

The monthly e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly by the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com

GOOD FRIDAY REFLECTION WITH FR AUGUSTO ZAMPINI DAVIES

Fr Augusto Zampini Davies* gave the following homily at the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday at Holy Apostles, Pimlico:

The Passion of Christ is a disturbing story, full of violence, lies, cries, manipulation of power, pain, and, indeed, the death of the innocent Jesus of Nazareth, who claimed to be King and God. Sadly, our world is also like that, full of disturbing stories where violence is chief, where lies abound, where the powerful keep playing power-games at the cost of the rest, and where many innocent persons cry out because they are hurt, wounded, abandoned, or being killed.

When we witness these events, or when we are part of them, we cannot be indifferent. A colleague of mine from CAFOD was deeply moved by a killing of some Christian and Muslim families in Syria who were supporting a peace movement. Fr Pat was affected by the killing of four sisters of Mother Theresa's order in Yemen, and the kidnapping of the priest who was with them. And I was shocked by the terrorist attacks in Brussels, probably because I could have been there. I must admit that when I watched the scenes of these atrocities, I couldn't escape having violent feelings and thoughts. Who on earth can possibly claim that killing innocent people is an act wanted by God? What kind of God is that?

Behind these two questions were lying some unnerving thoughts.

First, I wanted those people who committed the cowardly and atrocious murders to be punished. I even thought about revenge. But suddenly I realised they had killed themselves, since the terrorists in Brussels were suicide bombers. So what am I supposed to do with my unwanted desires to respond to violence with more violence?

Second, I felt sympathetic with the complaint of many that religion is poisoning people, and therefore what individuals and societies need to do is to get rid of God and religion altogether. Imagine there is no religion; this would surely be a step forward toward peace, as John Lennon would put it. But I am a religious person, and all my life is based in God. So what am I supposed to do with these anti-religious thoughts?

The Passion of Christ sheds light upon these relevant questions that many have today. Regarding violence, Christ suffered it, but did not inflict violence on others. As soon as one of his disciples, St Peter, tried to defend Jesus with a sword, cutting the ear of the soldier Malchus, he was scolded by Jesus: 'put your sword down Peter', 'put your sword down'; and then he healed the wounded soldier.

God, as revealed by Christ, does not want us to be violent; he wants us to follow him in the path of liberating peace, even if others react violently to our proposals. He wants us to follow the path of healing wounds, even to those we don't like or we consider enemies. God the Father is not a violent crazy god who sends his innocent son to be killed; it was Jesus, his son, who freely decided to reveal the love of the Father, and speak openly to everybody about the kingdom of justice and peace. And he decided to show this love up to the end, perfectly, radically. Moreover, his plea while dying was for forgiveness, even of his executioners: 'Father, forgive them, because they don't know what they are doing'. Jesus knows that only peace can free us from violence, that forgiveness can free us from revenge, and that his cross can help us to address violence differently.

So when we talk about the risk of religious radicalisation, we need to be cautious. Yes, it's true that people from any religion, Christians included, can and do perform violent actions in the name of their beliefs, either with words or deeds. But this is a denaturalisation of God, a corruption of religion. Truly religious radicalisation, as Christ has revealed, is that of love, is to be peaceful till the end, is to speak overtly about justice regardless of the consequences, is to cry out for the liberation of the poor, is to be merciful, is to give ourselves up for others as opposed to exploiting or killing others for our own sake.

So what to do with our inner violent feelings and thoughts? Let us put them into the cross today; Christ will take them and transform them. That's why he died for us; to free us from everything that hinders actual life, even from violence and death.

And what to do with our reluctances to faith and religion? Let us try this Holy Week to get closer to the one who has re-linked heaven and earth, who has overcome death, and who is willing to embrace us so as to bring the light of his resurrection to our most obscure feelings, thoughts or actions. By contemplating Jesus' cross, we don't become naïve persons; on the contrary, we can become more wise and peaceful, because we are able to see the cruelty of his passion and all the sufferings and deaths of our world with new eyes. Behind each single cross, there is hope in a new life.

* Fr Augusto is a theological advisor to CAFOD

Source: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=29728>

FR ROBIN GIBBONS: MAUNDY THURSDAY REFLECTION

The fuss over Pope Francis' decision to allow women to have their feet washed during the Eucharist today is incomprehensible to many people, especially if, like me, you work and live in an ecumenical setting where women and men share ministry together. I worry about the tendency to misogynistic takes on the historical reality of Jesus' foot washing as though it was part of some ordination rite, excluding women, which it plainly isn't.

Why do I think that? Well perhaps all those who get worked up might like to look at other references to foot washing in the New Testament and reflect on their significance. There are several that show women washing Jesus' feet!

There is the sinful woman of Luke 7.36-50 who anoints Jesus with tears and love. Mark and Matthew comment about the significance of her action and that what she has done, quoting Jesus: 'Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.' (Mt 26:6-13). John places one foot washing in the context of a family meal with Martha Mary and Lazarus, the friends he loved. Normally foot washing was a servant's job, and only done by peers as a mark of great respect, which is why Jesus' washing of the disciples feet shocked them because it places his action with all those left out, on the edges, marginalised! So when we place these alongside the Last Supper account a much richer symbolism emerges.

When this ritual emerged in early Christianity it was seen as something particularly connected with humble service and open to any believer, in 1 Tm 5:9,10 the Christian widow's practice of foot washing is understood as something done often: 'No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds'. The context is clear it is part of loving service.

This rite belongs to the community as a whole and in many churches people are thinking how it could be done in a better way, for it is not about gender or power, nor confined to one group, The Anabaptist tradition felt it to be almost sacramental in its use and to this day celebrates it with enormous care and love. It is a symbolic act capable of many meanings and we must be thankful for that gift of richness given us by the loving Lord.

Prayer from the Mennonite Tradition for Foot Washing

*Eternal Creator and Loving God, in the act of kneeling to wash one another's feet,
may we kneel also in our hearts so that our lives may bow in service to your will and not our own.
In allowing our feet to be washed, may our lives be cleansed with your forgiveness
so that we may go forth freed from the bonds of guilt and despair to live in freedom and hope.
O Lord, in our washing of feet, cleanse our relationships with one another as well.
May we, in washing one another's feet, forgive and accept forgiveness from one another
for any hurts or wrongs or misunderstandings that have passed between us,
so that we may rise to sit together at your table in a renewed and strengthened fellowship in your love. Amen.*

Source: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=29724>

ROBERT A. H. COHEN: THE WICKED SON'S GUIDE TO PASSOVER

Celebrating Passover can be tricky for us awkward Jews. Liberation and freedom have become the 'Passover Problematic' for the in-house critics of Judaism in the 21st century.

I'm thinking of Jews like me (growing in number each year) who insist that Zionism as the route to Jewish self-determination has turned out to be a bitter disappointment.

Jews like me who think our movement of political nationalism has created nothing but salt water because it comes at the expense of another people's freedom.

Jews like me who think our synagogue ethics are as thin as a piece of matzoh because they insist that supporting all things Israel is a sacred duty.

Each year our liturgy calls us to welcome 'the stranger' to join our feast because all must enjoy this festival of freedom. Towards the end of the evening, we wait expectantly for the prophet Elijah, hoping his arrival will herald messianic times with justice and peace for all. We even pour him a goblet of wine.

But there's no space at the table for the elephant in the room. It's an elephant draped in a giant black and white kaffiyeh, who rightly mocks our piety and our celebrations. It's the same elephant that's been turning up at our Yom Kippur services, our annual day of atonement, for decades but finds himself just too big to squeeze through the Shul doors.

