies can be found on:

[www.romerotrust.org.uk](http://www.romerotrust.org.uk)

The Greater Manchester Poverty Commission Report:

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

The Greater Manchester Living wage campaign launched in October 2013 has template letters to send to any employer, your council leader and church leaders. It also has the Campaign's briefing for churches. It is a helpful resource wherever you live:

[www.gmlivingwage.org/resources](http://www.gmlivingwage.org/resources)

Find out more about Church Action on Poverty:

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

The Churches' joint report 'The Lies we tell ourselves - ending comfortable myths about poverty':

[www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Truth-And-Lies-Report-smaller.pdf](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Truth-And-Lies-Report-smaller.pdf)

Credit unions vary around the country in the scope of their work: [www.abcul.org](http://www.abcul.org) To find your local

Union: [www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk](http://www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk)

## FOOD MATTERS

**A conference on food insecurity held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013, run jointly by Chester World Development Forum and Department of Geography & Development Studies, University of Chester.**

Vice Chancellor Prof Timothy Wheeler welcomed an audience of 90, students and "oldies" in equal measure, and introduced the day's key topics. He said this University venue was very appropriate as students are expected to ask difficult and important questions.

Gill Miller, International Development Studies, introduced our keynote speaker, Patrick Mulvany, Senior Policy Adviser for *Practical Action* and author of works on sustainable agriculture, for food and livelihood security. He showed the value and problems of small farms, and some causes of hunger - the developing world produces 70% of world food and consumes 30%. Sustainable farming is more robust than industrial farming and does not need interventions by big Corporations, and expensive technical fixes. One example of robustness was the system of protected rice terraces in Bated Bano, Philippines, surviving a tropical storm 2 years ago; another the success of ecological farms in Cuba surviving Hurricane Ike 2008, while larger scale commercial crop areas were devastated. At question time useful discussion was generated by delegates - not just from Cheshire but Wales, Lancashire, Leeds. From this session it emerged that Patrick was critical of the "IF" campaign for placing little emphasis on the need for an ecologically sound approach to food production.

After a short break delegates attended NGO workshops of their choice: Oxfam on the policies of Food Corporations; CAFOD on small farms (often run by women- a power issue here); Christian Aid on tax dodging; Action Aid on land grabs. These were repeated in the afternoon and reported back at the final panel session which led to more discussions from the floor. The foyer of the Best Building had been turned into a publications bazaar from many publishers, together with their staff. Good use was made of this also.

CWDF chair Terry Green wound up the day, thanking all present, particularly the University for providing venue, staff, and student helpers, making a great day possible. Last message: this is not the end. 2014 will be the UN International Year of Family Farming. Keep your eye on [www.chesterwdf.org.uk](http://www.chesterwdf.org.uk) for information of follow-up events.

*Peter Byrne*



## WELCOMING THE NATIONAL J& P NETWORK TO CHESTER

*Anne O'Connor writes:*

At the end of a week in which the largest Arms Fair in the world took place in London, about 70 Justice and Peace activists, many from the host dioceses of Shrewsbury and Wrexham, attended the NJPN quarterly meeting in Chester on Saturday 14 September. Keynote speaker Vijay Mehta shared his vision for world peace, outlined in his book *The Economics of Killing: How the West fuels wars and poverty in the developing world*, and introduced the peace programme 4D which stands for Disarmament, Demilitarisation, Development and Democracy.\*

He started by showing a short film made by Uniting for Peace ([www.unitingforpeace.com](http://www.unitingforpeace.com)) which charted war since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and featured peacemakers such as Gandhi and Rev Martin Luther King Jr. It explored ways of advancing non-violent initiatives. One such idea is Peace One Day, celebrated every year on 21st September.



Founded by film-maker Jeremy Gilley just twelve years ago it has achieved a UN backed resolution for an international Day of Peace, with the ultimate aim of making every day a day of peace and non-violence. Jeremy's commitment and enthusiasm, evident in the film clip, is outstanding. I have shared his story with school and Confirmation groups to encourage and inspire young people. The theme for this year's Peace One Day is *Who will YOU make peace with?* It challenges and invites us to take personal responsibility to become peacemakers in whatever way we can. Do try to mark the day in your parishes or at home and don't worry that the day has passed: action ideas on the Peace One Day website can be used throughout the year - go to [www.peaceday.org](http://www.peaceday.org)

The overwhelming theme of the Chester meeting, in spite of all the problems in our world today, was one of hope. Although the future of Justice and Peace in both host dioceses remains uncertain all those present enjoyed being with like-minded people. We came away heartened and revitalised.

