

Shrewsbury Diocese JP&SR E-Bulletin – July 2013

www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk

Vision: *A diocese fully engaged with the call of God to be a people of justice and peace*

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1. Changes to the Commission

The final meeting of the 'old' Commission on 26 June marked the retirement of long-serving Chair Tony Walsh, Vice-Chair Bernard Payne and Secretary Michael Crawley (although Bernard will continue to maintain the website). Presentations were made to all three with heartfelt thanks for the sterling way they have kept the Commission going since our Co-ordinator Joan Sharples' departure in May 2012. Maura Garside has taken over as Secretary. The Popular Report for 2012-13 is now available online <http://jpshrewsbury.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/2013-jp-popular-report-final.pdf>

2. National Justice and Peace Network News

NETWORKING DAY - OPEN MEETING Hosted jointly by Shrewsbury and Wrexham Dioceses

Saturday 14 September 2013 10.30am-4pm at St Columba, Plas Newton Lane, Chester CH12 1SA.

Please put this date in your diaries and encourage others to come. This is a great opportunity for local groups from the two dioceses, both now adjusting to life without a Worker, to get together and hear about justice and peace activities around the country. Representatives of Catholic/Christian Agencies will report on their work and suggest practical ways of becoming involved in campaigning for social justice.

Key Speaker (12.00 noon): **Vijay Mehta *The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels Wars and Poverty in the Developing World***. Vijay Mehta is a renowned author, international speaker and global activist for peace, development and human rights. He is the chair of Uniting for Peace www.unitingforpeace.org and Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity www.fortuneforum.org. Vijay will explore the legacy of Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth)*, a landmark document which represents an important step towards the advancement of peace in our world, looking at how we can build a safer, violence free world. In his talk, Vijay will also draw on the premise of his groundbreaking book *The Economics of Killing*: that today's world has become more violent, dangerously militarised and unequal. He believes a different, peaceful world is possible, based on policies of disarmament, demilitarisation and sustainable development.

Tea and coffee will be provided, please bring your own lunch. All welcome.

NATIONAL JUSTICE AND PEACE CONFERENCE REPORT Mission for justice 'between the Sundays'

Ellen Teague writes: "A weekend of integrating faith with action for justice and peace led John Battle, a former MP and Minister of State, to reflect that 'we are asked to do something in between the Sundays.' A long-time member

of Leeds Justice and Peace Commission, he chaired the 2013 annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN) for England and Wales on 19-21 July in Derbyshire, where keynote speaker Megan McKenna underlined in four presentations the centrality of Justice, Compassion and Mercy to the teachings and lifestyle of Jesus. "Do we truly hunger and thirst for justice?" asked the US theologian, who is an Ambassador of Peace for Pax Christi International.

During one talk, focusing on the mission statement of Jesus about bringing 'good news to the poor', Megan invited participants to call out what 'good news to the poor' might mean; they responded with "food", "water", "shelter", "the possibility of change." She felt that many Christians have "spiritualised Jesus" and lost his radical call for justice, which, she felt, is quite distinct from charitable outreach. The theme of the conference '*Breaking open the word*' invited those taking part to get back to the scriptural roots of work for peace and social justice and to be more creative in communicating this message through word, scripture, art, literature as well as traditional forms of campaigning. John Battle said that we live in a time of 'austerity of vision' and that we need new tools to help us challenge the economic austerity within our society. We must do this as a serious faith commitment seven days a week, linking in to our weekend worship. Better use of social media was one suggestion, particularly Twitter.

The 35th annual conference saw around 300 justice and peace activists gathering from more than 20 Catholic dioceses of England and Wales and from Catholic agencies and religious orders which are members. The event was organised by NJPN in conjunction with Hallam Justice & Peace Commission. Young people's programmes were organised by Y-Kids of Merseyside and by the InReality Youth Team from Hallam Diocese.

Practical ideas for promoting justice and peace came in 16 different workshops. Alison Gelder, Director of Housing Justice, focused on 'Austerity Britain – what is happening and what can we do about it?' She highlighted the negative impact of recent benefit changes and helped participants plan practical action back in their dioceses and parishes to support vulnerable groups, such as disabled people facing benefit cuts. Protecting the 'Welfare State' was a recurring theme at the conference.

