

# *Shrewsbury and Liverpool Justice and Peace Commissions*

Winter 07/8

*'If God's providence bestows an unfailing supply of food on the birds of the air who neither sow nor reap, we ought to realize that the reason for people's supply running short is human greed. The fruits of the earth were given to feed all without distinction and nobody can claim any particular rights. Instead, we have lost the sense of communion of goods, rushing to turn these goods into private property.'*

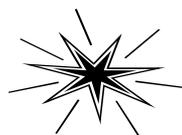
St Ambrose

*'.....the news for humanity is both joyful and sobering: there is a possible human future – but it will be costly for us. The question is whether we have the energy and imagination to say "No" to the non-future, the paralysing dream of endless growth that currently has us captive.'*

Archbishop Rowan Williams

*'The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.'*

Frederick Buechner



Issue 60

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## **live it! is a special event to celebrate the livesimply challenge.**

It includes a sixth form conference on Friday 14 March 2008 and an event open to all ages from the evening of Friday 14 March to Saturday 15 March, both taking place at New Century House, Manchester.

### **live it! - the 6th form conference**

Sixth form students from Catholic schools and colleges are invited to *live it!* Taking place in Manchester, the one day conference is aimed at young people with a commitment to social justice, and offers a unique opportunity for the students to engage in a lively way with environment and solidarity issues in the light of the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching.

#### **What will be happening?**

##### **LIVING SIMPLY**

Fr. Chris Gorton will speak about *livesimply* in the context of Catholic Social Teaching and film footage will be shown of how young people have put *livesimply* into practice during the last year.

##### **LIVING SUSTAINABLY**

An expert on climate change will explain how this global threat affects the people of developing countries most severely - and how by living sustainably we can all help make a difference.

##### **LIVING IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR**

Two Guyanan students will share how our promises to live in solidarity can transform situations in a developing country.

As well as receiving high quality input, students will have the opportunity to take part in an exciting carousel of activities, at their own pace - experiential learning at its most engaging!

They will also be given the chance to pose questions to a panel of experts and, if they bring school video cameras with them, to interview and make their own films of some of the speakers.

A professional photograph exhibition will be on display throughout the day, on the theme of climate change and environmental sustainability.

The day will also include a specially commissioned play, performed by students.

**To book** : Booking forms were sent out to schools in September.

Once places have been reserved, complete and return the forms on the *livesimply* website.

NB: These forms are only to be filled in AFTER the printed form sent to your school has been completed and returned and your reservations have been confirmed.

### **live it! - the event for everyone**

**Celebrate** with worship, music and drama    **Debate** - ask the experts, challenge each other

**Share** what *livesimply* means to you    **Look ahead** - what should we do next?

And much much more: Climate Gym, art, presentations, promise wall, exhibition, entertainment, stalls

**Special guests** will include:

- Mary Colwell, producer, *Planet Earth, the Future*, BBC TV
- Fr. Tom Cullinan, spiritual writer
- Most Rev Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Birmingham
- Most Rev Dr John Sentamu, Anglican Archbishop of York
- David Wells, religious education advisor



Tickets are £30 **but early birds who book before 31 December 2007 get a special rate of just £20.** Book on line at [www.livesimply.org.uk](http://www.livesimply.org.uk) ( click on live it March 08)





**set all free**  
 ACT TO END SLAVERY  
 ABOLITION OF SLAVE TRADE ACT  
 BICENTENARY 2007

On 21<sup>st</sup> October at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool, the bicentenary of the Act of Parliament Abolishing the Slave Trade in the UK was marked by **Set All Free: A Service, of Reflection and Prayer for Those Enslaved Today.** With Archbishop Patrick Kelly presiding and providing linking explanations, the service was a moving occasion where the

prayer, music, song and dance led us into reflection on the story of salvation. The text that follows gives the references for the readings that were used and the talks that were given.

Our thanks to Steve Atherton for supplying this.

**SECTION 1 FIRST COVENANT**

Genesis 9:10, 12-15 Set All People Free.

This reflection was given by **Sr Margo Murphy, representing the Medaille Trust**

The eminent psychologist, Carl Jung, had over the door of his house, a plaque which read "Bidden or unbidden, God is present". We each bear a similar mark on our foreheads and in the depths of our being – "bidden or unbidden, God is present." God needs no invitation to dwell within us, God is already there. For me, that is the essential starting point when reflecting on sin – the conviction that we are loved passionately, totally and unconditionally by God. We are redeemed.

The reading that we have just heard from Genesis gives a very bleak picture of human nature and God's response to it is quite devastating – "Yahweh regretted having made man on the earth and his heart grieved."

Can we find echoes of the corruption described there in our world today? Sadly we can see it all around us. And we can recognise in ourselves the tendency to put ourselves first, to do what I want to do, irrespective of how it affects others. St Paul explains it very well – "The good I desire to do, I do not and the evil I do not desire, that I do." There is something in us that draws us always to put self first. We become slaves to our own self satisfaction.

The Medaille Trust was born out of a passion to set people free. Religious Congregations, male and female, have come together to protest against the evil of human trafficking. We aim to provide safe housing for those rescued, raise awareness of trafficking and campaign against it. At the root of human trafficking lies greed and self interest. It is one of the major sources of illegal income today, fast overtaking the drugs and arms trade. There are various levels of complicity in this, ranging from that of actually buying and selling human beings to turning a blind eye when there is a suspicion that something is not quite right. The effects of human trafficking are devastating for individuals and communities. How can we claim to be civilised Christians in the 21st century when children, women and men are being bought and sold?

