



Justice & Peace

News from National Justice & Peace Network

Spring 2010



*Let all God's children
sit at God's table,
drink the wine of
deliverance, eat the
bread of freedom:
Freedom from bondage
and freedom from
oppression,
freedom from hunger
and freedom from want,
freedom from hatred
and freedom from fear,
freedom to think and
freedom to love,
freedom to hope and
freedom to rejoice;
soon, in our days .
AMEN*

Prayer from a Seder meal



Contents

Why Catholics must be participants..in the General Election	p1
Spring 2010 Actions	p1
Speaking Personally:	
Bishop William Kenny	p2
European Year of Poverty	p2
Phones for Justice	p3
NJPN Facing the Future	p3
Ethical Investment Group	p3
CAFOD volunteers in Copenhagen	p3
Diary	p4
Donations/Membership	p4
Contact details	p4

Why Catholics must be participants not spectators at the General Election

The starting gun for the next general election already seems to have fired despite the lack of a date for the contest.

The election will be set against a background clouded by the MPs expenses scandal. The resulting disillusionment could well have beneficial consequences for the smaller parties like the Greens, British National Party and UK Independence Party. There may also be a new wave of independents standing seeking a genuine reconnection between Westminster and the people beyond.

The economy will no doubt be one of the major issues debated. The Labour Party has undertaken massive spending to try and kick start the economy out of recession. It hopes that as the economy takes off and tax revenues rise that the deficit built up will be reduced accordingly. The Conservatives on the other hand favour cutting public services and spending generally in order to reduce the deficit. The concern must be that the cost of the crisis is not dumped on the lowest paid and most vulnerable people in our society.

Another subject that Catholics will hope is high on the election campaign agenda will be addressing climate change. All of the parties have made positive noises about this subject but the question will be who can deliver?

It must be hoped that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will figure in election debate. Sadly there is no party committed to pulling out of both conflicts. Withdrawal is already underway in Iraq but mainly so that troop numbers can be redeployed to Afghanistan. The commitment to these futile conflicts needs to be challenged.



Immigration has become a political football used to veil racism. The desire to blame the perceived outsiders for problems has also helped foster growth of the extreme right wing BNP. The Catholic Church has often been a lone voice in making the case for migrants. The Church has also condemned the policies of the BNP. It will be important to continue this work at election time, making the positive case for migration and helping stop the BNP.

Catholics need to get involved in the political process. It is no good just standing by as spectators on our own destinies; we must be participants in the political process, working to ensure that the social teachings of the Church become a reality under the next government.

Paul Donovan

(See also: www.paulfdonovanblogspot.com)

A fuller version of this article is available on the website, www.justice-and-peace.org.uk, as well as statements from politicians, activists and others. For hard copies send a stamped addressed envelope to NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX. The views expressed are not necessarily those of NJPN

Spring 2010 Action Highlights—See Diary for full details

The General Election is expected to be in May, so start preparing now. We hope to have links to resources for the election from around the Network on our website. LiveSimply Youth Forum will also have a website for those working with young people to help raise their awareness. **Lent and Easter** start with the Ash Wednesday witness at the Ministry of Defence, or organise a local liturgy, details from Pax Christi. CAFOD Lent Fast Day 26 February –this year is the 50th anniversary of the Friday Fast Days. Celebrate the women who started them and women peacemakers on **International Women's Day. Fairtrade Fortnight** -Fairtrade Foundation have ideas for action. 2010 is the 30th Anniversary of the assassination of **Archbishop Romero**, for details of events organised or to organise your own contact Julian Filochowski, romerotrust@btinternet.com. Contact Christian CND for events running up to the **UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference** in May. See inside for the **European Year of Poverty Zero Poverty** campaign.

Speaking Personally: Bishop William Kenny

Where do you think your commitment to justice and peace comes from? From a long way back. I come from a working class background and there was serious discussion at home around Catholic Social Teaching. Most of the discussion in those days (50 years ago) was around what was a fair wage, a living wage—at that time men went out to work and women stayed at home. Then as a young priest, I did all the theoretical stuff, but I did work among Portuguese immigrants in the coal mines in Belgium who were living in a lot of poverty, and their priests were too. Rich Catholics there didn't seem to see the contradiction in going to church and seeing their priests in poverty while they were living in wealth; so my awareness began at that level and with time it grew at the international level as well.

