

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

NJPN CONFERENCE: *CHURCH FOR LIFE - NOT FOR PROFIT*

Ellen Teague 23 July 2017

“The Church is there for life, not for profit” a Columban priest and CAFOD partner told the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales annual conference at the weekend.

Based for five decades in Latin America, Irishman **Fr Peter Hughes** was contrasting Church support for marginalised communities with the destructive practices of large-scale mining and agribusiness companies in the Amazon rainforest. He lamented destructive practices of extractive industries, and described the Amazon’s three million indigenous people as “today’s lepers, reduced to nothingness.” He said he was not totally against mining, “but it must be done in a more respectful way, respecting international law”. He warned that the planet’s fresh air, water and biodiversity are all being undermined with consequences for the whole Earth community.

Fr Hughes spoke about the **REPAM** initiative, which led him and Church leaders to accompany indigenous leaders from the Amazon to Washington in March to meet the American Commission for Human Rights, members of the US Congress, and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. This was an important step towards promoting a Church with an Amazonic Face – supporting indigenous peoples in their struggles to defend land, rivers and rainforest. “They made quite an impact in their feathered headdresses” he said “but lives have been reduced by extractive industries and could be reduced to oblivion in a very short time”. He felt we have much to learn from peoples who have lived sustainably in the Amazon for thousands of years, “never ceasing to have harmony with their habitat”. The US Bishops expressed support for REPAM’s work, and Fr Hughes hoped the visit of Pope Francis to the Peruvian Amazon in January next year will highlight the plight of its indigenous peoples.

Fr Hughes was speaking to the weekend conference on the theme, ***A Sabbath for the Earth and the Poor: The Challenge of Pope Francis***, and around 260 Justice and Peace activists attended from most dioceses of England and Wales and some in Scotland. He is an advisor to the Instituto Bartolome de las Casas and CELAM, the collegial council of Latin American bishops. He thanked Pope Francis for his inspirational leadership in producing ***Laudato Si’*** six months before the discussions in Paris that led to an international Agreement on Climate Change. He pointed to Paragraph 139 of ***Laudato Si’*** which says: “We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”

His suggestion that we need to review our notions about progress and good living were picked up by **Ruth Valerio** of **Tearfund**, whose talk focused on the need for “inner ecological conversion”. She urged the conference to “get out and reconnect with the natural world”. Her books, ***Just Living – Faith and Community in an Age of Consumerism*** and ***L is for Lifestyle***, are about living more simply and avoiding rampant consumerism. She felt “Pope Francis has presented us with the challenge of living with love and joy in this our common home”.

Kathy Galloway, a former leader of both the **Iona Community** and Christian Aid Scotland, lamented that the poorest suffer most from environmental destruction when they have “drained resources the least, waste nothing, and don’t fly around the world”. She urged that we live more sustainably and avoid a “privatised religion” which does not engage with the struggles of the most marginalised. There was a plea to support campaigns that challenge unjust and violent structures, and “to look outside the holy places for places where God’s reign is breaking through”. Examples in Scotland ranged from anti-nuclear protests on the streets, churches opening their doors to asylum seekers and “guerrilla” gardening. She reported being very moved by a panel organised by **Church Action on Poverty** from the **Leeds Poverty Truth Commission** which highlighted the suffering caused by poverty in Britain and the role of Church groups in building up support and hope.

The challenge to work at a macro level tackling structural injustice and the micro level of living more simply was reflected in workshops and “sabbath” time. The first included workshops on **Care for Creation; Sustainable Agriculture; Mining; Indigenous People; Stigmatisation of the poor; Divestment from fossil fuels**. And there was time for relaxing and contemplative activities such as a nature walk, visiting prayer spaces, an art session on the theme of the beauty of creation, and Tai Chi on the lawn. The harvesting of elderflowers and the production of elderflower cordial is not usually discussed at an NJPN Conference! And having time to visit the NJPN oak tree, now 30 feet tall, which was planted at the Swanwick Conference Centre on NJPN’s 25th anniversary fourteen years ago.

Saturday evening saw a performance of ***Romero – the Heartbeat of El Salvador*** and during the conference Mass Archbishop Oscar Romero was adopted as NJPN’s patron. At the final action planning session, feedback included Arundel and Brighton Diocese setting up a diocesan environment group, East Anglia producing a draft environmental policy and Westminster pushing to become a fairtrade diocese. The Jesuit parish in Preston, Lancaster Diocese, is working towards becoming a *livesimply* parish. Steve Atherton of Liverpool Archdiocese, who said he felt like an “endangered species” as the only full time J&P worker left in England and Wales, spoke about producing resources for Autumn’s **Creation Time** which have been picked up by many Liverpool parishes. Children at the conference produced a video “Can children and young people make a difference”. The answer was positive, with one quote being, “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade”. The youth group told participants: “We all say we want to tackle poverty – you need to get out there and do it!” **See:** <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/33038>

BLESSED OSCAR ROMERO ADOPTED AS NJPN PATRON

Ellen Teague 26 July 2017

Blessed Oscar Romero was adopted as Patron of the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales last weekend, at the annual weekend gathering of the NJPN.

On the Saturday evening a packed chapel at the Hayes Conference Centre in Derbyshire viewed a performance of *Romero - Heartbeat of El Salvador*, performed by **Rise Theatre**. Produced in collaboration with the Archbishop Romero Trust, it looked at the life and legacy of a man who chose to challenge those in power and stand up for social justice. The play highlighted the date - 24 March 1980 - when Romero was shot dead by a single bullet while celebrating Mass at the chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence in San Salvador. In 2017, the year that would have been Oscar Romero's 100th birthday, the play suggested that we continue to draw much inspiration from his example. The talented three-person cast, with John Bosco playing Romero, often perform the play in schools. Through this, students have an opportunity to explore important themes relating to the world in which we live – solidarity with the poor, promoting social justice, standing up for what is right, actively living out of faith. The challenge was summed up in Blessed Oscar Romero's famous quote: "Aspire not to have more, but to be more."

"Archbishop Romero's life and martyrdom were a thread running through the whole Conference in this centenary year of his birth" said **Julian Filochowski, Chair of the Archbishop Romero Trust**. "But the climax came towards the end of the Conference Mass when Blessed Oscar Romero was acclaimed the first Patron of NJPN" he added.

At the conference Mass the congregation, led by celebrant Fr Martin Poulson, said these words:

"Gathered as justice-seeking disciples we now acclaim Blessed Oscar Romero as Patron of the National Justice and Peace Network:

- Seeking courage to follow his example in service to the marginalised.
- Speaking out for those who have no voice.
- Exposing the abuse of power over those who are powerless
- Creating community with all who feel isolated.
- Naming the signs of God's reign in a world which would remain silent.
- Witnessing to the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of our time.
- Being at one with the Church of God throughout the Earth in proclaiming Good News to the poor, freedom to those who are in chains, vision for those who cannot see, dignity for all the oppressed. Amen."

Celebration: On Saturday, 12 August 2017 the 12.30pm Mass at St George's Cathedral, Southwark will celebrate the 100th birthday of Blessed Oscar Romero with principal celebrant Peter Smith, Archbishop of Southwark and preacher will be Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia who is coming from Rome especially for the occasion. All are welcome.

Read more about Rise Theatre here: www.risetheatre.co.uk/oscar-romero

For more information on the Romero Trust see: www.romerotrusted.org.uk/

NJPN CONFERENCE: 'NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US, IS FOR US'

Ellen Teague 25 July 2017

One of the most inspiring and powerful sessions at last weekend's National Justice and Peace Network Conference was a three-person panel from the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission, organised by Church Action on Poverty.

Facilitated by Andrew Grinnell, the panelists were Joy Pocock and Emma Stone. The three speakers highlighted the suffering caused by poverty in Britain and the role of Church groups in building up support and hope. The Commission website carries the byline, '*Nothing about us, without us, is for us*'. They started with a short video demonstrating how people living in poverty in Leeds have challenged the city's leaders to work with them on tackling the issue: www.leedspovetrytruth.org.uk/about/.

Hearing Joy's story was a raw experience. After a period as a prostitute in the red light area of Leeds, her engagement with the Commission over the past few years has transformed her life. She told stories about her earlier life "about the person I was, but not what I am now". Until she learnt the stories of other people who were also struggling, "I didn't see myself as someone in poverty but as someone who was bad with money". A turning point in her life came on 6 February 2014 at Leeds Civic Hall when stories were shared and listened to by civic leaders. Gradually, campaigns started up around local concerns raised, such as the lack of provision of mental health services in south Leeds, compared to north Leeds.

Joy knits a lot – in fact, she knitted as she sat on the panel, saying it helps her cope with the voices she hears – and got the courage to apply to university to do a textiles course. She nearly didn't go into the interview when she lined up alongside other candidates, but she had to stay because "my Tupperware box with photos of my work was still inside the room". In fact, she passed the interview with flying colours and received an unconditional offer from the university. The conference participants gave Joy a great cheer on Saturday when she announced that she will enter her final year at university in the Autumn and her focus will be on '*Spirituality and Textiles*'. Recently, she knitted Star Wars characters and brought them to a meeting at the Department of Work and Pensions. Those present were asked which character they most identified with!

"I don't recognise myself now from the person I was when I started with the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission" said Joy. She highlighted that making a difference and working towards the common good is not just about big initiatives at national and international level, "but great things can happen at local level". Joy demonstrated to the conference that everyone is an expert with wisdom to share. She could tell us why a local man walked a huge distance to shop - it was because a loaf there was 10p cheaper than a local shop. She knew about the areas in Leeds with no launderettes although "people still need them". Her words were echoed by Kathy Galloway in her presentation on the Sunday morning. She challenged the notion that the poor are to blame for their poverty, saying "we have individualised the causes of poverty." The **Poverty Truth** approach is based on building relationships across economic divides, challenging structures which, in the words of *Laudato Si'*, treat the poor and the excluded as 'refuse'.

For more information see: www.leedspovetrytruth.org.uk/ **See also:** <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/33047>

NJPN CONFERENCE: *UNEARTHING THE BURIED JESUS*

Fr Tom O Reilly SSC 27 July 2017

In a workshop at the NJPN Conference last weekend, David Rhodes, Anglican minister and author, spoke of how the Church over time buried Jesus under heaps of dogmas, rituals and institutional structures.

Traditional theology put the emphasis on the beginning (Incarnation) and end (Death and Resurrection) of Jesus' life, with relatively little attention to what happened in between. We need to rediscover Jesus and his ministry in the context of the political, economic and social structures of first-century Palestine. It was a world where power, wealth and status belonged to the ruling elite, aristocrats, merchants and priests, all of whom made up a very small percentage of the total population. The vast majority of people were very poor artisans and peasants with no power or status, of whom 15% were completely destitute and expendable. In treating Jesus' ministry in such a situation, David spoke of the subversive nature of the prayer Jesus taught (Luke 11:2-4).

