

## Message from the Chair

The world is moving and changing. It probably always was. But the pace seems to have accelerated and now we have entered a new era of globalisation. People, money, ideas, goods and much more can move around the world at will. This affects our lives in ways that are becoming more apparent. Migration is one of the signs of the times. How can we begin to understand this phenomenon? People are on the move seeking security, sanctuary and a better life. Our parishes and communities encounter (and maybe sometimes avoid) such people. How can we make them welcome in the spirit of the Gospel?

The Commission seeks to respond to current questions and issues in our annual Assembly Days. Details of the next one come with this newsletter (below) and poster attached.

The programme offers experienced speakers and interesting practical workshops on various topics to set us thinking and learning. It will, I am sure, be an inspiring and stimulating day. These days are an important opportunity for those involved in different ways in Justice and Peace to meet one another, friends from our localities and others from many parts of the Diocese.

We look forward to welcoming you this year. Do come and encourage one another to come to this important gathering. Please put the details in your diary and try and book in good time for this event.

Fr Gerard Murray.

### 4th Birmingham Diocesan Justice & Peace Assembly

*"There are no strangers"*

*"I was a Stranger and you welcomed me"* Matthew 25:35

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

**10.30am – 4.15pm**

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

Speakers: **Francis Davis**, Von Hugel Institute, Cambridge and

**Shari Brown**, RESTORE, Birmingham

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)

Applications can be downloaded from our website above, or requested from the Administrator

## **"Journey To Justice" - The Jubilee Debt Campaign**

On Sunday 18th May over 1,000 people from many different groups and communities returned to Birmingham to celebrate the decade of anti-poverty campaigning since the Human Chain of 70,000 enthusiastic campaigners encircling the City centre demanding that G8 cancel unpayable outstanding debts faced by some of the worlds poorest countries, in the name of justice.

Much has been achieved over this last ten years and there is great hope to maintain, and increase, this momentum; debts of \$88 billion have been cancelled but \$400 billion remains. In Uganda, debt cancellation has enabled the Government to abolish fees for Primary Schools so that 20 million more children are receiving education, and additional aid has been attracted as a direct result of the improved economic prospects.

## **Pope Benedict on The Eucharist and Justice**

Following the last Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist Pope Benedict has written an Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*. Of particular interest to Justice and Peace people is the final section: *The Eucharist, a mystery to be offered to the world* (paragraphs 88-92). It contains the following powerful passages:

- Our communities, when they celebrate the Eucharist, must become ever more conscious that the sacrifice of Christ is for all, and that the Eucharist thus compels all who believe in him to become "bread that is broken" for others, and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world... Each of us is truly called, together with Jesus, to be bread broken for the life of the world. (88)
- In the memorial of his sacrifice, the Lord strengthens our fraternal communion and, in a particular way, urges those in conflict to hasten their reconciliation by opening themselves to dialogue and a commitment to justice... All who partake of the Eucharist must commit themselves to peacemaking in our world scarred by violence and war, and today in particular, by terrorism, economic corruption and sexual exploitation. (89)
- The Lord Jesus, the bread of eternal life, spurs us to be mindful of the situations of extreme poverty in which a great part of humanity still lives: these are situations for which human beings bear a clear and disquieting responsibility... The food of truth demands that we denounce inhumane situations in which people starve to death because of injustice and exploitation, and it gives us renewed strength and courage to work tirelessly in the service of the civilization of love. (90)
- The prayer which we repeat at every Mass: "Give us this day our daily bread," obliges us to do everything possible, in cooperation with international, state and private institutions, to end or at least reduce the scandal of hunger and malnutrition afflicting so many millions of people in our world, especially in developing countries. In a particular way, the Christian laity, formed at the school of the Eucharist, are called to assume their specific political and social responsibilities. (91)
- The Christian people, in giving thanks to God through the Eucharist, should be conscious that they do so in the name of all creation. The justified concern about threats to the environment present in so many parts of the world is reinforced by Christian hope, which commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation. (92)

## CAFOD LIVING SIMPLY: The Challenge Continues....

Joe Andrew

CAFOD has been a supporter of the *live-simply* challenge since it was first launched in November 2006. Based on a prophetic document, written by Pope Paul VI in 1967, 'On the Development of Peoples' (*Populorum Progressio*), the challenge focuses on the idea that it is God who calls us to live simply. This is a radical challenge, in that the *live-simply* project calls on us to look hard at our lifestyles and choose to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor.

We need to recognise that it is everyone's responsibility to do what we can to improve the opportunities for people in developing countries. That is, the *livesimply* message taps into a growing realisation that our lifestyles in the global North cause many of the problems experienced by people in the global South. Here, in the North, we are now aware of the impact our energy use is having on the climate. We are concerned about how our food is grown and where it comes from. And even more important, we are starting to ask questions about what needs to be done, and what needs to change, to make the world a fairer and better place.

But what more can we do? In fact there are lots of practical steps we can all take to make a difference, in solidarity with the world's poor.

