



# Justice & Peace

News from National Justice & Peace Network

Spring 2006

## 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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NEXT ISSUE DATE

**MAY**

COPY DATE

**7 APRIL 2006**

## “Deus caritus est” (God is love)

‘Love is never “finished” and complete, throughout life, it changes and matures, and thus remains faithful to itself.’

‘The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State. Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken



Extracts from the first encyclical of Benedict XVI

the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply.’

Complete text available at: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20051225\\_deus-caritas-est\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html)

## The Greening of Justice and Peace

NJPN has set up an Environment Working Group as a follow up to the focus on environmental justice at last summer's annual conference. The group has held two meetings so far, with a brief to inform and mobilise the NJPN network to take action on environmental issues, to make links with other relevant bodies, and to help nurture a spirituality appropriate to environmental concerns.

Already there are plans to promote Operation Noah (the Churches' Climate Change campaign) and Eco-Congregation to NJPN members. Excellent materials on both initiatives can be used in parishes to raise awareness, save energy and learn to appreciate natural resources. Progressio's campaign against 'Terminator' technology where the genes of food crops are manipulated to genetically switch off a plant's ability to germinate a second time is also a focus. NJPN partners within the Jesuits and the Columbans are also concerned that corporate plans to push GM food will actually undermine

the food security of the world's poor rather than enhance it. CAFOD's forthcoming campaign on Extractives, particularly the negative impact of gold mining on poor communities will be highlighted too. A key NJPN



partner is Christian Ecology Link, an extremely effective ecumenical group whose website already keeps people informed about the latest materials and events on [www.christian-ecology.org.uk](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk).

The group hopes to strengthen links with the Bishops' Conference which has held two high-level environmental consultations in recent years. Action at local

level too will be urged. An NJPN leaflet, Greening our Parish, should be ready by Easter if the necessary finance can be obtained to produce it. A visit to Britain in March by Columban ecologist, Sean McDonagh, will provide an opportunity to deepen knowledge of Creation Theology.

There are plenty of signs of hope within NJPN already. At the group's second meeting Sr Christina McCann, who is based in Birmingham Diocese, told us how the 40,000 Sisters of St. Joseph internationally agreed at a recent gathering to spend the next five years focusing on the Millennium Development Goals, the Earth Charter and respect for all forms of life. As well as religious orders, Justice and Peace Commissions in such dioceses as Cardiff, Liverpool and Nottingham are already devoting significant energy towards tackling environmental justice. The first has actually changed its title to 'Cardiff Diocesan Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation network'.

Ellen Teague (Convenor)

## Stewards of Creation — conference feedback

Our JPIC Commission has put together a programme of reflection and sharing on issues around ecology and called it Minding Our Planet Earth - an 11th Hour Programme. It is Scripture based and designed for small groups to work on together and lead to action. Our Associates and Sisters are working on it together, Module by Module from Sept 2005 to Sept 2006. *Nuala Mottley*

Our small J&P group at Ss John & Matin, Balsall Heath, Birmingham have been focusing on the environment and God's creation. One of our La Retraite sisters designed an A4 leaflet based on 'He came down to Earth from heaven', with some suitable thoughts and a few suggestions of things parishioners might do. We gave out the leaflets as people went into church, talked about it at the end of Mass and then handed out Operation Noah cards.

*Margot Hutchison*

I have continued to advocate on behalf of communities affected by the activities of British-based oil and coal mining companies and am hoping to deepen my knowledge of those companies and, with others, make more effective our lobbying of company management to achieve justice for displaced people. In September I moved to the Oxford Catholic Worker community where we grow some of our own food on an allotment, buy organic vegetables from a box scheme and avoid meat and most foods that have too many 'food miles' on them.

We buy green electricity and have investigated getting solar water heating panels on our roof but have discovered that even with government grants we cannot possibly afford to do so. This dismays us and I will be taking the matter up with the MP as it seems silly that in order to reduce our carbon emissions we have to be rich, cold or dirty!

*Richard Solly*

A few months ago I was invited by Jo Rathbone (Eco-Congregation Co-ordinator) to act as one of the assessors for a local URC Church seeking an Eco-Congregation Award; the other was the recently appointed Agenda 21 officer. The very invitation made me aware of my ignorance regarding Eco-Congregation itself - I agreed and the learning process began.

Jo provided both information and assurance together with copies of the 12 modules of which the First is "an environmental toolkit for Churches". It provides guidelines to enable Churches to check up on their "existing environmental ministry, prioritise future steps and identify supportive resources". While there are these guidelines and materials suggested, this is no straight-jacket. It is up to each Church to use its own means to achieve the same end: an Award which recognises that this Community has made environmental issues/care of God's creation an integral part of the Church's life and mission.

We warmly recommended that the Award be given. The whole experience suggests that:

\* the Eco-Congregation Award can provide Churches with the incentive, the tools, the support which would enable them to embark on a process of effective "greening".

