

Notes on NJPN Quarterly Meeting, 10th February 2007

The meeting was held at CAFOD in Romero Close, Brixton. Eddie Slawinski, J & P coordinator for the Mill Hill Missionaries, led the opening liturgy with an excellent powerpoint-based reflection on peace and war. We noted that a new director (for Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility) had been appointed in Brentwood, Phil Butcher, with Davina Bolt as Deputy.

Swanwick National J & P Conference 2007 We were asked to publicise this with the leaflets as much as possible. We need to make a special effort to include young people who will have specially organised activities. The conference centre (400) has been fully booked for NJPN.

2008 & 2009 Preparations for Swanwick 2008 are under way, and will be reported on at the next meeting. A London coalition of organisations has undertaken to prepare Swanwick 2009, on the theme of Migration, which will be ecumenical and interfaith in scope. The first meeting explored the theme and possible speakers.

Working Parties The Ethical Investment WP is updating its leaflet on Ethical Investment. The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) will be doing a workshop at Swanwick this year, and on May 3rd, the Group will be meeting with ChariFaith regarding their investment plans.

The Environment WP reported that the Bishops' Conference (CBCEW) will discuss energy at their April conference. Bishop Declan Lang is responsible for Environment issues, and the group is writing to him to request that Creation Theology be included in seminary training, and that Environment Education should be included in Religious Education in schools. We should read David Toolan's *In Harmony with the Cosmos*, as an inspiring "read", and see *God is Green*, on Channel 4 on February 11th, which explores faith attitudes towards climate change. The Catholic bishops are anxious to work ecumenically.

Diocesan Reports Many dioceses are organising Live Simply events or producing materials exploring its themes, A wide variety of initiatives on the environment, the bicentenary of the Abolition of Slavery, Refugees, Ethical Investment, CAFOD's gold campaign and Fair Trade gave a lively picture of the national scene. Several dioceses had run training days on "From Violence to Wholeness", an inspiring holistic programme for social change.

NJPN business The next NJPN meeting will be in Doncaster in June 2nd, with Nick Kinsella, director of the UK Human Trafficking Centre, as speaker. A Catholic, he set this agency up, and is very committed.

Finances NJPN is now a charity for tax purposes. While one account is depleted because we have to pay in advance for Swanwick, for the first time, another is increased, so overall the finances are good. We need a better bank, as we are paying too much for transactions.

Good news is that Clare Laurence is now Deputy Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service, but she can no longer be Vice Chair of Justice and Peace, alas, so we need a new one.

Online application forms are available for the conference.

We are invited to become Friends of Oscar Romero, a new trust to support projects in El Salvador. The deadline for next newsletter items is Easter (8th April).

Speaker We were delighted to hear Jo Rathbone, of Eco-Congregation, outlining how parishes could become much more committed to caring for creation, and also qualify for an Eco-award. Eco-Congregation is a national project, ecumenical and provides a toolkit to support churches. This includes ideas for worship, buildings/fabric, and for personal lifestyles. Noone could come away without more ideas, however experienced a practitioner they were.

Agency Reports CAFOD, Pax Christi, Christian Ecology Link, Housing Justice, the Jesuit Refugee Service, Ploughshare (Christian CND), and the Mill Hill Missionaries/Africa Faith and Justice all provided us with no shortage of initiatives and dates for our calendars. A new organisation for some of us was the Apostleship of the Sea, the representative of which told us about the appalling working conditions of many merchant seamen. We were invited to visit a port, and to go around with a volunteer from AS. They also have a travelling icon of Our Lady, and a Speaker Service.