



Shrewsbury and Liverpool Justice and Peace Commissions

Spring 08

‘The Church cannot be deaf or mute before the entreaty of millions of people who cry out for liberation, people oppressed by a thousand slaveries. Those who put their faith in the Risen One and work for a world more just, who protest against the injustices of the present system, against the abuses of unjust authorities, against the wrongfulness of humans exploiting humans; all those who begin their struggle with the resurrection of the great Liberator — they alone are the authentic Christians’

Archbishop Romero in ‘Guiding Light: a Way of the Cross’ with Oscar Romero produced by CAFOD



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Issue 61

**“HEAR MY PEOPLE CRY”
National Justice & Peace Network Conference**

Organised in conjunction with Liverpool Archdiocese Justice & Peace Commission, the theme of the conference is: living as Christians in our modern time, exploring what it means to “love tenderly, live justly, and walk humbly with God”. It will focus on the implications of “doing justice” in the places where we live.

July 18 –20 at Hayes Conference Centre Swanwick Derbyshire

THE SPEAKERS

John Battle MP was national coordinator of Church Action on Poverty from 1983 until he was elected as the MP for West Leeds in 1987. His parliamentary interests have included the minimum wage, employment, housing and homelessness, poverty, the environment, renewable energy, and overseas development.

Dr Patrick Riordan SJ is assistant Director of The Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics and Public Life. He teaches Political Philosophy in Heythrop College’s Philosophy programmes. He also teaches on the post-graduate MA in Christian Ethics. His research interests are: Religion and Politics, the common good, philosophical issues connected with punishment and the philosophy of justice. He is the author of numerous books and articles.

Sr Margaret Scott ACI is an experienced teacher and lecturer. She has been involved with the leadership and training of her own and other religious congregations. She is experienced at spiritual direction and renewal of organisations. Her most recent book, “Yesterday’s Bread”, makes the argument that the Eucharist is deeply political and potentially subversive.

Ivanete de Araújo works for the support agency Apoió (a CAFOD partner). She is head of advocacy work and leader of the homeless movement pushing the Sao Paulo city government to provide more housing for the poor.

Fr Tom Cullinan is a priest of the Liverpool archdiocese. He is the author of “Silence” and “The Power of Political Love”. He will provide reflections and lead prayer throughout the Conference.

Booking forms from Steve Atherton, Joan Sharples or www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

**CATHOLIC MIGRANTS
opportunities and challenges**

Newman National Spring Conference 2008 has the theme: The renewal of the Church in Britain through welcoming Catholic immigrants by serving their needs and accepting their gifts.

**Saturday April 19th
St Ambrose College Hale Barns Altrincham**

Keynote speakers :
Bishop Patrick O’Donoghue of Lancaster
Francis Davis Von Hugel Institute Cambridge

Cost £22 including lunch

There will be a choice of workshops led by experts in related fields (more details to help make your choice on the booking form)

Further details and booking forms from the Conference Secretary: Peter Havard
36 Windermere Drive Alderley Edge SK9 7UP
Tel 01625 585 474

AIDING THE POOR

**what’s been achieved by debt relief
since the Birmingham G8?**

What now needs to be done?

As part of the 10 year commemorations, (see page 5 - Journey to Justice) the University of Birmingham will host a two day academic conference to discuss issues surrounding debt cancellation thus far, including problems with the process of debt relief; examples of where debt cancellation has been effective; and what the priorities are for the future.

16 -17th May

University of Birmingham Conference

More information on how to submit a research paper and how to register attendance is on www.newscentre/bham.ac.uk/debtrelief/



NEWS FROM ROMY TIONGCO—MAYOR OF DAMULOG

Shrewsbury Diocese J&P Coordinator, Joan Sharples, writes:

A year ago, *MouthPeace* readers responded magnificently to the appeal to write letters concerning Romy's safety in the Philippines.

Romy was 'home' in Cheshire with his wife and family in December 2007 and gave an update on life as Mayor of Damulog. After twenty years in the North-West of England working for a development agency, Romy was able to make regular trips back to the Philippines to promote social projects including a timber project aimed at yielding local income and helping to protect the environment. On a visit to the Philippines in October 2006, Romy was asked to stand for the post of Mayor of Damulog, Bukidnon Province, at the May elections, in a climate of intimidation. Romy and his colleagues were threatened, and a friend and supporter, Rogelio Estudillo was shot and killed on January 4th 2007. Romy was duly elected Mayor and took up office in July.

