



Justice and Peace

Issue 92 Winter 2015 –6

Prophets of peace in our time

Aung San Suu Kyi:

"Every thought, every word, and every action that adds to the positive and the wholesome is a contribution to peace. Each and every one of us is capable of making such a contribution."

Mahatma Gandhi:

"Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being."

Dorothy Day:

"We must cry out against injustice or by our silence consent to it. If we keep silent, the very stones of the street will cry out."

Desmond Tutu :

"Forgiveness is an absolute necessity for continued human existence."



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Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice & Peace Commission

Diocese of Shrewsbury Commission for the Promotion of Justice, Peace & Social Responsibility

Diocese of Shrewsbury Commission for the Promotion of
Justice, Peace & Social Responsibility

**ADVENT REFLECTION led by Terry Gorman
from Aid to the Church in Need**

Sunday December 6 4.30 – 6.30 pm

At Wistaston Hall, 89 Broughton Lane, Crewe CW2 8JS



Everyone welcome
Please bring some food for a shared table.

Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice & Peace Commission

**Annual Memorial Lecture
“REFUGEES”**

Louise Zanré from JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service)

Sunday 17 January

2.00 – 4.00 pm Doors open 1.30 pm

LACE Conference Centre, Croxteth Drive,
Sefton Park, Liverpool, L17 1AA



PALESTINIAN LIVES MATTER

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb (Lutheran Pastor of 'The Christmas Church', Bethlehem) October 2015 writes:

A new wave of political unrest is here. Within the last five weeks over forty young people from Palestine were killed and over 1100 injured. These are not mere numbers, but young people with faces, names, and dreams. Yet, as if their lives do not matter, the Israelis are easing their already loose laws on using arms with a clear message of shoot to kill. For the Israeli government, these young Palestinians are rebels that do not deserve to live. They must be taught a lesson. To add salt to injury, you hear the western politicians talking about Israel's right to defend itself, and standing shamelessly with Israel. Thus, to those international players, the lives of Palestinians are worthless while the life of an Israeli is precious. This pattern reminds us of how the world viewed the lives of black people under apartheid and how racism against blacks is felt in so many countries around the world. The same applies to Indigenous peoples, and the oppressed. The most dangerous thing however, is when young people from those oppressed groups are pushed to the point where they start looking for a life after death but do not believe any more in a life before death that is worth living.

In this context, we have three messages to share:

The first message is to our Jewish Israeli neighbours: The history of the Maccabees, of the so-called first Jewish revolt, and that of Bar Kochba teaches us that as long as there is occupation, there will be uprising. Over and over again, young people will rise requesting their freedom and this is their right. The occupation has to end for our sake and for your sake. Enough lives have been wasted.

The second message is to the international community: without justice for Palestine, there will be no peace for Israel. Unless we start seeing the lives of the Palestinians as important as the lives of the Israelis, the bloodshed will continue. Palestinian lives matter.

The third message is to our Palestinian young people: The question is not if we should resist or not, but the most important question is how to resist, and how to resist creatively. We do not want you to die, but to live for Palestine. Through your life you can contribute more to the future of Palestine. We want you to cling to your dreams, even if the occupation wants to steal these dreams from you, and if the whole world ignores your rights. The denial of your life and dignity with all its harshness should be used as a propeller for you to cling to life and not allow anyone to waste it. Your lives matter to God, to us, your community, and to those who love justice in this world. Your creative resistance will eventually free Palestine and then you, your families and all Palestinians will enjoy the life in abundance.

PEACE SUNDAY 2016 17 JANUARY *The theme is “Overcome indifference and win peace”*



“In his World Peace Day message 2016 Pope Francis invites us to reflect on how we can hope for peace without working to challenge the causes of violence and injustice in our world today. Time and again Pope Francis has spoken of our ‘throw-away culture’ which dehumanises and destroys the human person, whether through war and conflict or economic injustice. On Peace Sunday we have an opportunity to learn from this message and put our faith into action.

“In Pax Christi we know that peace is to be worked at, and we are greatly heartened by the outpouring of empathy and action that surrounds the current crisis we face of refugees fleeing war and conflict. But unless we combine this with work to stop the causes of war – the global arms trade and our part within it; the billions spent annually on war and war preparations – we will not win peace.”

Extract from the letter which Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP, National President of Pax Christi British Section sent to all parishes in the UK.

Resources for peace Sunday available from www.paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/peace-sunday/

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Editor: One of the most challenging issues at the moment is the large numbers of people coming into Europe seeking refuge and asylum. So it seemed important to dedicate the next 3 pages to look at the situation and the response our Dioceses are making to this challenge.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

Report prepared by Steve Atherton

The situation in the North West and in Liverpool in particular is complicated by the history of dispersal into the region. In Liverpool alone there are currently over 1,000 known asylum seekers awaiting a decision and a large but unquantifiable number of refused asylum seekers. There are already established organisations such as Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM) set up nearly 15 years ago which sees about 250 people each week, offering legal services, housing advice, food, clothing, language classes and other services.

