



Justice & Peace

News from National Justice & Peace Network

Autumn 2009

On The Road Together, Sharing Our Stories



*Our God, father,
mother, sister, brother,
all our faces are seen
across the world,
across this land.
Help us to value and
enjoy the diversity in
your creation and in
the human family.
Help us all to be proud
of being created in
your image and trust
your presence with us
on our life journeys.*



The Changing Face of Britain

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In June and July the message of climate change was carried along the Leeds-Liverpool canal by **Noah's Barge**, with Mr and Mrs Noah on board meeting people for events at various places along the route.



The 31st National Justice and Peace Conference brought together people from many nations to debate the issues around migration. This year's theme "**On the road together – Amazed by Migration**" celebrated the diversity in our society by opening up the discussion on such a rich and sometimes controversial topic.

At the beginning of the event keynote speakers provided insight and information on the causes of migration and shared their views on how we should respond to the challenges faced today. **Don Flynn**, of the Migrants Rights Network, called for faith groups, trade unions, citizens' organisations and others working on migration to come together in solidarity. He criticised the asylum system that makes it impossible to recognise humanitarian need, the problems caused by the Government points system for migrant workers, and stressed the need for a regularisation for undocumented workers.

Mary Grey, Professor of Theology, looked at migration in India, Palestine and Rwanda. She explained how conflicts and poverty in these countries have direct implications for people living there in the form of the creation of refugees. **Neil Jameson**, from the Citizens Organising Foundation, told of the 'Strangers into Citizens' campaign that is seeking to gain regularisation for undocumented workers. He condemned the Government's present approach to these people as amounting to starvation, forcing people into destitution.

Bishop Patrick Lynch also addressed the conference, pointing out that "Companies and markets are global, the labour force is mobile and at the touch of a button millions of dollars can be sent from one side of the world to another. Many years ago Pope Paul V1 spoke about the Church's responsibility to care for the casualties of social change. Migrants and their families are amongst those who suffer as a result of social change in our world today." He stressed the importance of the Catholic Church's social teaching and encouraged us to welcome and walk with migrants in the hope that they themselves are inspired and empowered to reach out to and work for justice for their fellow migrants. Bishop Pat went on to state that "Migration is an international not just a domestic issue – an issue that is closely linked to international development and peace" and so we are all effectively on the road together.....

This sparked a lot of interest and using the principles of **Open Space** Technology we as delegates were invited to contribute to the areas of debate.



Subjects for discussion ranged from "Fighting the causes of Migration" to "Lobbying Governments" to "Building welcoming communities". Keen activists in Justice & Peace spent most of the weekend in dialogue, the experience much enriched by the participation of delegates from other countries who had personal experience of the effects of migration.

Throughout the weekend, it was not all work, many delegates took part in the Just Fair, learning about the latest campaigns and purchasing fair-trade goods. On Saturday night there was much fun and laughter at the ceilidh where the very young and 'young at heart' enjoyed traditional dancing and music.

We came together in solidarity to listen to one another's ideas, concerns and recommendations. We left inspired, understanding the issues and complexities and with the hope that by interacting with 'the other' we can work together to educate, tell the stories and open the mind and hearts of our communities.

Catherine Waters-Clark

More photos and reports, including the recommendations and action points from the Open Space workshops are available on the website:

www.justice-and-peace.org.uk



Speaking Personally: SR PAT ROBB



Where do you think your commitment to justice and peace comes from?

Initially from my mother, an Anglican, who was always “doing good” and whom I often accompanied on these missions of mercy. Even though we were not well off we shared what we had with others. I remember, in World War 2, first of all British Tommies, who were billeted near us, coming to share our simple Christmas Day fare, and then, in following years, German prisoners of war from the local camp, coming to Christmas tea. It was to be

many years before I realised that, as a Christian, I was being asked to do more than just works of charity; I was being asked to go the extra mile. I am a nurse and midwife by training and was working in a poor township in Zimbabwe when a victim of Mugabe’s first reign of terror (in the 80s) came for help. His back had been flayed as a punishment for being a member of the opposition. As I treated his wounds I felt an anger rising in me. “I must be able to do more than just bandage the wounds” I said to myself. “Why is this happening? What can I do”. And so I got involved with the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe..... Since that time I have been amazingly privileged to work in some very difficult conflict areas and this has heightened my commitment to help inform others of unjust situations and to look at possibilities for action. Working in refugee camps in various African countries in civil war situations I was aware of the marginalisation of women as they fought to get their rations, not so much for themselves as for their children and the sick. A lot of my time and energy was directed towards this group through health care and administration. On returning to the UK I did a spell at The Passage before going to Brazil for 6 months to see the Basic Christian Communities at work. That was a very interesting experience and showed me just how much the people on the ground are able to do when other Christians are in solidarity with them: not doing as I had in Africa, but being alongside. It was very good lesson for me as I am naturally a Martha and not a Mary! Now I work as a chaplain in an immigration detention centre and am alongside those facing up to many injustices of our Home Office policies.

