



We may think of the poor simply as the beneficiaries of our occasional volunteer work, or of impromptu acts of generosity that appease our conscience.

However good and useful such acts may be for making us sensitive to people's needs and the injustices that are often their cause, they ought to lead to a true *encounter* with the poor and a *sharing* that becomes a way of life.

Pope Francis
Message for World Day of the Poor 2017



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Love, listen, find joy...

Around 250 people attended the conference entitled, 'A Sabbath for the Earth and the Poor' at Swanwick from 21-23 July.

The conference started on the Friday evening with a talk from Dr Ruth Valerio, Tearfund's Global Advocacy and Influencing Director on 'Made for Love: Living out the integral ecology of Pope Francis'. As part of her talk, she discussed how we must change the way we live. She reminded everyone, "We need to take action. We need to live differently. We need to change the way we do things."

After the talk, a Fairtrade wine reception at the Just Fair allowed conference members to browse and buy a variety of items from the many organisations involved in Justice and Peace displaying their latest work.

The second day of conference began with a talk from Fr Peter Hughes, an Irish Columban Priest who has spent most of his life as a missionary in Peru. This was entitled 'Listening to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor: the response of the Church in Latin America.' Fr Peter reminded those present of how linked everyone is to the Amazon and how 20% of the Amazon has already been destroyed. Every time we breathe we share a breath with those living in the Amazon and we rely on the Amazon to be able to breathe. The testimonies of a panel from Leeds Poverty Truth Commission made a deep impression on listeners. The Commission seeks to bring together 'experts by experience' of poverty with public officials and academics working in the field, to enable real listening and understanding in tackling issue of poverty.

The afternoon was filled with 15 different workshops including 'Archbishop Romero- Patron Saint for Justice & Peace', 'Community Sponsorship of Refugees- An introduction' and 'Power to be: Renewable energy tackles poverty and benefits the Earth'. The second part of the afternoon was Festival Time! An opportunity for re-creation and enjoyment. Sessions included a Peacemeal, Nature walks, Art Sessions and Poetry. Conference members were invited to join



L-R: Susy Brouard (Conference Chair), Kathy Galloway, Anne Peacey (NJPN Chair), Ruth Valerio, Peter Hughes

the sessions for the whole time or to pop in and out. This was a great way to spend the afternoon. Before dinner, the conference came together to celebrate Mass, with Fr Martin Poulson as the Celebrant. It was a lively Mass with much to celebrate and Fr Martin gave a homily on the readings of the day, inspiring everyone to do more and not to give up. In the evening, Rise Theatre performed their latest play 'Romero: Heartbeat of El Salvador', a very relevant play for Romero's centenary year and as newly adopted Patron of NJPN. The play shares Romero's story and while it only has a cast of 3 people, the variety and detail

of the play means it is one to watch. Rise Theatre are going to be touring the play around the UK and details can be found on their website.

Sunday started with a talk by Kathy Galloway, a practical theologian, campaigner, and writer. She focuses her work on peace making and social justice issues, especially relating to poverty, ecology and gender. Her talk was on 'Recovering the Common Joys: This could be our revolution; to love what is plentiful as much as what's scarce'.

Following Kathy Galloway's talk, the Children and Youth groups joined the main conference for a closing liturgy. The Children shared what they had been up to over the weekend, including one of their favourite songs—by the end everyone in the hall was joining in. The Youth shared about their experience of conference by explaining how everyone is interconnected. They shared their own experience as well as the people they had met and learnt about over the weekend. One of the young people said "Sometimes it is easier to say than do but we all need to get out there and do it."

This year's conference was a great success and everyone is looking forward to next year's National Justice and Peace Network Conference.