Addressing God intimately as 'Abba' challenged the way the ruling elite confined God to their elevated status and told the 'impure' masses that they were unfit to enter God's presence. Praying for the coming of God's kingdom would have disturbed those wanting to maintain the status quo which favoured them. Asking for daily bread meant a lot to the vast number of poor on the breadline. These same people, trapped in increasing debt by the system, could easily make their own a prayer for release from debts.

Many of the parables of Jesus take on new meaning when read in the economic context of Jesus' day. It has been suggested, for instance, that the parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) is a protest against an economic system which enabled those with money to amass more and more wealth with little care for the destitute of the land. The master in the parable is using his servants to make more money for him. In this scenario, perhaps the real hero of the story is the servant who buries the one talent he receives, refusing to collude with an oppressive and unjust system.

The healing acts of Jesus, particularly the exorcisms, can be seen as occasions when power of Jesus released people from the mental anguish, depression, dejection and anger brought on by the oppressive system in which they lived. The Gerasene demoniac (Mark 1:1-20), for instance, uses the military term 'legion' to name the evil spirits that assail him. Could this be an allusion to the occupying Roman legions which maintained a system of oppression? Jesus gives back to this dehumanised outcast his sense of dignity and worth and restores him to community.

We live and minister as disciples of Jesus in a world not dissimilar to the world of Jesus' day. Political, economic, social and even religious forces often leave the poor and vulnerable of our world in dire need. Status and worth are derived from abundance of wealth. The earth is exploited to feed consumerism and provide a way of life for the privileged that cannot be sustained. There is a crying need of '**A Sabbath for the Earth and the Poor**,' which was the theme of this year's NJPN Conference. In addressing this theme, the speakers in one way or another spoke of the transformative vision of Pope Francis, which ultimately is the vision of Jesus. We need to return, time and time again, to that vision and praxis of Jesus, where we find inspiration and energy to continue listening and responding to the cries of the poor and the exploited Earth.

See: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/33064>

NATIONAL JUSTICE AND PEACE NETWORK SPEAKS OUT AGAINST FRACKING

2 July 2017: **The National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales (NJPN) has joined with the Climate Coalition, in which it has members in common such as CAFOD and Columban missionaries, in refusing to support shale gas extraction in the UK.**

It has issued a **Fracking Briefing** which supports the **Climate Coalition** in saying: "The government has failed to demonstrate convincingly that fracking will not compromise the UK's legally binding climate change targets, or its broader commitment to limiting global climate change to two degrees. Britain should be leading the world in shifting away from fossil fuels and towards clean and sustainable energy, rather than trying to extract ever more inaccessible fossil fuels."

The Fracking paper was produced by the NJPN Environment Working Group, particularly by Paul Kelly from Lancaster Faith and Justice Commission, which has been involved for several years in raising awareness about plans for fracking in Lancashire. "In making this recommendation" says the statement "we are taking a moral decision that we believe is most likely to favour the common good and meet our Christian obligations founded on love of God and respect for God's creation". The paper says Britain has to reduce CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050 to have any chance of preventing catastrophic climate change. "We believe following a carbon-based fuel strategy, which includes fracking, will indeed make it more difficult to reach our climate change commitments and potentially our renewable energy targets". In the view of NJPN, fracking is distracting energy firms and governments from investing in renewable sources of energy, and encouraging continued reliance on fossil fuels. "We need a 21st century energy revolution based on efficiency and renewables, rather than increased burning of fossil fuels that will add to climate change" says the statement.

NJPN also reminds that the Catholic bishops for all continents said in a statement prior to the Paris Climate Talks: "Put an end to the fossil fuel era, and provide affordable, reliable and safe renewable energy access for all". The NJPN supports the divestment movement which is growing in the Catholic and other Churches. It also calls for simpler lifestyles and recommends campaigns such as CAFOD's **Livesimply** and renewable energy initiatives and **Joy in Enough** of Green Christian. NJPN calls on the Government at the very least to adopt the 10 key recommendations of the Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering to address the technical risks of fracking. Preserving fresh water must be a priority. The NJPN Environment group is committed to supporting reasoned faith-filled debate about fracking.

Full Fracking Briefing Paper statement available at:

www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/environment/fracking-briefing-paper-njpn-environment-working-group/

See: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32912>

UK ARMS EXPORTS TO SAUDI ARABIA CAN CONTINUE, HIGH COURT RULES

Alice Ross **The Guardian** 10 July 2017

Campaigners have lost a high-profile case calling for UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia to be stopped over humanitarian concerns, as the high court ruled exports could continue. **Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT)** launched the judicial review of the government's decision to continue granting weapons-export licences to Saudi Arabia despite widespread concern over the civilian death toll of its two-year bombing campaign in Yemen. CAAT called the ruling a "green light" for the UK government to sell arms to "brutal dictatorships and human rights abusers". Delivering an open judgment in the High Court in London, Lord Justice Burnett, who heard the case with Mr Justice Haddon-Cave, said: "We have concluded that the material decisions of the Secretary of State were lawful. We therefore dismiss the claim." The court is also handing down a closed judgment, following a case in which half of the evidence was heard in secret on national security grounds.

UK and EU arms sales rules state that export licences cannot be granted if there is a "clear risk" that the equipment could be used to break international humanitarian law. Licences are signed off by the Secretary of State for International Trade, Liam Fox.

The UK government's arms sales to Saudi Arabia has come under sustained scrutiny from NGOs and MPs since the start of the campaign in Yemen, where the Saudi-led bombing campaign is accused of killing civilians and damaging vital infrastructure. But the kingdom is the UK's largest weapons client and has bought more than £3bn of British arms in the past two years. The case, which was heard over three days in February, included uncomfortable disclosures for the Government, including documents in which the export policy chief told the business secretary, Sajid Javid, then in charge of licensing, "my gut tells me we should suspend [weapons exports to the country]". Documents obtained by the *Guardian* showed that the UK was preparing to suspend exports after the bombing of a funeral in Yemen in October 2016 killed 140 civilians. But the Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, advised Fox that sales should continue, adding: "The 'clear risk' threshold for refusal ... has not yet been reached."

CAAT presented "many hundreds of pages" of reports from the UN, European Parliament, Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières, Amnesty International and others documenting airstrikes on schools, hospitals and a water well in Yemen, as well as incidents of mass civilian casualties. The reports "represent a substantial body of evidence suggesting that the coalition has committed serious breaches of international humanitarian law in the course of its engagement in the Yemen conflict", the judges wrote. "However, this open source material is only part of the picture." Thanks to close military cooperation and diplomatic ties, the UK government has "considerable insight into the military systems, processes and procedures of Saudi Arabia adopted in Yemen", the ruling said.

As the government faced increasing scrutiny of its arms sales to Saudi Arabia, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) devoted considerable energy to tracking the conflict's impact on civilians, even though the UK is not part of the coalition, the case revealed. The Foreign Office compiles a regular report on international humanitarian law in Yemen, based on information provided by the MoD. These reports frequently recorded concerns – the October 2015 update found "worrying levels of civilian casualties in some reports" – but said there was not enough evidence to establish whether these were deliberate. Johnson sees all applications for weapons that are likely to be used by the Royal Saudi Air Force and provides a decision on all "particularly sensitive or finely balanced applications", the court heard.

The Saudi government had conducted its own investigations into allegations of concern, the judges noted, dismissing CAAT's concern that the Saudi civilian casualty tracking unit was working too slowly and had only reported on 5% of the incidents. The kingdom's "growing efforts" were "of significance and a matter which the Secretary of State was entitled to take into account" when deciding whether British weapons might be used to violate international humanitarian law. There was "anxious scrutiny – indeed what seems like anguished scrutiny at some stages" within government of the decision to continue granting licences, the judges wrote. But the Secretary of State was "rationally entitled" to decide that the Saudi-led coalition was not deliberately targeting civilians and was making efforts to improve its targeting processes, and so to continue granting licences. Burnett said he would consider an application for an appeal, which CAAT and its solicitors, Leigh Day, said they would be lodging immediately.

CAAT spokesman, Andrew Smith, said: "This is a very disappointing verdict and we are pursuing an appeal. If this verdict is upheld then it will be seen as a green light for government to continue arming and supporting brutal dictatorships and human rights abusers like Saudi Arabia that have shown a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law. Every day we are hearing new and horrifying stories about the humanitarian crisis that has been inflicted on the people of Yemen. Thousands have been killed while vital and lifesaving infrastructure has been destroyed." The case had exposed the UK's "toxic relationship" with Saudi Arabia, he added.

Rosa Curling of Leigh Day said: "The law is clear: where there is a clear risk UK arms might be used in the commission of serious violations of international law, arms sales cannot go ahead. Nothing in the open evidence, presented by the UK government to the court, suggests this risk does not exist in relation to arms to Saudi Arabia. Indeed, all the evidence we have seen from Yemen suggests the opposite: the risk is very real ... Our government should not be allowing itself to be complicit in the grave violations of law taking place by the Saudi coalition in Yemen."

James Lynch, Amnesty International's head of arms control, said: "Irrespective of this ruling, the UK and other governments should end their shameless arms supplies to Saudi Arabia. They may amount to lucrative trade deals, but the UK risks aiding and abetting these terrible crimes." Mark Goldring, chief executive of Oxfam GB, said: "This sets back arms control 25 years and gives ministers free rein to sell arms to countries even where there is clear evidence they are breaching international humanitarian law. With little legal oversight on arms sales, it is now imperative that parliament holds the government to account."

An online poll conducted by ICM for Avaaz at the weekend (8/9 July) found that two-thirds of the 2,011 respondents opposed arms sales to Saudi Arabia, with 14% in support.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/10/uk-arms-exports-to-saudi-arabia-can-continue-high-court-rules?CMP=tw_t_gu

CAMPAIGNER JOHN DOWLING HAS PREPARED A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

The arms industry, and the UK's role in it, shames this country. The power of the industry is remarkable. Behind this lies an intimate and compromising relationship between arms companies and government - from the thousands of hours of meetings, to the revolving door between companies, military and government, to the industry bodies within government itself.

The arms industry has inserted itself into the very heart and machinery of government, giving it totally disproportionate access and influence over vital areas, warping public policy and harming us all. Promoting arms deals is prioritised over controlling arms sales and securing a more peaceful world, and private commercial interests are allowed to trump human rights.