\* this is a positive way to respond to the Gospel imperative to care for God's creation at a time when a Make Poverty History type mobilisation is urgently needed to prevent our falling below the vital benchmark of a two-degree increase in global temperature.

\* there may be value in a group of Catholics looking through the materials and suggesting ways in which worship/theology might be adapted for parish use.

*Elizabeth Rendell*

At the Servite RC Church, Fulham Road, London our monthly Justice & Peace group incorporates many green / environmental issues as a standard.

As one of the conference attendees, I have given feedback on the conference during Sunday mass and at other parish group meetings, plus making available information and resources bought / collected at conference.

*Paula Gayle*

**Please keep us informed of your actions on the environment.  
Your ideas may inspire others.**

## ACTION !

### **CHOOSE LIFE NOT DEATH SAY NO TO TRIDENT**

Write to your MP about the Government's nuclear policy and Trident in particular.

For further information contact  
*Pax Christi 020 8203 4884*

### **SAY NO TO SUICIDE SEEDS**



Write to your MP asking him or her to sign a parliamentary motion, EDM1300, to show support for a ban on Terminator Technology—by 1 March '06.

#### **Also write to:**

Margaret Beckett  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs,  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

Hilary Benn  
Secretary of State for International Development  
1 Palace Street  
London SW1E 5HE

For further information contact  
*CIIR 020 7354 0883*

### **Endurance Challenge**

Could you take on the life of a refused asylum seeker by living off the equivalent of £5 a week and a food parcel for the first week of Lent (1-8 March) ?

For further information contact  
[www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk)  
0161 236 9321

To contact your MP visit  
[www.locata.co.uk/commons/](http://www.locata.co.uk/commons/)  
or phone the House of Commons Information Service on  
020 7219 4272

## Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God' (Rom. 15.7)

A personal reflection:

### 'An experience of Church'

*Do you have a similar reflection to share?*

The story of a year in the life of my parish began way back in Advent 2004 when, at the end of Sunday Mass our priest announced that he wished to share an idea with us. Reminding us that we were preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus into a family that was temporarily homeless it was suggested that we offer a home to members of the Salvation Army who were in need of accommodation.

The Salvation Army needed space to store the provisions essential for their work. Within the Church building such space was available; agreement was reached and from this small beginning just one year ago wonderful things have happened and will continue to happen.

We are on a journey and each step has been taken in faith with the hope that we are working together within our local community.

As people of The Book we know that strange and unexpected things happen on journeys. We may meet strangers on the road who teach us to open our eyes and show the way. We carry our experiences with us and, just like Jacob, may end up walking with a limp.

Over the past year there have been occasions which have stayed in my mind like signposts to show the way. I recall 'doing theology' when clearing up from the soup kitchen with members of different faith traditions discussing the merits of infant baptism and sacramental celebrations, each sure of their own position but accepting of the other.

I welcomed the invitation for the Salvation Army to hold Sunday worship in the church and felt that the joining together of the two communities on the afternoon of Good Friday was a blessing for all of us.

Another gift to the community was the event during one world week, organized by 'Churches Together' with facilitators from different traditions.

The joy of occasionally welcoming members of the Salvation Army to share in the music making has been tempered somewhat by the feeling of sadness in being unable to share in the Eucharist, but like Jacob we just keep limping along.

The year has past very quickly and we have just held our Christian Unity service, a real celebration and acknowledgement of all that has happened to us since last January and how we have grown in our relationships with each other.

We are called to search for the Divine in our daily lives and the verse of a hymn used during our Unity service speaks the words far more eloquently that I ever could.

*'Lord, we come to you through one another, Lord, we come to you in our need. Lord, we come to you seeking wholeness, lay your hands gently lay your hands'*.  
(laudate: Decani Music 2000)

As I write I look through my window and see the lights of the Church shining out into the darkness as a light to the world, welcoming Christ in the person of the rough sleeper for whom there is no room at the inn.

*Anne Peacey*

### "Nappies are not food"

Azib, an Eritrean woman who attends one of the Newcastle Drop-Ins, was refused Asylum along with her husband and two children, Mary and Hannah. As is often the case, she was not immediately sent home, since it was not considered safe at this time. Because of the children the family were given accommodation and financial help in the form of vouchers.

Azib came to the Drop-In one afternoon in a very distressed condition and told me that she had been shopping and the assistant at the check out had told her, "You can't buy nappies, your vouchers are for food only. Nappies are not food".

Both Mary and Hannah wear nappies. I went out and bought some straight away, of course, but I knew we had to do something more about this very real problem that other parents must be facing.

After explaining this to our Co-ordinating Council, one of our members, Jill, decided

to tell Azib's story to her Junior Justice and Peace Group, pupils at a primary school in Newhouse, a village in Durham.