*From the notes given out at the talk:*

### **\*DISARMAMENT, DEMILITARISATION, DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY**

The 4D's campaign aims to create global frameworks for taking actions on the interconnecting global issues of disarming and demilitarising the world with the savings thus accrued being deployed for development and democracy. World Peace and building a compassionate society is not a utopian dream. It can be realised by overcoming forces of destruction, violence, & war mongering. The work of reversing society's ills and standing up to injustice is not easy, and we need to be willing to invest the time and resources necessary to prepare ourselves just as much as a military prepares its front-line soldiers. Social change and the process of social transformation is not something that can be done overnight. One needs to frame issues which can resonate with the masses, building democratic decision making structures within the movement as well as in the larger world one that is disciplined in the face of repression. Those characteristics come with nonviolent training which can bring change.



The mission of the campaign is to take the Quantum Leap Faster, Higher, and Further to spread the message of 4D which is resolution of conflicts in a peaceful way. The campaign has many supporters the world over.

Vijay concluded his talk saying "The world will never be the indwelling of peace till peace has found a home in the heart of each and every person. Forgive your brother or sister today no matter how awful he or she was to you yesterday. Then and only then can peace come to you, to me: then and only then can peace grow from one person to a second, to 10, to hundreds, to thousands, to the billions that inhabit this earth. Let us remember the simple but profound message of a now familiar song: 'let peace begin with me: let this be the moment now. With every step I take this be my solemn vow: to take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally. Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me'."

The full script of the talk can be read on

<http://unitingforpeace.com/resources/speeches/2013/14th-September-Pacem-in-Terris.pdf>

## 2014 REMEMBERS 1914

*Bryan Halson writes:*

Already the word “celebration” is being used to describe plans for next year’s centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914. Surely the slightest consideration of the nature of that war makes the word “celebration” wholly inappropriate. Instead would it not be better to use words like “remembrance” or “commemoration”?

We need to give attention not simply to the *events* which led up to the war, and the nature of the war itself, but also to the emotional context. The opening years of the twentieth century in Britain saw an emphasis on violence. There was the shadow of the Boer War, which only ended in 1902 and caused much division in society; there was violent reaction within the struggle for Irish Home Rule; there was violence in an increasing number of industrial disputes (even the police went on strike); a major section in the struggle for women’s votes turned to violent actions to get their point across (and in turn were treated with violence by the authorities).

In such an atmosphere, once a cause of war occurred, it was easy for the man or woman in the street to assume a violent stance as a emotional reaction. Once war had become ‘inevitable’ the language used in common talk reflected this. The German invasion was “the *Rape* of Belgium”, the Germans themselves were “Huns” and so on.

Apart from this consideration there was a strong *imperial* element in operation. Despite evidence to the contrary the Empire flourished, and was widely regarded as fulfilling a call to ‘civilise’ primitive peoples and to defend justice. Thus Britain must always be foremost in fighting evil (note the image!) wherever it arose. When Germany attacked was it not an evil on our doorstep?

Now we must pay close attention to the *emotional* context of our ‘remembrance’ in 2014. Not now the shadow of the Boer War but the presence of Iraq and Afghanistan. Our picture of war and our rituals of remembrance are inevitably coloured with pictures (note the influence of television here) of the flag-draped coffins returning from the Middle East. It is no accident that the rituals of Remembrance Sunday after years of declining participation have seen a marked increase since the beginning of the Iraq War. By the same token recent polls have shown widespread approval of the Parliamentary decision against involvement in the Syrian conflict.

All this requires a sensitivity to avoid jingoism which did so much harm in 1914, and yet at the same time to acknowledge the pain of lost and ruined lives both then and now and the continuing desire to commemorate their names and those victims who have no name, including civilians.

