

Conference 2018: 'What would Zaccheus do?'



St Oscar Romero

Patron Saint of NJPN

Canonisation 14 October 2018

“Let us not tire of preaching love; it is the force that will overcome the world.

Let us not tire of preaching love. Though we see that waves of violence succeed in drowning the fire of Christian love, love must win out; it is the only thing that can.”

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This year's Annual NJPN conference was enjoyable and rewarding in a number of ways.

The title, **“In the Shelter of Each Other the People Live”**, left the speakers and other participant with a broad canvas to work with. So the delegates, fresh from a journey across England, Wales and beyond to the Hayes Conference Centre nestling in the quiet Derbyshire countryside (where the food has improved in the last few years), were challenged



by the highly charged talk by **Revd Dr Al Barrett**. No one snoozed as he mapped out what Christian discipleship in Brexit Britain, in the shadow of Grenfell Tower meant in the inner-city parish of Hodge Hill Anglican Church, Birmingham.

Stand beside, listen to, and learn from those who have been left behind in our society. He outlined the ways in which we fail to see or hear our neighbours and carry out charitable acts that perpetuate their plight. Instead of asking “what would Jesus do?” ask “what would Zaccheus do...”

The Fairtrade wine reception and opening of the “Just Fair” with its many stalls rounded off the evening with the opportunity to make new friends and catch up with old ones.

That theme of being challenged was stepped up when **David McLoughlin** took to the stage on Saturday morning. His title, “Living with others in the presence of our strange God” took us on a whirlwind tour of theology, describing the extraordinary nature of the God we worship and how this very nature should shape how we encounter both God and the people God chose to create. The breadth of the talk was matched by the depth of David’s analysis and by the passion and the wit he employed to keep us on the edge of our seats to the final sentence.



Then, before lunch, we were treated to the workshop session, which is an annual feature that continues to offer a wide range of opportunities to explore a subject in a bit more detail. The conference theme was present in the fifteen workshops, but the subjects were varied ranging from knife crime in local communities to the plight of seafarers, from migrant and refugee issues to nuclear disarmament, homelessness to the environment and so on. Thankfully, the

organisers ensured that we got feedback from these sessions as part of the plenary session on the Sunday morning.



The grounding experienced in the workshops was a good preparation for what **Sarah Teather**, the Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service had to say in her talk on “Hospitality: receiving gifts from Refugees” Many of us were

familiar with the issues but her detailed and personal account of how many refugees struggled with the “deliberately cruel asylum system” currently being employed in the UK was heart wrenching. The work of the organisation she runs and the tenacity of those they help shine a light of hope on a very difficult, government-created problem in our society.



And we planted a tree for our 40th Anniversary..

The Mass celebrated with Fr Colum Kelly of the Apostleship of the Sea, formed a healing and grace filled space for all which was much enhanced by the music as it was by Colum’s open ministry and animated homily. And for those who had not yet become aware of it, the Mass also allowed the participation of the children and young people whose conference activities had been running parallel to the adult sessions.

Our evening was mainly filled by a session entitled “Your Time” which was an open space where people were invited to offer talks, start up conversations and take part in impromptu workshops or explorations of issues. Tables and chairs were set up in the Main Hall and side rooms to create spaces for these and people wandered in and out of talks and debates, shared experiences and so on. It may have been seen as a risk by some, but the outcome was entertaining, challenging and informative, i.e. it worked. The session was followed by a screening of the very interesting film, “The Claim” on the Blessed Oscar Romero, his people and Pope Francis. If you have not had the opportunity to see this, contact the NJPN and find out how to organise a showing in your parish.

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Find more reports of the Conference on our website; watch the speakers on Liverpool J&P's YouTube at <https://bit.ly/2p8jOV4>; order CD's of the speakers and copies of the suggested actions from workshops from NJPN



Conference 2018: 'What would Zaccheus do?'

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The Sunday morning session on "an inclusive Britain" was delivered by **John Grogan MP**. Again, we were challenged by yet another view of the issues we struggle with everyday in the context of Justice and Peace. Some of the delegates felt he was less political than he could have been or didn't like the topics he chose for his talk but much of what he said rang

true and it led to a lively debate after the talk had been delivered.

Every NJPN Annual Conference has a business part to it including this year's overview of the annual accounts which indicated that we need to raise more money in the coming year to ensure the continued existence of the Network – a task we all need to concern ourselves with through fundraising and encouraging people to become members.