And yet, in the midst of all this suffering and evil, God's grace shines through in the many individuals and groups who are really working to combat traf-

ficking and to provide a tangible sign of God's love in the chaos and confusion around it. For God's word to Noah holds as much promise for us today as it did to Noah, "See I establish my covenant with you, and with your descendants after you." Change begins with you and me. We can make a difference to the world. Rupert Sheldrake's Morphic Field Theory claims that change in the behaviour of a species occurs when a critical number is reached, in other words when enough people change. It may be that you are just the one needed to reach that critical total and effect the change. So, what kind of energy do you send out – is it positive and liberating or is it negative and enslaving?

We have God's promise in this reading – "I establish my covenant with you", we have the words "Bidden or unbidden, God is present". Often we hear it said that God has no hands but our hands, no feet but our feet etc.

Let us refuse to allow ourselves to be slaves. Let us claim for ourselves the freedom that Christ won for us. This is not a hard task – it is simply recognising, accepting and walking with the God who "bidden or unbidden" is present in us.

**SECTION 2 REDEMPTION FROM SLAVERY**

Deuteronomy 7:6-9 A reflection on the theme of trade, economics and poverty, given by **Elmer Pulleros representing the Apostleship of the Sea and the Merseyside Mission to Seafarers**

The Israelites travelled across the sea to find freedom and the Promised Land. This year we are remembering the many who were forced to travel across the sea not to the Promised Land but into slavery.

Today many spend their lives crossing the seas, working as seafarers on cargo ships, container ships and tankers and we totally depend upon them to maintain our economy, our trade and our way of living. 90% of all the goods we use come to us by ship. We depend upon the seafarer.

It is right that in recent years we have become concerned that those working on the tea, coffee and banana plantations receive a fair price for their crops. That those working in garment sweatshops of the Far East are not exploited to satisfy our desire for cheap clothing.

(Continued Page 6)



## CREATION: SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE

The Shrewsbury Commission's recent Focus Day "Celebrating Creation" was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November in the familiar setting of St Thomas More School, Crewe. Joan Sharples had worked very hard to bring together a notable line-up of speakers, introduced to the gathering by Tony Walsh: Mary Colwell - a senior producer with the BBC's Natural History Unit, Fr Tom Cullinan - a Benedictine Monk well known for his theological reflections on man and nature, and Mike Monaghan - former member of our own J&P Commission and who, prior to retirement, was Environment Director within the P&O Group.



The Focus Day was held towards the end of a glorious autumn, delivering many beautiful golden landscapes. It was only natural for us to celebrate and be thankful for the beauty of creation. But, surprises were in store, and we finished the day with many new insights, determined, in the words of Fr Tom Cullinan, not to be mere "fair weather thankers".

### Mary Colwell spoke to the theme *Celebration and Challenge: Christianity and the Natural World*.

She used her background as Earth Scientist and twenty years of filming and reflecting on the natural world to give a stunning presentation. This interwove dramatic images with a range of expert commentaries and countless statistics, all illustrating the fragility of the natural world in the face of relentless and growing human impacts.

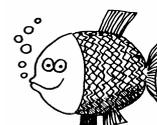
Among the key issues she explored were:

Biodiversity (where no fewer than 120 species have died out in the last 25 years and many more are in imminent threat);

Ocean pollution (with increasing problems of pollution by plastics as illustrated by a recent exercise in which 3m tonnes of plastic debris were encountered over a 1000 mile stretch, and a particularly grisly example of an albatross carcass being found literally stuffed full of plastic bottle tops);

Ownership of natural resources (including the management of the oceans and the exploitation of the rainforests);

Population levels (where the anticipated increase in global population from the current 6bn to 9bn by 2050 will inevitably bring huge additional pressures on the natural world.)



Increasingly over the last few years Mary, a parishioner of Clifton RC Cathedral, has been exploring and debating the Christian and spiritual response to environmental concerns, actively campaigning to bring these matters much more into mainstream Catholic thinking. She is only too aware of the tensions between secular and religious approaches to the environment, but believes passionately that Christians have a responsibility to acknowledge the interconnectedness of all life. The key is to develop a proper understanding of our relationship with the natural world and to live our lives accordingly. There is a need for profound change, a fundamental change to a new world system.

Though the challenges are indeed profound there are many signs of hope and we should not be despondent. In Clifton Diocese, growing awareness of the issues has led to the launch of the campaign "Sound of Many Waters", ([www.soundofmanywaters.org](http://www.soundofmanywaters.org)) and Bishop Declan Lang himself has been appointed the England and Wales Bishop for Environmental Justice. Christianity, when fully understood and followed, has the answers. It allows us to look at the world and ourselves in a different way. Its history has seen new patterns of community living, for example the rules of St Benedict and their stress on *simplicity, obedience, mutual conversation*. In the words of Eric Hoffer, in offering a vision for the future, we can dare to "kindle and fan an extravagant hope".

### Tom Cullinan spoke to the theme *Theological Questions and Perturbations*

and very quickly challenged some of our more comfortable notions and images of the environment - stressing the point that we are part of the natural world. He referred to Thomas Berry's observation that the arrival of man means that the creation story unfolds and can be appreciated - we have the extra gift of consciousness, thus we are there to appreciate the beauty of a sunset!

Our notions of beauty can be distorting and partial. We need to wonder at other aspects of creation - the fact a shovel full of good soil contains more microbes than the population of the planet (likewise stars in the sky), to appreciate slugs as well as brassicas (see the Monty Python version of *All Things Bright and Beautiful!*), to acknowledge that creation is very brutal. Like Job, we shouldn't be ashamed of being angry with God when His ways don't seem to accord with our ways.