What for you are the most important areas of concern today? Human rights abuses and the destruction of the environment would be the umbrella for my concerns. Human Rights abuses all over the world are making the gap between rich and poor grow wider by the day. Millions lack water and sufficient food. Millions more are driven off their land by the greed of others who steal natural resources. Conflict affects the lives of millions forcing people to become refugees, others face imprisonment, torture and death. Rich governments seem to do little to lift the poor out of poverty, but they continue to support large multinationals who exploit people and planet. (NB RBS using tax payers money to prop up, with loans, environmentally UNFRIENDLY energy companies such as E:ON, instead of supporting Green Energy projects).

As a follower of Mary Ward I am naturally very concerned about the way women are treated in so many cultures and organisations. I long for ALL women to have the right to make choices, be educated and to be safe from sexual abuse, but their lot seems to be getting worse. We, however, must not give up putting pressure on abusive powers. If we give up the bullies and abusers have won!

I am very concerned about the inhumane treatment the Palestinians are receiving from Israel and feel there is a need for a much stronger and effective United Nations to act on this and many other unjust situations around the globe. In the UK huge issues of concern for me are the inept and unjust Migration Policies of the Government that deny sanctuary to many who are in need, and that traumatises many, especially children, with detention and delays in finalising appeals.

What sustains you in your commitment? The life of the carpenter of Nazareth, the inspiration of people like Mary Ward and her followers, and the companionship of others with whom I have the privilege of working on J&P issues. And I often think of those amazing African women I met in very difficult situations yet keeping alive their dignity, sense of humour, and working so very hard to scrape a living for their families.

Jesus’ option for the poor and the marginalised is the energising force in my life and also Mary Ward, who founded the Congregation of Jesus to which I belong. She was prepared to suffer imprisonment, humiliation and suppression, by the Church, of her new Institute as she endeavoured to carry out God’s will for a “new way of being” which included the education of women and girls. This did not come about in her life time, but she never lost faith. There are many who inspire me in different ways: the poor women of Africa who maintain their dignity and selflessness in the most inhumane of situations, the many refugees I have met in this country who keep their hope alive and their trust in God when the powers of the British government are pitted against them. I find Oscar Romero, and Aung San Sui Kyi inspiring and I get energised by so many, who today, work with NGOs here and overseas, and others who dedicate time and love to their local J&P needs, challenging unjust structures, being alongside the marginalised, simplifying their life styles and being prepared to be called “Fools for Christ’s sake.”

What are your hopes for a Church like ours in the 21st century? I would hope to see Catholic Social Teaching central to parish worship and activities and the windows, originally opened by Vatican 2, pushed even wider open to allow for new ways of living our faith in this multicultural world. I feel women could play a much greater part in the life of the church and I would hope that the Church will speak out more on issues of justice and peace and the environment, and not only speak out, but give an example by their own actions making use of modern methods of communication and always making the situation of the poorest and marginalised known and responded to. I would like to see a Church that goes out more to those on the margins in all parts of the world to strive for peace with justice. The Church has a huge responsibility to work towards lessening the gap between the rich and the poor of God’s world. As Archbishop Tutu said: “As long as there is one person in the world hungry, or oppressed, in fear and lacking dignity, the work of the Christian is not done.”

Sr Pat Robb is a member of the Congregation of Jesus. She worked for several years as a nurse and midwife in hospitals and refugee camps in Africa. She is now based in Cambridge and works as chaplain at an immigration centre. She is active in East Anglia J&P Commission.

Burma Update

Over the past few months the country of Burma has featured in the media to a greater extent than is often the case. The crazed actions of an American swimmer served only one useful purpose - to turn everyone's attention to this desperate country ruled by one of the most brutal dictatorships in the world.

It seems that every few years an event occurs that is so momentous that even Burma's secretive regime cannot contain it. It is only two years ago that the monks were marching in Rangoon and we were all caught up with the Saffron Revolution, and less than a year later that Cyclone Nargis devastated vast areas of the land, especially around the Irrawaddy delta region. 140,000 people died and more than 2 million were affected. Many of the homes and families that were wrecked at the time remain shattered some 18 months later.

The early autumn months are renowned as the time for military repression and the army has recently restocked and updated its weapons. The role of North Korea in facilitating this update is something to be watched and alarmed by. Rumours of a secret nuclear reactor are also linked to North Korea as are reports of a network of between 600 and 800 underground tunnels across the country.

This September (2009) work is due to start on construction of 4000 km parallel gas and oil pipelines from Arakan State to Yunnan Province in China. Already there is fighting and displacement of 30,000 of the ethnic Kokang. The military government are expected to clear all opposition from the areas of the pipeline development and forced labour, forced relocation and land confiscation are just some of the problems to be expected.

