

The monthly e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly by the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com
Download earlier bulletins at: <http://jpsshrewsbury.wordpress.com/e-bulletins/>

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ATTACKS DAVID CAMERON'S LACK OF COMPASSION OVER ASYLUM CRISIS

The Church of England has made a dramatic intervention in the migrant crisis, delivering a stern rebuke to David Cameron for his "unhelpful" rhetoric. Speaking with the backing of the church, the Bishop of Dover, the Right Rev Trevor Willmott, accused senior political figures, including the Prime Minister, of forgetting their humanity. The bishop attacked elements of the media for propagating a "toxicity" designed to spread antipathy towards migrants. "We've become an increasingly harsh world, and when we become harsh with each other and forget our humanity then we end up in these stand-off positions," Bishop Willmott said. "We need to rediscover what it is to be a human, and that every human being matters."

The Prime Minister drew international censure when he described migrants trying to reach Britain as a "swarm" and promised to introduce strong-arm tactics, including extra sniffer dogs and fencing, at Calais. Bishop Willmott said: "To put them [migrants and refugees] all together in that very unhelpful phrase just categorises people and I think he could soften that language – and that doesn't mean not dealing with the issue. It means dealing with the issue in a non-hostile way." Save the Children also voiced dismay at the way political discourse had taken a "sour turn". In a piece published online by *The Observer*, Justin Forsyth, chief executive of the international charity, echoed Bishop Willmott's call to remember the fact that the migrants were humans and many were refugees fleeing horrific abuse or extreme danger. "We are in danger of shutting our hearts to the desperation of the people pleading at the door, refugees not economic migrants," he said.

Pressure on Cameron also grew with the deputy mayor of Calais, Philippe Mignonet, branding the Prime Minister "racist" and Labour's acting leader, Harriet Harman, revealing that she had written to Cameron accusing him of using "incendiary and divisive language". The UN special representative on migration, Peter Sutherland, said Britain's attitude towards the crisis suggested the lessons of Nazism had not been learnt. "Many of those in Calais are refugees, just as the Jewish people were in 1939," he said. "They can prove they were – and are – persecuted and would be persecuted if they were returned."

http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/01/church-attacks-david-cameron-language-asylum-crisis?CMP=share_btn_tw

BISHOP LYNCH VOICES CONCERN OVER HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN CALAIS

As the makeshift refugee camp near Calais - virtually within sight of the English coast - continues to grow, Bishop Patrick Lynch, Auxiliary Bishop for Southwark and Chair of the Office for Migration Policy, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has appealed for governments to do more to help the migrants and deal with the issues causing them to flee their home countries. Bishop Lynch said: "I am deeply concerned over the deepening humanitarian crisis involving thousands of migrants unfolding in Calais. The crisis has developed over a decade and challenges us all, both as Christians and as Europeans. We must face up to this reality at various levels.

First, in solidarity with the most vulnerable migrants we recognise the local pastoral, humanitarian, and compassionate response from the French Church and call on the French authorities to redouble their efforts in providing adequate reception facilities for migrants. We acknowledge the work done by faith organisations in France and the UK together with charities, agencies and the great generosity of families and individuals to the relief efforts. The task is immense and their contributions are most valued. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales will be making a material contribution to those efforts.

Second, at an international level we are aware that the answer to the current migrant crisis lies beyond Calais. Estimates from the UNCHR indicate that "In the first six months of this year, 137,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea, travelling in terrible conditions upon unsafe boats and dinghies". The 2014 estimate for the same period was 75,000. Therefore in addition to addressing the humanitarian needs of the increasing numbers of migrants undertaking this treacherous journey we must examine the root causes of current migration from North Africa and the Middle East across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

Third, we must face up to the shared responsibility of making the world a better and safer environment to live in. We must examine as a matter of urgency the arms trade that fuels armed conflict and civil war, climate change, unjust economic policies, poverty and corruption as some of the underlying causes of this fundamental global trend. The safety of vulnerable women and children who may fall prey to smugglers and human traffickers is paramount and must be addressed.

Finally, the current migration crisis is complex and there are no easy solutions for governments, non-governmental organisations, faith groups and charities working on the field. However, governments, charities and humanitarian aid agencies should be encouraged to work together for a collaborative international response to the challenge in partnership with the countries of origin. Countries of origin must recognise that 'the defence of migrants' rights' is viable and effective when based on a firm foundation of legal norms, and operates under the rule of law. (Caritas Europa 2009)".

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28031>

URGENT ACTION REQUEST from Regional Asylum Activism

Steve Atherton has passed on the following information:

Today we're writing to urge all our friends to take action to protect the dignity of refugee children and their families. We know you are already doing so much to raise awareness, campaign and provide practical support so we've kept it simple with 3 key actions you can take.

So, what's happening and why is this urgent? On 10th August 2015, the Home Office introduced a new flat rate of asylum support for all people seeking asylum of £36.95 per week, regardless of age. This is a devastating blow for families. The change has resulted in a cut in support to children seeking refugee protection of £16.00 per week and will push vulnerable people further into poverty. On top of this, the government is now consulting on plans to cut off support for refused asylum seeking families, a measure that will leave vulnerable families totally without any means of support, with no money for food and no accommodation.

Currently, 51% of the world's refugees are under 18. These children have been born into situations we can hardly imagine; the early years of their lives destroyed by war, torture and persecution and their lives in the UK often overshadowed by uncertainty and anxiety about the future. We are concerned that these new measures will force children and vulnerable adults who have sought safety in the UK further into poverty and utter destitution, breaking our commitment to welcoming refugees and safeguarding vulnerable children. We all want to live in a society that treats those who've fled war, torture and persecution with dignity and respect. It's time to stand up for the rights of refugee children and make our voices heard!

The reduction in asylum support rates has been introduced despite a strong evidence-base proving that parents living on asylum support struggle to meet their own essential living needs, let alone those of their children. Findings from an All-Party Inquiry into Asylum Support for Children and Young People in 2012 stated: "Based on the evidence provided by child poverty, health and well-being experts, social workers, local authorities and families themselves, the inquiry has concluded that the current levels of support provided to families are too low to meet children's essential living needs."

When asylum support rates were first introduced, they were set at the equivalent of 70% of income support rates. With the current changes, a couple with a child living on asylum support will now be forced to live on just under £111 per week, 40% less than a comparative family living on income support.

To date, 43 MPs, 9 City Councils and over 320 civil society organisations are asking the government to ensure that people seeking refugee protection are afforded sufficient financial support set at 70% of income support so that they can truly meet their essential living needs.

Barely a week after these regulations were announced, parliamentarians have tabled two Early Day Motions calling for the regulations to be withdrawn, and both the Scottish National Party and the Green Party have submitted written questions to the Home Office querying their decision to cut asylum support for children.

On 4th August 2015, the Home Office launched a consultation on plans to cut off support for refused asylum seeking families, a measure that will leave vulnerable families totally without any means of support, with no money for food and no accommodation.

We are concerned that these new measures will force children and vulnerable adults who have sought safety in the UK further into poverty and utter destitution. This isn't the first time withdrawing support to families has been tried. In fact, following a pilot in Yorkshire and Humber, the North West and London back in 2005 Local Authorities said they believed the measures were "wholly incompatible with the Children Act 1989" and risked breaching their duties under the Human Rights Act 1998.

It's time to stand up for the rights of refugee children and make our voices heard! TAKE ACTION TODAY!

- **Write to your MP today!** You can find out who your MP is at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>. Ask them to sign EDM 344 and to write to the Immigration Minister – James Brokenshire – to voice their concerns. We've got a Model Letter for you to use. Please let us know when you hear back from your MP.
- **Respond to the consultation!** Make sure the Home Office know what you think of these plans by submitting a response to the consultation. And why not send a copy to your MP? Find links to our briefing on this below.
- **Talk to the Media!** Get out there and explain what a devastating blow these proposals are for vulnerable families. We're looking for spokespeople. Please get in touch for more details.
- **Got a question to ask or want further advice? Contact your local activism co-ordinator:**
North West: Estelle Worthington northwest@regionalasylumactivism.org.uk Twitter: @RAANorthWest
Yorkshire and Humberside: Lorna Gledhill yandh@regionalasylumactivism.org.uk
West Midlands: WestMidlands@regionalasylumactivism.org
- **Further Reading ...** Check out our briefings and look at our website for the latest calls to action and campaigning updates: <http://regionalasylumactivism.org/>

CITY OF SANCTUARY

City of Sanctuary is a growing movement in Britain and Ireland and is focused on building cultures of welcome and hospitality, particularly, but not exclusively, for people seeking sanctuary among us. It is a local grass roots, community-led movement, with the aim of creating networks of places and people throughout Britain and Ireland, which do their best to include asylum seekers and refugees, and all vulnerable people, in the lives of their communities. City of Sanctuary was founded in Sheffield in 2005. Sheffield was officially declared a City of Sanctuary in 2007. There are now over 30 Cities and Towns in Britain and Ireland with a City of Sanctuary vision and working group.

A City of Sanctuary is a place where many organisations and individuals work within a shared vision of a city that is a place of welcome, hospitality and safety for all people, especially those whose lives are in danger, a city they can be proud to live in. It is a place where the skills and cultures of people seeking sanctuary are valued and actively included in local communities to contribute positively to the life of the city; where Youth and Community Groups, Worship Centres, Local Government, media, Businesses, Schools, Colleges, Universities and Health Centres have a shared commitment to offering sanctuary, so that it is seen as part of the city's identity by local people; and where those seeking sanctuary can easily build relationships with local people as neighbours, friends and colleagues. By creating such a vision people can demonstrate the desire build a more just and humane approach to people seeking sanctuary among us.

Many people are familiar with the "Fair Trade City" recognition granted when a number of organisations agree to buy, sell or serve Fair Trade goods. Similarly, City of Sanctuary embodies clear goals and is recognised when a significant number of local organisations sign up to the initiative, agree to provide welcome, hospitality and safety, and make a commitment to broaden support for the idea in order to gradually influence the culture of the city as a whole.

