



Shrewsbury and Liverpool Justice and Peace Commissions

Autumn 2007

Issue 59

'If we look at our broken world, it is easy to be overcome and cave in to feelings of desolation and helplessness. Such feelings remind us of our own need of God, our need to stretch out to God in our work for peace.'

Times of prayer and reflection are a great source of nourishment and energy.

Our liturgies and prayers for peace have their seasons and rhythms. They help us to name sources of violence and injustice around us; they remind us of our need of repentance and our complicity in violence.

Where we choose to pray is important too; outside the arms exhibition, the detention centre, the Ministry of Defence we are taking our liturgy and prayer out of the church onto the streets, a public 'yes' to life and peace.'



*Pat Gaffney of Pax Christi
at Swanwick 2007*

In this issue

- ❖ An International Mass2
- ❖ Diocesan events2
- ❖ Swanwick conference reports ...3
- ❖ Mayor of Damulog4
- ❖ Opening Hearts Opening Doors ..5
- ❖ CAFOD campaigns6
- ❖ A Martyr for Peace6
- ❖ Prisoners Sunday7
- ❖ Live Simply8
- ❖ 'The World Can't Wait'
G8 Mobilisation9
- ❖ The cost of oil?10
- ❖ CAFOD Diocesan Officer.....11
- ❖ Diary, names and addresses12

An International Mass

Sunday 17th June 2007 saw the first International Mass at 11.15am in St Vincent's Altrincham. In recognition of the many newcomers from other countries to our parish especially over the past year, the Justice and Peace Group organised this special Mass which was celebrated by Fr Ned Wall. Much thought and careful planning went into its preparation, the main emphasis of which was to extend the message that we are one church, one family wherever we find ourselves in the world.

Words of welcome, printed in several languages, greeted the congregation as they took their seats. A map of the world was placed in front of the altar and those present from other countries were invited to mark their homelands. Each continent in the world was represented!

Several languages that included Arabic, Czech, English, French, German, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Slovakian and Spanish were spoken and sung during the Mass. Indeed the choir very kindly obliged by preparing hymns in French, German and Spanish which were sung by all. Traditional breads from several countries were presented as gifts at the Offertory with a home baked Slovakian loaf taking pride of place along with a basket of dates from Iraq.

The theme of the Mass was reflected in Fr Ned's homily, namely that we are one church, one family irrespective of our origins, united through our coming together to worship. He also spoke about the importance of extending the hand of friendship and hospitality within our community.

With this in mind, all present were invited to lunch at Westleigh, our parish centre, courtesy of the Justice and Peace Group. This also had an international flavour with speciality dishes from native countries being served, including a traditional Brazilian bean and rice meal, several British and French regional cheeses, sauerkraut, quiche, pizzas, cold meats and salads along with many varieties of bread. Like the International Mass, this was very well attended. People got to know each other. For some, old friendships were renewed and new friends were introduced to old ones. Westleigh was buzzing as people shared a meal and connected with each other in the true spirit of the International Mass.

Marie Irwin

'Where has the power gone?'

Who has political power?
Where is the power of the Spirit?

September 22

Liverpool J&P Commission Annual Assembly
at LACE, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool

9.30am —3.30 pm.

Speakers include: Niall Cooper (CAP),
Fr George Robson SDB, Mark Woods (*Livesimply*)
and a local MP (tbc).

Drinks and a simple lunch provided.
A range of workshops in the afternoon.

Contact Steve Atherton or Maria Hardacre
0151 522 1080/1 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk
£5 waged. £3 unwaged

Shrewsbury J&P Commission Focus Day

Celebrating Creation

An opportunity to look together at current issues of ecological concern and some of the theological questions they raise and discern ways to respond.

Speakers: Mary Collwell,
Tom Cullinan and Mike Monaghan.

November 3

10.15 am —3.30 pm
St Thomas More High School Crewe
Contact Joan Sharples tel: 01270 620584

ADVANCE NOTICE:

Advent Reflection

December 9 (afternoon)

Fr Oliver Barry OMI at Wistaston Hall Crewe

Contact Joan Sharples tel: 01270 620584

PRAYER :

private prayer, the prayer of the church and the Eucharist.

Residential Faith and Justice retreat at Loyola Hall, with Stephen Hoyland and Fr Tom Cullinan. (Participants will be given a copy of Fr Tom's recent pamphlet on the Eucharist.)

November 9-11

£84 fully residential. £6.50 for Saturday only, bringing food to share. To book contact Loyola Hall, Warrington Rd, Rainhill, Prescot. L25 6NZ 0151 426 4137 mail@loyolahall.co.uk

Called to be Peacemakers—who me?

Reports on the 29th National J&P Conference Swanwick July 20-22 2007

'Peace crosses the world' was the message on the ceramic tile I brought home from this year's National J & P Conference. Participants had been invited to draw or write a peace message on tiles which made a path of peace from the main conference hall - each proclaiming a different way in which peace is to be made.

The worldwide need for peace was underlined by the inputs of the plenary speakers: US Jesuit peace-activist, John Dear, SJ, and Zoughbi Zoughbi, Director of Wi'am, the Palestinian Centre for Conflict Resolution.

