

# NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin – March 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](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com)  
Download earlier bulletins at: <http://jpshrewsbury.wordpress.com/e-bulletins/>

## GET POLITICAL IN 2015

**Ellen Teague** writes: The Spring issue of *Vocation for Justice* - the newsletter of **Columban** missionaries in Britain which focuses on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation - urges that we 'get political' in 2015. 2015 is a crucial year for the planet and its people. It's a time for inspiration to be more political and engage with the justice, peace and ecology issues that matter to us. When it comes to our planet's health, "2015 could be a decisive year in history," Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, told a CAFOD gathering in London in November. He hoped Catholics around the world could muster the spiritual and political clout to be involved in building the movement for social and environmental justice.

In September 2015, world leaders decide on new goals for sustainable development, and in December, in Paris, a new climate treaty. Pope Francis is preparing the first ever encyclical focused solely on the environment and it is widely anticipated that it will urge international cooperation and action to address climate change. Religion offers a spiritual, ethical base on which people can sustain hope and work for long-term change. In Britain, at home we have the **General Election in May**. The latest issue of *Vocation for Justice* urges engagement with the political process and the centre spread suggests questions to be put to candidates during hustings. The **2020 vision statement of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland** is deliberately positive. "Our starting point is a vision of the Good Society we want to live in by 2020, and how we can work together to build it." It calls for a moral economy in the service of all. Download: <http://www.columbans.co.uk/news/election-focus-vocation-justice/>

## BISHOPS ISSUE VOTING GUIDELINES

The Bishops of England and Wales have released a letter addressed to Catholics across England and Wales about this year's General Election. Over 500,000 copies of the letter have been sent to the parishes. The letter can be read here: <http://jerichotree.com/2015/02/25/general-election-2015-letter-to-catholics-in-england-and-wales-from-their-bishops/>

- Many agencies have issued their own guidelines. Some of these can be found below:

## CSAN AND CAFOD GENERAL ELECTION GUIDE

The direction of our country will be shaped by the decisions made on 7 May. Who you vote for at an election is a personal and private decision, and as people of faith we have a responsibility to pray for and question those who represent us on the issues that stand at the heart of the Gospel. When we speak out together as a Catholic community we have a stronger voice. This is why **CSAN** (Caritas Social Action Network), the official domestic social action and justice agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales is joining **CAFOD**, the international aid agency of the Catholic Church, to ask questions of parliamentary candidates at a time when they want to hear about the issues that matter most to you. Join us by asking your parliamentary candidate what their party is doing to end poverty at home and abroad. Whether you are attending hustings meetings where candidates debate and answer your questions, or responding to canvassers on your doorstep, the 2015 election offers us an opportunity to speak out against injustice with a united voice.

We believe that every individual is made in the image and likeness of God, with inherent dignity and worth. Regardless of where they live, everyone has the right to a life free from poverty. The Chairs of Trustees for CAFOD and CSAN, Bishop John Arnold and Bishop Terence Drainey, have said together: *"At a general election we are asked to think about the world we want to live in. As Catholics, we are called to speak up for the poorest and most vulnerable people at home and abroad. CAFOD and CSAN are asking supporters to reflect and act on some pressing challenges that we face both in the UK and around the world. We hope you will embrace this opportunity to reflect, act and pray during this important time and we wish you every grace and blessing."*

In your election guide you will find stories of the people affected by poverty at home and abroad, as well inspiration from Catholic Social Teaching and our Church leaders, which will ground your action in the values of our faith. You'll find a how-to and top tips for asking questions to parliamentary candidates ahead of the election plus four simple questions for candidates:

Q1: What will you do to make work pay?

Q2: What will you do to guarantee access to a genuinely affordable home?

Q3: What will you do to speak out for the poorest and most vulnerable people around the world?

Q4: What will you do to make tackling climate change a priority and to prevent it pushing people deeper into poverty overseas?

- Please email [election2015@csan.org.uk](mailto:election2015@csan.org.uk) or Tel: 020 7633 4971 to feedback any responses you receive related to Q1 & Q2.
- OR email [election2015@cafod.org.uk](mailto:election2015@cafod.org.uk) or Tel: 020 7095 5692 to feedback any responses you receive related to Q3 & Q4.

## 2020 VISION OF THE GOOD SOCIETY

A broad coalition of Christian denominations and agencies – including Church Action on Poverty, Church Urban Fund, the Children's Society and Housing Justice – are encouraging churches across the country to take up the theme of a '2020 Vision of the Good Society' with MPs and prospective candidates in the run up to the General Election. A statement has been produced under the auspices of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland out of a common desire to see a society that works for all – in which each of us are valued and which respects the Earth. In short: a society for the common good. The 2020 Vision focuses on five key areas – wealth and inequality, home, children and young people, livelihoods, and the environment and climate. Whilst these are not the only fundamental issues of our time, they do represent areas where we collectively have something particular to contribute to public and political debate in the run up to the General Election. CAP says: "As in other areas of life, much has been said about negativity in politics. There seems to be a growing awareness within faith and secular communities alike that if we truly want to create a more just and sustainable society we need a positive vision to work towards. Our starting point is therefore positive: a vision of the Good Society we want to live in by 2020, and how we can work together to build it."

**RESOURCES: CAP Hustings Guide:** <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/hustings/hustingsguide>

**CTBI Election site:** <https://ctbielections.org.uk/>

**Christians in Politics** have launched a resource pack *Show Up* at: <http://www.christiansinpolitics.org.uk/showup/>

**And can we all vote?** With changes in legalisation many have dropped off the electoral role [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk) gives information about how to register. Please encourage all to make sure they are registered to vote.

**Visions of the Good Society 2020** - free resources to order or to download from [www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday)

**Housing Justice** has some useful links: <http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/election-2015.html>

## HOPE NOT HATE

**Nick Lowles of HOPE not hate writes:** In May we go to the polls to elect our next Government in what some have dubbed the "decision of a generation". It is a view we share. While the Conservatives and Labour will be vying to form the next Government, HOPE not hate is concerned about the repercussions of a very strong UKIP vote. An already toxic political environment will sour further as other parties run to the right to try to win back UKIP voters. Casual racism will become more acceptable and the fear and hatred of outsiders will grow. Worse still, UKIP might even hold the balance of power. In the North West there is a real danger of UKIP winning Heywood and Middleton, a seat it almost won in the by-election last year. Missing out by just 617 votes, this is our priority constituency in the region. If you don't want to see UKIP win then sign up to get involved:

<http://action.hopenothate.org.uk/get-involved-2015>

## CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE

NOW is a great time to talk to them about arms trade issues. This is particularly true of the next couple of months, before election fever really takes hold and domestic and economic issues monopolise the agenda.