Please shut the revolving door between the arms industry, military and government, which gives the industry undue influence, and encourages the conflation of the public interest with corporate interest. Please implement measures for greater transparency on the 'open door' to industry. This relentless special access warps, narrows and distorts government priorities, and it is vital it is exposed to meaningful public scrutiny. Please shut DSO, the government's arms promotion unit, which is effectively a trade association within government, coordinating Whitehall in support of arms sales for international companies. Yours sincerely

More info: www.caat.org.uk

CHURCHES WORLDWIDE WELCOME TREATY BANNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

9 July 2017: **Nuclear weapons have always been seen as deeply immoral. Now, after years of work, 122 governments out of 192 have adopted a treaty that makes them completely illegal.**

The 7 July decision at the United Nations bans the manufacture, possession and use of nuclear weapons and provides pathways for their eventual elimination. World Council of Churches' members are among the many groups and governments working towards this new international law for the past six years and more. "I welcome this treaty with great thanksgiving. It is designed to protect all countries and the planet that is our home. It could ultimately save millions of lives," said the WCC general secretary, Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. "The WCC called for this very treaty at its Assembly in South Korea in 2013. We vowed there to live in ways that protect life and creation, not in fear, protected by nuclear weapons." The new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons recognises that "the catastrophic consequences" of nuclear weapons "cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national boundaries, pose grave implications for human survival" and are the responsibility of all states. The nine countries with nuclear weapons and 30 countries that seek shelter in US nuclear deterrence boycotted the month-long treaty negotiations and largely opposed years of preparatory work.

"The treaty, and the process which led to it, has finally taken the international debate over nuclear weapons beyond the narrow self-serving perspectives of military strategy and political influence to the wider domain of humanitarian principle and fundamental ethics, where the moral imperative against nuclear weapons is clear and categorical," said WCC International Affairs Director Peter Prove.

The nuclear ban treaty requires that states provide assistance to victims of nuclear weapons use and testing, and requires environmental remediation for areas contaminated by radiation. "This historic achievement acknowledges the unconscionable suffering of those affected by nuclear weapons use and testing. The treaty sets a course to ensure that nuclear weapons will never be used under any circumstances," said Dr Emily Welty, Vice Moderator of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. "It has been an honour for World Council of Churches to accompany the process and to highlight the voices of the *hibakusha* and indigenous groups who cry out for justice." Welty, other members of the CCIA and members of the Ecumenical Peace Advocacy Network of the WCC have advocated for the negotiations and for specific human-centered provisions in the treaty, of which there are many.

The treaty calls special attention, for example, to the "disproportionate impact" of ionizing radiation on women and girls, based on long-neglected evidence gathered in the Marshall Islands and other territories used for nuclear tests. "This treaty is anticipated to have an impact on all states, whether they join immediately or not, by stigmatising nuclear weapons and making the continued maintenance, development, and possession of nuclear weapons unacceptable," the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons declared. ICAN is playing a key role in the ban process. It has over 400 partner organizations including the WCC.

The treaty puts nuclear weapons in the same category as other indiscriminate, inhumane weapons such as chemical weapons and biological weapons, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. It ends a peculiar exception - that the worst weapon of mass destruction, is the only weapon of mass destruction not expressly prohibited. It therefore fills a gap in the law created and sustained by the ways in which nuclear powers have used their international power and influence. "Recent events that have seen North Korea testing such weapons of mass destruction have for me starkly brought our campaign and advocacy against these weapons into sharp focus," said CCIA commissioner Masimba Kuchera of Zimbabwe, who was in New York to lobby for a strong treaty. "Even those who have stockpiled nuclear weapons are afraid that someone may pull the trigger first. Having no country own these weapons is the best insurance that no one from a country big or small will ever have to fear such irreversible destruction. Christianity and indeed all faiths are premised on loving one another". "Churches now have a fine opportunity to help with the next step," the WCC general secretary said. "We can all urge our governments to sign and ratify the treaty and then to see that it is implemented.

On 6 July, European and US Catholic Bishops issued a joint statement in full support of the treaty, calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. They said: "the fact that most of the world's nations are participating in this effort testifies to the urgency of their concern, an urgency intensified by the prospect of nuclear terrorism and proliferation, and to the inequality and dissatisfaction of non-nuclear states about the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament efforts."

See: www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32943

Read more here: www.un.org/disarmament/ptnw/index.html **See also:** <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32952>

'EUROPE IS NOT A MARKET, IT IS THE WILL TO LIVE TOGETHER'

Esteban Gonzales Pons: 25 March 2017, Speech on Brexit, European Parliament, Brussels.

Europe is currently bound to the North by popularism, and to the South by refugees drowned in the sea. To the east by Putin's tanks, and to the West by Trump's wall. In the past by war, in the future by Brexit. Today, Europe is alone more than ever, but it's citizens do not know it. Europe is, however, for that reason the best solution and we do not know how to explain that to our citizens. Globalisation teaches us that today Europe is inevitable, there is no alternative. But Brexit also tells us that Europe is reversible, that you can walk backwards in history, even though outside of Europe, it is very cold. Brexit is the most selfish decision ever made since Winston Churchill saved Europe with the blood sweat and tears of the English. Saying Brexit is the most insidious way of saying goodbye.

Europe is not a market, it is the will to live together. Leaving Europe is not leaving a market, it is leaving shared dreams. We can have a common market, but if we do not have common dreams, we have nothing. Europe is the peace that came after the disaster of war. Europe is the pardon between French and Germans. Europe is the return to freedom of Greece, Spain and Portugal. Europe is the fall of the Berlin Wall. Europe is the end of communism. Europe is the welfare state, it is democracy.

PROGRESSIO CLOSING MASS

Fr Joe Ryan, Chair Westminster Justice and Peace Commission 10 July 2017

Sadly, after 75 years, Progressio, formerly CIIR, the Catholic Institute for International Relations, has had to close down due to a lack of funding. On 6 July, I was glad to be able to join Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Canon Tom Atthill and the congregation at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, for the closing Mass. This was followed by a reception at the CAFOD offices next door in Romero House. Many gave moving tributes to several wonderful people who over 75 years set up international self-help projects making such a difference to developing countries. Then there was the volunteer programme and the documentation service, especially the 'Comment' series. Engaging with governments looking at unjust structures on the basis of Catholic Social Teaching was an integral part of the work. A name that came up over and over again during the evening was the inspirational Mildred Neville, a moving force behind CIIR from 1967 to 1985 as general secretary.

Chris Bain, Director of CAFOD; Martin McEnery, Chair of Trustees; Cardinal Cormac, welcomed everyone. Daniel Hale of CAFOD acted as MC. Those who shared their memories were: Enda Byrne, Jon Barnes, Julian Filochowski, Ian Linden, Dinny Hawes, Christine Allen, Carmen Medina and James Collins. One message emerging from all that was said was that the work of Progressio must continue in the lives and work of all present and beyond. It is hoped that while a chapter closes a new one must begin.

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32957>

PROGRESSIO FAREWELL EVENT: A LIGHT HAS GONE OUT

Rev. Rob Esdaile writes : Really sorry not to be able to attend the Catholic Institute for International Relations/Progressio Farewell Event and Mass tonight at St. George's, Southwark. Such great work done over the course of 76 years. The work goes on, but a light has gone out - and I fear that the willingness of the Roman Catholic community (and its leaders) to see the end of such organisations and institutions one after another (Plater College, Heythrop College, Progressio ...) reflects a collective failure to place ourselves at the heart of national life as promoters of justice and agents of radical change.

EDUCAID: LEARNING FOR LIFE IN SIERRA LEONE

28 July 2017 **Miriam Mason-Sesay writes:** Dear Anne, Thank you for attaching the JULY NW NJPN newsletter - some lovely encouraging stories there too - despite the Trumps and the Mays there are lots and lots of good people trying to build bridges not walls and to work in the obvious commonalities rather than pointing out the divisions.

Things are fairly hectic here - they have been difficult days as the money is so short - with Ebola over, SL is now well and truly out of the news and I get it that there are horrendous situations elsewhere too with the refugees etc but SL is so so so not out of the woods! Just being desperately poor is not a story People don't think, do they, about how the aftermath of something like Ebola will last for years and years - children who lost their parents have still lost their parents, families who got decimated are still decimated; people who lost their businesses take years to rebuild and especially at a time when the financial climate is so so desperate here. Anyway, we battle on trying to help as many as we can but that is not nearly as many as we would like to or nearly as many as are needing the help.

I will be back in the UK in October and as usual looking for new partners: schools, youth groups, churches or others who would like to join their story to ours. I think it is the most encouraging part of being here - e.g. we have 2 lads who graduated with firsts from university this year who come from absolute destitute poverty; a woman who was picked up selling fruit on the streets who graduated in development studies a couple of months ago; our first doctor whose own story is an extraordinary one of courage and determination, etc.

• **Educaid** has been working with vulnerable young Sierra Leoneans since 1994. Initially, running a sponsorship programme and later establishing their own schools, they have established a reputation for high quality, holistic education that empowers young people to take their own first steps out of poverty and to become part of the rebuilding of their country. Educaid's vision is of a dignified, democratic and prosperous Sierra Leone where poverty is eradicated by educated citizens. This requires a focus not just on academic excellence but also on clear citizenship values of love, community and integrity. Due to the successes of Educaid's own schools, they have now been asked to help others and have a network of over 100 schools that they support with teacher training and materials. If you are in a position to help in our mission to some of the most vulnerable young people in the world, please go to www.educaid.org.uk to find out more and here to make a contribution: <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/educasierrealeonecio>

CARITAS: RISING INFLATION SHOULD PROMPT RECONSIDERATION OF BENEFITS FREEZE

7 July 2017: **The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's annual report into the public's opinion of what is necessary for a socially acceptable standard of living has highlighted increasing household budget shortfalls, especially for working families with children.**

The report comes as a release from the Office for National Statistics confirmed that in the first quarter of 2017, real household disposable incomes in the UK fell at their steepest rate since 2011. The fall is attributed to a rise in inflation whilst incomes stagnate.

CEO of Caritas Social Action Network, Phil McCarthy, said: "This evidence that disposable incomes are falling in the UK is concerning. Our member charities support people struggling to make ends meet. Unable to buy essentials such as electricity, gas and food, they are borrowing money from friends and family to meet additional one-off costs, such as new shoes for their children, or repairs to household appliances. If inflation continues to rise, budgets will be stretched ever tighter, and the Government should reconsider the freeze to working-age benefits."

Single, working-age adults have seen the cost of a 'minimum budget' (as judged by public surveys) increase by 4.2% since 2016, pensioner couples by 2.8%, couple parents by 4.1% and lone parents by 3.8%. The amount that families have to spend - after tax and benefits are taken into account - fell by 2% in the first quarter of 2017, compared to 2016. The main reason for the fall was the rise in inflation, which hit 2.3% in the year to March, as over the same period wages rose by 2.1%. Most working age benefits were frozen for four years from April 2016: Jobseekers' Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Benefit, applicable amounts for Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance rates.

• **Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) is the social action agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.** CSAN is a network of 42 charities that work across the field of social action including families and children, prisoners, elderly people and homeless people. **For more information see:** www.csan.org.uk and <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32946>

CSAN LAUNCHES ONLINE DEMENTIA AND SPIRITUALITY TOOLKIT

Caritas Social Action Network has partnered with one of its member organisations, "Welcome me as I am", to produce an online toolkit on spirituality and dementia, available to download at:
http://www.welcomemeasiam.org.uk/welcome_me_as_i_am_toolkit.html

Since the film *'It's still ME Lord'* was released in 2009, interest has grown in the 'spiritual self' as dementia advances, and how our Church communities can nurture the spiritual and religious needs of all those whose lives have been touched by dementia.