Along with the ‘R’ of Remembrance must go the ‘R’ of Repentance. We need to repent the mistreatment of conscientious objectors, of the executions of those troops traumatised and accused of “desertion”, of the ill treatment of Britons who had German connections. The repentance has to include large sections of the Church in 1914, and some of her leaders. (It has been said of a few Church of England bishops that they acted as enthusiastic recruitment sergeants.) Repentance also leads us to acknowledge that not only did British soldiers, sailors and airmen die, but many others as well. Britain lost three quarters of a million men; France, Germany, Russia lost over one million each, and proportionally larger losses were suffered by India, Canada and other nations. Have we forgotten them?

Gatherings at cenotaphs and town and village centres on Remembrance Sunday 2014 will be an occasion of mixed emotion. It is to be hoped that alongside the commemoration of those who died in the fighting we will remember those who struggled for the culture of peace, for example founders of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the International League for peace and Freedom (founded by Catherine Marshall), the Society of Friends (Quakers). “We will remember them”.

Resources:

The Pax Christi publication “Opposing World War One: Courage and Conscience” can be downloaded at: <http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/documents/Opposing%20World%20War%20One.pdf> or is available from as a paper copy from Pax Christi, St Joseph’s Way, Watford Way, Hendon, London NW4 4TY.

Churches Together in England: [www.churches-together.net](http://www.churches-together.net) (under the heading ‘information re marking WW1’)

Fellowship for Reconciliation: [www.for.org.uk](http://www.for.org.uk)

The International League for Peace and Freedom: [www.wilpfinternational.org](http://www.wilpfinternational.org)



## POVERTY, POLITICS AND THE CHURCH \*\*

*Paul Donovan writes:*

Where does the Church stand on the austerity agenda?

The Church is doing some excellent work on the ground, supporting the foodbanks network – 350,000 people now go to foodbanks—helping destitute asylum seekers, the homeless and the work of the SVP in helping the poor. Much of this work is being done in the name of charity, which is fine – it is an important part of the faith commitment. However, the question that always arises is what about the justice? As Pope John XXIII said charity cannot replace justice. Charity is always easier to do than justice.

Up and down the country, churches collect goods for foodbanks but how often do those putting their cans in the bin ask why, in the 5th biggest economy in the world, are 350,000 people a year going to foodbanks? Why in a country that has 88 billionaires are we in this situation?

It was the questioning of where is the justice in all of this that came to mind at a Catholic Social Action Network conference in June titled “the Catholic response to the poverty crisis.” Again, worthy contributions but much of the conference was about what the Church was doing on the ground to deal with poverty, yes important, but should the Church not be questioning the whole austerity agenda and whether or not we should be colluding in it at all?

Let’s accept that due to the banking crisis of 2007/8 something had to be done. Funds had to be raised from somewhere to service the debt. The big question was where? The problem for many is that it appears that the government’s answer is that the poor and most vulnerable in our society - who were not responsible for the crisis - are the ones being made to pay.

So the Coalition Government used the crisis as an excuse to further extend the neo-liberal project that has been going on for the past 30 plus years, an excuse to privatise the public services and cut workers’ rights. There have been the cuts to welfare for the poorest but no cuts to welfare for the richest – e.g. tax credits continue to provide a subsidy to big companies who refuse to pay living wages. Then there are the greedy landlords who push up rents and trouser most of the housing benefit needed to meet the bills

If we accept that there was a debt that needed to be paid there are other places and people who could have taken a bigger share –

\* There are 88 billionaires in UK, up from 53 in 2009.

The top 1,000 richest people in UK now have £450bn of wealth. The top 1,000 have increased their wealth by £150bn plus in the past three years. How much tax do they pay?

\* HM Revenue and Customs estimates that in 2010/11 it was deprived of £9.6bn in VAT, with £3.3bn in excise duties, and £14.4bn in income tax revenues, national insurance contributions and capital gains tax. The HM Revenue and Customs say that the tax gap for the whole economy amounted to £32bn in 2010/11 or a third of the deficit of £120bn for 2012/13.

\* What of the companies like Starbucks who paid £8.6m in corporation tax over 14 years of trading in Britain, and none for the past three years, despite sales of £1.2bn in the UK?

- Amazon reported turnover of £207m in 2011 for its UK operation, on which it paid tax of £1.8m.