City of sanctuary builds on the history and spirituality of sanctuary. In the contemporary expression of cities of refuge, the City of Sanctuary moves the idea towards a vision where local communities and organisations work together to challenge sectarianism, racism, hatred and bigotry and to build cultures of welcome, hospitality and safety for all residents. No one is safe until we are all safe. It recognises that the work of reconciliation and peace is not complete without the integration of all residents of the city. It builds a positive image of the city. The vision can be applied in many different contexts and not just confined to cities. See the City of Sanctuary website for ideas. www.cityofsanctuary.org

City of Sanctuary is a contemporary expression of an ancient tradition. As in the past, it is about respectful manners, behaving well towards others with welcome and hospitality, and being safe to be with. Good manners precede law. It is only when manners fail that we have to create laws to provide protection. The original cities of refuge were set up to encourage good manners while people waited for the processes of law. People from these Islands have benefitted from the hospitality of other nations and people when we have travelled abroad, and continue to do so. There is a human, legal, moral and spiritual obligation on us all to provide safety and sanctuary to each other, and especially to those whose lives are in danger. This is important and urgent in our times of open hostility and hatred particularly towards people from other countries seeking security and sanctuary among us.

Source: Racial Justice Sunday 2015 resources on the theme '*Hospitality & Sanctuary*' from Churches Together in Britain & Ireland <https://ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday-2015/>

NEWLY-WED COUPLE FEED 4,000 SYRIAN REFUGEES ON THEIR WEDDING DAY

A couple in Turkey swapped out lavish nuptials with their friends and family for the bread line with thousands of Syrian refugees. Fethullah Üzümcüoğlu and Esra Polat doled out food to 4,000 Syrian refugees for their wedding reception on the border town of Kilis. The bride wore an elaborate white dress, with a tiara perched on her headdress, and the groom sported a white tuxedo with black trim. They stood behind large food trucks distributing meals to hungry Syrians. The couple had decided that instead of hosting their friends and family for a traditional banquet reception, they would feed the victims of a bloody civil war next door.

"In south eastern Turkey there is a real culture of sharing with people in need ... They love to share their food, their table, everything they have," they explained. The idea came from the groom's father, who volunteers for a Turkish relief organisation called Kimse Yok Mu (KYM). For the past few years, KYM has distributed daily meals to the thousands of impoverished Syrians who've flooded across the nearby border. He approached a representative of the organization and proposed that the family would cover part of the costs of feeding refugees for the day. "I thought that sharing a big delicious dinner with our family and friends was unnecessary, knowing that there are so many people in need living next door," he said.

Kilis has been a central crossing point for the flood of Syrians arriving in Turkey. The city's official population is 108,000, but it hosts 123,000 Syrians. Early on, it was set up with a camp with containers for temporary shelter, but many refugees live in the urban areas where access to humanitarian assistance can be unreliable. The number of Syrians now living in Turkey is nearing 2 million, and in July, the government announced it would build a new refugee camp in Kilis to handle the influx.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/08/04/the-most-generous-bride-of-earth-couple-feeds-4-000-syrian-refugees-on-their-wedding-day.html>

STUDY DAY

Preliminary notice of Menorah Synagogue's Christian and Jewish Holocaust Study Day 2015

Eric Roth writes:

The annual Study Day is presented in conjunction with the Council of Christians and Jews, Manchester at the Menorah Synagogue, 198 Altrincham Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 4RZ. Thursday 12 November 2015. 9.30am – 1pm. Advance booking is required. For a detailed invitation, which will be sent in the first week of September, please email hsd@menorah.org.uk or phone Eric Roth on 0161 485 6051.

Our programme of lectures includes special guest speakers, leading figures in Jewish and Christian religious and academic spheres, who bring expert insight and inspiring narratives. We will feature a personal testimony of the Holocaust. Although most of our audience are Christian clergy, educators and students, the event also attracts many members of Christian and Jewish congregations, and persons of any faith are welcomed. Complementing the National Holocaust Memorial events in January, our study day takes a primarily religious viewpoint, and strikes an optimistic tone for the future. As in previous years, we will have a stimulating, informative, and often spiritually satisfying day which is a real contribution to inter-faith relations.

Our organising committee, with Jewish and Christian members, looks forward to welcoming you. Please mark 12 November in your diary, and tell your colleagues and friends. There is no admission charge, but if you would like to help us cover the costs of this event, a donation of £5 on the day would be very welcome.

FR MARTIN NEWELL CP ON FAITH AND NON-VIOLENT ACTION

Fr Martin Newell CP gave a number of presentations to the Passionist Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation meeting in Rome last month. The first part of his first talk (abridged) follows:

The first and most important basis of my motivation is my faith, and my conviction that Jesus is a pacifist, that Jesus is non-violent. This is revealed in his teachings and most powerfully in the Passion, where Jesus reveals at least two aspects related to this subject: Firstly, that the myth of Redemptive Suffering is true, not the Myth of Redemptive Violence. Secondly, that the love of God is a non-violent Love, as He observed when he said that God sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.

The second aspect of my motivation is the conviction that this does not mean that Jesus was passive. Jesus actively confronted injustice and the powerful in his life and ministry. And specifically, he also broke the 'Law' as it was interpreted in his time. Not that this is of the essence of non-violence, but it is essential to be able to challenge 'the system', the 'powers and principalities' in a way that breaks out of our and their comfort zone of what is widely considered as acceptable - in the right ways of course.

For example, he defended his disciples taking and eating ears of corn on the Sabbath. He regularly healed people on the Sabbath (Mark - man with the withered hand) - and specifically chose to do such a thing - on the Sabbath - in the synagogue - in front of the gathered community and the local leaders. He could presumably have waited. He wasn't even asked - it has been pointed out that in other healings, those in need asked Jesus to do so - on these occasions, it was Jesus who took the initiative. These ways of reading scripture encourage and inspire me to follow the example of Jesus in confronting the authorities, the powerful, in my time and place, with non-violent direct action and civil disobedience.

More currently, it has been particularly the witness and example of Catholic Workers and those I have met through that movement, that have led me to certain practical actions. As a result, I have been arrested somewhere between 15 and 20 times, and have spent a total of about 8 months in prison, most of which was for a period of just over six months, back in 2000/2001. The issues we have confronted in these actions are mostly around war and preparations for war: the Iraq, Afghanistan invasions, the cause of freedom for East Timor, British nuclear weapons, the arms trade, military drones, military recruitment generally. I have also been associated with non-violent protests relating to asylum and immigration policies, minimum wages, and climate change. I believe in the UK, helping destitute asylum seekers to remain in the country, who been given a deportation order to leave, is technically an offence, although I have not known anyone be prosecuted for it.

The most dramatic non-violent direct action I have taken part in was the '*Jubilee Ploughshares 2000*' action in November 2000. This was in the tradition of the faith based '*Ploughshares movement*' and part of the British 'Trident Ploughshares' campaign. We hammered on a nuclear weapons convoy vehicle and put it out of action for six months, spending over 6 months also in prison.

My main motivation in terms of current analysis is that we, as British people, as western Europeans, as 'First World' people, are members of the privileged class globally. These weapons systems and wars are used to maintain our riches, privileges and comforts, at the expense of the lives and impoverishment of the poor elsewhere. This is true since the flip side of Pope Paul VI's statement "*If you want peace, work for justice*" is "*if you want to prepare for injustice and violence, prepare for war.*" This is true even where the weapons are not 'fired', for example nuclear weapons. As in an armed robbery, the threat of use is usually enough. The truth of this analysis, and the truth that peace and justice are just the two sides of the same coin, as are violence and injustice, was shown to me particularly clearly in the case of East Timor. This was a case of invasion and oppression of a small and weak country by its large and powerful neighbour, Indonesia - a matter of injustice.

However, in the UK, when I got involved with the then Liverpool Catholic Worker and the Timorese refugees living there, I found myself taking direct action at a British Aerospace factory where they made Hawk jet planes which were being exported to Indonesia and used over East Timor. A matter of the arms trade, apparently. And the bigger and more powerful country of course had to prepare for that war, like all other wars. And it is the large, wealthy and powerful who win such wars, since they have the resources to be able to step up to the next level of violence. The US military even have a name for it in their military doctrine, *'escalation dominance'*. The 'highest' level of violence is of course the nuclear option. And it is what the Romans did when faced with the Jewish Revolt: they stepped up to the next level of violence, and completely destroyed Jerusalem and the Jewish nation.

Jesus, as we know, was born on the fringes of a small country, which was itself on the fringes of a large empire. He taught his followers ways of maintaining their dignity and freedom in the face of what was, in any conceivable future as far as the people of his time were concerned, insurmountable oppression. They only hope they could see was that God would send a Messiah who would miraculously change the pecking order, and put them on top. But the Messiah was not like that. So what would Jesus have had to say to followers who lived in Rome and who were Romans citizens? St Paul was of course one of those, and he spent most of his time in Rome in prison, before being executed, as were many other Christians. This is relevant because this is my position, and the position of millions of other Christians who live in 'First World' countries, and it is especially important in the post-Christian or culturally-Christian 'west'.

We are called, as Daniel Berrigan said, to a practice and a theology of 'resistance to Empire', from its heartlands. We are called to live in solidarity with the poor and crucified on the margins of Empire, and the poor and neglected, who are also crucified in a different way, at its heart. We have similar freedoms to those Roman citizens had: they had a vote too, at least some of them. We are called to oppose the practices and policies of exploitation and oppression of the corporations and governments that have a presence in our countries. We are called to do this sacrificially, to follow the way of Jesus along the *via crucis*, to put our bodies in the way, to step out of our comfort zones. It's relatively safe for us, not unlike the way it was relatively safe for Roman citizens to ask questions. But on the edges of empire, the poor are still disposable and those who oppose the system are still executed.

One aspect of our contemporary reality in the West is that because of the developments of technology, they don't need our young men (or women) to fight their wars any more. All they need is our silence and our taxes. So non-violence has to go onto the front foot, we have to actively put our bodies in the way of the war machine and the corporate machine, we have to be willing to pay the price of our convictions. This is something people can see as authentic, not all talk and no action as the churches are so often seen to be. We also have to re-learn how to live simply, to live voluntary poverty with the poverty of the global poor in view, not the comforts, amnesia and sedation of the entertainment industry. We need to avoid being like Peter in the palace courtyard, warming our hands by the fire of minor privileges of empire, while offstage Christ's screams can be heard.