Julia Corcoran

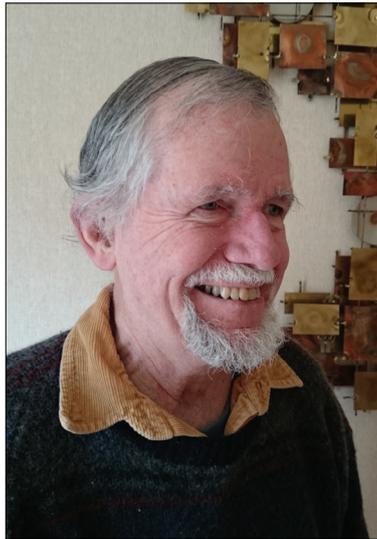
Read more reports of the conference on our website www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

Action Highlights Winter 2017—Spring 2018 See Diary on p4 for more details

Pray for Vatican Conference on nuclear weapons*Remembrance Sunday*Interfaith Week*World Day of the Poor*World AIDS Day*Advent/Christmas (Resources will be on our website + ACAT Christmas card campaign acatuk.org.uk)*Peace Sunday*Christian Unity*Racial Justice Sunday*Homeless Sunday*Church Action on Poverty Sunday*CAFOD Share the Journey Refugee and Migrants campaign*Show the Love Green Hearts*Ash Wednesday Witness*Fairtrade Fortnight



Speaking Personally: Frank Regan



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

My commitment to Justice and Peace stems from my experience of poverty and injustice in Peru. I was fortunate to live with a family of seven. The experience awakened me to the everyday struggles of good men and women to give everything they could to their children. There was a precarious existence. The neighbourhood had its share of problems—most of them related to work and money. There was

domestic violence, robbery and assault, addiction and illness for which there were no adequate services.

For ten years I was chaplain to a group of lepers. This put me in contact with extreme marginalisation and with lives lived on a precarious ledge, not to mention deep psychological scars due to a false religious consciousness.

Finally, I was for 20 years chaplain to the Young Christian Workers Movement. This put me in touch with hundreds of young people not always confident of the future which awaited them. We did a lot of work in the areas of labour organisation and grassroots political organisation. We must have done something right since I was denounced to the area bishop by the government Department of Religious Affairs. He "invited" me to return to my home country.

The penny dropped when I realised that all of the above and much more was structural and systemic. Mission was not a question of charity for the people I was accompanying but justice struggled for by them. The system which prevails—economic, political, international and imperial—will not change unless it is made to change. Only an apostolate which is insistent and militant will do it.

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

There are four major areas with many concerns in each.

The first is Poverty. We need a clearer grasp of systemic injustice, or of how the prevailing economic structures function to favour a few and prejudice the many. Commitment means political commitment. Within a democracy political participation defends the rights of the most vulnerable.

The second is Peace. We should continue to tackle the arms industry. This country sells arms to the wrong people. Sales to Saudi Arabia, for example, implicate us in the slaughter going on in Yemen. We should continue accompanying people in the Mid-East, especially Palestine. And our Church should learn from the Quakers, Mennonites et al and make Peace of the very core of Christian witness. This will mean a rethink of military chaplaincies.

The third is the Planet. I am not confident that we can reverse man-made climate change nor reduce the acidification of the oceans. To make our modern economy planet-friendly would require the "decarbonisation" of the West's entire capital stock starting with jet air travel. It would be a herculean and far from painless task. The Paris Accord is significant but not effectual. Renewables are coming on fast, but the economic model shows no sign of changing. Anyone who wants to protect the

planet and is not anti-capitalist is naïve. All we hear is: growth, progress, lower taxes, free trade, take back control and make America great again. Our challenge is to find ways to connect the struggle of the poor for justice and the struggle of Gaia—the planet for peace. Then we shall be whole and wholly.

The fourth area is the Person. The Catholic Church is the most powerful homophobic and misogynistic institution on the planet. It must change.

We live in the Age of the Immigrant. Immigrants arrive for various reasons: war, political or religious persecution, ecological disaster, trafficked for sex or slavery or criminal activity or body parts et al. We must work at ways that we can be magnanimous, open and welcoming.

What sustains you in your commitment?

I hold to a stubborn hope against a deep temptation to despair. Hope is never Pollyanna-ish or Panglossian. There is no room for optimism. Hope is more than a virtue. It is the grim determination to go on struggling and insisting that with God's strength, we shall overcome. Don Quixote once said: do not accept defeat before fighting all the battles.

I do not know what the coming Reign of God will look like but looking around, we are far from it. I constantly remember the words of Christ when he talks about having come for the life of the world, for life in abundance, for making whole the person and the creation. He talked about having patience for he has overcome the world. He promised to be with us all the way to the end.

