

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin – June 2015

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
Download earlier bulletins at: <http://jpshrewsbury.wordpress.com/e-bulletins/>

LIVERPOOL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY Saturday 20 June

Many of you will remember the stimulating Justice and Peace Conferences organised by Shrewsbury diocese at Crewe under the expertise of Mike Simpson and Joan Sharples. These gatherings attracted first-class speakers and J&P activists from across the North West and beyond. Liverpool J&P Commission now hope to carry on this initiative.

Steve Atherton writes: Liverpool J&P Commission is extending a warm invitation to J&P people in the north to attend their Annual Assembly on 20 June. We've taken the plunge and booked the bigger hall. It would be very helpful to have some idea of numbers so that we know how much hot food to order. I've attached a blurb that briefly explains the structure of the day.

What does it mean to be the church in the world?

Many of us feel confused, ill-informed and helpless, unable to answer the questions 'What's going on in the world?', 'How did we get into this state?' and 'What can I do about it?'

On Saturday 20 June, the Liverpool J&P Commission, under the title '**Who is my neighbour?**' will be holding their Annual Assembly at LACE* in Liverpool from 10 - 4. This year we are inviting everyone who feels the urge to be better informed about what's happening locally and overseas and who wants to be able to do something constructive in response. The day will be friendly and helpful with the emphasis on being church.

- Archbishop Malcolm McMahon will welcome us and lead the opening prayer.
- Fr Tom Cullinan, will talk about the scripture story of the Good Samaritan.
- Steve Atherton the J&P field worker will give a brief introduction to CST.
- Justine Silcock and Terry Philips from the J&P Commission will help us to explore notions of identity and of how we decide who's in and who's out.
- Paul Kyprianou, the local issues speaker, coordinated the recent 'Getting By?' report that followed 30 families for a year. He explains local issues in a simple, direct way and is not to be missed.
- James Trewby, the overseas issues speaker, works for the Columbans in the UK and has recently returned from leading a group to study immigration at the Mexico/USA border. He is one of the RC church's go-to people for youth expertise.
- Ten organisations will offer ways of responding and there will be a chance to talk to any that catch your interest.
- As always, there will be information and other stalls.
- The day will end with ample time to meet people from your area to see how you can work together for action and mutual support.
- There will be hot food provided. LACE lunch is always good.

It would help to know numbers so that we can organise enough food. There is a suggested donation of £10 but no one will be turned away. We hope you can join us.

- Book a place on 0151 522 1080/1081 or email s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk
- * LACE Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA.

Free event but please REGISTER NOW to book your place

TIME OF PRAYER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Sue Bownas writes: An initiative which we hope will pick up from our Novena for Peace last year and provide us with opportunities when we can come together in parishes around Shrewsbury diocese to pray for peace, for justice, an end to conflict and warfare, for refugees and displaced peoples, for the marginalised and stigmatised, for those without clean water, food, health care and education ... and afterwards to share a cup of tea, listen to a speaker or just get to know one another a little better. If you think you could offer to organise one of these "Times for Prayer", or think your parish would like to offer, please do get in touch with Sue or Liz as we hope to put together a diary that we can keep updated and circulated. If it isn't possible to celebrate Holy Mass, perhaps you could organise a Holy Hour or simply a quiet time for prayer? We will provide some resources and information perhaps on a particular theme. Do contact us to discuss in more detail. Sue Bownas and Liz Aiello
CAFOD Shrewsbury Diocesan Team Tel 01244 677594

AFTER THE GENERAL ELECTION: A POLITICS FOR ALL PEOPLE

The General Election might have returned a Conservative majority government, but the results 'cannot disguise a deeply divided nation, one which has rarely been more fragile and is heading into a precarious future.' **James Hanvey SJ** looks to what lies ahead and suggests that two pillars of Catholic Social Teaching can invigorate politics and allow it to serve, rather than instrumentalise society.

At its best, the democratic process is a sort of collective discernment about the sort of society and nation we wish to be. The results of the 2015 General Election appear to present a picture of a society that is confused and not sure who it is or to what it is aspiring. This is partly the fault of the political parties themselves. The campaigns of all the parties revealed the extent to which vision had given way to pragmatics and tactics. They all underestimated the extent to which the public was tired of the 'old' politics. Too often, it was fear rather than generosity that was invoked. It was all somewhat seedy and parochial. Voters are not simple-minded consumers who are looking for a cheap policy bargain. Yet so much of what passed in the last five weeks of campaigning often felt like just that: an endless series of special offers in a bargain basement clearance: 'everything must go' – and in many, ways it did!

While the result secures a slight Conservative majority it cannot disguise a deeply divided nation, one which has rarely been more fragile and is heading into a precarious future. Large tensions are obvious. The first is the complex reality and dynamic of the nationalisms that have emerged. The strong showing of the SNP and the virtual extinction of Labour and Conservative MPs in Scotland is the most dramatic. In the recent referendum, Scotland clearly decided against the break-up of the union, while today it claimed something of its independence. Second, there is the imminent question of Britain's relationship to Europe, itself under pressure from nationalism. It would be an astonishing example of historical ignorance or forgetfulness if, on VE Day, we failed to acknowledge the dangers of nationalism and to recognise that democracy of itself is no guarantee against barbarity, especially when a nation is manipulated into fear by individuals and parties whose only real aim is securing and keeping power.

There are also the economic and social divides, not only between north and south but also within communities as inequality grows. There are communities which feel neglect and despair, who rightly or wrongly feel on the margins, and for whom politics is impotent and irrelevant in the struggle for survival. These are complex communities: those on the margins, including immigrants, trapped and exploited, as well as those to whom UKIP gives some sort of voice. For the moment, the campaign and election has allowed them to claim our attention. They will not go away, and if their sense of alienation grows along with inequality, not only is social cohesion eroded, but violence becomes an alternative solution to a failed political framework.

Politics does not need to fail, but it does need to free itself so that it can serve society and not instrumentalise it. Within the complexities and tensions of the electoral results not only has the political landscape changed, but a new sort of politics is being asked for. Nationalism can be creative as well as destructive but it will require imagination to rethink identity and settlements; new modes of union need to be created which respect the legitimate character of peoples (nationally as well as locally), and the significance of place and community, but within a wider community in which one part does not feel subjugated by the other. Here, the two principles of Catholic Social Teaching, solidarity and subsidiarity, can take a constitutional form. It will take a new political imagination to fashion this so that union is not only preserved but redefined in a more productive and dynamic way. It will need to break out of the impoverished push-me/pull-you logic of either/or, into moral, legal, mutuality rather than competition. If Mr Cameron is serious about returning to a 'one nation' politics he will not only need considerable political skill; he will need new ways of thinking and imagining. That will not happen without listening and understanding how people throughout the UK have spoken through their votes. Only in this way can he avoid becoming the prisoner of his own Conservative right wing and begin to lay the foundations for a new politics that is needed to face new the challenges that the 21st century presents.

Whether it is natural or economic disaster that threatens us, since 2008 we have all recognised that a nationalism that is about protective isolation cannot be the answer; indeed it is a danger to all its citizens: we need to build and work within international structures and this requires a different way of thinking. The principles of solidarity and subsidiarity allow us to do that by holding the global, national and local in a creative and mutually supportive relationship.

Overcoming the deep and subtle divisions, as well as the urgent need to address health, security, wealth distribution and environmental stress, means that politicians will have to think in a much broader frame than the campaigns revealed. Augustine well understood the contingency and the limitation of the 'earthly city' but he also knew that that we cannot abandon it. We have a duty to work to secure the good within it and through it. In other words, we cannot abandon politics. Above all, whether in government or in opposition, parties need to recognise that they exercise their power for the good of all the people, not just those who have supported them. Maybe the elections results suggest that we're ready to try something new.