It was great to see him in December and fascinating to hear some of the details of his election campaign and of the progress towards the vision he has for the Municipality. After describing some of the dangers he had faced during the election campaign, he attempted to give us a picture of the reality of life in Damulog and the attempts being made to meet the targets on, for example, peace building; good governance; health; education; roads; and water. But, it's the stories that have stayed in my mind. Romy had signed a peace agreement with a local Muslim guerrilla commandant twenty years after signing a similar agreement with his father during his previous term as Mayor of Damulog. The guerrilla son told Romy that his father had been willing to negotiate with him because, when he was parish priest of Damulog, Romy had been ready to help anyone in need whatever their religion or race.

On election Romy had asked all the employees of the Municipality to write down the name of the person they had voted for as Mayor. He then had them burn the papers, telling them – to their amazement – that confirmation of their future jobs would depend on how well they worked at their jobs and not on whether they had voted for him. Some, like the niece of the former Mayor, were impressed by this gesture, but it cost him a number of friends.

Romy quoted President Kennedy: 'I dream of the possible, and ask why not': a good question to ask ourselves as we journey through Lent.

Peter Linsey and Rob Auld of MuCAARD-UK introduced us to the Kahoy Project, a sustainable community forestry project, based in Damulog. Rob was a VSO volunteer, with Linda McClintock (Tiongco) in the 1970's in Romy's parish. More information can be found on www.geocities.com/kahoyproject/ or from Joan.

LIVERPOOL DIOCESE ANNUAL ROMERO MASS IS ON APRIL 6

**6.30pm at St Richard's Parish, Mayfield Street, Atherton
Everyone is welcome**

Did you know that there are only two places in the world that have commemorated the assassination of Oscar Romero every year - San Salvador and Liverpool ?

The Archbishop Romero Trust (ART) was publicly launched in January 2007. It aims to raise awareness and to promote knowledge of the life and work of Archbishop Romero. It organises prayer services and memorial liturgies annually in March around the anniversary of his death on March 24th and encourages others to do the same. It also provides support to human rights and social justice initiatives in Latin America which carry forward the tradition of Archbishop Romero's work.



In the first issue of *Romero News* produced in December 2007 Julian Filochowski, Chair of the Trust, was delighted to report that there are now some 400 Friends supporting the Trust. Read the newsletter and find out more about the Trust on www.romerotrust.org.uk

CRISIS IN THE HOLY LAND

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, speaking recently in Boston, has described the situation in Palestine as *'worse than apartheid. I grieve, he said, for the damage to people's souls and bodies. I am reminded of the yoke of oppression (in South Africa)'* Recently, there have been two events in the diocese, which have explored the present crisis in the Holy Land and the increasing level of violence and injustice experienced mainly but not exclusively by the Palestinian people.

The first was held at St Agnes RC Church in West Kirby on December 3rd 2007, when a meeting on this subject was addressed by Irene Brennan, who is a retired Jean Monet Professor of European Studies and also by Mrs Nahida Yasin, who is a Palestine exile of many years standing. They discussed Pope Benedict's decision to become the first holder of the New Bethlehem passport, which is an award being given to those who help the city, whose existence is being threatened by the large Israeli concrete wall and fence which divides the land of the West Bank.

While the Vatican recognises the human dignity and rights of all those living in the Holy Land, under present Israeli law, Palestinians do not have equal rights, including property rights; and, unlike any other group of refugees, they do not have right to return from exile.

The Christian community are at risk, as are others, from house demolitions, property and land confiscation and road blocks. There are repeated bombings and targeted assassinations, which often kill innocent civilians. During the Israeli siege of the Nativity Church in 2002, a statue of Our Lady was used by the invaders as target practice, while a Franciscan janitor was killed for tolling the bell to call the community to prayer. Bethlehem's children are still attacked by Israeli snipers.

The situation is grim. The pilgrimage from Bethany to Jerusalem could no longer be made; Christian priests in East Jerusalem were prevented by the Wall from seeing their parishioners in the West Bank. The Wall has even been built straight through the lands of a Passionist monastery. Violent Israeli settlers, recently emigrating from the US, are now attempting to gain property in the Christian quarter of the Old City. Professor Brennan stated that, in 1993, a formal agreement had been signed between the Vatican and the Israel Government, but, since then, according to the former Papal Nuncio, Pietro Sambi, the situation had become much worse for the Church, the Christian community and the Palestinian people. She agreed with a questioner that the present EU policy was wrong in withdrawing aid to Gaza.

The second event was held at St John the Divine RC church in New Ferry, Wirral on Holy Innocents Day December 28th 2007 to commemorate the suffering of children in that region, when the names and cause of death for a selection of the children was described. Mrs Yassin in both events gave a Power-Point presentation which was beautiful, moving and evocative, showing Palestine experience of occupation and violence.