Despite the gloom there are persons and communities of light against the darkness, of growth in wholeness/wholiness against degradation and despair. I have a lot of confidence in them, but I wonder about their future for they will have none if they are not based on a common concern for the common humanity they share with other similar groups. There will be no room for sectarian triumphalism.

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

We are in a prolonged moment of seismic cultural change. We no longer think about women, sexual minorities or the planet in the way we did fifty years ago. The Church has been caught on the back foot. Its institutional life is in danger of mortal decline. The Church has a lot of interior work to do regarding the scandals around clerical paedophilia and financial finagling of various sorts. Clericalism is asphyxiating. Parishes should be turned over to lay administration and ministry. It is insulting to the laity to be closing parishes. New forms of lay ministry must be invented and tried. The Spirit is working elsewhere, in places we cannot imagine. Pope Francis is alert to that, but he has many enemies and a strong inertial negative energy which must be reversed.

I hope to see (from beyond my demise) a Church of the base at the service of those forces struggling for human flourishing and planetary peace and justice. This will create a Church whose worship is truly expressive of the transformation of the material world, e.g. bread into the Body of Christ; and the transfiguration of the person into the Body of Christ. And so they will be one in the Trinitarian community. I want a Church more attentive to the spiritual dimensions of humanity and less attentive to the survival of its structures (which have become mostly dysfunctional). Christ told Julian in her visions that all would be well. And it will. But as the Peruvian poet Cesar Vallejo wrote, "Ah-h-h, brothers and sisters, humans all, there is so much to do."

Frank was a Columban missionary in Peru and UK for 39 years. He left to marry and lives with his wife Tirke in Devon. Currently he speaks and writes on issues of Faith in dialogue with culture, politics, gender and the environment for publications in the UK and Ireland.

Church of the Poor conversations

Last year Church Action on Poverty published a report, *Church of the Poor*. Inspired by Pope Francis' call for churches to become 'churches of and for the poor', we asked church leaders from a number of denominations to reflect upon what it meant for their church.

More recently we have been having conversations with churches, leaders, activists, and justice and peace workers to find out what they understand by 'Church of the Poor'. We're learning what they are already doing to make it a reality, and how Church Action on Poverty could work with them to do more.

Here are some of the things we have learned: Churches of all kinds are enthusiastic to learn more about what works, and to build networks with others that share an interest in these issues and learn from each other. We need to find ways of supporting what is already happening, rather than demanding more of people.

While ideas like the 'option for the poor' are familiar to many of our supporters, they are less well known amongst other church members. We need to help people to reflect theologically on the idea, as well as helping churches to live it out. We have visited churches that are very much living it out, but found that they don't think of themselves as a 'church of the poor'. Instead they talk about their faith in a generous God

**POOR
CHURCH
TRANSFIGURED
CHURCH**

or their church as being a place of welcome.

Others are uncomfortable with using the term 'the poor' – as Keith Hebden at the Urban Theology Union has said, in the UK it is often a term without agency, used to label others.

There is a gap between churches doing great frontline work in disadvantaged communities, and churches in more affluent areas who are interested but don't yet fully understand what it means to be 'church of the poor'. Ideas are now emerging as to how we can work better with churches around this vision:

For example, Church Action on Poverty's broad supporter networks mean that we could have a role in sharing stories and helping churches to connect with each other. We know from our conferences and gatherings that simply sharing stories and ideas can be valuable and inspiring.

Other interesting ideas include organising church visits and exchanges, or helping people set up 'retreats on the streets' or visits to local social action projects. We will be exploring and developing all these ideas in the coming months. If you'd like to take part in the conversation, why not join us.

For more information contact sarahd@church-poverty.org.uk

Sarah Purcell, Church Action on Poverty

World Day of the Poor

At the end of the Year of Mercy in 2016, Pope Francis instituted an annual 'World Day of the Poor' to be celebrated each year on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time.

19 November 2017 will therefore be the first World Day of the Poor. The Pope's issued his message for the day in June, entitled **Let us love, not with words but with deeds**. It can be downloaded from the Vatican website at <http://w2.vatican.va/> and look for Messages.

In England and Wales Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) are co-ordinating resources for the day, which should be ready by mid-October.