So what's to be done? Let me introduce to you the Wicked Son of Seder night tradition. He has a radical solution to the awkward Jews' Passover dilemma. Our Seder night service, the Haggadah, tells us of 'Four sons' who draw out from their father the meaning of Passover and indeed Jewish identity.

First there's the Wise son who's keen to know all the details of the ritual celebration. The father looks proudly at him knowing that one day this child will lead a Seder night of his own. He tells him a few of the necessary do's and don'ts of the ritual.

Then comes the Wicked son. Some Haggadot describe him as 'Evil'. More modern editions of the liturgy soften the scorn by calling him 'Rebellious'.

Third is the Simple son who just wants to know the basic story. The father replies patiently quoting a verse from the book of Exodus: "With a strong hand the Almighty led us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage."

Finally there's the Young son not old enough to articulate a question. The father looks down at him kindly and quotes another verse, "It is because of what the Almighty did for me when I left Egypt."

Personally, whatever the label, I like the Wicked son more and more. He's the smartest of the bunch and on an evening designed to encourage questions, he asks exactly the right one. And by the way, the Wicked/Evil/Rebellious son is just as likely to be a daughter. And what does this Wicked son say to their father? The rebel looks his father in the eye and says: "What is this service to you?" At which point the father explodes in rage. What sounded like a perfectly reasonable question turns out to be a licence for the father to cast his child out of the family because, in the words of the Haggadah, the Wicked child has "divorced" himself from the community by "denying our very essence". His father is told to "blunt the bite" of his child and explain to him that his attitude would have left him a slave in Egypt.

So what just happened? Why was the question so terrible to ask? And why do I think the Wicked son does us such a big favour? The explanation can be found in the rabbinical instruction that at our Passover Seder night we must think of ourselves, and not just our ancient ancestors, as being personally rescued from slavery by the Almighty. All of us, every one, in every generation, follow Moses and walk through the parted waters of the Red Sea with our feet left dry. When Pharaoh and his army come racing in their chariots, they are after 'us' and not just 'them'.

The sin of the Wicked son is in formulating his question as "What is this service to you?" rather than "What is this service to us?" But what exactly is this service to his father, his mother, his siblings and all the rest gathered around the table? Has the Wicked son missed the point or spotted the problem?

Well here's my awkward Jews' commentary on the commentary. In challenging the rabbinic instruction to 'be there' the Wicked child has identified the 'Passover Problematic' and offered Elijah's cup of wine to the elephant with the keffiyeh.

If we are forever 'there' then we are forever the oppressed, forever the victim of injustice, forever racing to escape Pharaoh's chariots. Our Jewish view of the world is enslaved to the tribal past and deaf and blind to the tribal present. By his 'offensive' question, the Wicked son is demanding that we open our hearts and minds to the present and apply our Jewish paradigm of freedom and liberation to the here and now. But there is a price to pay if we have the courage to be truly 'here'. 'Here' we'll discover that we're no longer the oppressed but the oppressor. And the Pharaoh that has risen up in our own generation turns out to be ourselves.

The Wicked son knows full well that criticism of Israel is not the latest mutation of antisemitism as some who should know better insist on telling us. That's the opinion of those determined to be only, and forever, 'there'.

'Here', Palestinian oppression is real. The anger is justified. The hatred is not irrational. What may feel like antisemitism turns out to be something worse. We have taken away the freedom of another people. And we have abandoned the post-Exodus mission to build a just society. We have "divorced" ourselves from our own tradition, we are "denying our very essence".

So it's tough celebrating a Wicked Passover. The father needs to be challenged. The Seder night table needs overturning. The traditional Haggadah needs 'occupying'. Yes, there are modern peace and justice Passover supplements we can read. And radical third night Seders we can attend. But is that sufficient to address the most important Jewish issue of our time? The issue corroding our identity and our religion.

Perhaps celebrating Passover in our time has become an impossibility. The Afikomen, the broken middle matzoh, is so well hidden that it cannot be found. Should the Wicked Passover be a silent gathering? A prayer without words? Elijah's cup left empty? And then us awkward Jews can return to the news channels, the marches, the letter writing and blogging to search for the broken matzoh that must be 'here' and not 'there'.

http://www.patheos.com/blogs/writingfromtheedge/2016/03/young-liberal-zionists-if-youre-serious-about-peace-let-go-and-move-on/?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=writingfromtheedge_041716UTC060406_daily&utm_content=&spMailingID=51168111&spUserID=MTg2NDk3OTY3MzYxS0&spJobID=902118902&spReportId=OTAyMTE4OTAyS0

- Greenbelt speaker Robert Cohen is a Jew, married to Anne, an Anglican priest (and former Christian Aid staff member) working in a diocese in Yorkshire. He describes his blog *Writing from the Edge* as 'rescuing the Hebrew Covenant one blog post at a time.'

LONDON: ARCHBISHOP ROMERO SERVICE

Ellen Teague reports: Sunday, March 20, 2016

Pan pipe music from Bolivia filled St Martin in the Fields Church at Trafalgar Square and brought a flavour of Latin America to the opening of Saturday's annual Romero service in London. The ecumenical service marked the 36th anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero and took the theme: *'The violence of peacemaking - Archbishop Romero and the Search for Peace'*.

Julian Filochowski, Chair of the Archbishop Romero Trust, welcomed the congregation to the service by recalling the beatification of Romero in San Salvador on 23 May 2015, particularly the rare solar rainbow that circled the sun during much of the ceremony. He suggested it gave a cosmological dimension to the beatification. The rainbow around the sun had appeared once Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, had finished reading the official decree proclaiming Oscar Romero as a martyr and a blessed. Romero oversaw the diocese of San Salvador from 1977 until 24 March 1980, when he was shot and killed while saying Mass, after challenging the violence in his country.

The keynote speaker was Fr Francisco de Roux SJ, who said he has long been "touched and inspired by the witness to peace of Oscar Romero". Since the 1980s Fr de Roux has been a leading voice in the efforts to seek a negotiated settlement to Colombia's decades-long armed conflict, and he thanked CAFOD and Christian Aid for their support. He has received numerous awards recognising his contribution to human rights and peace-building: among them the French Légion d'Honneur and Colombia's National Peace Prize.

In his talk he reflected that in working with communities surrounded by violent groups, "we discovered that there is no safety in weapons, and that the only true and sustainable protection comes through trusting people". He hopes that plans for a peace agreement between the State and the FARC guerrillas will bring peace, ending 50 years of violent conflict. "Urban and especially rural communities are desperate and exhausted by the war" he said. He deplored the 'cult of violence' in Colombia and the threats he and fellow Jesuit Javier Jiraldo face in their peacebuilding work, and suggested that, "today Romero is asking you, in the name of Jesus, to continue your support for ordinary people, Christians and non-Christians alike, women and men who keep on believing in a fertile, non-violent struggle for peace."

Revd Richard Carter of St Martin in the Fields pointed out that serious peacemaking can be violent, as evidenced by the famous peacemakers such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Romero who all died violently. He praised Fr Pacho for his peacemaking work with ordinary people and suggested, "we too must be seeds of peace wherever we are". Readers at the service included Bishop John Rawsthorne, Emeritus of Hallam and Clare Dixon of CAFOD (both trustees of the Archbishop Romero Trust), Christine Allen of Christian Aid, Pat Gaffney of Pax Christi and Fr Joe Ryan, Chair of Westminster Diocese Justice and Peace Commission.

The musicians led songs on the theme of peace, including 'Bearers of Peace' by Bernadette Farrell, and the Romero Song. A collection was taken at the end for the work of the Archbishop Romero Trust.

Other services to mark the anniversary of Blessed Romero's martyrdom were held in Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester and Edinburgh.

