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| C:\Users\Cathy\Pictures\MP Navigator EX\2019_08_04\IMG_0005.jpg | **Catholic Social Teaching:**  **Sharing the Secret…** |
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| **In This Issue**   * **Upcoming Events** * **Heard of the Great Green Wall?** * **Archbishop of Canterbury Speaks Up for Women** * **The “Right to Excess”, Responsibilities, and the Lives of the Poor** * **The Good Law Project: For Everyone Who Cares About Our Country** * **Call to Suspend “No Recourse to Public Funds” Visa Conditions** * **What Jesus Never Said**   Q:\140066.enu\MEDIA\CAGCAT10\j0088542.wmf  UPCOMING EVENTS  **23-25 July:** National Justice and Peace Network conference. Theme is 2021: Life on Earth---Moment of Truth. Conference planners hope for in person attendance at Hayes Conference Center, Swanwick, but if Covid restrictions make this impossible, the conference will be held online.  Q:\140066.enu\MEDIA\CAGCAT10\j0088542.wmf  There is a Jewish proverb, “Before every person there marches an angel proclaiming, ‘Behold, the image of God.’”  Love is a commitment to seek the good and to work for the good and welfare of others. It doesn’t stop at our front door or our neighbourhood, our religion or race, or our state’s or your country’s border. This is one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth, as the hymn goes. It often calls us to step outside of what we thought our boundaries were, or what others expect of us. It calls for us to sacrifice, not because doing so feels good, but because it’s the right thing to do. . . .  Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditations, 17 March 2021  Q:\140066.enu\MEDIA\CAGCAT10\j0088542.wmf  **What Makes People Human**  To give and not to take---that is what makes man human.  To serve and not to rule---that is what makes man human.  To help and not to crush---that is what makes man human.  To nourish and not to devour---that is what makes man human.  And, if need be, to die and not to live---that is what makes man human.  Ideals and not deals---that is what makes man human.  Creed and not greed---that is what makes man human.  Peter Maurin (1877-1949), Easy Essays  Q:\140066.enu\MEDIA\CAGCAT10\j0088542.wmf God has made it clear: if you love [him], you will work for liberation with the oppressed and the marginalised in your midst, and you will share your home and food with those who have none. You will not hide from the brothers and sisters I have placed near you. Rather, you will actively go out to meet them and draw them to yourself, even if it is risky, even if you feel uncomfortable. Stephanie Spellers: *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation.* Church Publishing, 2006.  Q:\140066.enu\MEDIA\CAGCAT10\j0088542.wmf  Jesus regarded the poor not as beneficiaries of his "social action" but as brothers and sisters gathering as equals around a shared table. Attempts at Common Good theology start with the premise that without poor people the body of Christ is incomplete. This includes not only the destitute but all people on low incomes, across all ethnicities. A congregation with good relationships in this regard can start to build a Common Good:  a shared life enriched by the interests, gifts and discipleship of people who happen to be poor. Given that many churches have fallen out of relationship with ordinary working people, this is a painful challenge.  Together for the Common Good, 2021  Q:\140066.enu\MEDIA\CAGCAT10\j0088542.wmf  The “Right to Excess”, Responsibilities, and the Lives of the Poor  Many people today would claim that they owe nothing to anyone except to themselves. They are concerned only with their own rights, and they often have great difficulty in taking responsibility for their own and for other people’s integral development….A link has often been noted between claims to a “right to excess” and even to transgression and vice, within affluent societies, and the lack of food, drinkable water basic instruction, and elementary health care in areas of the underdeveloped world and on the outskirts of large metropolitan centres.  Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), 43 | **Heard of the Great Green Wall?**  The Sahara Desert is a universally known natural feature, and various surveys have shown that the world’s largest desert has expanded by 10% since 1920, in part as a result of climate change.  The southern edge of the desert, called the Sahel, is one of the poorest places on earth. In this region millions of locals are already facing the devastating impact of persistent droughts, lack of food, conflicts over dwindling natural resources, and mass migration to Europe.  An African-led initiative begun in 2007 is working on an ambitious project: to grow an 8,000 km natural wonder of the world by planting trees and other flora across the entire width of Africa.  After more than a decade and with roughly 15% completed, the Great Green Wall is transforming the lives of millions of people in the Sahel region. The initiative is already bringing life back to Africa’s degraded landscapes at an unprecedented scale and is providing food security, jobs and a reason to stay for the millions who live along its path.  The Great Green Wall makes a vital contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global agenda that aims to achieve a more equitable and sustainable world by 2030.  The Wall promises to be a compelling solution to the many urgent threats not only facing the African Continent, but the global community as a whole – notably climate change, drought, famine, conflict and migration.  