



# *Shrewsbury and Liverpool Justice and Peace Commissions*

Summer 2009

## **A prayer for peace for Palestine Israel**

Living God, we pray for all the people in Palestine Israel, that they may discover the courage and humility to build peace together.

We pray for those with power and influence, that they will seek a just path of reconciliation.

We pray for those who are in dire need today, that their human rights to food and shelter and medical care will be urgently met. We pray for international aid agencies as they work to bring hope to devastated communities.

We pray for all those in the land who have suffered over the years of struggle: for those who are grieving for their lost loved ones; for those whose lives have been changed forever because of injuries, mental and physical; and for those who bear the lasting scars of being displaced and dispossessed. Living God, their pain is so great today. Bring your healing, bring your peace, to Palestine Israel.

For our Muslim brothers and sisters in Palestine Israel this day, we pray *Assalamii Alaikum*.

For our Jewish brothers and sisters in Palestine Israel this day, we pray *Shalom Aleichem*.

For our Christian brothers and sisters, the Living Stones, in Palestine Israel, this day, we pray  
*The Peace of Christ.* Amen

*From material for use during week of peace for Israel  
Palestine*

[www.paxchristi.org.uk/events.HTML](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/events.HTML)

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Issue 66



## THE JOURNEY OF NOAH'S BARGE THROUGH THE NORTH-WEST

DATE	TRAVELLING THROUGH	EVENING MOORING FROM 6PM Events may not start till later. Ring for more info.	PHONE
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> June		Foulridge wharf Drop-in at Cargo Café	0752 370 6464
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Burnley Community Travel F4C	Church, near Accrington Community Travel F4C	0752 370 6464
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June	Blackburn and Chorley. Come and help with the locks	Adlington, White Bear Marina Café	0752 370 6464
Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> June	Haigh Plantations Stopping for a picnic and a walk in the woods at lunchtime	Top Lock Bring your picnic and a deck chair to meet Colin from Transition Town Wigan	0752 370 6464
Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> July	21 Wigan Locks. Come and help with the locks	Crooke Quiz in the Crooke Hall Inn in the evening	0752 370 6464
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July	Parbold and Burscough. Meet with Our Lady's Primary School, Parbold	Maghull, St George's Eco-rant: voice your environmental concerns	0752 370 6464
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July	Into Liverpool	Eldonian Village Hall RECYCLED JOKES. Bring a joke to share	0784 370 8188
Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> July	Albert Dock 1. Lobby the minister at Liverpool Town Hall 2. Marine biology of the dock system. Liverpool World Museum	3. J&P Annual Contacts Day meeting at Our Lady & St Nicholas 1pm -4pm 4. Music evening at Eldonian Village Hall	0784 370 8188
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> July	Eldonian Village. Mass at St Sylvester's	Possible event in afternoon	0784 370 8188
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> July	Out of Liverpool	Parbold	0784 370 8188
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> July	Aiming to get through the locks at Wigan before nightfall	21 Wigan Locks. Come and help operate the locks	0784 370 8188
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> July	Johnsons Hillock	Barden Mill, St Augustine's, Billington	0784 370 8188
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> July		Salterforth	0784 370 8188
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> July	Return to Barnoldswick for 9 am		

### INTERNATIONAL PRAYER VIGIL FOR VICTIMNS OF TORTURE

**June 27-28 8.00 pm to 8.am**

This annual Vigil will be held again to mark United Nations Torture Victims Day, Members of Action by Christians Against Torture (UK) will be taking part. It is hoped that many individual Christians and churches will join them or ask for the tortured to be included in intercessions at Sunday services. Those remembered will include Christians persecuted for their faith, prisoners of conscience, torture victims, human rights defenders under threat of death, the families of all victims and also those who torture.

**Can you spare 15 minutes to pray ?**

Please join with the many other Christians round the world, who will be praying, if only for 15 minutes, for the "least of our brothers and sisters". Download material or sign up for vigil on [www.thenightvigil.com](http://www.thenightvigil.com)

## LIVERPOOL AND NOAH'S BARGE: JUNE 19<sup>th</sup> - July 10<sup>th</sup> 2009

Steve Atherton *Liverpool J&P writes:*

**NOAH'S BARGE** is our big project to promote CAFOD's Climate Change campaign. (See *Why Climate Justice ?* on page 11) The whole journey is to raise awareness of the issues, to have conversations along the way, to pray and give witness, to generate enthusiasm for the cause and to give out materials to the people we meet.

Noah's Barge will be moored at the Eldonian Village in Liverpool on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> and then again on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July. It will be in Salthouse Dock all day Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July. (Salthouse Dock is an extension of Albert Dock) The mooring is right next to the road so please come and visit. (Full programme of journey opposite page)

**The context:** Some people are aware of the importance of UN Conference of the Parties 15 (COP15) in Copenhagen 17-18 December but its importance has hardly registered with the wider public. How can J&P contribute and come up with an iconic event or idea and begin to build up the momentum?