The concluding session also included details from the workshops and other feedback from sessions, but its main business was to help the delegates decide what their plans of action for the coming year should be. **Julia Corcoran**, who facilitated this session asked us to write down on Post It notes the main thing (or things) we planned to do, and we

stuck them on a board at the front of the room, so the Network could gather the information together. Finally, Anne Peacey, the chair of NJPN, thanked the NJPN's long serving co-ordinator, Ann Kelly for her many years of excellent work, dedication and the huge personal contribution she has made to the organisation as she stands down from that post. Her job is currently being advertised and all enquiries should go to the NJPN.

The closing liturgy of the conference is always brightened up with the contributions from the children and youth groups. This year's lively liturgy included an appeal to raise money for a local homelessness charity (on the initiative of the young people themselves), and nearly £200 was collected by the children at the very end of the official business of the conference.

Alison Gelder and Ian Smith

Speaking Personally: Joe Burns

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

The most important influence was becoming part of a Young Christian Students (YCS) group at high school. The See-Judge-Act method opened up to me a whole new way of seeing how faith connected with the world in



which I had to live. It provided a lens through which to view the world that has stayed with me since that time. As I attended an all-boys school, YCS was also a way of meeting girls! It is something that proved to be important to me as it was through YCS that I met my wife, Carol, who attended the Sacred Heart High School in Newcastle.

What for you are the most important areas of concern today?

There's plenty of choice! However, two of the most fundamental things to me are Climate Change and the gap (both nationally and internationally) between the rich and the poor. Part of this is down to the disruptive nature of internet-related technologies and the impact they are having in terms of both creating very wealthy individuals in a very short space of time and the inability of existing tax systems along with education and employment systems to manage the rapid pace of change in a way which is equitable to both individuals and sovereign states. Technology changes also provide 'cover' for many people in relation to Climate Change: they see it as a technical problem to be solved rather than the way Pope Francis described it in *Laudato Si'*, as a relationship issue of learning to act collectively to live sustainably both with the earth and with each other.

What sustains you in your commitment?

People who open the Gospel to us and expose how neutralised it has become over the last two thousand years within the institutional Church and how radical the teachings of Jesus really were in relation to issues of Social Justice and Nonviolence.

What are your hopes for a Church like ours for the 21st century?

My main hope is that the current clerical crisis (the reputational damage done globally by clerical abuse scandals and, more in Western Europe, the shortage of clergy) will lead to a flowering of lay leadership (especially by women) within the Church and the many, many gifts that lay people have to bring that will help all of us to better live out our faith.

Joe is 63, lives in Garforth on the edge of Leeds and has been involved in social justice issues since his time at High School in Newcastle upon Tyne. He is currently self-employed and regularly does work for the Justice & Peace Commission in the Leeds Diocese. He is also Treasurer of Pax Christi UK.

Welcome to...



Paul Bodenham, new J&P Fieldworker for Nottingham Diocese

Paul is a long time campaigner for the environment through Green Christian.

Read more about him in Nottingham J&P's newsletter 'Just Now' via the link on our website:

justice-and-peace.org.uk/nottingham/

Tessa Ricketts, who takes up responsibility for Social Action and Justice and Peace in **Arundel & Brighton Diocese**

Aisling Griffin, new Schools and Youth Education worker at Pax Christi, who is looking forward to working with young people to promote peace, non-violence and reconciliation. Please don't hesitate to get in touch at education@paxchristi.org.uk or follow our work on Twitter at @PaxChristiYouth.



"We are" the Body of Christ: Adoremus fringe events

I'm the J&P Fieldworker in Liverpool and can be expected to see Eucharist as an action rather than an object, something that the community does rather than as something that is done to it. This wasn't just a J&P observation.

Many of us in Liverpool were concerned that a generous and inclusive vision of Eucharist should be easy to see at the Eucharistic Congress which led us to prepare a Parallel Programme, to celebrate the rich and warm diversity of Catholic life. The thinking behind the Parallel Programme was that it should be a reflection on the experience of communion. Often, when we approach the altar and say 'Amen' to the minister's 'The Body of Christ', we just mean 'It is' but we wanted to emphasise that we also mean 'We are'. It was the 'we are' aspect that was explored and emphasised in the Parallel Programme, or 'Fringe' as we referred to it. We wanted the central theme to be 'Eucharist' rather than 'The Eucharist'.

Archbishop McMahon wrote in the diocesan magazine "*The 'fringe' events on the parallel programme are an opportunity to dig deeper into the meaning of the Eucharist. It is in these discussions, exhibitions, parties and performances that the true heart of what it means to be a Catholic Christian will be found. The warm, funny and friendly Catholics of Liverpool will make it very clear that the Eucharist is a place of welcome where the joy and mercy of Jesus is to be found. The Eucharist is an invitation to everyone: 'Taste and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 34:8). The challenge facing us in the wake of Adoremus will be to find ways to remove the man-made obstacles that block the*



Fr Tom Cullinan leads a reflection on Eucharist inspired by Teilhard de Chardin, beside the Pax Christi Icon of Reconciliation

Fr Tom Cullinan leads a reflection on Eucharist inspired by Teilhard de Chardin, beside the Pax Christi Icon of Reconciliation

way to the Lord." And at 8.30 on Saturday morning, the following email came in from the head of Pastoral Formation Dept: There's a lot going on today with so many people doing so many things – may see some of you at some stage at something! With prayers for all, Mt.