Once complete, the Great Green Wall will be the largest living structure on the planet, three times the size of the Great Barrier Reef. It is greatly hoped, but not guaranteed, that the wall will help prevent further encroachment of the Sahara on the Sahel.  More detailed information can be found in the following link:  [**https://www.greatgreenwall.org/about-great-green-wall**](https://www.greatgreenwall.org/about-great-green-wall)  **The Good Law Project: For Everyone Who Cares About Our Country** The Good Law Project exists to help change our country’s living and working conditions for the better through legal action. Its website states, “This is our country – and together we can improve it. The Good Law Project is a non-profit membership organisation. It is funded entirely by membership and private donations….We defend, define and change the law to uphold democracy, protect the environment and ensure no one is left behind….We are not for or against Government---but we are for good governance. “The Good Law Project uses the law to protect the interests of the public. We use litigation to engage and educate. We challenge abuses of power, exploitation, inequality, and injustice….We speak the truth and act with integrity.”  The organization takes a long hard look at numerous projects and continues to inform the public on bad practices. Among some recent ones: pork barrel politics (using public funds to benefit friends); attempts to constrain peaceful protests; repeated lying by government officials . See link:  [**https://goodlawproject.org/**](https://goodlawproject.org/) **Archbishop of Canterbury Speaks Up for Women** In a message of support to women everywhere, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said: “Testimony after testimony from women over recent days have shown us something we have known and ignored for far too long: the profound impact of the sin of male violence, intimidation, harassment, sexism and abuse carried out against women.” This type of sexism is a sin indeed, and much more must be done to change modern society---including calling out these actions for what they are. It has been said that “The difference between the sexes is that men are afraid women will laugh at them. Women are afraid men will kill them.” It’s a very bad reflection on any society that women also have to be afraid of all the other ways men carry out violence and hatred against them, simply because they are women. It is way past time when we should have formed a Women’s Lives Matter initiative.  But....where are the men’s voices (including the Roman Catholic hierarchy worldwide\*)? Anne Enright wrote in “The Sound of Silence” (Guardian, 20 March 2021), “Male agency is routinely removed from descriptions of male violence, and this helps men get away with it.” Instead of calling it as it is, deliberate male assaults on women, “We speak of ‘women’s safety concerns’, not ‘concerns about male violence’. We call it ‘an abusive relationship’, as if the relationship were doing the abusing, or an ‘abusive home’, as though the walls were insulting the occupants for fun”.  An American activist, Jackson Katz, agrees. He says that male silence about violence against women is a form of consent. Even the terminology shows this partiality: “When you look at that term, ‘violence against women’, nobody is doing it to them. It just happens. Men aren’t even a part of it!’ He describes men’s ability to go unchallenged as one of the key characteristics of power and privilege. Additionally, there is the insane sense of entitlement some men have, with vengeful and narcissistic types showing a breathtaking belief that they own the women in their lives, and that it is always the woman’s fault if a man uses violence.  A huge amount of work needs to be done for any changes to occur. For the full article, see the following link:  **https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/mar/20/we-always-speak-of-womens-safety-lets-talk-about-male-violence-instead**  \*Locally, the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle along with Tyne and Wear Citizens has successfully campaigned to have misogyny deemed a hate crime. **Call to Suspend the “No Recourse to Public Funds” Visa Conditions** Concerned citizens are urgently calling on the Government to suspend the No Recourse to Public Funds visa conditions to allow migrants and their families to be protected from the health and financial impacts of Covid-19. More support is needed for those who live and work in the UK, to ensure they can access the public safety net. The “no recourse to public funds” (NRPF) regulation has long pushed working families into poverty, unsustainable debt and homelessness. If they had access to the public safety net, many more families would be able to avoid destitution, especially in a climate of rising job losses. Greater risk of destitution will lead to increased financial pressure on local authorities, who must respond to requests for destitution support.  Suspending NRPF is vital to contain COVID-19, prevent hardship, and release pressure on local authorities. A petition (requiring 100,000 signatures before it can be debated in Parliament) can be accessed here:  [**https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/575517**](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/575517) **What Jesus Never Said** Here’s what Jesus never said: “Feed the hungry---only if they have papers.” “Clothe the naked---only if they are from your own country.” “Welcome the stranger---only if there’s zero risk.” “Help the poor---only if it’s convenient.” “Love your neighbor---only if they look like you.”  **James Martin, SJ** |