ANALYSIS: SEVEN STRANDS OF REFUGEES

- 1. Those in the camps in the borders of Syria.** 20,000 are to be invited into the UK over five years under the government's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). These people will be nominated by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). They will be given refugee status and full support to settle. We are disturbed by the unfairness of a scheme that chooses a small number from the millions who are in need.
- 2. Those in the same camps who will not be invited into the UK.** Under the Private Sponsorship scheme people can be invited into the UK by a group that is able to look after them. Sponsored people will be given refugee status, etc, but will not be supported financially. The UNHCR will be involved in the selection process. The same worries about the selection process apply to this category as to the above.
- 3. Those we have seen on our TV screens who are on the move to and through Europe.** They include the professional and middle-classes who have the initiative to make their escape and the finance to pay for travel, including to people smugglers where necessary, but they are finding fewer safe points of entry into to Europe and increasing reluctance from host communities. Some of these people are stuck in camps in Lesbos and elsewhere.
- 4. Those we have seen on our TV screens who have left Syria and have crossed Europe to reach the camps in Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk.** These camps also include the people who are fleeing from conflicts, climate change and endemic poverty in Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, Congo and Sudan. 3 out of every 4 people in the camps are waiting for housing in France. The main problem for the others is that there is no safe means of entry into the UK.
- 5. Those who are in the UK and have registered as Asylum Seekers.** Estimates of numbers vary widely but are probably around 20,000 each year for the last ten years. Once they have registered (which can only be done at the point of entry or in Croydon) they are dispersed across the country, to areas where the housing is cheaper, especially into the North West.
- 6. Those whose applications have failed.** Each time their claim is denied they lose all benefits and become destitute. After a refusal they can make another appeal, up to three appeals. The final appeal has to be heard in Liverpool, by which time they are destitute with no money to pay for their travel to Liverpool. (At the moment the children are still entitled to support but there a bill is currently before parliament to remove support from the children of failed asylum seekers.)
- 7. Destitute newly accepted refugees.** Those who have been given leave to remain but become destitute because of inbuilt failure in the system, i.e. they continue to receive support for 28 days, during which time they need to find new accommodation and register for work. They can often wait longer than 28 days to receive NI registration, to access a bank account and even longer to find employment. Without a bank account they can't access work or housing, without savings they can't pay the deposit for accommodation.

WAYS OF POSSIBLE RESPONSE

- 1. VPRS:** Tell the Local Authorities that our parishes are willing to welcome refugees and will help them to integrate into the local community. Gather volunteers to prepare to welcome refugees.
- 2. Private Sponsorship:** Endorse the scheme, raise money to support it and look for pilot parishes.
- 3. On the move:** Support the people in the camps in Lesbos, etc, via Caritas Internationalis
- 4. In camps:** It is not helpful to send clothes, instead we can offer to send money directly via CAFOD or CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network). CAFOD and CSAN are both agencies of the Bishops Conference.
- 5. In UK:** Encourage more support for local organisations e.g. ALM. These are organisations who have been looking after some of the poorest people in Liverpool Archdiocese for at least fifteen years, lurching from one financial crisis to the next but always keeping going. They need money and they need volunteers.
- 6. Failed:** This group is in desperate need of support. They are already here. Many have failed to meet the criteria for asylum but it is not possible to return home.
- 7. Destitute new refugees:** Change the system to allow for better and less stressful transition from Asylum Seeker to Refugee.



RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN THE LIVERPOOL ARCHDIOCESE

Work with local authorities: As the diocesan response to the vast movements of people into Europe has been slowly developing, it has become increasingly clear that any response to the situation must involve partnerships between churches and local authorities. Neither group can manage on its own: the government is liaising with local authorities and asking them to specify how many families or individuals they can offer places to under the VPRS (Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme) and the churches have groups of compassionate people who are looking for ways to get involved. The local authorities are delighted to find that the churches are eager to help. There is still an almost total lack of information about who is coming, when they are arriving, how they will be placed, how they will be matched with local hosts, and what 'vulnerable' means in practice. The same sort of lack of clarity applies to the Private Sponsorship model that allows groups to invite individuals or families into the country.

Work ecumenically: Liverpool has a great tradition of working ecumenically and the archdiocese, the diocese and the Free Churches are learning all over again that we are "Better Together". The Liverpool response is being framed as a project of CTMR (Churches Together in the Merseyside Region)

Work locally: So far we are working together with local authorities in Sefton, Liverpool, St Helens, Southport, West Lancashire and Knowsley; we have begun in Warrington, Widnes, Leyland and Ashton-in-Makerfield; we expect to begin soon in Widnes and Wigan. There is much to do before we reach the goal of a series of local organisations that are responding to local situations while staying in touch with each other and learning from each other's experiences.

Don't overlook the long standing problems: Pope Francis' appeal for the church to show compassion was in the context of refugees crossing the Mediterranean or seeking safety on the streets of continental Europe. In the UK we have a separate set of circumstances that demand our compassion. The food bank at the two cathedrals reports that 75% of its clients are asylum seekers/refugees. By the end of the summer they had provided over 300,000 meals and given out 20,000 food hampers. As well as ALM (page 3) in Wigan, Support Wigan Arrivals Project (SWAP), a much smaller organisation that has developed over the same sort of time frame, offers individual support to about 20 people per week and provides, food, clothes and some opportunities for socialising to about 70 each week. SWAP began as a church project but now has very little church support. This has become an increasingly important focus of our diocesan approach and the organisations are delighted that the churches are increasing their response to the terrible problems that already existed here before the current exodus from the Middle East.

Don't forget our local people: Throughout all this welcome increase in compassion for refugees we have tried to keep a clear focus on the needs of our local people, many of whom are struggling to make ends meet in the face of the current economic situation in the UK. To this end both the Liverpool archdiocese and the diocese have maintained their involvement in anti-poverty work, specifically with heavy involvement in the Feeding Liverpool initiative.

Keep in touch with what's happening nationally: There's no sense in re-inventing the wheel so we're trying to speak to people who are doing similar work across the country. This includes JRS (Jesuit Refugee Services), Citizens UK, the dioceses of Plymouth, Southwark, and Arundel and Brighton. We'd love to bring together all the groups who are involved in this effort to share knowledge and ideas.