Since 2000, 971 Palestinian children had been killed by the Israeli Army, some while going to and from school, playing football, pinning out the washing and one while sitting at a desk in school. According to the UN, 76% of children lived below the poverty line of £1 a day and 80% are deeply traumatised by military incursions and shellings. Mrs Yassin's figures showed that 3,000 Palestinian children had been arrested by the Israelis and 352 were currently imprisoned. She reported that 185 schools had been shelled including schools for those with special needs and the blind, 8 had been turned by the Israelis into barracks, 15 had become detention centres for Palestinian prisoners, 9 vandalised and 11 completely destroyed.



Presentations, talks and exhibitions

Mrs Yassin and Professor Brennan are willing to give similar presentations for any parish in the diocese. Please consider putting on such an event during Lent, Pentecost or later.

Presentations and talks available include:-

- The Pope's Open Bethlehem initiative,
- The Life of the Child in Palestine,
- The Life of Palestinian Christians
- 40 years of Occupation- Time for Peace,
- Steps to Peace in the Middle East.
- The Gaza blockade.
- Human Rights in the Holy Land.
- The Division of Jerusalem.

Various exhibitions are also available including – Open Bethlehem Campaign; Jerusalem and its peoples; Life of the Child in Palestine; Life of Women in Palestine.

If you are interested, please ring Dr Mary Brennan [Irene Brennan's sister] on 0151 625 3287, or email maryebrennan@btinternet.com

JOURNEY TO JUSTICE

Ten years ago this May 70,000 people surrounded the G8 meeting in Birmingham to demand world leaders dropped the debt. Since then, billions of dollars of debt have been cancelled, and many lives have been transformed. But the debt crisis is not over.



Jubilee Debt Campaign is marking the day world leaders woke up to the debt crisis with a major event at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on Sunday 18th May 2008. A powerful mix of speakers, interviews, music and film will look back on the last ten years of the debt campaign, show how debt cancellation is benefiting people in poor countries today, and – ahead of vital international meetings in 2008 – demand further action to drop ALL the debt. With events taking place around Birmingham on the day, this

promises to be an unmissable event in the global justice campaigning calendar. It is hoped all groups, organisations and individuals who are part of the UK debt campaign will get involved.

DROP THE DEBT FAST

In the run-up to Journey to Justice there will be a 36-day rolling fast to demand debt cancellation for 36 poor countries – countries that are still suffering under a huge debt burden while millions of their people live in extreme poverty. The fast will begin as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund hold their Spring Meetings in Washington, and end the day before we mark the 10th anniversary of the Birmingham G8 human chain. Each day we will focus on one country that urgently needs the chains of unpayable and unjust debts to be broken.

JOIN THE FAST for a day or more in take part, see: www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/fast

Ten years on: the facts

- \$88 billion of debt has been cancelled so far across 25 countries under international debt relief schemes
- Spending on public services has risen by around 20% across all the countries that have received debt cancellation

BUT

- At least \$400 billion of debt still needs to be cancelled across at least 100 poor countries – so we are only about 20% of the way there.
- Only 3% of the \$750 million of commercial debts covered by existing debt relief schemes has been cancelled.
- In 2005, the very poorest countries paid \$43 billion to the rich world in debt service – that's \$118 million a day.
- Developing countries as a whole paid five times as much in debt servicing as they were granted in aid in 2005.

From 'Shropshire Christian'

ACTION ON INDONESIA

When Indonesia's former dictator General Suharto died at the beginning of the year, one injustice he didn't take to his grave was his debts. This year marks a decade since the people of Indonesia rose up and toppled the dictator, on 21 May 1998. But they are still paying for the weapons he acquired at the height of his power. This includes the debt of £525 million Indonesia owes the UK for arms loans made to Suharto, to buy British weapons, such as tanks, water cannon, and aircraft. . Suharto's use of arms to oppress his own people, such as in East Timor, is notorious.

Suharto's arms debts are a textbook case of 'illegitimate' debts - debts which were lent irresponsibly by the creditor, and did not benefit the people of the borrowing country, but which those people are still repaying. World leaders have accepted the need to tackle the debt crisis, but not that their irresponsible lending helped to create it.



Every year Indonesia spends more on repaying debts than it does on health and education, while over half the population live on less than \$2 a day.

Suharto's death now gives the UK and other rich countries a chance to take the lead in cleaning up international lending, and cancel Indonesia's illegitimate debts.

Please take action now: write to the Chancellor Alistair Darling asking him to drop Indonesia's arms debt or email him on www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/indonesia



JINDE CHARITIES - CHINA

Jinde Charities is the first Catholic Non-Governmental organisation in China, founded in 1997 and recognised by the government the following year. On a Study Tour in October 07 we were privileged to visit them in Hebei province where Fr. Paul Han gave us a PowerPoint presentation of their work.