Throughout human history prophets have been those who have voiced a new consciousness of the world around them, marking real breakthroughs in understanding - but at the time creating a crisis of thought. Invariably, these prophets have been lonely figures until others belatedly come on board into the new way of thinking. Past breakthroughs have included the realisation that our earth was not flat, and Kepler's deduction that the earth circled the sun. The last 10-15 years has seen an invitation to as great a breakthrough in understanding, that is, of the interdependence between human activity and natural systems.



*All things dull and ugly,  
All creatures short and squat,  
All things rude and nasty,  
The Lord God made the lot:*

*Each little snake that poisons,  
Each little wasp that stings,  
He made their brutish venom,  
He made their horrid wings.*

*All things sick and cancerous,  
All evil great and small,  
All things foul and dangerous,  
The Lord God made them all.*

*Each nasty little hornet,  
Each beastly little squid,  
Who made the spikey urchin?  
Who made the sharks? He did.*

*All things scabbed and ulcerous,  
All pox both great and small,  
Putrid, foul and gangrenous,  
The Lord God made them all.*

Eric Idle



God's Covenant with Man is unilateral, which means that if we fail to respond he will find other ways to fulfil his will – "if God is God, then his Will will be achieved". Thus we can be certain that things will work out, but not necessarily in the way we have in mind.

The coming of God's holiness into human affairs created a crisis that otherwise wouldn't be there – it forced people to say "yes" or "no". Now, in terms of the salvation of the planet, is such a moment. We have to read the signs and respond – or see catastrophe. A measure of the challenge is the fact that in the next 50 years we must produce as much food as has been produced throughout human history.

The changes of Vatican II included a new understanding of "sacrament" as a living sign of God's universal kingdom. But this is not exclusive: the risen Christ can also be present in other faiths or none at all. In the words of Augustine "God knows many whom the Church knows not; the Church knows many whom God knows not".

**Mike Monaghan, in the final session *What Next?*** threw the main challenge in our direction: what were we as individuals intending to do? Before that he set the scene with a simple equation:  $I = C \times P \times T$ , where:

I = overall environmental impacts;

C = consumption (current consumption patterns produce 9 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per head which has to go down to 1 tonne);

P = population (within his own lifetime global population could have risen from 2bn to 9bn);

T = "technology" (i.e. techniques of production and lifestyle, etc.).

So in considering overall human impacts, we need to take full account of all these factors.

Mike quizzed us on "where we're at" on these big environmental issues. Are we: Confused, Discouraged/depressed, Angry/frustrated, Optimistic? (Unsurprisingly, we proved to be a mixture of all these things.)

And what of our responses to the many excuses Mike has heard as "reasons for doing nothing" about climate change: It's not really happening.

Christians should be concerned about people.

Government and industry – they're the ones who need to act.

The UK is only tiny – it's up to the big players like USA and China.

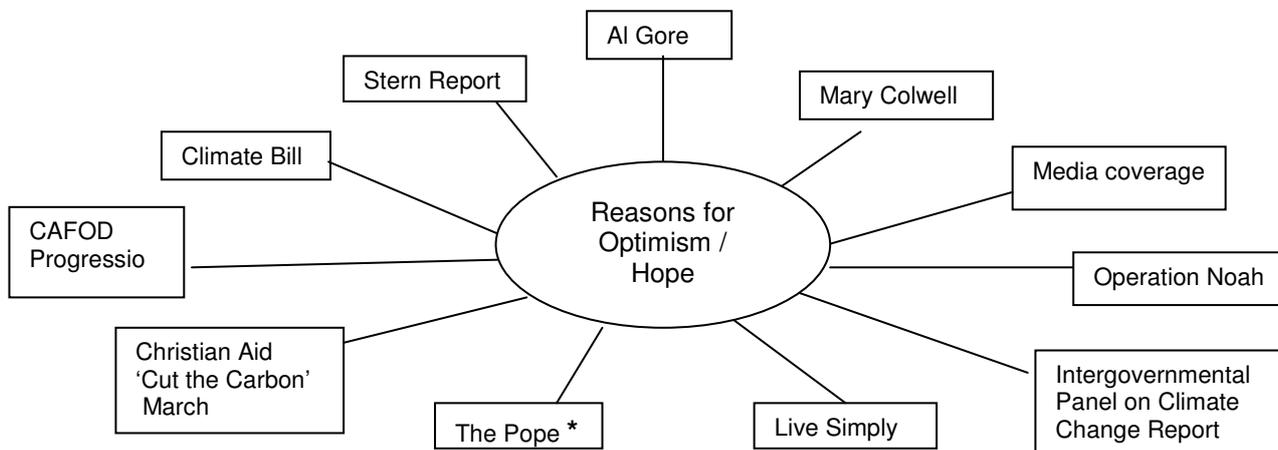
We're all doomed!

No purpose to "my little bit".

(We discussed these around our groups, and, being "the converted", though seeing some logic behind each "excuse", rejected them all.)



And are there real grounds for Optimism? Yes, Mike pointed to many hopeful signs, as summed up in this diagram, which shows a whole range of individuals, organisations and activities, all working to raise awareness and commitment:



Finally, Mike sent us on our way with a simple exercise, to supply answers to the following environmental questions:

*What are the good things we're already doing? What is the one extra thing we could do?*

*Why are we not doing this already?*

*So ... can you now commit to doing it?*

All was beautifully topped and tailed with liturgies and reflections prepared by Margaret Cook and Sr Monica Howes completing an inspirational and thought-provoking Focus day. Bernard Payne

\* "Care of water resources and attention to climate change are matters of grave importance for the entire human family. Encouraged by the growing recognition of the need to preserve the environment, I invite all of you to join me in praying and working for greater respect for the wonders of God's creation." Pope Benedict, September 2007



## Contd. SET ALL FREE: A Service, of Reflection and Prayer for Those Enslaved

### **SECTION 2 REDEMPTION FROM SLAVERY**

*Continuation from Page 3 of the reflection on the theme of trade, economics and poverty, given by Elmer Pulleros representing the Apostleship of the Sea and the Mersey-side Mission to Seafarers ...*

It is right that the Fair Trade Movement has enjoyed success here at home in raising our awareness and supporting our brothers and sisters in the developing world in their struggle for freedom and justice. And yet in this worldwide economic market place the vital role of transport and those who provide and run that transport is all but ignored. The seafarers have become the "forgotten ones".

