



Justice & Peace

News from National Justice & Peace Network

Spring 2008

National Justice & Peace Network (NJPN)

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The National Justice & Peace Network co-ordinates and encourages work for justice and peace within the Catholic Dioceses of England and Wales.

This newsletter is produced three times a year by the Network. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the National Justice and Peace Network.

Editor
Maureen Matthews

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New Year, New Challenges

For those of us involved with NJPN the past few years have brought a number of changes, each one presenting a considerable challenge.

The decision to become an independent company challenged us to accept the responsibility for meeting the requirements of Companies House, unchartered waters for most of us.

Applying for and achieving charitable status involved much thought and discussion over many months together with a great deal of official paperwork to be presented in order to achieve our objective. It became necessary to clarify categories of membership and adapt membership forms accordingly.

With this change in status we recognised the need to become effective fundraisers in order to continue to expand our membership but more importantly to fulfil our role as responsible employers.

Throughout this period of transition our vision, mission and values remained unchanged. Our commitment to working for peace and social justice has deepened as we have taken time to reflect on our role as we engaged in the process of strategic planning required by our change in status.



Through all these challenges we have been greatly supported and often 'carried' by the skill, commitment and enthusiasm of Maureen Matthews as Administrator of NJPN, a position she has filled very successfully for eleven years.

Maureen has worked to coordinate the preparation for each of the last 11 NJPN Conferences and her administrative and organisational skills have contributed greatly to the success of Conference.

Maureen has been responsible for editing and producing our newsletter a huge task the extent of which we may not fully appreciate.

Maureen has established and continues to develop an email link group through which members can receive regular updates on a range of issues relating to justice and peace.

In addition to the regular administrative tasks relating to NJPN meetings and events Maureen has given much of her time to creating valuable resources for NJPN. She has produced a range of cards, posters, bookmarks, badges, banners and flags all which have been a source of income for NJPN as well as visually enhancing our gatherings.

Maureen has represented NJPN at a European level and has established many international links.

Over the past few months Maureen has been working to develop the NJPN website, a huge commitment which she has undertaken with great enthusiasm and we can already see the result of all her efforts. We recognise the value of the internet as a networking tool and we are very fortunate that Maureen is to take on the new role of web manager and will continue this work.

As Maureen retires from her role as Administrator we thank her for her absolute belief in the need for a National Justice and Peace Network and for all her dedication to the task of ensuring that we continue to grow as a network and be as we are called to be.

We are delighted that Ann Kelly has agreed to take on the role of Administrator, we welcome her to NJPN and hope she enjoys many happy years working with us. Ann lives in Birmingham and brings to NJPN a wealth of experience both of working for peace and social justice and as an administrator. We look forward to working with her and getting to know her better.



Anne Peacey - NJPN Chair

www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

The re-designed NJPN website is a fantastic tool which enables us to fully engage with a range of issues of social justice.

The layout of the home page enables links to a wealth of easily accessible information on meetings, current issues, local contacts and future events.

The Action page leads directly to campaigns that invite our involvement and support and the External Contacts page include a huge number of agencies and organizations that are linked to justice and peace issues.

We invite you to make this exciting website your home page

from where just one click will lead you to a wealth of resources and opportunities. We challenge you to explore ways in which we can promote this great resource and ensure that any group wishing to take action is aware of the opportunities provided.

Further developments are due in coming months.

Poverty, People and Planet. by Sr Pat Robb CJ

A shortened version of the talk given at the recent NJPN quarterly meeting at Peterborough



The interweaving of people with the planet and the terrible, scandalous and abject poverty experienced by so many on this earth, cannot be denied. Poverty is caused by people; by the way we use the planet's resources and do not share them justly.

According to the United Nations Environmental Programme, poverty is the most serious problem affecting the world today tied up with climate change and the shortage of water. Statistics are alarming as the gap between rich and poor grows ever wider in all parts of the world. Our western culture of "must have", of ME, MY, I, closes our eyes to the plight of our brothers and sisters.

There is one word I want to hammer out today: **Dignity**. To remove a person's dignity, to take away from them their self worth is, I think, a crime against humanity.

