



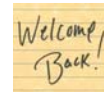
Justice & Peace Newsletter

December 2011
Issue No: 54

Published by Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan Justice and Peace
Co-ordinating Council

Sow Seeds Educate Network
Share Information Develop
Encourage Foster Growth Local
National International Gospel
Catholic Vision Social Teaching
Prayer Environmental Issues Analysis
Commitment Take Action
Campaign Spiritual Reflection
Vision Social Teaching Prayer

A few words from the Chair, Pat MacDonald



Welcome back and Christmas blessings on you, your families and parish communities. "We are re-launching the quarterly Newsletter now that we have some dedicated time from two council members, Anna and Esther. We look forward to receiving your news from around the diocese for inclusion in the next edition In February 2012".

AGM 2011

This year's AGM was hosted by J&P people in St Theresa's Heaton. We were made very welcome in lovely surroundings with a plentiful supply of tea and coffee and the parish shared their works in SVP, Shared Interest, Traidcraft and the links with Chile.

Audrey Marshall organised a thoughtful Liturgy to get the day off to a good start.

Elections to the J&P Co-ordinating Council 2011-2012

Chair: Pat MacDonald
Vice Chair: Anna Griffith
Secretary: Jill Oliver
Treasurer: Anne Thukeral,

Destitute Asylum Seekers: John Marshall
J&P Donations Gift Aid Contact: Pat Conway
Information Distribution: Esther Robson,
Groups Contact Officer: Audrey Marshall

Council Members:

Fr Bill Rooke
Teresa Moffett
Betty McGurk
Frances Armstrong
Helen Coyne
Mary Storey
Sr Josepha
Eileen Mason
Anne- Marie Hanlon CAFOD

As a consequence of the cuts, unemployment and the inequalities in our communities, gaps are widening further between the rich and the poor, although in some areas many have still to experience the full impact of this. Because of our years supporting asylum seekers, we felt we could see more of the consequences here. This was our brief for John Battle, a truly inspirational speaker - well versed in Catholic Social Teaching, who energised, motivated and challenged us still further, to recognise Christ's suffering in the poor and marginalised. John's Sunday Universe article said: "Practical service far

transcended the commentary. Hexham and Newcastle Justice and Peace are just getting on with the action”

Audrey Marshall shared with us heartrending stories of two clients who rely on the Drop in Centre and their experiences of destitution and powerlessness.

Pat MacDonald, Chair, presented the report for the committee from the last year - mixture of sharing experiences, observations and questioning. It was also agreed we should launch the Live Simply Award Campaign, see separate article and the Diary for meeting on the 25th FEB 2012. Excellent contributions were made by participants ranging from the Church Action on Poverty's Close the Gap Campaign, to CAFODs Live Simply Award, Palestine, Open Gate etc. For fuller information see Diocesan Website: www.rcdhn.org.uk/social_concerns/justice_and_peace

Full minutes of the AGM are available on request.

Consett J&P Group



We are a small J&P group here in Consett, but we feel that we punch (albeit non-violently) well above our weight!

Our group is aligned to CAFOD, but also branch out on our own to support other causes. We hold a monthly rice collection which is given to refugees & asylum seekers in Newcastle which is now into its fifth year as well as an annual clothes collection. Some of our members are involved in the new “Food 4 U” project in Consett to provide meals for underprivileged clients.



With CAFOD, one of our members was invited to see the difference supporter's donations made in Kenya and gave presentations to

schools and other groups on his return. We also took part in the Big Walk, from Durham to Holy Island and members joined the walkers to cross the Pilgrim's Way. In the future, we hope to link up with an importer of Maasai beads, which are made by former sex-workers, to assist them in earning a livelihood.

! Help! Our main problem is getting people interested enough to come along to meetings. We get great support from the parish, but getting them to cross the threshold is another matter. We have tried speaking to our confirmation candidates, but with no success, we use the parish bulletin to publicise our activities and organise a monthly Mass on many different subjects.

If there's anyone out there in the Consett area who wants to join our group, you'd be most welcome. If there's anyone who can give us some tips to entice more people in, we'd be most grateful. Whatever happens, we'll keep on going as we believe that God will provide, as we continue to do His work.



John McBride (Group Chair)
✉ johnj.mcbride@tesco.net ☎ 01207 583506



Open Gate (Durham)

Open Gate is a Charity Project which supports women who are released from HMP Low Newton. We support women living in the North East, helping them to settle and become a part of the community again, our ultimate aim being to reduce re offending.

Recently my colleague and I were invited to Jackie's confirmation service in the Prison Chapel. Without family it was going to be a small, very low key affair, or so I thought until the arrival of a 'very'

senior clergyman from the community was shown to his seat. Jackie had been very nervous and now I knew why!

