



## Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

We look forward to meeting you again at the Assembly Day on 17th October; it promises to be a stimulating day with first class speakers, a variety of workshops and the chance to meet friends and to make new ones. I hope you will be able to come, and ask you to help planning by booking early. We have a hard working and effective Commission in the diocese but we are always aware of our need for new members to help expand the representation from all parts of our big diocese. We are keen to have better representation from the north of the diocese and from other groups not already represented, especially from younger people.

We seek to involve people who have a particular interest or expertise in justice and peace and have a good knowledge of their particular deanery or area. Please consider if you have something to offer in the service of the diocese. The full Commission meets about four times a year and there are a few extra meetings of working groups especially to plan the Assembly. Please do think about this and let us know at the Assembly if you feel that you have something to offer, or get in touch with David Jenkins, Commission members that you know or myself to learn more about what is involved. May the Lord bless us as we continue our work at local level for peace and justice at home and in the wider world.

Fr Gerry Murray

### 5th Birmingham Diocesan Justice & Peace Assembly

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**10.30am to 4.30pm**

St Peter's Catholic School, Whitefields Road, Solihull, B91 3NZ

*“God or Mammon ?”*

*The Economy and Gospel values at global, local and individual levels*

Speakers:

**George Gelber: Head of Public Policy, CAFOD**

**Clifford Longley: Journalist, broadcaster and Consultant to  
the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales**

with local Justice & Peace Agencies and Workshops

**Cost: £10, low income and students £5**

Includes refreshments and sandwich lunch (for those that book in advance)

A Programme/Registration Form accompanies this Newsletter, and can also be downloaded from our website above, or requested from the Administrator.

## News From the Fairtrade Foundation

### Palestinian Olive Oil

Fairtrade is reaching out to the hardest to reach, including those in conflict zones. In March 2009, the first bottles of olive oil from Palestine to carry the FAIRTRADE Mark appeared on shelves in the Co-operative and independent stores. This Fairtrade first was the result of eight Palestinian producer groups, consisting of 265 farmers, becoming Fairtrade certified. By opening the shop doors to farmers, Fairtrade can help rebuild economic stability.

Internationally recognised Fairtrade certification of registered small farmers' associations will support and encourage the Palestinian producers to work together and be a stronger voice in vocalising their desire to farm in peace.

"I can't change the political situation but I can change my economic situation. Selling my olive oil through Fairtrade will help me to support my family and send my children to school"....Mahmoud Issa, olive farmer,

### A poem by Kathy Galloway, Leader of the Iona Community

Do not retreat into your private world,  
that place of safety, sheltered from the storm,  
where you may tend your garden, seek your soul,  
and rest with loved ones where the fire burns warm.

To tend a garden is a precious thing  
but dearer still the one where all may roam.  
The weeds of poison, poverty and war  
demand your care, who call the earth your home.

To seek your soul it is a precious thing,  
but you will never find it on your own,  
only among the clamour, threat and pain  
of other people's need will love be known.

To rest with loved ones is a precious thing  
but peace of mind exacts a higher cost;  
your children will not rest and play in quiet  
while they still hear the crying of the lost.

Do not retreat into your private world,  
There are more ways than firesides to keep warm;  
There is no shelter from the rage of life,  
So meet its eye, and dance within the storm.

## For the Common Good: Reflections on Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*

Many people think the Catholic Church is pre-occupied with contraception, abortion and death. Yet beyond that sometimes self-inflicted stereotype there is hidden treasure – a centuries-old tradition of radical, progressive action and insight on matters of social justice.

I meet few people of faith or no faith – never mind Catholics – who are aware of the existence and extraordinary breadth of Catholic Social Teaching, delivered via Papal letters or encyclicals. Without doubt it is Catholicism's best kept secret.

How about this from an encyclical from Pope Pius XI in 1931 in the wake of the 1929 financial crash. Addressing the "irresistible power" grabbed by trustees and directors of invested funds, he criticises their hold over credit which enables them to "supply the life-blood to the entire economic body, and grasping as it were, in their hands the very soul of the economy, so that no one dare breathe against their will." In a plea for better regulation that could have been uttered in 2009, rather than nearly 80 years ago, the Pope declared that: "free competition, and especially economic domination, must be kept within definite and proper bounds, and must be brought under effective control of the public authority."

In these times, as we face a loss of confidence in economic institutions and the political class, we need to hear a different analysis. There is a thirst for a voice of reason and realistic alternatives. Catholic Social Teaching could provide some answers. It talks about systems where people can be fully human, where global solidarity is put into practice and where the resources of the earth are used for the benefit of the common good, not the few.

All these points are in the recent encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* ('Love in Truth') by Pope Benedict. It comes at a time when confidence in economic and political systems is at an all-time low, and we look for a system that goes beyond mere transactions, one to where people can be more fully human. That's a central message of the Church's Social Teaching. It's also a central plank of Progressio's work.

We have asked Fr Jim O'Keefe, Sr Pamela Hussey, Ellen Teague and Tim Aldred to give some thoughts on the key messages in the encyclical. I hope you enjoy these reflections on Pope Benedict's first encyclical on social issues, in the leaflet from Progressio which accompanies this Newsletter.

*Christine Allen, Executive Director, Progressio*

## Hope for change in Zimbabwe

**CAFOD** Abigail McMillan

My short visit to Zimbabwe in June this year was one of mixed emotions. I had been to Zimbabwe 12 years ago, so I was fearful of seeing change for the worse. But I was also looking forward to returning to a beautiful country.

Zimbabwe is suffering. By the end of this year the UN food agency, WFP, predicts that half of the country's population of 12 million will be reliant on food aid, which basically means that people are going hungry.

CAFOD's partner Caritas Zimbabwe showed us how vital their humanitarian work is to the most vulnerable in communities. Through the strong Catholic Church networks CAFOD, through Caritas Zimbabwe, targets the neediest, distributing life-saving food to schools, health clinics and people living with HIV and AIDS who are unable to work.

In Dhirihori Primary School, just over 100 kilometres east of the capital Harare, the contrast between the full supermarkets of the capital could not have been greater. The 519 children of the school now receive a lunchtime meal provided by CAFOD's partner Caritas Zimbabwe. For many of the children this is the only meal they receive in a day, just receiving their meal of maize porridge brought out joyous laughter in the young pupils. It was only a few months back that only a third of the children were attending school, too weak to walk the distance, too busy caring for sick family members made weaker by hunger, or too busy searching for food to feed the family.

The Headteacher, Mr Innocent Chipara, told us gravely that the silence in the school had been awful; the children were too weak to play and laugh, he explained. Now, however, thanks to the meal of high protein porridge, cooked in gigantic cauldrons and stirred with joyful vigour by a team of cooks recruited from local villages, over wood fire, the wood provided by the children's families, the hurly-burly of school noise has returned. "The whole day they are very happy, jumping here and there", said Mr Chipara, "[providing lunch] is something very great for us, the teachers now are happy too."

So yes the situation is desperate, and yes we need to do more, as the recent Caritas Internationalis Appeal for £5 million has only produced a third of that amount. With more money more can obviously be done, and I left the country with hope that things will get better, a senior priest told us "When I compare what's happened over the past ten years with what's happened since September it's a miracle... There's a spirit of reconciliation, unity and healing. Please God we can't go back to where we were".

Please pray that miracle continues.

To donate please go to [www.cafod.org.uk/zimbabweappeal](http://www.cafod.org.uk/zimbabweappeal) or call 0500 858 885

Further information all CAFOD campaigns and local activities can be obtained by contacting:

CAFOD Birmingham, 23 Glebe Street, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 3NX. Tel. 01922 722944, or by Email on [birmingham@cafod.org.uk](mailto:birmingham@cafod.org.uk)

## Who is fleeing persecution and seeking sanctuary?

Please join Restore, a project of Birmingham Churches Together supporting refugees and asylum seekers, for information sessions on asylum issues and training for befriending refugees and asylum seekers.

**EVENING COURSE** on Tuesdays  
29th September and 6th & 13th October from 7.30-9.30pm at All Saints Church, 172 Herbert Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 0PR

**AFTERNOON COURSE** on Thursdays  
8th and 15th October 2009 from 1.30pm – 4.30pm.  
Venue to be confirmed.

Further details are available from Jeremy Thompson (Befriending Co-ordinator, RESTORE)

Tel. 0121 766 8764 or  
Email [befriend@restore-uk.org](mailto:befriend@restore-uk.org)

## "The Wave - Come Together to Stop Climate Chaos"

In December world leaders meet in Copenhagen to make vital decisions on global action on climate change. Ask them to commit to a fair climate change deal. Time is running out.

Attend an ecumenical service with Archbishops Vincent Nichols and Rowan Williams, followed by a peaceful march to the River Thames.

**Saturday 5th December**

Wear blue or bring blue banners to join the wave.

**The Service:** 11am. Westminster Methodist Central Hall, London SW1H 9NH. Activities for children and young people.

**The March:** Leaves straight after the Service; if you can't be there, the march will leave at 1pm from

# Diary Dates

## September

13th Racial Justice Sunday  
CARJ tel. 020 8802 8080  
web: www.carj.co.uk

21st International Peace Day  
www.peaceday.org or tel.  
020 7456 9180

## October

2nd CAFOD Harvest Fast Day

12th to  
18th Global Debt Week  
www.jubileedebtcampaign.org

17th Fifth Annual Diocesan J&P  
Assembly. World Economics:  
"God or Mammon?"  
10am-4.30pm.  
St Peter's School, Solihull  
Speakers, discussion groups and  
workshops. Appropriately on the:

17th International Day for the  
Eradication of Poverty  
www.unmeditation.org

18th to  
25th One World Week  
"Hungry for One World"  
www.oneworldweek.org  
and  
Week of Prayer for World Peace  
Details from: 0208 968 4340 or

24th United Nations Day  
www.unmeditation.org

31st CARJ Birmingham Local Event  
No details yet.

## November

11th Remembrance Sunday

15th Prisoners' Sunday  
PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust)

7th to  
14th Network of Oxford Women for  
Justice and Peace  
"Fusion" event at East Oxford  
Community Centre, Cowley Road.  
Details: Rosemary Galli  
Email: gallirose1@tiscali.co.uk  
or mobile: 07756 848542

## December

1st World AIDS Day

3rd World Migration Day

5th "The Wave - Come Together to Stop Climate  
Chaos" 11am Ecumenical Service and March  
(see ad on page 3)

10th United Nations Human Rights Day

## January 2010

1st World Day of Peace

## March 2010

19th to

21st International Conference, Las Casas  
Institute, Blackfriars, Oxford.  
"The Current Condition and Future Prospects  
of European Catholic Social Conscience"  
For details Email: lascalas@bfriars.ox.ac.uk

### **HOW TO GET IN TOUCH**

The Birmingham Justice and Peace Newsletter is sent to everyone on our mailing list free of charge. If you would like to be added to the mailing list please send your address, including EMail details, to the Administrator.

Also, if you have an event you would like advertised in the Autumn newsletter please send details to:

David Jenkins, Administrator,  
Birmingham Justice & Peace Commission,  
Home: Yew Tree Cottage, Hailey, Witney OX29 9UB  
Email: jenkins@woxon.freemove.co.uk  
Tel: 01993-702654 (home), 07919 325203 (mobile).

Winter 2009 Edition: Last date for entries 18th Nov.

More information about the Commission can be found on our website: www.birminghamjandp.org.uk

*The views expressed in this newsletter are the views of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission or the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham.*

**The Birmingham  
Diocesan Justice and  
Peace Commission  
website.**

Birmingham Diocese

For information on the J&P calendar and links to J&P organisations....

For downloads from the J&P Resource Pack and much more...

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