Pat Gaffney chaired a conversation about peacemaking between three generations of women

How do you judge success?

In terms of numbers: the best attended was venue was St Francis Xavier (SFX) to watch episodes of the TV series 'Broken' and join in a Q+A session with the author, Jimmy McGovern; the next best was the ecumenical conversation on Eucharist that the regional church leaders shared in the Anglican church on the waterfront; the singalong of Beatles songs went down a storm; there was a stimulating and reflective day at St Philip Neri with a wide grouping of northern dioceses, NJPN and other national organisations; the exploration of the diaconate received some interest; more people than predicted went to the event about Welcoming the Stranger; and I had a great experience of church at the Nugent kitchen making bread, eating curry and chatting to people.

In terms of witness: the events showed the wide range of activities that are part of Catholic life, though we missed out wine. They were prayerful, thoughtful, socially-engaged and active. Above all, they happened.

In terms of organisation: the programme was devised, coordinated and delivered by laity, with some help from clergy. It showed us a glimpse of a dynamic church of the future: active, enthused, engaged with society and not restricted to the sanctuary.

Steve Atherton

Diocesan Environmental Policies

The NJPN Environment Group has been working to encourage dioceses to develop Environmental Policies—here is an update on progress:

It is heartening to see that dioceses are beginning to develop policies. Three have produced clear diocesan guidelines - Middlesbrough, Hexham and Newcastle and Salford. The Middlesbrough one was launched at a day on 21 April in York, where Ellen Teague was a speaker.

Four dioceses (Liverpool, Southwark, A&B, Portsmouth) are working on policies. Paul Kelly is to be congratulated for all the energy he has put into this. He has complimented excellent diocesan contacts such as Mark Wiggin, the Director of Caritas Salford, and Fr Chris Hughes of Hexham and Newcastle Justice and Peace. Birmingham have recently started to look at policy.

If you would like to know more and to encourage your diocese to introduce a policy, get in touch with NJPN.

NJPN Environment Group is network of church groups concerned to promote care for our common home in the Church. The group meets 3 times a year. If you are interested in being involved, or would like to receive the minutes, please contact NJPN.



Members of Middlesbrough J&P selling re-usable coffee cups at NJPN Conference

Action Highlights Autumn/Winter 2018/2019 See page 4 for more details

A big cause of celebration for Justice & Peace people is the **canonisation of Oscar Romero** on 14 October. There will be a National Mass of Thanksgiving on 3 November and Evensong at Westminster Abbey on 17 November, after our Networking Day. Local celebrations will also be organised—check with diocesan J&P and Romero Trust website—or organise one yourself! Several diocesan J&P Assemblies will be held over the autumn and winter.

October: Prisoners; Week of Prayer for World Peace; One World Week; United Nations Day

November: Remembrance Sunday—Pax Christi has new resources; get white poppies from Peace Pledge Union ppu.org.uk; Interfaith Week; World Day of the Poor; Prayer for Persecuted Christians

Advent and Christmas: CAFOD retreats; Opportunities for reflection and finding less consumer driven ways to celebrate Christmas; Send greetings to prisoners of conscience (acatuk.org.uk) and to Christians in the Holy Land (Pax Christi, Liverpool J&P); Buy alternative gifts.

January: Peace Sunday; Christian Unity; Migrants and Refugees; Holocaust Memorial Day.

February: Victims of Human Trafficking; Climate Coalition Show the Love; Racial Justice Sunday; Fairtrade Fortnight.