He told an amazing story about a boy whose Dad had taken him into the forest. He described the darkness in the dense trees and the confusion of being alone. He told Jackie that even in the darkest moments of her life that God was with her - he told her that he had come to see her for her confirmation on God's behalf to tell her how special she was to him. The peace which came over this girl had to be seen to be believed and is still with her.

Out in the community with women I see them being lost in the forest of benefit claims, homelessness poverty and exclusion. The circumstances which surround women's introduction to prison are often tragic, related to domestic violence or horrific childhood experiences. Jackie can relate to both of these but with support she is being able to cut her way through the trees.

During the last two weeks we, at Open Gate, have helped:

- Three of the women we support enroll on college courses.
- One woman to find a flat and supported her both financially and with donations from our kind friends at the local churches.
- A homeless girl into hostel accommodation.
- A number of women to get to numerous drugs, alcohol and probation appointments.

I believe with Open Gates support, women who are lost can find their way to the edge of the forest and know that they can have someone to hold their hand.

Alison Wymess, Open Gate

✉ opengate@btconnect.com ☎ 0191 384 1500

What's been going down at St Aidan's, Benton, Newcastle!

St Aidan's Benton J&P group held the following events over the last few months:



- Pat Devlin shared her experiences as an Ecumenical Accompanier in the West Bank and Israel
- Fundraising activities including:
 - Plant & home bake sale
 - The Ravenswood Singers concert
 - Sharing Fair Sale
 - Mince pies and prisoners of conscience greeting card signing event (a real coming together of the parish community and 45 cards were sent).



- We also distribute regular newsletters to all parishioners and have a notice-board. We collect sugar for the Destitute Asylum Seekers Project
- Tins for iCan (the Cyrenians, FareShare North East icanfeed.org)
- Clothes for St Cuthbert's Care
- Our regular Traidcraft stall is well supported (generally every month but every 2 weeks Sept-Dec). This year I sold more sugar / fruit / honey by making up packs of ingredients and selling with recipe cards. You can see me make one of these cakes on my blog anne4justice.blogspot.com

All welcome.

If you would like more details don't hesitate to get in touch!

✉ anne.thukeral@blueyonder.co.uk

Holy Name, Jesmond

We organise the sponsorship of eight school children in Zimbabwe and provide food for a girl hit by lightning.

We also support the event detailed below:

Christian/Muslim Women pray for peace at Marian Shrine

The second joint Christian/Muslim women's event to pray for peace took place at the ancient chapel to Mary in Jesmond, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne on Saturday, May 7th, 2011.



Forty-eight women and two children offered heartfelt prayers for the protection of those in danger from conflicts of all kinds. They came to honour Mary with prayers and readings from the two faiths.

Catholic women attended from Blyth, Peterlee, Washington, Stockton, South Shields and elsewhere with Muslim women, some of whom were personal friends. Two Buddhist women and their children came from Stockton.

The event has a developing ecumenical dimension. The Rev. Rowena Francis, Northern Synod Moderator, United Reformed Church, Newcastle joined members of St George's, Osborne Road and the Rev. Allison Fenton from Christchurch, Shieldfield, who came last year.

There were readings by Fazia Shafee, Hengameh Ashraf Emami and Christine Wickens. Mia Fox explained the rosary and Hengameh explained the Tasbe (beads).

Two candles were lit and exchanged between Hazel Jones-Lee who said: "Peace be with you" and Hengameh who said "salamu Alaikum." All women then shook hands, embraced and kissed "very sincerely", as one said later

The event followed the guidelines of the RC Bishops of England and Wales in the document: "Meeting God in Friend and Stranger.": "We don't come to pray together, but we come together to pray." Ha`lal refreshments were then offered by the Commission at Holy Name Church Hall.

One woman commented: "That this could happen is amazing". Other comments:

- "I loved it. I felt Mary was there. No-one was distracted. Everyone was recollected." Margaret Rasburn, Holy Name, Jesmond.
- "Mary will bring us together." A Muslim.
- "I came because of events in Pakistan." Maria Byrne, Washington.
- "What a feeling of unity." Shiela Manley, Holy Name, Jesmond.
- "Just want to thank you for this afternoon's event in Jesmond which Rasheda and I enjoyed and found very moving." Margaret Memling.
- "The spiritual bond was great and I will never forget that warm environment." A Muslim.

(see www.rcdhn.org.uk for photos..)

Veronica Whitty ✉ veronicawhitty@hotmail.com ☎ 0191 209 3323

Justice & Peace Project, Destitute Asylum Seekers

Our development worker of 10 years, Michael McHugh, has now retired. Having done an excellent job of setting up a chain of drop-ins for asylum seekers and refugees across the diocese we must thank him wholeheartedly. That part of the project is now complete and we have no need to replace Michael. The work at all the drop-ins will of course continue.

Rising numbers...