**Traditional problems:** Mobilising numbers en masse normally leaves people with a certain fatigue associated with going on coaches to London with placards. There is a time and place for that, but if this is to build throughout the year, what can local and regional gatherings do? Liverpool J&P were inspired by *Operation Noah's* event in Cardiff on January 24<sup>th</sup> and think there is mileage in coalescing people around the theme of the Ark. (See [www.operationnoah.org/cardiff](http://www.operationnoah.org/cardiff))

### Why the Ark?

1. It allows people to participate and raises issues about what sort of world the next generations will inherit.
2. It is genuinely upbeat and celebratory: escaping some of the eco- doom and gloom tendencies.
3. It focuses on Noah: "an upright man of virtue" who did the right thing at the right time and is the Bible's first heroic conservationist. And also it gives people of faith a genuine God-centred motive for taking this issue seriously. We don't respond to global warming out of fear or guilt, but because the creation is not ours and we are called by God to act to nurture and protect it.
4. The Flood and Covenant themes have huge inter-faith potential. Indeed, the Flood narrative is a sort of Jungian archetype – with some equivalent in most cultures and societies.



**Why a journey?** We're on water which is the stuff of life. Water is 70% of our bodies. Our slow journey will let us reach people, taking time, allowing time to talk with people along the way, instead of our usual headlong rush. This time we're not zooming along the M62 at 70mph. The journey will give time to reflect and re-engage with our environment, a chance to buy local produce and to eat slow food. It is a chance to celebrate the beauty of our countryside. A chance to live simply.

**Why the Leeds - Liverpool canal?** Where else could we go? The aim of this journey is symbolism, political awareness raising and community building: the Ark represents our planet, our home and within it, it contains the whole spectrum of life which is threatened by the prospect of runaway climate change. Although aimed principally at faith groups, its powerful imagery is transcendent and capable of appeal to a wider set of individuals and green groups. We will be meeting with groups every day as well and talking to people along the way.

**Beyond the Leeds – Liverpool canal?** We hope (and plan) for good media coverage of this event. We have responded to the Cardiff initiative and offer encouragement to groups in other places in the UK. This project meets with enthusiasm wherever it is mentioned. The images from 19<sup>th</sup> June - 10<sup>th</sup> July can add momentum and energy to the process.

It is a tall order since this subject still feels distant and vague to many people. But if the symbols behind all this catch on, there is no reason why a coalition of NGOs such as Christian Aid, Tearfund, CAFOD, OXFAM, WDM and all the churches cannot begin to start a bandwagon moving in 2009 that will get this issue at the centre of the UK political agenda prior to the negotiations in December 2009.

We are part of a coalition that will be meeting with Ed Milliband at Liverpool Town Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> July. We hope to be mentioned by Fred the Weatherman. Can we be part of the Ark-based edition of Songs of Praise in autumn 2009? Is there room for the Barge in Radio 4's proposed documentary of the Cardiff project? Can you help us to raise awareness of environmental issues the minds of the public? Please let us know of any ideas you have or contacts you can make for us.

## THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN.....

Anne O'Connor writes:

*"Enlightening;" "encouraging;" "inspiring;" "illuminating;" "moving;" "optimism;" "frustration."*

Just some of the comments from participants at a day-long gathering on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May in Crewe to review Shrewsbury Diocese's contribution to the nationwide Changing Face of Britain Programme initiated by the Catholic Agency for Racial Justice (CARJ) to celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Our gathering with Bishop Brian was an opportunity to celebrate the growing diversity in the parishes of our diocese and provided a useful forum to discuss and discern new opportunities and challenges. Warm thanks are due to all who participated but especially to Ged Flynn, Director, Catholic Children's Society, who facilitated the day so well (and proved to be a technical whiz-kid too!) and to Joan Sharples for organising the day and for her support and encouragement to groups throughout the process.

Rosie Bairwal (CARJ CFB Co-ordinator), who is visiting every diocese in England and Wales in a series of similar meetings, explained the aims of the programme. It hopes to:

- celebrate the ways in which the Church and the wider society have changed for the better over the twenty-five years since CARJ was founded;
- attempt to read 'the signs of the times';
- discern in the new situation the challenges that we are called to address in the future.

Guest speaker and CARJ Trustee Richard Zipfel commented on the national picture and gave an excellent overview of the situation in Britain over the past 25 years:

### CELEBRATING WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED



Richard highlighted changes for the better and the progress that we have all made towards becoming 'a truly diverse Church in a truly diverse society':

- overt discrimination has been made illegal and largely banned from mainstream society
- people of different backgrounds live and work in all sectors of society
- educational disadvantage is being steadily overcome
- our churches and schools are communities of every language, nation, colour and culture

The *Race Relations Act 1976* and the CRE are being replaced by a new Single Equalities Act and the newly formed Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

### THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

Richard challenged us to look below the surface, to read the signs of the times and to discern what role we are called to play in our developing society. He drew our attention to the following issues:

**Second generation black British.** The riots of the early 1980s, which were examined in the Scarman Inquiry, suggest something of the situation 25 years ago – alienated black youth, racism in the police, over-representation in prisons, high incidence of mental illness, educational under-achievement, the emergence of black consciousness, black power and black pride.

**Islam in British society.** The Muslim community are currently in the forefront of public attention, partly because of terrorism but also because they are visibly committed to their faith and culture which some see as alien. Some second generation Muslims are becoming westernised under their traditional clothing – making their way in school and into jobs across society. Others are experiencing varying degrees of alienation and are sometimes under attack and the focus of new BNP activity. Issues of community cohesion often focus around divisions between Muslim communities and others.