For more information see: <http://www.romerotrue.org.uk/>

Hear the Romero Song at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21CN815v2G0>

Full text: Fr Francisco de Roux SJ at London Romero Service <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=29683>

MANCHESTER ANGLICAN NEWS: NEW RESOURCE CHURCH TO BE ESTABLISHED IN SALFORD

The Revd Gareth Robinson, 41, has been appointed to lead the first 'Resource Church' in the Diocese of Manchester, aimed at reaching young adults in the city centre and becoming a resource for the wider ministry of the Church of England in Manchester. Taking up his appointment in the autumn, Gareth will be based at St Philip's Church in Salford.

Cities like Manchester need lots of different kinds of churches in order to flourish. The diocese has identified that within a mile of the city centre more than 70% of the population is aged under 30, a number that will continue to rise as more apartments are built and occupied. In response to this changing demographic, the diocese is creating a new type of church that will be able to focus on reaching a generation that is often missing from its churches.

The move follows over a year's research and consultation with the Bishop's Leadership Team, the Deanery of Salford, Canon Andy Salmon and the PCC of St Philip's, Salford. Andy Salmon will remain Priest in Charge of Sacred Trinity which is already a growing church that is developing its own plans to further serve its parish and the wider city centre in a different, but complimentary, way.

The Bishop of Bolton, The Rt Chris Edmondson, who has been instrumental in the planning process, said, "I am very excited by the development of Manchester's first Resource Church. While not exclusively for young adults, it will have a particular focus in this area. The experience of other cities where Resource Churches have recently been established is that they offer a unique opportunity that can release blessing and stimulate mission and growth in the city, local deanery and diocese as a whole."

The Bishop of Islington, The Rt Revd Ric Thorpe, who has a national role in supporting newly established worshipping communities, said "I am so excited about Manchester Diocese's plans to launch a city centre Resource Church in Salford. It is bold and forward thinking, and part of a growing number of similar initiatives around the country. This move will add something new to churches in that region as they play their part in proclaiming Christ afresh in this generation."

Source: <http://www.manchester.anglican.org/news/1877/new-resource-church-to-be-established-in-salford?platform=hootsuite>

Stephen Crabb's speech to the Early Intervention Foundation annual conference, London 12/4/16

Comment: Bernadette Meaden April 12, 2016

When Stephen Crabb replaced Iain Duncan Smith as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, it was an opportunity to hope for a different approach, and a change of direction from the DWP. Although Mr Crabb displayed a worrying lack of knowledge about disability benefits, believing that people in the Work Related Activity Group of Employment Support Allowance were fit for, and seeking work, there seemed cause for hope. His tone was softer than his predecessor's, and his talk of never forgetting that behind every statistic is a human being seemed to be a tentative acknowledgement of the fact that for years now, the DWP has adopted an aggressive and hostile tone towards people in need of support.

However, his first major speech* was, ultimately, disappointing. On the positive side, Mr Crabb's rhetoric continues to be much less harsh than his predecessor's, and his tone more conciliatory, which is very welcome. He spoke of an all out assault on poverty, and again expressed a wish to talk to people and hear new ideas. But the substance of his speech indicated no reversal of any of the damaging policies that have been pursued in the name of welfare reform, and there were no significant announcements.

Perhaps the venue and context of his speech was more revealing. It was a conference of the Early Intervention Foundation, which was advertised as; "Looking at key themes including parent-child interaction in the early years, multi-agency working to spot risks early, the importance of couple relationships and the interplay between epigenetics and early intervention" (It is interesting to note the inclusion of genetics here, as there is growing support on the right in what Toby Young refers to as 'progressive eugenics', with Adam Perkins, supported by the Adam Smith Institute amongst others, seeing social security policy as a means to achieve eugenic aims.)

Now, one would have thought that the government departments most likely to engage with such issues would be Health and Education, along with local authorities. The fact that it was the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions who attended seems significant. Perhaps it indicates how far the DWP has moved, from being a department which exists to administer pensions and working age benefits, to a department that is becoming ever more involved in trying to 'nudge' and change the behaviour of working age citizens who happen to be on low incomes. It reflects the tendency on the right of politics to see poverty not as an economic problem, but the result of the personal shortcomings of individuals.

Baroness Stroud, formerly of the DWP, was at the conference and tweeted, "The EI Foundation's focus on quality of parental relationship across all family types is a way forward for policy". The Baroness is on record as saying that to tackle poverty, the government must tackle family breakdown, and the Secretary of State seemed to endorse this approach, with talk of an expansion of the controversial Troubled Families scheme.

But the root cause of poverty is not the quality of family relationships. The root cause of poverty is simply the fact that the money in society is not shared out fairly, so that some people can work very hard and still be in poverty, whilst others can do very little and be very rich.

The current government is, however, ideologically unable to concede this point, and so seeks out social problems and labels them as causes of poverty. It is easy to spend relatively small amounts of money on schemes that are billed as addressing the causes of poverty – far easier and more politically acceptable to the government and its supporters than tackling economic injustice by any major change to fiscal policy.

Of course, early intervention where a child has a problem, be it with mental or physical health, or in any other area of development, is very much to be supported. Relationship counselling and support is also to be valued. But where a child is living in a family that doesn't have enough money to live on, please don't let us pretend that by helping to improve parental relationships, but leaving the family still choosing whether to heat or eat, we are actually tackling poverty.

So Mr Crabb's all-out assault on poverty is a very noble aim, but there is little evidence that he will correctly identify the causes or make the bold moves he would need to succeed. As Alison Garnham, chief executive of the Child Poverty Action Group, said: "Universal Credit, which could have been a worthy tool for the 'all-out assault on poverty' that Crabb promises, has been crippled by repeated Treasury raids so that it will now leave people worse off than under the current system and ministers refuse to say what impact it will have on the number of people in poverty. What we now need is action to match the rhetoric, or else Stephen Crabb will be faced with the very real threat that this Government's main social policy legacy could be the biggest rise in child poverty for a generation."

For those on the lowest incomes to be helped rather than further impoverished, we would need a significant reversal of many welfare cuts, which at the moment seems extremely unlikely. The sad truth is that for this government, social and welfare policy is dictated by, and is very subordinate to, fiscal policy. And that being the case, unless he has the strength and courage to seriously challenge George Osborne, Mr Crabb may be powerless to launch an all out assault on poverty, and may have to content himself with trying to alleviate some of its symptoms.

© Bernadette Meaden has written about political, religious and social issues for some years, and is strongly influenced by Christian Socialism, liberation theology and the Catholic Worker movement. She is an Ekklesia associate and regular contributor. You can follow her on Twitter: [@BernaMeaden](https://twitter.com/BernaMeaden)

Source: Ekklesia <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/22945>

EKKLESIA LAUNCHES BOOK ON HOUSING CRISIS AT MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL

Yesterday evening (14 April 2016), Ekklesia was proud to launch our second book *Foxes Have Holes: Christian reflections on Britain's housing need* at Manchester Cathedral in partnership with Housing Justice.

The event provided an important opportunity to discuss the UK housing crisis in a city that will struggle to meet the housing needs of families in the next decade; currently has 20,000 on the waiting list for social housing and is already experiencing a tent city of homeless people.

We began with a warm welcome from Dr David Holgate, Canon for Theology and Mission, and a brief introduction to Ekklesia from our Co-Director, Simon Barrow. Virginia Moffatt, Ekklesia Chief Operating Officer, then set the context for the book's publication, citing factors such as an overinflated housing market, rising rents, and the sell-off of council estates in reducing the availability of affordable, accessible housing for all.