**CAAT** has three points all candidates should hear:

- Promoting arms exports is incompatible with human rights
- Security is not the same as military might
- Switch investment from the arms trade to the renewables industry – More info on these issues from: [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

## RELUCTANT VOTERS MAY HAVE MORE POWER THAN THEY THINK

Huge numbers didn't vote in the last general election. In 2010, the Conservative Party received the highest number of votes – just under 11 million. But twice this number – 22 million – didn't vote at all. Three important groups were less likely to vote: the young, people with low income, and those from ethnic minorities. Many felt ignored by politicians – and with good reason. People aged 18-21 are almost three times more likely to be low paid than any other age group. But by not voting they give politicians even more of an excuse to ignore them. And if those reluctant voters do make it to the ballot box, they may have more power than they think. Some MPs' majorities are surprisingly vulnerable. Please encourage everyone to register to vote, this can be done at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote> either on line or by downloading a form.

## UNLOCK DEMOCRACY: VOTE MATCH 2015 AND ELECTIONLEAFLETS.ORG

**Vote Match 2015** will be launching in March. Vote Match is an online voter quiz which matches you to the party that best represents your views at the election. Forget all the wrangling about who should be in the TV debates - Vote Match has the full range of parties included from the start. We've just launched a new website which will keep you updated until Vote Match 2015 goes live. You've probably already started getting leaflets from the parties through your letterbox. Before they go in the recycling, upload them to [ElectionLeaflets.org](http://ElectionLeaflets.org)

## TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD

A wealth of election resources focusing on building a healthy civil society for the common good can be downloaded at <http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/?u=77a7bd7701def6d784260b532&id=926c76cf64&e=b30a4185a8>

## A CALL TO CAMPAIGN AGAINST TTIP

Behind closed doors, the EU and US are drawing up a new trade deal called the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)**. If agreed, TTIP would extend the power of big business over our society to unprecedented levels. Shamefully, the UK government is currently a major supporter. The deal will reduce tariffs (taxes on imports and exports), but the major focus is likely to be on reducing 'non-tariff barriers to trade', which is the part that has elicited most concern from trade unions, and social justice campaigners.

If nothing is done TTIP could:

- Grant corporations the power to sue governments
- Lock-in the privatisation of public services like the NHS and education
- Undermine workers' rights
- Undo regulations that protect the environment, giving harmful industries like fracking an easier ride
- Remove food safety regulation to allow new GM crops, hormone pumped beef and chlorine washed chicken

The new Commission President elect, Jean-Claude Juncker, put on record in a speech on 22 October his concerns about giving corporations the power to sue governments. He might have gone further had he not received a letter on 21 October signed by the UK government and three other member states telling Mr Juncker to ignore any concerns and 'stick to the mandate'.

**No TTIP**, which includes several organisations such as World Development Movement, is active in raising awareness and campaigning against the worst aspects of this agreement.

[www.nottip.org.uk](http://www.nottip.org.uk) [www.wdm.org.uk/ttip](http://www.wdm.org.uk/ttip)

- Do your Parliamentary Candidates know about TTIP?

## BOKO HARAM: A PLACE OF PEACE, LOVE AND JOY DESTROYED

*Clair Gadzama, St Peter's Hazel Grove writes:*

I write on behalf of my husband's family and homeland in Borno State, North East Nigeria. On December 2nd 2014, Boko Haram fighters came to the town of Lassa where my husband was born. They entered it disguised in Nigerian military uniforms, asked people to gather to "advise" them and slaughtered indiscriminately. The village was 98% Christian and home to our extended family and deceased ancestors. It was ruled peacefully and democratically by a kind tribal chief. It was a place full of colour, vitality, love and joy. Now not a soul remains. Those who could escaped to the bush and tried to get to safety. Some have nowhere to go, no one to help. Those who have relatives in other parts made their way to them. Our immediate family are all displaced with no prospect of returning home. The village was razed to the ground. The Churches were burned down first. Our family are in a state of shock.

How could the Nigerian Government not stop this? We must be a voice for our brothers and sisters.

Every week, we hear news of further atrocities committed by Boko Haram; they systematically attack schools. The abduction of the Chibok girls in April 2014 attracted a lot of media attention, but that's all it was; 219 are still missing. There are claims that the girls have been made to convert to Islam and then given to marriage to Boko Haram fighters. Unfortunately by coincidence, there is a worrying trend in the increasing number of young girls that have been used as suicide bombers in the last few weeks. All the schools in the affected region are shut. Boko Haram means 'western education is forbidden', so schools, like our Churches, were the very first targets. They have been the sites of brutal killings, abductions and many were simply burned to the ground. Any left standing are deserted because the population has been killed or displaced. There is no education for tens of thousands of children, and some have not been to school for the last four years.

On 1 February 2015 Yakubu, my husband, gave a talk to a stunned and shocked congregation at St Peter's, Hazel Grove. He showed pictures of our home before all this and now, explaining how it has affected us so personally and how the Nigerian Government is only paying lip service to what is happening with no coverage on Nigerian news channels and little more here. The election of 14 February was postponed because of "instability in the region". 28 March is the new date but there is a huge worry that it will not take place at all. The election may be cancelled and the president will hold on to power indefinitely. This would not be the first time in Nigeria's history. Meanwhile the massacres are not discussed in the campaigns - virtually ignored. For the rest of Nigeria and the world life goes on.

As a result, following a meeting of concerned individuals in the UK who have families and friends in North-East Nigeria, a petition has been started to raise awareness and request world leaders to exert pressure on the Nigerian Government to put an end to this now. Please sign this petition to indicate your support for this appeal to the international community to take action now. The petition can be reached by typing <https://www.change.org/p/david-cameron-prime-minister-of-the-united-kingdom-stop-the-massacre-by-boko-haram/u/9413731>

## DAY OF INTERNATIONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Martin O'Brien** writes: 8 February marked the first Day of International Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking, which was announced by Pope Francis a few months ago. The day was marked by the premiere screening of a new documentary film "Bakhita's Prayer" in Covent Garden produced by the renowned Ten Ten Theatre company. The film explores the issue of modern slavery and the impact of the life of St Josephine Bakhita (whose feast is today) through the eyes of Sixth Form students.

The 26-minute film, which has been produced with the Westminster Vocations Office, will be available for all secondary schools to use free of charge throughout Lent 2015 in assemblies and RE lessons. It will also be available to youth groups and parishes. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in a screening of this film, please register here. An accompanying Teacher Resource Pack will be available soon. Watch a two-minute preview of the film: <https://vimeo.com/118986586>

Ten Ten Theatre – a professional theatre company with an underlying Christian ethos rooted in the Catholic tradition – was founded by its Artistic Director Martin O'Brien with his sister Clare in 2007. Since that time, Ten Ten has developed a wide-ranging programme in drama-based Relationship Education in primary schools, secondary schools and parishes, currently working with over 80,000 children and young people every year. The company has also won awards for its work with young offender institutions and has more recently moved into mainstream theatre productions, starting with the sell-out production of "Kolbe's Gift" at the off-West End venue, The Leicester Square Theatre, in October 2013.

