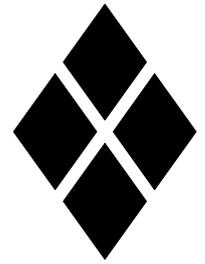


MOUTH PEACE



Shrewsbury and Liverpool Justice and Peace Commissions

Autumn 2008

“The Lord Almighty will prepare a banquet for all the nations of the world – a banquet of the richest food and the finest wine.” Isaiah 25:6-9

Migration is a fact of life. Increasingly, every community, even every church reflects more of the diversity of humankind. At many points in the Bible this reality is celebrated in the promise of a banquet to which all the peoples of the world are invited.



This year Racial Justice Sunday takes up this wonderful theme and offers an *a la carte* menu for the feast

*Lord of all nations, of all peoples,
We rejoice at the rich banquet you have set before us;
Choice food, mellow wine and exceptional company.
Thank you that no one
is excluded and everyone is welcome.
Help us to enjoy the feast in all its variety
So that it becomes for us not an occasional treat
But a staple diet of your bounty. Amen*

Prayer from *A Banquet for all People* a resource booklet produced by CARJ (the Catholic Association for Racial Justice) www.carj.co.uk or www.ctbi.org.uk/racialjusticesunday

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Issue 63

BRIDGES OF SOLIDARITY AND UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

Sue Bownas CAFOD worker for Shrewsbury Diocese writes:

I would like to use MouthPeace to convey a message of thanks from Pedro Landa, of Caritas Tegucigalpa: a message for all those people in the dioceses of Shrewsbury and Liverpool who have supported CAFOD's Unearth Justice campaign, calling for reform of the laws governing the mining activity in countries such as Honduras. Several groups organised gold chain petitions which were handed in to leading jewellery retailers in Stockport, Ellesmere Port, Chester, Macclesfield and Liverpool.

I have recently returned from a visit to Honduras where I was privileged to meet Pedro and the Environment Committee and to see and hear for myself how the open cast mining in the Siria Valley has devastated their lives. All members of the committee asked us to thank you all for your support but Pedro wrote the following message for us to bring home with us:-

*"Message to CAFOD campaign supporters: ***

The certainty that we have with the solidarity of the British people in the fights that we freed in Honduras, so that the gold mining to open pit does not destroy the future of our generations and it does not continue generating misery and diseases in our people, gives us the hope that it is possible to construct a better world, but similar to which God want for all. The diverse actions that CAFOD and all the English volunteers have made to unmask the injustice that hides behind the mining are very important to us, since they give us the strength to continue in our fight, with the confidence that we are not single and they demonstrate to us that distance is not an obstacle to construct bridges of solidarity and universal brotherhood.



We infinitely thank the men and women; adults, young people and children who are member of the group of supporters of CAFOD by all the actions of solidarity and their commitment to contribute so that the British people is conscious of the cost for our people of the gold extraction from irresponsible and blind companies by the ambition and the power of the money.

Many thanks also all its efforts to call the mining companies to be more responsible in order that the Hondurans are able to live without the fear of the destruction of the nature, of the damages to the health and the violation of our human rights, that make the mining companies at the moment."

If any of us have doubted in the past that our individual (or collective) actions here can make a difference to the lives and wellbeing of people thousands of miles away, then I hope that these words will dispel such doubts. No, the struggle isn't over but the people of the Siria Valley have been helped in ways we could never have imagined when we stood outside church collecting links for our petitions or spent time persuading jewellers to receive the gold chains.

Even as the campaigning goes on in Honduras, the people in the Siria Valley know it is already too late for them and for their families. After eight years of mining by international company Goldcorp, the natural water sources are substantially depleted and contaminated with arsenic, cyanide and mercury; homes and land have been destroyed, people dislocated from traditional communities, livelihoods and livestock lost. Recent studies carried out by independent experts showed that people living close to the mine have unusually high levels of mercury in their blood. Although the link cannot be proven scientifically, they believe that this and the health problems they are experiencing are a direct result of the contamination of the local water supply by the mine.

Yet they continue to work for justice, if not for themselves, then for others in Honduras and indeed in the many parts of the world where mining activity, far from bringing much needed prosperity is devastating communities and the environment alike. And they ask us to continue to work in solidarity with them.

If you would like to help then please look on CAFOD's website (www.cafod.org.uk/unearthjustice) for information on the latest phase of this campaign, where we are seeking the support of investors. Or contact myself or Liz in the Shrewsbury Diocesan Office on 01244 677594 (shrewsbury@cafod.org.uk) or Richard in Liverpool office on 0151 228 4028. (liverpool@cafod.org.uk)

*** Sue commented that to be authentic she passed on Pedro's message just as he had written it. Please bear in mind that English is the second, possibly third, language he uses.*



Hear My People Cry

Congratulations to Steve Atherton and the big team from Liverpool for all the work they put into organising this year's J & P Conference at Swanwick in July.

Those of us who were lucky enough to be there, were informed, inspired, encouraged and challenged. As well as all that, it was a most enjoyable weekend. We felt that for a couple of days Liverpool had come to Derbyshire!

For those who missed this weekend there are thoughts and wisdom from the conference included in this MouthPeace as well as reports of the speakers on pages 10 & 11.

Marian Thompson

One Liverpool family writes:

Having been invited to attend this year's conference it was, admittedly, with a rather nervous anticipation that we arrived later on the Friday evening. Within minutes of arrival we were enjoying a lovely evening meal and meeting new friends; this was to set the scene for the weekend.