So, let's go live with the poor, let's campaign and organise, let's protest and resist, let's go to the global corporations' offices or factory and protest, let's blockade, lock - on, occupy, sit on the roof, whatever it is that is both non-violent and morally legitimate, and at the same time not acceptable to business-as-usual, to the filthy rotten system and the established disorder. It might seem as if nothing can change, but the Roman Empire has long gone, and our faith in Jesus remains, and we know change does happen. To paraphrase one of my Diocesan seminary lecturers, *'if you don't wash your neck, it will just get more and more dirty.'*

It is necessary to talk about active non-violence not least because pacif-ism is often confused with passiv-ism. It is certainly not the case that as Christians we can abdicate some responsibility for the course of history, for the prevention or at least resistance to evil in all its forms. We cannot be passive. On the other hand, it is not our job to save the world - God has already done that. Our vocation is to be faithful to God's call, to be truly and fully human as Jesus was, to be who we are called to be, children of God, so that we can truly reflect the face of God in whose image we are all created. Those who call us to war, those who 'beat the drums of war', often portray the situation as one of impending doom, in apocalyptic terms. If we do not 'do something', the world is about to end, or at least the world as we know it. And that 'something' is defined as the most drastic thing possible, violence, war. And war and violence is believed to 'work'. Sometimes of course it does 'work', at least in the short term. Of course on the whole violence tends to work for those who are powerful in human terms, those who are wealthy and in control. It tends not to 'work' for the poor and the powerless, because they don't have enough resources, enough 'power'.

They will also tell us that non-violence 'does not work'. But history is proving otherwise. As much as the 20th century was a century of violence and wars, it was also a century of non-violence. Non-violence is powerful. Non-violent struggles have changed the world. The Suffragist movement in the west brought votes for women. Gandhi's non-violence brought independence to India and fatally undermined the justification for Empires. Martin Luther King's non-violence brought civil rights for U.S. blacks. Movements of nonviolent resistance were a key factor in the downfall of apartheid in South Africa, Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the Marcos regime in the Philippines. Non-violent resistance movements played a key part in achieving independence for East Timor: I know because I played a very small part in that. Trident Ploughshares and Faslane 365, the non-violent direct action wing of the British anti-nuclear movement, have played a key part in bringing the UK close to nuclear disarmament. I have also played a small part in that. And I know there were and are many others around the world.

Read the talk in full at: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=27998>

STOP THE ARMS FAIR

Sarah Reader, Campaign Against Arms Trade writes:

This September, the world's largest arms fair is due to take place in London from 15-18 September: Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEI). The arms fair involves more than 1000 companies and 30,000 attendees, and its results are felt around the world as people are killed, economies are devastated, refugees are traumatised and peaceful protest is crushed.

War starts here: Despite Israel's brutal attacks on Gaza last summer, it will host a pavilion at the arms fair to market its "battle-tested" weapons.

Repression starts here: Despite UK-made weaponry being used to suppress protests in Bahrain during the Arab Spring, the country's brutal rulers were among 14 authoritarian regimes invited by the UK government to shop for weapons at DSEI 2013.

Environmental destruction starts here: Real security involves tackling the causes of problems, not creating more. Climate change is one of the biggest threats that we face yet the UK government spends 25 times more on weapons research than research into renewable energy.

Because it starts here, we can stop it here. Join us from 7-12 September for a week of action to try and stop the arms fair from taking place. In 2013 activists kicked off a week of creative action by blocking the two access roads into the ExCeL Centre a few days before DSEI opened. This stopped military equipment from entering the building for over four hours. This year we are targeting the arms fair the week before it is due to start. Each day will highlight a different way in which the arms fair fuels repression and injustice, with a big day of action on Saturday 12 September.

Take part in the week of action: Organise an action or come along to one that's planned. Each day will highlight a different impact of the arms trade. From targeting the UK's complicity in arming Israel (Monday 7 September), to calling for a shift from arms to renewables (Wednesday 9 September) and a conference about the militarisation of education (Thursday 10 September), there are lots of actions to get involved with.

Join us for the big day of action on Saturday 12 September: We will come together for a day of creative protest outside the ExCeL Centre.

Ask the companies supplying DSEI to pull out: Write to them using our template letter and tweet #armstradeenablers

Can't get to London? Organise an action at your local arms company. Find out which one's near you using our interactive map.

<https://www.caat.org.uk/resources/mapping/dsei> In the run-up to the arms fair we're running lots of creative workshops in different cities. Find out about taking action in your local area and at DSEI. <https://www.caat.org.uk/events>

WAR ON WANT CAMPAIGNS UPDATE

Ryvka Barnard, Senior Campaigner for Global Justice, War on Want writes: Thanks for all your support and participation in our Stop Arming Israel campaign. July was a full month for us. We published our new report, **Arming Apartheid**, documenting UK complicity in Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people. With this cutting-edge report, we've succeeded in getting the information out beyond our usual supporters - our report was covered by major newspapers and news websites, including in an exclusive by the Independent. Over 2000 of you have emailed over 530 MPs demanding a two-way arms embargo.

What's ahead ... Our next event is on **7 September** at the ExCel Centre in London to stop one of the biggest arms fairs in the world (called DSEI) from going ahead. If you can join us, please email support@waronwant.org If you can't come watch our facebook page on the day for some creative ideas on how to support from a distance! <http://www.waronwant.org/>

Rise up against TTIP

Campaigner Mark Dearn writes: The next few months of the growing campaign against the secretive Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) are going to be very busy – and we hope that you'll be able to join us as we take to the streets to use our people power to stop TTIP. A week of protests begins on **Sunday 4 October** targeting the **Conservative Party conference in Manchester**. As part of this, we'll be joining allies including the People's Assembly, Unison Northwest and Stop TTIP Manchester to target TTIP on **Monday 5 October**. Please do join us for some protesting during the day, and then come to rally we'll be holding in Manchester Central Hall from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. We'll be sending more details nearer the date.

Tuesday 6 October marks the official end of the hugely successful European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) on TTIP after one year of collecting signatures – and we've collected an amazing 2.4 million from across Europe! The ECI has been incredibly important to our campaigning. It's demonstrated the immense public anger about TTIP to politicians across Europe, and they've been unable to ignore it. We'll be joining allies across Europe in a day of action on **Saturday, October 10**. More details closer to the date.

TRAINING DAY

On **Saturday 17 October** join War on Want and friends for **Skill Up! Stand Up!** A free day of training for activists and free skills workshops at the MERCi Centre in Manchester, 22A Beswick St, M4 7HR from 10-6. Choose from a wide range of workshops such as how to get local press coverage, using social media effectively, making an impact with a street stall, creative actions, strategies for influencing politicians, facilitating effective meetings and more. What sessions would you like to see at the event? What skills would you like to gain for your group work or campaign? Email takeaction@waronwant.org to let us know. Places are limited, so book now! <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/skill-up-stand-up-tickets-18148820611>. Organised by Economic Justice Project, War on Want, Global Justice Now, Jubilee Debt Campaign and People & Planet. More info: <http://www.waronwant.org/media/skill-stand> and <http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/skillup>

TRUE LOVE FOR GOD LEADS TO UNITY, SAYS MOSLEM CLERIC

Susan Gately writes:

The gift of dialogue was explored at the Focolare summer gathering in Liverpool in August which brought together over 700 people including a large Irish contingent. Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick was among the Irish delegation. Addressing the summer gathering Bishop Leahy said that when Focolare started in 1943, Chiara Lubich could "hardly have imagined that the spirituality that was coming to life would one day be shared by Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jews".

Presenting the movement's style of dialogue, Bishop Leahy focussed on key points: each person is a candidate for universal brotherhood and Jesus' commandment of love. "Love is the characteristic method in its dialogues. Also because members of other religions share the Golden Rule in common in all religious texts," he told a plenary session entitled 'Hope for Dialogue'. To dialogue "we need to enter into the skin of the other, see the world as the Jews, Buddhist, Muslim would see it. To make yourself one demands we be poor in spirit, poor in the spirit in order to be rich in love", he said quoting Chiara Lubich. He went on: "By doing this we create a space of dialogue. Sharing insights we grow in unity, truth and love and respectfully proclaim our faith perspectives."

Sharing a platform with Bishop Leahy were Dr JS Puri, a leader of the Sikh community in Ireland and Dr Mohammed Ali Shomali, who received a standing ovation at the end of his moving testimony. The Iranian Professor who trains Shia clerics in Qum, Iran, met the spirituality of Focolare in 1997 through a Benedictine priest. Dr Shomali said often religion is cited as a cause of problems between people. "The problem is that people love God but in a way that is not right." Some have a "possessive love for God: 'That is my God, not your God'".

"The root [of this religion] is ignorance or ego: 'I want to have a monopoly. I want God to justify my selfish work, to justify killing and injustice'." This is not God, he said. "This is a human being projecting his ego as God." But truly loving God, said Dr Shomali: "You try to be possessed by God, to rise to be closer to God, to be a godly person. When we go towards God we are able to love everyone, wish good to everyone. We are people working and speaking according to the word of God."

For fifteen years, Dr Shomali has been involved in Shia - Christian dialogue spending periods of time with Benedictines, Jesuits, at the Vatican and at the Focolare town of Loppiano. The six 'rounds of dialogue' he instigated on topics like faith and reason, ethics, friendship, community have resulted in a series of publications. Concluding his address, Dr Shomali said each person was like a 'drop of water'. "What can a drop of water do? Even if you have one million drops of water you cannot do that much. But if these drops of water become united then you can have a nice lake. Our prayer is that lake will grow and we will have that ocean of unity."

Speaking to ICN afterwards, Dr Shamali said that the Shia and Sunni Moslems in the UK needed to increase their efforts to "to appear together more and support each other more in public so people know there is no problem between the scholars and leaders." He warned young people against trusting people "just because they quote the Koran. We have to work with the youth to make them aware of the danger of trusting such people and the danger of going after people who speak beautifully but there is no real depth of spirituality of love for God." A man of God, said Dr Shamali, will always try to unite people "to build unity over unity - unity of husband and wife, unity of parents and children, unity of neighbours, unity of people of different faith but these people are very divisive even dividing the Moslem nation."