See the Ten Ten website for more information: <http://tententheatre.co.uk/>

## LOOSE THE CHAINS UPDATE: BRINGING AN END TO EXPLOITATION

### Major improvements as Modern Slavery Bill nears the finish line

**Louise Gleich** Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Policy Officer for CARE writes: The House of Lords considered the Modern Slavery Bill at Report Stage on Monday and Wednesday this week (23 and 25 Feb) – the penultimate stage in the Lords, and the main occasion for amending the Bill. There were an unprecedented 72 Government amendments made to the Bill, a welcome indication that the Government has listened and responded to the concerns expressed by Peers, MPs and charities like CARE as the Bill has progressed.

There were amendments to ensure that a wider range of exploitative actions is covered by the offence of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour, aligning it more closely with the human trafficking offence. Amendments were also made to the part of the Bill creating the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner which strengthen the Commissioner's independence and crucially extend the role of the Commissioner expressly to consider the care and support provided to victims. Particularly welcome were the amendments to strengthen the clause providing child trafficking advocates. The amendments were very similar to some that had previously been tabled by Lord McColl of Dulwich and which we had been supporting. They establish key safeguards and principles about advocates, ensuring that they will be equipped to provide the most effective support possible to the trafficked children they work with. We are extremely thankful for Lord McColl and Baroness Butler-Sloss who have repeatedly made these recommendations in the House of Lords over a number of years and whose persistence has now paid off.

Unfortunately Lord McColl had less success in persuading the Government to put a statutory guarantee of support services for victims into the Bill. His amendment which was co-signed by Lord Anderson of Swansea, Baroness Grey-Thompson and Lord Morrow received good support in the debate but the Minister declined to accept it. A small step forward was made with the passing of a Government amendment that introduces a power for future governments to put support and assistance measures into secondary legislation (regulations). CARE will continue to press future governments to make use of these regulations to ensure that victims in England and Wales do not end up with fewer rights than victims in other parts of the UK.

The Bill now moves to Third Reading on 4 March where it is possible further minor amendments will be made before going back to the House of Commons soon after. It is likely that the Bill will complete its passage through Parliament by mid-March.

The Modern Slavery Bill is now a far more victim-centred Bill that it was to begin with. We pay tribute to the MPs and Peers who have raised concerns with the Government time and again over the past year. The Government, to its credit, has also shown a willingness to listen and respond to those concerns. It may not be perfect but the end result is legislation that will be a better foundation for action against trafficking and exploitation and, most importantly, better for victims.

<http://www.care.org.uk/news/latest-news/independent-anti-slavery-commissioner-strengthened>

**CARE - Christian Action Research & Education** <http://www.care.org.uk/about-us>

## DOUBLE YOUR LENTEN GIFT TO CAFOD

From 8 February to 17 May 2015 each £1 you give will be matched by the government and if you are a tax-payer you can add a further 20% to your donation by signing a gift aid declaration. [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)

## CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN CALL FOR DIALOGUE AT FOCOLARE YOUTH WEEKEND

**James Buchanan** writes: A group of 80 Christian and Muslim young people called for dialogue as a means to grow in mutual understanding and build bridges among people from different cultures and faith backgrounds, as they met for an event entitled '**Multiculturalism – Interfaith – Dialogue: #DoYouCare?**' at the Focolare Centre for Unity in Welwyn Garden City on the weekend of 14-15 February.

Participants travelled from across the UK to take part in the event which enabled practical experience of engaging in dialogue with people of different faith backgrounds. The weekend built on the relationship which young people involved with the Focolare Movement in London have established with their peers in the Islamic Unity Society. In the last year they have taken part in joint study sessions as well as practical initiatives such as tree planting in Hertfordshire.

Introducing the weekend, one of the presenters quoted from Pope Francis' book **Heaven and Earth** which he had co-authored with Rabbi Abraham Skorka: "Dialogue is born of an attitude of respect towards another person, of a conviction that the other person has something good to say; it requires that we make space in our head for their point of view, their opinion and their position. Dialoguing involves a heartfelt welcome and not prior condemnation. To dialogue, one has to lower one's defences, open the doors of one's home and offer human warmth."

During the weekend the group heard from presenter and documentary producer Angela Graham, who has worked with BBC Wales, Channel 4 and ITV among others. She spoke to them of her own experience as a young person growing up in Northern Ireland, encouraging them to be people of dialogue in their own environment and seek to build bridges with people of other faiths and from different cultures. Participants also heard from Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali, resident Imam and director of Islamic Centre of England, who spoke in a conference call from Paris. He encouraged the group to "create opportunities of dialogue with everyone...dialogue is what makes us human beings: accepting to dialogue with somebody different from us does not diminish us, but makes us more true to ourselves".

There were workshops on a range of topics including interfaith dialogue, social media and politics and civic engagement. Lucia De Santis, 22, a student involved with Focolare through the group Youth for a United World, said: "it made me realise that our differences are not an obstacle but an aid to build something together, and discover that we have so much in common" "I'm very happy to be here", said 26 year-old Mohammed Mozaffari, a member of Islamic Unity Society from London. "I'm personally interested in interfaith dialogue and was eager to get to know Focolare. Since coming, it has been very refreshing to meet people who are so passionate about living and working for God." Local Councillor Michal Siewniak said: "It is so encouraging to see young adults from different faith backgrounds engaging in dialogue with one another and seeking to find answers together on how to live harmoniously in a multicultural, multifaith society."

## FIVE NEW TRUSTEES FOR CSAN

The Trustees of CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network) have welcomed five new members to the Board. Steven Webb, Sarah Teather MP, Liz Dodds and Bishop Tom Williams join the new Chair, Bishop Terry Drainey, on the charity's Board of Trustees. Steven Webb is the Director of the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and Liz Dodds sat on the senior management team and now acts as a Trustee of Nugent Care; both organisations are members of CSAN. Sarah Teather MP, has served as a Member of Parliament in inner London for 11 years and takes a particular interest in housing and refugee issues. She served for two and a half years in the coalition government as Minister for Children and Families, where she was responsible for early years education, special educational needs, young carers and child poverty. During his ministry, Bishop Tom Williams has been a member of FLAME, travelling to Lourdes with young people with disabilities as well as working with the St. Anthony's Lourdes Trust which finds funding to train local teenagers to work with young people with disabilities in Lourdes. He is current Chair of the Bishops' Conference Healthcare Reference Group. The new Chair of CSAN, Bishop of Middlesbrough Terry Drainey has served in the Archdiocese of Kisumu in western Kenya, as a Parish Priest in Salford Diocese and as Spiritual Director at the Royal English College of St Albans in Spain.

