



Message from the Chair

With the support and encouragement of Bishop Kenney we have recently written to parishes to encourage them to take the simple steps necessary to become 'Fairtrade Parishes'. Some have done so already. To become a Fairtrade Church the parish community needs to take a decision through a parish council or other leadership group or even by a referendum to:

1. Use Fairtrade tea and coffee for all meetings for which you have responsibility.
2. Increase the use and sale of Fairtrade products of which there are quite a range.
3. Promote Fairtrade during Fairtrade fortnight - this year 25th February to 9th March - and at other regular opportunities throughout the year.

This would be a wonderful action for justice and in the support of the poor that parishes could take this Lent. If enough of us were to do it we could become a Fairtrade Diocese!

You can apply for a Fairtrade Certificate through CAFOD by filling in a simple form or if you would like more details on becoming a Fairtrade Parish contact CAFOD on

020 7733 7900 or www.cafod.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/fairtrade

Please let the Commission know if your parish is already or is about to become a Fairtrade Parish. We will use this information in the future when we start the process of becoming a Fairtrade Diocese. Please contact the administrator to keep us informed. Contact details are on the page 4.

Fr Gerry Murray

Parish Profile

St Catherine's of Sienna, Birmingham

St Catherine's of Sienna, an inner city parish, have had a very successful first year as a J&P group. They have been active in many J&P campaigns including becoming affiliated to the Burma campaign and they became involved with the Nestle baby milk campaign. The group held a *Livesimply*/recycling weekend, which included a special liturgy at masses, giving out a sheet on energy savings tips and handing out free bags, tea towels and other things provided by their local Council Environmental Dept.

They have also had speakers to the parish, persuaded parishioners to sign the leaflets for the Progressio Terminator Seeds Campaign and attended both the National and Diocesan conferences.

It is fantastic to hear of the great work going on and enthusiasm that the parish community has show when asked to join in with campaigns.

If you would like more details of what St Catherine's have been doing you can contact Mary Sambrook on mary@newbrigg.co.uk

Whether your group has been established for a long time or is only been meeting for a few months old we would love to hear from you. Let us know what your group has been involved with, any particular successes or tips that may be useful to other groups and we will share it either in this newsletter or via the website. www.birminghamjandp.org.uk

What the Commission does.

(In response to a question that is often raised)

The general aim of the Commission (as expressed in its Vision) is to promote justice and peace – its theology, spirituality and practice – throughout the diocese.

The commission comprises six lay members, one religious, a deacon and two clergy (Fr Gerry Murray, the chair, and Bishop William Kenney). These 10 members meet quarterly with the administrator to work out how to achieve the following:

- Maintain a database of interested individuals and groups throughout the diocese;
- Produce a Newsletter four times a year and E-mail contacts regularly with up-to-date news of events and requests for urgent action;
- Maintain a website with current information about Justice & Peace and related organisations, campaigns and resources;
- Organise an annual Justice & Peace Assembly open to all in the diocese and others who may be interested;
- Organise deanery workshops around the diocese with an emphasis on practical support, methodology and spirituality for groups;
- Promote key campaigns by publicising where the expertise and resources are to be found.

The Commission would like to do more to enable groups to establish themselves, to network with one another and so explore what can be done together and how expertise can be shared. Hence the plan is to find out more about what groups are doing. We would be pleased to hear, via the administrator, (Contact details on Page 4) of any suggestions for improvement in our activities.

The Birmingham Diocese J&P Commission website is full of downloadable resources, addresses, dates and information that you and your J&P group will find helpful when running campaigns in your parishes.

www.birminghamjandp.org.uk

The website is there for you. let us know if there is anything you would like to see added to the site. Please contact the administrator with suggestions/ideas
amtibbits@blueyonder.co.uk

DO JUSTICE & PEACE AND LIVESIMPLY

The commission is running a workshop in Birmingham North Deanery on Saturday 12th April 9.45am to 4pm at The Abbey, Erdington Sutton Road, B23 6QL

The day is facilitated by Brian Davies (J&P Commission) & Helen Moseley (CAFOD)

The free day is for all who are concerned about the injustice and violence in our world and ask... How can we bring about change? How can we be better organised? What spirituality supports us?

For more information and an application form visit the website at www.birminghamjandp.org.uk or contact the administrator.