The Rt Rev Dr David Walker, Bishop of Manchester, provided some helpful reflections on our need for home and a place to belong. He pointed out the iniquities of the benefit cap and bedroom tax that was forcing people out of their homes, and the importance of all of us being able to live in a safe place.

Helen Woolley, architect and Reader in Landscape Architecture and Society at the University of Sheffield, discussed the importance of open space in cities. Describing how Bourneville, her home town, was deliberately designed to provide gardens and green spaces for tenants, she pointed out the importance of bringing such thinking to modern urban planning.

Andrew Francis, theologian, contributor and editor of the book, concluded by arguing for the importance of housing that was truly affordable, accessible to everybody who needed it and which enabled people to live in and contribute to their local communities. He finished by urging everyone to take copies of the book to their local churches and politicians, and to back the book's call for a nationwide programme to develop the housing we need for the future.

Ekklesia is grateful to all who made the event so special, including those offering thoughtful comments from the floor and the two donors who helped to crowdfund the book. We will be holding follow up events in London, Oxford and Glasgow, so please do keep an eye out for those. We would love to see you there.

A podcast of the event will be available shortly. You can now order books via Amazon. If you would prefer not to use Amazon you can order via the office, paperback (£11.99) or Ebooks (£2.99). Please email ekkleisia.office@gmail.com.

Source: Ekklesia <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/22958>

APPRENTICESHIPS 'FAILING YOUNG PEOPLE', SAYS COMMISSION

21 March 2016

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission says apprenticeship starts for under-25s rose by 4% from 2010-14, compared with 17% for over-25s. And most training courses taken were not a step up from the apprentice's previous level of study, it added.

No 10 said it was committed to getting more young people into apprenticeships. The commission welcomed the government's efforts to improve the number and quality of apprenticeships and said that for too long the vocational route to qualifications had been seen as an option for "other people's children".

But the report said: "The overall growth in apprenticeship starts has been driven by large increases in participation by over-25s. While youth apprenticeships have roughly flatlined since the early years of the decade, starts by over 25s are over 150,000 higher in 2014/15 compared to 2009/10. In comparison to this increase there were over 5,000 fewer apprenticeship starts by under-19s in 2014/15 compared to 2010/11. And there were around 1,000 fewer 19-24 apprenticeship starts in 2014/15 compared to 2011/12."

If this was projected forward, then adult apprenticeship starts would continue to increase, while youth starts would stagnate or decline, it added. The commission also highlighted how the vast majority of apprentices were studying at levels below their age. For example, 68% of A-level age apprentices were studying apprenticeships at GCSE-level and 98% of degree-age apprentices were studying at A-level equivalent or lower, the report said. It also highlighted how many youth apprenticeship starts were in sectors associated with lower pay and prospects for progress, such as hairdressing.

Commission chairman Alan Milburn said: "The government is committed to giving all young people a chance to make something of their lives, but the current drive to increase the number of apprenticeships isn't delivering for people under the age of 24. "Many of these apprenticeships don't offer young people a foundation they can build on. The government needs to increase the quality of apprenticeships on offer to young people and make sure that every apprenticeship offers a genuine route to success."

A government spokesman said an extra £25m had been allocated for recruiting 16 to 18-year-olds into apprenticeships to support the government's pledge to deliver three million apprentices by 2020. "Apprenticeships give school leavers the opportunity to gain the skills they need to get on," he added. "Our reforms mean apprenticeships are more rigorously tested, last longer and are more responsive to the needs of employers."

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-35847191>

TESCO FOOD DONATION SCHEME TO BE EXTENDED ACROSS MERSEYSIDE

Alan Weston writes:

A food donation scheme in Liverpool is being extended across the rest of Merseyside. The programme sees unsold supermarket food being distributed to those in need - cutting down on waste and helping vulnerable people.

Liverpool was among the first cities in the country to benefit from Tesco's Community Food Connection with FareShare FoodCloud service.

Following a successful pilot at Tesco's Old Swan store the initiative will now be rolled out to a further 10 stores: Allerton Road, Liverpool One, Edge Hill, Walton Liverpool, Formby, Deysbrook Barracks, Woolton, Bidston Moss Extra, Heswall and Litherland. Charities and community groups who register for the service will be linked to Tesco stores with innovative technology that allows store teams to alert beneficiaries to surplus food items available at the end of each day.

FOOD FACT
1 in 5 children go to school hungry in the UK.

Trussell Trust foodbanks have given out 415,866 meals to children in the past year.

The unsold food available as part of the programme will be fresh produce such as fruit, vegetables and bakery products. Chilled products like meat, dairy and ready meals are also offered.

Simon Jones, store manager at Tesco Old Swan, said: "We're pleased to say that the pilot period for this important new programme has been a success so we're ready to extend it to more stores across the city. No food that can be eaten should go to waste. We're working hard to make sure that the unsold food is made the most of. We have great links with local charities and community groups, so we're pleased to introduce another initiative that will support their efforts to help vulnerable people."

Mark Hall, Merseyside development manager for FareShare, praised Tesco for demonstrating "real leadership in tackling food surplus." The announcement followed a pilot in 14 UK stores which saw Tesco donate over 22 tonnes of food to more than 50 charities, the equivalent weight to over 50,000 meals.

For more information and to register for FareShare FoodCloud please visit www.fareshare.org.uk/fareshare-foodcloud

Source: www.liverpooecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/tesco-food-donation-scheme-extended-11120699#ICID=FB-Liv-main

MANCHESTER ASDA TO INTRODUCE 'QUIET HOUR' TO HELP CUSTOMERS WITH AUTISM

An Asda supermarket is set to introduce a 'quiet hour' to help autistic shoppers after the store's manager experienced how daunting the experience can often be for those living with the condition.

Asda Living in Cheetham Hill, Manchester, will introduce special measures including stopping escalators and turning off in-store music and televisions to make the store suitable for people with autism, who are often sensitive to loud noises. Autistic customers will also be provided with a specially created map that features pictures instead of words.

The pioneering scheme is the idea of store manager Simon Lea who says that customers will be able to 'hear a pin drop' when the scheme launches next month.

Simon described how he was prompted to start the 'quiet hour' after seeing the experiences of an autistic boy in-store. He said: "The boy was kicking and screaming. His mum just looked drained. She told me he suffers from autism. He was having a meltdown." Simon eventually calmed the boy down by giving him a football but the boy's plight has now prompted him to launch the 'quiet hour.' "Speaking to people with autism and disabled people has helped me think about how I can make it a better place to shop", he said.

Tom Madders, Head of Campaigns at the National Autistic Society said: "We are very pleased to hear that ASDA are introducing a "quiet-hour" in its Manchester store to make shopping a little easier for autistic people and their families, after its store manager learnt how overwhelming supermarkets can feel for an autistic person.

"At the National Autistic Society, we've launched our **Too Much Information** campaign <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi.aspx> to help people understand a little more about autism and encourage them to respond with more empathy, and we've been helping businesses across the country work towards our **Autism-Friendly Award** <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/towns-and-cities.aspx> to make the changes that allow autistic people to do the day-to-day things, like shopping, that the rest of us take for granted.

"ASDA's initiative is a great example of an organisation taking the trouble to understand how autistic people experience the world and we hope other retailers are inspired to follow their example."

Read more: <http://metro.co.uk/2016/04/24/asda-set-to-introduce-quiet-hour-to-help-customers-with-autism-5838632/>

PALESTINIAN TEACHER WINS \$1M (£707,000) GLOBAL TEACHING PRIZE

This year's recipient of the global teaching award is Hanan Al Hroub who grew up in a Palestinian refugee camp and now is a teacher of refugees herself. She specialises in supporting children who have been traumatised by violence.