Today's seafarer from the developing world and the emerging nations of Eastern Europe travel "from sea to sea", from port to port and never reach the Promised Land. Their lives are marked by long separation from family, unfair contracts and practises, low pay and no job security.

The Apostleship of the Sea, along with our ecumenical partners Mersey Mission to Seafarers and the British International Sailors Society stand alongside seafarers caught up in economic slavery.

Today we renew our commitment to remain in solidarity with all seafarers who visit our Port and invite you to reflect upon and renew your commitment to those who are enslaved by the economics of our trading system and for whom the Promised Land is still a distant dream.

### **SECTION 3 NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT**

Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians 2:12-22

**Talk given by Fr Peter Morgan**

What African woman, young, educated, intelligent, would leave the home with its love, community support, traditional values and family bonds, especially when pregnant, unless she were driven by desperate fear? And why come to a country obsessed with itself, hostile to its immigrants, with little awareness of the agony suffered by so many elsewhere in our world? It is an attitude encouraged by our mass circulation newspapers, whose owners have their own political agenda, often themselves citizens of other countries, and some times wealthy through their ownership of the "Asian Babe" variety of magazine – people with an inordinate influence on the policy of our elected Government. Why come to a land so cold, with another language, different customs and so inhospitable.

There are many such women who have come to Liverpool, often teenagers, pregnant through rape, usually through the violence of police, army, or political agents. In the Group for such young women, of which I am the Chair, we see how hard it is for these young women to bond with their children, seeing the face of the rapists in their child. Yet to us these children are truly beautiful. In our courts the immigration judge is driven by the Home Office agenda which is pre-occupied with public opinion to which the press both panders and encourages, and so often describes a woman as an "unreliable witness". One single judge, man or woman, each a political animal, each with their own political agenda, determines alone without advice, whether such a woman with her child should become an "illegal" asylum seeker.

Yet hospitality is at the core of our Christian history. It

was integral to God's earliest covenants with his people. "You must not oppress the stranger," says the Book of Exodus and the stranger deserves the protection of the powerful, along with the widow and orphan. St Paul demands that Christians make "hospitality our special boast".

The image of the journey or the pilgrim is embedded in our language. From earliest times the Monastery was the centre of welcome for the stranger. The Church was the place of refuge. I believe it still is. In our post-Christian city there will shortly be 30-40 "failed" asylum seekers living on our streets and it is illegal for anyone to give them sanctuary.

As Chaplain to the Women's Hospital I am among the first to meet some of these young women as they come, terrified, unable to communicate – and perhaps only now discovering that they are pregnant – through rape. The suffering is immense. It is bad enough for us – it is horrific for them. Many self-harm and talk of suicide. We have to give them reasons to live. If they are to be sent back to more of the same – and ultimately to be among "the disappeared" – what can we say? I can only thank God for words that come which are not our words – and for things that happen which can only be the hand of God.

### **SECTION 4 - COMMISSIONED BY CHRIST** John 5:8-17 Sections from the letters of Romy Tiongco, read by Linda Tiongco

*(Editor's note: As the material contained in these letters relating to the election has already appeared in Mouthpiece this section has been considerably reduced.)*

*Romy writes:*

Every time I visited Damulog while I was still living in England, I felt sad and angry that nothing much had changed over the years since I first left the country in 1989. I sensed a very strong hope among the people for change. But there was no-one credible enough who wanted to stand against the Mayor. They were scared.

When I went back to the Philippines in November 2006, friends asked me to join a group that was planning to contest the May 2007 elections. I agreed to serve as an adviser. But there was a strong pressure from civil society organisations that I run for Mayor. Although I kept on refusing, the rumour went around that I was going to run. Then on 4 January 2007 the political organiser of our group was murdered..... I felt very angry. But my commitment to non-violence pushed me to decide to run. I prevented people from taking revenge. I was scared but I felt that God was asking me to take the risk. So I did. At Rogelio's funeral I announced that I would run. That was my response. I had hoped that someday I would serve the municipality through deeds and words. But if God wanted me to serve the community by offering my life, so be it. In the beginning I didn't believe that I would survive the elections. I prepared myself to the possibility of getting murdered.

.....The election was tough and gruelling. ....I survived and won. I now move around with more freedom. I still do not go out alone at night. People still tell me not to be over-confident. Even Linda was told not to go out her own during broad daylight during her visit in the summer. But the people now live with little fear. The town is more alive. There is HOPE.



## **COMMISSIONED BY CHRIST continued .....**

We have already met with different Muslim groups - one peace pact has been signed, another is being finalised and two other commanders sent messages expressing interest to join the peace process. There have been no clashes since I became Mayor.

We are still waiting for the EC funding for a road project that will benefit four villages. But we're not just waiting - I launched a 'Peso-Peso' campaign which local people have given money to and raised over P60,000. to buy fuel and a construction firm repaired impassable sections of the road. Farm products can now be hauled to market using motorbikes, instead of horses and water buffaloes. This is saving farmers time and money. We have started having special market days. I get thanked by people making the town alive. Why couldn't the former Mayor do in six years, they ask, what you accomplished in three months?