John shared some of his own experience of involvement in non-violent action in the U.S. and of the inspiration of exponents of nonviolence: Jesus, Ghandi, and Luther King. He spoke of the need for a 'vision of the heart that sees all life as sacred' and quoting Daniel Berrigan: 'Peace begins with grieving'.

Zoughbi, a Palestinian Christian, told of how, at the age of fifteen, on the way to Jerusalem for the Good Friday Via Dolorosa, he was stopped by an Israeli flying checkpoint. He was able to turn his anger into action. Describing Bethlehem's shift from 'grotto to ghetto', he spoke movingly of the 80% of children exposed to trauma and the resultant bedwetting, nightmares and flashbacks. "I am walking the stations of the cross everyday", he reflected.

I was fascinated by the way each speakers' personal story was intertwined with the larger political context. At the start of the conference, participants had been asked to recall, write down and share with the person sitting next to them 'the event/story/experience which drew our attention to issues of peace and war'. These were then attached to long pieces of string spanning the decades from the nineteen-twenties to the present day, bringing into the life of the conference many experiences of violence and nonviolence.



The Conference was organised on behalf of the National J&P Network by two peace organisations: Pax Christi operating from its roots in the Catholic church and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, set up by Christians from the Reformed Churches. Participants came from many Christian backgrounds. We worshipped together, sharing beautiful liturgies led with great sensitivity by Philip Jakob. On Saturday evening, after a shared Liturgy of the Word, all walked, in silence, to their separate forms of worship: Quakers to their meeting, Catholics and members of the Reformed Traditions to their separate Eucharists. I'm sure I was not alone in finding this an extremely sad and painful experience - a powerful sharing of Christ's broken body. If 'peace', as Daniel Berrigan asserts really does 'begin with grieving', then, in the pain of our separation, perhaps seeds of future Church unity were sown.

Peace crosses the world, and it is woven from our individual actions, our stories of nonviolence, our determination to see others (and our selves) as sons and daughters of God, our commitment to study and practice ways of nonviolence, and our faithful persistence. As Bruce Kent said in the final liturgy, there are 'many roads on the path to peace and justice, but they all lead to the kingdom of God'. May God guide my footprints and my actions, so that they further God's kingdom dream of justice and of peace for all peoples and all creation.

Joan Sharples

36 people from the Liverpool and Shrewsbury Diocese were among the 360 who attended the conference. They came from all over England and Wales and further afield. Another 40 could not make the journey because of the floods!

Testimonies were given by:

Itasham Hibatullah, a Muslim peace worker aiming to promote peace amongst those of faith and none, and combat lurid newspaper headlines intended to work up xenophobic hatred against the Muslim community.

Roulu Maarouf, whose parents became refugees when they were expelled from Galilee in 1948. Having gained a masters degree in immigration law, Roulu is presently negotiating her legal status.

Maya Evans, is part of the peace group Justice Not Vengeance and rose to fame when arrested outside Downing Street for reading out the names of Iraqi civilians and British troops killed in Iraq.

During the ecumenical service the youth group gave a presentation, during which **Marianne Scott** (13¼) from Ellesmere Port, read one of the prayers from the podium.

Maureen Mathews, the NJPN Coordinator who lives in the Stockport side of Shrewsbury Diocese and is responsible for organising the national conferences, is retiring. Maureen was presented with a special bouquet and received a standing ovation for her long service to NJPN.

Tom Ormiston



Mayor of Damulog

Peter Byrne of Chester World Development Forum writes:

The election campaign had been a challenge to organise, exhausting to execute. The campaign team - Romy in particular - had police protection, but had to be on their guard at all times, worry about the safety of villagers and resist the temptation to retaliate. There was intimidation, but the nearest Damulog got to armed conflict was probably the occasion when armed thugs were chased off by villagers waving sticks and machetes. Then, May 14th-15th, Damulog delivered its verdict: Romy was elected as Mayor and his group won the election for Vice-Mayor and one other councillor. Overseas supporters gave three cheers; some said a prayer of thanks; then we all resumed biting our fingernails

Through May and June the team had to remain wary, especially after nightfall. Romy had some respite between June 2nd and 29th during another stay in Sri Lanka, helping to review National Christian Council tsunami projects. This exercise seemed likely to bear fruit giving the NCC better capability in the future. While in Sri Lanka, Romy was able to walk around freely; some days "on my own to just anywhere". But Damulog was always in mind, and planning for action already in progress. Romy returned to the Philippines and at last on Saturday July 2nd became Mayor. Next day he delivered his address for the first time in a village called Pocopoco to a crowd of around 1,000. It was well received there but challenging to the old regime, very bold and forthright.

It stated that Local Government was not there to provide employment but to serve. Staffing would be based on the community's needs, and recruitment on suitability. With recent events in mind, Romy stressed that faults must be owned up to; forgiveness and peace would follow. He explained his motivation. The murder of his friend, Rogelio Estudillo had pushed him to stand for election: he hoped to help build real democracy in Damulog, to support Muslim-Christian and *Lumad* peace initiatives, and to work towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty by 2015.