Their social work is impressive: construction of wells, agricultural irrigation, environmental protection, building schools, educating physically and mentally handicapped children, kindergartens, clinics, healthcare services. As well they run Homes for the Elderly and training for homecare. Emergency Aid and disaster relief, and an enlightened AIDS Prevention programme which also trains in awareness raising and care for the afflicted are part of Jinde's programme. They also have become active in raising awareness to trafficking of women and children.

Jinde has moved from short-term responses to support for long-term development work and actively facing up to problems of social justice. They have taken an Option for the Poor and in this prophetic role are influencing all circles in society. Jinde Charities state as an objective the expansion of the opportunities for the church and faithful to participate in civil society. They have become institutionally organised and professional. These are significant steps considering the history of the Catholic Church in China. While one group of Catholics registered with the Government under the Religious Affairs Bureau, another went underground and thus became illegal. The 'official' group consecrated their own bishops

and this created problems. However the Vatican has been working to normalize the situation and the two groups are working towards reconciliation.

Jinde receives help from the Church outside China especially from 'Misereor' in Germany and more recently from CAFOD. We should be heartened by the enthusiasm and work of this catholic charity and indeed all the Christians we met – they seem strong in faith and dedicated to work for the Kingdom.



Study Tours, where we were guests of the local Council of Churches, are taken every two years by FCC (Friends of the Church of China). They cover a great variety of concerns from urban to rural, giving you a chance to speak with them on a variety of concerns and to see their work. They also enjoy the tour sites on route. We saw The Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the famous Buddhist Caves in Luoyang, the Terracotta warriors, China's oldest mosque and museums. The FCC is an Ecumenical Group and our tour of 12 people came from 6 different backgrounds including Roman Catholic. Conferences take place alternate years and we have had as guests, leaders of the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches as well as young people, teachers and professionals – informative and stimulating. Christians in China are playing a pivotal role in helping China to develop into a caring, harmonious society. Find out more from the FCC website:

www.thefcc.org

Bernice Halson

MAKE UK POVERTY HISTORY 2008 Homelessness and Poverty Year



CHURCH ACTION
ON POVERTY

Twenty five years ago John Battle became an MP for Central Leeds. When he canvassed he found he was following round the tally man collecting for Provident Financial. People whose wages failed to cover their outgoings were not eligible for bank loans or credit cards. Lacking any security and with Credit Unions few and far between, 1.5 million people used this service paying 164% - 200% interest. This led to the founding of Church Action on Poverty and the Debt on the Doorstep campaign. This issue has been brought to Parliament many times but MPs will not sanction a cap on interest rates.

Many people believe that there's a safety net to catch you if you fall too low. This is not so. Others say 'these scroungers live on my taxes.' Our task is to create those conditions in which to change public opinion to influence politicians and parties so that we will bring about a more equal and just society. We must make Poverty History at Home and Abroad. Together we can do this.

For more information see www.church-poverty.org.uk

Pam Price

JUST CHURCH is a resource produced by CAP to help local churches and groups to take the issues of poverty and social justice in UK to heart. There are twelve modules that can be used in a variety of ways...as an ongoing course, as a monthly focus or .by selecting an appropriate topic, for a 'one off' meeting or as part of a retreat day.

Sandwiched between the introduction module - Just Getting Started– and the final one - Just Action— the other 10 are divided into 3 sections:

i. Just Faith on Jesus and the Bible

continued.....



JUST CHURCH continued.....



- ii. Just Church on Congregation, Worship, Spirituality and Children.
 - iii. Just World including Community, Living, Money and Transformation.
- This is an ecumenical programme so any church tradition or inter church group could use it.

In February in Cheadle at the North East Area J & P Meeting of Shrewsbury Diocese, Joan Sharples led the group in the 'Getting Started' module. After the prayer, there was a short video clip in which a variety of people on the street were asked what they meant by poverty and whose responsibility it was to do something about it. This led easily to a discussion within the group. There were several handouts during the evening which encouraged further discussion and could be taken away, giving food for thought at home. All this material is available on www.justchurch.info/ Marian Thompson

Poverty and Homelessness Action Week: 27 January 2008 - Sunday 3 February 2008

St Vincent's Altrincham Justice & Peace Group organised and hosted a "Coffee, Cakes & Donations Event" after Sunday Masses at St Vincent's Altrincham on Sunday, 3rd February. This was in aid of Cornerstone, the Manchester Day Centre for homeless and vulnerable people, run by Sr Lucy and supported by volunteer workers from many parishes. St Vincent's parishioners responded with great enthusiasm and kindness to make it a very sociable and enjoyable occasion. Homemade cakes and buns were the order of the day. £300 was raised, along with very generous donations of clothes and non-perishable food items which have been delivered to Cornerstone.

Marie Irwin, Justice & Peace Co-ordinator, St Vincent's Altrincham

NOW WE ARE 10!