What for you are the most important areas of concern today? First and foremost, recognising the dignity of the human person; this covers everything, the life issues and social justice. I feel strongly about immigration, that these are our sisters and brothers. Every single man and woman has a right to this dignity, even if they are in prison. Then issues like climate change and the credit crunch, I suspect that, at the end of the day, the poor will pay, it worries me that again and again, they will pay. I'm concerned about anyone who gets marginalised in our society and this isn't always to do with material needs; I've met bankers who are being marginalised, their children are being spat at school – no-one has a right to marginalise anyone, especially not children. With justice and peace groups, I would always push the local; they need to keep an eye on what is happening in their prison, hospital, school, their local community, it may be about racism or whatever issue arises; if they don't, who else will? This doesn't mean that they shouldn't be involved in national and international campaigns, but the local should always have a certain priority.

What sustains you in your commitment? I do believe in God and that every woman and man is created in the image of God. Only if we regard each person as our brother or sister, unless I see that and am utterly committed to them I won't be sustained in the difficult times. Then seeing the perseverance of others in this work; in the area of irregular immigration, few politicians across Europe are interested, but finding people on the ground who are working at this day after day trying to help people, sustains me in what I'm trying to do at the policy level. I do admire those who can do this without a faith in God – I'm not sure I'd bother! So prayer, knowledge and the perseverance of others are what sustain me.

What are your hopes for a Church like ours in the 21st century? To be a beacon of hope: whatever our faults, we stand for values and the preaching of the Gospel. We're not perfect, but there are still many people joining the Church, every Easter at the end of RCIA programmes, so we must be doing something that gives hope to ordinary people. I honestly think that hope is there in the Church in England and Wales; many people in this society live in a state of chronic low depression and we need to be offering them hope. We can do this by speaking out for the poor and the marginalised in our society, even if we don't always do it as well as we should. Through work for justice and peace, through our prayer, liturgy and teaching we can offer hope. I gave out prizes recently in a Catholic secondary school and was impressed by how many of the young people were inspired by their faith to want to give something to society.



Bishop William Kenny CP is a Passionist. He worked in Sweden for 37 years, 3 as Auxiliary Bishop in Stockholm. He has been President of Caritas Europa, concerned with problems of refugees and immigrants in Europe. He is a representative on the Holy Land Co-ordination which supports the Church in the Holy Land. He is currently Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham and served as Diocesan Administrator from May—December 2009.

2010...The European Year of Poverty

What is the European Year of Poverty?

The European Commission announced the year 2010 to be the European Year of Poverty in order to put poverty within Europe on top of the political agenda and to raise general awareness of this issue. 78 million people are currently living at the risk of poverty within the member states of the European Union. When people hear about poverty they tend to think of distant developing countries, so the point of the European Year of Poverty is to raise awareness that poverty can be found all over Europe – very often generally perceived as a wealthy continent - whereas in reality the gap between rich and poor has been rising.

Caritas Europa, which has affiliates in all European countries, has started a huge initiative to encourage people to take part in events and to become interested and involved in the issue of poverty and social justice. All EYP2010 campaigns will convey the message that poverty is everybody's concern and that something can be done about it. Caritas Europa often develops policy papers on the subject and addresses political institutions in lobbying for the emergence of sustainable social systems which will help alleviate poverty across Europe.

How can you get involved?

Caritas is inviting you to take action and has provided us with a handbook full of ideas on how you can contribute to the campaign all over Europe, such as fundraising Coffee mornings. The handbook is available from Caritas Social Action Network*, or on www.justice-and-peace.org.uk. This is just one example of a great variety of initiatives you can start with your friends and family, or within parishes, or community, work and school environments. You are invited to upload your own ideas on poverty-related issues by presenting pictures or stories on the website www.zeropoverty.org. Moreover you can see all the activities that are taking place in relation to this campaign all over Europe. Be inspired by them and start acting now!

Furthermore, Caritas Austria has produced a small "zero poverty" pin that can be worn as a sign of your involvement and recognition of the issues of poverty within Europe. Charities and other social organisations are encouraged to distribute the pins and to wear them at public events. They can be ordered through Caritas Social Action Network (*www.csan.org.uk, 020 7901 4875).

The European Year of Poverty 2010 campaign is an initiative that those involved in Justice and Peace groups can take part in to make an effective contribution in raising awareness about European poverty.



NJPN Facing the Future

At our Networking Day in November 2009, we asked people to tell us what they saw as the benefits of belonging to NJPN. This is what they told us:

- **INTERACTION**—between Dioceses, Individuals, National Agencies, Local Groups and Religious Orders
- **SHARED VISION** - giving inspiration, enthusiasm, a sense of common purpose, prophetic witness
- **NETWORKING** - a One Stop Shop for up-to-date information, an opportunity to advertise campaigns, share ideas and good practice.
- **OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEETING, SHARING, AND INSPIRATION** especially through Annual Conference and Networking Days
- **FRIENDSHIP**—support, personal affirmation, a sense of belonging to a larger group.