Peace Building was the foundation. A Peace Pact needed to be signed by the Municipal Government, and contending forces by October 2007. Damulog lands would be protected from cattle rustlers and military patrols kept within boundaries. Agri-business entry would need prior agreement: "our lands must be used primarily to provide food and livelihood for the local population". Police performance would be improved. **Good Governance** would require professional standards of hiring and firing, planning shared with the people, annual financial reports. **Social Services** would be developed "to wean people from the politics of patronage". This would cover education, health, child welfare and housing. **Infrastructure** projects included farm-to-market roads, water supply, and the gravelling of specific roads. **Environment/Sustainable Development** encompassed the protection of river and stream banks and commitment to diversified and mixed farming. "Land is not our inheritance from our forbears. We borrowed it from our children" It was essential to care for the land, the rivers and creeks, "the air we breathe, the trees - the whole environment." **Farm Support** was crucial since, "the majority of the population are farmers".

Not long after assuming office Romy met some former supporters of the ex-Mayor and got the impression that they would go along with the reforms. He was pleased also to be contacted by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front for a formal talk about peace. This may bode well. Progress since then has been slow, but the work has started, "against all odds".

A few months ago Romy said "Can anything good come out of Bethlehem?" Most observers would think it already had, whatever happens next.

We can continue to help the people of Damulog with prayer, and if we choose, by supporting MuCAARD (Muslim-Christian Agency for Advocacy, Relief and Development). Their current project is related to the provision of a portable sawmill for the Tree Farm. MuCAARD, UK, is a registered charity. The Treasurer, Peter Linsey can provide more information. Tel: 01244 320562 ; Address: 1st Floor Flat, Victoria House, 5 Grey Friars, Chester CH1 2NW. News from Chester World Development Forum 01244 350 323/ 678 087 in collaboration with MuCAARD UK 22.7.07

Editor's note: For any new readers to Mouthpeace, Romy Tiongco, known to us for his valuable work with Christian Aid, the J&P Commission and the Jubilee Debt Campaign, has recently spent more time in his native Philippines working to develop local community ecological projects. In October 2006, he was persuaded by local activists to stand for the post of Mayor of Damulog at the May elections – a position that he had held for nine months as an interim measure in 1986. In a political climate plagued by corruption and intimidation, his ability and integrity was thought to command strong support amongst the less privileged members of society. A number of other like-minded people agreed to stand for election to the Council, and Rogelio Estudillo, a life-time friend, became the group's political organiser. However, on January 4 2007 Rogelio was shot to death at his home. Since then we have been supporting Romy with our letters to various government officials and with our prayers

Opening Doors - Opening Hearts

CAP calls for moral campaign to challenge growing UK wealth gap

Church Action on Poverty has challenged the churches to campaign for urgent action to tackle the gap between rich and poor in the UK with the same vigour as they work for an end to global poverty in Make Poverty History. The Rowntree report published earlier this year revealed that Britain is moving back towards levels of inequality in wealth and poverty last seen more than 40 years ago. Over the last 15 years, more households have become poor, but fewer are very poor. Even though there was less extreme poverty, the overall number of 'breadline poor' households has increased i.e. households where people live below the standard poverty line.



CHURCH ACTION
ON POVERTY

One of the most worrying trends highlighted by the Rowntree research is the growing geographical separation between rich and poor. Urban clustering of poverty has increased, while wealthy households have concentrated in the outskirts and surrounds of major cities, especially those classified as 'exclusive wealthy', which have been steadily concentrating around London. The wealthy are effectively cutting themselves off from the rest of society, and oblivious to the plight of those struggling to make ends meet.

CAP feels the growing gap between rich and poor is morally indefensible. The Rowntree report is an indictment of an economy which is increasingly being run for the benefit of an obscenely wealthy minority, and at the expense of continuing poverty and hardship for far too many in society. Tackling growing inequality is not just a challenge to Gordon Brown as Prime Minister and politicians of all parties – but also to the churches. In recent years the Churches have been at the forefront of campaigns to tackle global poverty. Now, CAP appeals, it is time to focus our attentions on tackling the gap between rich and poor much closer to home. Churches across the country have a long history of providing immediate relief to people struggling with poverty, debt and homelessness – this report highlights the need to tackle some of the root causes, and to actively campaign for more just economic policies to narrow the gap between rich and poor as well.

26 January—3 February 2008 Poverty and Homelessness Action Week

Opening Doors, Opening Hearts is about opening hearts to hear the stories people have to tell about being homeless, badly housed and poor. It offers opportunities for dialogue, springing from the conviction that together we can open doors to a better housed, better paid, more just society. There is a resource pack to help us to pray, reflect and act on homelessness and poverty. See www.homelessness-sunday.org.uk



In 2008 Homelessness Sunday (27 January) and Poverty Action Sunday (3 February) are only one week apart, so they are being linked by Poverty and Homelessness Action Week. This offers a major opportunity to put poverty issues firmly on the agenda of local churches, communities and policy makers across the UK.

Church Action on Poverty, Church Urban Forum, Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action are aiming to encourage at least 100 poverty hearings or similar events to take place across the country during this week.