2007 Greeting card Campaign

Following the 2007 greeting card campaign to prisoners of conscience many people have received replies from prisoners asking for befriending and for material things including money. If you would like to help further Action by Christians against Torture in Zambia has a channel through which to send money, twice a year, via a Catholic Priest in Kabwe prison For more information contact Ken Watson ACAT prisoners support team co-ordinator at ken335@btinternet.com or Creina Hearn from our Lady of the Wayside J&P Group on 0121 705 4337

CAFOD IS STILL UNEARTHING JUSTICE

Joe Andrew

It is now nearly two years since CAFOD launched its campaign, 'Unearth Justice', which focuses on the extractive industries. This campaign is based on the principle enshrined in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* that the 'characteristic principle of Christian social doctrine [is that] the goods of the earth are originally meant for all.' It is a terrible irony that, while developing countries are the richest in natural resources, they are often those with the worst levels of poverty.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) offers sad testimony to this situation. For the DRC decades of gold mining should have provided prosperity. In reality it has trapped the country in a cycle of violence and poverty. Large-scale mining stopped when civil war broke out in 1996, leaving mining company employees unpaid and jobless. Since then, people have been working in abandoned mines in harsh and dangerous conditions. Moreover, the plundering of gold has done little but fuel conflict in the DRC, with army, militia and other elites growing rich on the profits. For example, in the gold-rich area around Mongbwalu in the north east of the country, 80 per cent of the population lives from mining. But much of the wealth from the mines is smuggled out of the country. The government is now

encouraging international mining companies to return to the region in an attempt to increase its revenue.

More broadly, the DRC has Africa's richest deposits of copper and cobalt, as well as abundant reserves of gold, diamonds and coltan (used in mobile phones). But it is estimated that 1,200 people die each day from conflict-related disease, hunger and violence in the DRC. This conflict has been fuelled by the struggle for mineral wealth.

Campaigns in the DRC, and elsewhere in Africa, Asia and Latin America are the inspiration for CAFOD's Unearth Justice campaign. As always we can take action through our parishes or communities. For both of these actions, talk to your CAFOD parish contact, or consult the website at www.cafod.org.uk. By doing this we can act in solidarity with the worldwide Church and people affected by mining.

Prayer For Justice

Loving creator, you have made us in your image and we yearn for the healing of all your people.

Fill our hearts with the fire of your love.

And our minds with the thirst for justice.

Embolden us to cry out against oppression, empower us to work for the coming of your kingdom, and enrich us with your life giving spirit so that all creation may feel your touch and be healed.

We ask this in the name of our crucified, risen Lord, our liberator and redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Annabel Shilson-Thomas

Journey to Justice, Sunday 18th May 2008

In 1998, 70,000 peaceful protestors gathered in Birmingham to form a 'human chain' around the city, calling on the visiting G8 to cancel the unpayable debts of the world's poorest countries. It was a milestone for those of us campaigning against poverty and injustice. This year marks the 10th anniversary of that great day, and Sunday May 18th will see a big event at the ICC in Birmingham at 2.30pm (£10 or £5 concessions) to celebrate the achievements and call on politicians to finish the job. Faith communities will mark the event in the morning; Catholics are encouraged to attend the 11am mass at St Chad's, which will be said by Archbishop Nichols, and be followed by sandwiches in the Grimshaw Room with a talk by David McLoughlin. More information from: www.journeytojustice.org"

Diary Dates

FEBRUARY

25-9 Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade Foundation

020 7405 5942

MARCH

7 Women's World Day of Prayer

God's Wisdom Provides New Understanding prepared by the women of Guyana.

01892 541411

www.wwdp-natcomm.org

29 Caring for Creation

Oxford Town Hall

CCND 0207 700 4200

APRIL -

MAY

11-17 Christian Aid Week

020 7620 4444

16 World Debt Day

www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

18 Journey to Justice

Jubilee Debt Campaign

www.journeytojustice.org

JUNE

5 Environment Sunday

www.unep.org

8 Campaign Against Arms Trade Christian Network Day of Prayer

020 7281 0297

16-22 Refugee Week

020 7346 6752

JULY

13 Sea Sunday

www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

18-20 National J&P Conference

Hear my people cry

020 7901 4864.

OCTOBER

11 Birmingham Diocesan Justice and Peace Annual Assembly

St Peter's Catholic School, Solihull

More information will be available in the summer newsletter

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 e-mail details to the editor; contact details are below.

If you have an event you would like advertised in the Summer newsletter please let the Editor know. Last date for entries 31st May 08

Please send to:- Anne-Marie Tibbits
Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission,
41 Wychall Road

Birmingham

B31 3AB.

0121 477 0412

E-mail amtibbits@blueyonder.co.uk

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 Diocese of Birmingham.

READ IT FIRST!

Over 180 people from our mailing list receive this newsletter by e-mail and also receive a regular e-mail from the Administrator containing news of local and national J&P events, campaigns that they can get involved with and urgent action they can take.

If you would prefer to receive our mailings by e-mail and would also like the regular e-mails just contact the administrator on amtibbits@blueyonder.co.uk with your e-mail address.