A teacher in an impoverished country taught his pupils the five basic needs or human rights:

1. to survive
2. to love and to be loved
3. to feel worthwhile to themselves and others
4. to have fun
5. to have reasonable freedom

We know that over a billion people do not have enough for dignified survival and yet for millennia humans lived, hunted, ploughed and worshipped in a simple sustainable way, respecting the earth and living in harmony with other life forms. What our generation is guilty of is deliberately destroying the earth, deliberately reducing human kind to slavery, deliberately killing and maiming in the name of GREED and POWER.

We have taken from people the security needed to love and to be loved; the security of knowing they have the necessities of survival, peace in their land so that they can grow food; access to water, that children can go to school and development projects can flourish.

We have denied people fun time as they have had to work for long, long hours making our clothes, cleaning our streets and offices and providing our food.

Our elected government has stood by and watched as our brave brothers and sisters have challenged dictators, human rights abusers and environmental destroyers. We have locked up innocent people and collaborated with nation states that do the same.

So how can we respond?

I would like to suggest following 5 "P".

1. **Prayer**. Prayer is a walking in balance. In a world where achieving is top of most people's agenda we are asked to

keep in balance as we walk on the two feet; charity and justice. Pray about the news, look into the eyes of the poor and suffering.

You are important and you deserve time to re-charge your batteries for your work for justice and peace. Times of prayer, of silence, walking, reading and doing what helps you get closer to God. St Ignatius says: "Everything has the potential of calling forth from us a more loving response to God." Working for justice can be driven by anger or frustration and yet there has to be a flowering of love out of our own inner peace. We need these times of personal reflection to gain that peace, while those around strive to get bigger and bigger bank balances, make "names" for themselves by their stupid attention grabbing behaviour and dress, work to get more and more recognition, certificates, even peerages, we are doing what Yahweh asks of us: Accepting to walk with the marginalised apparently achieving nothing, not making a name for ourselves, but trying to love God and love our neighbours regardless of their situation in life.

1. **Pen**; we can use our gift, our blessing of an education which is denied so many. We can write on behalf of the poor and marginalised. Letters to prisoners, letters to MPs, signing petitions.
2. **Purse**; we can buy Fairly traded goods, organically grown produce and local produce. We can support agencies that work to challenge the structures of injustice. We could use our power as shareholders to hold companies to account on ethical trading standards.
3. **Political voice**; Vote for the common good. Join a protest. Get to know your MP.
4. **Planet**. It is good to hear the Church speaking up more on this issue. Ecology is the understanding of all life forms and their interaction, and economy is the management of this balance with equity. Since the industrial evolution we have tried to manage the environment without understanding and our stewardship has been found lacking.



The devastation of recent floods in Mozambique

"God knew all people need the same provisions", so wrote a Mozambican refugee on the side of her hut. In other words **DIGNITY**, which will only come from a just sharing of the world's resources. The Principles of The Earth Charter, the inspiring movement that came from the grassroots following the Rio Convention, ends with these words:

"Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life." Or in the words of Jesus: "I came that ALL may have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

JP JUSTITIA ET PAX



Monument in front of remains of Power Station 4 at Chernobyl

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSIONS

The European J&P Conference is a network of 31 national Justice and Peace Commissions which this year met in Kiev.

Through lectures, visits and meetings we discovered and experienced the situation in a country which has suffered a troubled past.

Meeting people who were victims of the most terrible repression and atrocity was at the same time painful and inspiring. We heard about the great famine, political and military repressions, the forced displacement of the Crimea-Tartars, the tragedy of Bykivnia, the massacre of Babyn Jar and the sufferings and martyrdom within the different churches. We learnt that the gaining of Independence does not automatically or instantaneously come with the cessation of repression.

We were touched by the way people dealt with their past and grateful for their openness in sharing their stories with us. These stories must be told,

and told now, in order not to be forgotten. They are part of the national and international memory. The need for significant places to reflect and mourn, to acknowledge the truth and give voice to past events, became increasingly evident.

The latest catastrophe to befall this troubled nation is that of the nuclear explosion at Chernobyl. We gathered in the nearby deserted town of Pripjat in silent prayer for those who suffered in this terrible tragedy.

Coming to terms with the past is a complex and demanding process and learning from it is ongoing. To prevent the repetition of past mistakes and injustices our learning should be drawn from our own and other people's similar histories. For healing to begin and reconciliation be a possibility people need to face the fears and lay them aside.