Sunny Varkey, founder of the Varkey Foundation and who created the prize, said he hoped that Hanan Al Hroub's story would "inspire those looking to enter the teaching profession". He explained that the prize was intended to bring greater public recognition to the importance of teachers. The winner receives \$1m (£706,000) and will be asked to serve as a global ambassador for the Varkey Foundation, attending events and speaking about their work. But they are also required to remain working as a classroom teacher for at least five years as a condition of winning the award. Finalists were drawn from around the world, including the UK*, Pakistan, Kenya, Palestine, the US, Japan, Finland, Australia and India.

The winner was announced at an awards ceremony in Dubai, with a video message of congratulation sent by Prince William. Pope Francis sent a message saying that teachers were "the builders of peace and unity".

Ms Al Hroub told the audience that "teachers could change the world". Growing up in a refugee camp near Bethlehem, she now works with refugee pupils, with an approach using play that is aimed at resolving violence and tension. In her speech, given in Arabic, she said: "I am proud to be a Palestinian female teacher standing on this stage. I accept this as a win for all teachers in general and Palestinian teachers in particular. Each day, the role of the teacher is reinforced and its importance confirmed as the world questions what future we want for our children."

In his video link, Prince William said he had been taught by "some of the best teachers in the world. I know what an incredible teacher can mean to a child," he said. "A good teacher holds the power to influence, inspire and shape a young person's life for the better. They represent the key to real change in this world." He added: "Teachers are also uniquely placed to recognise and support the most vulnerable and troubled children in our society, reaching young people early on in their education and providing them with the extra support they need and giving them the best possible chance in life. This is an incredible responsibility."

Source: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/13/palestinian-teacher-wins-global-prize-worth-1m?CMP=share_btn_fb and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-35798117>

* London maths teacher Colin Hegarty has developed a highly successful video teaching programme.

See: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/feb/17/london-maths-teacher-on-shortlist-for-million-dollar-teaching-prize>

CAMPAIGN: AIR DROP TO SYRIA NOW

Right now, millions in Syria are being denied food and medicine by the Assad regime. A new campaign is calling for an air drop of essential supplies. Last Sunday (24 April 2016), the UN conducted its first successful aid drop in Syria. But only to Deir Ezzor, an area besieged on the outside by Isis. The vast majority of people cut off from aid in Syria are cut off from aid by the regime of Bashar al-Assad. In Daraya, where the town's women have been protesting peacefully for the world's attention, the people have received nothing for over 1,000 days. In Madaya, a young boy starved to death, while another bled out because the Assad regime would not allow him to be evacuated to a hospital.

These sieges are brutal but we have the tools to alleviate them. To add your name to the campaign, please go to: https://act.thesyriacampaign.org/sign/airdrop-aid-syria-now?source=fb&referring_akid=307.6640.vtoufX

More info: www.breakthesieges.org

The Guardian: *Syria's Daraya needs air drops to save its people from starvation*

In an article, dated 13 April 2016, Glenys Kinnock writes: "The town has been isolated from aid since 2012. Its people are appealing to the world for help, and the UK must not ignore their suffering." She adds: "In an appeal to the world last week, the women of the town wrote: "There is no food at all in Darayya ... We have resorted to cooking soups made purely of spices to stave off hunger ... There is no baby milk and no breast milk because of malnutrition ... There are no cleaning supplies for us to ensure hygiene and keep disease away."" Kinnock says: "In nearly 1,200 days of siege, their suffering has been ignored by the world." <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/13/syrias-darayya-needs-air-drops-save-people-starvation-wfp-un>

The Telegraph: *If we don't start dropping aid to starving Syrians now we'll never forgive ourselves* – a detailed report from Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, dated 14 April 2016.

Lubna, a Syrian women's rights activist, writes: "I last spoke to people in Daraya two days ago to see what their needs were. The men listed the usual items like protein-rich food, and medicine and vaccines. But the needs of the women were very specific and detailed. Their daily struggles are different. They don't have sanitary pads. They use cloths instead but then there's no clean water to sanitise the cloths after. They need lice shampoo and soap. They need milk and milk bottles to be sent in for their babies. They can't breastfeed because they're malnourished. The woman who runs our network's centre in Daraya has had two miscarriages during the siege due to malnutrition and lack of medical care, one at three months and one at six months.

"We can do something. I don't want us a few weeks from now to be crying over images of people who have starved to death and say "I wish we had done something before". The time is now. Please call on world governments to airdrop food into Daraya today: <https://act.thesyriacampaign.org/sign/airdrop-aid-syria-now/?aktmid=tm27959.UdNz5r&t=4&source=conf>

£1.7 TRILLION MILITARY SPENDING 'DESTROYING GLOBAL ECONOMY'

Conscience, the peace building NGO, supported the **Global Day of Action on Military Spending** (GDAMS) this year (18 April 2016) by raising awareness of the £1.7 trillion spent by governments on war. The Global Day of Action coincided with the release of the annual world military expenditure figures by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. It was also timed to tie in with Tax Day in the US, when Americans pay taxes and debate their use.

GDAMS UK is calling for:

- Military spending to be shifted towards social and environmental needs. These needs should take priority over aircraft carriers, long range strike aircraft, armed drones, weapons exports and weapons of mass destruction.
- No replacement of the Trident nuclear weapons system. Redirecting its cost alone could prevent many of the key public sector cuts in the UK.
- The huge subsidy to the arms industry to be redirected towards renewable energy and energy-saving measures, allowing diversification and conversion of the arms industry and enabling our public resources to tackle climate change which is a huge source of human insecurity.

Shaughan Dolan, Conscience Campaign Manager said: "Nearly three-quarters of British government spending goes towards military campaigns. This comes at an enormous cost in human lives and tax-payers' money. Global Day of Action on Military Spending is a reminder to us all that £1.7 trillion, enough to end world hunger twice over, is instead invested in ending the lives of others. We believe there is another way."

Conscience, working with Ruth Cadbury MP, will be tabling the **Taxes for Peace Bill** which would allow conscientious objectors to redirect the military portion of their taxes to non-military means of protecting our national security.

See: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/22606>

Shaughan Dolan added: "We should be working to invest in the global economy. Not destroying it. The Taxes for Peace Bill would enable individuals conscripted through the tax system into funding war, to instead finance more peaceful conflict resolution."

* **Global Campaign on Military Spending UK:** <https://demilitarize.org.uk/>

* **Conscience:** <http://www.conscienceonline.org.uk/>

See: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/22925>

ARMS TRADE PROTESTORS ACQUITTED

There is compelling evidence that arms were illegally being sold at the world's biggest arms fair which takes place in London, a judge has ruled. Acquitting eight anti-arms trade protesters who tried to disrupt the Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEI) event at Stratford's ExCel Centre last September, District Judge Angus Hamilton accepted the defendants' argument that they had tried to prevent a greater crimes, such as genocide and torture, from occurring by blocking a road to stop tanks and other armoured vehicles from arriving at the exhibition centre. The trial highlighted UK complicity in war crimes in Yemen, human rights abuses in Bahrain and the slaughter of Kurdish civilians by Turkey.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/dsei-protesters-acquitted-london-arms-fair-illegal-weapons-sales-a6985766.html>

Inspired by the #StopDSEI defendants? Pledge to take action to shut down the arms fair for good!

Go to: <https://www.caat.org.uk/get-involved/act-now/petition/stop-dsei>

AN APPEAL TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TO RE-COMMIT TO THE CENTRALITY OF GOSPEL NONVIOLENCE

Pat Gaffney, General Secretary Pax Christi writes: Many of you prayed in solidarity with the Conference co-hosted by Pax Christi International and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace which took place in Rome between 11-13 April. Thank you..