Columban Father Peter Hughes focused on 'Global warming and rising sea levels', pointing out that Britain and other countries are likely to be negatively affected by climate change in the coming decades, particularly poorer communities. He pointed to church organisations, such as Operation Noah and Christian Ecology Link, which are pushing for decarbonisation of church communities. The student movement, People and Planet, recently launched a campaign to push UK universities to reduce their carbon footprints.

Pax Christi's British section led two workshops on the theme of human security and how we can better communicate this vision for our world today. Pat Gaffney, General Secretary, led these workshops which used the new Pax Christi DVD '*Give Peace a Budget*'. Participants shared their own understanding of security - moving from a military/fear based model to a more human, live-giving model which indicates where resources are needed and how existing political choices need to change. Participants also reflected on images, quotations and pieces of sculpture, such as the Tree of Life made from weapons left after war, to discuss how we can be more creative in talking about models of security with others in our communities who are not involved in peace and justice work. At the same time they also listed the true costs of war - beyond basic financial costs - naming psychological damage, environmental destruction, family breakdown, the erosion of trust for the future as some of those things which we need to surface in challenging those who say that war works and solves problems.

Other workshops include: CAFOD Hungry for Change; Progressio - Women and fragile states; Racism; Gender; Music as an expression of social justice; Working with allies in a secular society; Asylum Seekers and Refugees, organised by the Jesuit Refugee Service. An Eritrean Coffee Ceremony on the lawn was very popular on the sunny Saturday afternoon, as was an early morning Tai Chi session at the same location early that morning.

Congratulations were sent over a telephone link to peace pilgrims who had arrived in Central London after a two-month trek from Iona to hand in a petition against Britain's Trident nuclear missile programme. The petition asked the Government to stop plans to renew Trident - a cost of up to £100 billion - and spend the money on education, the NHS and social welfare. The conference cheered as loudly as it could to support the walkers in London.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican, sent greetings to the conference, calling on participants 'to enrich the world with their own testimony of a faith that collaboratively

and fruitfully promotes the true common good as well as the respect for the dignity of every human person.' It was read out by Anne Peacey, NJPN Chair and member of Hallam Justice and Peace. The main conference Mass was celebrated by Fr Shaun Smith, Chair of Hallam Justice and Peace."

For more information see: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

3. The Fair Tax Mark

Campaigners for tax justice have launched a new initiative: the Fair Tax Mark which grades UK companies (25 of them so far) on whether they pay their tax fairly and transparently <http://fairtaxmark.net/>

Liam Purcell, Communications Manager, Church Action on Poverty explains: "The Fair Tax Mark is more of an external independent assessment, rather than a status a company would apply for like the Fairtrade mark. It will be useful for consumers, but also for investors judging where to put their money and so on. We'll certainly keep all supporters informed about it. In fact, we're meeting with church investment boards in the coming weeks, to talk about how they can include Fair Taxes and the Living Wage in their ethical investment criteria. Hopefully we'll have something to report back from those meetings in due course." www.church-poverty.org.uk

4. Housing Justice *On the Road and On the Street*

This summer Alastair Murray, Director of Projects for Housing Justice is taking a sabbatical. He writes: "In July and August I'll be doing something that has been on my heart for a while: a personal pilgrimage around this country. I'll be walking and hitch hiking, visiting places that have significance for me, like Whitby, where I was born, and places that have significance as centres of the Christian life, like St. David's, Holy Island and Iona. I will also be spending some time living on the streets, among people who sleep rough and use homelessness support services.

Being *On the Road and On the Street* will connect three things I care deeply about: my Christian faith, homelessness and pilgrimage. You can follow my journey from the comfort of your computer! And pray for me! I will be sharing reflections from the road on this blog" <http://alastairmurray.wordpress.com/>

Blog entry 24 June

Less than a week to go now and I am feeling some trepidation. To leave behind my wife, home and friends, work routines and support systems for 2 months is fairly radical. Of course I knew this all along but as the start date of 1 July approaches I find myself feeling quite unprepared. A bit daunted too, in truth ... Something about the idea of going with just the clothes I am wearing appeals. Didn't Jesus send the disciples out telling them to take only the absolute minimum and to trust God for the rest? And when the early Celtic monks and saints set out on their voyages they considered their lives as offerings, giving up all their rights and self sufficiency and praying that the Lord would guide them where He wanted them to go. And I am also consciously making the decision to give up my (illusory) self sufficiency on this pilgrimage.