**New Migrants.** Migrants coming to the UK since 1990 come from many parts of the world – Africa, Asia and Latin America – but especially from Eastern Europe. They come with a variety of needs and contributions to make to both the church and the wider society. They may suffer sporadic prejudice – stereotyping, media criticism, etc.

**Gypsies and Travellers.** The communities of Gypsies and Travellers are said to be similar in size to the Bangladeshi community in the UK. They are culturally separated because of their life-style and they often suffer very serious levels of prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage. There are important issues of health care, problems with the police, educational under-achievement and relations with local communities.

**Asylum seekers and refugees.** Asylum seekers and refugees are sometimes among the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. Past traumas, the current danger of being returned, lack of work or benefits, serious stereotyping and hatred and other problems make them a priority. There are a considerable number of church projects to cater for their needs, but the situation is patchy and sometimes uncoordinated.

**Poor white, working class and jobless and homeless.** This is not a single group but together make up a very vulnerable and fairly sizeable section of the white population. They are a breeding ground for the BNP and for the growth of the everyday racism of ordinary people. They are seen by some to be the 'neglected poor' as compared to black and minority ethnic groups.

## ..... AND OF SHREWSBURY DIOCESE

The seven parishes invited to help form a picture of the *Changing Face of Britain* in the Shrewsbury Diocese were: St Patrick's, Wellington; the Cathedral, Shrewsbury; St George's, Ellesmere; St Mary's, Crewe; St Joseph's, Birkenhead; St Vincent's, Altrincham and St John's, Wythenshawe. These parishes represent a good geographical spread throughout the diocese and encompass a wide range of ethnic and cultural diversity.



Each parish was asked to conduct a survey to discover how it had changed over the past 25 years and to give a brief presentation of their findings to the Crewe meeting. The talks were each punctuated by a short Taizé chant which moved us seamlessly from one group to the next – an inspired idea! It was fascinating to learn more about the ethnic and cultural make-up of different pockets of our diocese, which has traditionally been considered by many to be a rural white area. In fact the report from Ellesmere, a small rural town in Shropshire, revealed that only four regular adult members of the congregation had been born in the area, and only one of those had a grandparent born there. These findings were echoed by other parishes indicating that, to a greater or lesser extent, we are all migrants or incomers.

The presentations were varied in both content and form. We heard stories of Polish refugees at the time of World War II; West Indian migrants of the Windrush generation, sent to 'help the Motherland'; health service workers from the Indian region of Kerala and economic migrants from Eastern Europe. There was a moving and impassioned plea from CARJ member Eugene on behalf of the Dalit community, better known as 'the untouchables', the lowest of the low, who suffer scandalous hardship and discrimination.



St Vincent's, Altrincham focused on the very positive response of parishioners to new arrivals in their midst, welcoming this as an opportunity to celebrate the diversity and universality of the Church: an enriching experience for the whole parish. Newcomers were perceived to bring a commitment and a depth of faith that contrasted especially to our young people, many of whom are lapsed. St John's, Wythenshawe noted that academic and behavioural standards in schools have improved since the influx of pupils from overseas. It was encouraging to discover that the ethnic diversity of the Cathedral parish is reflected in church ministries - cleaning, Eucharistic ministers, etc, - a pattern being repeated increasingly elsewhere.

Parishes with a large immigrant community shared the difficulties faced by many newcomers: St Joseph's, Birkenhead described the experience as 'like being on a hamster wheel'. Families struggle with the pressure of both parents having to work separate shifts, with very little time together and no supporting relatives to help with childcare. Whilst this problem is not exclusive to recent arrivals to this country, the change of culture, coupled with language difficulties, often compounds the problem. Parishes with large Polish or Malayali communities (from Kerala, India) have maintained their cultural identity by organising regular events and appreciated support from clergy from their mother countries. Polish Masses are currently held once a month at St Joseph's celebrated by the Polish priest from Chester and Fr Sajimon, based in Wythenshawe, says Mass in the Syro-Malabar rite for Malayali communities throughout the diocese. St George's, Ellesmere have discovered The Simple Prayer Book in Polish, Spanish and Portuguese, and have a supply in Polish to give to new people. They also use a website [www.virc.ac](http://www.virc.ac) and currently download Sunday Mass readings in Polish, Italian and Portuguese.



Many parishes are now building up a tradition of International Masses to celebrate different cultures, share food and socialise. They have been a major focus for the J&P group at St Vincent's, Altrincham, which is made up of many nationalities, along with the parish's first International Carol Service. St George's, Ellesmere includes two international customs in their annual calendar to enrich the community. At the request of the Poles, Epiphany is now celebrated with the blessing of small pieces of chalk. These are taken home to write the initials of the Three Kings and the year over doorways to signify a welcome for the Christ child and for the stranger into their homes.

Overall there is general goodwill and interest on issues of race and diversity and a ready understanding of possible future problems. The questionnaires and parish meetings have provided a valuable forum for people to share their views. In addition they have highlighted a wider issue: the difficulty that faces any newcomer to a parish (or indeed to any other group). They have reminded us of the need to look out for the stranger in our midst, be ready to welcome everyone and to make sure he or she feels valued and supported.