The J&P group in Our Lady, Star of the Sea, Ellesmere Port was formed in March 1998, when the then parish priest Fr Chris McCurry invited Joan Sharples, the Shrewsbury Diocese J&P Field Worker, to come over to the parish centre one evening with a view to forming a J&P group in the parish.

About a dozen people turned up and Joan had cards and pictures of various J&P activities displayed on tables around the room. She asked each person to pick up cards or pictures of the activities that they would be interested in doing. This gave Joan an indication of what the new group might want to get involved with. Fr Chris suggested that Tony Walsh should lead the group. So we set out to change the world!

Our activities include:

- CAFOD: Lent & Harvest fasts days, distribution of envelopes and collecting money. Quiz nights in parish centre. We've raised £3000 over the last 3 years. Annual Wirral Walk from all over west Cheshire. £18000 raised for CAFOD. Gold campaign. Visiting mainstream jewellers to sign the 12 Golden Rules.
- Fair Trade: Monthly Traidcraft stall at the back of church. Supporting Fairtrade Fortnight, an ecumenical effort. Trade Justice campaign-local press photo ecumenical with Andrew Miller MP.
- Racial Justice Sunday – giving out prayer leaflets after Sunday Masses.
- Prisoners of Conscience – parishioners sign and send greetings cards in November.
- Visit to a mosque in Manchester.
- Make Poverty History march at G8 meeting in Edinburgh. ¼ million demonstrators.
- Attending national and diocesan J&P conferences.
- Attending spirituality afternoons and Advent reflections to keep our actions driven by scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.
- Keeping abreast of events by subscribing to MouthPeace & QuickNews.
- Recently we have been involved with Chester Asylum Seeker Support Group.

With the reformatting of parochial infrastructure, we now have a common Newsletter to cover all parishes in the Local Pastoral Area and we make sure that all the J&P news gets publication in the Newsletter. Our J&P group now has members from St Bernard's parish because we share the same parish priest. The 3 Parish Priests we have had in the last 10 years Fr Chris, Fr Philip McGovern and currently Fr Niall Mullalloy have been very supportive of our J&P activities and we are grateful for this.

Bishop Brian appointed Tony Walsh as Chair of the Diocesan Commission in 2000 and Joan is now the Diocesan J&P Coordinator. We set out initially to change the outside world, but probably what we have changed most of all, is inside ourselves! Tom Ormiston



CHANGING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES IN DEVELOPMENT

The Chester World Development Forum's meeting on 22nd January 2008 was at its usual venue, the Cheshire Development Education Centre. The audience of 24 members was rather bigger than usual, gathered for a talk by Alessandro Moscuza, Corporate & Communications Manager for the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID). He proved not only expert in his field, but very frank and informal in approach.

At DFID since 2003, Alessandro's current role meant that he was able to give a good exposition of the organisation and its role within government, including its roots in the Colonial Development Act of 1929 and the Overseas Development Administration of 1961. DFID itself was set up in 1997 with Clare Short its first Cabinet Minister. Since 1997, its evolution can be well traced through three White Papers (1997, 2000 and 2006).

Despite DFID's departmental character and civil service disciplines and employment regime, it clearly has a culture and instincts close to those of an NGO. Alessandro himself is passionate about development work (his academic speciality) and hopes eventually to move into a more direct role.

We were given insights into DFID's dealings with the European Union, UN, World Bank and other bodies, all very important to development worldwide. It seems that Britain is increasingly working as a team member, using EU agencies where appropriate, as when they have offices and field experts already in place. At present the balance between "bilateral" and "multilateral" channels is 60:40 but is moving distinctly towards the latter.

As to DFID's own direct contribution to development, Alessandro described it as outstanding. Britain is well ahead of most countries, including his native Italy (here he made a wry face), and also, sadly, la belle France. As for the US, it provided the most aid in gross terms, though not per head of population. We did not get onto the issue of some of that aid being self-serving, but clearly the US is still a crucial player.

Instead of a formal Q & A session, dialogue wound in and around Alessandro's exposition. For instance during his description of DFID he was questioned about the UK percentage of GDP (now expressed as Gross National Income) devoted to development - would it reach the UN target rate of 0.7% of GNI? Britain's current contribution was 0.4%, but he stressed that commitment to the target, and indeed all the UN Millennium Development Goals, was absolute. At this point he was challenged on the lack of advertisement for the MDGs in general and the role of DFID in particular. He agreed ruefully that PR had been poor but was in the process of being improved. (It is strange that one of HM Government's few triumphs should be so little trumpeted abroad - is it because they fear that the population is totally incapable of altruism?)

The position of Gareth Thomas MP on trade matters was queried - he is Under-Secretary of State shared between DFID and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). The reply gave grounds for optimism: our visitor assured us that Gareth was able to use this as an opportunity to push the case for fair trade, and was having some success in modifying BERR's instinctive support for free trade. He spoke highly of Gareth's enthusiasm, intelligence, knowledge and work-rate.