OCTOBER

- 13 'Migration—I was a stranger and you welcomed me': Birmingham J&P Assembly: Solihull birminghamjandp.org.uk
- 13 Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking: Northampton J&P Assembly: Luton: franforster2@gmail.com; 01494 875 485
- 14 Canonisation of Oscar Romero: Rome: romerotrust.org.uk
- 14 Prisoners' Sunday: prisonadvice.org.uk; 0207 735 9535
- 14-20 Prisons Week: prisonsweek.org
- 14-21 Week of Prayer for World Peace: weekofprayerforworldpeace.com; 0208 968 4340
- 16 End Hunger UK Conference: London endhungeruk.org/conference; 07455 688 535
- 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: unmeditation.org/october.cfm#idep
- 20 Just Spirituality Day of Reflection: Mytholmroyd: leedsjp.org.uk/events
- 20 'How are we shaping the future of our planet?': Bury St Edmunds: christiansaware.co.uk; 0116 254 0770
- 20 White Poppy Making Workshop: Hitchin: paxchristi.org.uk/events; oliasah-peace@yahoo.co.uk
- 21-28 One World Week: The World is Changing—How About Us? oneworldweek.org
- 22-18 December Unlocking Detention-A virtual tour of the UK's immigration detention estate: unlocked.org.uk
- 23 A nuclear weapons free world: What can Christians do?: Nottingham: christians@cnduk.org; 020 7700 4200
- 24 United Nations Day: unmeditation.org/
- 24 Chester to Newport Peace Train: Collecting messages along the line: chestercnd@gmail.com; 01244 679 051
- 26 'Europe for the Many': London: globaljustice.org.uk/events; 0207 820 4900
- 27 Hallam J&P Conference—Pax Christi icon: Rotherham: apeacey@btinternet.com

NOVEMBER

- 3 National Mass of Thanksgiving for the Canonisation of Oscar Romero: Southwark RC Cathedral: romerotrust.org.uk/
- 3 'Active Remembrance and Waging Peace Together: London abolishwar.org.uk; 020 3397 3019
- 10 Nottingham J&P Assembly: Lincoln: jpnnottingham.eventbrite.com
- 11 Remembrance Sunday
- 11-18 Interfaith Week: interfaithweek.org; 020 7730 0410
- 17 **NJPN Open Networking Day**: London, 10.30-1.30
- 17 3pm: Solemn Evensong... for the Canonisation of Oscar Romero: W'minster Abbey: eventbrite.co.uk/e/48330137743
- 17 Green Christian Annual Meeting: London: greenchristian.org.uk; 0845 459 8460

CAFOD Retreats

Countering Consumerism: Lessons from *Gaudete et Exsultate*

- 3 Portsmouth, Liverpool
- 10 Clifton, Leeds, Northampton
- 17 Birmingham, Hexham & Newcastle, Lancaster
- 24 Salford, Nottingham/Hallam, Southwark
- 1 December Westminster
- <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events>

- 17 Church Action on Poverty Conference: Manchester church-poverty.org.uk/conference; 0161 872 9294
- 18 World Day of the Poor: csan.org.uk; 020 7281 0297
- 19 International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church: csw.org.uk; 020 8329 0010

DECEMBER

- 1 World AIDS Day: National AIDS Trust: worldaidsday.org
- 1 Prisoners for Peace Day: wri-irg.org/en/campaigns/
- 3 Jesuit Refugee Service Advent Service: London jrsuk.net; 020 7488 7310
- 8 Christmas Concert for Human Rights: Birmingham freedomfromtorture.org/events
- 10 UN Human Rights Day: unmeditation.org/
- 11 Pax Christi Advent Service & Christmas Market: London paxchristi.org.uk; 02082034884
- 18 International Migrants Day: un.org/en/events/migrantsday
- 30 Sunday Worship led by Sarah Teather, JRS: Radio 4 8.10am

2019

JANUARY

- 11-13 Christians Aware Annual Conference: Swanwick christiansaware.co.uk/calendar; 0116 254 0770
- 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: ctbi.org.uk; 0207 6547254
- 20 Peace Sunday: paxchristi.org.uk; 0208 203 4884
- 20 World Day of Migrants and Refugees: w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/
- 26 Arundel & Brighton J&P Assembly: 01293 651 154
- 27 Holocaust Memorial Day: hmd.org.uk

FEBRUARY

- NJPN Open Networking Day**: Date and venue tbc. Watch justice-peace.org.uk/njpn-meetings
- 2 Cultural Exchange with China AGM: London: cecchina.co.uk
- 8 Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking: catholicchurch.org.uk
- 14 Climate Coalition Show the Love: fortheloveof.org.uk
- 17 Racial Justice Sunday: catholicchurch.org.uk; carj.org.uk
- 25-10 March Fairtrade Fortnight: fairtrade.org.uk; 020 7405 5942

DONATE TO NJPN: Online via our website. By cheque payable to NJPN. BACS to NJPN Sort Code:16-31-15 Account No: 10089516, put your name and Donation in the reference field. To make a regular donation by Standing Order, contact the Administrator or download the Membership Form on the website.

The National Justice & Peace Network encourages and facilitates communication and networking between 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. It works with all who share its aims and values.

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.

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NEXT ISSUE DATE
FEBRUARY 2019

COPY DATE
14 DECEMBER 2018

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A UK Registered Charity no. 1114947

A company limited by guarantee: Company no. 5036866

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