For a full report or more on how parishes went about gathering this info please contact Joan Sharples, 01270 620584

## INTEGRATING LIFE AND FAITH

*"A most thought-provoking and challenging course. Sharing the journey with others who were like-minded but coming from quite different places enriched the content which was delivered in a professional and non-threatening way by the Craighead team. The course has helped me to appreciate more deeply the importance of Gospel values and our Christian tradition for today's world and has given me a heightened awareness of my own responsibility as a Catholic Christian."*

*"I started this course at a time when I was searching and seeking for a more spiritual dimension on life. Looking back after the course I can see it was for the "inner freedom" – the freedom from and for. Have I found it? Well I hope I have started that journey."*

*"There is neither enough time nor space to articulate all that I have learned from the course. Suffice to say that it has been life-changing."*

*"The unique benefit of this course has been the opportunities to integrate different aspects of my secular and spiritual life."*

*"I have a profound sense that this course may well prove to be the leaven in the dough - it will go on working in me long into the future."*

A few comments from participants on the Shrewsbury & Liverpool courses

*Claire Walsh from Liverpool writes:*

I participated in the course in 2006/2007. I was looking for a way of integrating my life and my faith. I was fed up of feeling as if I was one person at work and another at home and church. I was not disappointed – the course did so much more than integrate my life and faith it was, as it says above, "life-changing". Two years on and the experience is still with me. The course gave me tools that I can use in all areas of my life and has led to experiences I never imagined possible. For the last two years I have been part of the team delivering the course in the Liverpool Archdiocese, trained and supported by the Craighead Institute.

### **Why are we offering this course?**

We are only too familiar with the cry that there is a split between our faith and the realities of modern life. Likewise that formation to help lay people take up their roles as Christians must be life-centred and speak to people's actual experience of life – not an easy challenge. At the heart of this course is the belief that God is as much to be found in our relationships, our families, our homes, our places of work and the events of every day as in prayer, in Scripture and in the Sacraments. Developing lay people for today's society involves building on this faith reality, to discover the God who is as much with us in the every day of our Mondays to Saturdays as in our Sundays.

### **About the Craighead Institute**

This Institute is a Scottish-based ecumenical Institute of Life and Faith involved in Consultancy, Research and Training in a global context. The Institute works systemically with specific emphasis on faith, values and beliefs in society, working with individuals, groups and organisations to transform oppressive and outdated structures into living and sustainable systems, contributing to a greater fullness of life. Countries where the Institute works include: Australia, Belgium, Bosnia, Burma (Myanmar), Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, Congo, Croatia, Denmark, France, Fiji, Gambia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Ko-

rea, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Namibia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Switzerland, Thailand, U.S.A., Zambia, Zimbabwe, as well as the UK. The Craighead Institute is also a premier practice of the Institute of Management Consultancy.

### **Who might benefit from this Course?**

Those who want to reflect on the integration of their faith with their daily living and to respond accordingly. Previous participants have included: interested parishioners, adult educators, catechists, religious sisters, justice and peace group members, voluntary workers in church or non-church settings, deacons, pastoral team leaders and members, parish ministers, spiritual directors, schoolteachers, department heads, pastoral workers, and those in the caring professions.

### **.... and how?**

Discovering more energising and empowering ways of working through an experiential approach rooted in the here and now. Teachers, for example, have said that this course has transformed their relationships with pupils and their parents. A parent in one of the Liverpool groups said that after just the first module her relationship with her children had completely changed for the better.

**and where?** The course is run in both the Liverpool and the Shrewsbury Diocese. The Liverpool course takes place at Loyola Hall, Rainhill and at various venues in the Shrewsbury Diocese.

### **There are no formal entry requirements.**

This course is suitable for all age groups: from young adults to retired people. It is run over four non-residential weekends over a period of six to nine months.

### **How do I find out more?**

If you live in the Liverpool Archdiocese contact Steve Atherton on 0151 522 1080

If you live in the Shrewsbury Diocese contact Joan Sharples on 01270 620584

The Craighead Institute has a website:

[www.craighead.org.uk](http://www.craighead.org.uk)



## FAITH DOING JUSTICE

*Elizabeth Wilson and Marian Thompson write:*



In March we gathered from various parts of the Diocese for a CAFOD/ J & P spirituality day at The Evron Centre in Stockport. This old house near the middle of the town, the home of the Sisters of Our Lady of Evron, is known locally as a place for prayer, quiet days and retreats. So it was an entirely appropriate venue for our day which was gently but ably led by CAFOD's Susy Brouard who herself had travelled from London. This was a day, rather unusual in J & P circles when we spilled time. There were opportunities to spend time with each other, talking, listening, sharing, and also to spend time alone with God.

The morning started with a reflective reading of Psalm 104 'in praise of God's creation' accompanied by beautiful photos to enhance our sense of awe and worship. Then Sue, as she said herself, offered a quick run through the prophets in the Old Testament finishing with Jesus as a prophet. We were reminded that prophets are those who listen to God and by their words and lives proclaim His Ways to the world. This is not an easy, soft option. His ways are not our ways and often we ( the world) do not want to listen and give prophets a hard time. Then we were given a quiet hour to listen to God, to reflect and pray. The warm welcoming centre with its quiet rooms and the garden ( just springing into life) provided the perfect setting

Returning to the coffee room at lunch time we found the food we had left in bags and boxes, had been laid out as a feast, thanks to the behind the scenes activity of Sue Bownas, Joan Sharples and their helpers. We forgot Lenten fasting and enjoyed the good food and fellowship – always an important part of such days.