POSTSCRIPT: In the light of the terrible events in Paris, it is important to remember that IS has a deliberate policy of using terror to spread fear and confusion. They believe that the West is corrupt and inferior to the ideology they offer. IS will only be reduced to silence by the counter model that we can offer of unfailing kindness and Christian charity. Bombs will make things worse.

RESPONSE IN THE SHREWSBURY DIOCESE

The Catholic Children's Society has been named as the contact point for Diocesan activity and Information Mary Kilcoyne as the named person within the organisation. She can be contacted on 0151 652 1281. She reports:

As an initial strategic response the following priorities were set and adopted.

Communication: In the beginning it was recognised that good communication is essential between Bishop Mark, the Clergy, Parishes, Schools, Local Authority and other agencies who could contribute to an appropriate response and or provide expertise and guidance. To this effect all parish priests and deacons have been sent letters from Bishop Mark encouraging a response at local level and a copy of the statement from Cardinal Nicholls and Archbishop Smith on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

A Facebook Page dedicated to news, information sharing, fundraising and guidance has been set up, and all parishes have included information on how to access this in their parish bulletins.

Mary Kilcoyne has participated in discussions and an audit carried out by CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network) and is kept updated by them. Catholic Children's Society is a member of CSAN. Communication has been maintained through CSAN members, who are also the named contact points in their own dioceses for the refugee crisis, sharing information about their local initiatives, strategies and good practice..

Local authorities have been contacted, and given details of the diocesan contact and informed of the willingness of the Church to collaborate where possible with its refugee plan.



SHREWSBURY DIOCESE RESPONSE continued:

Accommodation: The Diocesan Finance Secretary and Buildings Manager are auditing vacant buildings and assessing their suitability and state of repair for use by refugees. There have been offers from parishioners to accommodate single refugees; to offer spaces for families in their homes; a property developer has offered two houses as temporary accommodation for refugee families; priests have suggested sharing one presbytery in order to make the other one available; parishioners have been identifying spaces, empty presbyteries and churches as accommodation possibilities. These offers are all being audited.

Fundraising: Monies have been raised via CAFOD for the Calais Project, the SVP has organised a fundraising event and the money raised, (£4,000 +) will be used to support refugees arriving in the Diocese. Catholic Children's Society will also be using their gift donation facility on their website to fundraise for existing projects with refugees abroad and to support projects with the Syrian families once they arrive.

In Runcorn financial support has been directed to the ACN (Aid to the Church in Need).

Volunteering: A local religious sister offered her time to help with the promotion of the Diocesan refugee response and support the communication strategy.

Parishioners, some of whom are ex-teachers and others with a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) qualification, are offering their skills for teaching English to children and families arriving here. There has also been an offer from an Iraqi speaker to provide a translation service.

Car drivers to take families to medical / benefits and other appointments.

The SVP at their recent Annual Diocesan Festival Meeting shared many practical ideas about welcoming refugees, questions to think about and simple actions that parishes could adopt.

Collection Points / Support: Through the Facebook page people are informing others about collection points for clothing and shoes. Mostly at this time destined for Calais and the other Refugee Camps.

One Parish has collected bedding, clothing, footwear, rainwear and basic essentials and then funded volunteers to travel to Calais with the clothes and then take them over to Greece.

Awareness Raising: A Justice and Peace group has organised talks in the Parish about the migrant situation presented by CAFOD and extended an open invitation.

A person attending a seminar in Chester University about the Political context of migration will write a summary to be published on Facebook page

Current work with Refugees already here.

A parish in the Stockport area is providing clothes, shoes and friendship to groups of refugees passing through their area for a few days, located in a Britannia hotel, before they are moved on to Liverpool, Scotland or elsewhere. Usually these families arrive in what they stand up in and wearing only flip flops.

A West Kirby parish which has a long relationship with Asylum Link in Liverpool supports that particular project.

Runcorn: Primary schools have fundraised for Persecuted Christians and the money sent to ACN. For the last three years they have been supporting a Catholic school in Beit Sahour near Bethlehem supporting poor families with school fees.

Their J&P group regularly writes to the MP and MEP to raise awareness of especially, though not exclusively, Christian refugees. The Parish was the focus for the setting up of **Umbrella Halton** which works with immigrant groups seeking to support and resettle them in the local society.

Work with the **Ragheed group** (named after an Iraqi priest who was taken and killed) focuses on the welcome, support, celebration of ethnically diverse groups and encourages their integration in the host community through learning about their culture and sharing our own.

Prayer: In recent e mail communications from some of the parishes, all reported that prayer for the refugees and their families and a solution to the political situation that has caused this suffering, is included in the prayers of the Mass. Parishioners are encouraged to remember them too in their personal prayer.

There seems to be a feeling that parishes could have structures set up which would be able to respond and support the migrant situation. Many have pointed out that the "crisis" is long term commitment.

Setting up a Task Group

One of the concerns among many people is that there is very little information coming out from government. There is a real will to move, to act, to support but people feel unsure about the how. There will be a meeting of a task group made up of representatives from the SVP, health (experience of coping with trauma) a local authority representative, Housing (church associations), safeguarding, Catholic Children's Society, schools and a representative of the diocese. The first phase being: to listen to what each service can offer; to reflect on the difficulties each group may have to face and look for local solutions; to commit to working together in partnership both in action and information sharing, promote action within the parishes of the diocese and to keep the Bishop and diocese informed.

