

**Shrewsbury Diocese Justice & Peace Commission
Statement for Parish Justice & Peace Groups Concerning Amnesty International
October, 2007**

The Justice & Peace Commission deeply regrets the decision made by Amnesty International (AI) to change its position to one of regarding access to abortion as a human right in certain circumstances, notably when women have been victims of the use of rape as a weapon of terror.

Whilst condemning such brutality and having concern for the plight of women in such circumstances, the Commission cannot condone the stance Amnesty has taken on abortion. The Catholic Church's teaching on the sanctity of all life is unambiguous.

The Commission has never been a member of AI, although it has commended its valuable human-rights work and promoted its greetings card campaign.

Several high profile Catholics have resigned from the organisation, whilst others have chosen to retain membership, seeking to change its policy from within. It is for individuals to make their own decision whether to express their opposition to the new policy by resigning or remaining a member and lobbying whenever possible for a reversal of the policy. However, the Commission considers that Catholic Church groups would need to consider very carefully how they could justify continuing membership of an organisation that espouses a policy directly in opposition to Church teaching, particularly when the Church so strongly opposed the introduction of the new policy.

In the view of the Commission there seems no good reason why cards and letters may not be sent to/for prisoners of conscience whose details are taken from the AI website. By doing this we **are not** supporting AI, we **are** supporting the prisoners of conscience, for some of whom these cards and letters may be a matter of life and death.

Those wanting to support other human-rights initiatives may wish to consider one or more of the organisations listed below. The descriptions given are taken from the websites of the organisations, but the Commission does not have detailed knowledge of their policies and you may wish to investigate more fully.

In considering these issues, parish groups will naturally wish to consult with their parish priests. This statement has the approval of Rt. Rev. Brian Noble, Bishop of Shrewsbury.

Action for Christians for the Abolition of Torture 01752 843417 www.acatuk.org.uk

ACAT(UK) was formed in 1984 by the then British Council of Churches, with the active support of Amnesty International. It has a greetings card campaign.

Anti-Slavery 020 7501 8920 www.antislavery.org

Anti-Slavery International, founded in 1839, is the world's oldest international human rights organisation and the only charity in the United Kingdom to work exclusively against slavery and related abuses.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide 020 8942 8810 www.csw.org.uk

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is a human rights organisation specialising in religious freedom. CSW works on behalf of those persecuted for their Christian beliefs and promotes religious liberty for all. It has a letter-writing campaign.

Jubilee Campaign www.jubileecampaign.co.uk

Jubilee Campaign is an effective human rights pressure group bringing lasting change to children at risk and persecuted Christian families worldwide. It has a letter-writing campaign.

Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture 020 7697 7777 www.torture.care.org.uk

Founded in 1985, the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture provides care and rehabilitation to survivors of torture and other forms of organised violence.

Redress 020 7793 1777 www.redress.org

Redress is a human rights organisation that helps torture survivors obtain justice and reparation. Redress works with survivors to help restore their dignity and to make torturers accountable. We seek a variety of remedies, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. Redress' national and international programmes are aimed at ensuring that the rights of torture survivors, wherever they are, and wherever they are located, are realised in practice.

D I A R Y

OCTOBER

- Oct 8 – 26 Travelling Anti-Slavery Exhibition**, Meeting Point House, Telford.
- 14-21 Global Debt Week of Action *Lift the Lid***
Jubilee Debt Campaign
020 7324 4722
- 17 International Day for Eradication of Poverty**
www.unmeditation.org/
- 21 'Set All Free' service** in the Metropolitan Cathedral, Liverpool, 3.00 pm.
- 21-28 One World Week *All Together Now***. Contact OWW 0118 939 4933
- 21-28 Week of Prayer for World Peace**
0208 968 4340
- 24 United Nations Day**
www.unmeditation.org/
- 24 Poverty/Homelessness Action Week Briefing**
Hoole URC, 6.00-8.00 pm. Contact Church Action on Poverty 0161 236 9321.
- 25 Marple Slavery Today**
Speaker: Det. Inspector Mike Sanderson of the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (www.ukhtc.org). All Saints Church, 7.30 pm. Organised by Churches Together in Marple J & P Group. Contact Marian Thompson 0161 427 7254.

October 29 - November 5 Landmine Action Week
Landmine Action 020 7820 0222

October 29 – November 16 Travelling Anti-Slavery Exhibition, Shrewsbury Cathedral.

NOVEMBER

- 3 Celebrating Creation**
Shrewsbury Diocese J&P
- 5 Newman Association *Working for Justice & Peace*** Speaker: Joan Sharples. St Teresa's,

Wilmslow. Eucharist 7.30, talk, 8.15. Visitors welcome. Contact Chris Quirke 0161 941 1707.

11 Remembrance Sunday

Peace Pledge Union white poppies 0207 424 9444.

9-11 Residential Faith & Justice Retreat

with Tom Cullinan and Stephen Hoyland. For more information, contact Liverpool J&P Office 0151 522 1080.

9-15 Prisons Week & Campaign Against Arms Trade Control

17 BAE Speaking Tour

Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester 7pm.

18 Prisoners' Sunday

PACT (Prison Advice & Care Trust) 020 7490 3139.

17-18 Sr Helen Prejean

author of 'Dead Man Walking' will address a national conference in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Contact 01207 592244.

19 Nov – 7/Dec Anti-Slavery Travelling Exhibition

The Discovery Centre, Craven Arms.

Week of 26 Evening Meeting with Ann Pettifor

Director of Operation Noah, Chester University. Contact Peter Byrne 01244 678087.

DECEMBER

1 World Aids Day

WHO 0207 814 6726

3 World Migration Day

National Catholic Refugee Forum

3 Newman Association *Baby Jesus, the Magi and the Powers*

Speaker: Tom Cullinan. St Teresa's, Wilmslow. Eucharist 7.30, talk, 8.15. Visitors welcome. Contact Chris Quirke 0161 941 1707.

Focus on ... *Celebrating Creation*

Speakers: Mary Collwell,
Tom Cullinan,
and Mike Monaghan

**Saturday, 3 November,
10.15 - 3.30**

**St Thomas More High School,
Crewe**

Contact Joan.



Advent Reflection *Keeping the Flame Alive*

Fr Oliver Barry
& Sr Catherine Lavery

**Sunday 9 December
4.30 - 6.30**

Reflection followed by seasonal refreshments. Contact Joan.

READING GROUP

Set up for catechists and other to meet once a term. Their chosen book for this term is **Jesus Today** by **Albert Nolan**. Meetings will be held at Brerton Heath, nr Congleton (23 Nov, 7pm) Runcorn (28 Nov, 2pm) Birkenhead (30 Nov, 7.30pm). For more information, contact Joan.

ROMY TIONGCO

Romy will be in Cheshire during December and there will be opportunity to hear of his first few months as Mayor in the Philippines. He will be speaking at

Frodsham Parish Hall (to be confirmed) on Dec 10. Contact Christian Aid 01925 241222.

Chester (to be arranged) Contact Peter Byrne 01244 678087.

Whalley Abbey near Clitheroe leading a Christian Aid Advent Reflection Dec 13, 10.30-3.30. Contact Christian Aid 01925 241222.

Please send me your dates and news, so that they can be included in future editions of the

Quick News Network mailing.

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