In the afternoon we looked at Archbishop Romero as a prophet of our times. We watched a few extracts of John Duigan's film of Romero's life and then in small groups discussed what we had seen. To finish we were given red paper flames and asked to note things that the day had sparked in us and which we might fan into flames in the future.

A while ago CAFOD produces a coloured card saying "Aspire not to have more but to be more" a saying attributed to Archbishop Romero. This was such a day. We had not acquired lots of facts and figures about particular campaigns or issues or been given many leaflets and papers to take home. We had been stimulated and strengthened spiritually. We both feel that such days are important to renew us and remind us that if we are to be prophets, to read the 'signs of our times' for others, then our work and activity should be firmly rooted in our own relationship with God.

## REMEMBERING ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

The newly-formed joint J&P group from All Saint's and St Margaret Ward parishes in Sale and Our Lady's, Partington hosted an evening on 24<sup>th</sup> March to commemorate the assassination of Oscar Romero 29 years ago. The intimate layout of St Margaret Ward lent itself beautifully to the service. As the evening drew to a close participants were invited to light a votive candle and place it on the altar. It was extremely moving to sit quietly and prayerfully in the dark in the small chapel there. The tiny glimmers of the candles were a powerful reminder of how a light, however small, can shine out in the darkness, encouraging us to be that light in the world around us. During this time of quiet reflection a song about El Salvador by Christy Moore was played.

Other highlights were a recording of Archbishop Romero's final homily, explosively cut short by the fatal gunshot, followed by a poignant song of lament (with a translation by Fr Ned in the handout), and a challenging reflection preached by Sr Martine Patoir. She asked us to think about what Romero means for us today, focusing on the concept of 'true justice': the need to stand up for what is right and the importance of establishing right relationships with ourselves, with God, with other people and with the whole of Creation. She described how circumstances had forced Romero to reassess his life and values. He had to choose how to respond to the violence and injustice in El Salvador at that time. Far from being the expected 'safe pair of hands', conserving the (corrupt) status quo, he followed his conscience and dedicated himself to serving the poor, the downtrodden and the marginalized. We too are called to look at what is important in our lives, to follow our conscience and to act accordingly. Sr Martine warned us that this may not be easy and we may meet opposition and difficulties along the way.

Next year will be the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Romero's death. CAFOD plan to mark the occasion with an updated Romero Stations of the Cross. Groups might consider holding their own commemorative services to mark this special milestone. (I have a recording of the gunshot and song, photos of the final moments and other resources which can be provided on request.)

*Anne O'Connor (anneoc980@hotmail.com)*



## WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBOURS?

*Margaret Cook writes:*

It's commonplace nowadays for people to complain that neighbourliness is in decline, and with it, community spirit. Are they right or does it just take a different form? Included in accounts of this year's London Marathon was the story of how Arnold Schwarzenegger tweeted support to Major Phil Packer, the paraplegic Iraq war veteran. They had never met - but both of course had heard of each other through the media. Is this real neighbourliness? Major Packer certainly thought it was...but should it replace the proverbial cup of sugar?

It's striking to see how much people's 'interest in justice issues' is raised when there is some personal, preferably tangible, angle to the story. By far the best parish attendance we have had at a J & P event recently was at an evening we hosted where two young women described the time they spent helping at a hospital in the Nigerian diocese of Makurdi. The speakers not only gave us a first hand account, featuring real characters and images of what they had actually seen, but they themselves were very much our neighbours - we had seen them grow up in the parish, been to their First Communion, exchanged the Kiss of Peace with them. We didn't have to make an effort to know them, to understand the conditions of their lives or to evaluate the truth of their stories. And I noticed how much our parishioners wanted to extend that relationship by giving something of their own (money for a new laundry in Makurdi in this case).

By comparison, some of our excellent outside speakers attracted good audiences but comparatively fewer of our own parishioners even though the speakers were addressing national and global issues (for example, human rights, the Gaza situation and climate change) with the potential to affect all our lives. I do not for a moment think our parishioners do not care about these things but somehow they found it easier to see as their neighbours those with whom they had, as it were, a physical relationship, even if it was a vicarious one.

The contrast made me think about how far the Christian idea of neighbourliness extends. Are we called on to choose, according to our interests and capabilities, between helping those we know and those who are only a faceless statistic, or do we have to include both? Our families and friends, the people next door and perhaps colleagues at work, are easy candidates as neighbours, even if helping them is hard and sometimes causes a bit of tongue biting, and the common image of the Good Neighbour is of someone who does these things well. But in a sense we have **chosen** these people or at least had proximity to them forced upon us. It is possibly the case that we have to start here in our learning about how

to be a neighbour, rather as children's learning must always be referenced to their familiar experiences, yet I wonder if it can ever be the whole story. This is, as we are told, what the heathens (or should we say these days "followers of Dawkins"?) do.

We are surely called to more than this, as our speaker sessions showed us. If we continue to live our present comfortable lives, ignoring the lessons of climate change, human rights abuses, the Gaza problem with all its complexities, we will continue to live with destitute asylum seekers, violence and uncertainty in the Middle East and elsewhere, and the probable eradication of Pacific islands with the loss of untold numbers of homes and livelihoods. We cannot risk the failure of imagination, here. Making these people into our neighbours demands that we learn about things that are difficult and we have to take much on trust. There is a lot of "what if" about this kind of neighbourliness, and a lot of searching for a truth about which we will then have to make our own, often insecure, decisions. This is not comfortable and it sometimes requires that we make alterations to our lives without the certainty of seeing an immediate result. We like what we can slot into our existing knowledge and we like to hear it from people we are familiar with and trust.