Report November 2015

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DEAD AID by Dembisa Moyo

Bryan Halson of Alsager/Crewe JPIC, an ecumenical group associated with Churches Together, writes:

In recent years there has been considerable discussion on the subject of 'aid' (financial aid from the North to countries of the South); does it help economic development? and how is it best administered?

A controversial input to this discussion is a book, *Dead Aid*, written by Dembisa Moyo with reference to aid to Africa. Moyo was born and brought up in Zambia, has higher degrees from Harvard and Oxford, and has worked as a consultant in the World Bank and with Goldman Sachs. Our group used this to prompt our own discussions on the subject.

Dead Aid was first published in 2009, and is therefore somewhat dated in such a fast-moving area, but some of the points Moyo makes are every bit as relevant in 2015 - perhaps more so. Our group found it provided a useful basis for discussion.

Moyo distinguishes three types of aid. One is what she calls "humanitarian" aid. This is emergency aid in disaster situations such as earthquakes or floods. A second is "charitable" aid which is the sphere of NGO's such as Progressio, Christian Aid, CAFOD. Here the aid finances specific projects, many of which are chosen and organised by the recipients themselves.

The third type of aid is "government to government" aid, involving governments and also the World Bank. It is just this third type of aid which is the subject of Moyo's book. For decades it has been argued that development depends on aid. A huge mistake, says Moyo. "*Dead Aid* is the story of the failure of post-war development policy".

Aid is supposed to lead to economic growth and the elimination of poverty - but does it? The statistics from Africa tell a different story. Since 1970 some \$300 billion in aid has come to African countries yet in most of them poverty has increased and growth has declined. In 2009 Moyo can cite only three countries where this was not the case - Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, and Swaziland.

What lies behind this failure? Aid is itself the problem, says Moyo. Aid comes in two forms - concessional loans (lent below market rates and for longer lending periods), and grants (given for nothing in return). But the distinction between the two is often hazy. What has frequently happened is that even when aid has come with stipulations attached it has not been used as intended. One World Bank study said that this was the case with 85% of aid money, yet aid continued to be transmitted on the assumption that this was the only way to secure development.

This has led to an over-reliance which has trapped many in a vicious circle of aid dependency, corruption, and further poverty. There is only one way forward, says Moyo, and that is a complete shift from aid to other strategies. These would vary from country to country but could include greater use of the bond market, of micro-finance (of the Grameen type), fairer trade, foreign direct investment. Moyo describes the implications of the changes she advocates - changes affecting the World Trade Organisation's rules, the banking systems in African countries, the use of subsidies in First World agriculture, and strong action against the ever-present corruption.

Aid has failed, but there is another way forward, says Moyo. Her arguments have produced enthusiastic support and sharp criticism, but certainly they cannot be ignored.

SEND A CARD FOR CHRISTMAS

Action of Christians against Torture (acat(uk)) was formed in 1984. It seeks to increase awareness in the Churches and among Christians of the widespread and evil use of torture and the need, for reasons of Christian faith, to campaign for its abolition.

Victims of torture, human rights groups and individuals under threat, and persecuted Christians need our support and our prayers. At Christmas we can all take the opportunity to let them know that they are not forgotten. A card can mean so much to them. Cards also tell the authorities that prisoners are not forgotten and can result in improved prison conditions, in a new investigation leading to a retrial and, on occasion, to freedom. Cards of support, encouragement and thanks for their work can also give an important boost to human rights organisations under threat of arrest, imprisonment and death. A reply is occasionally received, but this should not be expected.

If you would like to send a card personally and encourage your church members to do the same you can download this year's list of groups or individuals who would welcome your support from <http://www.acatuk.org.uk>



If the challenges to our security in Britain come from terrorism, climate change and cyber warfare, how do nuclear weapons help to combat these? Is it not time to think seriously about replacing Trident?

Read more on www.rethinktrident.org.uk and write to your MP making your views known if you haven't already done so

STOP TRIDENT National Demonstration in London on February 27th 2016



CHRISTIANS AWARE ANNUAL CONFERENCE The Middle East Conflict Transformation

8th-10th January 2016 Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire DE55 1AU Tel: 01773 526000

Speakers include: Jeff Halper Director and co-founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Jeremy Moodey CEO of Embrace the Middle East and Simon Marchant and Becky Viney-Wood who work for EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel).



Full details of conference including booking form to download: www.christiansaware.co.uk/Jan_2016.html

HOMELESS SUNDAY JANUARY 24th



FACT: There are 1,843,992 households in England and Scotland on a local authority housing waiting list, while average house prices are now 6.3 times median earnings in England and 5.8 times median earnings in Scotland.

FACT: Over 160,000 households applied to local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales for help with homelessness in 2014

Homeless Sunday encourages us to show our concern for individuals affected by homelessness, to challenge the conditions that create it and to celebrate work that tackles the problem. Whatever level of engagement a congregation has with homelessness, Homeless Sunday is an opportunity to take it a step higher.

For useful resources see www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/homeless_sunday.html

LIVE BELOW THE LINE Can YOU live on £1 a day for 5 days?

The Archdiocese of Liverpool and PROGRESSIO are offering this challenge for Lent 2016.

CAMPAIGN LAUNCH with Archbishop Malcolm McMahon Thursday 28 January 6.30 – 7.30pm

at LACE Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool. L17 1AA

Introduction to campaign plus video of LACE chef making cheap 50p meals.

SHARING VISIONS OF A GOOD SOCIETY

Church Action on Poverty's annual conference

Saturday 30 January 2016



Venue Stoke-on-Trent Civic Hall in Stoke city centre. The building is fully accessible, and well connected to public transport links. Maps and directions on booking.