Destitute Asylum Seekers – most of whom attend our Benwell Centre at St Joseph's and in recent weeks the numbers have continued to rise so that at the start of February they reached 120.

While our two support workers and our team of volunteers make cheerfully adding and a bag of pressure on our




every new client welcome, them to our list to receive £5 groceries each week, the resources is enormous.

However, as far as groceries are concerned we are blessed by a huge number of supporters across the diocese – 95 parishes and some schools regularly supply us with our needs.

Money is as always harder to come by, especially at a time of recession when most people are feeling the pinch. In spite of this a remarkable number of generous donations continue to come in, allowing us to struggle along, hoping for better times.

We'd like to take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our faithful supporters, those who give generously, organising and delivering groceries etc. keeping our fund going and working, voluntarily, at our drop-in centres. Without you we could not carry on with our work.

For further information, contact John and Audrey Marshall
 0191 2452840 (home).

Sadly since this article was written we have had to reduce our financial support by 50% and now only provide £5 support to 60 Refugees although they all gratefully receive food and are on a waiting list for the £5 support should circumstances change.



Christmas Campaign to save UK Fairtrade businesses and prevent loss of livelihood for 3rd World producers.



Please buy (at least) one £5 Fairtrade Christmas present this year. If every UK adult spent £5 on a Fairtrade gift this would raise an extra £233m according to a 2010 survey by the Telegraph. Shop at your local Fairtrade or Oxfam shops or buy from Traidcraft, Divine or the Co-op.



Launch of the Live Simply Parish Award Scheme - A new initiative to enable us to take our environmental concerns to the wider church community is the Live Simply Parish Award Scheme.

livesimply so others can simply live! The award scheme is asking parish and religious communities to define their connections with the billion people on our planet surviving on under \$2 per day. It would require the resources of 3 planets for the whole world to live our lifestyle and the scheme is aimed at raising awareness of our impact on the lives of those in developing countries and on the lives of future generations.

The Bishops' Conference document "The Call to Creation" tells us that "Individual actions may seem insignificant but together the small steps of many people can have an astonishing impact" The *live simply* award scheme is supported by 80 Catholic organisations and co-ordinated by the Eco-congregations organisation. It recognises parish and community achievements in living more sustainably with creation and living in solidarity with people living in poverty.

How to get started? If you are in a parish first get the support of your parish priest, then set up a *live simply* group and carry out an assessment to identify where to start. The information and resources pack, available at the J&P AGM or direct from CAFOD, gives full information and assistance. The next step is to formulate a plan of action identifying three significant actions and six supporting ones.

The self assessment and plan to move forward should involve discussion covering, amongst other areas, reflection and worship, practical actions and actions to reach out to your wider community.

One question to ask could be if, when spending money, your parish considers the environmental and social effects of its choices? E.g. Fairtrade food or sustainable products for buildings work or office cleaning supplies. Another could be to consider if your parish engages with the local council, MP or other decision makers or with the media to influence public debate on issues of environmental and social justice? Their aim is to create a society where the basic needs of the people can be ensured through socio-economic development initiatives.

So why take on the *livesimply* award? The award will give recognition to the work your parish is already doing and inspire other parishioners to become more involved. It will enable you to share good ideas with others. It will enable us to play our part in the ecumenical Eco-congregations initiative (sadly taken up by very few Catholic parishes) and, perhaps most importantly, by working collectively we can achieve more impact and raise awareness outside our immediate community.

OK - but what help will we get? The full *livesimply* pack contains ideas for worship and reflection, for reaching out, for practical action and actions for individuals as well as general information and registration details.

The *livesimply* web site www.livesimplyaward.org.uk also provides assistance.

livesimply David Hughes at Eco congregations is happy to provide support ✉ coordinator@livesimplyaward.co.uk or ☎ 0114 263 6421

Making the most of your gift to support destitute asylum seekers



I have recently become the Gift Aid Organiser for the Hexham & Newcastle J&P Coordinating Council, in particular for the Justice & Peace Destitute Asylum Fund which comes under the Council's umbrella. The Fund is to support asylum seekers in this area who have no means of income or support. Audrey and John Marshall with other volunteers run the drop in centre at St Joseph's, Benwell. All donations are very gratefully received and you can request a standing order mandate to make regular payments, or make a one-off donation.

I would particularly invite taxpayers to make their gift even more valuable by completing the simple Gift Aid Declaration form which will be sent to you on request. Taxpayers must pay an amount of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the amount of tax reclaimed by the Diocese in each tax year. To qualify for Gift Aid, donations must be individual gifts not from fund raising or collections.

For forms, ✉ pat.conway1@btinternet.com or ☎ 01913868216

Please return any forms and donations to the treasurer Anne Thukeral, RCD H&N DA Fund, 16 Station Road, Benton NE12 9NQ

Thank you for your support.