Yet our physical neighbours are clearly important and we cannot neglect the immediacy and discipline of care which they afford us. Perhaps there are different kinds of neighbourliness, all of which we need to practice? The care which our parishioners give one another and the overwhelming generosity they show to those brought to their notice by our J & P and SVP groups, is the kind of neighbourliness which Jesus shows us

many times in the Gospels: think of His immediate reaction to the young couple whose wedding party skirts disaster, and Peter's mother-in-law shaking with fever in the next room. We recognise these people as the familiar neighbours whom we care for daily out of a kind of loving necessity.

But Jesus shows other kinds of neighbourliness, too, towards, people He does not know but meets through friends or by chance: the disabled man with the pushy friends, the blind beggar, the band of lepers who cross Jesus' path. And then there are others whom He has to go out of His way to meet because they have been shut out from society: the Samaritan woman excluded from His society and her own; the woman with the unsociable disease who forces him to be her neighbour by gently touching his garments; the presumptuous and determined widow - again an outsider - who, by dint of some clever spin, gets Jesus' attention and food for her children. This kind of neighbourliness requires more

*Continued opposite*



## IDEAS FOR SUMMER READING



### ***Fighting the Banana Wars and Other Fairtrade Battles* by Harriet Lamb**

Rider £10.99

Harriet Lamb has been **Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation in the UK** since 2001. She has guided the Foundation through a period of staggering growth, which has seen estimated sales of Fairtrade products in the UK increase from £30m to more than £290m in 2006, with more than 3500+ retail and catering products carrying the Fairtrade mark. So she is in a good position to describe and assess the work of the Foundation. In the book she relives the dramatic campaigns and successes that have brought Fairtrade to this point and outlines the hurdles still to be overcome. She also introduces us to some of the producers and farmers for whom Fairtrade has been a life changer. In the final chapter she shows us what we can all do to help achieve global Fairtrade.

### ***Global Catholicism Diversity and Change since Vatican II* by Ian Linden** C. Hurst & Co £14.99

Forces as divergent as Jihadist Islam and Richard Dawkins are making religion more central to our lives today. Ian Linden has been an active lay member of the Catholic Church for many years and has witnessed firsthand such important movements as liberation theology. In this book, he charts the complex history of the forces of renewal unleashed by the Second Vatican Council and the counter-forces that gathered during the last half century. It focuses notably on changes that had wider historical importance than the internal evolution of the Catholic Church as a religious organisation: war and peace, nationalism and democratisation in Africa, liberation theology, military dictatorships, guerrilla movements in Latin America, Africa and Philippines, interaction with communist governments, inculturation and relations with resurgent Islam. It views the Catholic Church as a unique example of a religious organisation responding in a unique way to globalisation. Most unusually it adopts a perspective from the global "South" pointing to the future axis of Catholicism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The book weaves together the interaction of ideas and action, doctrine and life, in an innovative and interdisciplinary way.

### ***Little Daughter - Memoir of survival in Burma and the West* by Zoya Phan** Simon & Schuster £15.99

Zoya Phan is the International Coordinator at Burma Campaign UK and is one of the leading Burmese democracy activists in Europe. She is from the Karen ethnic group in Burma. When Burmese army soldiers attacked her village, she and her family were forced to flee. They hid in the jungle for weeks before finding their way to a refugee camp in Thailand. She is now a refugee living in London. She has met with the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown twice, several senior government ministers, the leader of the opposition party, and is regularly interviewed by national and international media including BBC, CNN, and Al Jazeera. This recent book is the extraordinary but true story of her life.

*For more books see also page 11*

### ***Who are our neighbours ?*** *continued from P 8*

of an effort. What these stories seem to be telling us is that the world's advice to look after your own is a necessary beginning in neighbourliness training, but not enough. We need to go beyond this to those we do not have to have contact with by circumstance and whom, in some cases, we may not find "acceptable".

And there is another level of neighbourliness, still, which we need to address because we are, after all, sent to the whole world and not just our own part of it. These are the faceless masses about whom no individual stories can be told and who never make it to more than a finding in national and international research: the children living in poverty in our own country, the girls deprived of schooling in Afghanistan. If we need a Biblical illustration, it is surely in the feeding of the five thousand. The problem is presented first, not in a personal way, but as a statistic. It is, in ordinary neighbourliness, beyond what anyone can be called upon to address - and the Apostles sensibly tell Jesus so. Yet it swiftly becomes not only their responsibility but also within their competence. The crowd has become people we can help - albeit with Divine support. And yet they remain a statistic: there is no

attempt at personalising the problem, no case studies, no pictures of mothers with milkless breasts or children with cleft lips. The Apostles have to take Jesus' instruction on trust and against their ordinary human judgement - just as we have to believe that even in a recession, we can still maintain and increase our contribution to the international aid fund.

For us to follow the Apostles is a complex process: it requires a listening ear, a willingness to know and recognise the needs of people unknown to us - perhaps in our case, by reading newspapers and the internet and listening to the radio. And then it means assessing the practical possibilities, the alternatives and the resources available, including prayer, (and perhaps tweeting?), identifying the shortfall and our own capacity to address the situation. And coming into play is the essential discipline we have acquired from our day-to-day neighbourliness, the knowledge that we cannot as Christians, live just for ourselves. Above all, it means sometimes coming out of our comfort zone, the warmth of the familiar, so that we can, in the words of the Hindu prayer, perform heroic as well as small acts of kindness. Just like Major Packer and Arnold Schwarzenegger!



## FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT FAIRTRADE

Andrew Jeffries, a member of the Trafford Fair Trade Group, writes:

I attended the Christians Aware day at Denton on 4<sup>th</sup> April at Denton Methodist Church. In the morning I heard an excellent speaker, Jeremy Lefroy of Munguishi Coffee, whose profits help fund the Training Centre of the Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. He explained how Fair Trade (FT) assists farmers not just by paying a minimum price plus a development premium, but also by 'pre-financing', to stop the need for sales of beans still on the plant to speculators at 50% of value to secure cash flow for farmers. Partnership is the aim, a long term relationship in which conditions for production are environmentally and financially sustainable.



In 1998 the UK bought £20M of FT products. In 2008 it was £700M, with bananas at £140M and coffee at £120M being the largest items.

Jeremy Lefroy addressed the auditing issue, saying the price of avoiding the odd scandal would be a heavy bureaucracy. He explained how the £1.75 per 250 grams of coffee is split with 51p going to the farmer. He showed how this was reasonable, with roasting, packing and delivery in UK costing 68p. He argued that crude challenges to non-FT suppliers should be fair too, and not ignore e.g. high overhead costs of Starbucks, Costa etc, nor the tax regime, which is 50% in Ivory Coast and only 5% in Tanzania, nor the differences in transport costs between different regions. [Starbucks were congratulated on their ethical trading.]

An illuminating part of the talk was a challenge to an **Adam Smith Institute's report** attacking FT, which Jeremy Lefroy described as 'their worst ever.' This carried particular weight as he is a parliamentary candidate for the Conservative Party somewhere in Staffs, and you'd expect the right-wing think tank to appeal to him. He took the report apart argument by argument:

**'Only a few farmers are helped.'** The total market is not a 'closed system' and helping some doesn't harm others, although care is taken to offer to work with everyone within a given region.

**'Medium rich countries like Mexico are helped, not poor like Ethiopia.'** However, it is the poor of those countries who are helped. Also, Ethiopia has currently caused one big buyer to withdraw completely by seizing some FT goods without compensation.

**'FT doesn't aid economic development.'** Yes it does, with money going to the grass roots, with examples of over a decade's investment being impressive. Taxes paid locally are better than aid.

**'FT sustains uneconomic farmers.'** No it doesn't.

**'It keeps the poor in their place.'** The premium is entirely for education. He cited the example of the most successful business man in Tanzania being the product of a similar farmers' co-op scheme from 60's/70's.

**'Producers hold back on diversification, mechanisation and moving up the value chain.'** Not true. Moreover, it makes agriculture an effective counterweight to the misguided drift to the cities.

**'It is targeted to help landowners.'** True only for tea plantations which are inevitably bigger. '10% only goes to producers, with UK retailers pocketing bigger margins than on other products.' Possibly true, but it is them that should be challenged, or boycotted in favour of smaller suppliers.

**'FT was caused by low coffee prices in the 90's, with current high prices making it unnecessary.'**

Yes, it was a driver of FT, but it remains valid. JL explained that it was the pragmatic idealism of the churches in the UK which had made such a huge success of FT, compared with the view in Germany in particular that this was a socialist idea, to be avoided by mainstream business. Existing small FT traders [like Tearfund, Traidcraft, etc] have not opposed supermarkets getting involved. However Café Direct is threatened by supermarkets' 'own brand' FT items. While it is good to buy FT in supermarkets it is better to buy in small outlets like churches because money then goes into developing new sources of FT items. FT is challenged by the recession but people do trust that it reaches farmers without corrupt governments muscling in.

**Mass of Thanksgiving  
for the work of CAFOD and its supporters in Shrewsbury Diocese  
Sat June 13th at 10.30am**

**CAFOD**  
just one world

Celebrated by Bishop Brian at Our Lady and The Apostles in Stockport. There will be refreshments afterwards in the Parish Hall where there will also be a CAFOD speaker.  
**Everyone welcome.**



## WHY CLIMATE JUSTICE?



"It is very difficult to survive if there is no rain, because people depend on the rain to farm. So if families cannot farm they are forced to carry out illegal logging or to travel outside the village to find work."

"Due to the difficulties people face in farming, the cost of food products, including rice and vegetables, are rising."

"It is not uncommon for men who travel outside the village in search of work to contract HIV/AIDS, which they can pass on to their wives."

"Years ago, the rice fields were full of water in July and August and I was able to start planting at that time. But now, there is little rain and heavy winds, and I cannot plant until later in the year"

These are just some of the voices we heard when Khim Sarin and Lay Sophea, CAFOD Partners from Cambodia, spoke at our launch events in Liverpool and Shrewsbury earlier this year. They are the voices of individuals struggling to feed their families and to protect their environment as unpredictable rainfall and extremes of weather make it harder and harder to make a living and the land ceases to provide.