Churches and communities across the UK are taking part in Good Society conversations – exploring what must be done to build a Good Society, listening especially to voices from poor and excluded communities. At the conference, participants from those conversations will join Church Action on Poverty's supporters to share our visions of the Good Society – and discuss how we can work together to make those visions real.

Book online at www.church-poverty.org.uk/conference or call 0161 236 9321

FEBRUARY 7 CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY SUNDAY

Food is a gift from God. But in the UK today, thousands of people are denied access to that gift by injustices that leave them destitute. Why not break bread, share soup and donate to help end the scandal of poverty in the UK? Resources to help you on www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday



"TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS"

December 10, January 12, February 9, March 10

An ecumenical quiet day for everyone

10 – 4 pm at The Convent of our Lady of the Cenacle, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 6TW Input and time for individual quiet prayer and reflection.

Tea & coffee provided. Bring your own lunch.

Cost £10 For more information or to book :

Tel 0151 7222271 email: winniecenacle@mail.com

CAFOD QUIZ NIGHTS

January 15, February 12, March 11
at 7.30 pm.

Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port Town Centre.
Entrance: £3.00 (children £1) Quizmaster Mr. Mike Ives
All money raised will go to CAFOD's Connect2 Ethiopia fund raising project. Fair Trade stall and Fair Trade refreshments provided at the interval.

For further details contact Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419.

Arranged by Ellesmere Port LPA J & P group



LAUDATO SI' - THE IMPERATIVE TO CHANGE

Margaret Cooke writes:

On a cold and gusty November day nearly seventy people gathered at St Agnes, West Kirby, to hear the message from Pope Francis's latest encyclical: our world is beautiful but vulnerable and our current lifestyles are severely damaging it. By the end of the day, two excellent speakers, Ellen Teague, a Catholic journalist and writer on environmental issues, and Paul Kelly, GP turned environmentalist, had convinced me, at least, of the truth of the Pope's message and the Christian imperative to act quickly to prevent further damage.

The message was timely, coming just before the UN Paris conference on climate change in late November and December. This will be attended by about 190 national leaders and will attempt to set new targets for greenhouse gas emissions when the present ones expire in 2020. The Pope's encyclical is, in part, an attempt to influence this process, addressing the whole world and asking us to listen to what scientists are saying.

Ellen Teague started the day with a compelling sequence of slides showing how human development over the last 50 years has largely vitiated the principles of justice and peace which lie at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching. She started with some of the photographs taken by astronauts in the sixties showing not only the beauty of our earth as we had never seen it before but also its vulnerability. This last she documented by examples of environmental damage in some developing countries: desertification in Northern Nigeria; typhoons in the Philippines and melting glaciers in Peru causing extensive flooding; heat waves and pollution in Pakistan; whole scale destruction of Amazonian rainforests; and the destruction of sites of biodiversity in the interests of nuclear bases.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* implicates our lifestyles in this degradation. We have a model of development based on the intensive use of fossil fuels in energy, transport and flying. This results in pollution which harms and kills people. And we have a throwaway culture which ignores the environmental damage caused in providing the components for cheap products. Moreover, we refuse to appreciate the natural world for what it is, rather than its usefulness to us.

Pope Francis establishes free access to water as a human right, and points to a rise in the price of food should water become scarce or subject to control by multinational concerns. This scarcity could lead to conflict. He also points to the negative effects of an economic model in which priority is given to speculation and the pursuit of financial gain and 'a deified market' which fails to take into account human dignity and the natural environment. This can lead to global inequality and social breakdown.

Ellen pointed to the ways in which these violated the principles of Catholic Social Teaching: respect for human be-

ings; the need for community and participation; care for creation (the major focus of the day); provision for dignity at work; the drive for peace and reconciliation; and solidarity between humans and particularly with the poor. The result of the neglect of some of these principles can be seen in refugees fleeing from conflict, the violation of human rights and the effects of environmental change.

In combating these violations, the Pope talks of the need for an 'Integral Ecology' in keeping with St Francis who showed us 'how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace.' We are faced with not two crises but one, a complex crisis which is both environmental and social. We must hear both the 'cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.' This concern for the common good must also extend to future generations, and requires what he calls 'intergenerational solidarity.' He feels we are easily distractible, want to go on living as we are and think technology will solve environmental problems, when what we need is 'a global ecological conversion' so that our children can be hopeful, not fearful, about their future. Ellen pointed to the 'cosmic experience' of the Eucharist as the supreme example of this conversion.

Before ending with some inspiring quotations from *Laudato Si'*, Ellen gave us some leads into further study and action, including the Live Simply Award for parishes demonstrating a commitment to environmental concerns. These were also included in a handout of resources compiled by both speakers.

After lunch Paul Kelly complemented Ellen's talk by giving us some 'Signs of the Times' drawn from science. He used the See, Judge, Act model to document facts about climate change and how we could take action to mitigate its effect. Care for creation was not new in Catholic teaching and despair for Christians is not an option. Living simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor showed the way forward.

Under 'See' Paul described the present situation. Looking at land and sea temperatures over the period 1880 to 2012 shows that global warming has not only increased but has accelerated in the last 30 years. The IPCC's group of 2000 scientists from 150 countries agree with this and that the increase is due to human activity. The confidence level for this finding is 95% which, Paul explained, means not that 5 in every 100 scientists disagree, but that 95% of the time, the data showed the same result. This, to a scientist means certainty. Developed countries produce most of the world's greenhouse emissions, energy production being the principal component and fossil fuels implicated in most energy production.