I get credited and thanked for all the changes. The truth is I only did one thing. I unleashed a load of repressed generosity and creativity among the people. The people have done it, not I. When we decided to run we knew that the odds were against us winning the election. The opposing

line-up had the money to buy votes and had access to guns and goons to harass us. We didn't have much but we had hope and the belief that we could change things.

Though only three in our line up won, given the situation, ours was a real political and moral victory. Many people now say that there was no other person who could have galvanised and inspired those who wanted change to register their stance through the ballot. Rogelio was very sure that no-one could play my role. I was his only hope. Many people now agree with Rogelio.

AND the prayers and actions of thousands of Filipino friends and from overseas..... We knew that thousands had written and signed petitions to the Government demanding justice for our murdered friend they made a difference and gave us hope. We knew that thousands were with us in prayer. We had our own daily regime of prayers. We gained courage and hope from within to keep on going. And there were times when the going was very, very rough. I said so many times that God wasn't asleep. God is awake and is with us.

As the Mayor of Damulog I believe I am proclaiming God's reign mainly through deeds. I hope I am really serving God in being a servant to the people of Damulog.

**Romy Tiongco is back in the UK for some of December. There will be an opportunity to meet him again at the following venues:**

**Mon 10: 7pm -9pm. Meeting and greeting Romy** at Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane (near junction A56 and B5152) Open to all , big car park, enquiries to Linda 01925 241222 Itiongco@christian-aid.org

**Tues 11: Inter-faith event** hosted by Chester Asian Council at University of Chester. Buffet lunch at 1pm followed by speakers including Romy Tiongco. If interested in attending please contact Peter Linsey, 01244 320560.

**Thurs 13 : Christian Aid Advent Reflection.** Whalley Abbey nr Clitheroe. 10.30am - 3.30pm. Romy Tiongco to lead. £22 incl. lunch. Max 30 people so booking essential with Christian Aid office 01925 241222 Itiongco@christian-aid.org

**Fri 14 Meeting and greeting Romy** at St Mary's Handbridge Parish Hall, 7.30pm. Organised jointly by Chester JDC and MuCAARD Chester (Muslim Christian Action Advocacy Relief & Development). Details from Peter Linsey 01244 320562.

## **'HEAR MY PEOPLE CRY'**

### **The National J & P Network Conference at Swanwick on July 18—20 2008**

This is being organised in conjunction with Liverpool Archdiocese Justice & Peace Commission. The theme of the conference is: Living as Christians in our modern time, exploring what it means to "love tenderly, live justly, and walk humbly with God". It will focus on the implications of "doing justice" in the places where we live. The speakers include **John Battle MP**, **Dr Patrick Riordan SJ**, **Sr Margaret Scott ACI** and **Fr Tom Cullinan**.

Steve Atherton already has an enthusiastic planning group/core team of about 20 but will have jobs for more people nearer time and would be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested in becoming involved.



### **AMNESTY GREETING CARDS CAMPAIGN**

The recent decision of Amnesty to abandon their neutral stance on abortion in certain specific circumstances has caused much heart searching and many Catholic individuals and groups have wondered if they should support the Greeting Cards campaign this year. Both Liverpool and Shrewsbury J & P Commissions have produced statements on Amnesty which can be found on their websites or obtained from Steve Atherton or Joan Sharples



## BETHLEHEM TODAY

Pat Gaffney and Ann Farr of Pax Christi visited Israel and Palestine at the beginning of October 2007. Here are a few extracts from their diary:

October 4

We are dropped off at the Lutheran Church in the Old part of Bethlehem and met by one of the sisters from Mary's House, the Brigettine Convent guest house where we stay. In 2002, just a few months after their arrival in Bethlehem, during the Israeli incursions, the house was taken over for several days by Palestinian fighters and the sisters held hostage. Much of the house was damaged as the Palestinians shot out and the Israeli's fired in. The Vatican became involved in the negotiations to get the sisters released and to allow the young Palestinian fighters out ( the sisters told us that most were simply young men from Bethlehem who were not really soldiers at all). The house was further damaged when the Israeli's entered Bethlehem and searched the house for Palestinians. Instead of asking for entry from the sisters they simply broke down the doors. Despite their experience, the sisters decided to remain in Bethlehem.

October 8

At the end of the day we made a short viist to Wi'am, the Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center and its Director Zoughbi Zoughbi. He had been in the UK in the summer as a guest of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and had contributed to the national J & P Conference at Swanwick. It was good to see him on home ground. Wi'am also runs a summer camp each year, offering opportunities during the school holiday time for children and young people.

October 9

Murra of Arab Educational Institute had arranged for us to visit the Terra Sancta school run by the Franciscans in the heart of Bethlehem. A boys school, there are 1,200 pupils from pre-school to grade 12. Around 70% of the students are Christian, the remainder Muslim. As a 'private', which means church-run school, it receives no money from the Palestin-

ian Authority and has to raise all its own funds. Those who can make a small contribution are encouraged to do so but the principal, Fra Marawan Di'des, told us that most of the running costs are met externally. We had an opportunity to visit one of the classes where students were in studying English the impact of globalisation on world trade!

Later in the day we visited the workshop of the Holy Land Arts Museum which supplies Pax Christi with olive wood goods. Joseph Giacaman who runs the shop introduced us to his son Elias who is a craftsman working on olive wood goods. In their work-yard they showed us olive wood that was being left to mature. The wood comes from trees that have been pruned, no trees are destroyed. The family have had this business since the 1920s passing on skills from one generation to another. At one time they employed around 20 people. Now there are only 6. Without tourism and export opportunities there is no demand for goods so skills are lost and there is grave unemployment. But Joseph and Elias have great pride in their work and in some of the early pieces of mother of pearl, carved by Joseph's father. These will never be sold—they are works of art and there are no longer craftsmen who can produce goods of such quality. We explained that we used the sale of the olive wood to raise awareness about life in Bethlehem and talk about the impact that occupation has on the lives of people in the West Bank.