Aside from the wonderful and engaging narratives by the speakers, the workshops were an excellent opportunity to address community issues, which relate to our own experience. We belong to a well-established parish in Liverpool with many older worshippers. I found the workshop 'Older people and Poverty' particularly engaging during which we raised issues around mobility, financial problems and isolation. I was surprised to learn that over £50 million of benefits are left unclaimed by older people in the UK. Information needs to be disseminated to local communities in order to reach the minorities. This can be done via the parish newsletter or for those more determined, flyers through doors, *there; I'm in... hook, line and sinker!*

My Husband Robbie teaches children who have learning difficulties and behavioural problems and so found the workshop on prison communities interesting. If the 'typical' prisoner's profile is one of domestic negligence, drug/alcohol abuse and social deprivation then where should the intervention be focused, are we a nurturing or punitive society? Prisoners are continually being locked up and punished for crimes that they have been conditioned into.

Our children Stephen (12) and Alice (10) had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. Stephen made lots of new friends in the Youth Group, as did Alice in her 'Y Kids' group. Their activities were well organised and totally inclusive with all children encouraged to participate within their own 'comfy zones'.

This was a lovely weekend during which we were encouraged to take time out from our busy and often hectic lifestyle and reflect on issues around poverty, employment, housing and also local community problems such as depression and loneliness. The conference is open to all, offering a warm welcome to families; the children had a wonderful weekend with their own agenda. The fantastic sense of working together for the common good was underpinned by the wonderful music (provided by Tongues of Fire) which was exhilarating and at times very moving.



As a family, we look forward to returning next year and meeting up with our new friends,

Best wishes,
Helen, Robbie, Stephen and Alice Reynolds x.

ONE CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT— the opportunity to visit 'PURE GOLD?'

This CAFOD exhibition exposes the exploitation of gold mining companies and the conditions of the local people who are affected in the Congo, Honduras and the Philippines. Large colourful photographs brought home very powerfully the destruction and devastation mining has caused. It is hoped that the exhibition will be in Chester in November.....contact Sue Bownas for more details.

SWANWICK 2009 17—19 JULY On the Road Together: A-mazed by Migration

THE MEDAILLE TRUST

A Charity to Help Sex-Trafficked Women and Girls and to Campaign Against all Trafficking of People

Ann Gill writes:

In July I once again went to the annual National Justice and Peace Conference. I signed up for a workshop simply called 'Medaille Trust', a Catholic charity established to help the victims of sex-trafficking in the UK. I had not expected it to be enjoyable but was surprised at how harrowing the experience was. The workshop was facilitated by Sister Ann Teresa SSJA, who founded the charity, and Lucy Woodman, who works in one of the safe houses.

We started with three clips from News at Ten, showing an undercover reporter posing as a UK brothel owner travelling to Eastern Europe to buy girls and young women. A spoof website had been set up and within two hours there had been 400 bookings. The video showed the reporter in Eastern European brothels having the 'goods' paraded before him in scanty underwear. The prices ranged between £3,000 to £5,000 for an outright purchase, but leasing was also available for periods of six months. We heard that 1 in 10 British men use prostitutes and there are at least 25,000 sex slaves in the UK at any one time. Worldwide between 2 and 4 million men, women and children are trafficked each year, some destined for the sex trade, some for forced labour and many other forms of servitude including the removal of organs. There was one 14 year old, trafficked at 9 and already sold on 11 times. I never imagined I would learn sexual slang from a religious sister, but do you know what 'bareback' means? It stands for unprotected sex with young girls, and men will pay a high price for this, obviously putting the girls at a high risk of becoming HIV positive. As one British man told the reporter, "If you've got enough money you can buy anything, it's just like going to Tesco."

Many of us have heard or read of how the girls are lured by the prospect of good jobs in richer nations and end up being sold into slavery as prostitutes. They are gang-raped, beaten and abused, and threats are made against their families. In this way they quickly learn to do as they are told and please their customers. We heard harrowing individual stories, a few with escaped girls talking directly to camera. I particularly remember a girl from Zambia in her late teens and trafficked into this country in January 2007.

"I managed to escape and came in contact with the Medaille Trust who have accommodated, fed and provided me with pocket money every week....I was so depressed that I attempted suicide I had no hope for tomorrow, my dreams were hopeless...All I wanted was to die and forget about all the suffering and pain I went through. I thank God because people at the Medaille Trust didn't give up on me, they

showed me love....I thought it was going to take years for me to feel like a young lady again. I have gained my confidence, I feel pretty again...I am studying...at the local college....My entire special thanks...to the staff and everyone who has made it possible to keep the charity going may God bless you all."