The IPCC predict that the rise in global temperature levels will be in the range of 2.6-4%, with any rise over 2% likely
continued opposite....



TTIP and TTP update

For many of us TTIP (the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) and its fellow TTP (the Trans-Pacific Partnership) have disappeared below the radar. But it is important to keep up to date with these negotiations as they will affect us all in many ways if/when the documents are finally ratified. It will be too late then to make our protests.

TTP The final text has just (November 2015) been agreed and released to the public. It cuts trade tariffs and sets common standards in trade for 12 Pacific rim countries: Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States, and Vietnam. It marks the end of five years of often bitter and tense negotiations. Supporters say it could be worth billions of dollars to the countries involved but critics say it was negotiated in secret and is biased towards big corporations. The deal covers about 40% of the global GDP. To take effect it still has to be ratified by legislatures in each country involved. Interestingly China has not been part of these negotiations. But you may be wondering what this has to do with us? The TTP text gives us some idea of what we can expect from TTIP and as expected it is very favourable to big business. **www.SumOfUs.org** amongst others is campaigning to prevent TTP being ratified.

Reminders about TTIP

This treaty is being negotiated between United States and the European Union – the world's two largest economies. It covers an even larger area than TTP. (50% plus of the global GDP). Only 10% of its value is about tariff removal. Its main purpose is to remove regulatory barriers to trade. In practice this mutual deregulation could mean a watering down of standards ignoring the social costs. There are fears that it will reduce protection in the areas of hazardous waste substances, animal testing, aviation emissions, GM foods for instance. So far the negotiations have been continuing out of the public domain although, as a result of public pressure** the EU has released some of their negotiating documents. But the consolidated text featuring proposals from both sides is still not available to the public. If these proposals are accepted before President Obama's term of office finishes they could be ratified in 2017.

To help us collect our thoughts and tell others about TTIP, a new book has come out.

TTIP: The Truth about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership by Ferdi De Ville and Gabriel Siles-Brügge

In this incisive analysis, the claims made by TTIP's cheerleaders and scaremongers are scrutinized to reveal a far more nuanced picture behind the headlines. TTIP will not provide an economic 'cure-all', nor will it destroy the European welfare state in one fell swoop. It can be ordered from www.polity.co.uk/book.asp?ref=9781509501014

**<https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/page/s/eu-ttip-petition#petition> Over 3,300,000 people across the EU have already signed this online petition.. The aim is to reach 5,000,000. Please consider signing if you haven't done so already.

Laudato Si' Continued from opposite page

to result in severe effects. As we are already well on the way to at least 2.5 % of warming, this is a situation where we have to take substantial additional action now if we are to avoid severely narrowing our options in the future.

Paul then detailed some of the existing effects of global warming, some of which Ellen had already noted: extreme weather, including droughts, and typhoons; melting glaciers; rising sea levels and flooding; erosion of coral reefs; and loss of biodiversity sites. The IPCC predicts further woes: crop failures, increased migration, a drop in fish yields, water insecurity and more conflict. Although poorer nations have a much lower carbon footprint than developed ones, they are much more liable to these adverse effects and thus this is a matter of social justice.

There are, however, signs that some measures can have a positive effect: metering water, changing from fossil fuels for energy production, better house insulation, waste management and recycling, solar panels and wind farms, reforestation, eating less meat, and paying people a fair wage so that they are more resilient to adverse conditions, can all help reduce the adverse effects of climate change.

Paul then applied Christian principles in order to judge whether or not he would act to support fracking and underwater coal gasification. He concluded that the reason for employing either of the two processes was probably commercial gain and therefore he would not consider them. He would, instead, respond to Pope Francis's call to live more simply, cut waste and increase the use of renewables. He finished by inviting participants to complete a Quaker leaflet on carbon footprinting. Most of us found this illuminating-and horrifying. We all have a lot to learn!

Most of us went away from both talks knowing much more about *Laudato Si'* and climate change than we had previously, and with a determination to live more simply than before. The day brought other rewards: participants' generosity meant that lunch time donations to Cursillo for Save the Children totalled £260; the speaker kindly donated their fees to Asylum Link in Liverpool and the National J and P Network; and St Agnes' parishioners had a Sunday homily which reminded us of the impending UN conference and the need urgently to address the climate change issue. Thank you, Ellen and Paul, for coming and spreading the word so eloquently.



ONE CHINA EXPERIENCE

Marian Thompson writes:

In October I went to China; at the same time President Xi Jinping and his wife visited UK on a state visit so for a short time China was news. For many years I have been interested in China – its long history, its way of cooking, its culture and more recently its amazing economic development. This interest was further encouraged by the NJPN Swanwick Conference on China in 2012. So to celebrate a special birthday my family urged me to go and see for myself. I knew I had to go with a group as I wouldn't manage the language and the writing on my own so I spent several months looking at the various tours on offer. I nearly chose an Exposure Trip organised by Cultural Exchange with China (CEC) - see report on page 11 - but in the end I plumped for one that combined visits to the classic tourist sites: the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace in Beijing, the Great Wall, the Terracotta Warriors in Xian and the Shanghai waterfront with its tall buildings. I rejected a cruise on the Yangtse and seeing the pandas in favour of a few days of village experience in the Gullin area which included Chinese cookery lessons with chopper and wok, cycling around farming villages, a visit to the rice terraces and a trip on the River Li with its amazing limestone scenery.