Thinking that the subject of nappies might be a source of giggling, Jill began by telling the group that she didn't want them to laugh because what she was going to tell them was a serious story. The young people listened very quietly and at the end one of the boys said, "I don't find that anything to laugh at. It's not funny at all!"

The group decided they must do something to help and a nappy fund was agreed. They very quickly raised quite a lot of cash and have so far collected £200 to use in this way.

We were all delighted that this group, wearing their Newhouse Junior Justice and Peace Group T Shirts were able to join us at Durham Cathedral for our Make Poverty History North East service of thanksgiving and re-dedication. We were all very proud of them!

*John Marshall*

# DIARY

Prayer . . . .

Information . . . .

Reflection . . . .

Action . . . .

## FEBRUARY

26 **Poverty Action Sunday**  
*Stories That Need to Be Heard*  
CAP 0161 236 9231

## MARCH

3 **Women's World Day of Prayer**  
*Signs of the Times* prepared by the women of South Africa. 01892 541411  
www.wwdp-natcomm.org

4 Cwmbran Day of Reflection on 'The Call of Creation -- Theology and Spirituality for Care of the Earth'. Llantarnam Abbey, Cwmbran, Newport, South Wales. Details Val Evans, Cardiff Diocesan JPIC network j.evans2620@ntlworld.com

6-19 **Fairtrade Fortnight**  
*Make Fairtrade Your Habit.*  
Fairtrade Foundation 020 7405 5942

10 **CAFOD Lent Fast Day**  
CAFOD 020 7733 7900

15 - 17 **Countryside & Church: Contemporary Challenges.**  
Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. Organised by The Churches Rural Group and the Arthur Rank Centre. Details and booking form from the Arthur Rank Centre 02476 853060

## APRIL

16 **Easter Sunday**

20 - 22 Tim Cooper (CEL chairman) is a speaker at: the International and Interdisciplinary Conference: **COUNTERING CONSUMERISM: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR RESPONSES**  
Graduate Centre, London Metropolitan University  
www.londonmet.ac.uk/iset/conf

21-23 Worth Abbey, near Crawley, W Sussex  
**"You Know How a Stranger Feels"**  
A residential weekend retreat for Christians working with asylum seekers and refugees with Mary Jane Burkett, Uta Sievers, Fr Paul Fleetwood  
01342.710318 or TOC@worthabbey.net

## MAY

13 **CAFOD Campaign Conference, London**  
020 7733 7900

14-20 **Christian Aid Week**  
020 7620 4444

20 **CAFOD Campaign Conference, Manchester**  
020 7733 7900

19-21 **Chester Christian Ecology Link Retreat 2006:**  
Keeping on Keeping On: An Ecological Spirituality for the Long Haul: led by Kathy Galloway. Chester Retreat House CH1 2HU details and booking form A few bursaries available for "Under 30s".

## JUNE

5 **World Environment Day (UN)**  
www.unmeditation.org/

11 **Campaign Against Arms Trade Christian Network Day of Prayer**  
020 7281 0297

17-25 **Green Transport Week** - www.eta.co.uk

26-30 **The Big Recycle** - www.thebigrecycle.com

19-25 **Refugee Week**  
020 7346 6752

## JULY

21-23 **National Justice & Peace Conference**  
*The Desert Will Bloom—Scattering Seeds of Hope*  
020 7901 4864.

## AUGUST

6 & 9 **Anniversaries of first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima & Nagasaki.**  
Pax Christi 020 8203 4884 & CND 020 7700 2393.

## SEPTEMBER

10 **Racial Justice Sunday**  
CARJ 020 8802 8080 & CCRJ 02076204444

21 **Global Cease Fire Day**  
020 7456 9180 & www.peaceday.org

## AWARD FOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI

## NEWS



Aung San Suu Kyi

Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Burma's pro-democracy leader, has been awarded the Olof Palme Prize. The organizers said Suu Kyi was awarded the prize for her "unyielding fight for a democratic Burma." "To her compatriots, she is known as the 'iron Butterfly', a name alluding to her peaceful struggle and

her courage and strength of character. Aung San Suu Kyi has devoted her life to Burma, and is a stubborn believer in the final victory of its peoples' will." "To peoples around the world fighting oppression, she is an important symbol of peaceful opposition to repressive power." The \$50,000 prize is to be presented on 28 February, the anniversary of the 1986 shooting of Palme, the Swedish prime minister. The award will be accepted by Sein Win, a cousin of Suu Kyi and head of the exiled National Coalition Government of Burma.

The National Justice and Peace Network welcomes Fr Joe Ryan to the post of J&P Coordinator for the diocese of Westminster. Fr Joe takes over from Fr Pat Davies, who has held the post for the last three years. Fr Pat has attended NJPN meetings for many years and we will miss his presence with us. Fr Joe Ryan is based at: West Green Parish 4 Vincent Road London N15 3QH Tel: 020 8888 5518 Fax: 020 8888 5554 email:justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk