

Justice & Peace

News from National Justice & Peace Network

Summer 2005

National Justice & Peace Network (NJPN)

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

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Editor
Maureen Matthews

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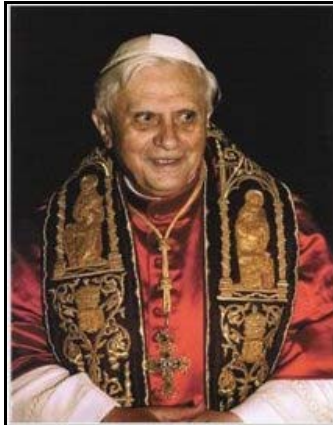
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BENEDICT XVI and J & P



The Christians and members of other faiths who gathered with Pope John Paul II in Assisi affirmed that seeking God means seeking peace and justice, according to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

"If we as Christians set out on reasons to unleash a war the path toward peace following against Iraq. To say nothing of the example of St Francis, we the fact that, given the new do not need to fear losing our weapons that make possible identity; it is precisely then that destructions that go beyond the we find it,"

"Are we not all, perhaps, passengers on the same train? Is not the fact that the train chose as its destiny peace and justice, and the reconciliation of peoples and religions, a great inspiration and at the same time, a splendid sign of hope?"

"And, if others join with us in the search for peace and justice, neither they nor we should fear that the truth might be trampled under the beautiful phrases uttered,"

"There were not sufficient

combatant groups, today we should be asking ourselves if it is still licit to admit the very existence of a 'just war.'" May 2003

As Christians we must constantly be reminded that the call for justice is not something which can be reduced to the categories of this world. . . Only when we Christians grasp our vocation, as having been created in the image of God . . . Can we address the urgent social problems of our time from a truly Christian perspective." March 2005

TIME FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

27th Annual Justice & Peace Conference
Organised by the National Justice & Peace Network

WE ARE STEWARDS OF CREATION The Greening of Justice & Peace



Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire
8-10 July 2005

Some aspects of the degeneration of our planet are already irreversible. If we do not act swiftly then further degradation will occur which now could be prevented. What we do not properly value and regard today will cease to be there for our children and future generations. The

warnings are coming 'loud and clear' and yet too few of us appear to be adjusting our lifestyle sufficiently to make any real difference.

In the recent electioneering where were the environmental issues?

This year's Annual Justice and Peace Conference on 8-10 July at Swanwick in Derbyshire is the first J&P conference to focus on the environment and all the issue which are so vital at this time and explore the links between defending the environment and reducing global poverty.

Fr Sean McDonagh, a Columban father reknowned for his books and lectures on environmental issues, will be the key speaker. He will be ably supported by Ed Echlin, Paul Bodenham, Ellen Teague and Joji Carino. Also contributing to the weekend are Fr Andres Tamayo, a CIIR partner from Honduras, and Janet Millar, a Greenpeace activist. There will also be a variety of practical workshops on issue around the theme.

For bookings and information contact:
NJPN Administrator, 39 Eccleston Square,
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WHY BE A PRISON VISITOR ?

Is prison just the place for people who 'get what they deserve' or might there be another way of looking at the life of prisoners?

When I was younger and thought about the 'corporal works of mercy' (are they still called that?), I would pass over the one about visiting the imprisoned, seeing it rather as something metaphorical, which meant visiting anyone who *felt* imprisoned, because of course it couldn't be meant literally....So it came as something of a shock to find myself involved in the issue, especially, of women in prison, through my membership of the policy and development committee of CASC. In 1999, CASC produced with the support of ecumenical friends its first "Jubilee Paper" on "Women in Prison". This report with its twelve recommendations for improving the lot of women in prison affected me quite deeply.

Our J & P group here in York had made a few visits to the Chaplaincy Centre at Full Sutton prison – a maximum security men's prison outside York – at the request of the Anglican chaplain there. Through these visits, I became aware of the desire and need of some prisoners to talk to someone from 'outside'.