After this harrowing introduction Sister Ann Teresa told us more about the Trust. In 2005 a Pastoral Plan on prostitution and trafficking was sent from the Vatican to every Bishop. Sister Ann Teresa and Sister St. Joseph were asked to represent the Bishops of England and Wales at the First Pontifical Conference on the liberation of women in street-based prostitution and trafficked people. They were inspired by what they heard was happening around the world and returned to the UK to invite people from religious orders to come together in order to help trafficked people. Their first meeting took place in October 2006 and the Medaille Trust was born. Since then they have opened 2 safe houses, whose locations are secret, and helped at least 36 women and their babies. Each house provides: safety; comfortable accommodation; therapy and counselling; English tuition; opportunities to learn new skills; help with asylum claims; help to move on. They soon realised that the women cannot remain in the houses indefinitely, they need to move on to more independent lives. As the women are not entitled to any funding this seemed impossible but, since January, the Trust has been working closely with a Women's Housing Association and they now have 5 Move-on apartments and by next January they will have 10. Not only is this better for the women but it frees up places in the safe houses. In October 2007 Sister Ann Teresa and Sister Jo were asked to attend a five-Day Counter-Trafficking Seminar in Rome called 'Building a Network: The Prophetic Role of Women Religious in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons.' There was a growing awareness of the work being done by small pockets of Religious all over the world and the need for these to network and link together. In this country the Trust works closely with CHASTE (Churches Against Sex Trafficking in Europe: www.chaste.org.uk) and the UK Human Trafficking Centre in Sheffield: www.ukhtc.org).

We were left with suggestions to help deal with the situation:

- Talk about trafficking at home, in work, when socialising, in Church. If you are a man begin having conversations about demand.

Pray

- For the victims whose lives are being destroyed.
- For the men who use these women, children and young men because they are destroying their own lives as well.

THE MEDAILLE TRUST continued

Pray

- For the traffickers. They must have had awful lives to be able to buy and sell people and treat them with such violence.
- For governments, that they will use their power for the most defenceless.
- For the Church, that it will be more inclusive of women with all the implications of this.

If you live in the leafier parts of the country, don't think this isn't happening near you. There will be a brothel with Trafficked girls and women near you. We were shown a film of a very ordinary-looking house in a village with a population of only 5,000. The camera went inside to show several young women ready for

clients! Keep your eyes open for anything unusual, lots of men going in and out, drawn curtains in daylight etc. and report your suspicions to the UK Human Trafficking Centre.

Three rays of hope have stayed with me over the last few weeks. The first is the Medaille Trust itself. Secondly, the Traffickers have world-wide networks, now the Religious are setting up their own world-wide networks. Thirdly, some of the men who visit the brothels realise the women are trafficked and inform the UK Human Trafficking Centre.

All this costs a great deal so if you can support the Trust financially please do so at:
www.medaille.co.uk

The Lady of Burma

Aung San Suu Kyi appeared before us on stage in a powerful solo performance by Liana Gould at the Lowry Theatre, Salford in June. It is hard to describe the evening in which the Lady of Burma reflected on her childhood and the inspiration of her father; her relationships with her husband and family in UK; the political struggles of the Burmese people and her present longstanding house arrest.

*a paper lantern
fluttering in the breeze
delicate*

*impossibly fragile
ripped to shreds
tossed aside*

with never a second thought

*a child
fearful of the dark
of the unnamed demons
that lurk in the shadows*

*a woman so frail
she might break
- what new demons
must she overcome today?*

*a bare prison cell
a stark piercing light
never turned off
no respite day or night
from its merciless glare*

*violence
brutality
degradation
separation*

*a spirit beaten, bruised
but not broken
a spark that will not be put out*

*an iron resolve
the hope of a nation
hope still*

Thanks to Anne O'Connor who captured something of the atmosphere of the evening with these verses
NB: We can support Aung San Suu Kyi and the people of Burma on www.burmacampaign.org

"Conservation, Inclusion and Hope"

An Ecumenical Open Forum
on the Social Gospel and Justice for All.

Saturday 11th October 2 - 5pm

Lower Bebington Methodist Church, Bebington, Wirral

From 11am displays on practical conservation / lifestyle today

2.30pm an address by Martin Deane MA Green Party candidate, Catholic and peace activist - "Embracing Diversity: the ministries of Jesus for men and women" (Matthew's Gospel ch 23 v 37-39) followed by small group reflection & questions to a panel of local and national activists

Organised by members of Catholic Women's Ordination Northwest, with thanks to our Methodist friends for their hospitality and welcome.

For more information contact

Fr Peter Hooper BA, PGCE, BACP, 76, Church Road, Bebington CH63 3EB. Tel. 0151 644 7530

email@stlukethephysician.co.uk

Who is my Neighbour?

A church response to social discords linked to gangs, drugs, guns and knives

As knife crime becomes a heightened national concern, Churches Together in England in July published a timely report. Among its recommendations are: that churches should develop strategies to better support families, promote listening events for young people and encourage members to move back into deprived areas; that the Government should empower local people to tackle these issues themselves, and encourage inter-faith and inter-generational projects; that the police deepen their involvement with Restorative Justice projects and work closer with churches as key partners. It can be downloaded at www.churches-together.net

Plans are currently being drawn up for a series of receptions and discussion forums, based on this publication, in 10 key cities across the country to enable the findings to be applied in a regional setting and engage with local issues.

From 'Shropshire Christian'



PRAYER FOR THE PLANET

'Like the movement of a spiral our faith expresses itself in action and our action deepens our faith reflection'. At a well-attended meeting in West Kirby on June 4th Joan Sharples and Steve Atherton (Shrewsbury & Liverpool Diocesan J & P Commission workers) together gave an informative and thought provoking presentation, on the present environmental crisis, at the invitation of 'Towns in Transition-West Kirkby'. They indicated how the pastoral cycle, devised by Joseph Cardijn who founded the Christian Workers, could be used to develop both faith reflection and action on the various ecological challenges that face us all.