I can only give a few fleeting impressions from my own personal experience. But reading again the notes I made at the Conference in 2012, I found a lot of similarities. Conference quotes are given in Italics.

China - A rainbow of colours

It is a vast country (the same size as Europe) with 1.3 billion population. Approximately 91.50 % of the population are Han Chinese and remainder is made of 56 ethnic communities, many speaking different languages but united by their written characters.

Our Chinese guides (we met 4 at different places on the tour) were all young i.e. in their 30s. All spoke excellent English including colloquialisms and jokes. They were open to discussion and answering questions. Rather sadly I thought they had all assumed English names to accommodate us. – David, Jenny, Freddie and John!

'I was the first westerner they had met and first English speaker.' reported Micheal Nooman who went as an English Lecturer at Shanghai University of Electric Power on a Cultural Exchange with China .

Everywhere we went we were stared at as something out of the ordinary. There are still very few people with western features about. When I got home more than one person asked if I found the Chinese intimidating. My experience was just the opposite. The Chinese were very welcoming and wanted us to be photographed with them. They liked us to fuss their children and take photos of them. They welcomed us in morning Tai Chi sessions in local parks—in Shanghai in a car park near the hotel.

The one-child policy has brought many problems. It is not sustainable. In an aging population one child is responsible for several aging adults. We have a generation of only children who were often spoilt and now as adults find it difficult to cope with the give and take of relationships. Commented Xinran on of the speakers

It was noticeable there were very few children in relation to adults – family groups visiting the sites with us seemed to have parents, maybe grandparents and one child. The only time we saw children together was on school trips when they stuck together all in their smart uniforms. I came home to hear this one child policy is to change. On 29 October 2015, Xinhua, China's state news agency, reported a change in the existing law to a two-child policy, citing a statement from the Communist Party of China. However it will take effect only when it is ratified in the annual session of National People's Congress in March 2016. But there is still a generation of only children and that cannot change.

'A kaleidoscope of perspectives'

In the enormous expanse of Tian An Men Square looking up at the large picture of Mao ZeDong still prominently facing us, David commented on different generational views. His grandparents still loved Chairman Mao for bringing peace after a period of civil war. His parents hated him for sending them to the country to be 're-educated' by the peasants so they did not have chances for real education. He himself couldn't care less about Mao but admired Deng Xiaoping for opening up China again to the rest of the world. *China today is not an emerging but a returning power*

Did David care about lack of freedom and personal liberty? No! For him life was very good when compared with the hard varied experiences of his elderly relatives

Since 1990 there has been gradual reform - economic growth is important as it gives more social stability. The Chinese are really fearful of disorder. They value co-operation rather than competition and incessant comparison with others.

Talking to another guide in the rural Gullin area where there are many different ethnic minorities we asked about Tibet. He seemed genuinely puzzled. 'What do they want? they have plenty of food, good health care, good schools'.

Continued opposite ...



ANOTHER CHINA EXPERIENCE

Bishop Nolan of Galloway, visiting China with the Chinese Cultural exchange in October 2015, writes:
"The Church in China is not as I imagined it."

"Many stayed faithful throughout the difficult years but can now practice their faith freely," he said. "And the Faith is growing. In Beijing, the capital city, there are 2000 adult converts a year. Most of these are young people. One young lady tells us that since she became a Catholic her aunt too has been baptised. Her hope is that her parents also will become Catholic. Among these new Catholics there is a great desire to pass on the Faith to others."

The bishop also told of a young nun and priest he met. "Mary was only a young child in the mid 1960s when the Cultural Revolution started in China," he said. "One of her earliest memories was of the Red Guards coming to the house and taking away her grandmother. When her grandmother returned, she was badly beaten and bruised but happy that she had not denied her Faith. At that moment when all seemed dark for the Church in China the seeds of a vocation were sown and Mary longed to become a nun. Today that vocation is now bearing fruit as Mary seeks to set up a religious community."

"We met Matthew who showed us a picture of his great-great uncle who in 1900 was put to death in the Boxer Revolution. His great-great uncle is now a canonised saint and Matthew is a Catholic priest," he said. "Fr Matthew and Sr Mary come from villages where the people have kept the Faith and where the majority are still Catholic and are now openly practising their Faith. Indeed Matthew's church is no modest structure but seats over 2800 people."

"We meet Fr Peter – his living conditions are very poor- yet he shows us his plans for not one but 3 new churches he plans to build. He has no money and no permission from the government but he is confident that God will provide. We meet another priest who shows us his church just newly opened. It is built on the site of a previous church that was burnt down in the Boxer Revolution resulting in the death of the 78 Catholics who had sought refuge inside. This new church is now at the centre of a modern housing estate."

"We are used to hearing that the Church in China is divided," the bishop went on. "In the past it was common to talk about the official Patriotic Catholic Church and the unofficial Underground Church. But those terms are no longer used by the Vatican. It is more correct to talk about the registered and unregistered Church. The government want all religious bodies to be registered. Lack of trust in the government means that some parts of the Church refuse to register and therefore are considered illegal. All Catholics in China pray for the Pope and consider him as their spiritual leader."

The bishop said that 'the Church is now accepted as long as it is seen to work for the development of the harmonious society of China.'

To read more about this visit with pictures see

www.cecchina.co.uk/britain/exposure-visits/blog-of-exposure-trip-in-china-2015/

A CHINA EXPERIENCE *continued from opposite page*

The idea of personal freedom seemed unnecessary. When back in England I mentioned this to a member of our J & P group who is very involved in Free Tibet. He snorted 'the Chinese have been brainwashed so they don't understand'.