An increasing number of Churches have become involved in the 'dementia friends' initiative, enabling those involved in pastoral work and the wider parish to deepen understanding of the experience of dementia. The new online toolkit is not just about facts and figures, but how to accompany those whose lives have been touched by dementia in their spiritual journey – how to understand and nurture the God-given 'ME', and so enable us to deepen the practice of our faith. We use the phrase 'those whose lives have been touched by dementia' deliberately, to include the person with dementia, loved ones, friends, and the wider community. This is in contrast to the expression 'dementia sufferers' and 'carers' – which tends to divide those involved into the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', more than conveying the equality and reciprocity that are features of good human relationships.

The toolkit is for Clergy and Deacons, Parish Pastoral Workers, Members of the SVP, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and those whose lives are touched by dementia. Content of the toolkit include:

- **'Dementia – a Spiritual and Theological Perspective'** – Theological and spiritual issues in understanding and working with dementia and how these link to a positive and person-centred approach to dementia.
- **'Living well with dementia'** – keeping physically and mentally active, post-diagnostic support and accessing appropriate services. Making our church 'dementia friendly'.
- **'I need you to minister to me'** – Pastoral support for all those whose lives are touched by dementia, including carers and families. Communication skills and forming relationships as dementia advances. Outreach to residential and nursing homes. Life Story work from a spiritual perspective. This module will be particularly relevant for Pastoral Workers, Volunteers, Ministers of the Eucharist as well as Clergy and Deacons.
- **'The Power of Presence'** – Spiritual accompaniment at the end of life – providing a spiritual dimension to end of life care. Communicating when the power of speech has been lost. Ensuring that spiritual needs are understood and met at the end of life. Listening to and supporting families, friends and loved ones.
- **'No decision about me without me'** Some legal perspectives covering the Mental Capacity Act and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards to consider further in pastoral work.
- **Resources and information on appropriate services** for a church community to become a 'dementia friendly'.

INTRODUCING THE HERBERT PROTOCOL; COMMUNITY MESSAGING

Cumbria Constabulary has started using the **Herbert Protocol** to improve the way it works with families to find vulnerable people who have gone missing, such as those suffering from dementia. The family or carer of a vulnerable adult will be asked to complete a form; essentially a "Life History Questionnaire". This is retained in a safe place so that it is immediately available in the event that the person goes missing.

Download from the Cumbria police website: <https://www.cumbria.police.uk/Services/ReportAdvice/Mental-Health.aspx>

If you would like to find out about initiatives like this directly, sign up to the **Community Messaging** service:
<https://www.cumbriacommunitymessaging.co.uk/>

G20 SUMMIT: LEADERS FAIL TO BRIDGE CLIMATE CHANGE CHASM

8 July 2017: **A statement at the G20 summit says the Paris accord is "irreversible" but the US forces compromise.**

Leaders of 19 nations at the G20 summit in Germany have renewed their pledge to implement the Paris deal on climate change, despite the US pulling out. Deadlock over the issue had held up the last day of talks in Hamburg but a final agreement was eventually reached. It acknowledged President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement without undermining the commitment of other countries. The compromise came after violent protests in the host city.

The joint summit statement released on Saturday said: "We take note of the decision of the United States of America to withdraw from the Paris Agreement." However, the leaders of the other G20 members agreed the accord was "irreversible". The statement also said the US would "endeavour to work closely with other countries to help them access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently". Mr Trump has pledged to help the US coal industry make a comeback and has previously characterised the Paris agreement as aiming to disadvantage his country's workers.

In a news conference as the two-day summit drew to a close, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she still deplored Mr Trump's position on the Paris accord but she was "gratified" the other 19 nations opposed its renegotiation. Mr Trump cancelled his own scheduled news conference on Saturday, reinforcing the image of the G20 as the G19 + 1. It has been a divisive summit in which the rest of the world has been struggling to come to terms with the US president's "America first" policy.

"I think it's very clear that we could not reach consensus, but the differences were not papered over, they were clearly stated," Mrs Merkel told reporters. She said she did not share the view of UK Prime Minister Theresa May that Washington could decide to return to the climate agreement. But Mrs May reiterated her belief that the US could rejoin the accord in her news conference on Saturday. And French President Emmanuel Macron also remained hopeful of persuading Mr Trump to change his mind, saying: "I never despair of convincing him because I think it's my duty." He announced that Paris would host another summit on 12 December to make further progress on the climate agreement and to address financing.

<https://outlook.live.com/owa/?path=/mail/AQMkADAwATZiZmYAZC04NzBhLWI4OAEtMDACLTAwCgAuAAADTnuzMKzdE0SPkswpBdjU5gEAPBZCpYtBaEOG4RbnZsWpIQAAAKfjAAAA>

PREPARING FOR PRAYER AND ACTION ON CREATION CARE

Ellen Teague 10 July 2017

Resources are now available for **The Day of Prayer for Care of Creation** (Friday 1 September 2017) and **Creation Time**, which runs to the Feast of St Francis (1 September – 4 October). They include sample prayer services, posters and video material. During this time Christians will be lifting up the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (*Laudato Si'* 49). From the Amazon to the Philippines and countless places in between, there will be services and events to showcase how Christians are coming together to pray for and care for creation.

- The Columban JPIC team has pulled together resources which can be downloaded at: www.columbans.co.uk/creation-time/
- **Background** to the **World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation**, which was initiated by Pope Francis two years ago, at <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/world-day-of-prayer/> <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/laudatosi/>
- **Creation Time** or the Season of Creation is promoted by the Global Catholic Climate Movement, the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, the World Council of Churches, Anglican Communion Environmental Network, ACT Alliance and GreenFaith. The following website contains information and photos of events from Creation Time 2016 held in 55 countries. Also, videos of Church leaders, including Pope Francis, promoting Care for Creation. The Prayer resources section contains materials produced by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Franciscans and others. <http://seasonofcreation.org/>
- **Laudato Si'** weekly quotes for parish newsletters, produced by Westminster Justice and Peace Commission at: <https://westminsterjp.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/lis-quotes.pdf>
- **Posters** are now available to download at: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

POPE FRANCIS ENDORSES 'LAUDATO SI' PLEDGE CAMPAIGN'

13 July 2017: Following the second anniversary of the publication of his encyclical *Laudato Si' – On Care of our Common Home*, Pope Francis has endorsed a pledge campaign that aims to mobilize at least one million people to directly engage in turning the encyclical's message into action. Organised and promoted by the **Global Catholic Climate Movement**, the pledge calls on those who sign to answer the call of *Laudato Si'* by praying with and for creation, living more simply, and advocating to protect our common home.

The *'Laudato Si' Pledge campaign'* has received support from Church leaders from around the globe including Cardinal Turkson, Cardinal Tagle, Cardinal Ribat, Cardinal Cupich and Cardinal Marx. It has also garnered the support of major environmental leaders. Tomás Insua, Executive Director of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, said: "We are grateful and inspired by Pope Francis' endorsement of the *Laudato Si'* Pledge. With 1.2 billion Catholics around the world, we have a critical role to play in tackling climate change and the wider ecological crisis. Pope Francis has already changed the discussion around climate change and this pledge is inviting us to put the Church's teachings into action and answer the urgent call for strong political action and lifestyle change put forth in *Laudato Si'*."

The Pope's endorsement adds to the momentum of recent Catholic climate action: Pope Francis requested that Angela Merkel uplift the Paris climate accord during the G20 summit, several Catholic organizations recently divested from fossil fuels, GCCM joined other Christian groups calling on governments to take strong action before the G7 last month and the Movement's Executive Director joined other scientific, political and faith leaders in publishing a letter in Nature Magazine pushing the G20 to recognize the urgency of the climate crisis.

Read more about the Global Catholic Climate Movement here: <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/>

See: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32980>

LISTENING TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH AND THE CRY OF THE POOR: THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA TO POPE FRANCIS' CALL

Shrewsbury Diocese:

Will Cochrane writes: Fr Peter Hughes is an Irish Columban who has lived mainly in impoverished communities in Lima, Peru. He is an advisor to the Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas and the 22 Bishops Conferences of Latin America and the Caribbean on pastoral leadership, and has recently advised the United Nations. He came on 7 July to speak at St Vincent's Altrincham to CAFOD and Justice & Peace Groups in the area with Sarah Croft, CAFOD's Campaigns manager.

Fr. Peter told us of the response of the Church in Latin America to Pope Francis' call via *Laudato Si'*. Over forty people heard how mining was destroying great parts of the Amazon forest and how the indigenous tribes are losing their land and way of life. This is also affecting the climate; it is a problem for all of us. Fr Peter helped to found and works with REPAM Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network which works in 8 South American countries – so not just Peru – but that is where he is now based. REPAM was set up to represent these tribes (over 300) who live and sustain life in the forest. They were funded by CAFOD and others to have their day at the United Nations to say WE ARE HERE AND WE EXIST!

Fr Peter also related personal stories from his life amongst the people and how he was profoundly affected by a mother who was so pleased that he would baptise her dying child. A vote of thanks was given by Bridget Fenwick, Shrewsbury CAFOD Organiser.

- The Amazon rainforest is the largest in the world and the Amazon River, the world's largest river in terms of discharge, drains about 6.9 million square kilometres or about 40% of the entire South American continent. But areas outside the basin are included when people speak about the Amazon, and this Pan-Amazonia region ranges from 7.7 to 8.2 million square kilometres. This area includes portions of eight South American countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Suriname, and French Guiana. Indigenous Peoples who continue to live in the Amazon are poorly quantified but around 20 million people in eight countries are classified as indigenous. (**Source:** Mongabay)

Liverpool Archdiocese:

Stephen Cooke writes: Last Saturday (8 July) saw an inspiring day when both Fr Peter Hughes SSC and Sarah Croft, CAFOD's Campaigns manager, spoke at our joint event with the Liverpool Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission in Wrightington. You can read a report of the day at: cafodliverpool.wordpress.com/2017/07/11/an-inspiring-day-with-fr-peter-hughes-and-sarah-croft-in-wrightington/

Many of the people who were unable to attend expressed their disappointment at not being able to see the talks, so we videoed them for you! You can watch the videos on the J&P Commission's YouTube channel [youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5UUtVasGfc-wnmD4j_YjtyHpJYB5a1iY](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5UUtVasGfc-wnmD4j_YjtyHpJYB5a1iY) where all four videos from the day can be found, feel free to share the videos with anyone you think would be interested. The talks were thought provoking and very interesting, and are definitely worth watching.

