

Report of NJPN Quarterly Meeting Peterborough 17 November 2007

NJPN's idea of holding their quarterly meetings around the country was endorsed by a good turn out from the local Peterborough J&P groups. Following discussion of the more routine items we heard about the 2008 Conference. Plans are progressing and speakers are already booked. The proposal for those involved to develop a sense of team bodes well.

From the reports of the Working Parties it is clear how complex the issue of Ethical Investment is proving to be with no 'black and white' answers. Providing a central point for queries about issues was supported but the danger of giving advice was stressed. We were told about Charifaith which is an Investment Fund that aims to reflect Catholic ethos and teaching. On the Environmental side the broad nature of the topic was again apparent with lots of advice on events and websites, giving clear messages about living simpler more sustainable lifestyles. One such example is Operation Noah, a climate change campaign founded by Christian Ecology Link (CEL).

The Diocesan reports were full of activity and enthusiasm and it was interesting to see how many and varied issues the groups were engaged in. Several reported on work which linked with the theme of migration (a topic which is relevant in Peterborough) and examples of practical advice were given. It was frustrating to hear that the role of officers from the Gangmasters Licencing Authority is limited as they are not able to be proactive and that workers in such jobs as catering and care are not covered. Fairtrade was also a key theme and it was good to see the progress made in parishes and schools. However there was some disappointment with Councils such as Biggleswade turning down the option of becoming a fairtrade town.

We then had a 'guided tour' of the NJPN website and the progress made was greeted with considerable interest. It is proving to have a wealth of information on issues and contacts and much praise goes to Maureen for this.

Sr Pat Robb had the unenviable task of holding our attention in the 'after lunch' slot. Her talk on 'Poverty, People and Planet; a few reflections' focussed on refugee issues and was inspiring and enthusiastically delivered. Her message about treating all people with dignity came through loud and clear. The 5 'P's' response to the issue - Prayer, Pen, Purse, Protest and Planet will be a challenge to us all. The further discussion on migration and the reports from the Agencies which followed reinforced many of the points.

This was Maureen's last meeting as Administrator and she was thanked for all her hard work. However as she will be involved in developing the Website she will continue to be as busy as ever.

Mary Beasley.