'We must ask' they said 'who are the winners and who are the losers in any changing situation and try to list them locally, nationally and internationally.' Those at the meeting did so in small groups and most discovered that it was the poor who suffer most in any society. They then made the faith reflection on their prayers for the planet using material supplied by the speakers and their own knowledge of the scriptures and other spiritual writings using the technique of the Examen to sum up the ideas which had inspired them, the people who had encouraged them and any new conclusions which they had reached.



Those working in the field of ecology and nature found themselves enriched, while others came to understand the links which exist between justice, peace and ecology. It was truly a unifying and enriching experience. To quote from a reflection used at the meeting..

*'If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere..
People would come from everywhere to defend it with their lives...
Because they would know somehow that their lives, their own roundness would be nothing without it....*

Mary Brennan St Agnes J & P Group

'BETWEEN THE FLOOD & THE RAINBOW'

Operation Noah has produced a Study Guide on Climate Change based upon key themes in Catholic Social Teaching. Containing material for six meetings, it is intended for study and reflection by adult groups.

The six themes are :

- The Common Good - The Catholic Church is committed to the Common Good which is undermined by Climate Change
- Option for the Poor - Climate Change hits the poor hardest
- Caring for God's creation - Thankfulness for God's gift of the natural world and respecting it
- Human Dignity—exploring the place humans have in relation the rest of creation
- Rights and Responsibilities—Individuals, parishes and schools can all take responsibility for promoting justice, peace and the integrity of creation and addressing climate change
- Sustainable development— we must act now to build a sustainable future.



Hard copies Price £5 plus £1 p & p from Operation Noah, The Grayston Centre, 28 Charles Square, London N1 6HJ (Cheques payable to Operation Noah)

Downloadable version from www.operationnoah.org

TRANSITION TOWNS is a new fast-growing initiative which encourages towns to adopt the Transition Model for responding to the twin challenges of Peak Oil and Climate Change. Its website, www.transitiontowns.org describes its vision of a community (not necessarily a town) 'working together to look Peak Oil and Climate Change squarely in the eye and address this BIG question:

"for all those aspects of life that this community needs in order to sustain itself and thrive, how do we significantly increase resilience (to mitigate the effects of Peak Oil) and drastically reduce carbon emissions (to mitigate the effects of Climate Change)?"

The website recognises that creativity and imagination along with collective planning are necessary to create 'a way of living that's significantly more connected, more vibrant and more in touch with our environment than the oil-addicted treadmill that we find ourselves on today'. Transition communities exist in South Liverpool and West Kirby and the latter invited Joan Sharples and Steve Atherton to lead an evening's reflection on Prayer and the Planet.

Having prepared the 90 minute session, Steve and/or Joan would be willing to use it with other groups (not necessarily linked to the Transition Town idea).

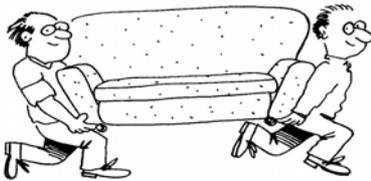
ST VINCENT DE PAUL ELLESMERE PORT FURNITURE UNIT

The SVP is well known in all parishes for its charitable work in supporting those in need and visiting the house-bound. What many people do not realise is that in recent years the SVP has become involved in the furniture re-use business to further its charitable work.

The SVP in Ellesmere Port became involved in the provision of good quality second-hand furniture 15 years ago, starting off in the garage of one of its members. Today it has grown considerably into an organisation with two part-time paid staff and nearly 50 volunteers. It runs two depots, a lock up garage, two shops and a van.

Good quality second-hand furniture is collected from the Ellesmere Port, Neston and Chester areas. This is then taken to the main depot for sorting, listing, cleaning and testing (for electrical items) and minor repair work (if needed). Finally the furniture is taken to the shops for sale or given to families or individuals in great need. The SVP Furniture Unit has entered into an agreement with the Borough Council and Social Services to provide furniture for people being re-housed from the Stoke Lodge Homelessness Unit or who have severe financial constraints. Similarly SVP Conference members can alert the team to cases of deprivation following home visits and basic furniture needs will be met. Last year over 70 families or individuals were helped in this way.

The furniture placed in the two shops is sold at very reasonable prices and delivered free of charge to people living in the area. Profits from such sales cover the expenses incurred in running the depots, shops and van. Surplus funds have been used to purchase a holiday home in Talacre, N. Wales, where needy families from the local parishes have been able to enjoy a much welcomed break at no cost (apart from food and spending money).



The Furniture Unit is a member of the Cheshire Furniture Reuse Forum. Other members of the Forum run similar projects around the county, in towns and districts including Winsford, Crewe, Chester and Wythenshawe. The principal aims of the forum are to support the different projects by sharing good practice and to encourage the reuse of a valuable resource so that it does not just end up in landfill sites across the county. Moreover the various projects help the poorer members of our community to buy good quality second-hand furniture that they would not otherwise be able to afford. The

success of the enterprise is shown by the fact that that the Furniture Reuse Forum won a national award last October as the best Community Recycling Initiative in the UK. Just before Christmas, the SVP Furniture Unit was awarded the best Sustainable Recycling Initiative in Cheshire at a ceremony in the Town Hall Chester.

Projects such as this do not happen by chance. It all hinges on the dedication and hard work of the dedicated group of volunteers and workers skilfully led by Chris Duke, SVP President and project leader since it began.

If you live in the Ellesmere Port area and have furniture you would like to donate please ring 0151 355 0689. For other contact numbers please ring the Coordinator Ged Edwards at the Blacon Community Trust on 01244 390344. www.cfrf.org.uk

Tony Walsh Furniture Unit Committee

PHONES FOR JUSTICE

Make your mobiles speak out for justice

Your old mobile phone could be worth anything from 45p to £100 for National Justice & Peace Network. However £3 is always guaranteed.

To check your model and what its worth to NJPN

- remove the rear cover
- remove the battery and SIM card
- read the model number
- Log onto www.envirocharities.com
- enter your model number and see what it is worth

Why not encourage your friends and family to hunt out their old phones or start a collection box in your parish or J & P group?

To send your phone you will need a Freepost envelope. Contact Ann at 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX Tel 0207901 4864 email: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk



Editor:-

Recycling in all its aspects is very much part of living simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor.

It would be good to hear if you have any other ideas or know of any other groups in your area. In the meantime here are a couple of suggestions:



The Freecycle Network - changing the world one gift at a time by giving or get 'stuff' for free in your local area www.freecycle.org

Tools for Self Reliance refurbishes tools given in the UK to send to communities in Africa. www.tfsr.org

JUSTICE & PEACE—SIERRA LEONE STYLE

Elizabeth Barratt writes:

Aquinas College, Stockport was the scene of Fr Jonathan Brandon's chance encounter with Miriam, one of the founders of EducAid Sierra Leone. Ever one to seize an opportunity she used the meeting to enquire from him how she might link up with the parish and schools in St Peter's, Hazel Grove. This led to our relationship with EducAid and ignited a great enthusiasm among parishioners young and old for this small but powerful charity.

Although a great supporter of CAFOD projects, the parish always responds with warm and generous empathy to the valiant and necessarily small drop efforts of tiny charities, - mainly perhaps because they can be so 'hands on' and personal. Fr Jonathan suggested to Miriam that she work through Justice and Peace in the parish and, that evening, she arrived at our monthly Justice and Peace meeting.

Knowledge of the country and its current situation was our first need as we knew little about Sierra Leone or its problems. Miriam arrived and, with the use of a PowerPoint presentation, was able to give us a vivid and shocking picture of life in this beautiful country. Below is a synopsis of her presentation:

Sierra Leone, currently ranking 177th out of 177 on the UN's Human Development Index, is 5 years out of a ten-year brutal rebel war. Every NGO imaginable is in operation here; 'aid' money is pouring in from many donor governments and yet all the injustices that sparked the original civil war still stand seemingly unchallenged: 1 in 4 children die under the age of 5; adult literacy figures vary between 20 and 30%; only 1 in 3 people have access to safe water; maternal mortality rates are the highest in the world, and so the story goes on.

Sierra Leone is a country blessed with rich natural resources: the 3rd deepest natural harbour in the world - potential for importing and exporting to and from the whole West African sub-region and indeed the world; rich, fertile land on which anything and everything grows - potential for a strong agriculture based economy; stunning paradise-like beaches - potential for a strong tourist industry; not to mention the minerals: gold, diamonds, bauxite, rutile among others - potential on their own for a strong economy. The questions remain: what happened and what happens that so much potential is lost such that Sierra Leone continues to come out at the bottom of the international poverty and development tables?

The above picture of Sierra Leone is quite disturbing and it is only keeping an eye firmly on the small scale individual successes that makes it possible to keep believing in the fight against injustice on a day to day basis. Young people with every reason to be anti-social, angry with the world and incapable of positive

action, gain an education, waste no opportunity to move for-

ward, prove themselves capable leaders for good, uphold strong morals and put themselves in position to be the backbone of a positive Sierra Leone.

This is the experience of EducAid Sierra Leone. EducAid is a very small UK-based Christian charity. It was founded by 2 friends in 1993 on their return from a student exchange visit in Sierra Leone. It is now run by 6 volunteers in the UK who support, through appeals in churches and schools across the UK, a staff of 30 Sierra Leoneans who teach nearly 1000 students. EducAid runs the only free secondary schools in Sierra Leone and targets vulnerable war affected young people who would otherwise find it impossible to meaningfully complete secondary education. After running a sponsorship programme for 6 years where control of quality was an issue, we started our own school in September 2000. On the first day there were 20 students directed to us by local religious and community leaders and we worked on the back veranda of a house we rented. Today, there are 990 students across 4 schools. We have moved from the back veranda to our own buildings in each case. Students leave us with some of the best exam results in the country and a good number have been sponsored on by friends of EducAid to tertiary level - trainee doctors, accountants, teachers and engineers. But not only are their employment chances improved they are also empowered in other ways. They know their rights and are in a position to claim them not with armed revolution this time but with clear arguments demanding accountability and justice from their politicians and leaders. In addition to this they can put behind them the violence of their past. They can turn to a new page where the terrible things they



have seen, done and had done to them can be forgotten and they can do things of which they can be proud. They become part of a movement for good, constructive accountable society. They are still the minority not the majority but they are seeds of hope being sown one by one. Maybe one of the seeds will be the seed of Sierra Leone's own Mandela, Martin Luther King, Romero or Gandhi.

Not surprisingly this story caught the attention of all present. We continued to research and inform ourselves about the plight of young Sierra Leoneans and then

made a decision to make EducAid the recipient of our annual parish Advent Appeal. A leaflet on the situation in Sierra Leone and the work of EducAid was prepared and distributed at all masses on the first Sunday in Advent. It was enough to fire the imaginations and open the hearts and purses (yet again!) of parishioners. By the end of Advent over £2,500 had been raised. This contribution to the work of EducAid was a significant proportion of its annual budget and helped to make possible its continuation, small seed by small seed.

Our interest was not to end there and the primary school children in the parish were not to be outdone. As well as visiting the parish to say a thank you at each mass, Miriam, on a later visit home to England, also managed to fit in a visit to one of our parish primary schools, St Simon's, to talk to the children about the plight of young people like themselves in her adopted country.

... contd.

J & P SIERRA LEONE STYLE continued....



"Adam in Eden" a play by St Simon's

The children's reaction was quite astonishing. They learnt that it costs EducAid £120 to educate a child for a year. It was decided among them that their seven classes would try to raise the money for 7 children as their Lenten project.

Reception and Years 1 & 2 undertook a sponsored walk; Years 3, 4 and 5 combined their efforts and put on a play called 'Adam in Eden' for parents before the Easter holiday; Year 6 held a hunger lunch to which parents were invited and put on a talent show. Prior to the start of the Adam in Eden performance Miriam's video presentation of EducAid's work was shown to unusually silent parents. The collection after the performance was the largest amount the school had ever raised after a single event. The project totally captured both children's and parents' imaginations. At one stage when a further £45 was needed to tip the amount over into paying for a further child, a granny arrived at the school with an additional £20 and two children in Year 3 who have their own chickens brought their eggs into school and sold them until the remaining amount was reached. By the end of Lent the children had raised £1,380, enough to put 11 children through a year's education. What a magnificent achievement for our very young parishioners!

For more information about EducAid Sierra Leone see www.educaid.org.uk or send an email to

miriam@educaid.org.uk or james@educaid.org.uk

If you would like to make a contribution to the work, cheques made payable to EducAid can be posted to J Boardman, 89 West St, Harrow on the Hill, HA1 3EL

A RETURN VISIT TO ZIMBABWE

Irene McKay writes:

I returned to Zimbabwe in 1995, 2001 and June 2008 after leaving in 1978 following ten years working there as a missionary teacher and trainer. The focus for this last visit was the 30th anniversary of the Ndhlela (The Way) Centre in Gweru - a multi purpose community residential training centre, which with my Zimbabwean colleague I helped to develop on land that did not fall under the existing apartheid land laws.

The visit was overshadowed by the impending presidential election at the end of June. The only dissension from almost unanimous desire for change was from one elderly Zimbabwean Christian friend and statesman who, in the 1970s, had shared the deep longing for independence and justice for all. Sadly in 2001 and again in 2008 he could not face the reality of the betrayal of his own government and instead continued to blame Britain and the MDC for the present violence and economic problems. Tragically the violence continues after the sham election and attempts to find a means to negotiate a way forward. Many, including church ministers and members of my Zimbabwean family, live in fear of their lives and damage to their homes. Some Christians courageously speak out against the horror while others live with conflicting fears for themselves and others.

In 1978 £1 was matched by 2Z\$. In June 2008 £1 was linked to 1billionZ\$ and is still rising. Details of the economic situation and lack of resources are well recorded in the news, but it is still very painful to see the extent to which quality of life is so diminished for all but the rich and powerful. Water and electricity supplies are completely unreliable even for street and traffic lights as well as at the Harare International Airport. Supplies of essentials like sugar and oil for cooking are often only available to those who live in the most exclusive areas of Harare and many are deprived of basic food for survival. At the Ndhlela Centre the work is greatly hampered by the lack of finance to maintain equipment, including a room full of sewing machines. The engine for the borehole was stolen and so the agricultural initiatives are severely limited.

Despite this most tragic situation, I was deeply moved by the opportunity to share fellowship with Christians whose strength of faith and trust in God's guidance is powerfully expressed in public worship, prayer and study groups; in the tutor for theological studies who immediately started to prepare edited notes for students to give as much access as possible to this valuable resource; in the friend excited by her new found faith following the amputation of both legs and the opportunity to walk again with new prosthesis; in the joyful celebration at the Ndhlela Centre where trillions of dollars were sacrificially given to help the development work to be revived to meet the needs of people of all ages. The strength of faith is humbling echoing words of St.Paul in Romans 8 verses 24-39: 'For in hope we were saved. ...Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.' I pray that in Britain we honour that faith by our continuing prayers and action for change.

*Editor: **Action for People of Southern Africa** is concerned about Zimbabwe and suggests ways we can support T.U. leaders and the women. Click on the Zimbabwe flag at www.actsa.org to see more. There are also useful updates on the political situation there.*



Hear My People Cry

NATIONAL J&P CONFERENCE 2008

This year's conference was organised around the themes: See, Judge, Act of the Pastoral Cycle. The main speakers were Sr Margaret Scott aci, Dr Pat Riordan SJ, and John Battle MP. Thank you to both Paul Donovan and Tom Ormiston for their contributions to this report.

SEE Sister Margaret Scott aci

Tom writes:

Sister Scott has worked in 28 countries and is fluent in several languages. She teaches social ethics at St Joseph's University and is currently Director of the Raphaela Retreat Center, both in Philadelphia USA, and her book *'Eucharist and Social Justice'* is coming out soon. Educated in Staffordshire, she graduated from London University, where she became a Catholic because of her strong love of the eucharist.