Revd Dr James Hanvey SJ is Master of Campion Hall, University of Oxford - article from **Thinking Faith**, online journal of the Jesuits in Britain. Explore the website to find articles and reviews to help you think about your faith and think, through your faith, about the world.

https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/after-the-general-election-politics-all-people?utm_source=Thinking+Faith&utm_campaign=f07fabf574-TF_201505085_8_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_620a4d7197-f07fab574-68834617&mc_cid=f07fab574&mc_eid=2de5f0eba5

ADVISING MR CAMERON: LESSONS FROM AN ANCIENT KINGDOM

Posted by the **Anglican Bishop of Sheffield, Steven Croft** 11 May 2015

The Prime Minister will not be short of advice as he appoints the Cabinet and prepares the Queen's Speech. There is a particular bible story about accepting and weighing advice that I would suggest it might be helpful for him to read and ponder in the first days of the new government. It's a story about transition. King Solomon has died. All the tribes of Israel have gathered to make his son, Rehoboam, the new king. But there is widespread discontent. A delegation comes from the northern tribes, requesting an easing of their burdens.

Rehoboam has a choice to make and he asks for three days to reflect. He consults two sets of advisors. The first group, his father's counsellors, advise him to listen to the people, to be their servant, to reach out to the disaffected and lead from this foundation. The second group, his own contemporaries, give opposite advice. Discontent should be met with harshness. The burdens on the north should be increased still further. The new government should start as it means to go on. Rehoboam makes his choice. It is a fateful one. He listens to the younger, harsher, more strident voices. A few years later, the kingdom is divided, at war, impoverished and in chaos.

I have no doubt that David Cameron will receive both sorts of advice in the coming days. There will be those who counsel him to reach out to the whole nation, to connect with the disaffected, to listen to the people and to be their servant. But there will be those who see the Conservative majority as a mandate to fulfill and go beyond the manifesto commitments, blind to the risk of increasing the burdens of those who already bear the heavy load (of sickness, disability or the struggle to find sustainable employment).

The Prime Minister's speech on the steps of Downing Street on Thursday moved clearly in the first direction. David Cameron spoke of one nation and sought to connect more deeply with those who had voted for other parties, with the people of Scotland, with the regions. He promised to bring our country together, to help working people and give "the poorest people the chance of training, a job and hope for the future". Much of this rhetoric is encouraging but now it needs to be supported and backed up with action. That action needs to be taken swiftly to begin to draw the United Kingdom back together again and begin to build for the future. The choices made in the next few days about priorities and plans for legislation in the next year are critical. So here are some suggestions for a big, open offer from Mr Cameron to every part of the United Kingdom, and especially to those who voted for other parties.

- Make an early, concrete and clear commitment to safeguarding the environment and to leadership in the key climate conferences this year through the appointments you make and in the Queen's Speech. Action on climate change is integral to economic growth.
- Abolish the bedroom tax. It hasn't worked. It has generated more resentment than revenue. Repealing it would demonstrate a capacity for change and to think again.
- Promise an early review of benefits sanctions as part of the ongoing reform of welfare. Sanctions cause massive hardship. They are responsible for a significant number of people needing foodbanks. They are tangential to the main welfare reforms. In the meantime suspend sanctions for families with children and people suffering from mental ill health.
- Encourage the Living Wage as part of growing a sustainable, strong national economy.
- Take a long view of constitutional reform. Acknowledge the concern revealed by the election outcome. Entrust it to some kind of independent commission which has time and space to think. Don't rush the key decisions which will affect the whole future of the United Kingdom.
- Revisit the Big Society ideas, if not the language. Place active partnership, between national and local government and the faith and voluntary sector, front and centre again, not as a replacement of government initiative but complementary to it. Make sure there is clear leadership for these ideas at Cabinet level.
- Accelerate the provision of truly affordable housing and prioritise this as part of investment in the future. Protect and strengthen social housing provision to ensure that everyone has access to a decent home at a price they can afford.
- Reach out to the English regions as well as to Scotland in swift and tangible ways. In particular make investment in the northern powerhouse a key priority for the first two years of the new government.

The word Minister means servant. A Prime Minister is called to be one who serves the whole nation. If Rehoboam had listened to different advice the whole story of Israel would have been different. I hope that David Cameron will take a moment to read and ponder his story: to listen to all the people, to lighten burdens, and to build one nation, for the benefit of all.

+Steven Sheffield (*The story of Rehoboam's choice is told in 1 Kings 12*)

<http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/blog/bishop-of-sheffield/advising-mr-cameron-lessons-from-an-ancient-kingdom>

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTER'S LETTER TO DAVID CAMERON GOES VIRAL

An open letter to the Prime Minister from a United Reformed Church minister has been shared more than 30,000 times on Facebook. In his letter, the Rev Mike Walsh, United Reformed Church minister in the Chorlton and Whalley Range areas in Manchester, called on David Cameron, as he prepares for a new term of government, to try to understand how life looks and how it is lived in places where people are scared – “Scared of what your policies will do to our communities and families. Scared of what will happen to our health service and our schools. Scared of losing our family homes for the sake of a few quid saving from the bedroom tax, or not being able to heat our home and have enough left to buy food.”

The Rev John Proctor, the URC's General Secretary, said: “Mike Walsh writes about places and people he knows. His aim is to be prophetic and positive, as he asks for a wider vision of the needs and hurts of all our people to inform those who lead our nation and write our laws.”

Commenting on the positive public response to his letter, Rev. Walsh, said: “My words have clearly touched a nerve, and I'm touched and delighted by that. I wanted to express my fears about the new government and thought the best way to do this was to write directly to David Cameron. He has already made clear his commitment to 'one nation' conservatism and I hope that, as part of this commitment, he will make it a priority, to accept my invitation and visit Manchester, to meet me and some of the people who have been affected by his policies to date, and the ones to come.”

The letter read:

Dear Prime Minister,

I don't know if you will ever read this, but I have some things I wish to say to you.

You have won the General Election and command a majority in the House of Commons, and as such will feel you have a legitimate mandate to govern. However, you must also know that you don't command a majority of the British people.

Although our political views are very much at odds on many issues, I'm willing to believe that you are a good man, as sure of your ideals as I am of mine, and believe your plan is what's best for us all. You said today that you will govern for the whole country and bring back together that which has clearly fractured. I hope you will.

But Prime Minister, though you can obviously see your party did not win the confidence of Scotland and huge swathes of the north of England, I'm not sure your party quite understands why. It's not because we're all 'loony-left' or extremists and nationalists, it's because so many of us are scared. Scared of what your policies will do to our communities and families. Scared of what will happen to our health service and our schools. Scared of losing our family homes for the sake of a few quid saving from the bedroom tax, or not being able to heat our home and have enough left to buy food.

I don't disagree with you that the best way out of poverty is to work, nor do I think that people should get something for nothing and expect the tax-payer to support people indefinitely if they are able to work. Who would think that that was ok and fair?

But your party's policies on these issues, couched in terms of reducing the deficit and balancing the books, don't seem to take into account the social and human cost of such actions. The country isn't a business, it's its people. All its people. And you are everyone's Prime Minister whether we voted for you or not.

You said today you will govern for everyone and unite the country. I hope you do. But to be able to do so you need to make it a priority in your first 100 days, to spend time in Scotland visiting people on zero hours contracts. Come to Manchester and talk with those who have been sanctioned for having a spare room, but have nowhere else to go. Go to Liverpool and meet people with disabled dependents who can't afford even one nanny, or to Newcastle and talk to people still living in poverty due to the demise of the coal industry. Spend a week or two living on the minimum wage, or volunteer in a food bank for a whole day.