The European delegates offered their support to the people of the Ukraine as they work towards dialogue and growth.

M M

ROME



Maureen with Cardinal Martino

2nd WORLD CONGRESS OF JUSTICE & PEACE GROUPS

At the same time as Pope Benedict was creating 23 new cardinals there were representatives of more than 100 countries meeting together in celebration of the 40th anniversary of Populorum Progressio.

This second World Congress of Ecclesial Organisations for Justice and Peace brought together 310 people from Columbia to Benin, from Sudan to Angola, Japan to USA. While I welcomed the opportunity to meet up again with colleagues from Europe, last seen in Kiev in September, the best experience of the few days in Rome was to share the stories and briefly the lives of peoples one would never normally have the opportunity to meet.

We heard from the Archbishop from India of the plight of the Dalits; and saw the anxiety on the face of the delegate from Pakistan who was following the changing news from his homeland as the power struggle was evolving. The delegate from Sierra Leone, in the workgroup I attended, spoke

of the after-effects of long running conflict, but the biggest thrill for me was to renew the acquaintance of Archbishop Bo from Burma who I last met in 1998 while on an exposure trip to that troubled country. I was able to assure him of the deep concern that we all feel, of the campaigns we are involved with and of our continual holding the people of Burma in prayer.

During our few days at the congress we were able to listen to erudite speakers and experts from each continent. Cardinals Martino, Bertone and Crepaldi who were part of the welcoming panel shuttled between the congress and the cardinals' investiture. Cardinal Martino was profuse in his thanks to us for attending and inspired us all to continue the work of Populorum Progressio.

The lasting memories from this congress will be of the hundreds of dedicated J&P people, who had travelled half way round the world to share the vision of Pope Paul VI's prophetic encyclical.

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live simply

14-15 March 2008
New Century House
Manchester

Celebrate, Debate
Share, Look ahead

Change yourself . . .
to change the world

Tickets are available now online at
www.livesimply.org.uk/event08
or contact Mark Woods on
01293 541334

live it! An event to celebrate the livesimply challenge

During Advent 2006 at numerous dioceses across England & Wales launched the *livesimply* Challenge encouraging us as individuals and communities to look at how we live our lives, and to try and live them simply, sustainably and in solidarity with those who are poor. Importantly this was often the work of various groups in each diocese from Justice and Peace to the Liturgy Office, CAFOD to Charismatic Renewal. Over the last year people have been taking up the Challenge and especially making Promises to *livesimply* by leaving the car at home, conserving water, taking part in anti-poverty campaigns and giving more time in prayer to God.

Just over one year on to celebrate so much effort, to showcase what has been achieved and to commit to doing even more in the future, there will be a major celebratory event 14-15 March 2008 in Manchester. The event will include debate on climate change and how to live simply, worship, music and drama as well as prominent speakers such as BBC's Mary Colwell, Plymouth Diocesan Advisor and charismatic speaker David Wells, and the Anglican Archbishop of York Most Revd Dr John Sentamu, well known for his strong views on social justice.

The event will also be supported by *livesimply* patrons Archbishop Vincent Nichols and Bishop Crispian Hollis, who will be there to help us think how we can as a community start to live the Gospel more fully by answering God's call to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with all those who are poor both at home and overseas.

livesimply Network Coordinator, Mark Woods says "We are looking for passionate individuals who love a challenge and are ready to put faith into action to join us at *live it!* It promises to be a fantastic day and one that will be a turning point in many of our lives."