## NEWS FROM PROGRESSIO

**Jenny Vaughan** Activism Officer for Progressio writes: These are a few links to Progressio actions and things people can get involved in. You could write to David Cameron demanding action on poverty, climate change and inequality here:

<http://www.progressio.org.uk/content/welcome-2015>

We now have a live pre-registration for **Live Below the Line** which can be found here: <http://www.progressio.org.uk/lbtl>

A good read: <http://www.progressio.org.uk/blog/progressio-blog/passion-bee-keeping-secures-economic-freedom-zimbabwe>

And finally, we have launched our action around the Commission on the Status of Women which is targeted toward MPs and asks them to ensure the UK continues to push forward on the issue of gender equality and act as a leader:

<http://www.progressio.org.uk/content/email-your-mp-now-and-get-them-clued-commission-status-women>

## PAX CHRISTI LIVERPOOL ASH WEDNESDAY ACTION

**Jan Harper writes:** Around 45 people came to support Liverpool Pax Christi in remembering the horrors of nuclear weapons and calling for an end to Trident, replacement which estimates currently exceed £100 billion. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Quaker Peace groups and members of diocesan Justice and Peace groups took part in the service of prayer and reflection, using traditional Ash Wednesday symbols of repentance: ashes. Beginning at the Statue of Reconciliation, the Coventry Litany was shared to underline both an individual and a collective need for change - a conversion from ways of war to ways of peace.

Walking through the city we reflected that the area had been heavily bombed during the war and we tried to imagine the devastation that would be wrought by one Trident warhead, 8 times more powerful than the A Bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Our gospel was taken from Jesus words at the time of his arrest to one of his disciples who drew his sword, telling him that nothing good could come of it - John Dear's analysis/ commentary of this was also used as a reflection after the Gospel. Testimonies from the Hibakusha (Japanese survivors of Hiroshima) were read out as shoppers milled around us.

After distributing ashes we moved to the Law Courts to symbolise the breaking of international law in our possession of a weapon that, if used, would cause wide- spread catastrophic damage to the civilian population and the natural environment, thereby breaking the Geneva Convention Protocol and Article VI of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty.

Daniel Berrigan's powerful reflection stated 'the possession of Trident , or any nuclear weapon is' a blasphemy against hope' and a direct violation of the commandment to Love one another.' Our litany of saints called to mind those who had inspired us with their own courage and non violence, both in the past and today. We remembered Gerry Hughes whose campaigning and foresight on the nuclear issue was a source of inspiration and support during the most active anti nuclear campaigns, also the four women who had courageously disarmed a Hawk jet, and whose subsequent trial and acquittal had taken place in the courts behind us almost 20 years earlier.

Messages of support came from Liverpool's Anglican Bishop Paul Bayes, Catholic Bishop Malcolm McMahon and Pax Christi in London, who too were gathering as well as Glasgow Catholic Worker. 'Let there be love shared among us' concluded the liturgy and a petition calling for Trident to be declared illegal was handed in to the Law Courts.

*For more information on Pax Christi's anti nuclear work please visit their website [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk). The Liverpool group meets on the first Tuesday of the month, contact [janharper1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janharper1@yahoo.co.uk)*

## POPE'S MESSAGE OF PEACE

Pope Francis in his New Year message exhorts us to 'Discover rather your brother or sister ... give up the way of arms and go out to meet the other in dialogue, pardon and reconciliation, in order to rebuild justice, trust and hope around you.' He appeals for the non-proliferation of arms.

## ARMS TRADE

Did you know that Britain supplies weapons to countries with appalling human rights records e.g. Saudi Arabia. For more information please see the Campaign Against Arms Trade website: <https://www.caat.org.uk/>  
Look too at: <http://nuclearweapons-warcrimes.org/>

## AN UNINVITED GUEST

On 3 February Campaign Against Arms Trade activists challenged arms dealers gathered in London for a £246/head 'networking' dinner, where they were wining and dining 40 MPs and 60 senior civil servants. After making their way past protesters at the door, the guests probably thought they could sit down and get on with the business of keeping military spending high and public subsidies for arms companies flowing. But there were a few surprises when the first speaker took the stage. See how CAAT's Anne-Marie O'Reilly confronted the arms dealers about the world her child will be born into in 4 months' time.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF92KxIj4BA&feature=youtu.be>

**Anne O'Connor writes:** I contacted Anne-Marie to thank her for her actions and said that it was sad but not surprising that she only managed to speak for a few moments before being forcibly removed. I commented that man-handling a pregnant woman indicated a lack of respect for human life. She replied to say that it's been amazing how many people have now heard about the MPs dining with arms dealers and she was overwhelmed by how much support the action has received.

## JUSTICE & PEACE STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR 2015

Two leaflets — for Adults and for Young People with new material topical to 2015 produced for NJPN by Anne O'Connor. The version for young people is semi-dramatized. Download at: [www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk](http://www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk)

## CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY: NEW GUIDE TO HELP PEOPLE AVOID UNFAIR ENERGY PRICES

Prepayment meters (PPMs) charge higher tariffs for gas and electricity than credit meters, meaning that people on low incomes end up paying a 'Poverty Premium' for their energy. PPMs also cause a number of other problems: they make it difficult for people to manage any debts; it is very difficult and expensive to get one removed; and they can even charge people for debts incurred by previous tenants of a property. (See **Church Action on Poverty's** report *Let Us Switch!* for more information about the problems with PPMs.)

Our new ***Guide to Using Prepayment Meters for Gas and Electricity*** is designed to help people avoid these pitfalls and reduce their energy costs. It includes advice on what to do when you move into a property with a PPM (especially how to avoid paying a previous tenant's debts), information about switching to more affordable tariffs, and contact details for a range of energy suppliers and advice services. The Guide was written by people with experience of fuel poverty who took part in a School of Participation delivered last year by Church Action on Poverty and The Broughton Trust. We're very pleased that the Guide is now being distributed by Salford City Council. If you have a PPM yourself or you help people in fuel poverty, you might find the Guide useful too. You can click here to download the Guide: <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sop/resources/ppmguide> or request printed copies by contacting Joyce Kay on 0161 236 9321 [joyce@church-poverty.org.uk](mailto:joyce@church-poverty.org.uk)

## OLIVER SACKS REFLECTS ON THE END OF LIFE

A month ago, I felt that I was in good health, even robust health. At 81, I still swim a mile a day. But my luck has run out — a few weeks ago I learned that I have multiple metastases in the liver. Nine years ago it was discovered that I had a rare tumour of the eye, an ocular melanoma. Although the radiation and lasering to remove the tumour ultimately left me blind in that eye, only in very rare cases do such tumours metastasize. I am among the unlucky 2 per cent. I feel grateful that I have been granted nine years of good health and productivity since the original diagnosis, but now I am face to face with dying. The cancer occupies a third of my liver, and though its advance may be slowed, this particular sort of cancer cannot be halted.

It is up to me now to choose how to live out the months that remain to me. I have to live in the richest, deepest, most productive way I can. In this I am encouraged by the words of one of my favourite philosophers, David Hume, who, upon learning that he was mortally ill at age 65, wrote a short autobiography in a single day in April of 1776. He titled it "*My Own Life*." "I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution," he wrote. "I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company."