Another question - about the control of the department by government - did elicit the response that yes, a change of government could mean policy changes. A thought to conjure with.

In closing Alessandro was thanked in the usual way, so too was Gill Miller (Chester University's Programme Leader for International Development Studies); it was she who thought of introducing him to the Forum while he was up in Chester to address her students. Alessandro in turn was clearly impressed by the commitment of and awareness of Forum members, by CDEC Director Heather Swainston's role in education, and the mass of information and displays at the CDEC Centre.

Peter Byrne & Bernard Payne

NOT FOR SALE SUNDAY 18th May

Launched in 2007, this is an initiative of CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking Across Europe) to raise awareness that in the UK women, children and men are currently being sold in our cities and towns for sexual exploitation. It is a time to reflect, respond and start to make a difference. Liturgy, prayers, power point presentations and bible studies available for your church online and in print. www.notforsalesunday.org

To find out more the book 'Not for Sale: Raising Awareness, Ending Exploitation' £12.99 is available from selected bookshops and www.chaste.org.uk

AN AFRICAN SCANDAL?

Dr Robert Beckford, academic and Theologian explores the themes of his TV documentary aired on Channel 4 in 2007 (Fairtrade and poverty issues as they affect Ghana)

March 12th 7pm

FACT 88 Wood Street LIVERPOOL
Free entry but phone Christian Aid 020 7523 2048 to reserve a place

CLIMATE CHANGE

Week of Action - First week of April



The UK is likely to be the first country to pass national legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Now is the critical time to persuade MPs to ensure the Climate Change Bill becomes a strong and effective law. Currently, the Bill is not strong enough to meet the government's own ambition of showing international leadership on climate change. Together, we must persuade the politicians to **Boost the Bill**

Key changes to the Bill

- 1) At least an 80% reduction in UK carbon emissions by 2050 to keep global temperature rises below 2°C
- 2) Annual milestones for carbon reduction
- 3) International aviation and shipping included within the UK's carbon budget

CAFOD is working with the "I Count" campaign to ensure all MP's hear just how important our 3 key demands are and how strongly we feel about climate change.

Week of Action: The first week of April will see a range of events and actions to make all MPs aware of our demands - join in by emailing campaign@cafod.org.uk to register your interest, and we will be in touch with more details.

We hope that CAFOD Supporters and campaigners for Climate Change will take this opportunity to commit to living simply, sustainably and in solidarity with those vulnerable communities already affected by climate change.



CLEAN UP YOUR COMPUTER

A new CAFOD report (8 February 2008) claims electronics workers in Mexico are still being regularly subjected to labour rights abuses.

In 2004, CAFOD's 'Clean Up Your Computer' campaign successfully persuaded leading electronics manufacturers Dell and IBM to sign up to Codes of Conduct to improve conditions for workers across their supply chains. Following the campaign, companies have met with local organisations and heard the experiences of electronics workers first hand.

Four years on, CAFOD's Mexican partner, the Centre for Reflection and Action on Labour Issues (CEREAL), has produced a new report into labour rights abuses as part of its ongoing work to ensure ICT companies in Mexico live up to their commitments. The report claims that workers are exposed to toxic materials, safety rules are ignored allowing accidents to happen, and union rights are restricted. Alleged abuses uncovered include a woman whose hands were severed by a company machine, a pregnant woman forced to stand for seven hour shifts, and a denial of annual leave or maternity leave to the contract workers who make up the majority of the workforce.

Interviews were conducted with almost 2,000 workers within the supply chains of electronics companies, including Hitachi, Hewlett Packard, Nokia, Philips, Dell, Motorola, Lenovo and Intel, and 236 cases of alleged abuse were documented.

Electronics equipment is Mexico's main export and the industry employs 400,000 workers who earn on average 100 pesos (US\$ 9.25) a day.

Anne Lindsay, CAFOD private sector analyst, says: "Thanks to CEREAL's work the industry is now well aware of abuses, and is often responding more promptly to complaints. But, as this report shows, that abuses are still occurring on a regular basis is hugely disappointing."

CAFOD and CEREAL are calling for all electronics brands and large contract companies to work across their supply chains to improve conditions and allow workers to join independent trade unions.