They are running Training Events across the country during autumn 2007, introducing a variety of options for the local events in Jan/Feb 2008. These could include a local poverty hearing, hosted by a church or community project through to a full day town/city hearing organised by several organisations. Some Churches Together groups may wish to take the lead. Each event should find ways to enable people with personal experience of poverty or homelessness the opportunity to tell their stories, though advisers and others may also contribute. The Training Event will also inform you about CAP's new Lent Study Programme "Just Church" and the campaign - "Free from Poverty" - which involves a wider coalition of national partner organisations to encourage stronger political concern about poverty in preparation for the anticipated General Election in 2008 or 2009.

Local training days

22 September 9.30—3.30 at LACE, Liverpool see page 2 for more details

Contact Steve Atherton or Maria Hardacre 0151 522 1080/1 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

9 October 6—8 pm Methodist Central Hall, Manchester Contact CAP 0161 236 9321

24 October 6—8 pm Hoole URC, Hoole Road, Chester Contact Pam Price 01244 341554

For more details see www.church-poverty.org.uk www.housingjustice.org.uk



Unearth Justice Campaign – Success and new action!

F Hinds has signed up to the Golden Rules by signing the gold-sourcing policy. They join Fraser Hart, Signet (H Samuel and Ernest Jones) and Beaverbrooks in signing up. This comes as result of CAFOD supporters throughout England and Wales creating and presenting 100 gold chain petitions containing 45,000 signatures to jewellers. Unfortunately, Argos and Goldsmiths are still lagging behind but we are still putting pressure on them to follow suit and sign up to the Golden Rules.

ACT NOW !

Go to www.cafod.org.uk/latestaction to email Argos and Goldsmiths. You can forward the action to family, friends and colleagues. So far over 1000 people have taken the action but we need to demonstrate the level of public support for clean gold.



This autumn CAFOD will be targeting an industry body that is drawing up a voluntary code of conduct and standards that could have a really positive impact on the gold mining industry. This body, the Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices (CRJP) consists of retailers such as Signet and Argos; mining companies such as Anglo Gold; and trade bodies such as the National Association of Goldsmiths. See www.responsiblejewellery.com

AUTUMN ACTION

From October postcards will be available to send to the Chairman of CRJP in the USA. It is a real opportunity for us to show the body, particularly via its jewellery retailers that consumers are watching and waiting for them to turn over a new leaf to promote better practices to stop the harm caused by gold mining.

Climate Change Campaign

The issue of climate change is dominating the news but too frequently the fact that climate change is hitting the world's poorest communities first and the hardest is overlooked. CAFOD is responding to the "greatest challenge facing humankind" by urging supporters to lobby their MPs on the climate change bill which will see its first reading in November.

For the latest news log onto www.cafod.org.uk/campaign

If you would like to get involved with either campaign please contact your local diocesan office.

Liverpool Archdiocese: Richard Greenwood, 0151 228 4028 or liverpool@cafod.org.uk

Shrewsbury Diocese: Sue Bownas, 07920 232936 or shrewsbury@cafod.org.uk

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A Martyr for Peace

Franz Jägerstätter to be beatified as a Martyr for Peace (*Announcement from Congregation for the Causes of Saints, 1 June 2007*). His cause has been long promoted by Pax Christi.

Franz was an Austrian farmer who refused to fight in Hitler's army. He believed that he would be committing a sin if he acted against his conscience and agreed to fight for the National Socialist state. For him, this was a situation in which he had to obey God more than the commands of secular rulers. In following the commandment 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself' Franz decided that he could not fight with weapons of war. For refusing to fight he was sentenced to death in Berlin and beheaded in Brandenburg on 9th August 1943.

Speaking of the beatification, Bishop Malcolm McMahon, President of Pax Christi UK said: "The extraordinary courage of Franz Jägerstätter, a faithful Catholic, has been an inspiration to many and a powerful witness to peace and nonviolence. In an age of war and violence we urgently need the example of those who use their consciences to make judgements about what is evil - and refuse to take part in it. The recognition of this man's holiness by the Church should encourage us all to stand up for peace, justice and human dignity."

Pax Christi offers a warm message of support to his widow, **Franziska Jägerstätter**, a faithful partner in his terrible sacrifice and a witness to peace herself. Their three daughters were all under the age of six at the time of his death. Franziska suffered many years of economic punishment, discrimination and social exclusion before Austrian attitudes to her husband's conscientious objection began to change. [Continued opposite ...]

Because I'm worth it.....

Monsignor Keenan, Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain for Prisons National Offender Management Service writes:

'Because I'm worth it....' is a catchy phrase that clever marketing experts have led us to associate with a certain brand of toiletries. How I wish that all the people I meet locked in prison cells, were able to apply that phrase to themselves in considering who they are and how they wish to live.

To be the victim of crime is to be disrespected and invaded. Even petty crime, leaves victims damaged and sometimes traumatised. Victims of crime need great support, care and love.

I have visited many of the 139 prisons in England and Wales and met some of the almost 78,000 children, young people, women and men held there. My experience tells me that prisons too, are full of victims! Most of those held in our prisons have never discovered or even imagined their worth as human beings.