Meanwhile, also on the blog we have many interesting stories for you to read, including two from CAFOD Liverpool Community Participation Co-ordinator **Ged Edwards** about his ongoing visit to the Philippines, which you can read at: cafodliverpool.wordpress.com/2017/07/04/working-in-the-philippines-first-impressions-from-ged/ and cafodliverpool.wordpress.com/2017/07/10/ged-in-the-philippines-training-volunteers-for-social-action/

You can also read about the **Live simply** weekend at St Anne's Ormskirk at: cafodliverpool.wordpress.com/2017/07/11/st-annes-ormskirk-celebrates-their-live-simply-weekend/ and other interesting articles on the rest of the blogcafodliverpool.wordpress.com/

CAFOD Liverpool, 27 Crofton Road, Liverpool L13 5UJ. 0151 228 4028. [facebook.com/CAFODLiverpoolBranch](https://www.facebook.com/CAFODLiverpoolBranch)
twitter.com/CAFODLiverpool cafodliverpool.wordpress.com

ACTA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Our ACTA National Conference in Birmingham on 21 October 2017 is covering the topic that all Catholics are deeply concerned with - Eucharist, Leadership, Priesthood and Laity. Is the closing or amalgamation of parishes inevitable? There are alternatives.

Our speakers are gifted communicators. The scene will be set by **John Sullivan**, Emeritus Professor of Christian Education from Hope University in Liverpool, exploring discipleship and leadership in the Church, then taken on by **David McLoughlin**, the well-known theologian from Newman University in Birmingham, who will describe 'an ancient solution to a contemporary problem' - explaining the idea of locally ordained community leaders, as proposed by Bishop Fritz Lobinger. Our final speaker is **Fr Tony Flannery**, the Redemptorist priest from Limerick, who will talk about how the shortage of priests in Ireland is impacting both priests and laity there and elsewhere - from his perspective as one of the founder members of both the Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland and the International Church Reform Network of priests' associations and reform groups.

The conference programme allows for 'in depth' Q&A sessions with each speaker, as well as the formal presentations and a plenary panel. The venue is the Quaker Priory Rooms conference centre in Bull Street, in the middle of Birmingham, a six minute walk (or two tram stops) from New Street Station. A light lunch with soft drinks is included. The cost is £20.

Book online at acalltoaction.org.uk or send a cheque to the ACTA Hon. Treasurer: Ken Holden, 67, Menlove Avenue, Liverpool, L18 2EH. If you have any queries, don't hesitate to email the conference co-ordinator at mjriordan@hotmail.co.uk, or the treasurer at k.holden67@btinternet.com

U2 CELEBRATE JO COX ON JOSHUA TREE TOUR

Mark Savage BBC Music Reporter 9 July 2017: **Rock band U2** paid an emotional tribute to murdered MP Jo Cox as they brought their *Joshua Tree* tour to the UK. Bono, who worked with the MP on the **Make Poverty History** campaign, dedicated *Ultraviolet (Light My Way)* to her memory. "She lived her life championing the lives of others," he told the audience at London's Twickenham Stadium. Mrs Cox, 41, was shot and stabbed in June last year during the EU referendum campaign. The tribute was one of several moments when U2 paused to acknowledge global events, including the recent terror attacks in Manchester and London. For their encore, the band asked Noel Gallagher on stage to sing *Don't Look Back in Anger*, which became an unofficial anthem of resilience in Manchester after a suicide bomber killed 22 fans outside an Ariana Grande concert in May. Gallagher also dedicated the song to the victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster.

A day earlier, U2 had invited 50 of the firefighters who tackled the blaze to watch their rehearsals and soundcheck. And Bono echoed Jo Cox's maiden speech to Parliament - "*we have more in common than that which divides us*" - as he made a plea for tolerance towards immigrants. "Us Irish are immigrant people," he said, "and of course we came here into this great, Great Britain and we thank you for giving us safety and sanctuary for all these years. We hope it won't stop."

It was a testament to U2's experience and sincerity that these moments did not overshadow or unbalance the evening; which was, at heart, a celebration of their career-defining album *The Joshua Tree*. Written against the backdrop of the Cold War, *The Joshua Tree* reflected the two sides of the American dream, with the Irish band seduced by its glamour but repelled by what bassist Adam Clayton "the bleakness and greed" of the Reagan era. Thirty years later, it remains an eerily relevant ode to a divided America. "It seems like we have come full circle from when *The Joshua Tree* songs were originally written, with global upheaval, extreme right wing politics and some fundamental human rights at risk," said guitarist The Edge earlier this year.

With the crowd still singing the chorus to *Pride*, the band moved to the main stage, and played *Where The Streets Have No Name* silhouetted against the burnt orange colour of a sunset. This was exactly how the original *Joshua Tree* tour began in 1987 and it proved similarly effective 30 years later. Indeed, the screens were consistently used to great effect. *I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For* was set against a slow-moving shot of a desert highway; while *With or Without You* saw the band play against dramatic time-lapse footage of Death Valley. Later, before *Exit*, they showed a clip from the 1950s TV Western *Trackdown*, in which a shady con-man named Trump tries to frighten the residents of a small town into building a protective wall. When Bono sang *Mothers of the Disappeared*, accompanied by a video of women holding candles in honour of the young Chilean men murdered by Augusto Pinochet, the purity of his emotion echoed around the stands.

ARIANA GRANDE MADE AN HONORARY CITIZEN OF MANCHESTER

Ariana Grande is being made an honorary citizen of Manchester as a thank you from the city for the way she responded to the arena attack in May. The city council passed the motion unanimously at a special meeting on 12 July. The singer was praised for returning to stage the **One Love Manchester** concert less than two weeks after the attack on her arena gig, which killed 22 people. Manchester City Council leader Sir Richard Leese said it would have been understandable if she hadn't returned. "But no - instead she, as an artist, a performer, was determined that she would not perform again until she had returned to Manchester to perform," he said. "In doing so, she brought comfort to thousands, she raised millions for the **We Love Manchester Emergency Fund** and became the first patron of that fund. Sir Richard also hailed those who helped in the aftermath for showing the "spirit of Manchester... of strength and defiance".

THEATRE: YOUNG VIC

MY NAME IS RACHEL CORRIE 29 Sept – 21 Oct 2017

March 2003. The Gaza Strip. 23 year old Rachel Corrie stands between a Palestinian house and an armoured bulldozer. Meet the heroine behind the headlines. This play captures the idealism, the blazing eloquence, the sardonic wit in Rachel's vivid diary entries. Josh Roche, winner of the JMK Award 2017, directs this stirring, troubling account of an extraordinary young woman's overwhelming commitment to her cause. Taken from the writings of Rachel Corrie, edited by Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner.

Performances: Monday to Saturday: 7.45pm (except 4 Oct), Wednesday and Saturday Matinees: 2.45pm (except 4 Oct)

Tickets: £15, £20, Previews: (29 Sept - 3 Oct) £10.

THE SUPPLIANT WOMEN by Aeschylus 13 Nov – 25 Nov 2017 New version by David Greig, Direction Ramin Gray

Fifty women leave everything behind to board a boat in North Africa and flee across the Mediterranean. They are escaping forced marriage, hoping for protection and assistance, seeking asylum in Greece. Written 2,500 years ago, one of the world's oldest plays speaks to us through the ages with startling resonance for our troubled times. Featuring a chorus of local women from London, this is part play, part ritual. Director Ramin Gray unearths an electric connection to the deepest and most mysterious ideas of humanity - who are we, where do we belong and if all goes wrong - who will take us in? **Performances:** Monday - Saturday: 7.30pm, Saturday matinees: 2.30pm. **Tickets:** £10, £20, £29, £38, Previews: (13 - 15 Nov) £10, £20

THE JUNGLE 7 Dec 2017 – 6 Jan 2018 by Joe Murphy & Joe Robertson, Direction Stephen Daldry & Justin Martin

A Young Vic and National Theatre production, commissioned by the National Theatre. From Good Chance Theatre, an immersive new play where worlds collide. In the worst places, you meet the best people. This is the place people suffered and dreamed. Okot wants nothing more than to get to the UK. Beth wants nothing more than to help him. Meet the hopeful, resilient residents of "The Jungle" - just across the Channel, right on our doorstep. Join refugees and volunteers from around the world over fresh baked naan and sweet milky chai at the Afghan Café. **Performances:** Monday - Saturday: 7.30pm (except 15 Dec), Wednesday & Saturday Matinees: 2.30pm (except 16 Dec & 3 Jan). **Tickets:** £10, £20, £29, £38, Previews: (7 - 14 Dec) £10, £20.

● **YOUNG VIC, 66 The Cut, Waterloo, London.** Box Office: 020 7922 2922 boxoffice@youngvic.org

IRINA RATUSHINSKA 1954 - 2017

"... You must not, under any circumstances, allow yourself to hate. Not because your tormentors have not earned it. But if you allow hatred to take root, it would flourish and spread during your years in the camps, driving out everything else, and ultimately corrode and warp your soul. You will no longer be yourself; your identity will be destroyed, all that will remain will be a hysterical, maddened and bedevilled husk of the human being that once was."

Michael Bourdeaux 9 July 2017

Early on the morning of 10 October 1986, Igor Gerashchenko, the husband of the dissident Soviet poet Irina Ratushinskaya, phoned Keston College in Kent, the centre for the study of religion in communist countries. "Irina is free," he told us: relayed to the BBC and thence to the world, this news upstaged the event for which the media had been waiting – the opening of the Reykjavik summit between the US president Ronald Reagan and the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The timing was no coincidence. There was a hiatus in the news while Reagan and Gorbachev were airborne on their way to Iceland. The latter was anxious to prove to world opinion that he was serious about wanting to improve relations, not only internationally, but on the home front as well, through recognition of the improved human rights situation brought about by his programme of *perestroika* (reconstruction). So it was a calculated move on his part. Irina had been reported as nearing death in prison, and he knew that freeing her would capture the world's imagination. Thirty years on, she has died aged 63, of cancer.

She had been the Soviet Union's best-known dissident since the release of the Jewish activist Anatoly Shcharansky (now Natan Sharansky), earlier in the year. Very soon the "father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb", Andrei Sakharov, received a personal call from Gorbachev to return to Moscow from his exile in Gorky. The Soviet Union would never be the same again. World publicity had already raised Irina's profile to international status. An Anglican priest, the Rev Dick Rodgers, spent the whole of Lent 1986 in a cage in Birmingham attempting to simulate the jail conditions and diet of this young prisoner. Irina came to believe that the huge publicity he engendered contributed to saving her life.

She was not a natural dissident. Born in Odessa, in Ukraine, then part of the Soviet Union, she was the daughter of Boris, an engineer, and Irina, a teacher of Russian literature. She graduated in physics from Odessa University in 1976 and became a primary school teacher, marrying Igor, a physicist, in 1979. A gifted poet and with firm Christian convictions, she tried to inculcate her own standards in her pupils. The Soviet educational system was dominated by the atheism that she abhorred, but precisely why she was singled out for such inhuman treatment remains a mystery. One might have expected that she would have been given an intimidating rebuke by the KGB and dismissed from her job. Instead she found herself confronting the full force of the Soviet law, but poetry in Russia was always dangerous.