- Google recorded revenues of £396m in 2011 in the UK and paid corporation tax of only £6m. However it is estimated that Google actually had £2.75bn of revenue from its operations in the UK with an estimated pre-tax profit of £836m.

Other areas that could prove fruitful for those looking to save money are overseas military adventures like that undertaken in Afghanistan. Some £37 billion has been spent on war in Afghanistan. It is proposed to spend billions more in renewing the Trident nuclear weapons system.

So there are other areas where funds can be obtained to pay the deficit. The decision to cut as this government has done was quite deliberate – it amounted to making a preferential option for the rich. I would question the way that our Church has accepted the government’s approach, it should have questioned it on faith and moral grounds. We need to return to Catholic Social Teaching. Take a look at concepts like the Common Good. I’d argue that the Church hierarchy are looking at the common good more from the viewpoint of the boardroom and the owners of capital than the mass of humanity. From our position as Christians the Common Good should look at what economic decisions mean for the dignity of the human person. This would include the welfare of a person’s family, the effects on the environment and the community as a whole, not just the bottom line and how much profit has been accrued in a financial year.

What is our Church’s position on privatisation? The exploitative nature of the employment relationship where workers are not represented by a trade union should be a cause of constant concern to our Church—as

## POVERTY, POLITICS AND THE CHURCH

*Continued from previous page*

should the polarisation of wealth towards the few. Data from the Office for National Statistics shows that between 1977 and 2008 the wage share fell from 59 per cent of national income to 53 per cent, while the share of profits rose from 25 per cent to 29 per cent. Trade unions rarely get mentioned in the Church discourse.

There is also the growing incidence of in-work poverty, coming about as a result of forcing people into low paid work. A recent study by the Joseph Rowntree Trust found that 6.1m people living in poverty came from households where at least one person was working. So we need to go back to CST to see what it says in terms of poverty and the austerity agenda.

What is needed is a multi-faceted approach. The need must be met but charity and justice need to come together. Support the foodbank yes, but don't forget to ask the question why are they needed in the 5th largest economy in the world? We need a proper critique of justice in the workplace, issues like privatisation, taxation and poverty. Working for the common good is not the same as working for the maximum profit of a company or enterprise.

The need to work for justice brings us onto the state of the Justice & Peace network. At present, it is under attack. The loss of J&P workers, funding shortage, lack of people coming through into networks. An ageing movement. There is a need for NJPN to look at itself. There is a need for a change of structures. Formation needs prioritising. Change has to be from the bottom up, strengthen the networks and make the hierarchy change.

At grass roots level, more needs to be done to bring people into J&P. There needs to be linkage with the unions and progressive parties, like Labour and the Greens. Other campaigning organisations like Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Amnesty International, CAFOD and Oxfam can provide good partnerships in broadening the appeal. The linkage with community organising groups like Citizens UK and London Citizens needs developing. This new agenda would see the Church rediscover its prophetic voice on poverty in this country. A church speaking for the common good on issues affecting everybody's daily lives – a Church dare I say it relevant to the papacy of Pope Francis.

*\*\* Edited version of the presentation given at the annual general meeting of the Hexham and Newcastle J&P Co-ordinating Committee on Saturday 26th October.*

### **Homelessness and Poverty Action Week 25 January – 2 February**

**'Standing with people in crisis, give, act and prayer'**

Throughout the scriptures, we see that God is always on the side of people who are poor, oppressed, homeless or marginalised. In this time of economic crisis, people experiencing poverty and homelessness are being hit harder than anybody else by the recession and spending cuts. Churches are called to show God's bias by standing alongside these people. Church Action on Poverty, Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action respond to that call through practical action and campaigns. We are invited to give, act and pray with them during Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2014: [www.actionweek.org](http://www.actionweek.org)