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=27995>

CHRISTIAN AID WELCOMES FIRST ISLAMIC DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Christian Aid has welcomed the Islamic Climate Change Declaration launched on 18 August at the world's first international Islamic climate symposium held in Istanbul, Turkey. The strong declaration, signed by representatives from a broad spectrum of the Islamic world, will form the basis of action on climate change from madrassas and mosques to Islamic businesses around the globe.

Ahead of December's UN climate summit in Paris and the adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals in September, Christian Aid said it was crucial to see world faiths leading the call for the transition to a low carbon world. Mohamed Adow, Christian Aid's Senior Climate Change Advisor, said: "Coming on the heels of the Pope's encyclical it is great to see Christians and Muslims uniting to tackle a common enemy. Climate change will affect people of all faiths and the world's poor in particular. As both faiths have a long tradition of caring for those in poverty it is right that they make tackling climate change a priority. It is imperative that people of faith bring their voice into the global climate talks. Unlike politicians on short-term electoral cycles or businesses looking at the next quarterly statement, faith leaders have a generational perspective handed down to them over centuries.

It is this prophetic, long term vision that will be needed to tackle a problem as far reaching as climate change. This symposium along with the Pope's encyclical and the recent Lambeth Declaration signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury are welcome moves towards achieving that goal. We hope it will spur Muslim leaders to play an even bigger role in taking effective climate action, particularly in the Muslim majority nations."

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28111>

See also: ICN 18 August 2015 - *Istanbul: Islamic Climate Declaration calls for fossil fuel phase out*

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28106>

• **Columban Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation** *Laudato Si' Study & Action Guide for Individuals & Small Groups* available at <http://www.columbans.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Laudato-Si-Study-and-Action-Guide-by-JPIC-Britain.pdf>

'TAKING A LIMP OF FAITH' - THOUGHTS FROM A LAYWOMAN

Ellen Teague writes:

What do I love about my faith and my church? That question was posed to around 60 adults on the final day of a recent Catholic People's Week titled, *'Taking a Limp of Faith'*. The answers varied from "the whole package of Church tradition and teaching", "Catholic Social Teaching", and "community", to "Faith and Church are not the same thing for me; this week is the kind of initiative that nurtures my faith, but I probably won't be back in my parish until Christmas".

The adults were generally, shall we say, "thinking Catholics", and generally active in parishes and Catholic schools. Many had young families who participated in three separate programmes on the week, according to age. They seemed to expect something from the Church in terms of formation, fostering collaboration with laity, nourishing the faith development of young people, and reaching out to the vulnerable in our own society and in the global South. Yet very often views were lukewarm - "the Church doesn't set up barriers to me being a better person".

Some aired disappointments with the Church. Hypocrisy featured strongly, particularly in relation to the Church sex abuse scandal, and particularly where a priest calls for more lay support but clearly wants 'pay, pray and obey' Catholics. "People's gifts are squandered" was mentioned more than once. The exclusion of women from church decision-making was mentioned. The new liturgy wording was unpopular. There seemed to be widespread experience of young, newly ordained, clergy being overly preoccupied with rules, controlling every aspect of liturgy and wearing old-fashioned liturgical dress. Birettas have apparently made a comeback, along with ritualistic Communion preparation where young people have little opportunity to discuss their faith. "We cannot underestimate the influence a new priest can have on a thriving parish if he wants to take back control of everything" said one person.

The positive thing is that these Catholics are tending to hang on in there, and very concerned that their children see the faith dimension of their lives as critical to being a whole person. Catholic People's Weeks are marked by spontaneity and liturgies relevant to the week and events in the world.

"I like saying prayers I've written myself" said one child. There was plenty of opportunity on a week where nearly 40 young people, in three separate age groups, helped prepare the daily mass assisted by a team of young helpers, many from families that brought them along as children - certainly true of my family where all three sons came as children and are now helpers. They used drama, symbols, artwork and hymns with hand actions to enhance understanding of mass themes, participation, and enjoyment. Yes, enjoyment. What's wrong with enjoying Mass and participating? In one Mass, a globe was passed around while we sang about the whole world in God's hands and as each verse ended the person holding it said a bidding prayer. We were all engaged and listening keenly. In another, the altar cloth was made by the children and they felt they were presenting their special gift at the Offertory.

It seems sad to me that families like mine find most faith nourishment outside of the parish model and even outside of the Catholic school. It isn't only Catholic People's Weeks which my sons love attending, but Justice and Peace days/weekends, the Easter week in Lourdes of HCPT - the Pilgrimage Trust and the Flame Conference organised by CYMFED. It all costs though, and many families just can't attend these events for financial reasons.

Young Catholics could be consulted more about their involvement with the Church and it seems to me that far more resources for youth work and youth leaders would be well placed. Children in Catholic schools want to fully participate in school Masses in the same way that they often do for assemblies and significant trouble needs to be taken in preparing them.

It is also striking how lay people with amazing talents - musical, dramatic, knowledge of scripture, for example - often do not feel respected by clergy in their parishes and dioceses, and gradually withdraw to the periphery of the Church, especially locally. Such people need to be affirmed and welcomed by a clergy trained in various management styles and the importance of inclusivity. More resources being devoted to formation and engagement of laity by the structural Church is another need. Most lay people I know studying theology are paying for it themselves.

It is clear that the Church is far more judged by what it does rather than what it says. Wonderful statements about such things as women in the Church, eco-justice and faith, and valuing young people mean little unless there is a change in practice. That change is necessary for Catholics to defend and promote their faith with integrity.

Pope Francis has brought a breath of fresh air to the Church but more of us need to be carried on that breeze to engage with the signs of our times and work with people of other faith communities.

But another point is that beautiful gatherings of the Church community have been happening this summer, usually beneath the radar of the hierarchy. The teenagers at the Catholic People's Week produced a video shown at our final Mass. Responding to the question, what does your faith mean to you?, they concluded with, "Trusting in the God of all Creation".

Read the article in full at: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28087>

LONDON: PRIESTS' GROUP APPEALS FOR INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE ON FUTURE OF CHURCH

In response to Ellen's article I attach a report by Jo Siedlecka, Editor of Independent Catholic News, posted way back in July 2012. Since the time of writing the grassroots movement A Call to Action (ACTA) was formed and is now represented nationwide. [Editor]

More than 70 Catholic priests and deacons gathered at a London church yesterday to pray, share concerns, and discuss the future of the Church. The meeting at St John's Anglican Church, Waterloo, was called following a letter in the Tablet (2 June 2012) by seven priests, speaking of the 'universal call to holiness in Christ' for all the baptised made by the bishops at their November 2011 conference, and their desire to promote 'a culture of vocation' within the corporate identity of the Catholic Church, 'marked by a confident Catholic faith'. The authors called for a more active encouragement of lay people in the work of the Church, and expressed concern that the call for collegiality made by Vatican II has not been realised.

After an opening prayer, the assembly sang *Veni Sancte Spiritus* and there was a short period of silence.

Fr Joe Ryan, north London parish priest and chair of Westminster Justice and Peace said he was glad to be part of the process of "building up the body of Christ" by attending the meeting. Fr Paul Saunders from Southwark Diocese said he saw it was "part of our stewardship" to pass on and develop the teachings of Vatican II.

Fr Patrick McLaughlin who spent years in peace and reconciliation at Corrymeela in Northern Ireland quoted Antony Di Mello who spoke of the need to "combine loyalty and obedience with creativity and confrontation". At Corrymeela, he said, they had endeavoured to work collaboratively with people from different communities - "opening up spaces where people could be listened to with respect and gentleness". The result, he pointed out, was that Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness eventually came to work together.

In a brief presentation, theologian Mary Gray spoke of her overwhelming sense of priests with a deep love of the Church but with great concerns for the future, with an ageing priesthood, declining vocations and loss of young people. There had been euphoria after Vatican II, she said, but this had been followed by a great sense of disappointment. "We could not have expected the failure to implement the teachings of Vatican II and the backlash that has followed", she said. "People are confused. They see married former Anglican priests with families being ordained but Catholic seminarians cannot marry and there is no discussion about this."

Underlying all this, she said, was the fact that people are afraid to speak, or be seen as critical in any way, for fear of very serious censure. She advised: "As St Ignatius said: 'go where the energy is good'. And that is - the monasteries, convents, and organisations like CAFOD". She also advised people to express their views. Quoting Catherine of Siena she said: 'I see that the world is destroyed through silence.'

Echoing these views retired priest Fr Gerry Burke counselled dialogue, but he said: "The call to disobedience by the Austrian priest is a serious mistake, which could have an undesirable outcome." It would be a great mistake to set up a forum which did not include everyone, he said.

Fr Anthony Maggs from Southwark pointed out that "so much has happened since Vatican II. I've been influenced by so many people. If we are to renew the Church we must also listen.

Discussion groups called for the Church's need to listen and act on what was said; the building of trust, and 'critical loyalty'. One group said it was 'all very well to talk about Vatican II - but how many Catholics today really know what it said?'

In a message, Professor Tina Beattie suggested the establishment of a forum which included representatives from the bishops, priests and laypeople, 'in a spirit of respect and mutual trust' to begin an ongoing dialogue.

"It's not a question of anger" one priest said. "It's a question of where do we go from here to build up the Kingdom of God." He said he worked with 11 deaneries in which most priests were over 70 and three this week were having operations. "What will happen in five years' time?" he asked.

"A loving and respectful relationship needs to exist between laypeople, priests and bishops for the Church to witness God's love" a statement on the agenda concludes.