In 1981 she and her husband co-signed an appeal to the Soviet government on behalf of the exiled Sakharov, and they followed this up by taking part in a demonstration, for which her husband lost his job and they both served a 10-day prison sentence. After her second arrest, in 1982, she was held in prison until she faced the court in April 1983, charged with "agitation carried on for the purpose of subverting or weakening the Soviet regime"; for this she received a sentence of seven years in a labour camp in the republic of Mordovia, to the south-east of Moscow, followed by five years of internal exile.

After her release she described conditions in the "small zone" of the camp in a remarkable book, ***Grey Is the Colour of Hope*** (1988). This restricted area, a kind of prison within a prison, was set aside for particularly dangerous female political criminals, including many of the prominent female dissidents of the time. She described them with occasional humour and much insight, as they helped and sustained each other in appalling conditions. Among many others, Irina befriended Lagle Parek, who would later become the first minister of the interior in free Estonia.

Even in prison, Irina was able to continue writing. Deprived of paper, she would scratch her poems on bars of soap, commit them to memory, erase them and reconstitute them when eventually paper came to hand. Somehow she smuggled them out to Igor, and he relayed them to the world. They made a huge impact. Settings to music included Sally Beamish's cycle ***No, I'm Not Afraid*** for spoken word and chamber orchestra (1988).

Emigration to the UK soon followed her sudden release. Medical checks revealed the extent of her suffering: she was told that she would not be able to bear children. Nonetheless, in 1993 she gave birth to twin sons, Sergei and Oleg.

Irina's immense popularity in the west led to her being invited to Northwestern University, Illinois, as poet in residence (1987-89), but eventually it faded and invitations to speak became less frequent. She and Igor wanted to bring up their sons as Russians. The Yeltsin regime took some time to restore Irina's citizenship, but in 1998 Irina and Igor moved to Moscow and settled into a reasonably comfortable way of life, supplemented by the royalties she received. Irina continued to write, not least scripts for sitcoms, and give occasional poetry readings, but plans for a satirical novel in which dogs, crows and rats took over the world from people were cut short by the diagnosis of her illness.

Irina retained the Christian faith and the standards that inspired her, but Russia and the world came to forget the circumstances that had made them so compelling. She is survived by Igor and her sons.

• Irina Borisovna Ratushinskaya, poet and human rights activist, born 4 March 1954; died 5 July 2017

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jul/09/irina-ratushinskaya-obituary>

LIU XIAOBO, NOBEL LAUREATE AND POLITICAL PRISONER, DIES AT 61 IN CHINESE CUSTODY

Tom Phillips in Beijing 13 July 2017: China is facing a barrage of international criticism for its treatment of the Nobel laureate and democracy campaigner Liu Xiaobo, who died at the age of 61 on Thursday. Liu, who championed non-violent resistance as a way of overcoming "forceful tyranny", had been serving an 11-year jail sentence for demanding an end to one-party rule when he was diagnosed with late-stage liver cancer in May. He died of multiple organ failure while under guard at a hospital in north-east China, making him the first Nobel peace prize winner to die in custody since German pacifist Carl von Ossietzky, the 1935 recipient, who died under surveillance after years confined to Nazi concentration camps.

News of Liu's death sparked an immediate outpouring of international mourning and condemnation. His peaceful activism and biting criticism of one-party rule meant he had spent almost a quarter of his life behind bars. The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, paid tribute to "a courageous fighter for civil rights and freedom of opinion". The US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, said he mourned the loss of a man who had dedicated "his life to the betterment of his country and humankind, and to the pursuit of justice and liberty". The leader of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, which awards the prize, said the Chinese government – which had stopped Liu travelling abroad for treatment despite appeals from world leaders – bore "a heavy responsibility for his premature death". "We find it deeply disturbing that Liu Xiaobo was not transferred to a facility where he could receive adequate medical treatment before he became terminally ill," said Berit Reiss-Andersen. The British foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, said he was deeply saddened by the "huge loss" of the "lifelong campaigner for democracy, human rights and peace" and attacked Beijing for denying Liu and his family the chance to seek medical treatment overseas. "Liu Xiaobo should have been allowed to choose his own medical treatment overseas, which the Chinese authorities repeatedly denied him. This was wrong and I now urge them to lift all restrictions on his widow, Liu Xia."

One of the most forceful attacks on the authoritarian regime of China's president, Xi Jinping, came from his Taiwanese counterpart, Tsai Ing-wen, who paid tribute to a "human rights warrior". Tsai said Liu had striven to transform China into a nation where human rights and the rule of law were respected. "This was Liu Xiaobo's Chinese dream," Tsai said, alluding to Xi's central propaganda slogan. "We hope that the Chinese authorities can show confidence in engaging in political reform so that the Chinese people can enjoy the God-given rights of freedom and democracy ... Only through democracy, in which every Chinese person has freedom and respect, can China truly become a proud and important country."

Liu Xiaobo was famed for his Gandhian "no enemies" philosophy – but there was rage as well as grief among his friends as news of his death spread. "I hate this government," said the author and activist Tienchi Martin-Liao, breaking down in tears as she learned of her friend's death. "It is not only sadness – it is fury. How can a regime treat a person like Liu Xiaobo like this? This is unbearable. This will go down in history. No one should forget what this government and the Xi Jinping administration has done. It is unforgivable." Hu Ping, a friend of almost three decades who edits a pro-democracy journal called the *Beijing Spring*, said: "Liu Xiaobo is immortal, no matter whether he is alive or dead. Liu Xiaobo is a man of greatness, a saint." Hu said his friend's plight highlighted the bleak realities facing activists living under Xi, who has presided over what observers call the most severe political chill since the days following the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown. "I think the situation in China now is deteriorating – and the way in which Liu has been treated clearly shows us what the current situation is, and how it goes beyond our imagination."

Born in the northern province of Jilin in 1955, Liu was part of the first generation of Chinese students to go to university after they reopened following the upheaval of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution. He studied Chinese literature and went on to become a revered writer and public intellectual. When pro-democracy protests broke out in Beijing in the spring of 1989, Liu was lecturing in New York but decided to return despite having previously shown little interest in politics. "He thought: 'This is where I should be and this is where I can make a contribution. So I am going there'," said Perry Link, a Chinese literature expert from the University of California, Riverside, who knew him. Liu flew back to Beijing and headed to Tiananmen Square, where he played a central role in the protests. He led a hunger strike shortly before the 4 June military crackdown in which hundreds, possibly thousands of lives were lost. He was jailed for almost two years for his role in what Beijing called "counter-revolutionary" riots. The experience served as a political awakening that transformed Liu into a lifelong activist and champion of democracy. Over the coming years Liu continued to speak out, despite two more stints behind bars, railing incessantly against China's authoritarian regime in essays and interviews.

The "crime" that led to Liu spending his final years behind bars was Charter 08, a 2008 declaration inspired by Charter 77, a manifesto published by Czechoslovakian dissidents in 1977. "The current system has become backward to the point that change cannot be avoided," it warned, calling for an end to one-party rule. Authorities did not approve. Hours before it was due to be published, Liu, who had been one of the document's drafters, was detained at his Beijing home. The following year he was handed an 11-year sentence for "inciting subversion of state power". "The charter was the first public document since 1949 to dare to mention the end of one-party rule," said Link. "But of course the problem with having an influence is that the crackdown has been effective. A lot of young people don't know about the charter and don't know about Liu Xiaobo now."

In 2010, Liu was awarded the Nobel peace prize for his "long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China". He was represented at the award ceremony by an empty chair. When he was informed of his victory he reportedly said: "I dedicate this prize to the lost souls of 4 June," in reference to the victims of the Tiananmen massacre. Human rights and democracy campaigners saw Liu's Nobel prize as a triumph for their cause. Eva Pils, an expert in Chinese law and human rights from King's College London, said Liu Xiaobo would be remembered for his "wise and forceful" style of political resistance. Supporters had been counting the days until his expected release from prison in 2019. "Now this is extremely disappointing," she said. "Naturally, I, like many others, had been counting down to the time of his release. It's so unfair." Link said Liu would be remembered as "a stubborn truth-teller" and someone who opened "the possibility of a different kind of China". "That is a lasting legacy. The model of how an independent intellectual stands up to the state will be admired if it is not completely obliterated." Béja said Liu's ideas would continue to inspire, long after his death. "It's always very hard to evaluate the impact of a thinker or of an actor but I am sure that – despite all the efforts by the party – he won't be forgotten."

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/13/liu-xiaobo-nobel-laureate-chinese-political-prisoner-dies-61>

BRACE YOURSELVES FOR COSTLY PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY

Robert A. H. Cohen 7 July 2017

Well, you can't say you haven't been told. The Christian community in Occupied Palestine has just called time on 70 years of world-wide Christian/Jewish collusion in their oppression and slow demise. In an open letter to the World Council of Churches, they're demanding a different course of action from their Christian sisters and brothers because, they write, the situation is now "beyond urgent". The exasperation of the National Coalition of Christian Organisations in Palestine is understandable. The Church around the world has failed them. They've seen year after year of Holy Land reports, theological reflections, pilgrimages, conference debates, and the occasional divestment commitment. But all this softly, softly solidarity has failed to improve their condition, let alone win their liberation. Yes, there've been plenty of carefully worded and balanced calls for "justice" and "security" for Christians, Jews and Muslims. But no calling out of who has the power, who uses it to oppress, who allows it to continue, who excuses it, who remains silent. Nor has there been much willingness to incur a collective cost to any Palestinian solidarity, either financially or reputationally from the leadership of Church denominations.

Much of this comes down to what the Jewish theologian Marc Ellis long ago described as 'the ecumenical deal'. It amounts to this: the unwillingness within formal Christian Jewish encounters to question Jewish support for Israel for fear of unpicking decades of interfaith reconciliation following the Holocaust. Ellis, writing for the journal of Americans for Middle East Understanding back in February 1992 summed up how this has become an obstacle to justice: "The foundation of the dialogue rests on Christian repentance for anti-Jewishness and acceptance of Israel as central for Jewish identity. Those involved in the dialogue know that it has essentially turned into what one might call the ecumenical deal: eternal repentance for Christian anti-Jewishness unencumbered by any substantive criticism of Israel. Substantive criticism of Israel means, at least from the Jewish side, the re-emergence of Christian anti-Jewishness." The outcome of the ecumenical deal, Ellis went on to say, is that debate about the oppression of the Palestinian people by Israeli Jews, and its support by "commission or omission" by Jewish and Christian communities around the world is left unchallenged.

25 years of failed peace process, a wave of Palestinian terrorism at the turn of the century, three major Israeli assaults on Gaza and a Jewish Settler population of now more than half a million has done little to shift the interfaith dynamics that Ellis described a quarter of a century ago. So it's hardly surprising to see Christians in Palestine despairing of the endless "hiding behind the cover of political neutrality" and the unwillingness of Church leaders "to offend their religious dialogue partners." In Palestine they learnt long ago that liberation doesn't come cheap. What's required from us they say is "costly solidarity" not "shallow diplomacy". And in practice that means: "That you revisit and challenge your religious dialogue partners, and that you are willing to even withdraw from the partnership if needed". So brace yourselves. Jewish-Christian dialogue is about to go through the wringer. And not before time.