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NB The purpose of Pat and Ann's visit was primarily to renew contact with partners and friends in Bethlehem at the Arab Educational Institute. In addition they wanted to learn first hand of the work of the Israel Committee Against House Demolition and the Ecumenical Accompaniment programme in Palestine and Israel (Pax Christi International and a number of national Pax Christi sections support this programme) in order to better promote their work within our membership network and church groups in the UK. The full report of their visit with photos can be found on [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

*Who are you? Catholic Jew Muslim? ..... A human being*

Graffiti photographed on the 'security' wall dividing Israel and Palestine

### PEACE SUNDAY 2008

*(celebrated in England & Wales on Sunday 20th January)*

The theme for 41st World Day of Peace message by Pope Benedict XVI is: **"The Human Family: Community of Peace"**  
Resources available on [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)



## OPENING DOORS - OPENING HEARTS

### Poverty and Homelessness Action Week: 27 January 2008 - Sunday 3 February 2008

This is the first major event of the 2008 UK Poverty Campaign. During the week it is hoped that groups will organise at least a hundred local events across the country. These will range from very large to very small. The alliance organising the campaign have produced excellent briefing material to help organisers. The main purpose of the events is: to provide the opportunity for people with direct experience of poverty and/or homelessness or poor housing, to speak out for themselves, while encouraging those with power, authority and different experiences to listen.

Training sessions took place recently in Chester and Liverpool. Action Week Events are planned to take place in Chester (30 Jan, 7.30, Hoole URC, contact Pam Price 01244 341544) and in North Wales, Birkenhead and Liverpool. For more information contact Church Action on Poverty 0161 236 9321.

### GM CAMPAIGN

Biochemical companies have persuaded some farmers and politicians - in UK, Europe and elsewhere - that GM is not merely OK, but offers a solution to the problem of "feeding the world", as one millionaire grower in Argentina claimed. Our Government may agree. Before the May 2008 meeting of the CBD (UN Convention on Biological Diversity), pressure to legalise GM products will grow - opposition will be dismissed as irrational. The motive of the companies - to create monopolies ( and reap the profits from otherwise redundant research) - will not surface.

Two new texts - short and to the point - can be used in the resistance campaign. They have been made for use directly as actions.

**The Soil Association campaign** is more general and continuous. A Soil Association Journal feature describes dangers revealed in animal feeding trials, and one human trial. Yet manufacturers and regulators reject the need for testing: GM plants are claimed to be "substantially equivalent" to conventional ones. Odd when the selling point of GM products is that they are novel, and are patented as such. Odd that the unpredictability of outcomes after implantation of the foreign gene has been brushed aside.

The Action requested is to send the article (1 double sided A4) to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) - address supplied - with a covering note expressing your concern. More details [www.soilassociation.org.uk](http://www.soilassociation.org.uk)

**The Progressio campaign** was launched 16th October, World Food Day, and is building from there, in the run-up to May 2008. It focuses on Terminator seeds. A Progressio action is contained in a mock seed packet labelled "Corn Seeds , terminator variety". Inside is a text describing how such seeds will ruin poor farmers world-wide. Not merely a one-harvest thing, but needing chemicals to thrive and possibly contaminating crops nearby. Heard of this before? Of course, but it hasn't gone away, and now there are also Zombie Seeds! We need to convince our Government and others that the Moratorium on Terminator seeds should be maintained.



The Action requested is to send the return card enclosed back to Progressio free-post; they will send them in bulk to the MPs appropriate (you have to name your MP). Cards from Progressio at [www.seedsaver.org.uk](http://www.seedsaver.org.uk) Peter Byrne - Chester World Development Forum

### ONE WORLD ONE PEOPLE ONE CHURCH ONE VOICE

St Vincent's Altrincham held their **second International Mass** on 4 November building on the success of the first one last spring. The J & P group, many of whom are from other countries, gathered together readers from Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Belgium, Burma, Malaysia, France, Slovakia, Iraq and Ireland, and Fr Tony Grace, who has worked in Venezuela, said the Eucharistic prayer in Spanish. The offertory procession included flags from many nations which were pinned to a large world map under a banner that joyfully proclaimed that we are 'One World, One People, One Church, One Voice'.. Many of the hymns were sung in other languages and everyone was invited to say the 'Our Father' in their own native tongue. The Mass ended with a colourful display of Irish dancing by girls from three of the local schools. The church was absolutely packed and most of the congregation came through to socialize, make new friends and enjoy a sumptuous shared table with dishes from many countries. What a wonderful way to celebrate the richness and diversity that we enjoy in the parish!

Anne O'Connor



## WORKING TO COMBAT THE SLAVE TRADE TODAY IN THE UK

**United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC)** in Sheffield was established on October 3 2006, to provide support and guidance to both law enforcement and partner agencies because trafficking is serious organised crime and is core police business. Pentameter 1 which took place last year resulted in the rescue of 88 victims of trafficking from 22 different countries. There were a total of 232 arrests, which led to 134 people being charged with a variety of offences. October 3 2007 saw the launch of Operation Pentameter 2 by the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. Jacqui Smith MP. The main aims of Operation Pentameter 2 include identifying and disrupting those involved in human trafficking, rescuing victims, improving knowledge and understanding of trafficking and raising awareness of this form of criminality. Pentameter 2 aims to ensure the UK becomes hostile territory for those criminals who engage in this 21st century slavery. If you have information about human trafficking then the police can help. In the case of important urgent information that requires an immediate response contact any Police Officer



**set all free**

ACT TO END SLAVERY  
ABOLITION OF SLAVE TRADE ACT  
BICENTENARY 2007

**Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking Across Europe (CHASTE)** was founded in 2004 and has since been working with women who are escaping the clutches of the traffickers. It helps to open up some new possibilities for life as they recover from the deep and lasting trauma that this form of sex slavery entails.