I have been lucky enough to live past 80, and the 15 years allotted to me beyond Hume's three score and five have been equally rich in work and love. In that time, I have published five books and completed an autobiography (rather longer than Hume's few pages) to be published this spring; I have several other books nearly finished ... One line from Hume's essay strikes me as especially true: "It is difficult," he wrote, "to be more detached from life than I am at present." Over the last few days, I have been able to see my life as from a great altitude, as a sort of landscape, and with a deepening sense of the connection of all its parts. This does not mean I am finished with life. On the contrary, I feel intensely alive, and I want and hope in the time that remains to deepen my friendships, to say farewell to those I love, to write more, to travel if I have the strength, to achieve new levels of understanding and insight. This will involve audacity, clarity and plain speaking; trying to straighten my accounts with the world. But there will be time, too, for some fun (and even some silliness, as well).

I feel a sudden clear focus and perspective. There is no time for anything inessential. I must focus on myself, my work and my friends. I shall no longer look at News Hour every night. I shall no longer pay any attention to politics or arguments about global warming. This is not indifference but detachment — I still care deeply about the Middle East, about global warming, about growing inequality, but these are no longer my business; they belong to the future. I rejoice when I meet gifted young people — even the one who biopsied and diagnosed my metastases. I feel the future is in good hands. I have been increasingly conscious, for the last 10 years or so, of deaths among my contemporaries. My generation is on the way out, and each death I have felt as an abruption, a tearing away of part of myself. There will be no one like us when we are gone, but then there is no one like anyone else, ever. When people die, they cannot be replaced. They leave holes that cannot be filled, for it is the fate — the genetic and neural fate — of every human being to be a unique individual, to find his own path, to live his own life, to die his own death.

I cannot pretend I am without fear. But my predominant feeling is one of gratitude. I have loved and been loved; I have been given much and I have given something in return; I have read and travelled and thought and written. I have had an intercourse with the world, the special intercourse of writers and readers. Above all, I have been a sentient being, a thinking animal, on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure.

*Extract from an article originally published in the **New York Times**.*

**Oliver Sacks** is a renowned physician, Professor of Neurology and best-selling writer.

## THE POWER OF THE POWERLESS

*God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise.  
And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 1 Corinthians 1:27*

In all honesty, once it was on top and fully part of the establishment, the Church was a bit embarrassed by the powerless one, Jesus. We had to make his obvious defeat into a glorious victory that had nothing to do with defeat--his or ours. Let's face it, we feel more comfortable with power than with powerlessness. Who wants to be like Jesus on the cross, the very icon of powerlessness? It just doesn't look like a way of influence, a way of access, a way that's going to make any difference in the world. We are such a strange religion! We worship this naked, bleeding loser, crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem, but we always want to be winners, powerful, and on top ourselves . . . at least until we learn to love the little things and the so-called little people, and then we often see they are not little at all, but better images of the soul.

Yes, those with mental and physical disabilities, minority groups, refugees, the addicted, the homosexual, the prisoner--anybody who's failed in our nicely constructed social or economic success system--can be our best teachers in the ways of the Gospel. They represent what we are most afraid of within ourselves, what we most deny within ourselves. That's why we *must* learn to love our "enemy"; we absolutely must or we will never know how to love our own soul, or the soul of anything. Please think about that until it makes sense to you. It eventually will, by the grace of God. One of the most transformative experiences is entering into some form of lifestyle solidarity with the powerless. It's like changing sides from the ego side of things, and this is what changes you. *We don't think ourselves into a new way of living; we live ourselves into a new way of thinking.* It is lifestyle choices that convert people. I am not aware that merely believing a doctrine or dogma has ever converted anybody. That should be obvious by now.

Someone once pointed out to me that most of the great founders of communities, including Francis of Assisi, Mother Katherine Drexel, Vincent de Paul, Benedict, John Baptist de la Salle, and Mother Seton all started out as what we would now call middle class or even upper class. They first had enough comfort and security and leisure to move beyond their need for more comfort and security and leisure (because they saw it did not satisfy or feed the soul). Each in their own way changed sides and worked in solidarity with those who did not have their advantages. When the Right moves toward the Left, while including what they learned on the Right, we often have the best of both worlds. We are now seeing this also in Pope Francis.

**Richard Rohr OFM**

- Read Richard Rohr's profound and challenging daily reflections by signing up (free of charge) at <https://cac.org/sign-up>

## JUSTICE AND PEACE CALENDAR

### 23 February - 8 March Fairtrade Fortnight

Why does Fairtrade matter? Find out from Edson and Tsala, two of the farmers and workers at the heart of Fairtrade, in our new thought-provoking short film. <http://fortnight.fairtrade.org.uk/> Film screenings are taking place across the country and over 60,000 people have already watched the **Fairtrade Matters** films online. Can you help us reach more people to inspire them to choose products that change lives? The films can be streamed from the website which also features an interactive personality game, as well as producer stories and daily promotions <http://fortnight.fairtrade.org.uk/> The film is made all the more poignant in the context of recent events in Malawi, where heavy rains in January have resulted in devastating flooding. Unfortunately, the producer groups filmed during *Fairtrade Matters* have been badly affected. Edson and Tsala who feature in the film are both safe, but many have lost whole fields of crops, which will inevitably lead to hardship. Read more about what's happening in Malawi, as well as what Fairtrade can do to help in a blog post from Faith Muisyo of Fairtrade Africa. <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/media-centre/blog/2015/february/flooding-in-malawi>

We're appealing to Fairtrade supporters to help restore the livelihoods farmers have worked so hard to build, by making a donation to a project run by Fairtrade Africa. Donations could pay for start-up kits containing the seedlings, fertiliser and crop nutrients that farmers need to get growing again. If you're holding a film screening, please consider raising money for this project. Ask viewers to text the words CROP15 plus your donation amount to 70070 to give towards this work, e.g. CROP15 £5. Any cash collected can also be donated to this project. Please see the film FAQs for how to get this to us if you can help. <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight-2015/fairtrade-matters>

### 2 - 8 March Climate Week

Climate Week is Britain's biggest climate change campaign, inspiring a new wave of action to create a sustainable future. Each year half a million people attend over 3,000 events and thousands of schools take part. This year Climate Week is partnering with The Big Pedal, the UK's largest inter-school cycling and scooting challenge that inspires pupils, staff and parents to choose two wheels for their journey to school. [www.bigpedal.org.uk](http://www.bigpedal.org.uk)

Taking part in the Big Pedal is just one of the things you can do to get involved in Climate Week. You could also take part in the one-hour Climate Week Challenge for teams in schools, or run a Climate Week Swap event at which people can exchange clothes, books or toys. Whatever you do, please register your event or activity with Climate Week. [www.climateweek.com](http://www.climateweek.com)

## 6 March World Day of Prayer: *Do you know what I have done to you?*

Women's World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church, organisation which enables us to hear the voices of women, from a different part of the world each year, expressing their hopes and concerns and bringing them before the rest of the world in prayer. On Friday 6 March an estimated 3 million people, in over 170 countries, will gather to observe the day of prayer, using an order of service written by Christian women from The Bahamas and translated into over 1000 different languages and dialects. In the British Isles alone over 5,000 services will be held. The day will begin when the sun rises over the island of Samoa, and continue until it sets off the coast of American Samoa some 35 hours later.