It is hoped that the day will be a spur to action which leads to 'true encounter and a sharing that becomes a way of life' (Pope Francis in message for World Day of the Poor)

Welcome to

**Janet
Vaughan**

New J&P
Administrator
for Birmingham
Archdiocese



bham.jandp@gmail.com

John Baxter Ruming RIP—J&P's first national paid worker



Born in Surrey in April 1931, John lived for many decades in Carshalton, moving to the Sussex coast a couple of years before his death in August. In the 1970s he was a member of the Bishops' Conference former Commission for International Justice and Peace ("CIJP"), which fostered diocesan J&P groups. He worked with a small Southwark group from 1975-81, to build a J&P community.

At that time he was also a leading member of CLC (the Christian Life Community). He left office in CLC to become the first paid national J&P worker in 1988, interviewed by a panel chaired by a certain Mgr Vincent Nichols (General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference). His first act upon appointment in 1988 was to delay his starting date for 6-months to attend an Ignatian course of study and retreat at St Bueno's in Flintshire, afterwards working through 1989, 1990 and 1991, returning for a few days to help at the 1992 conference in Lancaster.

Upon John's appointment, CIJP provided office space at Eccleston Square. John diligently recorded and filed everything, even more importantly taking initiatives in organizing events and maintaining contact with the network.

John was gentle with a smile for all, yet very determined and able to put forward his viewpoint fearlessly. Whilst being respectful, he was zealous and well able to confront those

who disagreed, clergy included, usually maintaining equilibrium and ending upon good terms. A rosy complexion, a wicked sense of humour and twinkling eyes provided a passing resemblance to a garden gnome, perhaps helping his acceptance as a non-threatening innovation! He created the worker's role, quietly winning over Bishops' Conference staff and others.

When I became NLC Chair for the last of his three years with us he was unfailingly helpful and timely in knowing when to offer advice. His presence improved the handling of work in key areas such as supporting members, liaison with others and servicing regular meetings: the network became more productive and participation grew. He kept in touch with fieldworkers, getting their annual gatherings started. He visited at least 12 dioceses, meeting bishops and local concerned people to find out what support might be offered. He also established regular communication with a number of religious orders and church organisations.

John was on Pax Christi's Executive Committee from 1996, spending a year as Chair. In 1997 he was key to the logistical planning of their International Council in London.

He was good servant of the church with great commitment to the J&P mission, missed and remembered with admiration and thanks for his qualities, and with love. A truly lovely and dedicated person: may he rest in peace and continue to give us energy and hope from his new vantage point, face to face with the Lord.

Phil Kerton—with thanks to several others for their memories

OCTOBER

- 15-22 Week of Prayer for World Peace
www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com, 0208 968 4340
- 21 Romero—Heartbeat of El Salvador: Caterham: 07983 384 385;
ticketsource.co.uk/risetheatre
- 22-29 One World Week: www.oneworldweek.org
- 24 United Nations Day
- 24-30 UN Disarmament Week: un.org/depts/dhl/disarmament/index
- 25 Towards A World Free of Nuclear Weapons—What Faith Communities can do next: London: 07825189263;
eventbrite.co.uk/ (search nuclear ban treaty)
- 28 Hallam J&P Diocesan Day: Rotherham: 0114 256 6410
eventbrite.co.uk/ (search not with words but deeds)
- 28 Fairtrade Day of Action targeting Sainsbury's:
cafod.org.uk/fairtrade
- 28 Workshop 'Religion and Anarchism' at Anarchist Book Fair: London: 0208 348 8212 londoncatholicworker.org
- 28 Churches that Change Communities: Becoming a church for the poor: Cambridge: jubileepius.org/events
- 28 Christians Aware Day Conference on the Environment: Bury St Edmunds: 0116 254 0770: christiansaware.co.uk
- 31-9 Nov: 'Sick of Corporate Greed' Speaker tour: 020 7820 4900: globaljustice.org.uk/events