In the Spring 2005 the CHASTE Round Table for safe housing first met in the offices of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. The vision was to match the Government funded provision for UK safe bed space then solely provided by the Poppy Project in London. The challenge was taken up the Salvation Army and the Conference of Religious to find capital resources and personnel to provide some safe houses independently financed to enhance the slim provision of the time.

**The Medaille Trust** is a charity founded by Catholic nuns, brothers and priests with the aim of helping women, young men and children who have been freed from sex-trafficking to regain their dignity and self-worth. The Trust provides safe housing and offers opportunities for physical and psychological healing and rehabilitation. It also raises awareness of the plight of those who are enslaved and exploited in the sex-trafficking industry in the UK and campaign on this issue.

For more details see [www.ukhtc.org](http://www.ukhtc.org) [www.chaste.org.uk](http://www.chaste.org.uk) and [www.medaille.co.uk](http://www.medaille.co.uk)

## TME TO PRAY AND REFLECT

In November a small group of us spent the weekend in Loyola Hall, Rainhill taking part in a Faith and Justice Retreat. More people arrived on both Saturday and Sunday just for the day. Arranged by the two Steves (Hoyland and Atherton) with input also by Fr Tom Cullinan, there was time to think, pray and ponder on the challenges that were being offered. In Justice & Peace we tend to focus on the work and can become busier and busier. It is good to take 'time out' occasionally and try and look more objectively at our lives. With the help of the Jesuit practice of the Examen we were encouraged to do just this. Then Fr Tom helped us to look more deeply into the Eucharist. It was a good weekend and I returned inspired and refreshed to start work on Mouthpeace. Thank you to the organisers.

Marian Thompson

## FAIRTRADE CHALLENGE FROM BRIDGENORTH

Bridgnorth Fair Trade Group will hold a fair trade fun quiz evening before Fair Trade Fortnight 2008 (Feb 25 to March 9). They issue a challenge to all other fair trade groups to do the same using the same quiz questions and the same format. They are so confident about the intellectual superiority of Bridgnorth and its surrounding district that they are prepared to offer a prize to any other district whose quiz winners obtain a higher score than the Bridgnorth winners!



They hope that all fair trade groups in Shropshire are prepared to take up this challenge. A copy of the Bridgnorth quiz (including Fair Trade, general knowledge and other rounds) together with detailed instructions for running a quiz night, are available at a nominal cost of £5 (to cover printing and postage costs).

In organising this competition, it is hoped to offer to the Shropshire Fair Trade Coalition and to fair trade groups an opportunity for publicity about county-wide activity as Shropshire comes up to the first anniversary of its Fair Trade status.

Packs are available from:- Derek Cole, 21 Farmlands Road, Bridgnorth, WV16 5AX.

Tel 01746 764350 or by email at [derek@farmlands.entadsl.com](mailto:derek@farmlands.entadsl.com)

## “CATHOLIC MIGRANTS—opportunities and challenges”

Newman National Spring Conference 2008 has the theme: The renewal of the Church in Britain through welcoming Catholic immigrants by serving their need and accepting their gifts.

### Saturday April 19th at St Ambrose College Hale Barns Altrincham

Keynote speakers : Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue of Lancaster Francis Davis Von Hugel Institute Cambridge  
Cost £22 including lunch

There will be a choice of workshops led by experts in related fields ( more details to help make your choice on the booking form) Further details and booking forms from the Conference Secretary: Peter Havard  
36 Windermere Drive Alderley Edge SK9 7UP Tel 01625 585 474

## M A S H in Liverpool

**The Merseyside Asylum Seeker Health (MASH)** met on November 1<sup>st</sup> as part of a monthly asylum seeker health education program in Liverpool. This report has been compiled by Dr Joseph O' Neill. Dates of future meetings below.

### Asylum seekers – the facts

Asylum seekers are never allowed to work. 75% have their asylum claim refused very rapidly, and are then destitute, homeless, and reliant on charitable donations, and at risk of being removed to countries such as Zimbabwe and Iraq. There are perhaps 2000 destitute asylum seekers in Liverpool – the New Homeless. An excellent fact sheet is available from [equal\\_lasar@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:equal_lasar@yahoo.co.uk)

### What are the churches already doing in Liverpool?

Fr Peter Morgan, Parish Priest of St Bernard's and St Anne's told us how he had become involved when he was asked to provide bail for an asylum seeker who had been illegally detained for 10 weeks, in 2002. He spoke of the asylum seekers experience of rape and torture in their own country, and the distress and destitution they endure in the UK.

**Housing :** The Catholic Church in Liverpool, through Fr Peter Morgan , provide two houses for asylum seekers and asylum support agencies – St Anne's in Overbury Street, which houses Asylum Link Merseyside, and St Bernard's in Kingsley Road which house MRANG, another asylum support group, in addition to charitable accommodation for destitute asylum seekers.

**Hospitality :** Both venues provide a welcoming and friendly environment for asylum seekers, which is generally not available to the same extent elsewhere.

**Professional Contacts ;** Fr Peter has built up a wide network of legal, spiritual, medical, political and other contacts, and has links with two local MP's – Louise Ellman and Jane Kennedy, and has met two Immigration ministers, including Liam Byrne.