The theme of the service is taken from St John's Gospel, chapter 13 verses 1-17, '*Jesus said to them: "Do you know what I have done to you?"*' and it challenges us to demonstrate the same radical, unconditional love for others that Jesus showed when he washed the feet of his disciples. The Bahamas consists of over 700 islands, scattered over 100,000 square miles in the Atlantic Ocean, only a small proportion of which are inhabited. It refers to itself as a 'family of islands' and in the service the needs of the smallest islands are given as much prominence as those of the larger ones.

Everyone is welcome to attend the service, men, women – people of all ages. For further information and resources, together with details of services in your area, please see the WWDP website: [www.wwdp.org.uk](http://www.wwdp.org.uk)

- **N.B.** wrongly attributed in the February bulletin to the women of Egypt who compiled last year's theme - apologies.

## 12-19 March Week of Prayer and Awareness of Dementia

The annual national Week of Prayer and Awareness of Dementia is now in its fifth year and we are inviting everyone to join in and use our online resources to pray and raise alms for the Pastoral Care Project. For more resources and updates please go to the Prayer and Resources sections - we will be adding new resources regularly in the lead up to the Week. We would love to hear from you about what you plan to do in your area or how we can help you to get started. Please contact us now to register your interest Email [info@pastoralcareproject.org.uk](mailto:info@pastoralcareproject.org.uk)

Resources available from The Pastoral Care Project [http://pastoralcareproject.org.uk/Week\\_of\\_prayer\\_for\\_dementia.asp](http://pastoralcareproject.org.uk/Week_of_prayer_for_dementia.asp)

## 22 March World Water Day

An international day to celebrate the importance of fresh water and advocate the sustainable management of fresh water resources was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The United Nations General Assembly responded by designating 22 March 1993 as the first World Water Day in light of the increase in demand for water access, allocation and services.

[www.unwater.org/worldwaterday](http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday)

[www.wateraid.org.uk](http://www.wateraid.org.uk)

## 24 March Archbishop Oscar Romero

On 3 February Pope Francis officially declared that Archbishop Oscar Romero died a martyr's death, 'killed in hatred of the Faith'. This means that Oscar Romero will be honoured as Blessed Oscar Romero. Further details, including when the beatification ceremony will take place, are yet to be announced, but at a press conference on 4 February it was said that it would happen 'in the coming months'. You can watch the press conference online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cNL4zoXYU4> During the press conference, it was also announced that the cause for canonisation of Romero's friend, the Jesuit Rutillio Grande, who was assassinated on his way to celebrate Mass in El Paisnal in the Aguilares parish, has been opened. You can read more about Rutille Grande SJ here: <http://www.romerotruster.org.uk/documents/rutilio%20and%20romero%202005.pdf>

There is currently an excellent radio broadcast about Archbishop Romero. Mark Dowd presents a 30 minute radio programme for the BBC World Service's *Heart and Soul* looking at Archbishop Romero, who he was, his ministry, why he was killed, and the ongoing influence he has on the people of El Salvador, and the wider world with an extended interview with the Chair of the Romero Trust, Julian Filochowski, as well as others who knew Romero personally, including the Jesuit Jon Sobrino. Available via the BBC iPlayer website. Follow the link <http://romerotruster.org.uk/index.php?nuc=news&func=view&item=73>

Information about Romero's life, including every homily he delivered, and his personal diary at: [www.romerotruster.org.uk](http://www.romerotruster.org.uk)

## 28 March Earth Hour 8.30pm: *Uniting People to Protect the Planet*

In the UK alone we consume three times our fair share of the planet's resources. The World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Earth Hour is the single, largest, symbolic mass participation event in the world. Born out of a hope that we could mobilize people to take action on climate change, Earth Hour now inspires a global community of millions of people in 7,001 cities and towns across 152 countries and territories to switch lights off for an hour as a massive show of concern for the environment and invites us to take positive steps to reduce our carbon footprint.

<http://www.greeningtheblue.org/event/earth-hour-830pm-28-march-2015>

## 4 April United Nations' Mine Awareness Day

The United Nations' International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action is observed on April 4 each year. The day aims to raise awareness about landmines and progress toward their eradication. The term 'mine action' refers to a range of efforts to clear landmines and explosive remnants of war and to mark and fence off dangerous areas. It also includes assisting victims, teaching people how to remain safe in a mine-affected environment, advocating for universal participation in international treaties related to landmines, explosive remnants of war and their victims, and destroying landmines stockpiled by governments and non-state armed groups.

On 8 December 2005, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly declared that April 4 of each year would be officially proclaimed and observed as International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. It was first observed on April 4, 2006. According to the *Landmine Monitor Report 2005*, 84 countries were affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance, which together kill or maim between 15,000 and 20,000 adults and children annually. The UN works together with countries to find and destroy these devices.

[www.un.org/en/events/mineawarenessday/](http://www.un.org/en/events/mineawarenessday/)

## 13 April Global Day of Action on Military Spending UK

It is a scandal that 1 in 4 children in the UK grow up in poverty. It is a disgrace that 20,000 disabled people will lose support for the basics in life when the Independent Living Fund closes. It is outrageous that thirteen times more people are relying on foodbanks to survive than did five years ago.

It is all the more scandalous when you realise that the UK's military spending is among the highest in the world. It's time to shift priorities. Take action with people across the world to challenge military spending on the Global Day of Action – 13 April 2015. Let us know you'd like to take part and we'll be in touch with ideas and resources soon! <http://demilitarize.org.uk>

## 11-15 May Walk to Work Week

Walk to Work Week is part of National Walking Month, an annual campaign run by Living Streets which promotes walking for all. Create your online profile now to be a part of our free workplace walking challenge week starting Monday 11 May. Join or create a workplace team and get competitive with colleagues using our live totalisers and leaderboards to motivate you. Log any walking you do to see how many calories you are burning and what CO<sub>2</sub> you save. Complete our challenges to feel the benefits of walking more and earn badges for all your achievements.