### **FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2014 February 24—March 9**

Fairtrade bananas appeared in our shops 13 years ago. Due to intense campaigning by the Fairtrade Foundation, over 1.2bn Fairtrade bananas are now sold in the UK each year. But this is still only 1 in 3 of all the bananas sold in British shops, so there is still a long way to go. Despite our achievements, there remains a serious problem at the heart of the banana business. That's why Fairtrade Fortnight 2014 marks the launch of a special campaign that aims to transform the banana industry to ensure those at the sharp end of the supply chain, the millions of struggling banana farmers and workers, get a fair deal. It's a campaign to 'Abolish the Unfair Banana' and is the next part of our three year initiative to Make Food Fair. See [www.fairtrade.org.uk/get\\_involved/campaigns/fairtrade\\_fortnight\\_2014.aspx](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved/campaigns/fairtrade_fortnight_2014.aspx)



#### **An idea for action from Stockport Fairtrade Group:**

They are planning to do a "Scavenger Hunt" around Stockport town centre to locate businesses selling a number of fairtrade items... not just the unavoidable token KitKat, or similar products. Whilst KitKats, etc. are good, they do not qualify a business for the label of being 'Fair Trade Committed'. So, they are hoping to gain the interest of a group of young people, who would be willing to scour the centre of Stockport, on a day yet to be decided, identifying businesses who show a significant commitment to fairtrade. Apart from the fun of taking part, there will be a small prize for the most names collected and a helpful list for the Group for future use.



## 'BRIGHT NOW' - TOWARD FOSSIL FREE CHURCHES

The **Bright Now** campaign challenges the Churches and the Christian community in the UK if they are to retain their integrity in face of the growing threat of catastrophic climate change to:

- disinvest from companies involved in the extraction of fossil fuels
- take a leading and influential role in the national debate on the ethics of investment in fossil fuels
- support the development of clean alternatives to fossil fuels through their investment policies.

Run by Operation Noah, an ecumenical Christian charity, the campaign argues that fossil fuel companies cannot continue with 'business as usual'. The institutional Churches say they believe in ethical investment. They also say that they care about climate change. But they are still investing in fossil fuels. There is a huge gap between the stated policy of all the major denominations ..... and what they are actually doing in practice. Bright Now is calling on them to close that gap.

By moving their investments, Churches would demonstrate the leadership that is largely missing from our political leaders. They would offer hope by showing that radical action can be taken. And they would send a signal that the continued extraction of fossil fuels is no longer morally acceptable.

Find out more on [www.brightnow.org](http://www.brightnow.org)

Taking a lead : In October **Quaker Peace & Social Witness** announced it is working with and on behalf of Quakers to speak out and create pressure in the UK for an energy economy that does not rely on fossil fuels" If you want to find out more about this topic there is a very useful briefing on <http://quaker.org.uk/ending-fossil-fuel-dependency>

### 'THE UK GOLD'

This film was described by the Daily Mirror as "*a shining piece of film-making on the darkness at the heart of the City ... this is a film no one should avoid*". It has been in the North West as part of its Autumn 2013 Tour under the auspices of Christian Aid, Action Aid and Oxfam. If you have not seen it yet here may be a chance in Chester on February 27th (see Diary page 12) or check [www.theukgold.co.uk](http://www.theukgold.co.uk)

## BUCKING THE TREND - A BRIGHTER LIGHT ON THE HIGH STREET

At a time when many bookshops, particularly Christian ones, are closing, one independent shop is bucking the trend: '**Illuminate Christian Books**' in the centre of Shrewsbury, continues to thrive in its remarkable old building on Wyle Cop, selling Christian books, music, gifts and more recently opening a large and popular second hand book section.

However, only in 2010, after over 50 years trading, the shop faced closure. Determined to maintain their bookshop, local Christians raised over £50,000 to buy the business and now own and run it as shareholders.

Andrew Pattison, Chair of the Board of Trustees, told us, 'Our success in recent years has been built on the support of local Christians who 'shop locally'. We also work with an increasing number of churches, who we support through bookstalls and the supply of cards, books and other church supplies. The staff, including many volunteers, also benefit from Shrewsbury's tourist trade.'

Christine Coleman, the shop manager, explained, 'Particularly in the summer months, we get many visitors who are thrilled to find a Christian bookshop, often telling us how their local shop has been forced to close.'

Illuminate is still looking to work with more local churches and is holding an open evening for church leaders on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014 to encourage more to work with them. Andrew Pattison explained 'It really is a case of use us or, eventually, lose us, as we depend primarily on trade to pay the bills. As well as very often being able to match the price of certain very well known internet retailers, we provide a local service to local churches, something we would love to do for far more congregations. I, for one, want to see a local Christian presence continuing in the High Street for a long time to come and hope may local Christians will join us to make that possible.'