I did just wonder if, with our particular history of democracy and human rights, it is maybe us with our western background who don't understand. *'Our response to China today depends on our standpoint.'*

I had heard and read about **the Beijing smog** caused by industrial pollution. Yet the day we arrived the sun was shining and the sky, blue. This glorious late summer weather continued for the short time we stayed in Beijing. We were told "they had turned off the pollution". The previous week had been a national holiday when no-one worked and factories closed down – hence no smog. There is apparently much pressure from the Chinese themselves for better air quality. Early in 2015 an online documentary 'Under the Dome' was launched, financed and presented by a former state television producer Chai Jing. Similar to Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth' it focuses on the causes and effects of China's air pollution raising the question 'should we have rapid economic growth at the expense of human health?' For many the answer to this would probably be 'No' but are they prepared to forgo their improved lifestyle to achieve this? But then this a question we are all grappling with.

I am so glad I have now visited China but realise I have only had a very fleeting glimpse of this vast beautiful country. As Xinran said in Swanwick *'I don't think I am qualified to tell what the Chinese are because I am only a drop of water in the ocean that is China.'*

Some helpful websites: Free Tibet www.freetibet.org/

Aid to the Church in Need www.acnuk.org/countries.php/10/china

Chai Jing's 'Under the Dome' www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6X2uwlQGM



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

29 Nov to 11 Dec 2015: The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, COP21

DECEMBER

5 'RED FLAG OVER BERMONDSEY—THE ADA SALTER STORY' a play 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Quaker Meeting House, *Union Walk, Frodsham Street, Chester, CH1 3LF*. Further information from Cheron & Roger rocheron@tiscali.co.uk

6 Opening of the Holy Door for the start of the Year of Mercy, Metropolitan Cathedral, Liverpool

6 ADVENT RETREAT Shrewsbury Commission. Wistaston Hall, Crewe see page 2

6 VSO CHRISTMAS CONCERT Chester Town Hall, Northgate Street Chester, CH1 2HJ 7pm Tickets £10

8 'TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS' at the Cenacle see page 7

10 HUNGER & MALNUTRITION IN AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm University of Chester, Beswick Lecture Theatre, Parkgate Road Chester, CH1 4BQ. Inaugural Lecture by Professor Lynne Kennedy. Tea and coffee from 6-6.30 pm in Beswick Foyer. A complimentary drink will be available after the lecture. Please book a place. Tickets are free of charge and can be obtained from Jenni Westcott, T Corporate Communications: Ext 1344; Email j.westcott@chester.ac.uk

13 CAROLS IN THE CITY An Advent service for all those who are interested in the asylum seeker and refugee situation. Stories from ALM Music led by Tongues of Fire St Agnes 82 Huyton Hey Rd L36 5SQ 4.00 – 5.00 Hospitality afterwards in the parish rooms.

17 CAFOD CAROLS 7.30 – 9.00 St Teresa's, 23 College Rd, Upholland, nr Wigan. WN8 0PY

JANUARY

12 'TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS' see page 7

15 CAFOD QUIZ NIGHT Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port Town Centre. 7.30 pm see page 7

17 LACE ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE see page 2

17 PEACE SUNDAY see page 2

18 - 25 WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Theme: 'Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord' Resources will be available: https://ctbi.org.uk/week_of_prayer

19 UGANDA RURAL TRANSFORMATION Talk by Sarah Cooper 5.00-6.00pm, Best Building, University of Chester, Chester Campus, Chester CH1 4BQ Open to all. 01244 512190.

24 HOMELESS SUNDAY see page 7

28 LIVE BELOW THE LINE Campaign Launch at LACE 6.30 – 7.30 pm See page 7

30 SHARING VISIONS OF A GOOD SOCIETY CAP Annual Conference see page 7

FEBRUARY

2 CLIMATE: REFLECTIONS ON THE PARIS CONFERENCE NEGOTIATIONS AND OUTCOMES Talk by Rob Elsworth, Climate and Policy Analyst at CAFOD. Jointly arranged by CWDF and the Department of Geography and Development Studies. 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm University of Chester, Chester Campus, Chester CH1 4BQ

7 CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY SUNDAY see page 7 www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday

9 'TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS' at the Cenacle page 7

10 ASH WEDNESDAY

12 CAFOD QUIZ NIGHT see page 7

27 STOP TRIDENT National Demonstration in London

29 Feb to 13 March FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 'Sit down to breakfast, stand up for farmers.'

MARCH

4 WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 'Receive children, receive me' by women of Cuba www.wwdp.org.uk/

8 'TIME OUT ON TUESDAYS' see page 7

11 CAFOD QUIZ NIGHT see Page 7

13 36th ANNUAL ROMERO MASS Celebrant Fr Dave Heywood St Benedict's, Rhodes St, Warrington WA1 2NS 10.00 Family Mass

27 EASTER SUNDAY

Liverpool

J & P Fieldworker

Steve Atherton
J&P Office, LACE
Croxteth Drive,
Sefton Park,
Liverpool L17 1AA
Tel: 0151 522 1080
s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

Liverpool Chair:

Susan O'Halloran

Liverpool Office Secretary

Maria Hardacre

Maria is making a good recovery from her operation and we hope that she will be returning to work in the not too distant future.

Shrewsbury

Secretary: Maura Garside

Tel: 0781 1679055

mauragarside@hotmail.com

Editor of MouthPeace

Marian Thompson
37 Dale Road,
Marple

Stockport SK6 6EZ

Tel: 0161 427 7254

marianet@tiscali.co.uk

Copy date for next issue 1/2/2016. 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

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