Patricia Conway
Justice & Peace, Gift Aid Officer

National Justice and Peace Conference 2011

'Justice in the Workplace'

Around 300 J&P activists from around the country, folks of all ages, gathered at the Hayes Centre in Swanwick from the 15th –17th July to explore the issue of Justice at Work, in the light of Catholic Social Teaching.

We always look forward to annual conference, anticipating a stimulating, worthwhile and enjoyable weekend, our real chance to meet up with old friends, meet new ones, share experiences, ideas and good food with like minded people. We are never disappointed, and this year was no exception. The venue is superb-whatever the weather-since all buildings are connected by covered ways.

Keynote speakers included Frances O'Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary (the first ever woman to hold this post) Jon Cruddas, MP,



JUSTICE
AT
WORK

Shiela Kambobe, from the Jesuit Centre in Zambia and David McLoughlin, theologian and founder member of the Movement of Christian Workers.

Their presentations included the issues of TU membership, the living wage, pensions and the

right to work. John Battle, former MP and Universe columnist gave a series of thought provoking reflections, with a touch of humour, at the end of each session.

In addition, a number of witnesses gave personal testimonies on related issues, all powerful, but especially those from the inspiring young man from the Young Christian Workers and an outspoken young woman, a community activist speaking about the campaign 'Close the Gap'

On Saturday afternoon we had a choice of 18 workshops ranging from various campaigning issues to Liturgy Preparation. Social

activities included a Fairtrade reception, the Just Fair with its crowd of colourful informative stalls, the Saturday evening social and the bar on both evenings.

Thoughtful liturgies were organised by members of the Catholic Worker Movement.

The whole weekend was, as ever, a thoroughly uplifting experience. If you've never been to National Conference give it a try next year - you'll find it addictive!



Audrey and John Marshall

Look out for more information on next year's Conference 20th to 22nd July 2012 A new world: China today and our responses.

Church in the real world of the younger generation;

excerpt from a leading article in The Tablet by Paul Donovan, July 2011



Many young Catholics join secular justice & peace movements because they feel that their church seems to stand apart from the reality of life. The answer is to place social-justice work at the heart of parish life.

There is often talk about how young people lose their faith and leave the Church as soon as they are confirmed. They are, in fact, trying to find a faith that helps them to understand their problems, most adolescents are critical of a faith that seems to stand apart from life; they need to reflect on the meaning of Christian beliefs and on what these say

about living in today's world, especially when it comes to issues of justice, peace, war and climate change. If you look at secular movements on these issues you will find many young Catholics.

They join the secular movements because they are not finding this work, or any attractive vehicle for it, going on in their parishes.

TO DO:



1. Find out if your parish has a J&P group
2. Help young people in your parish see that our faith does not stand apart from life.
3. Encourage them to bring movements they are involved with into their parishes
4. Encourage them to form a junior J&P group.
5. Think about asking for formation in social justice.

If you have views on what J&P formation should take place, contact Paul on [✉ pauldonovan@hotmail.com](mailto:pauldonovan@hotmail.com)



Future Newsletter Articles

Don't forget to send us your news and events for the next newsletter, with dates for the diary and the web site by **13th January 2012**.

Let us know...



Please let us know if you would like us to add or change your contact information, by contacting:

Esther Robson: ✉ estherrobson@ymail.com

Pat MacDonald: ✉ pmacdonald_uk@yahoo.co.uk : ☎ 0191 268663

Anna Griffith: ✉ griffith-family@blueyonder.co.uk
Westwood, Balmoral Gardens, Whitley Bay, NE26 3LU



Dates For Your 2012 Diary

JANUARY	
15	Peace Sunday
15 th	The theme for 45th World Day of Peace message by Pope Benedict XVI is: " <i>Educating Young People in Justice & Peace</i> " <i>Resource materials will be available from Pax Christi</i> ☎ 020 8203 4884
27 th	Holocaust Memorial Day, 'Speak Up, Speak Out': hmd.org.uk/
28 th	London: CAFOD 50th Anniversary Mass
28 th	Poverty Sunday: Church Action on Poverty ☎ 0161 236 9321
Poverty and Homelessness Action Week: 28 th Jan – 5 th Feb actionweek.org.uk	

FEBRUARY	
5 th	Homelessness Sunday: Housing Justice ☎ 020 7920 6411
11 th	NJPN Networking Day ☎ 020 7901 4864
22 nd	Ash Wednesday Witness: Pax Christi ☎ 020 8203 4884
25 th	Hexham & Newcastle J&P Live Simply Award Workshop with Maria Elena Arana Fairtrade Fortnight - 27 Feb 11 Mar - Fairtrade Foundation ☎ 020 7405 5942

MARCH	
2 nd	CAFOD's Family Fast Soup Lunch at Newcastle Civic Centre

MAY	
5 th	Hexham & Newcastle J&P's Spirituality Day with Kathryn Turner