The British Section played a key role in the planning and running of the Conference. One immediate outcome is the Appeal which was produced and which was then presented to Pope Francis. Below, a copy of the Appeal which sets out the key thinking of the conference and also offers some immediate concrete steps. This is only the beginning of a much bigger process that we will continue to be involved with.

As Christians committed to a more just and peaceful world we are called to take a clear stand for creative and active nonviolence and against all forms of violence. With this conviction, and in recognition of the Jubilee Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis, people from many countries gathered at the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference...

Our assembly, people of God from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Oceania included lay people, theologians, members of religious congregations, priests, and bishops. Many of us live in communities experiencing violence and oppression. All of us are practitioners of justice and peace. We are grateful for the message to our conference from Pope Francis: "your thoughts on revitalizing the tools of nonviolence, and of active nonviolence in particular, will be a needed and positive contribution"...

Full document here: <http://bit.ly/244tn4r>

Read Pope Francis's message to the gathering and articles/interviews about the gathering: <http://bit.ly/26qSFOH>

LIBERTY APPOINTS MARTHA SPURRIER AS ITS NEW DIRECTOR

Liberty has announced the appointment of its new Director, the campaigner and barrister Martha Spurrier. The civil liberties and human rights organisation describes Martha Spurrier as having an exceptional track record in defending people's rights, raising awareness of threats to fundamental freedoms and holding the state to account for neglect, abuse and mistreatment. She will join Liberty from Doughty Street Chambers, where she has specialised in defending access to justice and the rights of women, children and disabled people.

As a barrister, Martha Spurrier has acted for bereaved families seeking answers after loved ones have died in state care, represented victims of rape, domestic violence and trafficking who have been failed by the police, and challenged attempts to curb press freedom and protest rights. She was previously a lawyer at the mental health charity Mind, and the Public Law Project, where she led a ground-breaking access to justice project. She has written widely on civil liberties and recently ran a high-profile campaign on the importance of the Human Rights Act in protecting ordinary people and their families.

Liberty: <https://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/>

Read the article in full: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/22915>

RESOURCES

EXHIBITION BROKEN LIVES: Slavery in modern India

International Slavery Museum Albert Dock, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool, L3 4AX 17 on till 24 April 2016. Entry free.

A window into the experiences of Dalits and others who are being exploited and abused through modern slavery in India.

Delivered in partnership with the Dalit Freedom Network, this powerful and moving exhibition reveals stories of hardship, survival and hope for broken lives mended. <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/exhibitions/broken-lives/>

MERSEYSIDE CHURCHES ISSUE GUIDE ON WELCOMING REFUGEES

- A guide to working with refugees and asylum seekers, written by Liverpool's Justice and Peace Commission in conjunction with other church leaders. *Welcoming the Stranger* - is intended for churches and other groups to help them find a way to respond positively to the refugee crisis. With easy to read sections and important factual information the guide busts myths that have grown up to describe this national and global crisis. Importantly the document offers clear guidance and support to help church communities, and others, offer practical help as they seek to welcome the stranger.

Liverpool Justice and Peace worker Steve Atherton told ICN: "It is a cooperative venture by the churches in Liverpool and is going out under the CTMR banner (that's churches together in the Merseyside region) The guide is being distributed at the Mass of Christm at both cathedrals and then generally across the two dioceses and to the other churches. We think it fills a need because it puts some clarity into the SEE part of the pastoral cycle and we are delighted with the response it is receiving," he said.

The guide can be read at: <http://www.liverpoolasyluminfo.org.uk/>

Source: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=29709>

DOCUMENTARY: HAMSA

"We were going to die, we were going to sink, the water was up to here... we lost everything...My daughter was crying and saying God please help my family."

Caroline Spearpoint and **Miriam Thom**, the directors of *Hamsa: A Documentary and Educational Platform* write:

In September 2015 the BBC recorded an interview with Hamsa, a Syrian mother and refugee as she neared the end of a desperate four year journey from Homs to Germany. Her determination and spirit caught the attention of thousands of people around the world, including ours, two English filmmakers based in New York. We contacted Hamsa and she granted us permission to tell her story.

In January 2016, we travelled to the small village of Schnega, Germany to gain a first person perspective that would go beyond what we had seen in the media. Hamsa and her family welcomed us into their home, their openness led to an honest and intimate film depicting one refugee family's experience integrating in a country so different from their own. The result is *'Hamsa: A Documentary and Educational Platform'* which uses human storytelling to engage audiences and motivate action towards helping resettle those suffering from the Syrian Refugee Crisis; the worse humanitarian action of our time. During the short film (20 mins) the audience will get to know Hamsa and her family as they go to school, meet their neighbours, try German food, learn a new language, sing, dance, cry and laugh. Our mission is to reframe mainstream discourse and opinion around the resettlement of refugees and offer those who watch effective ways to take action via our website www.hamsathedocumentary.com.

The film is free and available for screenings worldwide as part of the [#hamsathedocumentary](https://www.change.org/) movement, hosted by [change.org](https://www.change.org/), which features associated petitions that focus on the resettlement of refugees. We can provide all organisations, individuals and groups who wish to host a screening with a package, including a letter from Hamsa, posters and questions to begin a discussion and dialogue following the film. We will be in London during Refugee Week and can be available to discuss the film at screenings.

We want Hamsa's story to be told as widely as possible during Refugee Week so if you're interested in organising a screening please CLICK HERE to watch our trailer <https://vimeo.com/159275035> and get in touch at hello@hamsathedocumentary.com <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/hamsa-a-documentary-and-educational-platform/>

WORKSHOP: SCREEN STORIES OF CONFLICT, MIGRATION AND PLACE

Venue: HOME, 2 Tony Wilson Place First Street Manchester M15 4FN. Date: 4 May 2006

Screen Stories of Conflict, Migration and Place is part of the Platforma North West Hub Learning Lab, delivered by Community Arts North West (CAN) in partnership with Counterpoints Arts and Highlight Arts under the Moving Worlds Film Programme. http://learninglabeditions.org/index.php/2016/04/19/screen-stories-of-conflict-migration-and-place-2-workshops-1-roundtable-1-feature-screening-home-manchester/?mc_cid=7bff8233e0&mc_eid=c136b5af9e

This daylong event focuses on the changing nature of digital storytelling and film production in the context of the Syrian civil war and other places of conflict. What motivates screenwriters, filmmakers and producers to engage in creative storytelling in the middle of a violent conflict? Or when experiencing and/or witnessing dramatic human displacement? What are the new methods of capturing and re-imagining stories of everyday life for people and places undergoing transition because of conflict?

Morning Workshop – Filming Syria

The current civil war and scale of human displacement in Syria is one of the most YouTubed of conflicts. Despite Syria being a media-controlled territory before 2011, filmmakers, creative storytellers, journalists and eyewitnesses have against great odds produced and communicated extraordinarily moving screen stories. This workshop focuses on films made in or about Syria, exploring the notion of 'home' through the lens of first and second-time filmmakers. We will look at films produced within and against the backdrop of the civil war, discussing recurring themes and film language and approach. We will screen clips from films using low-budget mobile technologies that are reaching local and global audiences through social media, including entries from Syria's Mobile Phone Film Festival, 2015.

Workshop themes include: Place-making and 'home' through film; film in conflict; Syria captured through a particular lens; creating a vision of a place through film; displacement; violence versus non-violence.

Workshop questions include: What kind of storytelling matters? What equipment matters? What different form or process does it take to make these films; Are they reactions to a situation or the emergence of a new aesthetic?