### What response are asylum seekers experiencing from the churches in Liverpool?

Three asylum seekers from Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Malawi told their very moving stories. In order to protect their safety, and to prevent punitive removal from the UK by the Home Office as a result of speaking up about their ongoing humanitarian crisis, we did not feel it safe to provide details of their presentations in this report. . Our three asylum speakers are very happy to do a presentation on their situation to sympathetic church groups, and can be contacted via Dr Joseph O' Neill at Asylum Link Merseyside on 0151 709 1713.

The asylum seekers expressed their disappointment with the overall response of the Liverpool churches to their plight. Below is a summary of their spontaneous comments in the discussion after their presentations, in their own words:-

*“We believed that the church is universal, a light...a moral compass for this society...providing moral authority...”*

*We believe the church has a big role to play... the church is not doing enough... the churches need to form a coalition to come together and provide a common front, to change government policies...*

*It is not enough to pray – put prayer into action – prayer without good works is dead - don't say to us “God will look after you” – we need clothing and housing...*

*Bad legislation is causing 21<sup>st</sup> century slavery...*

*Asylum seekers are a taboo subject in this society...*

*The church needs to reassert its spiritual and political power; it has a duty to do this...*

*The church should make a difference...”*

### Future meetings of MASH : these start at 09.30 and finish at 16.30.

December 11 <sup>th</sup> 2007	Asylum Children (Venue: Liverpool Medical Institute)
January 8 <sup>th</sup> 2008	Poverty and Destitution (Venue: LACE Centre)
February 19 <sup>th</sup> 2008	Human Rights and Legal Issues (Venue: Peoples Centre, 50 Mount Pleasant)
March 4 <sup>th</sup> 2008	Physical Health/NW Primary Care Group (Venue: Refugee Action Trust, Mount Pleasant)



**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**DECEMBER**

- ★ **1 Prisoners for Peace Day**  
www.wri-irg.org/co/01dec.htm
- ★ **1 World Aids Day** World Health Organisation  
0207 814 6726 www.who.int
- ★ **3 World Migration Day** National Catholic  
Refugee Forum www.ncrf.fsnet.co.uk
- ★ **3 'Baby Jesus, the Magi and the Powers.'**  
Speaker Tom Cullinan Newman Association  
St Theresa's Wilmslow 7.30 pm Eucharist  
8.15 pm talk Visitors welcome  
Contact Chris Quirke 0161 941 1707
- ★ **9 'Keeping the Flame of Hope Alive'** Fr Oliver  
Barry & Sr Catherine Lavery Shrewsbury J & P  
Commission Advent Reflection 4.30—6.30 pm  
Wistaston Hall Crewe Contact Joan Sharples
- ★ **10 UN Human Rights Day** www.unmeditation.org/
- ★ **10—14 Romy Tiongco** is back in our area - see p 7
- ★ **13 Annual CAFOD Carol Service** 7 pm  
St Theresa's Upholland followed by refreshments  
and Fairtrade stall in parish centre
- ★ **27 CAFOD Fun Run** 1 pm Wavertree Sports centre  
contact 0151 228 4028 www.lcafod.org.uk/liverpool

**JANUARY**

- ★ **7 'Multiculturalism: is it a discredited  
approach that leads ultimately to greater  
segregation?'** Speaker Philip Sumner  
Newman Association—venue and contact as 3 Dec
- ★ **18-25 Jan Pray without ceasing** Week of  
Prayer for Christian Unity: Churches Together in  
Britain 0207 654 7254 www.ctbi.org.uk
- ★ **20 Peace Sunday** www.paxchristi.org.uk see p.8
- ★ **27 Holocaust Memorial Day** www.hmd.org.uk
- ★ **27 Homelessness Sunday** Housing Justice  
020 7723 7273 www.housingjustice.org.uk
- ★ **27 - 3 FEB 'Opening doors opening hearts'**  
Poverty/Homelessness Action Week

**30 Action Week meeting** at Hoole URC  
Chester 7.30 pm contact Pam Price 01244 341554

**FEBRUARY**

- ★ **1 "Telling it like it is: young voices from the  
streets and some responses from the faith  
communities"** 9.15 am - 3.15 pm at the Quaker  
Meeting House, 22 School Lane, Liverpool. L1  
Contact Steve Atherton tel.0151 522 1080
- ★ **3 Poverty Action Sunday** Church Action on  
Poverty 0161 236 9321 www.church-poverty.org.uk
- ★ **4 'Kyrie Eleison: Mercy, Peace, Righteousness  
& Truth'** Speaker :Giles Hibbert OP  
Newman Association—venue & contact as 3 Dec
- ★ **15 CAFOD Lent Fast Day 020 7733 7900**
- ★ **24 "Salaam, Shalom, Peace." Liverpool J&P  
Commission Annual Memorial Lecture.** 1.30 -  
3.30 pm Archbishop Patrick Kelly reflects on his  
experience in the Middle East. Contact Steve Atherton
- ★ **25 - 9 MARCH Fairtrade Fortnight**  
www.fairtrade.org.uk www.traidcraft.co.uk

**MARCH**

- ★ **3 'Scandal Must Come: the Church, the Press  
and Offence'** Speaker Austen Ivereigh  
Newman Association—venue & contact as 3 Dec
- ★ **7 Women's World Day of Prayer 'God's  
Wisdom provides new understanding'**  
by women of Guyana www.wwdp-natcomm.org
- ★ **14 -15 Live it!** An event to celebrate the  
livesimply challenge see Page 2
- ★ **23 Easter Sunday**

**ADVANCE NOTICE**

- ★ **APRIL 19 National Newman Conference** p 11
- ★ **JULY 18-20 National J & P Conference** at  
Swanwick arranged by Liverpool Diocese see p 7

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**Copy date  
for next issue  
1/2/08**

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

*The opinions expressed in  
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[www.archdiocese-of-liverpool.co.uk](http://www.archdiocese-of-liverpool.co.uk)