- *ACTA Chair Eileen Fitzpatrick reports that there have been a number of responses to the recent ACTA survey (see page 13 August e bulletin) from serving and retired bishops directly and also some via their secretaries - 10 to date. All are VERY positive. Those who have read the document have noted it with great interest and others have said they look forward to reading and digesting it. The responses include one from the Cardinal's office and Andrew Hornsby-Smith, compiler of the survey and report, received a very warm response from Cardinal Murphy O'Connor.*

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

DIALOGUE WITH IAIN DUNCAN SMITH RE WELFARE REFORM

On 3 July a group of leading Catholics published an open letter to Iain Duncan Smith calling on him to change his approach to welfare reform (see August e bulletin). We are delighted the Minister has taken the time to respond to the letter, and publish his reply in full below:

Dear Ms Moffatt et al,

Thank you for your letter dated 3 July. I welcome your engagement with the vital issue of social justice. It might be helpful to bring to your attention the principles behind the measures announced at the July 8th Budget and also some of the latest evidence around the impacts of our reforms. The Chancellor recently announced a service of measures to reduce welfare spending, and the 4 principles that have underpinned his decision making. Firstly, the welfare system should support the elderly, vulnerable and disabled people; secondly, those who can work should be expected to look for work, and take work when it is offered; thirdly, the working-age benefit system has to be more sustainable and fourthly, the system shouldn't support lifestyles or rents not available to the taxpayers who pay for that system.

Based on the above principles he announced a number of protections for the most vulnerable in our society: exempting disability benefits and Carer's Allowance from the Working-age Benefits freeze; maintaining the state pension triple lock; exempting the most vulnerable disabled people from the Benefit Cap; and exempting the disabled/severely disabled child elements in Child Tax Credits (and their Universal Credit equivalent) from the Tax Credits/Universal Credit payment limits. These exemptions show that safeguarding the vulnerable is at the very heart of our reforms.

With regard to sanctions let me be clear that there is no evidence to suggest that sanctions have caused claimants' health to deteriorate. There is however evidence to show that sanctions are changing attitudes towards gaining employment - over 70% of JSA claimants and over 60% of ESA claimants have said themselves that the possibility of being sanctioned makes them more likely to engage in the job finding process. Benefit sanctions have been part of the system for at least the last four decades; however they are only applied as a last resort. Needless to say, we ensure the most vulnerable are protected, and no-one is sanctioned without first being made aware of hardship payments.

The department, as we always have, will continue to support disabled and vulnerable people, providing a strong welfare safety net for those in need. We spent £50 billion on disability benefits and services in 2012/13. We increased spending on the main disability benefits by over £2 billion over the last parliament, and we will be spending more on the main disability benefits in 2020 than we were in 2010.

With regard to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), this was introduced to ensure that support goes to those who most need it and has already resulted in more people receiving the top rate of benefit than did on Disability Living Allowance (DLA). I publically recognised that the delays faced by some PIP claimants last year were unacceptable and drove significantly improved performance. The average time a claimant waits for a PIP assessment is now 5 weeks for new claims, and 4 weeks for reassessments of existing claims.

You also discuss Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). We have already made considerable improvements to the WCA process, including accepting over 100 recommendations from 5 independent reviews and terminating the failing contract with ATOS.

At the Budget, we announced that we would align the ESA Work Related Activity Group (WAAG) rate with that of Jobseeker's Allowance for new claims, alongside a package of measures to increase health and employment support for ESA claimants. This is because it is important not to write disabled people off to a life on benefits. Many can work, want to work, and need our support to get them into work. More and more disabled people are successfully making the transition into work, with latest figures showing that the number of disabled people in work is up by 238,000 on the year.

The benefit cap strikes a balance between incentivising work, fairness for working households and supporting the most vulnerable. In order to protect the most vulnerable, we have however ensured that the cap does not apply to any household where someone receives DLA or is in the Support Group of ESA. Where the cap does apply, households were 41% more likely to go into work after a year than similarly uncapped households just below the cap level, illustrating how the policy incentivises work. Very few capped households have moved and there have not been large scale moves out of London.

There is a clear rationale for this Government's welfare reforms. The system we inherited from Labour was uncontrolled and unaffordable. It wrote off people with a disability to a life on benefits, and it made welfare a more attractive option than work for millions of people. Our welfare reforms are restoring fairness, simplifying the benefit system, and helping people into lasting employment. Employment is up nearly 2 million since 2010, and 800,000 fewer people are in relative low income than in 2010 - clear signs that these reforms are working.

Last week we announced a new National Living Wage. This will be set at £7.20 an hour from next April and will rise to £9 by 2020. This will benefit over 2 million workers. By 2020 a full time worker on the national minimum wage will earn over £5,200 more by 2020. I am sure you share in my delight at this announcement, which will see millions of workers earn more through work.

Signed: **The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions**

REPLY

Ekklesia associates who initiated the correspondence with Iain Duncan Smith write:

Whilst we welcome the Minister's willingness to engage in constructive dialogue, we feel this letter misses the point of the damage that welfare reform causes. We have therefore sent him the following reply. We await his response.

Dear Mr Duncan Smith,

Thank you for your detailed response to our letter which we have read carefully. We have the following observations to make. Whilst we welcome your view that the welfare system should "support the elderly, vulnerable and disabled", we would reiterate that the reforms passed in 2012 have in fact done the opposite, and the July 8th budget will make things worse.

1. Protecting the vulnerable. We are pleased that people on disability benefits are exempt from some of the changes in the July 8th budget. However, these exemptions are insufficient to safeguard people you refer to as the 'most vulnerable'. There is clear evidence from a number of sources that sick and disabled people have been harmed by cuts to welfare and social care. The Centre for Welfare Reform reported on this in 2013, bringing this to your Department's attention in 2014. The Equality and Human Rights Commission reached similar conclusions in July 2014.

Furthermore, the latest official poverty figures show that in families where at least one member is disabled, the number in 'absolute low income' has increased to thirty per cent. Children in families where at least one member is disabled are twice as likely to be 'in combined low income and material deprivation.' In the face of this information, it is hard to see how your belief that disabled people are being protected, can be justified.

2. Impact of sanctions on health. You assert that there is no evidence that benefit sanctions cause a deterioration in a claimants' health. However this is contradicted by your Department's own guidance for Decision Makers on this subject. In sections 35098 and 35099 the authors state that a healthy adult is likely to experience a deterioration in health if they are without essential items such as food or heating. It advises that Decision Makers should therefore consider whether the health of a person with a medical condition is likely to decline further than a healthy adult. The example given, of a diabetic woman, notes that if she was sanctioned for two weeks her health "would decline further than a normal healthy adult because lack of funds would not allow her to follow a regular diet."

This guidance caused the writers of the Joint Public Issues Team's 'Time to Rethink Benefit Sanctions' report to argue that "any human society should be disturbed by a statutory system that deliberately causes harm to another human being". You also state that "no-one is sanctioned without first being made aware of hardship payments". This does not fit with the experiences reported within the JPIT paper cited above, which found many people discovered they were sanctioned only when they tried to draw cash out from their bank.

3. Spending on disability benefits. Whilst it is true that spending on disability benefits has increased in cash terms, spending on out of work disability benefits is falling rapidly as a share of GDP, as illustrated by Figure 6.1 on page 97 of the Office for Budget Responsibility's Welfare Trends Report published in October 2014. The Journal of Economic Perspectives, also stated that forecasts of spending on disability benefits for 2018-9 were projected to be at their lowest share of the national income since the late 1960's.

4. Changes to Personal Independent Payments. We very much welcome your efforts to reduce the waiting times for people being assessed for Personal Independence Payments. However, we continue to be concerned that the reassessment process is expected to lead to hundreds of thousands of people having their benefit cut, or losing it altogether. This will have a negative impact on people's ability to be independent and restrict the ability of many people to take up paid work.

5. Employment Support Allowance, Work Capability Assessment and WRAG. Whilst any improvements to the process of assessing people's fitness to work are to be welcomed, the change of provider from Atos to Maximus still does not solve the fundamental problem, that the Work Capability Assessment itself is unfit for purpose. We see no justification for the cut to the incomes of people in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) of ESA made in the Budget. There are only two outcomes to a Work Capability Assessment: being found fit to work, or being found entitled to Employment and Support Allowance.

People entitled to ESA and placed in the WRAG include those who are undergoing cancer treatment, and people who have progressive illnesses like Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis. They have been assessed by your own department as not fit to work, which is why they are not on Jobseekers' Allowance currently. They are certainly not in the same position as Jobseekers, and would not be regarded as such by employers. Allowing them a higher but still very modest income is not writing them off to a life on benefits, but simply showing some compassion and understanding of their situation.

6. The benefits cap. We are puzzled by your assertion that households with a benefit cap were 41% more likely to go into work. The recent Institute for Fiscal Studies report on the impact of the cuts suggests that only 2,000 out of 27,000 families affected had someone move into work ie 7% of the population. The same study also noted that "Many experienced very large reductions in income". Research by Shelter and the Citizen's Advice Bureau suggests that the revised cap will 'exclude poor families from large parts of England'.

7. Rationale for welfare reforms. You note that the system the Conservatives inherited from Labour was uncontrolled and unaffordable. We would dispute this. As the Work Foundation has found, the most recent OECD estimate of public social spending accounts for 21.7% of UK GDP, slightly above the average of 21.6%. In addition, public social spending since 2007 has risen by 1.6% in the UK compared with 2.7% across the OECD. They conclude: 'These figures do not suggest that the UK is devoting an excessive share of GDP to social expenditure or that the increases forced by the recession have been over-generous.'

8. National Living Wage. We do welcome the proposed rise in National Living Wage announced in the Budget. Unfortunately the accompanying cuts to tax credits will make workers on low incomes worse off. Assessing the Budget as a whole, the IFS said: "the changes overall are regressive – taking much more from poorer households than richer ones."

Before closing, we would like to endorse and reiterate the recent report by our colleagues at Caritas Social Action Network, which stated, "the culture and the processes of the welfare system that were making it increasingly difficult for clients to survive, let alone flourish. The effect of welfare reform cannot be isolated to individual pieces of legislation. Rather, it is the multiplicity and speed of these reforms, hand-in-hand with the tightening of the sanctioning process, that has increased the desperate state of many people's lives."