More information on www.cafod.org.uk

NB A new home for CAFOD SHREWSBURY based next door to St Clare's, in Lache, Chester, (actually in first floor accommodation over the Parish Room), so the address is 27A Downsfield Road, Chester CH4 8HH; Tel 01244 677594 or email shrewsbury@cafod.org.uk

CAFOD LIVERPOOL still operates from 27 Crofton Road, Liverpool L13 5UJ, Tel 0151 228 4028, email liverpool@cafod.org.uk



MARY'S MEALS - the simple solution to world hunger that works

Hunger kills 6 million children every year before they reach the age of 5. A further 300 million suffer from chronic hunger. For many of us, it is hard to comprehend that there are millions of people throughout this world, in particularly children, who don't know when and where their next meal is going to come from. Yet in Europe and USA, \$17 billion dollars is spent on pet food and \$11 billion dollars on ice cream each year. The cost to eliminate world hunger is \$19 billion dollars.

130 million children do not attend school or get an education. Yet, studies show that an education is the best way an individual, or a society, can escape from poverty. An education can set a child free from poverty in adult life and not only that, but their children too. How can you educate a child, if their only way of survival is to labour in the fields or in the streets? Even if you get the child to school, how can the child concentrate when they are continuously hungry?

The answer to this is Mary's Meals.



Mary's Meals is a project run by a charity called Scottish International Relief (SIR) and its objective is to provide poverty stricken children at least one substantial meal a day at school. The benefits of this include:

- (i) Daily attendance at school improves - Parents (if the children have any due to HIV/AIDS) are more likely to send their children to school if they know they can get a decent meal, even girls who traditionally stay at home to help out in the household.
- (ii) Concentration in school improves - By receiving a daily meal at school, this removes the gnawing pain of hunger, leaving the children free to turn their attention to class work. This in turn leads to better grades and improving performance.
- (iii) Better health - By receiving a daily meal, children's health improve and they are better placed to resist illnesses.

It only costs £5.30 to feed a child in Malawi for a whole year. **YES, £5.30!!** In this country, this is more or less the cost of a bottle of wine, a packet of cigarettes, or a visit to the cinema for one. A little sacrifice from us could be a life changing experience for a child in Malawi!

The low cost is only achievable because costs are kept to a minimum. Much of the organisation of

Mary's Meals relies upon volunteers from those who carry out fund raising to those who make and serve the meals. Invariably, it is the mothers of the hungry children who get up at 7 o'clock in the morning to prepare the meals - they see this as a way to give a better future for their children. Furthermore, the ingredients for the meals are sourced from the country, thereby investing in the farming economy of that country.

There are no highly paid Executives in SIR and of the few paid staff working for the charity, they have the conviction that what they are doing is making a difference to many thousands of children's lives. Even the Chief Executive, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow's office, is effectively a 'tin-shack' in the grounds of the Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer in Dalmally.

How can we help?

What has recently become popular is a scheme to sponsor a school. Parishes, schools, organisations and even individuals have set up fund raising projects to sponsor a school. Whilst the Mary's Meals cause has captured the hearts of many, the sponsoring of a school has helped to focus fund raising on a specific goal.

To start a feeding project at a school, it is necessary to build a brick building that serves as a kitchen and store. This costs £4,000. A further £2,000 is required to buy the large cooking pots used to make the Likuni Phala (Maize porridge) and the mugs used by the children. One-off donations and specific fund raising events are good ways of raising money for this target.

When considering sponsoring a school, it is useful to decide what size of school to raise money for, i.e. the number of children attending. The target for feeding children is £5.30 times the number of children attending the school. As the children will need to be fed year-on-year, there is a degree of commitment required to continue this support. Regular contributions via Gift Aid, is the best way of assisting with this commitment. A person donating £5.30 per month will end up feeding 12 children over the year. It soon becomes evident that you don't need many contributors of this nature to support a small to medium sized school.

All-in-all, Mary's Meals is a simple solution to a very big problem and it touches the hearts of many people. Sponsoring a school is simple and helps to give a focus to fund raising. More information can found at www.marysmeals.org

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DON'T FORGET BURMA

Who could forget those dramatic images last September of the orange clad monks leading the Burmese people in protest against the huge increases in the cost of living? The regime responded with a brutal crackdown on the peaceful protestors. Official figures put the death toll at 10 people. However, others believe (see www.burmacampaign.org.uk) that up to 200 were killed, over 6000 were arrested people, including an estimated 1400 monks.

International leaders condemned the regime's violence and there was a flurry of diplomatic activity. On 15 October EU Foreign Ministers finally agreed to strengthen targeted sanctions against the military regime. But although forgotten by news media, the junta still oppresses its people. Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest. Members of the Burma Campaign UK who returned at the end of January from a trip to Karen state in Eastern Burma tell of increasing numbers of child soldiers being sent to the frontline to take part in attacks on ethnic Karen civilians. This is because the regime's battalions in Karen state are under strength, reportedly due to increasing difficulties recruiting, high numbers of desertions, and heavy losses fighting the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

To keep our concern alive:

A WEBSITE was started in November 07 with pictures and comments from all over the world. You can read others and post your own. www.dontforgetburma.org

A GLOBAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR BURMA on Saturday March 8th. Organised by Christian Solidarity Worldwide at Emmanuel Centre in London (details on www.csw.org.uk)
If you cannot attend maybe you can arrange a time of prayer locally.