Then Prime Minister you might begin to understand the cost of your policies from the other side, to see people as more than their net contribution to the economy, or as deliberate drains on the system. If you do that, then maybe you can heal some of the fractures in our society. Without this I just don't believe you can see just how crucial these issues are. So please Prime Minister, leave Westminster for a few hours a week and truly strive to govern for all of us.

BISHOP CALLS FOR LIVING WAGE ON FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER

Rt Rev Terence Draney, Bishop of Middlesbrough and Chair of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) writes:

Today (1 May) marks the feast day of Saint Joseph the Worker, the day when we celebrate the dignity that work brings, the stability of a fair wage and the reassurance of good working conditions. Employment gives people a sense of purpose, allows them to progress and flourish as well as provide for themselves and their families.

For many people in the UK, however, work is just not providing enough. There are 6.7 million people living in poverty despite being in work. This is more than the combined number of people in poverty who are unemployed or retired. Not only this, but almost two-thirds of all children in poverty live in a family where at least one person is working. More and more working people are forced to turn to foodbanks and charities for material support and benefit advice.

As trustees of CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network), we know working people all across England and Wales are struggling to feed their families. This is something I know all too well in my diocese of Middlesbrough. If we are to bring human dignity back into the world of work, movements towards adopting the Living Wage as well as ending the use of exploitative zero-hour contracts would be big steps indeed. Wouldn't that have been something Saint Joseph would have downed tools to applaud? The present statutory minimum wage is £6.50 an hour. Campaigners are calling for a national living wage of £7.85 an hour and a London minimum wage of £9.15.

For more information on the Living Wage Campaign see: <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/>

Caritas Social Action Network is the social action arm of the Catholic Church in England & Wales <http://www.csan.org.uk/>

BENEFITS STREET

Liam Purcell, Church Action on Poverty writes: A new series of the controversial **Benefits Street** started on Monday, 11 May. Channel 4 claims that the series "reveals the reality of life on benefits" yet many people who receive benefits don't recognise themselves or their situation in the programme.

Benefits Street is promoted and discussed in a way that fosters hatred and prejudice. The participants in the first series received death threats. Already the participants have been described in national newspaper headlines as "addicts and scroungers". The coalition government used *Benefits Street* as evidence to justify huge cuts and changes to the benefits system. As the new conservative government plans to make a further £12 billion of cuts to benefits, it is urgent that we make more people aware of the reality that doesn't make it onto TV.

- **Find out more** by visiting the *real benefits street* website <http://realbenefits-street.com/>
- **Follow *real benefits street*** on [youtube](#), [facebook](#) or [twitter](#) - you'll see new video clips from our experts every day
- **Help us make sure our videos are seen as widely as possible** - share the videos on social media
- **Call us** on 0161 236 9321
- **Email us** jackie@church-poverty.org.uk
- **Don't judge** <http://blog.church-poverty.org.uk/2015/05/17/how-to-listen-to-people-telling-stories-of-poverty/>
- **Articles, worship resources:** <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/about-us/about-us/spark-newsletter/summer2015>

NATIONAL BOARD OF CATHOLIC WOMEN OF ENGLAND & WALES POVERTY PROJECT

Inspired by Catholic Social Teaching and using the evidence we have found in listening to women the National Board of Catholic Women has produced a 39-page toolkit to empower women to challenge the system and structures that fail to address poverty, get involved and make a difference. We are encouraged by the frequent statements of Pope Francis that we as the Church should prioritise the empowerment of poor people.

Aware of the Gospel message to 'bring good news to the poor', the National Board of Catholic Women organised events in various parts of the country from London to Blackpool, Derby to Hull to highlight the problems that women and their families are coping with as a result of austerity policies. We worked with CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network) and other organisations in our network, such as Housing Justice, Catholic People's Weeks, Sisters of Mercy, Society of the Holy Child Jesus, as well as many other local organisations. We included local councillors and MPs where possible, to emphasise the importance of local and national responses to the current levels of poverty here in our country. At our events, speakers from CSAN, Housing Justice, Taxpayers Against Poverty, London Citizens have highlighted the problems caused by the economic crisis as well as detailing policies that have meant the poor, especially women and children, have shouldered the burden of austerity. Invited speakers have brought Catholic Social Teaching to life and we have heard from many local initiatives such as food banks, which are working to help struggling families. The picture that emerged showed real hardship due in part to changes in the benefit system, harsh sanctions for minor breaches, lack of affordable housing and low wages for those in work. Single mothers are especially hard hit. www.nbcw.co.uk

HOPE FOODBANK

On 18 May 2015, "Food Bank" <foodbank@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk> wrote:

By the beginning of Holy Week this year, we had provided 15,000 hampers of food; we also provided over 200 WashDay15 bags of toiletries. Due to our wonderful number cruncher, Lew Eccleshall coming down with a very nasty bug, we only caught up on our statistics at the weekend. Thus, we almost missed the fact that at some point during our Ascension Day pantry at St Bride's last Thursday, we quietly, and with no fanfare passed 16,000 (16,023 to be precise). We should celebrate that with all your wonderful help we were able to do so; but protest the need to do so upon the tops of the mountainsides.

Thanks to Lew and Dr Chris Wooff, you can now read our stats to the end of April here:

<http://www.hopefoodbank.org.uk/usagestatistics/>

Two items leap out: the continued rise of benefit delay as a reason for people to need our help, as opposed to benefit sanctions i.e. people without benefits through no fault of their own, even worse, often due to housing or domestic violence issues; and the continuing tide of Syrians both newly arrived, and those struggling with housing and other issues as a result of their claim for Asylum having succeeded. Despite the fact that both Turkey and Lebanon have tightened their border security as a result of the increased activity of Da'ish, we continue to see ever increasing numbers. One of the unexpected spin offs of this for us has been our provision of help and support for family reunion visa applications since Legal Aid was withdrawn. It is always a very happy day for us when a previously morose and anxious single man returns with his wife and children, Sadly, as the situation worsens, we are faced with the challenge of applying a web based process to families living in cellars, caves, or tents. We are constantly amazed at the ingenuity our guests use in order to get emailed pdf's to a woman in a tent in the middle of nowhere.

Our new van (thank you Newgate Finance) Scipio, has been earning his keep already. Yet another incredibly generous donation from West Cheshire Foodbank, not only kicked off our Pharaoh's Dream Campaign with a bang, but provided Scipio with his first serious test. We're glad to report he managed 1.5 tonnes in just two trips. Hard on the heels of West Cheshire came a totally out of the blue donation of breakfast cereals from HIS Church in Market Rasen. God has truly moved wonderfully mysterious ways in the last few days....well the last two years really.

The new food store is now finished, and very fine it looks to thanks to wonderful work from the Cathedral Maintenance team. A very generous grant from the Duchy of Lancaster enabled us to equip it with brand new racking, which the lads in Maintenance not only assembled but secured to the walls for us, which was a huge relief as we had visions of spending a couple of weeks assembling them! The hard work has now started to sort and move all the supplies from our second store into the third. I was very moved today when three very recently arrived Iranians turned up and spent the whole day helping to load and move several tons of supplies. They wanted to thank us for our support.

Maths is not my strongest subject but looking at our current weekly footfall, it seems very likely that we will have provided for more than 20,000 before the year's end D.V. We continue to seek a way to enable us to provide every guest with the basics of human dignity.