We believe that between us, and our colleagues working in frontline charities, we have a wealth of experience of what is actually happening regarding the impact of welfare reforms. We could, if you would accept our invitation to talk, be a source of nationwide grassroots feedback, enabling you to identify problems and to use your authority to alleviate the considerable suffering and hardship we are seeing in our communities. We seek only to work with you in the pursuit of the common good as laid out in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Together we could ensure that we uphold the common dignity and value of every human being in need of assistance. We extend this invitation in the spirit of Christian justice and compassion and we look forward to hearing from you.

Signed: **Virginia Moffatt (Chief Operating Officer, Ekklesia)** and **Bernadette Meaden (Ekklesia Associate)**, on behalf of all the original signatories.

Ekklesia www.ekkleisia.co.uk

Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) www.csan.org.uk

CLOSE THE GAP PRAYER COMMUNITY UPDATE

Church Action on Poverty is speaking out about the holes being created in our benefits safety net, and calling for action from Government to make sure the system ensures nobody is left destitute. Find out more at our website www.church-poverty.org.uk Our **Real Benefits Street** project has challenged the stigmatisation of people in poverty and reached a wide audience, enabling people supported by benefits - the real experts - to tell stories about their lives and experiences. Click the link to see and share their video stories <http://realbenefits-street.com/>

Prayer

Following the General Election, Phil Borkett from Church Action on Poverty's local group in Sheffield shared this prayer:

We pray for those in government, at local and national level,
that they might use the power granted to them wisely and for the common good;
building a society that is both compassionate and inclusive,
where people are no longer faces but start to become neighbours,
and towns become communities caring and supporting one another.

Click here: <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/pray> for more prayer and liturgy materials - including **When I need a neighbour, are you there?** - a worship outline produced in collaboration with ROOTS (Christian worship resource provider)
<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/pray/worship/pentecost2015>

Prayer requests

The recent Emergency Budget is likely to leave hundreds of thousands of people deeper in poverty. Pray that more employers will pay a genuine Living Wage to help ensure that work can lift people out of poverty. Churches and MPs of all parties have urged the Government to rethink the unjust benefit sanctions regime. Pray that our politicians will listen and take action.

Share your prayers and see those that others have posted by joining the **Close the Gap** prayer community Facebook group - or email them to Liam Purcell: liamp@church-poverty.org.uk

*Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity; it is a task of justice.
Like slavery and apartheid it is not natural.
It is man-made and can be overcome.*

Nelson Mandela

FEEDING BRITAIN: A REPORT ON TACKLING THE UK HUNGER CRISIS

An article by Frank Field and Andrew Forsey published in The Tablet (13 August) examined the problem of hunger in the UK today and revealed exciting new initiatives to address this. Here are some (abridged) extracts:

Hundreds of thousands of people in Britain today go hungry because they cannot afford to buy or cook themselves food. For this to be happening in the world's fifth-largest economy is nothing short of appalling. The cross-party parliamentary inquiry into hunger, which we set up last year with Tim Thornton, the Bishop of Truro, to examine more closely the extent and causes of hunger in this country, found that up to 4 million people might only be one crisis away from being unable to feed themselves – be it because of an unexpected bill, the loss of their children's free school meals in the holidays, or a suspended or delayed benefit payment.

Britain's churches have responded in an extraordinary way to this vulnerability in their communities, contributing to the rapid growth of Britain's food-bank movement, with more than 900 banks now established. They have helped people who rely on their emergency food parcels, as well as, for some, basic human compassion. Without it, many more hundreds of thousands would have been hungry.

Our report, *Feeding Britain*, concluded that hunger on such a vast scale is not a sudden phenomenon resulting from one government policy or another. It has arisen, in part, from the increasing costs of food, gas, electricity and housing, relative to household incomes, that have most disadvantaged Britain's poor.

There are ways in which the Government could, and should, alleviate the problem. Our findings suggest it could halve overnight the numbers of people relying on food banks if it were able to administer the correct benefit payments promptly for new claimants who are desperately short of money. It could also implement a "Yellow Card" warning in place of immediate financial sanctions for claimants deemed not to have fulfilled their duty of looking for work, and introduce a minimum tariff for all tax credit claimants to ensure their claims would no longer cease following a change of household circumstances.

But those of us who served on the inquiry have also taken steps – which would not have been possible without the valuable help of organisations in the voluntary and private sectors – to begin more effectively countering hunger. This response has taken two forms: The first is the development of a model that we have called **Food Bank Plus**. This seeks to build on the charitable giving of food which, thanks to churches up and down the country, has been a vital emergency response to hunger in our communities. Food Bank Plus combines this emergency food parcel with a range of on-the-spot support and advice to address the problems that have exposed an individual to hunger. The aim is to lift people free from hunger as soon as possible.

As part of the *Feeding Birkenhead* campaign, which we set up to begin implementing the inquiry's findings at a local level, we have piloted a Food Bank Plus approach in one of the town's main food banks. Early findings suggest that a third of people seen by an adviser, trained to help people with problems linked to benefits and debt, during their first visit to the food bank, no longer require further food parcels, because the adviser has resolved the issue that had left them penniless. Npower, one of Britain's major energy suppliers, is piloting a scheme with *Feeding Birkenhead* whereby people who cannot even afford the gas on their prepayment meter to cook the contents of their emergency food parcel, are given a fuel voucher for two weeks' worth of free gas and electricity.

A second part of the strategy focuses on building up Britain's network of "**social supermarkets**" – an innovative new way of helping the poorest in society avoid hunger. Social supermarkets rescue good food that would otherwise be wasted by buying buy food classed as "surplus" from supermarkets and their suppliers for 10p in the pound, and selling it on to customers for 30p in the pound. Food becomes "surplus" due to incorrect labelling or damaged packaging, not because of inferior quality.

Social supermarkets are accessible only to people signed up as members, and membership is restricted to people struggling on low incomes and in receipt of means-tested benefits. Once they've signed up, members have access to the social supermarket, where they receive a discount of two-thirds on their shopping, and also to an adjoining cafe area in which activities are laid on to help people sort out personal and financial problems. Rather than rely on the charity of others through parcels from a food bank – however vital that has been – people have more choice about what they eat, and are paying for the food themselves.

Social supermarkets have the potential to nurture people's skills, confidence and employability while simultaneously relieving at least some of the pressure on their household budget, thereby reducing both the immediate and longer-term risk of having to go hungry. Members are enrolled on weekly group sessions covering budgeting and debt advice, cooking decent meals on a limited budget, and how to get and keep a job. Community Shop limits membership to six months. This controls demand for food while giving people the opportunity to address the problems that have made their lives an uphill struggle – not dissimilar to the Food Bank Plus model.

A second front could be opened up by inviting local churches into the governance of social supermarkets. Their emergency food bank response will remain vital, and their embrace of Food Bank Plus has the potential to lift free from hunger many of our fellow citizens who have, for one reason or another, fallen below Britain's national minimum standard of living. Some branches of the Catholic Church's Caritas Social Action Network have indicated they are interested in the work of social supermarkets, combining the offer of good-quality food with longer-term support to combat the root causes of hunger.

Frank Field is Labour MP for Birkenhead and chairman of the Work and Pensions Select Committee. Andrew Forsey is his senior parliamentary researcher. **Read the article in full here:** <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/6414/marketplace-for-need>

EXHIBITIONS

ON THEIR OWN: *Britain's child migrants*

Merseyside Maritime Museum Albert Dock, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool, L3 4AQ 17 October 2014 to 4 October 2015
Free entry <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/exhibitions/child-migrants/index.aspx>

From the 1860s until the late 1960s more than 100,000 children were sent from Britain to Canada, Australia and other Commonwealth countries through child migration schemes. Some were orphans and many came from families who were unable to care for them. At the time charitable and religious organisations sent them overseas, with the belief that their lives would improve as a result. They were supported by governments for which these schemes supplied much needed population and labour.

Liverpool and Glasgow were the main departure ports for children sailing to Canada. Liverpool's Allan Line carried almost half of Canada's child migrants on its ships. Siblings and friends were split up on arrival and left isolated, facing long hard days of labour in extremes of climate. This isolation often led to a lonely, brutal childhood.

This exhibition tells their emotional stories, and through detailed case studies, visitors will meet a number of child migrants and find out more about their different experiences.

Find out more on the *On their own - Britain's child migrants* exhibition website: <http://www.britainschildmigrants.com/>

MAYAS: *Revelation of an endless time*

Liverpool World Museum William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN 19 June to 18 October 2015 Free Entry
<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml/exhibitions/mayas/>

Step back to an ancient time and discover the powerful and revealing world of the Mayas. This was a time of warriors, shamanic rituals, human sacrifice, jade treasures, advanced knowledge and veneration of the cosmos. The ancient Maya was a Mesoamerican civilisation that has left a far-reaching legacy of architectural, cultural and artistic achievements.

Through 385 stunning objects from museums and Maya sites in Mexico, from striking funerary masks to intricate jade jewellery, the exhibition explores this extraordinary civilisation whose culture is still alive today. This is the only opportunity to see this breathtaking exhibition in the UK.

This exhibition has been produced by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) in Mexico <http://www.inah.gob.mx/>
It is part of the **2015 'Year of Mexico in the United Kingdom'** and **'Year of the United Kingdom in Mexico'**
<http://mexicouk2015.mx/bienvenido>

BROKEN LIVES: *Slavery in modern India*

International Slavery Museum Albert Dock, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool, L3 4AX 17 26 June 2015 to 24 April 2016 Free entry
<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/exhibitions/broken-lives/>

Slavery still exists. Even though it is illegal throughout the world today, contemporary forms of slavery can be found in almost every country. Up to half of the victims of modern slavery globally are in India, most of these are 'Dalits'. The word 'Dalit' means broken, crushed or oppressed. Dalits used to be known as 'untouchables', indicating how many others avoided physical contact for fear of tainting their religious purity or social superiority. Many still experience marginalisation and prejudice, live in extreme poverty and are vulnerable to human trafficking and bonded labour.

Broken Lives: slavery in modern India provides a window into the experiences of Dalits and others who are being exploited and abused through modern slavery in India. Delivered in partnership with the Dalit Freedom Network, this powerful and moving exhibition reveals stories of hardship, survival and hope for broken lives mended.