Paul writes:

Sr Scott called on justice and peace activists to "develop a more critical political awareness" amid a culture obsessed with "shopping and shooting". She stressed that it will only be with the development of such an awareness that the people's cry can be heard.

Sr Scott recalled much of the structural and social sin being committed around the world. "People die every day due to lack of food and drink. Every minute 11 football fields of rainforest disappear. It is a crisis that hits the poorest hardest" said Sr Scott, who also highlighted the coveting of oil in Iraq as a social sin.

The central thesis of Sr Scott's presentation was that everything we do as Catholics and Christians should come back to the eucharist. "The eucharist is the world in a wafer" she said. Everyone is called to the table regardless of culture, class, sex, race or wealth. "The poor and dispossessed should have enough to eat. The eucharist is essentially global and inclusive" said Sr Scott, who called for a strategy of transformation of neo-liberal economies based on profit to the eucharistic model of unconditional giving. She quoted Pope John Paul II's proclamation that making justice happen was a measure of our eucharist. "The eucharist and justice go together, the eucharist without justice is sterile" said Sr Scott. "There needs to be a call for eucharistic conversion church wide and parish deep."

Tom writes:

Sr Scott said that the Eucharist is our solidarity with the poor. At the table we have the total community, all, saints and sinners.

The Penitential Rite is a cry for help, sin is never an individual affair.

The Word expresses the God of the oppressed.

Jesus inculcated social justice in to his lifestyle.

The *Offertory* is a project of solidarity and is pregnant with meaning. Bread and wine are not natural products. They have to be bought and nurtured by humans and give us a window on global trade.

The Eucharistic Prayer is where liturgical and political dialogue meet in solidarity against a backdrop of invasion, dominance and imperialism. Each prayer is about remembering the poor, the marginalised and outcast in our society.

The Consecration is Christ's proclamation to the Jewish people and should take place in a public place and not in a quiet corner. It's about being fed by Christ and in a socio-political context is important in Africa where hunger kills more people than all the major diseases combined.

JUDGE Father Pat Riordan SJ

Tom writes:

Fr Riordan has several books and dozens of publications to his credit. He teaches courses at post graduate level in Philosophy, Society and the Common Good at the Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics and Public Life, where he is Assistant Director. Fr Riordan said that his part in the Pastoral Cycle was to do some social analysis. Catholic Social Thinking is radical and profound, but sometimes packaged as pious waffle. We read it, tick it off and say "That's grand, we know that stuff, we can now move on". There are many Papal documents on social teaching, from the first, and loudest, *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XII on 15th May 1891. The one that inspired Fr Pat whilst he was studying theology and going on to study philosophy, was *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Pope Paul VI on 8th December 1975.

Paul writes:

Fr Riordan identified market fundamentalism as the cause of much suffering in the world today. This favours deregulation and assumes markets will look after themselves. "It cannot work. There are some companies that Government's cannot let fail" said Fr. Riordan, pointing to actions from the British and US Government to prop up banking institutions like Northern Rock. "On the one hand free markets are espoused and on the other they are not allowed to fail."

Fr Riordan longed for the day when those responsible for much of the suffering caused by financial malpractice in the UK would be arrested rather than given golden handshakes.

He recalled Pope John Paul II's teaching on capitalism. "Pope John Paul II condemns capitalism when the markets are not regulated intelligently" said Fr. Riordan, who recalled the collapse of Equitable Life as an example of a failure of regulation.

Conference report continued....

He recalled a Marxist analysis to explain how the world had reached the point where people have become the slaves of markets. First there was alienation. This happens as a result of people being talked into taking mortgages and loans beyond their means. They then become oppressed by the consequences.

"People define themselves through the division of labour. People are defined according to what they do rather than who they are" said Fr Riordan. "We remove ourselves from our own humanity, break bonds with others."

There is then an ideology created that says this is the natural way to look at things.

"So it becomes the natural way to an individual, standing alone. I decide how I want to define my life, plan my life" said Fr Riordan, who stressed that the challenge was to speak out against the ongoing injustice of the capitalist dynamic that amounts to thieving from the poor and conducting wars.

ACT Nanele de Araujo CAFOD partner

Paul writes:

Nanele de Araujo told her moving story from being in the depths of poverty and despair to working for homeless people in São Paulo.

Life became so bad that Nanete finished up at one point living under a viaduct in São Paulo with her husband and family. "People walked by looking at us as though we were a heap of rubbish" recalled Nanete.

The family then received some help when a group known as the Angels of the Night came bringing food to the hungry and homeless family. A man then said he could find them some accommodation. "The accommodation was in a hospital that had been closed for 18 years. I was concerned the children might contract illnesses and told my husband I was not going to go" said Nanete. "But he said that he would end up in prison if we went back on the streets."

The family moved into the building and Nanete became more aware of her rights to housing under the Brazilian constitution. "It was like we'd been thrown a rope and climbed up it. There are families living in sub-human conditions who could climb up it too" said Nanete, who then became involved in working to empower homeless people to take charge of their destinies.