Most of us, I suspect, have our own history of weakness. We can become resigned to our present state – "This is the way I am. This is the way my life has always been. I want to change but I don't know how to change. I can't change!" Whether I am in a physical prison cell or whether I am in any other kind of prison that holds me bound, how as the Psalm puts it, do I "sing a new song?". It's not easy for any of us. Real change means battling with many things within us and around us that combine to keep us locked into old ways.

However, the experience of God's loving presence in our lives brings a new conviction and a sense of purpose that all manner of things can be well. When I enter into a partnership with the Lord, then together we bring about amazing changes. This is just as true for our brothers and sisters in prison, as it is for you and me.

How does the Lord do it? Normally He does it by sending people to us who offer the support, encouragement and love that we all need. He works through human beings. Those held in prison cells, as you read these lines, are in need of someone like you, to help them believe they 'are worth it'.

Martyr for Peace continued.....

He is now honoured as a hero in Austria. Franziska still serves the small village church in St Radegund, Upper Austria, where Franz himself was sacristan.

Pax Christi commemorates the anniversary of Franz Jägerstätter with an ecumenical service in London each year, and has organised several pilgrimages to St Radegund since the first British Pax Christi group went there in 1975.

As our Bishops have written in their book 'A Place of Redemption' * : "The Christian Community is called to witness to this by its actions".

One of the most popular hymns during Mass celebrated in prisons, has the line: 'Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name, you are mine'. If people like you and I visit those held in prisons, write to them, support them when they are released, offer a real, warm welcome to them in our parishes, then those words will ring true.



"I was in prison and you visited me", says the Lord. 'I left prison and you walked with me' is surely what he also says. Please consider how you might respond to the Lord's words "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me."

* 'A Place of redemption' produced by The Catholic Bishops Conference has many things to say about penal policy and practice and how, from a Christian perspective, public policy could be changed for the better. It also addresses Christians directly and invites them, individually and as parish communities, to ask "What can I do?". The latest edition (2006) encompasses a study guide for parishes and discussion groups and further commentary responding to reaction to the original book.

Ed: We are grateful to PACT (Prison Advice and care Trust) for their permission to print this article. Which first appeared in the Prisoners' Sunday Pack 2006

PRISONERS' SUNDAY NOVEMBER 18TH 2007

Every year for Prisoners' Sunday, PACT produce a pack which contains information and liturgy material and encourages parishes to make a donation to their work.

Details on www.prisonadvice.co.uk

Reflections on the Live Simply project:

... in the parish

As the end of the year of "Living Simply" approaches, two events have caused me to reflect on some of the issues and complexities surrounding the implementation of the project. The first was a parish lunch organised by the Justice and Peace Group I belong to, in conjunction with the local St Vincent de Paul congregation and some of our young people. We used the same format that has proved successful for us in the past in developing awareness and raising funds for a specified project (in this case the national SVP's sponsorship programme in Sudan and Darfur) while bringing together the different Mass congregations in the parish. We had a simple (but, in fact, delicious) lunch of cheese, ham and home made salads. We provided fun and fund raising activities and two workshops about practical ways of developing solidarity with the poor, as well as a Fair Trade stall and displays about the Live Simply project and the SVP's work overseas -none of it very different, I expect, from hundreds of other similar events this year.

The preparations, however, gave rise to some interesting reflections. Achieving some degree of solidarity between the three Mass congregations was comparatively easy: we laid out a single very long table in the parish hall so that our 100 or so lunchers had to sit together (no splitting up into small groups!) The rest was trickier. If we were living simply, should we be providing wine (even though Fairly Traded) and dessert? Did a commitment to sustainability mean that we should be buying reusable glasses and china (possibly not made from recycled materials) instead of the plastic cups and cutlery of which we had an existing supply? Should the salad materials be bought locally to save airmiles or from a Cash and Carry, where the savings would mean a bigger surplus to go to the SVP? In the end we compromised (of course), washed the plastic cups and cutlery for reuse and made a single economical trip to the store. The dessert problem was solved by ensuring that it was cake and biscuits bought from the Fair Trade stall. That left the question of wine which for me at least resulted in an interesting thought: Living Simply is not about doing penance or even especially about providing extra resources to give to the poor (although we did raise a very useful £560 for the SVP) but about living a fully human life which celebrates the goodness of creation as well as recognising that for everyone to share in this we all have to live moderate and just lives.

... and in school

My second reflective moment came, bizarrely, during the OFSTED inspection of the Catholic primary school where I am a governor. The school community is situated in an area of severe economic deprivation which is almost exclusively white and mono-cultural and the inspector was, rightly, concerned about how we provided the insights into other cultures which might militate against the latent racism which often occurs in such situations. Where, he asked, were the positive images of black people which might redress the cultural balance? As it happens, the school has been fully engaged in the Live Simply project and has used it to emphasise the positive advantages of adopting the simpler life styles of some other cultures rather than stressing their poverty and need. This, the headteacher pointed out, addressed questions of attitude and values and went far beyond the possible tokenism of a display of black faces. The inspector's conversations with the children confirmed her view and we now have possibly the first OFSTED report which commends the positive effects of the Live Simply project on multi cultural provision!

These two events, and especially the second, have made me see (belatedly you will say) the values which should perhaps be central to Live Simply: the importance of celebrating simplicity as well ensuring it; of seeing that moral choices are as often about the details of everyday life as much as the big issues, that they are intimately wrapped up with our relationships with others and complex and messy in their resolution; and that solidarity with the poor is essentially a two way system in which we should always look to receive as well as give.

It is all too easy to think of our response to poverty and injustice as about providing resources and, like others, we have found that this is comparatively simple to do: people are very generous and are easily touched by the plight of those clearly less fortunate than themselves. However, the radical aims of the encyclical which Live Simply is celebrating are not primarily defined in terms of money but in the requirement to transform our own lives as well as the global system which produces the disabling conditions of poverty and injustice. In doing so, let us not presume that we have nothing to learn. Perhaps the best lesson we can take from Live Simply is that we need to take from others what, as a culture, we have often failed to incorporate in our own life styles -simplicity, moderation, respect for our world - and the gift for genuine celebration!

Margaret Cook

The world can't wait!

G8 Mobilisation in London June 2nd 2007

Chester World Development Forum took one coach to London; sadly it was not full – 25 people on a 53 seater-but we were a friendly crowd; good to see some of the “usual suspects” as well as some new faces. Some of our North Wales and Wirral colleagues joined us. Thanks to Peter Byrne for the arrangements beforehand and to Bernard Payne for being our main marshal on the day. Thanks also to some supporters who were unable to go but gave donations.

Overall the day was a success. The weather was beautifully sunny (we have campaigned before in both sunshine and rain and sunshine is definitely better!)

We disembarked by the London Eye on the stroke of 11.00. Most of us re-crossed the river on foot to make our way to the Emmanuel Centre to hear an international panel debate “Two years from Gleneagles; can the G8 deliver?” Speakers included the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Midge Ure and Charity Musamba (who came to Chester for a Jubilee Debt Campaign AGM, held at St Mary’s Centre.)



We then took part in the centrepiece of the day: we all grouped along the banks of the Thames and across Lambeth Bridge making ourselves heard with lots of noise and whistles, but also took part in a 5 minute silent vigil while the “World Can’t Wait” motor launch coursed up and down the river.

Finally we re-crossed the river to see the display stalls in Archbishop’s Park and were able to write our own messages to the G8 on the “speech bubbles” fixed to the fences. Although the slogan “World Can’t Wait” was devised by CAFOD, most of the national NGO’s were much in evidence: Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund, Action Aid etc.

The rally was less ambitious than Edinburgh and considerably smaller (an estimated 5,000 compared with 250,000). However, we got good TV coverage; earlier that day in Rostock, North Germany there had been serious rioting near the site of the G8 meeting. TV introduced our demo with the comment “ meanwhile in central London a peaceful demonstration took place” – highlighting the contrast.

The rally did not have to compete for media coverage with mega-pop concerts. Demonstrators on London were, I believe, mainly those who had been on previous demos and will be on others in future. We all know we have to be committed to “the long haul”.

Kath Stephenson Chester WDF

CAFOD reports:

The result of the G8 summit in Germany is very disappointing. But the failure of G8 leaders is not our failure. The G8 leaders have not yet delivered on their commitments to the poor – and to the millions of their citizens who have campaigned against poverty and injustice. This is a spur for us to raise our voices even louder against poverty, not to walk away with our heads bowed.

Japan, which hosts the next G8 summit in 2008, has stated that aid to Africa will be a “top agenda item”, along with climate change. This represents a substantial achievement for anti-poverty campaigners. Our concerted efforts have ensured that the G8 now regularly has to consider the key issues of climate change and poverty eradication at its meetings. The voices of the world’s poorest communities are represented loudly and clearly on the world stage.

Liz Taylor and Caroline Shevelan are CAFOD campaigners who went to Germany to lobby the G8 in person. They say: “The act to abolish slavery was not passed on its first reading. Women didn’t get the vote as soon as the first suffragette went on hunger strike ...

“How can we turn our backs on those who are born with no hope of survival? How can we turn our backs on those mothers who watch their children dying? How can we turn our backs on those grandparents destined to bring up their grandchildren because their own sons and daughters have died? We can’t and we won’t.”

CAFOD partner Charity Musamba from Zambia reminds us what is at stake for the millions living with HIV and AIDS – and why campaigning for access to life-saving drugs is so vital.

“Mothers want to be able to care for their children. And children need their parents,” she says. “Access to treatment saves lives - and it also means my country has the chance of building a future.”

The Cost of Oil?

On the 28th June 07 I attended the Stockport Peace Forum* to hear Neil Endicott. Neil was in the last stages of writing a thesis titled 'The role of Oil in Conflict situations'. He shared his thoughts with the group, first, in a general way and then describing the impact of oil in Nigeria.

Oil flows from natural springs in many localities and has been mentioned since Biblical times as a liniment or medicine. But the first oil well came into being in 1859 when Edwin Drake drilled a well in Pennsylvania. The well was 69 feet deep and produced 15 barrels a day. The area quickly boomed and the modern oil industry was born. Later Texas and Oklahoma became the centres for US production and, throughout the world, oil production developed at a rapid rate.