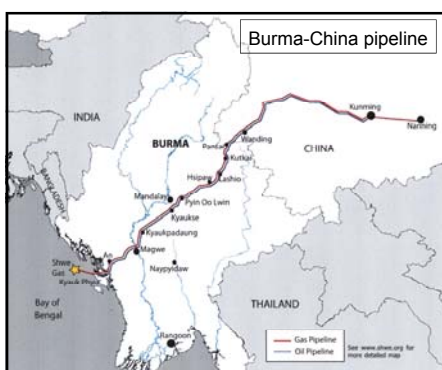
An estimated 13,200 soldiers are already deployed along the route of the pipeline. The advantages to China are the supply of gas from the offshore Shwe gas field and an alternative route for African and Middle East oil which at present has to pass through the US-Navy controlled Malacca Strait. The advantage to the Burma regime is an income of at least \$29 billion over the next 30 years. The regime currently spends 50% of its income on arms. It has no external enemies. It uses its weaponry only for the repression of its own people.

Having successfully prevented Aung San Suu Kyi from being able to take any part in the 2010 elections, the military rulers of Burma are likely to cling onto and wield such power as to keep the Burmese people as repressed as they have been since 1962. Although commentators will insist that change must come from within the country, it is hard to see how the monks in October 2007 could have been more brave. How do you stand up and make a difference when your own army guns you down?

During the last year in this country we have had the opportunity to see the remarkable play by Richard Shannon, "The Lady of Burma" (script and sound recording available), as well as the film "TOTALdenial", highlighting the court case which was won against TOTAL oil; more recently the film "Burma VJ" was premiered, telling the story of young video journalists with hidden cameras who recorded the real story of the Saffron Revolution: a gripping but terrifying film that puts the viewer in the heart of the action. Most of these journalists are now serving 65 year prison sentences. I recommend these films and also Zoya Phan's book "Little Daughter", an account of the Karen people and their treatment at the hands of the Burmese military.

To support those working to bring about change in Burma, visit: www.burmacampaign.org.uk (currently promoting a Global Arms Embargo); and www.irrawaddy.org

Maureen Matthews



Autumn/Winter 2009-2010

Actions—See Diary for full details

ECONOMIC JUSTICE Church Action on Poverty regional events ; CAFOD'S Paul VI Memorial Lecture by Shirley Williams. National Ethical Investment Week in November; "G20 Alternative Conference" while the G20 meets in the UK in December.

CLIMATE CHANGE Campaigning towards the UN Conference in Copenhagen in December culminates in "The Wave" event in London on 5 December; 24 October is International Day of Action for Climate Change—organise a local event using the Climate Change Cocoa Challenge—contact Brie O'Keefe at Progressio: 020 7354 0883; brie@progressio.org.uk

INTERFAITH The first Interfaith Week is inaugurated this November.

WAR AND PEACE Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day in November: ideas for ways to remember all victims of war and find alternatives to war from Movement for the Abolition of War (www.abolishwar.org.uk; 01908 511 948) or Pax Christi.

Peace Sunday: 17 January, resources from Pax Christi: the theme is "If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation".

Aldermaston Blockade: 15 February.

HUMAN RIGHTS Prisoners' Sunday, International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians, World Migration Day, Human Rights Day, Holocaust Memorial Day . Christmas cards to prisoners of conscience from Action by Christians Against Torture (www.acatuk.org.uk; 01752 843 417)

WORLD AIDS DAY 1 December. The text of a talk given earlier this year by Sr Margaret Farley who spoke of AIDS as a justice issue from her experience in Africa is available from admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk or 020 7901 4864.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Advent resources from Churches Together (www.ctbi.org.uk) and from Anne O'Connor (anneoc980@hotmail.com) in Shrewsbury Diocese. Alternative Christmas gifts will be available from CAFOD and other charities; make it a *livesimply* Christmas!

POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

ACTION WEEK starts with Homelessness Sunday on 31 January and finishes with Poverty Action Sunday on 7 February; resources available from Housing Justice and Church Action on Poverty.

FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT 22 February–7 March: Fairtrade Foundation

Caritas in Veritate The Pope's latest encyclical on Catholic Social Teaching came out in July. *Caritas in Veritate* (*Love in Truth*) commemorates **Popolorum Progressio**, addressing issues of development in the light of current economic realities and globalisation, and includes a section on the environment. The document is available on our website:

www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

Progressio have produced a booklet of reflections on the document, "The Common Good": www.progressio.org.uk/

The US Bishops' Conference has produced a study guide online at www.usccb.org/jphd/

OCTOBER

- 24 **United Nations Day:** www.unmeditation.org/
- 24 **International Day of Action for Climate Change:** www.350.org
- 24 **Plymouth: Climate Change Event:** CAFOD and Respect Plymouth: contact Lindsey Carter, lcarter@cafod.org.uk
- 24 **Westminster Annual J&P Day:** Energy to Make a Difference www.rcdow.org.uk/justicepeace; 020 8888 5518
- 25 **London: St Paul's Cathedral: Faith & Money: What Are We Worth?** www.stpauls.co.uk/institute; 020 7489 1011
- 31 **London: CAAT National Gathering:** www.caat.org.uk; 020 7281 0297

NOVEMBER

- 1 **London: St Paul's Cathedral: Faith & Money: What Should We Do?** www.stpauls.co.uk/institute; 020 7489 1011
- 6-7 **St Andrews: G20 Finance Ministers' Meeting**
- 7 **London and St Andrews: G20 Alternative Conference:** Put People First: putpeoplefirst.org.uk
- 7 **London: Westminster Cathedral: CARJ 25th Anniversary Celebration:** www.carj.org.uk; 020 8802 8080
- 7 **Ottery St Mary, Devon: CEL Conference:** Transition Towns www.christian-ecology.org.uk; 01522 33858
- 7 **Newport, S. Wales: Fair Trade Social:** kate@fairtradewales.com; 02920 803 293
- 7 **Peace Education Network Conference:** www.peaceeducation.org; 01865 278 443 (FoR) or 020 8203 4884 (Pax Christi)
- 8-14 **National Ethical Investment Week:** www.neiw.org
- 8 **London: MAW AGM:** www.abolishwar.org.uk
- 8/11 **Remembrance Sunday/Armistice Day:** Peace Pledge Union: www.whitepoppy.org.uk; 020 7424 9444
- 12 **Coventry: How the bee has helped build peace in northern Uganda:** CORD: rdickson@cord.org.uk; 01926 315 301
- 15 **Prisoners' Sunday:** PACT: www.prisonersadvice.org.uk; 020 7490 3139
- 15 **International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church:** www.csw.org.uk; 0845 456 5464
- 15-21 **Interfaith Week:** www.interfaith.org.uk
- 21 **NJPN Open Networking Day:** CAFOD Offices, London: John Hemer: St Paul and Justice and Peace: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk; 020 7901 4864
- 22 **London, St Mellitus: Prisoners' Afternoon:** Mgr Malachy Keegan and others. Contact Bruce Kent: bruce@uk2.net; 020 8340 6639
- 27 **London: Paul VI Memorial Lecture:** Shirley Williams: Capitalism, Catholicism and Community: harmony or dissonance? www.cafod.org.uk/PaulVILecture; tickets@cafod.org.uk; 020 7095 5568 (pre-booking essential)

DECEMBER

- 1 **World Aids Day:** www.worldaidsday.org or postivecatholics.googlepages.com
- 3 **World Migration Day:** www.catholicchurch.org.uk
- 5 **London: The Wave:** Climate Justice Ecumenical Service and March; activities for children: www.cafod.org.uk; 020 7326 5517
- 7 **London: Pax Christi Advent Peace Service:** www.paxchristi.org.uk; 020 8203 4884
- 7-18 **Copenhagen: UN Climate Change Conference**
- 10 **Human Rights Day:** www.unmeditation.org/

2010 JANUARY

- 17 **Peace Sunday:** www.paxchristi.org.uk; 020 8203 4884
- 18-25 **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:** www.ctbi.org.uk; 020 7564 7254
- 23 **Arundel & Brighton J&P Assembly:** Seán McDonagh: Peace with Water, War without: David Thomson, justice-and-peace@dabnet.org; 01293 515 666
- 27 **Holocaust Memorial Day** www.hmd.org.uk
- 30-7 February: **Poverty and Homelessness Action Week:** www.church-poverty.org.uk; www.housingjustice.org.uk

FEBRUARY

- 6 **London: Palestine Solidarity Campaign AGM:** www.palestinecampaign.org; 020 7700 6192
- 15 **Aldermaston Blockade:** www.cnduk.org; blockawe@yahoo.co.uk; 020 7700 2393
- 20 **World Day of Social Justice** un.org/esa/socdev/intldays/IntlJustice
- 22-7 March **Fairtrade Fortnight** www.fairtrade.org.uk
- 26 **CAFOD Lent Fast Day**

MARCH

- 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
- 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** romerotrue@btinternet.com

Church Action on Poverty Regional Events

- 14 Nov **Sheffield: Annual Conference:** Redefining Prosperity
- 17 Nov **London:** Unemployment and the Future of Work
- 23 Nov **Leeds:** Ethics and Finance after the Crisis
- 2 Dec **Newcastle:** Developing Our Communities
www.church-poverty.org.uk; janeta@church-poverty.org.uk; 0161 237 5359

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.



NJPN-
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network

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Editor
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