Embedding Justice & Peace

Part of our discussions have been on how we embed Justice & Peace in the consciousness of Parish and Diocesan life? Do we really know about what happens in Parishes and what does J&P mean to everyone? And how is it lived? Our host Parish for the AGM shares with us in Christian witness on what they are involved in as individuals and groups. How do we share more? Via the newsletter and website, any other suggestions? We hope in our education and campaigning to give leadership on some of the burning issues of injustice of which we are aware, what are your views?

What Is Priority?

Will the UK's poorest people, the least able, pay the price for economic recession? How worthless do people feel and are made to feel by joblessness? What is the priority for us in our churches? Will the growth in 'green' jobs offer more opportunities to those on low incomes? Will we be able to influence this by how simply we live and make fewer demands on the earth's resources?

Close the Gap

'Close the Gap' aims to reduce levels of poverty and inequality in the UK, to speak out on how Government policy adversely affects the most vulnerable, and to promote fair working conditions for the poorest so that low-paid workers have dignified, life-enhancing employment. Let us embrace CAFOD's Live Simply Campaign.

MEMBERS OF THE DIOCESAN JUSTICE & PEACE CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL 2010 to 2011

- Pat MacDonald (Chair)
- Jill Oliver (Secretary)
- Liz Archibald (Sec) resigned
- Anne Thukeral (Treasurer)
- Ann Moore (Vice Chair) resigned
- Anne-Marie Hanlon (CAFOD Diocesan Manager)
- Sr Josepha
- Sr Lucina deceased 2011
- Fr Bill Rooke
- Teresa Moffett
- Mary Storey
- John Marshall (Destitute Asylum Seekers Contact)
- Audrey Marshall (Groups Contact Officer)
- Elizabeth McGurk
- Frances Armstrong
- Esther Robson (Information Distribution)
- Anna Griffith
- Pat Conway (Donations Gift Aid Org)
- Helen Coyne

FOR FURTHER COPIES OF THIS REPORT

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Diocesan Website: www.rcdhn.org.uk/jandp

Justice & Peace

Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan
Justice and Peace Co-ordinating Council

Report 2010-2011

Why do we exist?

To encourage commitment and personal action in light of the Gospel message and teachings of the Catholic Church, as part of the Diocesan response to God's call to be people of Justice and Peace

Who are we and what do we do?

The Diocesan Justice and Peace Co-ordinating Council is elected at the AGM in October each year from members of existing J&P groups in the Diocese. We meet monthly, try to arrange four events annually and communicate about issues and current campaigns.

Objectives

To foster the growth of this work within parishes and deaneries and to encourage the use of the four stages of the Pastoral Cycle i.e. Study/ Experience, Analysis, Prayer/Spiritual Reflection and Action.

Please contact us if you think we can help.

Projects

Our Major project for the last 10 years has been support for asylum seekers. We have drop-in and support centres for asylum seekers in Stockton, Kenton, Benwell, Walker, and Gateshead, staffed by volunteers. Benwell co-ordinates the collection of food from our parishes (92) and makes the £5 weekly payment of your donations to failed asylum seekers. (See separate report). Further support and prayers are always needed.

Diocesan Website: www.rcdhn.org.uk/jandp

In the past year the J&P Co-ordinating Council through its members and elected Officers has:

- Supported 5 Refugee & Asylum Seekers Drop-in Centres with volunteers and regular forums for information sharing. {Separate report for failed asylum seekers and food collection programme.}
- Attended city-wide meetings about Refugees and Asylum Seekers.
- 10 people attended Charity Dinner for Refugee week.
- 9 people from the Diocese attended the National Justice and Peace Conference 'Our Daily Bread' at Swanwick, Derbyshire.
- Arranged the annual J&P Mass on May 7th at St Andrew's celebrated by Fr Bill Rook, supported with music by Holy Island Camp volunteers with a small celebration after.
- Arranged an inspiring Justice and Peace Spirituality day 'The Common God' at St Lawrence's, Byker, 25th June 2011. Rosemary Theobalds led us to consider the underpinning spirituality of our work in all areas of social justice, and our work to promote the Common Good. Then she led us to see some of the underpinning in scripture.
- Promoting Church Action on Poverty Campaign - Close the Gap.
- Contributed to setting up the Sharing Fair Co-operative to sell craft Goods from Good Shepherd Projects to promote dignity and justice for women and their families in the developing world.
- Held a successful AGM hosted by St Joseph's Durham, with parish witnesses on their work on J&P. Hosted Pat Devlin, an Ecumenical Accompanier, as our main speaker at the 2010 AGM who shared her experiences in Israel &Palestine.
- Attended films and discussions on Palestine on the illegal detention of young children and the group of Israelis who continue to support a community of Palestinians evicted and living in caves and tents.
- Involved local schools in developing J&P material for Primary J&P groups.
- Promoted CAFOD's work - 13 people supported the Mayor's Charity Dinner for CAFOD. Launching a campaign on Live Simply.
- Fairtrade continues to be promoted around the Diocese with attendance at meetings, events and stalls, communication and even development of a blog http://anne4justice.blogspot.com/ .
- Supported successful Refugee Week information event in Newcastle with positive public response.
- Communication group set up to re-instate the newsletter and set up e-mail communications.
- Sr Lucina's illness and death has left us without web-site support – we are making more use of Diocesan website.
- Organised meetings with Bishop Cunningham and Kathleen Turner to share a vision of the work of the J&P Council in engaging the Diocese to respond to God's call to become people of Justice and Peace.

Understanding our mission

After challenging our own understanding of Justice & Peace i.e.: is it Fairtrade, Peru, Manvi, CAFOD, Charity, Asylum Seekers, Freedom from Torture, The Environment, Water, Land Rights, Sharing Fair? We recognised we had no "one size fits all" answer.

We have long known that we have to ground our action in prayer. So spirituality and prayer are a major part of the Group's formation. We have to be at peace with ourselves to promote Peace in our communities. We do know the plight of Asylum Seekers has been generously acknowledged in over 90 parishes and schools with wonderful responses of food and cash donations.