Food has become a very important issue lately, because of soaring prices and resulting shortages; food and how it is produced, is at the heart of the *livesimply* challenge.

We need to ask ourselves 'How was our food produced?' Agrochemicals could be polluting the water supplies of people living near the farms. The food could be grown or raised on land owned by a multinational corporation, while local people may not have access to land on which to grow food to eat or sell for a livelihood. And how did your food get to you? It could have come four miles down the road from a local farm, or been flown 4,000 miles in the hold of a cargo plane. And at what cost?

We all can take steps to change our lives, to take the small steps that will make a big difference. Again in the area of food we can buy local, seasonal (and preferably organic) food from local greengrocers, farm shops or farmers' markets; or subscribe to a vegetable box scheme. When buying food produced overseas, we can buy fair trade and/or organic. If we shop at a supermarket, we can ask them what their policy is on stocking local food and fair trade produce - and keep pressing them to do more.

There are similar issues we could reflect upon in the areas of trade, or energy. *Livesimply* really is an empowering and enabling project. It's also a really Good News story - good news in that it's having a real impact on the way many people live, but also because by responding to this challenge we really are bringing good news to the poor.

Joe Andrew

### **Has anyone heard of ZENIT ?**

*ZENIT is an International News Agency which sends daily news updates by E-Mail completely free of charge entitled "The World Seen From Rome" and is a truly excellent way to keep immediately abreast of developments around the globe, especially with a Catholic Christian significance for us Internationally and Locally.*

*Regular features are the Vatican Dossier covering the Pope's activities, verbatim reports of Homilies and addresses etc. followed by World Features, Liturgy, Interviews, Spirituality, Forum, Documents etc. which vary from day to day, depending on developing events. It presents a balanced and unbiased picture, available in English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Arabic and Portuguese.*

*To read on-line and to sign up just go on to their web page <http://www.zenit.org> . It is a free service.*

***"Wrong is wrong even if everybody is doing it..."***

***Right is right even if nobody is doing it".***

***St Augustine of Hippo***

# Diary Dates

## JULY

**23 Independent Asylum Commission Recommendations.** Open Meeting  
Speaker: Jonathan Cox, IAC.  
7pm. All Saints Church, Small Heath

## AUGUST

**6th & 9th Anniversary of bombing Hiroshima & Nagasaki**  
Pax Christi 020 8203 4884  
CND 020 7700 2393  
Christian CND 020 7700 2393

**6 Hiroshima Day, Coventry**  
Service 6-7pm. in Chapel of Unity,  
Coventry Cathedral  
Info: Penny Walker 02476 664616

**1st-30th Hiroshima/Nagasaki Exhibition,** Chapel of Unity,  
Coventry Cathedral.

**22-25th Greenbelt Festival**  
Cheltenham Racecourse  
[www.greenbelt.org.uk](http://www.greenbelt.org.uk)

## SEPTEMBER

**7 5K "Run for their lives"**  
Actionaid, Birmingham  
[www.actionaid.org.uk/running](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/running)

**14 Racial Justice Sunday**  
020 8802 8080 & [www.carj.org.uk](http://www.carj.org.uk)

**21 International Day of Peace and Global Cease Fire Day**  
[www.peaceday.org](http://www.peaceday.org) and  
[www.internationaldayofpeace.org](http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org)

**21 Taize Hour for J&P, 6-7pm**  
St Catherine's Church, Bristol St.  
Pax Christi: 020 8203 4884  
and [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

**24 Worcester Diocese Criminal Justice Conference,** Pershore  
on Restorative Justice  
Joyce Bush 01527 585246 or  
[joyce.bush@btinternet.com](mailto:joyce.bush@btinternet.com)

**27 J&P Workshop for Religious**  
St Francis Hall, Univ.Chaplaincy,  
(Email: [a.oconnor@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.oconnor@bham.ac.uk))

## OCTOBER

**3 CAFOD Harvest Fast Day**  
01922 722944/[www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)

**11 Birmingham Diocesan J&P Annual Assembly** St Peter's School, Solihull  
[www.birminghamjandp.org.uk](http://www.birminghamjandp.org.uk)

**17 Int'l.Day for the Eradication of Poverty**  
[www.unmeditation.org/](http://www.unmeditation.org/)  
and  
**Child Poverty Day**  
Actionaid [www.actionaid.org.uk](http://www.actionaid.org.uk)

**19-26th One World Week "Growing Together"**  
[www.oneworldweek.org](http://www.oneworldweek.org) & 0118 9394933

**19-26th Week of Prayer for World Peace**  
Prayer leaflets: 0208 968 4340  
**24 United Nations Day**  
[www.unmeditation.org](http://www.unmeditation.org)

### 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, contact details below.

If you have an event you would like advertised in the Autumn newsletter please send to:

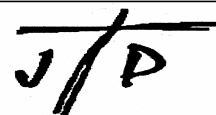
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More information about the Commission can be found on our website: [www.birminghamjandp.org.uk](http://www.birminghamjandp.org.uk)

*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)