The prison which I decided to visit is in our parish and our parish priest is the Catholic chaplain there. It is an open and resettlement prison from which women can go out to do community work, and eventually to take jobs in the neighbourhood. In the past, women have been brought to Sunday Mass from there but they sat together, with an officer, and always left before the end. That has changed over the past few years. The prisoners are now brought and fetched by a fellow-prisoner in a fairly ordinary car instead of a prison van, are usually unaccompanied by an officer and stay for coffee afterwards. This has had a quite marked effect on those members of the parish who have got to know them. Last Sunday, one of the babies was baptised in our church and it was a very warm and friendly occasion.

In the five years since I started visiting, I have been a visitor for seven different women (three of whom were in with their babies) and have also made the acquaintance of several more through the church and through taking the occasional service at the prison when the chaplains couldn't cover them. I suppose the biggest difference it has made to me is that I no longer see prisoners as a group apart, but people like you and me, many of whom have sad and even tragic backgrounds. At the very least, most of them come from dysfunctional families and the majority are

there because of a crime committed at someone else's behest. These are facts and a look at the statistics shows that very few women are in for violent crimes. Perhaps half are drug-related. Many of the women lose their homes, their partners, even their children when they come to prison for any length of time. In many cases, poverty is at the root of everything. One woman was offered £1000 to carry drugs; another was threatened that her son would be killed if she didn't....There are many, many stories.

What has become very clear to me is that issues around prisons are mostly issues of justice. The connection between offending and re-offending and deprivation, poverty, inadequate or non-existent housing, unemployment, inadequate parenting, scholastic exclusion and failure, is a very strong connection. Above all, mental health is a major concern. The number of prisoners who have had mental health problems before and during their imprisonment is startlingly high. I truly believe that for many, the choice of offending or not offending is not a free choice. If we are truly concerned about human rights and justice, we need to inform ourselves in much more detail about who is in prison, and why. The churches are all producing documents and conferences on how to cut down on the rate of re-offending, and how to make prison "a place of redemption". I still feel much more needs to be done to ask WHY people offend, and WHO is most likely to offend. Surely this is a justice issue?

I have learnt so much by being a prison visitor and I believe there is a need for this particular task. We cannot even be sure our visits will do anything to change things in the future. Our role is not to judge or moralise about going down the straight and narrow. There may be opportunities to show another way of life, but there may not. It may just be our role to listen without comment. What I do know is that any one of these women could be me, or my daughters or sisters or friends if we, too, had been brought up in an atmosphere of fear, or poverty, of insecurity, of deprivation. When the model for success is not being found out, or being able to get away with lies, prison is not going to do much to change ideas for the better, but it is just possible that you and I may be able to do something towards offering another way of living just by being there for someone.

Nan Saeki

WORLD OF WORK

World of Work Working Party of the A&B Justice & Peace Commission

'Children, Daddy's just rung to say 'Good Night and God Bless' because he'll be late home from work again'.

There are lots of ways that the changing pattern of work impacts us and our families. On the one hand there are record levels of affluence and low unemployment, on the other there are record levels of stress and family breakdown.

It would be an uncaring church if we weren't concerned about this for lots of reasons.

Quite apart from the money, many of us have sought work that is satisfying in some way, in which we can invest our skills, exercise our creativity, develop enriching personal relationships, provide some form of 'good' for society.

Such aspirations are not just in the realm of our physical, mundane life, but intrinsic to, and expressions of, our spiritual life too.

But the church says it is the authority on our spiritual life doesn't it?

Business life brings people from diverse backgrounds not just into contact, but into structures of co-operation and common purpose. Decisions made by such communal enterprises can have profound effects for good or bad on other communities near and far.

The church is often looked to when we want to hear the voice of the community. Does it know enough about all the communities involved?

The witness of our faith, our lifestyle and our respect for others, can face its toughest test at work, but can also act as a powerful beacon to those looking for a star to guide them in their personal lives.