Oil is a "convenient" fuel in that it can be pumped out of the ground rather than being mined. It is refined into all manner of products -- plastics, pharmaceuticals, agro-chemicals and fuels, diesel and petrol -- to name but a few. Undoubtedly, its biggest use comes from the development of the internal combustion engine. Today almost all forms of transport -- cars, tractors, commercial vehicles, buses, trains, ships and airplanes -- are fuelled by oil. There is not an obvious alternative fuel for transportation so world oil production grows to alarming rates. In May of this year, the total oil production was 84.44 million barrels per day which dwarfs the 15 barrels per day of Drake's first oil well.

Almost from the beginning oil has been at the centre of conflicts. In the First World War the British navy



had a strategic advantage over the German navy since it could rely on oil from the USA. Afterwards there was the carve-up of the Middle east into protectorates sorted out in terms of oil. Politics and the Middle East have been inseparable ever since because of the large oil deposits in that region.

Equally important are environmental concerns about oil extraction and the trans-

portation by either pipe-lines or tankers. Many mishaps have already occurred with tankers leaking their cargos to shore with catastrophic consequences on wild-life in scenic parts of the world. The laying of pipe-lines also causes disruption of local communities as land is commandeered by huge multinational oil companies with little or no compensation.

So what of the future? Oil will not last for centuries. The peak of newly discovered oil reserves occurred in the late 1960's and many analysts feel that around 2010 we will pass the peak of production. With China, India and many parts of Asia consuming much more oil than was envisaged, the oil may run out within several decades (2080 or so) rather than into the next century. Desperation may however take its course and oil companies may start exploration at the North and South poles or use environmentally unfriendly technology of reclaiming oil from tar sands in Canada. Whatever the outcome, oil will run out.

For his thesis Neil had made a special study of Nigeria which is the second largest producer of oil in Africa (with Libya first). The Nigerian population of 137 million has very little sense of nationhood. Before colonial borders were drawn, there were just hundreds of small local communities. The Nigerian state was established based on the oil industry with Shell always a major player (nowadays it is responsible for 45% of the production). As West Africa is now becoming a key to the future supply of oil after Middle East, there is an increasing US presence in Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria is unusual in that 98% oil production is in the hands of foreign companies, unlike most other oil producing countries where the state owns the majority of production,

The effects of oil extraction in the Niger Delta region are various, most noticeable being environmental degradation. The residual natural gas from the oil wells is just burnt away which causes terrible pollution for the neighbouring villages, both from noxious fumes, noise and continual bright light (a flame 100ft high can be ever-present) In 2005 the Nigerian High Court ruled that companies should control this flaming but nothing was done as the government was incapable or unwilling to enforce this.

Local communities in the delta region have their livelihoods threatened by the pollution. Fish stocks have died and the sources of drinking water are contaminated. In the 1990s Ken Saro-Wiwa spoke up on behalf of the fishing and agricultural communities whose entire way of life was devastated by oil extraction. The state cracked down, Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed and over 1000 civilians were killed. Other peaceful groups continue seeking determination for locals and some control over oil revenues. But it is an uphill struggle. Instead more and more local militias are being formed who use violence means to earn money from the oil trade such as kidnapping of foreign workers and government officials and demanding ransoms.

Other peaceful groups continue seeking self determination for locals and some control over oil revenues. But it is an uphill struggle. Instead more and more local militias are being formed who use violence means to earn money from the oil trade such as kidnapping of foreign workers and government officials and demanding ransoms.

Because 80% of government revenues come from oil extraction there is no great incentive to tax local people and therefore no need to encourage a productive economy. As has already been said, the oil production is in the hands of foreign companies leaving the government vulnerable to fluctuations of world market. The government accrues a large amount of foreign exchange (mainly US \$) which has to be spent in US and so does not benefit the local people. Forty years ago Nigeria was self sufficient in food but now most food is imported. Also most of the jobs with oil companies go to foreign workers. Wealth therefore is consumed not created and the local communities suffer. More than 70% of Nigeria's population lives on less than \$1 per day and many Nigerians still don't have access to basic needs such as health, water and sanitation, and education. Government officials and the military are the only ones to benefit from oil money. So the Nigerian government offers favourable contracts to the companies and does not enforce environmental standards which saves companies money. In exchange they accept the use of state security forces and lack of human rights. If the government were more effective in environmental and human rights issues the companies profits would be squeezed.

A complicated system of bribes has developed to deal with local problems. If money doesn't work then punishment follows with the strong well armed security service being used to put down locals. (cf 1990

above) The democratic process is under the control of ruling elite who have undue influence at elections.

A whole economy of conflict has developed. The local militias mentioned above are funded through crime – illegal arms trade, kidnapping and ransoms. There is also the illegal oil trade - stealing oil by breaking into pipes – which is extremely dangerous as pressure in pipeline immense and accidents are many. The multinationals bribe the militias money not to attack their pipe lines and workers. These groups are no longer political movements for change. This violence has become a way of life. There are no socially coherent groups who might work for change i.e. unions or intellectual middle class.