MUSIC

PINK FLOYD GUITARIST DAVID GILMOUR'S NEW SINGLE FEATURES FORMER PRISON INMATES

David Gilmour has recorded *Rattle That Lock* with **The Liberty Choir**, a rehabilitation project that includes former Wandsworth Prison inmates and local singers. The rock legend said the choir gives prisoners "real hope and optimism".

Gilmour's son Charlie served time in Wandsworth Prison in south London in 2011 after being arrested at a tuition fees protest. He spent four months in jail after being convicted of violent disorder for his part in the 2010 protest, where he swung from a flag on the Cenotaph and threw a bin at a royal convoy. David Gilmour told BBC News: "Charlie's experience was something that has impacted on us and has made us more aware of the prison system and what could and should be done to improve it." "We're just helping out by being part of this initiative, which will hopefully spread."

The Liberty Choir, run by vocal coach MJ Paranzino and writer Ginny Dougary, takes members of the South London Choir into Wandsworth Prison for weekly sessions with serving inmates. They also run regular sessions outside jail, where former offenders can join members of the South London Choir. Seven of these former inmates were part of the 30-strong choir that sang on *Rattle That Lock*.

Gilmour and his wife, writer Polly Samson, have also donated money to allow The Liberty Choir to expand to other jails. He said: "It's wonderful, seeing all these guys singing in the prison along with people from the South London Choir. We joined a regular session where 20-something prisoners and about 20 people from the choir outside get to sing along and are taught. MJ is a brilliant teacher. They come week in, week out, and there's a waiting list inside prison because the room available is small. The maximum number they can get in is about 20, but there are many, many more who want to take part."

He added: "I've had conversations with some of the guys in the prison and some who have recently been released, and they all think it's a fantastic programme and are very keen for it to be widened and spread to other prisons. It gives them real hope and optimism that they don't just come out of prison into a vacuum and the same temptations. This gives them at least one night a week with something to do where they feel valued, and they can join in with something artistic that is uplifting."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-33772293>

THEATRE

RHEMA THEATRE COMPANY: 'IT'S NOT FAIR'

Rhema Theatre Company present an inspiring and moving new piece of theatre telling stories from around the world of human trafficking - and those who fight it. Chester Diocese and 'Churches Against Trafficking' have invited Rhema to include Frodsham as a venue on their national tour this autumn. The production will be at Frodsham Methodist Church, Kingsley Road, Frodsham, WA6 6BA on Friday 16 October 2015 starting at 7.30pm. Tickets available from www.eventbrite or frodshamforuminfo@gmail.com. There is no cost for the ticket, but it is hoped that people will want to give a donation to the work of fighting slavery and providing for the victims. The presentation is suitable for anyone over the age of 11. **More info:** www.theitsnotfair.co.uk/tour-dates

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY: 'BAKED ALASKA'

19/10/15 7.30pm Baked Alaska "high-energy, 'seriously funny' style... extraordinary theatre for these extraordinary times." **Alderley Edge** Methodist Church, Chapel Road, SK9 7DU. Tickets: Box Office 01904 613000 or <http://ridinglights.org/baked-alaska/>

A show about global warming staged by The Riding Lights Theatre Company as part of a national tour sponsored by Christian Aid. The company aims to create unforgettable, entertaining theatre in response to current issues and the hopes and fears of the world we share. The show was commissioned by the Diocese of Lichfield, Christian Aid and Operation Noah.

The Riding Lights Theatre Company is one of the UK's most productive and long-established independent theatre companies. Founded in York over 30 years ago, partly through the initiative of a city-centre church, the company continues to take innovative, accessible theatre into all kinds of communities far and wide. It aims to create unforgettable, entertaining theatre in response to current issues and the hopes and fears of the world we share. While the company's roots are in a Christian ethos, its work is open to everyone, using faith as a springboard to explore all aspects of life.

Other tour dates in the NW area – All performances at 7.30pm

24/10/15 Shrewsbury Church of the Holy Spirit, Meadow Farm Drive SY1 4NG.

02/11/15 Wirral Hoylake Chapel, Station Road, Hoylake CH47 4AA. Venue phone: 0151 678 6201

03/11/15 Church Stretton Church Stretton School Theatre, Shrewsbury Road, SY6 6EX. Venue phone: 01694 722296

04/11/15 Rochdale St Chad's Church, Sparrow Lane, Rochdale OL16 1QT.

09/11/15 Preston St Cuthbert's Church, Lytham Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 3AR.

10/11/15 Old Trafford, Manchester St John's Centre, St John's Road, M16 7GX.

11/11/15 Lancaster, Lancs Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre, Lancaster University, LA1 4YW.

13/11/15 Manchester St Andrew's Methodist Church Hall, Brownley Road, Wythenshawe, M22 0DW. Box office: 0161 485 1605

NATIONAL BOX OFFICE: 01904 613000

Touring from September 2015 - for a full list of performances visit: www.ridinglights.org/baked-alaska

JUSTICE AND PEACE CALENDAR

During Ordinary Time (Autumn), i.e. from September to Christ the King, we are asked to pray for these intentions:

The Spread of the Gospel; The Harvest; the Fruits of Human Work, and the Reverent Use of Creation; Justice and Peace in the World; All Victims of War; Young People; Prisoners and their Families.

Racial Justice Day Sunday	13 September
Home Mission Day Sunday	20 September
World Mission Day Sunday	18 October
The Harvest	27 September
Harvest Fast Day	2 October
Day of Prayer for Prisoners	11 October
Remembrance Day	8 November
Youth Day	22 November [Christ the King]

POPE FRANCIS ANNOUNCES WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CARE OF CREATION

Pope Francis has decided to establish a 'World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation' to be celebrated on 1 September each year in line with the date used by the Orthodox Church as "a valuable opportunity to bear witness to our growing communion with our orthodox brothers." The Pope continues: "We live in a time where all Christians are faced with identical and important challenges and we must give common replies to these in order to appear more credible and effective. Therefore it is my hope that this Day can involve, in some way, other Churches and ecclesial Communities and be celebrated in union with the initiatives that the World Council of Churches is promoting on this issue."

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28043>

1 September – 4 October Creation Time

Eco-Congregation Scotland has produced worship material that follows the World Council of Churches (WCC) theme, *Joining the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*. It is written to help prepare and equip churches to respond to the key **United Nations Climate Change conference (COP21)**, due to take place in Paris in early December 2015. The material covers the four Sundays from 6 – 27 September following the Revised Common Lectionary readings for September, with a particular emphasis on the Gospel readings which feature Jesus journeying on the road. It has been written by an ecumenical group, with contributors from the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the United Reformed Church.

<https://ctbi.org.uk/creation-time-2015/>

13 September Racial Justice Sunday

The British Social Attitudes survey of 2013 found that the proportion of Britons who admit to being racially prejudiced has risen since the start of the millennium, raising concerns that growing hostility to immigrants and widespread Islamophobia are setting community relations back 20 years. Racism affects all of us. It breaks our communities apart, feeding violence and hate. It breeds injustice and conflict. Racism can be both targeted directly at individuals (such as race related physical attacks or verbal abuse), or it can be institutional (such as employers choosing not to hire certain ethnic groups). In the UK racism is sadly still a reality. For example: people of mixed race are twice more likely to be the victims of racial abuse than white people. The unemployment rate for ethnic minority groups has consistently been twice that of whites. Recent studies have suggested there are high levels of racial discrimination in the labour market. The percentage of people living in poor housing is higher for all ethnic minority groups than for their white counterparts. Is this an issue in your parish?

Editor's note: Confusion has been caused by Racial Justice Sunday apparently being celebrated on 13/9/15 by two different groups using different themes:

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) focus on *Hospitality and Sanctuary*. Resources include an order of service, material for Bible study, group discussions, activities and worship. <https://ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday-2015/>

whilst **The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales** have chosen *Dignity of the Human Person* as their theme

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

19 September – 4 October British Food Fortnight

Follow the LOAF principles - food that fulfils at least one of the following criteria: **L**ocally produced; **O**rganically grown; **A**nimal friendly; **F**airly traded. <http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/resources/loaf>

Support local food initiatives: www.lovebritishfood.co.uk/british-food-fortnight/loaf

21 September Peace One Day - An annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence

The annual International Day of Peace (21 September) is organised by Peace One Day, a non-profit organisation that raises awareness of peace issues. Peace One Day was founded in 1999 by British documentary filmmaker and actor Jeremy Gilley, whose dedication and persistence resulted in a UN Resolution 55/282 nominating one day a year for peace and inviting organisations and individuals to commemorate the International Day of Peace through education and public awareness, and to co-operate with the United Nations in the establishment of the global ceasefire. This year's main event will be in Kigali, Rwanda and focuses on young people, empowering a new generation of peacemakers.

<http://www.peaceday.org/2015-celebration>

20 – 26 September World Week for Peace in Palestine & Israel *Bridges not Walls*

An annual event to promote education, prayer and action for peace in Palestine & Israel. A symbol of division, the Separation Wall challenges God's plan to break down what divides us. We must face this Wall as a source of suffering and confusion for the people of Palestine and Israel, and as a stumbling block on the path to peace.

Resource materials, including worship ideas, information about events, and a downloadable postcard template along with links to all partner organisations available from Pax Christi www.paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

5-6 Morecambe Bay: Local Peoples Pilgrimage. *Around the world people of faith are setting out on journeys, big and small, to visit places at the heart of the climate crisis. This is The People's Pilgrimage & we have our own local pilgrimage. Every step we take together, every story we share, lifts up the human face of climate change. On our way we will collect messages from the people of Morecambe Bay to send to world leaders at the climate summit in Paris in December.* Contact: Clíodhna at flowstone@me.com or Sam at samagita@phonecoop.coop For more info on the worldwide pilgrimages see <http://peoplespilgrimage.org/index.html>

8 A look at "Sustainable Development Goals" 6.45 pm - 9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN. Chester World Development Forum meeting in advance of the UN Summit in New York in late September looking at "the Post-2015 Development Agenda", with the adoption of a series of Sustainable Development Goals taking over from the earlier Millennium Development Goals which expire at the end of this year. Gill Miller aims to bring some illumination! 01244 350323.