You may have heard that NJPN is facing financial difficulties due to the ending of the grant from our main funder. We feel that the Network has a unique and vital role in the life of the Church in England and Wales and we are determined that NJPN is going to continue, come what may. We will do everything we can to keep our administrator. We are actively seeking support from Religious Orders, and making applications to grant-making trusts. The Executive, every member of which is a volunteer, is doing all it can to see us through the present funding difficulty, and although we run on a shoestring we are looking at ways to reduce expenditure. However, we believe its not just about standing still. There is so much more NJPN could do with more resources. We will be re-doubling our efforts to increase group membership from organisations who benefit from our extensive network, as well as seeking to increase individual membership. If you are not a member yet, get in touch and become part of this vibrant and supportive network!

NJPN Ethical Investment Group

NJPN is in the process of reconstituting its Ethical Investment Working Group as an Email based group. The main focus of the group will be to support the work of the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR). If you would like to be involved, please email admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk



The One Stop Shop for Justice & Peace —Make it your Home Page

By making our website your Home Page on your computer, you can have instant access to all the Diocesan websites as well as those of most of the justice and peace related agencies, plus our rolling calendar, Resources Page, Catholic Social Teaching page and much more! To do so: **Go into Internet Explorer—Tools— Internet Options- Home Page and type in www.justice-and-peace.org.uk.**

CAFOD Volunteers Campaign In Copenhagen

On the evening of the 9 December 2009 we set off from CAFOD's Brixton headquarters for the 19-hour coach journey to Copenhagen. We were part of the more than 100,000 campaigners from all over the world gathering that weekend to march for FAB – the fair, ambitious and binding deal on climate change which we hoped would be signed by the 192 countries attending Cop15, aka the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

A sobering mental snapshot from that weekend stands out clearly: the dike we travel across in Holland, flanked on either side by the North Sea. Sea level rises aren't just a problem for tiny Pacific islands and low-lying developing countries. If scientific predictions are accurate, this part of wealthy Europe may also be under water before the century's end.

My mental photo album does contain less depressing snapshots. An entrancing view of Copenhagen outlined in lights against the December dusk. A concelebrated international Mass in St Ansgar's Catholic cathedral. (Bishops from different countries took part in the ceremony, but no bishop from the UK was anywhere to be seen). The warm welcome given by our Danish Caritas Internationalis hosts at a reception after the Mass – and their thoughtfulness in providing us the next day with apples for the march. The march itself in an atmosphere of optimistic enthusiasm and camaraderie. We marched, sang, waved our placards and chanted slogans along the three miles from the city's main square to the



Bella conference centre. A four-hour plus trudge, yet worth every inch of the way. (And yes, the black-clad anarchists were there, but media reports of violent disturbances that weekend were overblown.) On Sunday, in 0-degree weather, we joined a large ecumenical gathering in City Hall Square to hear Bishop Desmond Tutu encourage us all to keep on campaigning for a FAB deal. His announcement that over 580,000 signed cards destined for the world's leaders had already been handed in was received with loud cheers. At the end we all joined in his rallying call, "Yes, we can and YES, WE WILL!!"

I don't think any of us was surprised by the Conference's fudged outcome. If anything, it is an incentive to press on with our work for climate justice. For if we don't tackle the global issues created by human-driven climate change world poverty will only increase, leading to a rise in violence and a perilous decline in the chances for a sustainable peace.

Yet however grim that outlook may be, we must never lose hope. If Copenhagen taught campaigners one thing, it is that our voices **are** being heard. One of CAFOD's press officers told us that scores of astonished conference delegates were watching the march on giant screens inside the Bella Centre. Most said that seeing so many people calling for a binding deal encouraged them to continue fighting for it. If not today in Copenhagen, then tomorrow or the day after in Mexico or wherever until we reach our goal. The campaign marches on.

Diana Mills

FEBRUARY

- 17 **Ash Wednesday witness against nuclear war preparations:** MoD London: Pax Christi, coordinator@paxchristi.org.uk, 020 8203 4884.
- 20 **World Day of Social Justice**
un.org/esa/socdev/intldays/IntlJustice
- 22-7 **March Fairtrade Fortnight** www.fairtrade.org.uk
- 26 **50 Years of CAFOD Fast Day** www.cafod.org.uk
- 27 **Network for Peace AGM** Huddersfield: Polling Day Plus One—where next for the Peace Movement: 020 7278 0444
www.networkforpeace.org.uk, mail@networkforpeace.org.uk