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

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### FEBRUARY into MARCH

**18 February – 26 March *Images on faith's journey* by Paul Wawszczyk Blackburn Cathedral Lent 2015.** These paintings begin with the love of the Trinity resulting in creation and the development of humanity, stretching through to the incarnation and Christ's life. There are several images that look at the impact of faith in our world and seek to put the Christian vision at the centre of everything. Paul is a permanent deacon in St Bernadette's parish, Lancaster

**23 February - 8 March Fairtrade Fortnight** <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk>

**25 February – 25 March: Lenten Lunches Chester** The annual series of Lenten Lunches organised by Christian Aid for each Wednesday in Lent, 12noon to 1.30pm at the Quaker Meeting House, Union Walk, Frodsham Street, Chester CH1 3LF. Contact 01244 320562. The dates to note are: **25/2, 4/3, 11/3, 18/3, and 25/3**

### MARCH

**6 Women's World Day of Prayer *Do you know what I have done to you?*** prepared by the women of The Bahamas [www.wwdp.org.uk](http://www.wwdp.org.uk) **N.B.** wrongly attributed in Feb. bulletin to the women of Egypt who compiled last year's theme - apologies.

**6 Women's World Day of Prayer Event** 2pm, Baptist Church, Water Lane, Newport TF10 7TX

**6 Women's World Day of Prayer Service** 10.30am Salvation Army Citadel, Anne Street, Newtown, Chester CH1 3HU.

**6** One of a series of 4 events across England & Wales, each providing an introduction to the work of national charity, PAPHOS: Prevention of Young Suicide at LACE, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool, L17 1AA. Cost £10 per person. 10am -3.30pm (light lunch provided). All welcome. Contact: Maureen O'Brien 0151 522 1044 [m.obrien@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:m.obrien@rcaol.co.uk)

**7 Celebration of International Women's Day** 11am - 4pm, The Guildhall, Watergate Street Chester, CH1 2LA

International Women's Day is officially celebrated each year on 8 March, but in Chester this year it is being marked with a gathering on the previous day, Saturday 7 March, in The Guildhall, Watergate Street. There will be a variety of displays and stalls – if you would like a stall (£20 charge) contact Sheila at [brookessm@aol.com](mailto:brookessm@aol.com) for further details and to book a place.

**7 'A Time to Listen, A Time to be Heard'** A consultation preparing for the **Synod on the Family** -share your thoughts, feelings and experiences of family life. St Peter's Parish Centre, Green Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport, SK7 4EA. 2-4pm. **Also March 14 & 21** — come to one or all meetings, each have a different focus. Arranged by members of **ACTA** (A Call to Action)

**7 Christians Against Poverty** Launch event to further explore a Debt Counselling Centre for Telford 10.30am-1pm with a light lunch provided afterwards. Venue: Wombridge Parish Church, Wombridge Road, Wombridge TF2 6HT.

**7 Aid to the Church in Need Prayer Vigils for Religious Freedom in the Diocese of Lancaster** 10-11.30am Holy Trinity & St George's Church Blackhall Road, Kendal LA9 4BW. An opportunity to learn about, reflect on and pray for all of those Christians around the world who are currently suffering terrible hardships because of their Faith. All welcome.

**8 International Women's Day** [Internationalwomensday.com](http://Internationalwomensday.com)

**9 VSO Manchester & Cheshire Supporters Groups** 7.30-9.30 pm, The Britons Protection Pub, 50 Great Bridgewater Street Manchester, M1L 5E. Cath Nixon, VSO Nepal & Sierra Leone, on **Nursing at an Ebola treatment centre in Sierra Leone.**

**10 CWDF Forum Meeting** 6.45pm-9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN. Forum member Gill Miller, Programme Leader in International Studies at the University, will lead a discussion on some of the large issues surrounding Development Aid that were raised in the recent talk by Emma Mawdsley. Useful prelude to our pre-election hustings session.

**12-19 March Week of Prayer and Awareness of Dementia** Resources available from The Pastoral Care Project

[http://pastoralcareproject.org.uk/Week\\_of\\_prayer\\_for\\_dementia.asp](http://pastoralcareproject.org.uk/Week_of_prayer_for_dementia.asp)

**13 CAFOD Quiz** for CAFOD's **Connect 2 Ethiopia** projects organised by Ellesmere Port LPA J&P Group 7.30pm Our Lady's Parish Centre. Fee £3 for adults £1 for children including interval refreshments. Teams are welcome or join a team on the night. More details contact Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419.

**14 A Time to Listen, A Time to be Heard** see March 7

**14** Archbishop Romero Anniversary talk. Speaker Johan Bergstrom-Allen (University of York). Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre, Barden Lane, Burnley, BB10 1JD. 1.30pm for 2.00pm start (light refreshments available). Mass 3.30pm.

**17 Christian Aid fundraiser: The Making of a Family Bible** 7.30-9pm, Wesley Church Centre, St John Street Chester, CH1 1DA Chester Christian Aid Committee are staging this event to raise funds for Christian Aid. Trevor Dennis will be talking about his writing *The Book of Books*, which Lion Hudson published back in 2003, and reading passages from it. There will be refreshments and a bookstall, and those who come will be asked to make a donation to Christian Aid of £5.

**17 Friends of Sabeel UK**, NW Group invite you to meet Charlotte Marshall of **Kairos Britain** (Taking action for Palestine). Discover how you and your church can get involved in supporting a just peace in Palestine and Israel, through prayer, action, campaigning, and linking with Christians there. Sion Baptist Church, Burnley BB11 2DW. Bring and share meal from 6-7.15pm. Meeting from 7.30 - 9pm. Palestinian crafts and Fairtrade products. Donations for expenses. Contact: [logan-j@btconnect.com](mailto:logan-j@btconnect.com)

**18 As above** at St John's United Reformed Church, Wilderspool Causeway, Warrington WA4 6QE. 10am – 2pm including Bring and share lunch. Palestinian crafts and Fairtrade products. Donations to defray expenses. Contact: [logan-j@btconnect.com](mailto:logan-j@btconnect.com)

**18 Signs of the Times #2** A follow-on evening looking at the question of how Catholic Social Teaching influences our local areas. 7-9 pm St Clare's Parish Centre Rutland Avenue Liverpool L17 2AU

**19 'The Stones cry out' Film** The untold story of the Palestinian Christians. 7.45 pm at Mellor Parish Centre, Church Road Mellor Stockport SK6 5LX Donation to cover costs.