Having to ask for food can be deeply shameful for many; fortunately our wonderful volunteers are expert in welcoming people and making them feel respected and cared for. However, trying to find a way to make the public more aware of "difficult" issues, by which I mean uncomfortable truths, such as the stark fact that a woman with no money lacks the means to purchase feminine hygiene items, is not easy. News agencies do not want to upset their audience by talking about sanitary pads over the breakfast cornflakes, or fungal infections caused by a lack of the means to keep clean. That said, people responded very well to our WashDay15 campaign. All we can do is to continue to put the information out there and pray that we provoke a response.

And finally: Not really directly about Hope+, but of interest, I hope? Bryn Marsh has been one of our most generous and long standing benefactors. He first heard about us at Everest Base Camp! He is not a man who seeks the limelight; indeed for the first few months, we never actually knew his name or met him, we would arrive to find a large donation of whatever we were short of. As he saw what we were doing he became much more involved. When the first earthquake hit Nepal, I knew he had been due to travel there, so with some concern I contacted him. He was due to travel the following week, and he did. He has gone to help rebuild the orphanages and schools he has supported with the same quiet determination as he has supported us. He has been keeping a diary "The only thing keeping me sane", and with his consent, I am blogging it as a guest blog on my website. If you are interested you can find it here:

<https://choralevensong.wordpress.com/2015/05/18/nepal-an-as-it-happens-a-guest-blog-by-bryn-marsh/>

Many thanks again for all your continued and diverse support. We could never have achieved one tenth of all this without you.

Best Wishes, Nädine Daniel Project Manager, Liverpool Cathedral, St James Mount, Liverpool L1 7AZ
Tel:0151 702 7237 [Email: nadine.daniel@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk](mailto:nadine.daniel@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk)

CSAN VOICES CONCERN OVER WELFARE CUTS IN QUEEN'S SPEECH

Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) has expressed concern over the Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill, outlined in yesterday's Queen's Speech. Chief Executive Helen O'Brien said: "CSAN recognises the need for deficit reduction, however we call for this to be achieved without the likelihood of pushing more families and children into poverty. We have consistently voiced our concern that reducing the benefit cap to £23,000 is going to cause further financial hardship for many families, especially larger ones. The worst affected, some 24,000 families, are set to lose more than ten percent of their income from this new restriction, despite which this policy reduces spending by an overall insignificant amount. Another issue for families over the past few years has been the significant increase in hunger and the reliance on foodbanks, many of which are supported by Catholic charities and parishes. This problem, we fear, with further restrictions to benefits, can only increase."

CSAN consists of 42 member charities and Caritas dioceses working with children living in poverty, older people, the homeless, travellers, disabled people, and others on the margins of society. The statistics on the impact of benefit cap from the Institute for Fiscal Studies: <http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/7762> For more information see: www.csan.org.uk

CSAN CHARITIES ASK NEW GOVERNMENT TO PRIORITISE CARE WORKERS

A collective of Catholic charities has chosen Dementia Awareness Week (18-24 May) to speak out on the conditions of work for homecare workers. The Older Peoples' Forum, a working group facilitated by Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) and comprising Caritas Diocese of Salford, Catholic Care Leeds, SVP, Father Hudson's Society, Irish Chaplaincy, Welcome Me As I Am, Nugent Care, Caritas Care and Caritas Westminster has principal issues with short visits, lack of training and poorly paid contracts.

Chair of the Forum, Mark Wiggin said: "care workers are pushed to breaking point. Jam-packed diaries mean that domiciliary carers are forced to cram visits together, often rushing through tasks and leaving appointments early to try to stick to some sort of schedule. This 'straight in, straight out' approach is distressing for both carer and client, with many saying that they have just fifteen minutes to help an individual whilst they tidy their home. Fifteen minute visits offer little dignity; we wouldn't ask ourselves to make a choice between going to the toilet or getting dressed, and neither should we do the same for elderly and vulnerable people. If we are to value the dignity of older people, we must look to the care industry and address wages that scrape minimum level, the lack of payment between visits and exploitative zero-hours contracts. Training must be a priority: currently almost half of care workers haven't received any specialist training to deal with clients who have specific needs, such as Alzheimer's or dementia. If we are to bring the provision of social care back from crisis, our homecare workers must be better valued than they are currently."

The Older Peoples' Forum asks that the new government ensures that social care remains a key issue by:

- readdressing visiting appointments, assessed on client requirements rather than tasks or minutes
- abolishing exploitative zero-hour contracts
- introducing industry-standard levels of training, at no cost to the worker

www.csan.org.uk/

THE BIG MILE

Two Catholic charities - the St Vincent de Paul Society England and Wales, and CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network) - have teamed up for a new initiative taking place this summer in the Dioceses of Cardiff and Shrewsbury. The Big Mile is an awareness raising event consisting of walks, one mile long, aimed at anyone - families, school children, older people, younger people, people with and without disabilities - who wants to take a practical stand against poverty. The walks will take place in June 2015 and go national in England and Wales from next year. Walks will be organised on the ground by local SVP groups, teaming up with local parishes and schools to raise money and spread the news about people suffering the plight of poverty. A website has been launched for anyone interested in the Big Mile to sign up to walk or organise a walk. www.bigmile.org.uk features case studies showing how the SVP and CSAN help thousands of people every year cope with poverty, bereavement, debt, and other types of hardship. Every walker will be sent a walker's pack containing a poverty factsheet highlighting key information and statistics in order to tell people more about how common poverty in the UK really is.

Elizabeth Palmer, CEO of the SVP England and Wales, said: "The SVP has been actively working to alleviate poverty in England and Wales since 1844. This walk is an opportunity for SVP members and non SVP members alike to come together and walk in solidarity with those in need." CSAN Chief Executive, Helen O'Brien, said: "Walking has always been symbolic. Whether it is a pilgrimage, a hike or a march, joining together to walk for something we believe in means something. As The Big Mile shows, it doesn't have to be a great distance or a monumental challenge that makes a difference. By joining together to walk a mile, parishes, schools and community groups are working to eradicate poverty here on their doorsteps. Thank you to everyone who is taking part." The Big Mile will be taking place in parishes and schools across Shrewsbury and Cardiff Dioceses in June. To find out more visit www.bigmile.org.uk or contact Anita Boniface, email: AnitaB@svp.org.uk Tel: 020 7703 3030

THE REAL 'WEALTH CREATORS'

Bernadette Meaden writes:

Politicians like to talk about wealth creators. They are usually referring to very rich individuals we mustn't tax too heavily for fear they will leave the country.

This misrepresents how wealth is created. For just one real example of a wealth creator, I would nominate Dr Keith White, a senior lecturer in ecology and the environment at Manchester University. And I'd also like to nominate the teacher who first sparked his interest in science.

Here is why Dr White is a wealth creator. The Manchester Ship Canal was one of the busiest waterways in Europe. By the mid twentieth century it was heavily polluted, and any development of the land and property around the docks was prevented by 'unpleasant odours, bubbling gas, and sediment rafts.' Research led by Dr White established the cause and extent of water pollution, followed by evidence based restoration programmes, which rejuvenated the waterway and surrounding areas. The improvement in water quality was the essential first step in the development of Salford Quays, which has seen approximately 2000 homes being built and the arrival of 900 businesses employing over 35,000 people. It includes Media City, home to the BBC, and the Lowry Centre, an important arts venue.

No doubt many entrepreneurs and property developers have made a fortune from Salford Quays, but none of them could have done so without the publicly funded work of Dr Keith White, on the salary of a University lecturer. A company called APEM was founded on Dr. White's work, and is now "one of the largest independent aquatic science consultancies in Europe. APEM's continuing commercial activities relating to water quality management are underpinned by Dr White's research."

The people we usually hear described as wealth creators could often more accurately be described as wealth accumulators. They are riding the crest of a wave. To do so takes skill and courage – but they did not create the wave. Many people we have never heard of, and many people's taxes, helped create the wave, but the heavily promoted idea of the individual wealth creator ignores their essential role. This way of looking at things, seeing the people who make most money from something as being the creators of that wealth is wrong. Wealth creation in the real economy is a much more collaborative activity than we are led to believe, and depends to a great extent on publicly funded services.

As US Senator Elizabeth Warren has said, "There is nobody in this country who got rich on their own. Nobody. You built a factory out there – good for you. But I want to be clear. You moved your goods to market on roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate. You were safe in your factory because of police forces and fire forces that the rest of us paid for. You didn't have to worry that marauding bands would come and seize everything at your factory... Now look. You built a factory and it turned into something terrific or a great idea – God bless! Keep a hunk of it. But part of the underlying social contract is you take a hunk of that and pay forward for the next kid who comes along."

This could be something to bear in mind the next time a politician talks about 'wealth creators'.

© **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. **Follow her on Twitter:** @BernaMeaden

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FORMER CONSERVATIVE DEFENCE SECRETARY SLAMS TRIDENT REPLACEMENT

Former Conservative Defence Secretary Michael Portillo has slammed plans to replace the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system as 'a waste of money'. Speaking on **BBC This Week** on 30 April, Portillo said:

"A former defence secretary and some Generals [this week] wrote a letter demanding the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons programme. You're probably familiar with these men who are worried about their own virility and buy large sports cars, and this I think is a case in point. I mean, Britain now has a minute army and a microscopic navy. And as these have become smaller so the status symbol of having nuclear weapons becomes more important, at least to some people.

"Our independent nuclear deterrent is not independent and doesn't constitute a deterrent against anybody that we regard as an enemy. It is a waste of money and it is a diversion of funds that might otherwise be spent on perfectly useful and useable weapons and troops. But some people have not caught up with this reality."

<http://www.cnduk.org/cnd-media/item/2140-former-conservative-defence-secretary-slams-trident-replacement>

THE STRANGER ON THE BRIDGE

*Building a friendship with the man who saved my life by **Jonny Benjamin***

Last year I was reunited with the man who stopped me from taking my own life. It had been six years since I travelled to a bridge in central London with the intention of jumping off. I felt incredibly nervous leading up to the reunion. I had such a hazy memory from our first meeting, what if I couldn't recall Neil at all? It wasn't until the Twitter campaign I launched to #FindMike that I actually came to know his name was Neil after all. But it didn't take long for the memory of that day to come flooding back just after we were reunited. We talked in detail about what had happened on the bridge and in the years since. He was as warm and kind as I remembered from our first encounter and during the reunion it began to feel as if I was talking to an old friend I'd known for years. Since then we have become firm friends. We'll often go for a drink together and last summer we both travelled to Dallas, Texas after being asked to appear on a chat show there. It proved to be a real adventure and it was great getting to know Neil away from any media attention. The most amazing thing of all is how passionate he is now about raising awareness of mental illness and suicide, and we have both become ambassadors for the charity **Rethink Mental Illness**. Together we want to inspire hope and recovery in anyone who is struggling with their mental health.

Recent months have been difficult for me after suffering a relapse in October last year and being hospitalised twice after becoming suicidal again. This time I decided to document my struggles on <https://www.youtube.com/user/johnjusthuman> I've been very frank in my videos, as I hope it will help other people experiencing the same feel less alone. The response has been fantastic and it's a cathartic process for me.

I've had a lot of time to reflect on my mental health and growing up I felt burdened, especially having to come out as gay as well as having mental health problems - it felt like a double whammy. I get a lot of messages from people who have mental health issues and are gay. I think the link between sexuality and mental illness is an important issue and one we have to really tackle. I think too that a lot needs to be done to address the lack of parity between physical health and mental health. At the moment physical health overtakes mental health in terms of treatment, waiting times, and funding. People are waiting years for mental health treatment. That would never happen if it was a physical health problem.

When I was 17 and first went to my GP about my mental health, I had to wait months and months for an appointment with a specialist. In the end I gave up and said "I'm going to do this on my own". That's what happens to people, they just give up waiting and try to manage without help and support. This isn't fair. Everyone deserves an equal chance to recover. I've still got some way to go until I'm fully recovered this time, but with the help and support of family and friends, including Neil, I know that I can overcome this period and feel better once again. That's the real message we want people to take away from our new documentary *The Stranger on the Bridge* - that there is always hope and that it is possible to overcome any adversity in life.

The Stranger on the Bridge was broadcast on Channel 4 on 4 May. <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-stranger-on-the-bridge> Follow Jonny on Twitter [@MrJonnyBenjamin](https://twitter.com/MrJonnyBenjamin)

INSIDE OUT - A POEM ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

Jonny writes: Published on Aug 14, 2014, I was just finishing this short film when Robin Williams very sadly passed away.

Inside Out <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi8gBvLCwI>

I wrote the poem and created this film to show that we often never truly know what is going on in someone else's mind, particularly if they are suffering. I hope that someone who is suffering might be able to see this and relate, but most of all know that they are not alone and that as my last words hopefully illustrate, the suffering can be overcome. Remember you can get help wherever you are in the world at any time. Find someone to speak to here: <http://www.befrienders.org/>

HEARING VOICES

Hearing voices has been regarded by psychiatry as 'auditory hallucinations', and in many cases a symptom of schizophrenia. However not everyone who hears voices has a diagnosis of schizophrenia. There are conflicting theories from psychiatrists, psychologists and voice hearers about why people do hear voices. We believe that they are similar to dreams, symbols of our unconscious minds. Although the Network is open to many diverse opinions we accept the explanation of each individual voice hearer.

Traditionally, the usual treatment for voice hearing has been major tranquillisers, administered to reduce the delusions and hallucinations. However not everyone responds to this treatment. There are some psychiatrists and psychologists who now work with people who hear voices using talking therapies and exploring the meaning of the voices. Although this is not yet 'the norm', this practice is increasing. As the improvement in individuals who are encouraged to talk about their voices becomes more apparent and increasing number of health professionals are beginning to understand that the key to understanding voices lies in the 'content' of the voices. The first UK hearing Voices group was formed in 1988 in Manchester. There are now groups established across the country. For your nearest group go to: <http://www.hearing-voices.org/hearing-voices-groups/find-a-group/>

HUGE RESPONSE TO CROWDFUNDED CAMPAIGN AGAINST REPEAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Amnesty International has received a huge response to a new crowdfunding newspaper adverts campaign calling on the recently-appointed Justice Secretary Michael Gove to save the Human Rights Act. Amnesty is warning of significant global repercussions if the government proceeds with what could be the biggest roll-back in human rights in British history, and more than 1,000 people have made financial pledges to pay for national newspaper advertisements in support of the Human Rights Act in the first few hours of the crowdfunding campaign. Contributors are paying £10 for their name to be included in the newspaper advertisement. Amnesty campaigners and Crowdfunder have both been impressed by the speed and volume of responses. The first of the publicly-funded adverts appeared in *The Times* newspaper on 26 May, with further national titles set to follow in the run-up to the Queen's Speech on Wednesday 27 May. The Conservative Party's election manifesto had said it would repeal the Human Rights Act should it form a majority government, with earlier Conservative proposals also suggesting that the UK might additionally withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights. The European Convention was established in direct response to the horrors of the Second World War, and if the UK withdraws from it, the country would become one of only two in Europe which is not a party to the convention - the other being Belarus which has an extremely poor human rights record.

Kate Allen, Director of Amnesty International UK, said: "Repeal of the Human Rights Act could represent the single biggest roll-back of rights in British history. It could lead to an unravelling of the progress on human rights across the world. People all over the world are risking their liberty and their very lives to try to get the same rights protected by the Human Rights Act. It took ordinary people here in Britain a very long time to win these rights and we shouldn't let politicians take them away at the stroke of a pen. The British government is effectively saying to dictators the world over: 'Pick and choose your human rights and pick who you think deserves them'. We want everyone in Britain to join us in rejecting this politics of fear and to instead stand up for hope, equality and fairness."

The Human Rights Act makes 16 freedoms and protections legal entitlements, including the right to a fair trial and to be free from torture. Instances of its use include a woman who had been subjected to domestic violence who was able to be reunited with her children, and an elderly couple able to sue under the Act to argue that they should be allowed to live together in the same care home after they had been separated after 65 years of marriage. Nearly 80,000 people have already signed an Amnesty petition calling for the Human Rights Act to be kept.

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/>

STOP PRESS: The Bill was not included in the Queen's Speech on 27 May to allow time for further deliberation.

FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE APPOINTED TO VATICAN POST

Pope Francis has named Dominican priest Fr Timothy Radcliffe as a consultor of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Ordained in 1971, Fr Timothy is the author of more than a half-dozen books, a well-known preacher and an internationally sought after speaker. His book *What is the Point of Being a Christian?* won the 2007 Michael Ramsey Prize, which is awarded by the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury for the "most promising contemporary theological writing from the global Church." Fr Timothy served as Master of the Dominican order from 1992 to 2001. He is the only member of the English Province of the Dominicans to have held the office since the Order's foundation in 1216. He is currently the Director of the Las Casas Institute of Blackfriars Oxford which focuses on the promotion of Social Justice and Human Rights. He is an Honorary Doctor of Divinity at the University of Oxford.

Commenting on public support of gay marriage he said it showed "a society that aspires to an open tolerance of all sorts of people, a desire for us to live together in mutual acceptance." (December 2012 article in *The Guardian*). "Tolerance," he wrote, "implies an attention to the particularity of the other person, a savoring of how he or she is unlike me, in their faith, their ethnicity, their sexual orientation. A society that flees difference and pretends we are all just the same may have outlawed intolerance in one form, and yet instituted it in other ways." He is also a proponent of opening up to communion to divorced and remarried Catholics, currently a hot topic among bishops participating in the Synod on the Family. In a 2013 essay in *America* magazine, Radcliffe wrote that he held "two profound hopes. That a way will be found to welcome divorced and remarried people back to communion. And, most important, that women will be given real authority and voice in the Church. The Pope expresses his desire that this may happen, but what concrete form can it take?" Regarding the role of women in the Church, Radcliffe is in line with Pope Francis, who has said no to women's ordination but who nonetheless wants women to hold positions of authority. Radcliffe lamented what he sees as a stronger fusion between ordination and decision-making offices in the Church. "I think the women's ordination question has become more acute now because the Church has become more clerical than in my childhood," he said in a 2010 interview with *US Catholic*.

Radcliffe has pushed for a more open Church, along the lines of Pope Francis' assertion that the Church be willing to "make a mess of things." "Jesus offered a wide hospitality, and ate and drank with all sorts of people. We need to embody his open heart rather than retreat into a Catholic ghetto," Radcliffe said in a 2013 interview.

CAFOD CELEBRATES BEATIFICATION OF OSCAR ROMERO

The beatification of Oscar Romero on Saturday 23 May will provide overdue recognition for "one of the great heroes of the 20th Century", says the aid agency CAFOD, which closely supported his work. "Archbishop Romero's words and actions are at the heart of everything that CAFOD does, and we are delighted about his beatification," said Chris Bain, CAFOD's Director. "He was an extremely brave man, who was inspired by his faith to fight not just poverty but injustice, to give a voice to the voiceless. The reason that CAFOD staff and supporters, like many Catholics around the world, continue to hold him in such high regard is obvious. He didn't simply talk about the need to love your neighbour, but courageously denounced the violence and named the injustices that plagued his country. He reminded us that Christ is found in people living in poverty, and that we cannot ignore the suffering of our brothers and sisters in need. He may not be a household name for non-Catholics in the UK, but he was one of one of the great heroes of the 20th Century. He deserves to be commemorated alongside the likes of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi as a peacemaker who sacrificed his life standing up to injustice. I hope that his beatification will give him the wider recognition he so richly deserves."

Oscar Romero was the Archbishop of San Salvador from 1977 until he was assassinated in 1980. He was initially regarded as a conservative choice, but he became increasingly outspoken about human rights violations in El Salvador - particularly after the murder of his close friend Father Rutilio Grande. After repeatedly condemning poverty and injustice, he was shot dead while celebrating Mass on 24 March 1980. 35 years later, Archbishop Romero will be beatified - or declared "Blessed" - on 23rd May as a prelude to being made a Saint. CAFOD staff including Clare Dixon, the agency's Head of Latin America, will attend the celebration in San Salvador.

CAFOD has a long history of working with Archbishop Romero and promoting his legacy. In the 1970s, CAFOD supported Romero's famous radio broadcasts, which - at a time when the press was heavily censored - were often the only means by which people in El Salvador knew the truth about the atrocities occurring in their country. When Romero's radio station was blown up, CAFOD provided funding to rebuild it. After Romero was martyred, the aid agency's staff successfully petitioned Lambeth Council to rename the Brixton street where their office was located 'Romero Close'. And when CAFOD moved to a new office in 2009, it was named 'Romero House'. Today, CAFOD continues to work in El Salvador, helping farmers to improve their crops, assisting communities in reducing the risk of disasters, supporting people living with HIV, building peace, defending human rights and trying to create a more just society.

Chris Bain said: "I think Archbishop Romero would be pleased to see some of what is happening in El Salvador today. In 2013, one socially-minded government peacefully succeeded another, and they are consciously trying to implement policies that Romero would approve of: fiscal reform, free school uniforms and books for children, funding for cooperatives, more social programmes. But El Salvador remains a country in the grip of inequality, and the legacy of the civil war continues to cause divisions. All around the world hundreds of millions of people live in poverty or under oppressive regimes. The world as a whole desperately needs more figures like Romero - leaders with the courage and faith to stand up for the poor against injustice."

MARY COLWELL IN TOP 50 'POWER LIST' FOR CONSERVATION

Mary Colwell has made number 27 in the top 50 power list for conservation heroes in May's *BBC Wildlife Magazine* - congratulations! **Mary writes:** I spent the morning giving a talk to the Bristol Christian Meditation Group, part of a worldwide movement to promote meditation from any faith or from none. They were interested in how faith could play a part in promoting a greater awareness of our relationship with nature. The audience were lovely, engaged and asked some searching questions. I gave the talk a strange title - Being a Christian and a Mammal. For too long Christianity (and many other faiths) has put humanity aside from nature, regarding people as floating, spiritual beings that are removed from the nitty gritty, mess and joy of the natural world. The common approach is that the earth is a resource that supports us, not an integral part of what we are. I wanted to stress our mammalian nature, place us in an evolutionary context, look at what drivers shaped the way we look, act and interact with the world around us. How we evolved an upright stance, developed forward looking vision, why we developed complex language, how we formed social groups and the consequences of that. The tribalism, gossip, group sizes that we adopt - all driven by our evolution and the pressures we responded to in nature. I also wanted to point out how much of the earth is hidden from our senses as we developed our complex brains. How we miss so much of what is happening around us, the colour spectrums we can't see, the vibrations we can't feel, the electrical fields we can't detect and the sounds outside our hearing.

Is it important to think of ourselves as mammalian as well as spiritual? Or is this intellectualising and only useful for middle England chatter? I think it is important to look into our deep-time roots and think about our long history on earth. Because if we regard ourselves as separate from all that out there then we will have a relationship that is based on difference, not connection. We will have an intellectual relationship. It also leads to a kind of paternalism towards the natural world and the extraordinary creatures we live alongside. Too often the religious approach is either utilitarian or overly sentimental. We are told to look for God in the beauty of a butterfly or flower, or in the majesty of a mountain. But what about God in the ebola virus or malarial parasite? In the Nepalese earthquake? If God is only in the appealing things then when disaster strikes or a snake bites or a child dies of malaria, we don't know how to process it. It was a good morning, thanks to the organisers for asking me.

Posted [Saturday, May 09, 2015](#). Follow Mary at: <http://marycolwell.blogspot.co.uk/>

JUSTICE AND PEACE CALENDAR

4 June International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression

On 19 August 1982, at its emergency special session on the question of Palestine, the General Assembly, "appalled at the great number of innocent Palestinian and Lebanese children victims of Israel's acts of aggression", decided to commemorate 4 June of each year as the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression ([resolution ES-7/8](#)). The purpose of the day is to acknowledge the pain suffered by children throughout the world who are the victims of physical, mental and emotional abuse. This day affirms the UN's commitment to protect the rights of children. www.un.org/en/events/childvictimday

5 June World Environment Day *Sustainable Consumption and Production*

The well-being of humanity, the environment, and the functioning of the economy, ultimately depend upon the responsible management of the planet's natural resources. Evidence is building that people are consuming far more natural resources than what the planet can sustainably provide. Many of the Earth's ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points of depletion or irreversible change. By 2050, if current consumption and production patterns remain the same and with a rising population expected to reach 9.6 billion, we will need three planets to sustain our ways of living and consumption. Living within planetary boundaries is the most promising strategy for ensuring a healthy future. Human prosperity need not cost the earth. Living sustainably is about doing more and better with less. <http://www.greeningtheblue.org/event/world-environment-day-5-june-2015>

12 June United Nations World Day Against Child Labour

According to the International Labour Organization statistics, it is estimated that in 2013 alone, 2 million children were subject to child domestic labour. On this day, the ILO encourages governments to undertake legislative reforms and implement policies that guarantee the elimination of child labour. <http://www.vercalendario.info/en/event/days-unitednations-12-june-2015.html>

15-21 June Refugee Week *Different pasts, shared future*

Refugee Week is a UK-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events and activities that celebrates the contribution of refugees to the UK and promotes better understanding of why people seek sanctuary. It was first held in 1998 and developed in response to the increasingly negative perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers held by the general public in Britain, fuelled by persistently hostile media coverage of the asylum issue. It is the only UK-wide event that attempts to counter this negative climate, defending the importance of sanctuary and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host communities. Refugee Week provides a platform where positive images of refugees can be promoted in order to create a culture of welcome throughout the UK. We hope to create better understanding between different communities and to encourage successful integration enabling refugees to live in safety and to continue making a valuable contribution to the UK. Refugee Week is a unique opportunity for us all to experience and celebrate the rich diversity of refugee communities through theatre, music, dance, film & other events which take place all over the UK. Through Refugee Week we aim to provide an important opportunity for asylum seekers and refugees to be seen, listened to and valued. <http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk>

26 June United Nations Day for Victims of Torture

Every year, the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, on 26 June, gives us the opportunity to stand united and remind the world that torture is a cruel violation of human rights. This year's theme, **Right to Rehabilitation (R2R)**, allows the IRCT movement to showcase the vital role it plays in ensuring as many torture survivors as possible have access to the rehabilitation they need and have a right to. IRCT members and friends provide much needed rehabilitation services to torture survivors in over 70 countries. However, they can help only a fraction of those who have been tortured, as the need for rehabilitation far exceeds the capacity of rehabilitation centres. The vast majority of survivors of torture are forced to cope with their trauma alone. This trauma reaches far beyond the direct victims and in some instances, where torture has been used in a systematic and widespread manner, whole societies are affected. Providing holistic rehabilitation and redress to survivors of torture and trauma can help heal the effects of torture and therefore help reconstruct broken societies. The aim of rehabilitation is to empower torture survivors to rebuild their life. This is why the R2R is more important than ever. This year, we are calling on all rehabilitation centres to make R2R the focal point of their activities, to promote the vital work they do in providing rehabilitation, and to pressure governments into meeting their responsibility to make R2R a reality in their country.

<http://www.irct.org/our-work/day-against-torture-on-26-june.aspx>

12 July Sea Sunday

Sea Sunday is an opportunity to remember and pray for seafarers, their families and all who support them. On Sea Sunday Catholic Churches around the UK take up a second collection with all funds raised going to the Apostleship of the Sea to support our work. It is a day of remembrance, prayer and celebration, and an opportunity to think about and thank those seafarers who work tirelessly throughout the year bringing us goods we often take for granted. We rely on your help to ensure that Sea Sunday is recognised in UK Parishes. More information: johngreen@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk, 07505 653 801

<http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/about-sea-sunday>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

JUNE

4 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression www.un.org/en/events/childvictimday

4 Domestic Violence Awareness Training for all involved in pastoral care in the church 9.45am-4pm at Maryport Methodist Church, CA15 6EX. Free of charge. Bookings: Helen Boothroyd 07503 931196 hbctic@tiscali.co.uk

5 World Environment Day <http://www.greeningtheblue.org/event/world-environment-day-5-june-2015>

5 Catch up with Romy & Linda Tiongco 7.30 -9pm Hoole URC, Hoole Road Chester, CH2 3NT. Meet Romy and hear all he is accomplishing with the people around him in the Philippines – and how MuCAARD-UK supporters are giving them assistance.

Hosted by MuCAARD-UK: Muslim Christian Action for Advocacy, Relief & Development. 0151 526 2799 kalinaw@mucaard-uk.org

6 Pax Christi Annual General Meeting 10.45am - 4pm, Holy Apostles, Cumberland Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 4LY. Hear about our work, meet like-minded people and be inspired. This year, we have invited Ziad Hilal SJ to be with us and speak about his work with JRS Homs Syria. We will also award the 2015 Pax Christi Peace Award. Archbishop Malcolm McMahon our National President will be with us. Bring food for shared lunch. RSVP to Pax Christi 0208 203 4884 or admin@paxchristi.org.uk www.paxchristi.org.uk Full details here: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2AGM15-edited.pdf>

7 Environment Sunday www.greenchristian.org.uk/whats-on 0845 459 8469

7 "Songs of Praise" 3-4pm St. Mark's Church, St. Mark's Road, Saltney, Chester, CH4 8DE. An opportunity to join in familiar and not-so-familiar hymns, in celebration of the work of Christian Aid and CAFOD. Followed by light refreshments. Hosted by Christian Aid, Chester Committee. 01244 674391

7 Annual CAFOD Afternoon Tea at High Legh, Village Hall, West lane, Knutsford WA16 6LR. 1-4.30pm. Books and plants on sale too as well as a Fair Trade stall. Plenty of parking opposite the village hall.

8 Chris Bain (Director of CAFOD) and Bernadette Hopper (Head of Supporter and Volunteer Services) will be in **Chester** to meet with supporters and volunteers in Shrewsbury Diocese, in order to explain firsthand the reason for the changes that are now planned and to share the vision for new ways of working and to answer any concerns or questions. 12.30 - 3.00pm. To make the most of the time they have available we plan to meet at St Clare's, Downsfield Road, Chester CH4 8HH in the Parish Room (immediately below the CAFOD Diocesan Office). We will provide a simple sandwich lunch from 12.30pm before meeting together from 1.15 - 3pm. Please let us know if you hope/intend to come to this meeting so that we can accommodate and cater appropriately for numbers attending. Parking at St Clare's and in the Community Centre Car park next door to the church.