The picture Neil painted was somewhat depressing and he concluded that oil wealth perverts the way a country functions. Nigeria would be better without oil. The greatest hope for future was the gradual decline of oil production.

NB One of Oxfam's projects involves The Extractive Programme in Nigeria. See www.oxfam.org.uk

Frank Thompson

*Stockport Peace Forum was started in response to the horrors of 9/11. The United Nations group in Stockport wanted to do something positive and felt that they could further understanding by raising awareness of various problems world wide. The Forum still continues with bi-monthly meetings which are open to anyone who hears about them and is interested in a particular topic. There are of course the few faithful regulars who come to all meetings and without which no group can continue. The meetings are in the evenings at the Friends Meeting House, Cooper Street, Stockport. To find out about future meetings contact Marian Thompson marianet@tiscali.co.uk

CAFOD DIOCESAN OFFICER: SHREWSBURY DIOCESE (Based in Chester)

PART TIME: 21 HOURS PER WEEK

The holder of this new post will primarily be responsible for maintaining an efficient local office base for CAFOD's work in the Shrewsbury diocese. You will undertake the management and administration of the office, including supervision of volunteers, and help foster excellent relationships with Catholic parishes, schools and groups across the diocese. You will respond to queries about CAFOD activities and support major events in the diocese.

You will have strong organisational, interpersonal, ICT and communication skills. You will be actively involved in the Catholic community and have a passionate interest in overseas development issues.

In accordance with CAFOD's Child Protection policy, the successful candidate will be required to obtain a disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.

If you think you have this combination of skills, please obtain an application pack by visiting www.cafod.org.uk/jobs/, emailing vacancies@cafod.org.uk or phoning 020 7095 5601, quoting ref. CDO_SB. Closing date: 21 September 2007.

CAFOD
just one world



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SEPTEMBER

9 Racial Justice Sunday Mass

Celebrated by Bishop Brian Noble 2.30 p.m.
St Mary's 29 Zetland Street, Dukinfield

15 'From Violence to Wholeness' workshop

10–4 pm St Alban's Parish Centre Macclesfield
Places are limited so registration essential.
Contact Joan Sharples

17 'Working in Parishes: How do we get people involved?'

Area Meeting 7.30—
9pm St Ann's, 29 Vicarage Ave. Cheadle Hulme
Contact Joan Sharples

21 Global Cease Fire Day 020 7456 9180

www.peaceday.org

22 'Where has the power gone?'

Liverpool J&P Commission Annual
Assembly at LACE, see pages 2 & 5

29 'Jesus— a man for today' Churches Together

in Cheshire Forum 2007 9.30 - 1 pm Keynote
speaker Dr David Wilkinson Middlewich
Community Church. Cost £8 Details and
registration form www.cheshire-churches-together.org.uk or from Joan

30—Oct 7 Teddy Bear Week: A week of

Christian action supporting adult survivors of
child sexual abuse organised by the North-West
Region of the National Association of Christian
Survivors of Sexual Abuse (CSSA National)
Contact through Joan Sharples 01270 620584.

OCTOBER

5 CAFOD Harvest Fast Day 020 7733 7900

8 – 26 Travelling Anti Slavery exhibition

Telford. Meeting Point House, Telford

10 Poverty/Homelessness Action Week

Briefing 6-8 pm Central Hall Manchester
contact CAP 0161 236 9321 see page 5

17 International Day for Eradication of

Poverty www.unmeditation.org

20 –31 'Behind the Smile' Tourism concern
exhibition in the Metropolitan Cathedral
Liverpool

21 'Set All Free' A service of reflection and prayer for those enslaved today.

Archbishop
Patrick Kelly will preside over a service of
readings, prayer, talks and reflection in
the Metropolitan Cathedral, Liverpool. 3pm

21-28 One World Week *All Together Now*

0118 939 4933

21-28 Week of prayer for World Peace

0208 968 4340

24 Poverty/Homelessness Action Week

Briefing 6—8 pm Hoole URC Chester
Contact Pam Price 01244 341554 see P. 5

24 United Nations Day www.unmeditation.org

25 'Slavery Today - at home and abroad'

Speaker Det. Inspector Mike Sanderson of
United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre
(www.ukhtc.org) 7.30 pm All Saints Church
Marple (prepared by Marple J & P group)
Contact Marian Thompson 0161 427 7254

29—Nov 16 Travelling Anti Slavery exhibition

Shrewsbury Cathedral

NOVEMBER

3 'Celebrating Creation' Focus Day see page 2

9-11 Residential Faith and Justice retreat

at Loyola Hall see page 2

11 Remembrance Sunday

Peace Pledge Union
white poppies 0207 424 9444

9-15 Prisons Week and

18 Prisoners' Sunday PACT see page 7

17 Stockport Fairtrade Fair 10-30 am—3-30

Stockport College on A6 Many stalls with a
wide range of fairly traded goods (crafts, toys,
clothes as well as food & drink) from various
Suppliers. Contact Pauline Howell –0161 449 5647

DECEMBER 9 Advent Reflection see page 2

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Don't forget to send in
reports of events
and dates for the diary

www.archdiocese-of-liverpool.co.uk

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the individual contributors or
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not necessarily reflect those of
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