When you last heard the church talk about the importance of evangelisation, was the emphasis on getting 'them' to a special church service, or on equipping 'us' to be more effective witnesses in the market and workplace?

We believe that the 'Kingdom' encompasses our working lives wherever we work. The 'Spirit' is moving 'all over this world' including the world of work. Do we know enough about this to be any earthly use?

The ecumenical World of Work working party has begun to ask the questions, and to search for how God is using those of us in our workplaces to bring forth his Kingdom, and those of us in his church to recognise and affirm this. Please join us on our quest.

NB A date for your diary: Half day seminar/workshop 'Discipleship in the Workplace' Saturday 12 November. Contact: World of Work, c/o Kevin Burr, Justice & Peace Adviser, 01483 894325

The New

SOUTHWARK J & P COMMISSION

SOUTHWARK J&P COMMISSION
Cathedral Clergy House
Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7HY

Tel: 020 7928 9742
E: office@southwarkjandp.co.uk

Fieldworker:
Sr Pat Trussell
Commission Chair:
Fr Michael Scanlon

This is one model of a Commission structure and it is still early days to see how it works.

How is your Commission structured?

What other models are there?

The Need for Change

Southwark has a history to be proud of when it comes to Justice and Peace. In the past 30 years the diocese has established the J&P office and employed a series of workers. It has also had a variety of structures, the most recent being the Area Commissions and the Coordinating Committee.

Times, and challenges, change. So does the complexity of life, and of the diocese. There are hundreds of people working in a myriad of different groups to try and bring about something of the Kingdom of God among us. For some it might be issues of newly arrived asylum seekers, for others Third World debt, for others prisoners of conscience, for others campaigning for racial equality. Some work in parish groups, others in dedicated organisations, some of which are Catholic, others of which are not.

Our context too has changed. We are not simply London and Kent, but suburbia and the inner city, coastal and rural, international corporation and local businesses, large parish and small parish. We are a multi-cultural, multi-faceted diocese where much of our population originates from outside the area, be it the north of England or South America.

In our Review one issue came up time and again: we need to come together, to share our rich experiences so that we can support and encourage one another. ***That is why we have decided to make the new Commission not a committee but an Assembly to which all can be invited and take a place at the table.*** Together we can do great things for God and His Kingdom.



Fr Michael Scanlon (Commission Chair), Sr Pat Trussell (Fieldworker) and Archbishop Kevin

The New Commission

In October 2004 we wrote to all those on the **J&P contact list** to invite those who would like to volunteer to be on the new Commission to write and let us know. The list was divided up by deaneries, and where there were more than two volunteers from one deanery we circulated their names to all the others on their deanery list and asked people to vote for two of them. The ones with the most votes became the Deanery Representatives on the Commission.

The Archbishop also invited **clergy** in London who are Borough Deans to join the Commission, and in Kent Bishop Hine asked for a priest in every deanery to volunteer to join the Commission.

The Archbishop also invited those **groups working for Justice and Peace** in the diocese, such as CAFOD, to send a representative. An invitation was also sent to our partners from **other faith communities and secular bodies**. They too are part of the Commission.

Yes its big – but not that big. ***It is an assembly, not a committee, one which brings together all the different strands of Justice and Peace in our diocese so that conversation, collaboration and consensus can be developed among us and other people of good will.***

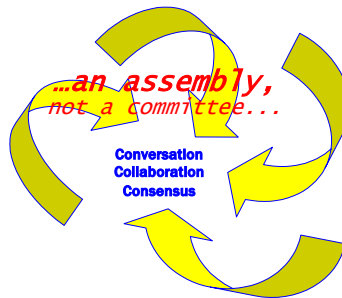
An Assembly

A Commission which meets as an assembly gives an opportunity for others to come along, see what's going on and to be inspired. Confirmation groups, RCIA, seminarians, those hoping to develop something in their own parish – all can come along and see for themselves what's going on.