**21 'A Time to Listen, A Time to be Heard'** see March 7

**20 Pre-Election Hustings on World Development Issues Chester.** 7-9pm Best Building, Chester, Cheshire CH1 4BQ courtesy of the Department of Geography and Development Studies. [www.chesterwdf.org.uk](http://www.chesterwdf.org.uk)

**21 VSO North West Regional Meeting** 10am-4pm, Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS

**21** in the Cathedral Centre Lancaster **Gospels and Government: will Catholic Social Teaching affect the way you vote?** With inputs from John Battle on visions for the future, Helen Boothroyd on the Cumbria Welfare Commission and Simon Stewart on Catholic Social Teaching. For more information and to book a place contact Maggie: [lfjc@talktalk.net](mailto:lfjc@talktalk.net) 01524 383081

**21 Afghan New Year, the Drones Campaign Network** is encouraging people to **Fly Kites Not Drones**. Raise a kite to the sky for all the children around the world who have to live under the threat of drones. Hold a kite making workshop – instructions on how to make a kite here. See an inspiring video from the Afghan Peace Volunteers who started it all off last year and see what happened around the world. Wear a Fly Kites Not Drones t-shirt – order one from [vcnvuk@gmail.com](mailto:vcnvuk@gmail.com) – £10 plus £1.50 p & p. More info: <https://dronecampaignnetwork.wordpress.com/week-of-action-events/>

**22 35th Annual Liverpool Romero Mass** St Mary's, Lowe House, 99 Crab St, St Helens. WA10 2BE. 11am Family Mass. Celebrant: Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP. All are welcome

**22 Romero Mass** 4:30pm at St Wilfrids Preston PR1 3JJ [www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk](http://www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk)

**22 Romero Mass** 11am St Mary's St Helen's WA10 2BE celebrant Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP [www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk](http://www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk)

**22 World Water Day** [unwater.org/worldwaterday](http://unwater.org/worldwaterday)

**23 Telford Hustings Event** 10.30-12.30, Whitehouse Hotel, Wellington TF1 2NJ, Senior Citizen's Forum, election special. 07932 828333 or 07552 975676 – [enquiries@tandwseniors.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@tandwseniors.org.uk)

**24 35th Anniversary of the Death of Archbishop Oscar Romero** [www.romerotrue.org.uk](http://www.romerotrue.org.uk)

**28 March Earth Hour** commencing at 8.30pm - switch lights off for an hour as a show of concern for the environment <http://www.greeningtheblue.org/event/earth-hour-830pm-28-march-2015>

## APRIL

**1 Fracking? As Christians should we have a view?** Exploring our views as people of Faith. 7pm St Anthony's Church Social Club, Cadley Causeway, Preston PR2 3RX. All Welcome.

**4 United Nations' Mine Awareness Day** [www.un.org/en/events/mineawarenessday/](http://www.un.org/en/events/mineawarenessday/)

**13 Global Day of Action on Military Spending UK** <http://demilitarize.org.uk> **Pax Christi** has a lesson on military spending as part of their General RE scheme of work <http://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/general-re/>

**15 6pm for 6.30pm at Friends' Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS Manchester Newman Lecture** The first in a new annual lecture series. ***The Politics of the Common Good: What does Catholic Social Teaching have to contribute to electoral politics?*** Speaker: **Dr Anna Rowlands** Lecturer in Contemporary Catholic Theology and Deputy Director of the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University. No charge for entrance. Booking essential. Contact Chris Quirke preferably by email ([secretary@newman.org.uk](mailto:secretary@newman.org.uk)) or phone 0161 941 1707. Coffee/tea available from 6pm, lecture at 6.30pm.

**16 The Housing Justice Manchester Roadshow** bringing together churches, Housing Associations, local authorities and other housing organisations. The aim of this ecumenical event (in partnership with CARITAS Salford and The Booth Centre) is to encourage and motivate churches to be part of the housing solution and to work in partnership with others. There is significant housing need in all areas and this roadshow will be an opportunity to share good practice and discuss how working together can bring real change to communities. Across the nation, homelessness and lack of decent housing have a devastating impact on lives. The introduction of welfare benefit reform has made this situation worse for many families and single people. Come and hear about the great work churches are already doing, and be inspired to make a difference. **Cathedral Centre** 3 Ford Street, M3 6DP Salford 930am-3pm.

Booking: [https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/housing-justice-roadshow-manchester-your-church-and-the-housing-crisis-registration-15810570843?utm\\_campaign=new\\_event\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=eb\\_email&utm\\_term=viewmyevent\\_button](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/housing-justice-roadshow-manchester-your-church-and-the-housing-crisis-registration-15810570843?utm_campaign=new_event_email&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eb_email&utm_term=viewmyevent_button)

**18 Some say 'It's never been so bad'** A pre-election event to devise questions to ask candidates. The focus will be on housing and the living wage. 3-5 pm LACE Croxteth Drive Sefton Park Liverpool L17 1AA

**18 TTIP Day of Action** – this is a global day of action and will send a big message to the government that gets into power in May that we do not want TTIP. Get in touch to get involved with an action in your area. [Matthew.bramall@globaljustice.org.uk](mailto:Matthew.bramall@globaljustice.org.uk)

**21 VSO Cheshire Supporter Group AGM** 7-9.30pm English in Chester, 9 Stanley Place Chester, CH1 2LU. We plan to deal with the business part of the evening from 7pm with a roundup of the year's events and some planning for the future, and then enjoy the screening of a film, *Bamako*. Bamako is the Capital of Mali. The film is based on the true incident of a private US financial consortium buying up Mali's Russian international debt at a discount and then insisting on the full amount from Mali.

## MAY

### 7 General Election

**12 CWDF AGM** 6.45-9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN. Following the business part of the AGM we will be hearing from our guest speakers, VSO volunteers Tricia Atherton and Margaret Park, on the theme VSO Education in Rwanda.

**16 NJPN AGM & OPEN NETWORKING DAY** 10.30am-4pm CAFOD 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB. Speaker Nick Dearden from Global Justice Now on ***TTIP: A Charter for Big Business?***

## JUNE

**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. Messages from supporters on bunting. Evening rally in Trafalgar Square with high profile speakers. Simultaneous local community events. Further info:

[www.theclimatecoalition.org/](http://www.theclimatecoalition.org/) or [www.cafod.org](http://www.cafod.org)

## JULY

**17-19 The Things that make for Peace. NJPN annual conference** at Swanwick. This conference will seek to identify the real threats to human security and how we can work together to create a world without war. More details 020 7901 486 [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)

## OCTOBER

### ADVANCE NOTICE

**3-4 COME & SEE 2015 Conference** at Southport with Keynote speaker **Sr Helen Prejean**. Sunday Mass with Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP. Booking forms with sae from Irenaeus, 32 Great Georges Road, Liverpool L22 1RD. Tel: 0151 949 1199 Email: [jenny@irenaeus.co.uk](mailto:jenny@irenaeus.co.uk)

- Many of the items featured in this and previous bulletins are taken from the daily e bulletin Independent Catholic News [www.indcatholicnews.com](http://www.indcatholicnews.com) an invaluable free resource for up-to-date J&P news and events. Sign up too for weekly bulletins from National J&P Network [www.justice-and-peace.org](http://www.justice-and-peace.org) - contact the Administrator 020 7901 4864, [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)

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

### RESOURCE FOR ROMERO SERVICE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21CN815v2G0> A 5 minute clip of archive footage set to a haunting song with lyrics featuring many of Romero's statements. **ROMERO** is the first single from **The Project's** special event album, **Martyrs Prayers**. To discover the fascinating background behind the album visit <http://www.themartyrsproject.com/index2.html> Available to download from itunes <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/martyrs-prayers/id573957341> - other songs include Beckett, Iqantius, Bonhoeffer, Ravensbruck and many more.