For more information, to book or find out more about the Open Evening call Illuminate on 01743 233657.

[www.illuminatebooks.org.uk/](http://www.illuminatebooks.org.uk/)

## THE KILLING OF ADELINA GAVIRIA

On 30th September 2013, Adelina Gómez Gaviria was gunned down by paramilitaries in the small township of Almaguer, Department of Cauca, Colombia. Her eldest son, aged 13, was wounded in the attack.

The 36-year-old mother of three was returning home after a women's meeting. She was killed for opposing an Anglo Gold Ashanti mining project that threatens to destroy the local area and the livelihood of the people living there. Adelina was one of the leaders of a campesino organisation dedicated to defending local land rights. In Almaguer she also set up a Mining and Environmental Forum in which some 1,500 campesinos and indigenous people took part. Her anti-mining activities resulted in telephone warnings: "Stop messing about with that mining stuff, it's dangerous and you'll get yourself killed." She was also frequently approached in the street and warned to stay away from people who opposed mining.

Adelina wasn't given to delivering speeches on platforms. She spoke to people one to one and on a personal basis, regardless of whether they were for or against mining. Her mission was to hold the community together. She did this at ground level and throughout the region, speaking with the constant determination that characterises the way women carry out their tasks and responsibilities. It is a quiet form of leadership that may seem modest, perhaps even insignificant, but which is fundamentally exercised by women. All too often it is devalued by many institutions and even popular organisations that prefer the male model, which favours political action and speeches. Both approaches are useful in their own way, but we must value and make visible the thousands of women who are indispensable within their own communities because they organise, give meaning to and uphold both resistance and action.

Those behind Adelina's murder know that women like her are key factors in spoiling the plans of companies seeking to enter territories and displace their communities in order to set up their mining operations in Colombia, a country being carpeted with megamining projects. There are 5 women on the list of 14 social defence leaders killed in Cauca Department's rural areas. Adelina Gómez Gaviria is yet another woman added to that tragic list.

The shooting of Adelina and the other men and women being killed daily in Colombia cries out for these crimes to be investigated and those transnational companies that instigate the killings to be brought to justice.

*Diana Mills*

*English translation of extract from an online article that appeared on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013 [www.kaosenlared.net/amenca-latina/item/70899-columbia-mujer-fue-asesinada-por-oponerse-a-la-miner%C3%Ada.html](http://www.kaosenlared.net/amenca-latina/item/70899-columbia-mujer-fue-asesinada-por-oponerse-a-la-miner%C3%Ada.html)*

*Anglo Gold Ashanti is a transnational mining company listed on the London Stock Exchange. It would be interesting to know if any dioceses have investments in extractives and if those include AGA.*

## CONFLICT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

A new DVD with an accompanying resource booklet was launched this October highlighting the danger of climate change leading to more conflict both regionally and globally. They covers such issues as 'Does climate change mean more conflict?', 'Is there a military solution to climate change?' and 'What can be done to prevent further conflict?' It is pointed out that civil unrest in Syria started with food price hikes linked to water scarcity and an intensifying and increasingly regular drought cycle. The conflict in Sudan's western region of Darfur, which broke out in 2003, was stoked by drought and the advancing desert. The DVD calls for sustainable development, and an understanding of security which includes good stewardship of the natural world for the common good.

In the 18 minute DVD several prominent political leaders, scientists and academics voice their concerns on the need to tackle climate change and reduce the risk of war as we all experience more extreme weather events and rising sea levels.

For use in schools and with adults such as in J & P groups, the DVD is produced by Bob Walters and executive producers Valerie Flessati and Ellen Teague. The booklet is written by Ellen Teague with an introduction by MAW (Movement for the Abolition of War) Vice President Bruce Kent. Christian groups have given financial support to the DVD production, including Columban JPIC, Jesuit Fund for Social Justice, Religious of the Assumption and the Christian Peace Education Trust.