10 Prayer for Peace and Justice 7.30pm Mass at St Ann's Cheadle 29 Vicarage Avenue, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle SK8 7JW - we are very grateful to our supporters and parishioners at St Ann's as well as to Fr Chris for organising this, the first of our '**Time for Prayer,**' an initiative which we hope will pick up from our Novena for Peace last year and provide us with opportunities when we can come together in parishes around Shrewsbury diocese to pray for peace, for justice, an end to conflict and warfare, for refugees and displaced peoples, for the marginalised and stigmatised, for those without clean water, food, health care and education ... and afterwards to share a cup of tea, listen to a speaker or just get to know one another a little better. Tel 01244 677594 Sue Bownas and Liz Aiello, CAFOD Shrewsbury Diocesan Team

10 CAFOD Lecture on Catholic Social Teaching, given by Justine Silcock and Phil Doyle, CAFOD volunteers. The Church Hall, St. Cuthbert's Church, 3, Palatine Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3LH. from 7pm (prompt) till 9pm (prompt). Doors open at 6pm. Tea, coffee, juice and biscuits will be provided. More information from Eric: 0161 434 7644

10 Domestic Violence Awareness Training for all involved in pastoral care in the church 9.15am-3.30pm Trinity Church Centre, Barrow LA14 5HT. Free of charge. Bookings: Helen Boothroyd 07503 931196 hbctic@tiscali.co.uk

11 Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group's AGM 7.30-8.45pm Southwater Room, Meeting Point House, Telford Centre TF3 4HS with speaker Rabbi Mark Solomon (Interfaith Consultant for Liberal Judaism), who will be talking on 'The Secret Light', the influence of Islam on Judaism. Please direct any enquiries to Barbara: bcrawforth@btinternet.com

12 UN World Day Against Child Labour <http://www.vercalendario.info/en/event/days-unitednations-12-june-2015.html>

12 Taking a Walk Upstream: Churches response to poverty and injustice 7pm at the Shakespeare Centre Kendal. Speaker: David Walker, Bishop of Manchester. No charge. Donations to Manna House and Food Bank. Bookings to Kendal Ecumenical Group : kendalecumenical@gmail.com

13 Wake up your church! A one-day workshop to enable Christians make powerful connections between faith, everyday life and challenges of justice and environmental sustainability. 9.30am till 4.30pm St Thomas' Church, Penny St, Lancaster, LA1 1XX For info: T- 01524 39018 E-mail: hkadmin@phonecoop.coop *Treading Lightly Network, Lancaster Churches Together*

13 Stop Arming Israel day school – Free all day event 10.30am–5pm at Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS. Organised by Boycott Israel Network in association with the Campaign Against Arms Trade with support from War on Want and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Places are limited so please book your place now <http://www.waronwant.org/news/events/18318-stop-arming-israel-workshop-in-manchester> If you can afford it, please donate £5 or more on the day to help cover costs.

13 Charity Concert for Malawi fund 7.30-10pm Heswall URC, Telegraph Road Heswall, CH60 7SE. Enjoy an evening of music and song, raising money for the Dr Harry Lindsay Potter Endowment Fund – which provides Malawi university scholarships. The line-up features the Port Sunlight Lyceum Brass Band and the Chester Songsmiths. Tickets – £8 adults, Children under 18 years £4, including refreshments. Contact Susan Flynn 01244 381490 sflynn@waitrose.com

15-21 Refugee Week <http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk>

15 and then for 5 weeks at Ucheldre Centre, Holyhead: **Silent Voices** – A touring exhibition of photos taken by children in the Palestinian village of Bil'in depicting their everyday lives.

17 Climate Change rally & lobby Parliament Square, London. Mass lobby of MPs in Westminster, Climate fete: food, stalls, fun & games for all the family in a local community-feel Fair on Parliament Square. Evening rally in Trafalgar Square with high profile speakers. Simultaneous local community events www.theclimatecoalition.org/

20 Liverpool J&P Commission Annual Assembly 'Who is my neighbour?' 10–4 at LACE Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA. Coffee/registration from 9.30am. Prayer, speakers, discussion, action plans. Stalls: J&P, Nugent Care, CAFOD, Progressio, SVP, CND, MARCAP, CAP, Church Credit Champions, Traidcraft foods and catalogues. Book a place on 0151 522 1080/1081 or email s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

26 United Nations Day for Victims of Torture Action by Christians Against Torture ACAT(UK) www.acatuk.org.uk/

28 13th annual Wirral Coastal Walk for CAFOD. From Seacombe Ferry to Thurston, Wirral Country Park, full walk 15 miles but exit points at approx 5 and 10 miles. CAFOD walkers raising money for CAFOD's Syria Appeal. Recruiting new walkers, individuals or parish/school team. More information. 01244 677594 or email shrewsbury@cafod.org.uk

JULY

1 Pray & Fast for the Climate gatherings in Lancaster. 1pm Cumbria University Chapel, Lancaster Campus; 1.15pm Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre; 7.30pm St Thomas' Church, Penny St. Each event lasts 20-30 mins. All welcome or pray at home!

1 CAFOD Preston Meeting 7.30-9pm St Clare's Parish Hall, Sharoe Green Lane North, Fulwood, Preston PR2 9HH with visiting speaker Montserrat Fernandez, CAFOD Programme Officer from Nicaragua. All welcome.

4 Domestic Violence Awareness Training Kendal. Enquiries: Helen Boothroyd 07503 931196 hbctic@tiscali.co.uk

9 Workshops on Climate Change Lancaster University CAFOD, Christian Aid & Operation Noah

12 Sea Sunday apostleshipofthesea.org.uk 07505 653 801

14 CAFOD day with Fr Edu Gariguez, Caritas Philippines in Salford: marana@cafod.org.uk 020 7095 5417

14 CWDF Forum 6.45-9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN Speaker to be confirmed.

17-19 The Things That Make For Peace. NJPN annual conference at Swanwick to identify the real threats to human

security and how we can work together to create a world without war. 020 7901 486 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

Speakers include Prof Paul Rodgers & Fr Edu Gariguez. Theological reflections from Rev Dr Martin Poulson SDB.

Activities for children and young people, and a Just Fair with information and resources from many organisations.

23 Domestic Violence Awareness Training Whitehaven. Enquiries: Helen Boothroyd 07503 931196 hbctic@tiscali.co.uk

Further sessions planned for 17 September (Cockermouth), 22 October (Ambleside), 12 November (Appleby) – enquiries to Helen

30 World Youth Day: www.worldyouthday.com

August

6&9 Anniversaries of the first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki paxchristi.org.uk ccnd.gn.apc.org

28-31 Greenbelt Festival Kettering www.greenbelt.org.uk

September

13 Racial Justice Sunday www.carj.org.uk

13 CAAT Christian Network Day of Prayer www.caat.org.uk 020 7281 0297

15-18 DSEi Arms Fair London www.caat.org.uk 020 7281 0297

19 NJPN Open Networking Day: Warwick Rd URC, 10 Warwick Row, Coventry, CV1 1EX. Speaker: Paul Bodenham (Green Christian) on '*Francisconomics: The Saint, the Pope and the Economy of Enough.*' Contact: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

020 7901 4864

20-26 World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel www.pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace/

21 Peace One Day 020 7456 9180 www.peaceday.org

October

3-4 COME & SEE 2015 Conference at Southport. Keynote speaker **Sr Helen Prejean**. Sunday Mass with Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP. Booking forms with sae: Irenaeus, 32 Great Georges Rd, Liverpool L22 1RD. 0151 949 1199 jenny@irenaeus.co.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 too for 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