*Let us pray for the people of Burma,
that their struggle for democracy may be achieved without further blood-
shed and repression.
That these beautiful and generous people may not be stifled
by hunger, poverty and that their homeland
may soon be assured of a safe repatriation.
And that the children and young people of Burma may grow up
in a land that respects the value of all its people.*

*Written by Maureen Matthews after her visit to Burma with CAFOD in
1998*



THE LADY OF BURMA written by Richard Shannon this year is touring the country. This is the inspirational true story of Aung San Suu Kyi with a compelling solo performance by Liana Mau Tan Gould. It has previously been a sell-out at the Edinburgh Festival and the Old Vic in London.

It is at Unity Theatre Liverpool on Tuesday April 22nd and
The Lowry Studio Manchester on June 2nd.

TEE SHIRTS with image of the Burmese monk (above) threatened by soldiers are now available.

If you use Amazon to buy books online, you can support Burma by going through the Burma Campaign website. More details of all these as well as up-to-date information on the situation in Burma on www.burmacampaign.org.uk

LATEST NEWS : On Saturday 9th February the junta announced that it would hold a referendum on a new constitution in May, and general elections in 2010. However, the constitution enshrines military rule, giving 25 percent of the seats to the military, and also gives the military effective veto power over decisions made by Parliament.

'This is a move away from democracy, not towards it,' said Mark Farmaner, Director of the Burma Campaign UK. 'It is public relations spin because they are afraid of stronger sanctions being imposed. They are defying the UN Security Council by going ahead with this sham process and refusing to hold genuine talks with Aung San Suu Kyi and leaders of ethnic groups. There needs to be a strong international response to say that this will not be accepted.'

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FEBRUARY 25 - 9 MARCH

Fairtrade Fortnight.

www.fairtrade.org.uk www.traidcraft.co.uk

MARCH

3 'Scandal Must Come: the Church, the Press and Offence' Speaker Austen Ivereigh Newman Association, St Theresa's Wilmslow 7.30 pm Eucharist, 8.15 pm talk. Visitors welcome. Contact Chris Quirke 0161 941 1707

4 Physical Health - NW Primary Care Group. Venue: Refugee Action Trust, Mount Pleasant. Contact: Dr Joseph O' Neill at Asylum Link Merseyside, 0151 709 1713.

7 Women's World Day of Prayer 'God's Wisdom provides new understanding' By women of Guyana www.wwdp-natcomm.org

7 'Black Gold'— film about Ethiopia and the coffee trade Town Hall Chester 7.30 pm. Free admission. Contact 01244 400906

8 Day of prayer for Burma see page 11

12 African Scandal CA meeting 7pm FACT 88 Wood Street Liverpool see p. 8

14 -15 Live it! An event to celebrate the *livesimply* challenge. New Century Hall, Manchester. More details & booking www.livesimply.org.uk/event08 or 0870 879 1006

23 Easter Sunday

23 Romero Day. See page 3

APRIL

1-7 Climate Change Week of Action. See page 9

6 Liverpool Romero Mass 6.30pm at St Richard's Parish Atherton. See page 3

8 Medical Report Writing for detention + torture victims. For venue & time contact Dr Joseph O'Neill, see March 4

12 Drop the Debt Fast. Start of 36-day rolling fast to call for debt cancellation for 36 more countries, see page 5

19 Catholic Migrants—opportunities and challenges National Newman Conference St Ambrose College Hale Barns Altrincham. See page 2

22 'The Lady of Burma' Unity Theatre Liverpool see page 11

29 Annual General Meeting of Churches Together in Shropshire. in St George's Parish Church, Pontesbury. Guest speaker **Isobel Carter from the Marches Energy Agency.** See www.chtogshropshire.co.uk

MAY

13 Adolescent Health - For venue & time contact Dr O'Neill, see March 4

11-17 Christian Aid Week

18 Journey to Justice: Breaking the Chains of Global Debt. International Convention Centre, Birmingham. See page 5

18 Not for Sale Sunday. See page 8

JUNE

10 Global humanitarian crises - their effects on the UK For venue & time contact Dr O'Neill, see March 4

JULY 18-20 'Hear my people cry' National J & P Conference at Swanwick arranged by Liverpool Diocese, see page 2

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Copy date for next issue 1/5/ 08

Don't forget to send in reports of events and dates for the diary

The opinions expressed in MouthPeace are the views of the individual contributors or organisations concerned and do not necessarily reflect those of the Justice and Peace Commissions of the dioceses of Shrewsbury and Liverpool

edited and typeset by
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