It also gives the Archbishop an opportunity to meet with those engaged promoting Justice and Peace across his diocese, to share his thoughts directly with those on the ground and to hear first hand what is going on.

This is an open and inclusive way of being a Commission, with a radically new way of offering support and encouragement to those promoting the Church's social teaching.

Text taken from 'The **new Justice & Peace Commission**' leaflet of Southwark diocese.



DIARY

Prayer

Information

Reflection

Action

2005

- May 15-21 **Christian Aid Week** 0207 620 4444
- June 5 **World Environment Day (UN)** www.unmeditation.org/
- June 18 **Celebrating peacemaking with Pax Christi** at St Joseph's, Hendon, London 10.30—5.30
Guests will include Michael Sabbath, Mairead Maguire and Etienne De Jonghe. 020 8203 4884
- June 20-26 **Refugee Week** Refugee Council Refugee Week info line: 0207 820 3055
'Living Ghosts' campaign launch Church Action against Poverty 0161236 9321
- June 19 **60th Birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi** contact Burma Campaign UK 020 7324 4713
"Just as the world rallied to free Nelson Mandela, we must free Aung San Suu Kyi."
- June 21 **'Open Family' seminar** Leeds Caritas-social action 020 7901 4875
- June 5 **Environmental Sunday** Worship materials on Climate change A Rocha 020 8574 5935
- June 15 **East Anglia J&P Walsingham Pilgrimage** 01223 473806 01223 240207
Julian Filochowski speaking about "The relevance of Romero for us today."
- July 1 **White Band Day** CAFOD 0207 733 7900
- July 2 **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** march & mass rally before G8 Summit Edinburgh
- July 8-10 **National Justice and Peace Conference** "We are the Stewards of Creation" 0207 901 4864
- Aug 6 & 9 **60th Anniversaries of first use of Atomic weapons at Hiroshima & Nagasaki**
Pax Christi 0208 203 4884 & CND 0207 700 2393
- Sept 11 **Racial Justice Sunday** CARJ 0208 802 8080 & CCRJ 0207 620 4444
- Sept 21 **Global Cease Fire Day** Peace One Day 0207 456 9180 www.peaceoneday.org
- Oct 7 **CAFOD Harvest Fast Day** 0207 733 7900
- Oct 7 **CIIR Annual General Meeting** London Voluntary Resource Sector Centre, Holloway Road
- Oct 17 **International Day for Eradication of Poverty** www.unmeditation.org/
- Oct 23-30 **One World Week** "Promises, Promises - Make Poverty History" 0118 939 4933
- Oct 23-30 **Interfaith Week of Prayer for World Peace** 01666 825249
- Oct 24 **United Nations Day** www.unmeditation.org/

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

Bishops' Conference of England and Wales



Spring Meeting 2005

STATEMENT ON THE MAKE POVERTY HISTORY CAMPAIGN

The widening gap between rich and poor around the world is a scandal and a contradiction.

We wholeheartedly support the Make Poverty History campaign and we urge Catholics in England and Wales to play their part in it.

The Global Common Good requires that the critical questions of trade, aid, debt and good governance be addressed. We add our voice to the call to political leaders to honour their commitments to the UN Millennium Goals.

HELP UPDATE OUR WEBSITE

www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

As a start to our work on this part of our Action Plan, we will be grateful if you will answer the following, as far as possible, and/or pass on a copy to someone else in your organisation to answer. (Please reply by end of May, if possible.)

1. What should be provided for
 - (a) Current member groups
 - (b) Individual members of these groups
 - (c) Potential members
 - (d) Those likely to work with us
 - (e) Others
2. How should our present site change to cater for these needs, and what current features should be retained?
3. What sites show examples for us to consider, in terms of
 - (a) catering for the needs of users;
 - (b) containing useful material?
4. Have you or your group experiences to share? (Please indicate their nature.)

Please reply to: eddielawinski@lineone.net