5. Climate Pro: let's tackle climate change together – a new initiative from Progressio

Climate change is happening right now. ClimatePro is a unique approach to tackling this challenge. Progressio's Climate Adaptation Partners are individuals, groups and companies committed to reducing their contribution to climate change, while supporting vulnerable communities around the world to adapt to its effects by working alongside them to build their resilience and help them thrive.

Climate Adaptation Partners commit to reducing their own contribution to climate change in four high-impact areas: flights taken, vehicle use, electricity use and other fuel use. We believe that this combination of both adaptation and mitigation is the only fair and effective way to tackle climate change. We have the skills and experience to really make a change. You can join ClimatePro as an individual, a group or any size of business. Find out more: <http://www.climate-pro.org/about/>

6. ShareAction plans Green Light campaign to fight climate change through pension power

This autumn ShareAction, the Movement for Responsible Investment is launching an ambitious new campaign, *Green Light*, to harness the power of pensions to help prevent climate change.

ShareAction asks 'are you accidentally investing in climate change?' stressing that the £billions in our pension funds have the power to change the world, but that currently more than half of the money remains invested in fossil fuels and so increases the risk of climate change.

ShareAction is looking for volunteers with pension savings to engage with their funds, calling on them to act responsibly and move away from high-risk, high carbon investments. ShareAction will provide all of the know-how, skills and support to help volunteers make a big difference through this campaign. The first training will be held on 14 September, bringing together volunteers from NGOs, trade unions and faith organisations to create a coalition that cannot be ignored. Contact Jo Beardsmore jo.beardsmore@shareaction.org to find out more or volunteer to participate in the campaign. www.shareaction.org

7. Just Peace Pilgrims

The Just Peace Pilgrims arrived in London on 20 July having started their *Pilgrimage for Peace and Economic Justice* on Iona on 19 May bringing the message to Westminster and Downing Street that the £100 billion the Government are proposing to spend on renewing Trident nuclear weapons would be far better spent on funding essential human needs. The pilgrims walked more than 750 miles across Scotland and down the length of England to present their Declaration to Parliament which calls on the UK Government to abandon the renewal of the Trident nuclear missile system prioritising instead the NHS, education and other hard-pressed public service.

On Tuesday 16 July an advance party of pilgrims were joined by veteran peace campaigner Bruce Kent to present the Pilgrimage Declaration to Parliament. Bruce Kent also joined the Pilgrims on Friday 19 July to visit 10 Downing Street to present David Cameron with his own personal copy of the Declaration. The pilgrimage ended with a closing vigil in Trafalgar Square on Saturday 20 July. Supporters were invited to bring a carrier bag of groceries on Saturday morning to donate to Westminster Foodbank as part of the pilgrimage's final act of witness.

"In the context of the ongoing economic crisis," says walk co-ordinator Andrew Greaves, "we see the 2013 Peace and Justice Pilgrimage as a way of expressing our commitment to a nuclear-free, more equitable future for all." The model for the Peace and Justice Pilgrimage was the UK Olympic Torch relay. The Pilgrims covered 10-15 miles a day, with a 'rest day' once a week. They were joined by others along the way for a few hours, several days or weeks. Accommodation and hospitality was provided by pilgrimage supporters along the way in halls, meeting houses and private homes. Public reaction throughout the pilgrimage was overwhelmingly positive.

www.justpeacepilgrimage.com

8. Together for the Common Good: Christian Collaboration for Social Justice Liverpool Hope University 6-8 September

The leaders of the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist churches in England have united in support for an ecumenical initiative to explore how faiths can work better together for social justice amidst unprecedented economic crisis and inequality. The Together for the Common Good initiative will draw on the Anglican, Catholic and Free Church traditions of social justice to highlight effective strategies for faith-led social collaboration and take inspiration both from current examples of joint working and from the legacy of bishops David Sheppard and Derek Worlock. During the 1980s they, with Free Church leaders, acted as advocates for the communities in Liverpool and as 'honest brokers' between those communities and government.

Conference speakers include Lord Glasman, Phillip Blond, the Revd Ruth Gee, Bishop Rupert Hoare, Dr Anna Rowlands and Archbishop Bernard Longley. The intensive weekend will explore how faith groups can work better together for social justice, bringing together leading figures involved in faith-based social justice activity. Together they will examine past and present-day case studies and exchange examples of good practice from their diverse experiences. Booking closes on 28 July. More info on the T4CG website www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk

9. The Big Iftar *Sharing is Caring*

Hope not Hate, which campaigns to counter racism and fascism, has sent the following message:

"We are currently in the middle of Ramadan, a time for fasting, reflection and giving for all Muslims. We believe it should also be a time of coming together; a time to remember what we have in common. Since the awful and inexcusable murder of Lee Rigby there has been an upsurge in anti-Muslim hatred. People have been threatened, mosques attacked and the level of online hatred is unprecedented. A man has just been charged with murdering an elderly Muslim man in Birmingham and setting off three bombs outside mosques in the Black Country. An entire community is being blamed for the actions of two extremists and that is totally unacceptable. Muslim organisations are coming together to host The Big Iftar - an initiative to open up mosques and other community buildings to non-Muslims and share a meal. Find a Big Iftar near you <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/big-iftar/>

In the immediate aftermath of Woolwich Muslim organisations moved quickly to denounce the murder of Lee Rigby and state clearly that the murderers did not act in their name. Now, with the Muslim communities feeling increasingly threatened, it is the time for non-Muslims to show their solidarity. Attending a Big Iftar event - a meal to break the fast - is one way of doing that.

If you are unable to attend a Big Iftar event then perhaps you would prefer a more intimate interaction with a Muslim family. HOPE not hate is also promoting the Dine@Mine initiative where Muslim households host a meal for non-Muslims. You can sign up here: <http://action.hopenothate.org.uk/page/s/dine-at-mine-2013>

Food is an excellent excuse to come together and it is also a great way to show our solidarity with others. At a time when extremists in all communities are seeking to divide us, let us come together and show We Are The Many.” <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/>

NEW RESOURCE

A short synopsis has been prepared of Brian Davies' talk *Drawing Inspiration from Vatican II* which was held at St Columba's Chester on Saturday 18th May. On the 'Latest News' page of the Shrewsbury Diocese JP&SR website www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk follow the links for the synopsis: [Drawing Inspiration from Vatican II – synopsis](#) and for Brian's PowerPoint presentation: [Receiving Vatican II](#)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST

10 Empowering Women and Children Cream Tea organised in support of the project helping women and children of Malawi. Cream Tea £2.50, 3pm at 107 St James Avenue, Upton, Chester. Includes sale of Chifundo fashion, bags and jewellery, and raffle. Further information, 01244 341906

SEPTEMBER

1 September – 4 October Climate Time www.greenchristian.org.uk

8 Racial Justice Sunday Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ) www.carj.org.uk

8 Campaign Against Arms Trade Christian Network Day of Prayer www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/christian

9 Chester World Development Forum (CWF) meeting 6.45 for 7pm – venue to be announced. Talk on the work of the World Development Movement (to be confirmed) Contact 01244 350323

21 Truth and Lies about Poverty A Question Time debate chaired by the Bishop of Birkenhead, panel comprising political and church leaders. Arranged by Chester & Ellesmere Port Foodbank 6.30 for 7pm at UCAE Academy, Whitby Rd Ellesmere Port, CH65 6EA. All welcome, no need to book. To submit a question in advance, email: info@chesterellesmereport.foodbank.org.uk by 14th September

21 VSO Barn Dance Chester Details from Linda Shuttleworth 01244 679791

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

OCTOBER

15 Drone Wars Talk by Chris Cole of Drone Wars UK, arranged by Chester CND 7.30pm at Quaker Meeting House, Frodsham Street Chester. Further information from Allison Challen, alli8586son@hotmail.co.uk

[NB: please contact Allison if you know of someone with family connections in any of the affected countries and who may be able to speak for a short while at this meeting]

See www.dronewars.net

20-27 One World Week More than Enough? This year's theme for OWW builds on the "IF" campaigns slogan "Enough Food for Everyone IF ..." It asks us to consider whether we have more than enough: *of consumer culture; of being defined by what we possess; of seeing our planet consumed; whether we take more than enough ourselves?* www.oneworldweek.org