Afternoon Workshop – Widening the Lens

In the afternoon we will explore how the morning's workshop themes relate to everyday and local experiences of migration, displacement, conflict and home. This is a practical workshop in which participants develop a short story idea from the first person perspective. Participants will develop an understanding of the digital storytelling process. They will explore the power of self-representation; digital storytelling as a self-advocacy tool; models and tools for constructing and telling a digital story; and the 'how to' and ethics of digital distribution.

Final session

In the final session we will together explore the future needs of the Platforma North West Hub in the context of building sustainable platforms for digital advocacy, storytelling, and arts for social change.

Evening Screening: *Queens of Syria* Director, Yasmin Fedda | Jordan/UAE/UK | 2014 | 70 mins

Whilst the conflict in Syria continues and thousands have been displaced, Yasmin Fedda's powerful documentary 'Queens of Syria' follows a group of women living in exile in Jordan as they prepare to perform Euripedes' tragedy, The Trojan Woman. Though separated by two thousand years and more, the uprooting, the enslavement and the bereavement suffered by the fictional queens of Ancient Greece mirrors the modern suffering of these ordinary, yet extraordinary women.

Post-screening Q/A: Aine O'Brien, Co-Director Counterpoints Arts in conversation with Yasmin Fedda, Director *Queens of Syria*

For more information, please contact:

At CAN, Manchester: sara@can.uk.com; katherine@can.uk.com

At Counterpoints Arts, London: aine@counterpointsarts.org.uk

MAKING MEMORIES: Living Well with Dementia - creative reminiscence for older people.

Gallery Oldham is one of the first museum and galleries in the country to become Dementia Friendly. All our staff are trained Dementia Friends and we welcome visits from older people and carers.

NEW for 2016 – Living Well with Dementia. Free monthly drop-in sessions for carers and their loved ones with information, advice and support delivered by a range of experts. Sessions run from 1-3pm on the last Wednesday of the month and include a range of cultural, heritage, arts and craft activities as well as free refreshments.

Gander and Gab: Pick up a copy of our new gallery trail and discover a range of interesting and inspiring objects. The trail will give you pointers and suggestions to start conversations and recall memories.

Curator Talks and Handling Sessions: These informal group sessions give both carers and the cared for the chance to handle some of our wonderful collections. Light refreshments are provided and sessions last around an hour and a half.

Reminiscence Boxes: Our fantastic Past Times Reminiscence Boxes are available for groups or individuals to hire. Items have been selected to stir memories for those who may find it difficult to recall the past. Themes include *A Right Royal Do*, *Beside the Seaside* and *Down the Pub!*

We also offer a bespoke reminiscence service for organisations. Our experienced team can consult with your older people, staff and relatives to find a common theme of interest. We will then source suitable objects and devise creative, stimulating activities relating to the objects and the theme. For course bookings/group enquiries call: 0161 770 4742, book online at Eventbrite or email: glenys.walsh@oldham.gov.uk To find out more about all our services for older people email joy.thorpe@oldham.gov.uk or call Joy Thorpe on 0161 770 4663.

NOVEL: Virginia Moffat 'Echo Hall'

'*Echo Hall*' is a novel about three generations of women set against the backdrop of the Gulf War, WW2 and WW1. It explores the impact of unresolved conflict on later generations, and features those who fight, and those who resist.

Find out more: <https://unbound.co.uk/books/echo-hall>

JUSTICE AND PEACE CALENDAR

MAY NATIONAL WALKING MONTH #Try20

This May we're asking you to give walking a go and pledge to #Try20. We're challenging previous Walk to Work Week participants to see if they can walk an extra 20 minutes every day throughout National Walking Month. Pledge to #Try20 with Living Streets this May. We have put together 20 ways to fit 20 minutes extra walking in to your day.

<http://e-activist.com/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=1719&ea.campaign.id=48068&ea.tracking.id=e-2&ea.url.id=553887>

13 May Unicef UK Day for Change

Day for Change is Unicef UK's annual fundraising appeal, raising money for our vital work to keep children safe. This year, the theme is children in emergencies.

Anyone can take part in Day for Change, including schools, churches, sports groups, employees, friends and families. The challenge is to collect as much loose change as you can – from around the house, down the sofa, in your pockets or anywhere else you can think of! You can involve your friends and colleagues or, if you're a teacher or pupil, get your whole school involved.

Collect your change between February and May 2016. The big change drop-off day is on Friday 13 May, or you can choose another day to suit you. Alternatively, why not get creative and come up with your own fundraising idea for Day for Change?

For more information: Call us on 0300 330 5580 Email us at dayforchange@unicef.org.uk

<http://www.unicef.org.uk/fundraise/events/other-events/day-for-change/>

15 May International Conscientious Objectors Day

Download Pax Christi's lesson *Should Christians fight in Wars?* which explores some of the issues around faith and military service. The pack includes guidance on how to organise a Peace Studies Day together with a selection of prayers and reflections about peace.

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/lessons-workshops/general-re/>

Download Pax Christi's Way of the Cross using the moving stories of First World War Conscientious Objectors - compiled by Valerie Flessati with prayers from Fr Derek Reeve. Save for next year if you don't have the opportunity to use this year!

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Conscientious-Objectors-Way-of-the-Cross-1.pdf>

MPs launch new Conscience Objection Bill

March 2nd 2016 marked 100 years since the first inclusive right of conscientious objection became law in the United Kingdom. To commemorate the centenary, the NGO Conscience: Taxes for Peace not War, hosted a discussion evening featuring MPs from three different parties and Sir Richard Jolly, a former United Nations Assistant Secretary General.

It also served as the launch of the '**Taxes for Peace Bill**' legislation which would bring conscientious objection into the 21st century by allowing people who object to funding war to re-direct the military portion of their taxes to non-violent methods of sustaining our national security.

The Bill will be tabled later this year by Ruth Cadbury MP, a Quaker, members of whose family were World War I conscientious objectors. When talking about the Bill Ruth Cadbury said: "In an age where more and more people are concerned about spending their money ethically, this is an idea whose time has come." Ruth was joined by Liz Saville-Roberts MP, who spoke of the history of war resistance in Wales. Michelle Thomson MP then spoke of her opposition to war and nuclear weapons from a Scottish perspective. Kelvin Hopkins MP also gave a talk describing his four decades of peace campaigning. All of these MPs and more have pledged support of the Taxes for Peace Bill, and have also supported an Early Day Motion highlighting the issue. They were joined by Robin Brookes, a peace campaigner who has unsuccessfully attempted to prevent his taxes being spent on military activity both by withholding taxes and seeking a judicial review of the definition of CO status with respect to taxation.

Ruth Cadbury added: "I want to pay for our national security, in fact I want to strengthen it, the Taxes for Peace Bill does this by investing in the most effective form of defence – conflict prevention."

<http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/22845>

* **For more details see Conscience website:** Campaign@ConscienceOnline.org.uk

21 May Feast of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter

Austrian farmer Franz Jägerstätter refused to fight for the German Army because of his opposition to the Nazi regime. He cited St. Thomas More as a key influence. Executed on 9 August 1943, he was declared a martyr and beatified in 2007.