To reset the Christian interfaith relationship with the Jewish Community will take boldness and courage on the part of Church leaders, local ministers and their congregants. It will take them far from their ecumenical comfort zone. Long standing relationships with Jewish neighbours and clerical colleagues will deteriorate long before they can be rebuilt with new foundations.

But costly solidarity requires no less. It means refusing to allow your local Jewish communal leadership to set the boundaries of permissible debate on Israel. It means listening to the Christian voice under occupation before the Jewish voice living comfortably, with full equal rights, many thousands of miles from that same occupation. It means refusing invitations to Balfour 'celebrations' this November. It means you, not them, deciding what forms of protest are appropriate and fair. It means you choosing to invest your funds in ethics not in companies profiting from Occupation. It means your next pilgrimage to the Holy Land may be turned back at Ben Gurion airport. It means you WILL be branded Israel haters. You WILL be branded anti-semitic.

And when that happens you should refuse to be bullied (because that's what it is). You must call the Jewish officials to your office. Ask them to clarify their position. Seek legal opinion. Demand an apology. Insist that those that accuse you of 'unfairness' and 'lack of balance' make clear their own position. What's their view on the legality of the Occupation and Settlements? Do they recognise the inequality of political, civil and human rights in Israel itself and the Occupied territories? Can they confirm their commitment to freedom of speech in a democracy? And do all of this publicly. This is what costly solidarity will look like until things change. Because silence and collusion on a great injustice of our time cannot be the basis of healthy interfaith dialogue.

But what about the Jewish side? We still don't have an accepted Jewish vocabulary or conceptual thinking that will enable us to recognise our complicity in Palestinian suffering. That makes the idea of Palestinian solidarity almost impossible for most Jews to contemplate let alone sign up to.

We're still stuck in a mindset of powerlessness and victimhood that no longer holds true. The dilemma for Jews is that questioning the State of Israel within our Jewish communities risks unraveling the collective sense of who we are and what being Jewish means in the 21st century. The recalibration on Israel required from Jewish communities around the world is now just as profound as the soul searching that took place within Christianity after the Holocaust. Just as Christians had to look Jews in the eye and ask for forgiveness so that Christianity could move forward, the same will be true between Jews and Palestinians. Again, this is ground well covered in the writings of Marc Ellis.

The future for Jews and Judaism itself is now entirely bound up with our relationship to the Palestinian people. However, we are still a very long way from being ready to confront this truth.

Costly Christian solidarity with the Palestinian people has the potential to speed up a change in Jewish attitudes. But it requires turning the tables over in the temples of ecumenical deal making. I'm not underestimating how difficult this will be. The Jewish response to costly Christian solidarity with the Palestinians will be hostile and intolerant, at least to start with. The current Jewish leadership of our communities around the world is conditioned to react like this. They have no other language or thinking available to them. But changing the language of interfaith dialogue is what needs to happen, and the sooner the better. Shallow diplomacy has had its day.

So what should the new dialogue look like? How do we keep the good progress made over the last 70 years but throw out the politics of a silent collusion of injustice? Perhaps a celebration of our creation mythology that makes clear that all humanity is equal in God's eyes. Maybe a common commitment to building communities where all faith traditions are respected and honoured. How about a shared understanding that national chauvinism will always undermine building the Just and Righteous society that Jews and Christians pray for each day? Or how about a firm belief that solidarity with the oppressed comes with a cost that's always worth paying? Otherwise, what exactly are we all being faithful to?

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/writingfromtheedge/2017/07/brace-costly-palestinian-solidarity/>

• **Robert Cohen** lives in North Yorkshire in Britain and began writing on Israel-Palestine in 2011. His work has been regularly published at Mondoweiss, Tikkun Daily and Jews for Justice for Palestinians. Writing from the Edge broadens Robert's remit to wider issues of Jewish interest from a British perspective. Expect some radically dissenting views on Israel, commentary on Jewish-Christian interfaith issues and life as the Jewish husband of a Church of England vicar.

• Thanks to regular reader **Chris Dove** who passed on this article from a Quaker friend, **Tricia**, who has visited Palestine as an accompanier having shown her the *Kairos* article in the last e bulletin.

PALESTINE AND ISRAEL – THE HOLY LAND

Patricia Devlin writes: This is an invitation from the North East to join us at Minsteracres Retreat Centre

- to get beyond the sound bites on the Israeli Palestinian conflict and
- to reflect more deeply on our responsibility in relation to it
- to deepen our commitment to a just resolution

To mark the 3 big anniversaries this year:

- 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, when Britain supported a homeland for the Jews in that land
- 50years Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian Territories
- 10 years of the Israeli Blockade of Gaza

Hexham Kairos in partnership with **Peace and Justice in the Holy Land NE** and **Minsteracres Retreat Centre** have organised this event **'The Resurrection of Peace'** on Nov3rd/4th to coincide with the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration and the arrival of the Walk for Justice in Jerusalem. We have secured an outstanding range of contributors: Mary Grey, a Roman Catholic eco feminist theologian and trustee of the Balfour Project is our keynote speaker. There will be contributions from Mary Lucas (CAFOD), Charlotte Marshall (Kairos Britain), Brian Brown (Methodist Minister with a background in apartheid South Africa), Veronica Whitty (with an MA in Peace Studies).

As you will see the programme does include a walk in solidarity with the **Walk for Justice** on the Friday but don't feel you have to participate in this. You can take time to familiarise yourself with the resources available and relax in the beautiful surroundings of Minsteracres and you will be able to hear contributions from the Villages Group and Ashray at the beginning and end of the walk.

Our exhibition on last year's theme for the **World Week for Peace in Palestine** and **Israel 'Dismantling Barriers'** will also be on show. It consists of 19 panels giving statistical information about the key barriers to life in dignity and peace, illustrated by stories of their effect on the lives of individuals and communities. It also includes video extracts illustrating the work of joint Palestinian and Israeli groups committed to working together to overcome the barriers and to achieving a just peace. This will provide background information, particularly for those coming fresh to the issues. However our hope is that the two days in the Minsteracres setting will also give those of us who have been active for many years now, an opportunity to reflect:

- a) more broadly - learning the lessons of history and of other more recent conflicts
 - b) more deeply on what inspires and motivates us and how that translates into our commitment and action for a Just Peace
- Finally we hope it will be a time when we hear very clearly the voices of our Palestinian and Israeli brothers and sisters

If you would like a residential place in the beautiful Minsteracres setting, book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. But it would help us avoid sleepless nights if all bookings came in before the summer, where possible, and certainly long before the October deadline. Hoping you will join us and our brothers and sisters in Palestine and Israel in a journey sustained by an indomitable hope.

To book or for more information please contact: Minsteracres Retreat Centre, Co. Durham DH8 9RT, 01434 673248
info@minsteracres.org www.minsteracres.org

RESPONDING TO HATE WITH LOVE – NEW ASSEMBLY ON NONVIOLENCE

Among the gifts presented to President Trump by Pope Francis was a copy of his message for World Peace Day 2017, *Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace*. This assembly reflects on the Christian vocation to non-violence and how it challenges us to act by responding to hate with love.

Downloads: Assembly Script (pdf) <http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Pope-Trump-Nonviolence.pdf>
Assembly Slideshow (pptx) <http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Trump-Nonviolence-Assembly.pptx>

I ask God to help all of us to cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values. May charity and nonviolence govern how we treat each other as individuals, within society and in international life.

- Pope Francis, Message for World Peace Day 2017

Follow [#ThisIsNonviolence](https://twitter.com/ThisIsNonviolence) on Twitter to find out more.

CAFOD'S WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

Posted on 24 July 2017 by **Ged Edwards**

Today's my first day back in the CAFOD Liverpool Volunteer Centre after our trip to the Philippines. This is my fourth blog and I want to say something about how our partners NASSA/Caritas Philippines (NASSA for short) and the Church is working to enable people and the planet to have a more sustainable future. I'll try and give a brief outline of how the Church is already responding to social concerns, based on its structures, what its potential is to make further improvements and the directions it seeks to take. Once again, these are just the impressions I've received from what we've witnessed heard from others there.

Church-sponsored Social Action work operates at all levels (local/parish, diocesan and national). Throughout this work, like a thread through their lives, people expect and plan for coping with natural disasters (earthquakes, typhoons, landslides, floods, volcanic eruptions, etc.). On Palm Sunday, they collect money and keep some for local development work (helping people make their lives better), put some aside for emergencies (typhoons, earthquakes, etc.) and send some to NASSA to provide support to the whole church and respond where the local Church can't cope. Typhoons are an example and the recent ones have been so damaging that even the local and national support wasn't enough so other Caritas agencies like CAFOD came to help.

A great example of people coping with such circumstances was in Pasig south of Manila where Fr Errol is the PP of a parish of 20,000. We were there at a survey meeting with NASSA staff to find out where local people need most training to cope with the next major shock. They already know they are OK at dealing with floods because four years ago, heavy rains on the Sierra Madre Mountains became an 8-foot torrent around the church. Huge amounts of damage. People now have an evacuation drill worked out and practise it regularly so NASSA will help train local people to deal with earthquakes instead. To cope with such events, Fr Errol has setting up local Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) of 15-20 families each. The Groups meet weekly and pray but they are also dealing with the issues of their lives. He meets monthly with representatives from each BEC and visits the BECs on a rolling programme too. This is a growing model – in 2017 people are more focussed on parishes becoming "communities of communities." NASSA is keen to encourage parishes and BECs to go beyond emergency relief and support one another on a more regular basis, responding to needs as local people see it. NASSA work largely through their local diocesan Social Action Centres who support such developments, some more strongly than others. In my first blog, I mentioned the work of Lipa Archdiocese's Social Action Centre nearby (LASAC) as a strong example. This idea of small communities is at the heart of the Self-Help Group Programme in the Lipa area where women cluster together and save a little money each week in a credit union. On the back of this a massive movement has quickly grown with four towns covered by their own network of such groups in depth. These networks in clusters and in larger federations advocate for political change as well as basic community and economic development. The Groups design and lead the new developments.

We heard about the need for this approach too from Environmentalist Florenzio from Sorsogon Diocese. When we were looking at the world stats, he was not only familiar with the international picture of poverty, inequality and power as we looked at the world map but also knew well the local position too. His group have completed a local audit and had a map as part of the planning for emergency relief led by NASSA across the country. He knew where the people who didn't have toilets (or latrines) were, those who didn't have running water, and about child health concerns for under 5s. Fishermen and farmers were the poorest he told me and his greatest concern was for the environmental damage in fishing and the dumping of waste by people. He struck me with his quiet and deep commitment to improving the lot of farmers and fishermen who struggle with poor conditions, low wages and the poisoning and dynamiting of fish stocks with poor support for their rights from the Government. He had nearly been shot in defence of local people and told me calmly and matter-of-factly that he was ready to die for what he believed in, the beauty of the earth and the needs of the poor, and was proud of the involvement of the Church in this.