FEBRUARY

- 1** "Telling it like it is; young voices from the streets and some responses from the faith communities" 10-4 Quaker Friends' meeting House, Liverpool, L1 3BT
- 3** **Poverty Action Sunday** CAP (Church Action on Poverty) 0161 236 9321 www.church-poverty.org.uk
- 5** **Creation and Climate in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition** led by Ed Echlin. Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ, 6.30-8pm. Sisters of Sion sion@yahoo.co.uk
- 6** **Ash Wednesday.** Christians risk arrest through acts of non-violent civil disobedience, including marking the Ministry of Defence building in Whitehall with ash & charcoal. Pax Christi 0208 203 4884 www.paxchristi.org.uk
- 9** **NJPN Quarterly Meeting** 10.30-4.0 English Martyrs Parish, York. 0207 901 4864
- 12** **Fellowship of Reconciliation & Pax Christi Seminar.** *The Iraq War—5 years on A continuing challenge to Christians—what is our response today?* St Vincent's Centre, Carlisle Place, SW1P 1NL 2-5pm
Contact :info@paxchristi.org.uk
- 15** **CAFOD Lent Fast Day** 0207 733 7900
www.cafod.org.uk
- 15** **Night Vigil of Reconciliation & Reflection for Creation** with Fr Chris Boles SJ. Clifton Cathedral, www.soundofmanywaters.org or 0117 973 8128
- 16** **Portsmouth Diocesan Justice & Peace Day** Living our Faith: The Good Steward at St Anne's School, Southampton SO15 2WZ. Speakers: Pat Gaffney & Alison Gelder. Contact: 01329 835583 or 020 8203 4884
- 24** **Salaam, Shalom, Peace Liverpool J&P Commission Annual Memorial Lecture.** Archbishop Kelly reflects on His experience in the Middle East. 1.30-3.30pm. Contact: s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk or 0151 522 1080.
- 25-9** **Fairtrade Fortnight** 020 7405 5942
www.fairtrade.org.uk

MARCH

- 1** **2008 Peace Education Network Conference** – Friends House, London. Details email or 'phone Hilary Topp:
education@paxchristi.org.uk , 0208 203 4884
- 7** **Women's World Day of Prayer – God's Wisdom provides new understanding.**
www.wwdp-natcomm.org
- 14-15** **Live it!** An event to celebrate the *livesimply* challenge. New Century House, Manchester. Contact: www.livesimply.org.uk/event08 or 0870 879 1006
- 29** **Caring for Creation. All Faiths for Peace, Justice & Sustainability.** Inter-faith conference, Oxford Town Hall. Email Christians@cnduk.org or 0207 700 4200/2393.

MAY

- 10** **NJPN AGM & Quarterly Meeting** 10.30-4.0 CAFOD offices, Stockwell Road, London, SW9 9TY Contact; 0207 901 4864
- 16** **World Debt Day.** 10th anniversary of the Birmingham G8 human chain.
www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk
- 17** **Faith & Justice Conference:** "Between Holiness and Hedonism". Chaplaincy Centre Lancaster university. Speaker John Bell of Iona Community. Contact: lfj@fish.co.uk

JUNE

- 5** **World Environment Day** www.unep.org/wed
- 8** **Campaign Against Arms Trade Christian Day of Prayer.** www.caat.org.uk
- 16** **PaxChristi AGM** English Martyrs Parish, York.
www.paxchristi.org.uk
- 16-22** **Refugee Week**

JULY

- 6** **Day for Life** www.dayforlife.org
- 13** **Sea Sunday** www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk
- 18-22** **NJPN Conference "Hear My People Cry"**
0207 901 4864

Many of the above websites may be accessed via links from our website
www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

BURMA UPDATE FROM BURMA CAMPAIGN UK

Following the demonstrations and unrest in Burma during September/October the Burma Campaign UK report:

Campaign success - DFID doubles aid to Burma
In October we asked you to email the Department for International Development (DFID) to call for increased aid to Burma. Thousands of you took the action and following our campaign, DFID have announced that they will double British aid to Burma from £8.8 million this year to £18 million by 2010. This will save hundreds of thousands of lives. Thank you to everyone who took the action.

New EU Sanctions

On 15 October EU Foreign Ministers finally agreed to strengthen targeted sanctions against Burma's military regime. The new measures include a ban on investment

in, and imports of, Burmese timber, metals and gems. It is also considering a ban on all new investment if the regime does not enter into genuine dialogue with the democracy movement.

These are the first sanctions by the EU that will actually hurt the regime and cut off an important source of income. However, the EU needs to continue to increase pressure on the regime by imposing the investment ban as soon as possible and increasing targeted sanctions, such as a ban on financial transactions.

Continue to follow the movement for democracy in Burma through: www.burmacampaign.org.uk or www.irrawaddy.org and through the Action page of the NJPN website.