<http://www.paxchristi.org.uk>

15-21 May Christian Aid Week

Celebrated in May every year, this is the week we love every neighbour. Jesus calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and not just the ones next door or at the end of the street. Christian Aid Week unites over 20,000 churches to put this love into action. Together we'll hold church collections, host Big Brekkie fundraising breakfasts, and collect house-to-house. Join us.
<http://www.caw.org>

20 - 26 June Refugee Week

The theme for Refugee Week 2016 is 'welcome'. On 19 June at London's Southbank Centre there will be a whole afternoon of Refugee Welcome activities and performances produced with Counterpoints Arts as part of their world famous Meltdown festival – curated this year by Elbow frontman Guy Garvey. Under the heading of Refugees Welcome, there will be an entire day of free activity from 11am through to 10pm involving Refugee Week partners. Musicians, poets and dancers will pop up across the site, and the marketplace will host activities and craft workshops. The activity will culminate in *The Boat We're In*, a concert inspired by the Red Cross produced album *The Long Road* and featuring Led Zeppelin lead singer Robert Plant, Meltdown Director Guy Garvey, Mercury Prize nominated folk singer Nick Mulvey, Radio 6 Music favourite Nadine Shah, northern soul singer Josephine Oniyama and the Southbank Sinfonia. Across the Royal Festival Hall there will also be small boats installed as part of a project working with refugee communities.

Meltdown booking: <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/the-boat-were-in-96896>

Anyone and everyone can organise an event of any scale, in any location, of any type for Refugee Week. From sport tournaments, to exhibitions and debates, we can support you all the way. Go to: <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/events/advice-and-ideas-for-organising-events/>

For inspiration on activities or resources for schools go to: <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/info-centre/educational-resources/>

Refugee Week T-shirt sale

Special offer price of £5 for logo T-shirts. Order yours today! <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/shop/>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

MAY

7 Follow-On Day for all who used the Lenten resource '*Mercy and Our Common Home*' from CAFOD and Liverpool J&P.

10am-4pm St Bartholomew's, Warrington Rd, Rainhill L35 6NY

10 Time out on Tuesdays - an ecumenical quiet day for everyone 10am-4pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 6TW. Input and time for individual quiet prayer and reflection. Tea & coffee provided. Bring your own lunch. Cost £10. For more information or to book: tel 0151 722 2271 email: winniecenacle@mail.com

10 Chester World Development Forum (CWDF) AGM 6.45-9pm at The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN. As well as the "business part" of our AGM, in which we review our year and vote in our officers for the next year, we'll have a talk by new Forum member Jim Holmes. Jim is a freelance documentary photographer and he'll be giving us insights into a number of his missions overseas. Not to be missed! Contact 01244 350323 www.chesterwdf.org.uk

13 Unicef UK Day for Change <http://www.unicef.org.uk/fundraise/events/other-events/day-for-change/>

14 Laudato Si' Session 1 Led by Steve Atherton. 12.45 –2.15pm (Mass: 12.00) St Marie on the Sands, Seabank Rd, Southport PR0 0EJ. All welcome. s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk 0151 522 1040

14 Faith in the New Economics? with David Midgley and Jonathon Dawson from Schumacher College. 10am -4.30pm in Holy Trinity and St George Parish Centre, Blackhall Road, Kendal LA9 4BW. All welcome. The meeting will be chaired by Sr Margaret Atkins. Sr Margaret attended the Green Christian Conference *Joy in Enough* last November and was really inspired to share the ideas. Hot drinks available, please bring packed lunch. Registration from 9.30am. For info and to reserve a place contact Margaret McSherry, St Bernadette's Parish House, Bowerham Road, Lancaster LA1 4HT lfjc@talktalk.net 01524 383081

14 NJPN AGM & Open Networking Meeting at CAFOD, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE7 1JB. Our speakers will be Daniel McNamara and Katherine Copperthwaite of Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact), on the experiences of children and young people who have had family members arrested, tried or imprisoned. There will be opportunity to hear about justice and peace activities from groups around the country. Representatives of Catholic/Christian Agencies will report on their work and suggest practical ways of becoming involved in campaigning for social justice. Tea and coffee will be provided, bring your own lunch. Further details: Ann Kelly 020 7901 4864 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

15 International Conscientious Objectors Day www.paxchristi.org.uk 02082034884

15-21 Christian Aid Week www.caw.org

21 Feast of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter, Austrian farmer who refused to fight for the German Army because of his opposition to the Nazi regime. He cited St. Thomas More as a key influence. Executed on 9 August 1943, he was declared a martyr and beatified in 2007. <http://www.paxchristi.org.uk>

22 Talk by Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon, Myanmar/Burma Sunday 2pm Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral *Aid to the Church in Need*. The Cardinal will also be preaching at the 6.30 pm Mass in Lancaster Cathedral on Saturday 21 May.

<http://www.acnuk.org/events.php/416/a-talk-by-cardinal-charles-bo-of-myanmarburma>

26 EU Referendum Debate (provisional). Chester Debating Society's main season has ended, but they are organising an additional event: a debate on the EU Referendum, jointly with the University of Chester. This will be an open event, and full details will be included on the CWDF website as they become available. Venue and timings to be decided. www.chesterdebating.org.uk

JUNE

5 World Environment Day www.unep.org/wed

7 Raising Awareness of Modern Slavery - a study day organised by Churches Together in Cheshire, the (Anglican) Diocese of Chester and the Cheshire Anti-Slavery Network for Clergy and Church Leaders to introduce issues relating to the crime of modern slavery, help spot the signs of human trafficking, signpost specialist support and suggest resources to help mark Anti-Slavery Day in parishes. Also to inform the Churches of Cheshire's Anti Slavery Network and how it is possible to link in with activities already happening. At Church House, 5500 Daresbury Park, Daresbury WA4 4GE from 9.45am-1pm. Open to Clergy and Church Leaders. Book at: <https://modernslaverychester.eventbrite.co.uk>

8 ACN Prayer Vigil for the Persecuted Church 6pm St Walburge's Church, Preston PR2 2QE
<http://www.acnuk.org/events.php/422/acn-nw-prayer-vigil>

11 Laudato Si' Session 2 see May 14

14 Time Out on Tuesdays see May10

20 - 26 Refugee Week <http://refugeeweek.org.uk>

25 'Welcoming the Stranger' Liverpool Justice and Peace Annual Assembly Speaker Fr Damian Howard SJ 10am-4pm
Registration from 9.30am LACE Conference Centre Croxteth Drive, Liverpool L17 1AA s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk 0151 522 1040

BOOKING NOW: Annual Justice & Peace Conference 15-17 July 2016

'Justice, Power and Responsibility: How Can Democracy Work for the Common Good?'

SPEAKERS

Jon Cruddas MP - Labour member for Dagenham and Rainham. From 2012 to 2015 he was in the Shadow Cabinet as Policy Co-ordinator for the Labour Party. Influenced by Catholic Social Teaching, he is developing a virtue-based model of politics.

Jenny Sinclair - daughter of the late Bishop David Sheppard, who had a celebrated working partnership in Liverpool with Archbishop Derek Worlock and Free Church leaders. Four years ago she felt moved by the Spirit and founded a project, Together for the Common Good to help establish a dialogue with all people of good will aimed at change. togetherforthecommongood.co.uk

Takura Gwatinyanya - Program Manager of Caritas Harare. His special interest is in the implementation of sustainable development projects that promote engagement of civil society through public and private partnerships.

4th speaker: to be confirmed

CONFERENCE CHAIR: Christine Allen, Director, Policy and Public Affairs at Christian Aid. Christine was Executive Director of Progressio for 10 years and was part of the LiveSimply Executive.

Plus Panel Discussion: Chair: Simon Barrow, Writer, commentator, theologian, journalist; Co-Director of the Christian think-tank, Ekklesia.

There will be a programme of activities for children and young people, and a Just Fair with information and resources from many organisations.

Find booking form here: <http://justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/>

For more information contact: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

- Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resource for up-to-date J&P news and events. Sign up for comprehensive weekly e-bulletins from National J&P Network 020 7901 4864 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

The views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of NJPN