When I asked him what he hoped for from the day, he quietly thought for a moment and, reverting to his own language, simply said, "Bayanihan!" This means "spirit of cooperation", a term Filipinos have coined from a practical example. Many people live in houses which need to be more mobile than we are used to because of the natural hazards they face. When someone needs to move, they often literally move their house on poles too. This takes a great deal of effort from a team of people and this practice is used to encapsulate the spirit of cooperation.

We saw a wonderful Church-sponsored rice growing project in the north. 317 rice farmers have grouped together through the Social Action Centre to form an organic cooperative. Tatay ("Grandad") Ben, deeply respected we were told by the farmers, tests the farms for artificial fertilisers and encourages people to stay in the scheme. He told me that unless something was done to protect the land, it would become exhausted in 40 years with over-farming and climate change. You can see in his hands a sample of the organic fertiliser they have developed which is like rocket fuel for rice! He was another who calmly spoke his truth to us, cradling the soil in his hands – it was part of him – all the time we were speaking with him.

I also met resistance to taking social action. A young man told me earnestly about the wonderful BECs (6 in his parish) and it was early days. The Groups were focussed on prayer activity so far with a 2-hour Bible study a day. However, he was reluctant to get involved in social action: "The rich have more and they should give more! We will pray!" Some we used in the training, such as the Lampedusa Cross Service, encouraged people not only to pray but to find out about the world, to share their concerns from compassion and to consider taking action. While he has a good point, we hoped he too would put his shoulder to the wheel after the training!

And he does have a point about the rich of course. CAFOD's work in the Philippines is now at an end – for the moment at least as we need to focus scarce resources on other nations. NASSA are trying to become more independent of foreign aid and engage more people in social action and supporting their local people but I also learnt this from Anlyn, NASSA's community worker: 76% of the \$13bn annual income in the Philippines is in the hands of just 40 families.

This means that the other 104,000,000 people have only 24% of the wealth of the nation to keep them going, which was only \$3.75 Billion around \$36.06 per person per year. That's not CAFOD being mean or tired – if we had more, we could give more to more partners. It's simple: other nations need our support even more. The Church in the Philippines, who also gave to the people of Nepal in the 2015 earthquake, are trying to share their resources better and encourage more people to make their voices heard in favour of the poor.

Find out more about CAFOD's work in the Philippines: <https://cafod.org.uk/About-us/Where-we-work/Asia/Philippines>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST

5 Chester Picnic in the Countess Park off Countess Way, Chester CH1 4ED. Organised by the Friends of Countess Country Park. Details at www.facebook.com/pg/friendsofcountesschestercountrypark

6 & 9 Anniversaries of first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. www.paxchristi.org.uk 020 8203 4884

6 Chester Hiroshima & Nagasaki Flower Memorial 8-9pm. Meet at the Bandstand on The Groves, Chester for readings, a period of silent reflection and the dropping of flowers on the river. Bring white flowers if you wish. Organised by Chester CND 07856 749264 www.chestercnd.org.uk

12 Mass Southwark Cathedral 12:30pm to celebrate **100th Anniversary of Romero's birth**

18-21 Pedal for Peace 2017 Coast to Coast Challenge Barrow-in-Furness • Kendal • Barnard Castle • Great Ayton • Whitby.. Call the Pax Christi office on 020 8203 4884 or email education@paxchristi.org.uk

26 Stop Arming Saudi Arabia – silent vigil 12.30-1.30 pm, The Cross, Chester. Vigil events take place at The Cross on the last Saturday of the month, organised by Chester CND. All welcome. Further information 07856 749264 chestercnd@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER

1 Day of Prayer for Care for Creation

1-4 October Season of Creation <http://seasonofcreation.org> www.columbans.co.uk/creation-time/

2 Fairtrade wine tasting Hoole Community Centre. Further details to be confirmed. (May be 9 Sept instead). Arranged by Fairtrade Steering Group, with the evening led by the Co-op.

6 CAFOD Power to be Service 7-7.45pm (refreshments after) St Anne's Catholic Church, Westby Mills, Westby PR4 3PL

4-11 Stop the Arms Fair Week of Action www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk

11 CAFOD Carlisle Harvest Fast Day Briefing 7- 8.30pm New Waterton Hall, Warwick Square, Carlisle CA14 1LB

12 CWDF Forum 6.45 - 9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN. The Forum's first meeting of the autumn. Details to be arranged. www.chesterwdf.org.uk

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

15 CAFOD Quiz Night Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port 7.30pm. With Fairtrade refreshments provided at the interval. Entry fee £3 adults, £1 children. Proceeds to CAFOD's Connect 2 Ethiopia project. Details: Tony Walsh 0151 355 6419

17 Anti Modern Slavery ecumenical service Chester Cathedral 6.30pm. Major Ann Read will be preaching and the band from Hoole Church will be playing. The Bishop of Chester, the Mayor, and the High Sheriff will also be attending. All welcome, but please give numbers to Canon Jane Brooke, Vice Dean to ensure adequate seating canon.brooke@chestercathedral.com

17-23 World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel: *Voices of the young ... visions for the future.* Pray for a peace process to end 50 years of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories; **Learn** from the young people of the Holy Land and their visions for the future; **Act** to create a just peace for all the people of Palestine & Israel. <http://tinyurl.com/UK-WWPP1>

20 Celebrating Creation Service 7:00 St Monica's Blackpool FY4 4FA. Details: Maggie lfjc@talktalk.net

21 Peace-One-Day annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence www.peaceoneday.org/global-campaigns

23 NJPN Open Networking Day 10.30am-1.30pm, CAFOD, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB followed at 3pm by **Evensong** to celebrate centenary of the birth of **Blessed Oscar Romero** in Westminster Abbey. Email: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk Tel: 0207 901 4864 Web link: <http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-meetings/>

25 CAFOD Preston Harvest Fast Day briefing 7.15-8.45pm (refreshments from 7pm), St Wilfrid's Parish Centre, Chapel St, Preston PR1 8BU. We will be joined at this briefing by Ruth Flores from CAFOD's Latin American team who will update us on the **Connect2Peru scheme**.

OCTOBER

3 CWDF Forum meets Chris Matheson MP 7-9pm, Best Building, University of Chester. An informal meeting with Chris Matheson, the re-elected Chester MP, 4 months after the 2017 General Election. A Q&A session on a range of development issues in these very unpredictable times. Arranged in association with the University's International Development Society.

6 CAFOD Harvest Fast Day. This Harvest Fast Day we will be inspired by the Oscar Romero prayer, which you will find in your Fast Day pack. "We plant the seeds," the prayer says, "that one day will grow": a perfect picture of both our work and also of each donation, given in faith. The Fast Day pack features Endelmira, a farmer in El Salvador, as she works to grow a harvest from good, local seed given to her by CAFOD's local partner. This strong, native seed means Endelmira can resist having to buy weak, commercial seed that won't let her grow a second harvest with its yield. So, we and Endelmira are fighting for God's natural abundance - the fertility of a seed - for her and for her children, and for future generations. Your Fast Day pack will arrive in the first week of September. www.cafod.org.uk/News/Events/Harvest-Fast-Day

7 Be My Guest: Cumbria Church Leaders in conversation 10am-4pm St Mary's Church & Ambleside Church Centre, Ambleside LA22 9DH. Keynote Speaker Rev Terrie Robinson Director for Women in Church and Society, the Anglican Communion. A day to learn and question, explore perception and share stories, support and challenge Workshops on: Domestic abuse, Gender justice, Gender and the local church, Expectations in maleness, Trans and the Church. Cost: £12 (notify us if reduced rate needed). Book by email: lkctic@yahoo.com or call Helen on 07503 931196

8-14 Prison Sunday & Prisons Week www.prisonweek.org

10 Challenges of Developing Business in Bhutan 7.30-9pm, Best Building, University of Chester. A talk by William Tacon about his work with the Loden Foundation – an organisation dedicated to fostering an enlightened and happy society in Bhutan through promotion of education, learning and entrepreneurship among the Bhutanese children and young adults.

14 & 15 Come & See 2017 with Timothy Radcliffe OP at Christ The King School Southport. Workshops by Steve Atherton, Fiona Castle, Dermott Donnelly and more.... Music by Jo Boyce and friends, also Mime artist Steve Murray and Margaret Duncan. For more info about our events see www.irenaeus.co.uk the Irenaeus Project 0151 949 1199 or email jenny@irenaeus.co.uk

15-22 Week of Prayer for World Peace www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.org

20 The Balfour Project. Talk David Cronin, journalist and author of a book about the Balfour Declaration preceded by the film *The Balfour Project* which marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the declaration. Meeting arranged by Chester Friends of Palestine, details of venue and timings to be advised. www.chesterwdf.org.uk For background see: www.balfourproject.org

21 ACTA National Conference the Quaker Priory Rooms conference centre, Bull Street, Birmingham. A light lunch with soft drinks is included. The cost is £20. Book online at acalltoaction.org.uk or send a cheque to the ACTA Hon. Treasurer: Ken Holden, 67, Menlove Avenue, Liverpool, L18 2EH. If you have any queries, don't hesitate to email the conference co-ordinator at mjriordan@hotmail.co.uk or the treasurer at k.holden67@btinternet.com

22-29 One World Week www.oneworldweek.org

NOVEMBER

10 Romero Heartbeat of El Salvador by **RISE Theatre** 7pm (precise time still to be confirmed) St Wilfrid's Catholic Church, Chapel St, Preston PR1 8BU.

15 Balfour, May and the "wrong kind of Jews" 7pm Cornerstone, Dalton Square, Lancaster LA1 1PX. Speaker Robert Cohen

18 Romero: Journey to Justice retreat Listening to the poor, reflecting on the Scriptures and engaging with political realities transformed Oscar Romero into one of the Church's most respected and inspirational figures. His legacy of radical love lives on 100 years after his birth. You are invited to a **CAFOD 'Journey to Justice'** retreat at Wardley Hall, 43 Wardley Hall Lane, Worsley, Manchester M28 2RL, 10am-4pm, to explore how Romero's life and faith can inspire and challenge us and transform our world.

You don't have to be a CAFOD volunteer to take part, so please invite friends or others in your parish to come along too. The retreat is free but please book in advance here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/journey-to-justice-a-cafod-retreat-tickets-35696994672> Please bring savoury vegetarian food to share for lunch.

25 CAFOD Lancaster Annual Memorial Mass 6pm Vigil Mass St Mary and St Michael's Catholic Church, Bonds Lane, Garstang PR3 1ZB

• Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resources for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles. Sign up for comprehensive weekly e-bulletins from National J&P Network 0207 901 4864 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

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