12 The smell of the sheep: A survey of Catholic opinion in England and Wales in preparation for the Synod on the Family, October 2015. Prayer, reflection and discussion with Andrew Hornsby-Smith 10am-1pm St Bernadette's Parish 120 Bowerham Road Lancaster LA1 4HT. To book please email anne.foley@blueyonder.co.uk or phone 01772 555483. Tea and coffee provided on arrival at 10am' Facilitated by ACTA (A Call to Action). ACTA aims to encourage dialogue at all levels in the Church we love and to grow in our relationship with Jesus through an exploration of the Sacred Scriptures and the riches of Vatican II.

12 Day Conference on 'Suggesting the Possible in a Fragile World' led by Pat Gaffney, Pax Christi at the Niland Centre, Bushey, Hertfordshire. http://paxchristi.org.uk/event/suggesting-the-possible-in-a-fragile-world-day-gathering/?instance_id=451

13 Racial Justice Sunday - two different sets of resources: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) on the theme *Hospitality and Sanctuary* <https://ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday-2015/> OR The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales on the *Dignity of the Human Person* <http://www.cbcew.org.uk>

13 Racial Justice Sunday Mass arranged by the Justice and Peace Association (Caritas, Diocese of Salford) 2.30pm at St Patrick's, Livesey Street, Manchester, M4 5 HT. Celebrant Fr Phil Sumner. Mass followed by shared refreshments (cold food only, please).

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

14 Candle-Lit Vigil on eve of DSEi Arms Fair A gathering open to all to join this silent vigil. Gather at 6.30 at Royal Victoria DLR outside in Tidal Basin Road. Then to London Excel for vigil 7-8 pm. Pray at home if you can't get to the vigil.

http://paxchristi.org.uk/event/candle-lit-vigil-dsei-arms-fair/?instance_id=444

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

19 Churches Together in Cumbria Celebrating Together "Let Justice Roll Down (Amos 5): how the Church responds to poverty." Keynote Speakers: Chris Mould, Chair of the Trussell Trust -*Difficult Questions* and Paul Morrison, JPIT (Joint Public Issues Team) - *Welfare Reform: "Damn your charity we want justice!"* - Archbishop William Temple. Workshops, Worship led by RC Faith & Justice Commission, Church Leader Panel, Market Place stalls. 10am-4pm Applethwaite Centre, St Mary's Church, Windermere LA23 1BA (5 minutes walk from Windermere Railway Station). Cost: £5 Book by email: lkctic@yahoo.com or call Helen on 07503 931196

19 NJPN Open Networking Day Warwick Rd URC, 10 Warwick Row, Coventry, CV1 1EX. Speaker: Paul Bodenham (Green Christian) 'Francisconomics: The Saint, the Pope and the Economy of Enough.' admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk 020 7901 4864

20-26 World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel Pax Christi is a sponsor of the week and has leaflets available for use in churches £3 per 100 and postage. <http://paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine/world-week-for-peace-in-pi/>

We are posting information on events here. If you plan something do let us know. We know of events in Leeds and Newcastle.

http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/events-calendar/action~agenda/page_offset~1/time_limit~1442251801/

www.paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine and www.pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace/

21 Peace One Day 020 7456 9180 www.peaceoneday.org This year's main event will be in Kigali, Rwanda and focuses on young people, empowering a new generation of peacemakers <http://www.peaceoneday.org/2015-celebration>

26 Caritas Social Action Network Roadshow Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, CH65 7AQ. 10.30-15.30. Shrewsbury Commission for Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility will have a stall. Social action workshops plus marketplace hosted by MP John Battle. To confirm your place or book a stall please contact Pauline.McCulloch@dioceseofshrewsbury 0151 652 9855

29 St Monica's and Warrington J&P have invited Marie Reynolds from **Nugent Care** in Liverpool to speak. 7.30pm St Monica's church, Dingleway, Appleton, WA4 3AB. Nugent Care is involved in all kinds of Social Work supporting the poor and needy in society – an opportunity to discover the full extent of that work and appreciate the vital role they fulfill. All warmly welcome.

OCTOBER

3 Ruth Valero speaking on *Climate Change: Caring for Creation* 7pm Father's House, Owen Road, Skerton LA1 2AP. Ruth is a well-known Christian speaker who blogs at <http://ruthvalero.net>

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

4-10 Week of Action Against TTIP in Manchester, Conservative Party Conference (see page 8) <http://www.waronwant.org/>

9 Charity Concert organized by Chifundo UK and Soroptimist International of Chester featuring *A Handbag of Harmonies* and *The Queen's School Chamber Choir* 7.30pm at St Columba's, Plas Newton Lane, Chester CH2 1SA in aid of the SOKU Fund, an educational charity providing university scholarships for women in Malawi www.thesokufund.org £12 Adults, £6 under 18s including refreshments. Tickets: Susan 01244 381490 chair@chifundomalawi.org or Carole 01244 637987 soroptimistsinchester@gmail.com

16 Rhema Theatre Company: 'It's Not Fair' Frodsham Methodist Church, Kingsley Road, Frodsham, WA6 6BA 7.30pm. Tickets available from www.eventbrite or frodshamforuminfo@gmail.com. Admission free, but it is hoped that people will want to give a donation to the work of fighting slavery and providing for the victims. Suitable for age 11+

- 17** join **War on Want** and friends for *Skill Up! Stand Up!* A free day of training for activists and free skills workshops at the MERCi Centre 22A Beswick St, Manchester M4 7HR. 10am-6pm. Wide range of workshops such as how to get local press coverage, using social media effectively, making an impact with a street stall, creative actions, strategies for influencing politicians, facilitating effective meetings and more. Places limited, book now! <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/skill-up-stand-up-tickets-18148820611>.
- 18 'Singing for the World'** - songs of justice and songs from around the world - music and worship event to celebrate Christian Aid's 70th Birthday led by Alison Adam of the Iona Community at Wigan Baptist Church, Scarisbrick Street, Swinley, Wigan, WN1 2BS. Workshop 2-5pm (must book). 'Celebration' 6.30-8pm with CA video and short talk by Alasdair Roxburgh, Christian Aid's Head of Campaigns. Workshop and disabled access Charles St entrance. Parking on local streets or Mab's Cross School car park across Wigan Lane. Please contact for disabled access/special parking facilities. Booking forms John Logan logan-j@btconnect.com 01942 214656.
- 19 Baked Alaska** A show about global warming staged by The Riding Lights Theatre Company as part of a national tour sponsored by Christian Aid. 7.30pm **Alderley Edge** Methodist Church, Chapel Road, SK9 7DU. Tickets: Box Office 01904 613000 or <http://ridinglights.org/baked-alaska/>
- 24 Shrewsbury** Church of the Holy Spirit, Meadow Farm Drive SY1 4NG. Tickets: Box Office 01904 613000 or <http://ridinglights.org/baked-alaska/>
- 24** A Columban led day at LACE *Faith in Creation: a Call to Mission* hosted by Archbishop Malcolm McMahon and led by Ellen Teague. All booking is through the Columbans via Stephen Awre on stephenawre@columbans.co.uk
- 31 ACTA National Conference** Leeds <http://www.acalltoaction.org.uk>

NOVEMBER

Baked Alaska Performances: (Tickets: Box Office 01904 613000 or <http://ridinglights.org/baked-alaska/>)

- 2 Wirral** Hoylake Chapel, Station Road, Hoylake CH47 4AA. Venue phone: 0151 678 6201
- 3 Church Stretton** Church Stretton School Theatre, Shrewsbury Road, SY6 6EX. Venue phone: 01694 722296
- 4 Rochdale** St Chad's Church, Sparrow Lane, Rochdale OL16 1QT.
- 9 Preston** St Cuthbert's Church, Lytham Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 3AR.
- 10 Old Trafford, Manchester** St John's Centre, St John's Road, M16 7GX.
- 11 Lancaster**, Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre, Lancaster University, LA1 4YW.
- 13 Manchester** St Andrew's Methodist Church Hall, Brownley Road, Wythenshawe, M22 0DW. Box office: 0161 485 1605

OTHER EVENTS IN NOVEMBER

- 12 Preston Housing Justice Roadshow** 9.30 -3.30 Plungington Community Centre, Brook Street, Preston PR1 7NB. Free, must book <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/housing-justice-roadshow-lancashire-housing-and-homelessness-event-tickets-17830073229>
- 28 ACTA Shrewsbury Diocese** 11am – 3pm at St Columba's Church Hall, Plas Newton Lane, Chester CH2 1SA with speakers Fr Kevin Kelly, a moral theologian and experienced pastor from Liverpool Archdiocese and Eileen Fitzpatrick, National Chair of ACTA. Come along and find out more about ACTA and meet others who are committed to promoting dialogue within the Church. Details: Martin Higgins martinandmaria@lineone.net

LANCASTER DIOCESE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS TRAINING

- for all involved in pastoral care in the church

on 17 September - in Cockermouth; on 22 October – in Ambleside and on 12 November – in Appleby
More Information from Helen Tel: 07503 931196; [email: hbctic@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:hbctic@tiscali.co.uk)

Receiving Vatican II – A series of talks reflecting on 50 years of receiving Vatican II at 7pm in the Gibberd Room, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, Mount Pleasant L3 5QT. Further details: 0151 709 9222 enquiries@metcathedral.org.uk Admission free – retiring collection. Kindly sponsored by the *'Friends of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral'*

15 September Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP, Archbishop of Liverpool *'Nostra aetate: 50 years on'*

22 September Dr Christopher McElroy, Director of Music, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral *'Catholic imagination: Unlocking the arts in worship today'*

29 September Rev Dr Nicholas Sagovsky, Visiting Professor, Liverpool Hope University *'From Gaudium et Spes to Together for the Common Good: Catholic social teaching as public theology'*

13 October Rev Mgr John Devine OBE, Former Churches' Officer for the North West *'Faith in the public square'*

20 October Rev Dr Peter McGrail, Associate Professor of Theology, Liverpool Hope University *'Active participation: unpacking a disputed concept'*

27 October Dr Alana Harris, Teaching Fellow in History, King's College London *'Interrogating the Council from Merseyside: the mariology and eschatology of Dr Anne Biezanek'*

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

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