The pack is published by Kevin Mayhew and costs £8.99 (DVD and Booklet) directly from:

[www.kevinmayhew.com/conflict-and-climate-change-book-and-dvd.html](http://www.kevinmayhew.com/conflict-and-climate-change-book-and-dvd.html) or 0845 388 1634



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### DECEMBER

#### LOYOLA-metro SILENCE IN THE CITY

Each Thursday during Advent – 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> at 5pm  
At Pauline Book Shop (upstairs) for a time of guided prayer  
lasting for 30/45 minutes contact Debbie Reynolds on  
0151 298 1911 for more details or email:

[d.reynolds@sfxchurchliverpool.com](mailto:d.reynolds@sfxchurchliverpool.com)

#### 7 Volunteer Mission Movement Information Day

(volunteering in Africa) 12-3 Liverpool Hope  
University . To reserve a place 0151 292 3438, or  
[vmm@hope.ac.uk](mailto:vmm@hope.ac.uk)

#### 8 ADVENT REFLECTION 'Living out God's call to Holiness'

led by Fr Peter Philips, at Wistaston Hall 89 Broughton  
Lane Wistaston Crewe CW2 8JS 4.30—6.30 pm  
The reflection will be followed by a shared buffet.  
Please bring a plate of food to share. Drinks provided.  
Everyone welcome. More details from Maura Garside  
0161 282 8859 or [mauragarside@hotmail.com](mailto:mauragarside@hotmail.com)

**10 'THY KINGDOM COME'** J & P Advent Carol Service, with  
music and story. 7pm St John's, Kirkdale, Liverpool. L4 1QL

**10 United Nations Human Rights Day**  
[www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday](http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday)

**11 Girls' Hope University Choir Concert in aid of the  
Whitechapel Centre 7pm at SFX Church Liverpool**  
Pay on the door : £5

#### 12 Time to Shine at the Basement

10-3 Parr Street, Liverpool 1 – 0151 707 1515  
Bringing together Homeless Agencies and Recovering  
Communities Sing along Christmas Carols at 2pm to  
2.30pm All are welcome

**18 International Migrants Day**  
[www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday/](http://www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday/)

### JANUARY 2014

**14 CWDF Forum meeting.** Speaker Tony Ellis on the back-  
ground and work of the charity International China Con-

cern, supporting orphanages for abandoned children in  
mainland China. 6.45 for 7.00pm at The Unity Centre, 17  
Cuppin Street Chester CH1 2BN. 01244 350323.

**17 CAFOD Quiz Night** Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere  
Port Town Centre. 7.30 pm . For further details contact  
Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419.

**18—25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** - Theme *Is  
Christ divided?* [www.ctbi.org.uk/CGEA/657](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CGEA/657)

**19 Peace Sunday** [www.paxchristi.org.uk/](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/) see page 2

**19 LACE Memorial Lecture for Peace Sunday**  
with Pat Gaffney from Pax Christi 1.30 – 4.00 LACE,  
Croxteth Drive Sefton Park Liverpool L17 1AA see page 2

**25 Jan—2 February Poverty and Homelessness Action  
Week**—Standing with people in crisis give, act, pray  
[www.actionweek.org.uk](http://www.actionweek.org.uk)

### FEBRUARY

**9 "Let Your Light Shine" Preparing for Lent**—Children's  
Liturgy Leaders—led by Jo Boyce CJM Music 2-5 pm at  
LACE, Croxteth Drive Sefton Park Liverpool L17 1AA £ 10  
to book send name and cheque to Mrs Julie Cassidy  
(cheque payable to RCAOL)

**17 CAFOD Quiz Night** see Jan 17

**27 "The UK Gold" Film.** Chester's Fairtrade Steering Group  
are bringing it to: Grosvenor Museum, 27 Grosvenor St  
Chester CH1 2DD, 7.30pm. (NB: arrangements provisional  
at this stage) [www.theukgold.co.uk](http://www.theukgold.co.uk)

**February 24—March 9 Fairtrade Fortnight**  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

### MARCH

**7 World Day of Prayer** (formerly Women's World Day of  
Prayer ) 'Streams in the Desert' prepared this year by the  
women of Egypt [www.worlddayofprayer.net](http://www.worlddayofprayer.net)

**21 CAFOD Quiz Night** see Jan 17

#### Liverpool

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events and dates for the diary*

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