Nanete told how there are 420,000 buildings sitting empty in central São Paulo while people live homeless on the outskirts. In some areas, thousands live in squalor while alongside the rich have apartments with swimming pools and tennis courts. "Our struggle is to bring people from the outskirts into these empty buildings so that they can be fulfilled in their lives" said Nanete. "Strength and will-power can really make a

difference, working together fighting for justice and peace. Those who aren't struggling are dead."

ACT John Battle MP

Tom writes:

John Battle a Labour MP for an inner Leeds constituency has always been an ally to the poor and marginalised. He is currently Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group - Friends of CAFOD. He states that there is no Church without the poor. He commented on how people in his constituency from diverse backgrounds tend to keep apart, but when there is a local disaster then they tend to help one another and integrate. Could we not become friendlier without adversity?

Paul writes:

John called for the Justice and Peace movement to embrace building globalisation from the base upward. He called on J&P activists to be active in moves to bind together social justice, citizenship and social spirituality.



He welcomed the government agenda of empowerment and called for services like caring for the elderly, meals on wheels and child care need to be devolved down to the locality of five streets coming together. There is then an ideology created that says this is the natural way to look at things.

A reflection was given by Fr Tom Cullinan OSB

Tom writes:

Fr Tom who lives in Liverpool, is a theologian and a prolific writer on spiritual and social issues. He is a vegetarian and always uses public transport. Also a regular speaker at Newman Society meetings and J&P conferences.

Fr Tom commented on how we look to blaming others for social problems. He said that if his visitors arrive late and they blame the terrible traffic congestion, Fr Tom sometimes chides them and says "you mean the cars in front of you". We are sometimes part of cause of the problem. As part of the Pastoral Cycle - See, Judge and Act - we should try to see beyond our own self interests.

Archbishop Patrick Kelly was the chief celebrant at Sunday Mass and was present for the whole conference. He prefers the Mass to be on a Sunday, saying "although the Jews start their Sabbath celebration on Friday evening, they don't finish on Friday".

The young people, who were looked after by 'Ykids' gave a presentation during the Mass.



DIARY DATES

SEPTEMBER

9 'Torture' MASH (Merseyside Asylum Seekers Health) 10—3 CASA 29 Hope St. Liverpool. Contact Weston Chimuzu or Julia Taylor at asylum@initiativefactory.org

14 'A Banquet for All People' Racial Justice

Sunday Join Bishop Brian for Mass to celebrate the growing diversity of Shrewsbury Diocese
St Anne's Pillory Street Nantwich, 2.30 pm

21 Global Ceasefire Day www.peaceday.org

23 'Spirituality' MASH See Sept 9

30 "The Sound of Many Waters" Mary Colwell and Bishop Declan Lang from Clifton Diocese share their year-long celebration of the need to care for the environment. 7.30—9 pm LACE, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, L17 1AA. Contact Liverpool J & P Office

OCTOBER

3 CAFOD Harvest Fast Day

4 "A Dynamic Day for Peace" A celebration of the feast of St Francis of Assisi, with speakers, Franciscan spirituality, prayer, workshops, and resources. 10—3.30 St Anthony of Padua, Queen's Drive, Mossley Hill, Liverpool, L18 8A. Contact Liverpool J & P Office

7 'Children' MASH See Sept 9

11 "Hear My People Cry" Liverpool J&P Commission's Annual Assembly, following the Pastoral Cycle model used at this year's NJPN Conference. 10- 4 LACE, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, L17 1AA. Contact Liverpool J & P Office

11 "Conservation, Inclusion and Hope" Ecumenical event in Bebington. Contact Peter Hooper 0151 644 7530 See Page 5

19-26 'Growing Together' One World Week
See www.oneworldweek.org

19-26 Week of Global Action against Debt and the International Financial Institutions
See www.debtweek.org

19-26 Week of Prayer for World Peace
Prayer leaflets from <http://nfpb.gn.apc.org/Prayer/>

16 Fernanda Borges MP in East Timor's Parliament and leader of the reconciliation process. Evening, time to be confirmed, St Michael's, Horne St, Liverpool L6 5EH. Contact Liverpool J & P Office

24 United Nations Day www.unmeditation.org/

NOVEMBER

4 International Conference MASH See Sept 9

8 Faith & Justice Retreat Stephen Hoyland leads a day using the *Examen* prayer practice to raise environmental awareness. (£7 contribution) 10—4 Loyola Hall Warrington Road, Rainhill, Prescot 0151 426 4137 loyola@clara.net

8 From Violence to Wholeness A workshop led by Shelagh Fawcett & Joan Sharples New Brighton 10—4. Limited places -Pre-booking essential - Contact Tony Forder 0151 639 4968. (Suggested donation £6)

8 Stockport Fairtrade Fair 10—3 Stockport College opposite Town Hall

11 Remembrance Sunday Peace Pledge Union white poppies 0207 424 94444

12-13 MASH International Conference See Sept 9

9-15 Prisons Week www.prisonweek.org

16 Prisoners' Sunday

26 'Feed the world— at what cost?' Panel discussion arranged by Chester World Development Forum, including speakers from Progressio and Soil Association. 7pm at University of Chester. More details from Peter Byrne, 01244 678087

DECEMBER

1 World Aids Day World Health Organisation www.who.int

3 World Migration Day

9 'UN 60 years progress' MASH See Sep 9

14 Shrewsbury J & P Advent Reflection Led by Fr Ned Wall, 4.30 pm Wistaston Hall, Crewe
Contact Joan Sharples

Shrewsbury Chair

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

*The opinions expressed in
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