Sarin and Sophea explained how they work with Development Partnership for Action (DPA) to help families and villages to deal with the impact of Climate change - providing advisory and training services on growing crops, caring for livestock and good farming practices (including changing from long-term to short-term crops and assisting in well—drilling for water) and other support services for individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS. For families who have low crop yields, DPA provides rice and seeds for planting. Elsewhere they have established cow banks whereby cows are given to families which they can use to plough their field in return for any calf the animal may have in the future. In these ways CAFOD and DPA are working with the villagers to improve their living conditions, to increase their skills and to develop plans to deal with the impact of climate change whilst protecting the land and forests.

This is the reality of changing climate, not some vague concern for the future but an everyday reality for millions of people today who are already living in real pov-

erty. It is why CAFOD is campaigning and why we are asking for your support.

After a very successful launch of CAFOD's new campaign for Climate Justice in Shrewsbury, action has slowed a little but news is beginning to come in that groups and parishes are ordering materials and planning card signing events after Masses in the coming weeks. Once parishes have secured support from their own parishes we hope that they will be able to promote the campaign action across their LPA's and regions in the months up to December 2009, so growing the climate for Justice and ensuring the voices of our Partners and communities in developing countries are heard and their needs put at the heart of a fair and binding agreement at the United Nations meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009.

To help with this Joan Sharples and I are arranging a series of Regional meetings over the summer and early autumn to bring people together, to share resources and messages and to offer support as we widen the reach of Climate Justice. For details of these, or if you have any queries or you would like to help in some way, please contact Sue on 01244 677594.

Information packs and action cards can be ordered directly (free of charge) from [campaign@cafod.org.uk](mailto:campaign@cafod.org.uk) or phone 020 7095 5692. Other e-actions can be found on the website [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk) prior to European elections and Euro finance meetings in June.

Sue Bownas

## MORE IDEAS FOR SUMMER READING

### ***The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo**

£5.99

Set during the autumn of 1995 in the aftermath of Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution in Nigeria for alleged political crimes, Beverley Naidoo's frighteningly topical novel is a reminder about just how good children's teenage fiction can sometimes be. Tackling multiple themes--most importantly injustice, the right to freedom of speech, the complexities of political asylum, bullying and, ultimately, the strength of the family--*The Other Side of Truth* is a gripping story that undoubtedly deserves its widespread acclaim and success. This was the book of the month in May recommended on the Refugee Week website in the Simple Acts campaign ( see Diary p12 ). A useful book to introduce young people to J & P ideas.

### ***The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* by Ilan Pappé.**

Oneworld Publications Limited £9.99

According to John Pilger "Ilan Pappé is Israel's bravest, most principled, most incisive historian." He is no longer Israeli Government's favourite son - so he now teaches history at Exeter University.

NB: All these books are available on Amazon— you can help to raise money for the Burma Campaign if you enter Amazon through [www.burmacampaign.org.uk/join\\_donate.html](http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/join_donate.html)



## DIARY DATES

### JUNE

**4 –10 World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel** A prayer/information leaflet can be downloaded from [www.paxchristi.org.uk/events.HTML](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/events.HTML) (See prayer on Page 1)

**6 World Environment day** [www.unep.org/wed](http://www.unep.org/wed)

**7 Campaign Against Arms Trade Christian Network Day of Prayer** Contact CCAT 0207281 0297 [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

**13 Mass of Thanksgiving for the work of CAFOD and its supporters in Shrewsbury Diocese** Celebrated by Bishop Brian at Our Lady and The Apostles in Stockport at 10.30am. See Page 10

**13 West Kirby Peace Vigil** St Agnes Church Darmonds Green West Kirby Wirral 3-4 pm

**15—21 Refugee Week** Why not join in The Simple Acts Campaign? This consists of 20 actions that can be done by anyone and that encourage us to learn and do more with refugees. Details on [www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/) See also Beverley Naidoo's book ( page 11)

**25 Telford & Wrekin Interfaith group AGM** Meeting Point House Telford 7.30 pm  
Speakers: Mr Devinder Kalhan & Mr Sehdev Bismal (Wolverhampton Interfaith Council)

**26/27 Get Fair Constituency Lobby** Make your voice heard! For more information or to register your interest : [www.getfair.org.uk/lobby](http://www.getfair.org.uk/lobby) or call 0161 236 9321 Don't forget to contact your MP too and ask to see him/her on these dates.

**27/28 International Prayer Vigil for victims of torture** 8 pm—8 am see Page 2

**25 June – 4 July Noah's barge along Leeds & Liverpool Canal** See Pages 2 & 3

### JULY

**4 Welcome Barge to Albert Dock Liverpool and Climate Change Rally** See Pages 2 & 3

**11 West Kirby Peace Vigil** See June 13 above

**11 Shrewsbury Diocese J & P Walk** Starting at 10 am covering 4-5 easy miles of easy companionable walking in the Waverton area, near Chester. Contact Tony Walsh (see below) for details of starting point.

**12 Sea Sunday** [www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk)

**17-19 National J & P Conference at Swanwick** 'On the Road Together: A-Mazed by Migration'  
Late booking from NJPN Administrator 39 Eccleston Square London SW1V 1BX 020 7901 4864

**26 Day for Life** [www.dayforlife.org](http://www.dayforlife.org)

### AUGUST

**6 & 9 Anniversaries of first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima & Nagasaki**  
PaxChristi & CND

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#### Copy date for next issue

**1 August 2009**

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

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