MARCH

- 1 **Embassies Walk** in preparation for UN NPT meeting: Christian CND, www.ccnd.gn.apc.org, 020 7700 4200
- 5 **Women's World Day of Prayer** www.wwdp-natcomm.org; 01892 541411
- 6 **NJPN Open Networking Day:** Cardiff: Rev Roy Jenkins: Torture, the Crucial Challenge for Christians: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk; 020 7901 4864
- 6 **Just Church?** Rhyl: Speakers Kevin Flanagan, Mgr Malachy Keegan. Contact Maria Pizzoni: 07595584790 or Curial Offices 01978 262726
- 8 **International Women's Day:** www.internationalwomensday.com Celebrating Women Peacemakers greeting cards from Pax Christi, 020 8203 4884, coordinator@paxchristi.org.uk,
- 16 **Hexham Debates: Alistair McIntosh** The Roots of Climate Change in the Violence of Hubris: www.hexhamquakers.org.uk
- 19-21 **Peacemaking in a Time of Global Crisis:** Hilfield, Dorset: www.hilfieldproject.co.uk, hilfieldproject@franciscans.org.uk, 01300 341741
- 19-21 **Oxford: Las Casas Institute International Conference:** The Current Conditions and Future Prospects of the Catholic Social Conscience: lascasas@bfriars.ox.ac.uk
- 24 **30th Anniversary of Archbishop Romero's death:** see inset
- 27 **CAAT Regional Gathering** York: www.caat.org.uk, christian@caat.org.uk, 020 7281 0297

APRIL

- 2 **Good Friday**
- 2-7 **Flame of Hope South Coast Relay** Dover to Southampton: Christian CND, www.ccnd.gn.apc.org, 020 7700 4200; or www.peacebourne.serifweb.com, George on 01323 844 269
- 4 **Easter Sunday**
- 16-17 **Peace History Conference** Imperial War Museum, London: Bruce Kent, brucek@uk2.net, 020 8340 6639.
www.abolishwar.org.uk,

23, 24, 25 **Romero Commemorations in Wrexham** with Julian Filochowski. Contact Maria Pizzoni: 07595584790 or Curial Offices 01978 262726

MAY

- 3-28 **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference**, New York: www.reachingcriticalwill.org
- 8 **Concert for Peace**, Musicians Against Nuclear War
www.mana.org.uk, admin@mana.org.uk, 020 455 1030
- 9-15 **Christian Aid Week** www.christian-aid.org.uk, 020 762 4444
- 15 **NJPN Open Networking Day and AGM:** CAFOD Offices, London: Frank Regan, New Wine in Old Wineskins?
www.justice-and-peace.org.uk; 020 7901 4864
- 15 **International Conscientious Objectors Day**
- &
- 21 **Bl Franz Jägerstätter Feast Day** Pax Christi, 020 8203 4884
coordinator@paxchristi.org.uk, www.paxchristi.org.uk
- 22 **Southwark J&P Spring Assembly** Aylesford Priory: Terry Brown, office@southwarkjandp.co.uk, 020 7928 9742
- 24 **CAAT Regional Gathering** Bristol: www.caat.org.uk, christian@caat.org.uk, 020 7281 0297

Romero Anniversary Commemorations

Masses and liturgies around the country around the date of the Anniversary in March, including:

- 20 11.00am York Minster with John Sentamu, Keith O'Brien
- 24 5.30pm Westminster Cathedral with Vincent Nichols
- 28 6.30pm Westminster Abbey with Rowan Williams, Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Vincent Nichols and Leslie Griffiths

Events planned in: Birmingham, Brentwood, Edinburgh, Lancaster, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich, Reading, St Helens, Salford, Sheffield, Southwark. Also Wrexham in April (see above)

For more information contact romerotrust@btinternet.com, or see the full programme on www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

Annual Justice & Peace Conference

16-18 July, Swanwick, Derbyshire
Our Daily Bread: Food Security, People and Planet
Booking forms with this newsletter, or contact the Administrator at NJPN, or download from www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

Pax Christi

European Peace Walk Burgundy, France, 2-10 August. For 18—35 age group. www.vezeley2010 or 020 8203 4884
Visit to the Holy Land, 1-8 November, £900 per person. Limited places available, call 020 8203 4884

DONATE TO NJPN: Send cheques payable to NJPN to the address below, or to make a regular donation by **Standing Order**, or to **become a Member**, contact the Administrator at the address below, or download the Membership Form at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

The National Justice & Peace Network encourages and facilitates communication and networking between Catholic/Christian individuals, groups, and organisations (both lay and religious) who are working for justice, peace and the integrity of creation at grassroots, diocesan, national or international level.

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