NOVEMBER

- 3-7 People's Climate Summit: Bonn, Germany: pcs2017.org/en
- 6-17 UN Climate Conference COP-23: Bonn Germany: cop23.de/en
- 4 'Busy Times, Busy Families' Scripture Resource Day: Leicestershire: 020 7901 4877: Fleur.Dorrell@cbcew.org.uk
- 7-8 Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network Networking Day: Crewe: picmillhillbritreg@care4free.net
- 9 Service of Commemoration for those who have died homeless: London: 020 3544 8094; housingjustice.org.uk
- 10-11 Vatican Conference on Nuclear Disarmament
- 12 Remembrance Sunday: White poppies: ppu.org.uk
- 12 Movement for the Abolition of War AGM 12 noon; Lecture 3pm—'Freedom from Fear: Unions for Peace': Imperial War Museum, London: abolishwar.org.uk
- 12-19 Interfaith Week: interfaithweek.org
- 18 Young Christian Workers 80th Anniversary National Mass: Salford: 0161 872 6017: ycwimpact.com

Journey to Justice: CAFOD Romero Retreats

- 4 November: Clifton; Southwark; Hallam
- 10-12: Young Adults Retreat: London-Battersea
- 11 November: Leeds; Westminster
- 18 November: Birmingham; Cardiff; East Anglia/Brentwood; Salford
- 25 November: Plymouth
- 2 December: Arundel & Brighton
- cafod.org.uk/retreats

- 18 Joy in Enough, the Big Workshop: Sheffield: 0345 459 8460; greenchristian.org.uk/
- 18 Church Action on Poverty AGM and Conference: Sheffield: 0161 872 9294; church-poverty.org.uk/conference
- 19 World Day of the Poor: CSAN: 020 7281 0297, csan.org.uk
- 19 Int Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church: csw.org.uk
- 21 World Fisheries Day: Resources for schools: 020 7901 1933 apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/
- 25 Int Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women: unwomen.org/en
- 25 **NJPN Open Networking Day:** London, St Thomas More, Henry Road N4 2LH
- 25 Columbans 100th Anniversary Mass: Birmingham: Send your contact details to sharinggospeljoy@columbans.co.uk
- 25 Bring on the Ban! Christian CND AGM and Conference: Bristol: 020 7700 4200; eventbrite.co.uk/ (search Christian CND)
- 25 Nottingham J&P Assembly and AGM: Derby: 07410 411 048; nottinghamjp.org
- 25 Voices of Refugee Women: London 020 72501968 wilpf.org.uk

DECEMBER

- 1 World AIDS Day : National AIDS Trust worldaidsday.org
- 3 Migrants' Day
- 10 UN Human Rights Day: unmeditation.org/
- 18 International Migrants' Day: un.org/en/events/migrantsday/

2018

JANUARY

- 14 Peace Sunday: Pax Christi: 020 8203 4884, paxchristi.org.uk
- 14 World Day of Migrants and Refugees: w2.vatican.va
- 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 020 76547254 ctbi.org.uk
- 27 Holocaust Memorial Day: hmd.org.uk
- 28 Racial Justice Sunday: CARJ: 020 8802 8080, carj.org.uk
- 28 Homeless Sunday: 020 3544 8094, housingjustice.org.uk

FEBRUARY

- NJPN Open Networking Day:** East Midlands, date & venue to be confirmed: check our website or contact the office (details below).
- 3 Green Christian On the Road: London 0345 459 8460; greenchristian.org.uk/
- 8 Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking: catholicchurch.org.uk
- 10 'Tackling Family Poverty-A Diocese Acts': Bradford jiandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk
- 11 Day for the Unemployed
- 11 Church Action on Poverty Sunday: 0161 872 9294; church-poverty.org.uk/sunday
- 14 Ash Wednesday Witness at MoD: 020 8203 4884 paxchristi.org.uk
- 23 Lent Fast Day: cafod.org.uk
- 26-11 March Fairtrade Fortnight: fairtrade.org.uk

DONATE TO NJPN: Online at www.cafonline.org, put National Justice and Peace Network in the Find a Charity box; 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.

Editorial Group: Stephen Cooke, Henrietta Cullinan, Ann Kelly, Anne O'Connor, Anne Peacey

NEXT ISSUE DATE
FEBRUARY 2018

COPY DATE
18 DECEMBER 2017

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A UK Registered Charity no. 1114947

Company no. 5036866

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