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THE DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER

Westminster Justice and Peace Commission

Glad tidings of great joy for the New Year

A shift in the Catholic Church's position on Nuclear Weapons...



It is not often that students, diplomats and Nobel peace laureates from around the world meet to reflect on how, together, we can work for a nuclear free world. This unique gathering was convened by the Dicastery Promoting Integral Human Development in Rome on 10 and 11 November 2017. Members of Pax Christi International and Pax Christi UK, Flanders, Netherlands, Italy and France took part in the Conference.

PAT GAFFNEY OF PAX CHRISTI MEETS POPE FRANCIS

Pope Francis addressed the gathering in a speech that presented a shift in the position of the Church with regard to deterrence and the threat and possession of nuclear weapons. He said " ... *genuinely concerned by the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of any employment of nuclear devices, if we also take into account the risk of accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned...they exist in the service of a mentality of fear...*"

The Nobel Peace Prize 2017 & the abolition of Nuclear Weapons...

11 December Faiths' Leader Statement in support of Nobel Peace Prize 2017

Twenty-two faith leaders, among them Most Revd Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and Bishop William Nolan, Bishop of Galloway and President of Justice & Peace Commission Scotland, have issued a statement to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), recipients of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, and urge the UK Government to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.



Faith groups and leaders have in the UK have long expressed moral positions around the retention of nuclear weapons. On the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN, faith communities in the UK call on all parliamentarians and UK citizens to support the abolition of nuclear weapons under international law and call on the UK Government to begin working to this end.

The UK Government continues to advocate a 'step-by-step' approach to disarmament that is unspecific in its overall approach. The government also expresses concerns that the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons might divert attention from the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Faith groups and others would agree that continued support for the NPT is essential. But over the past 50 years since the 'grand bargain' of the NPT was agreed, the respective actions of nuclear and non-nuclear states has been unequal. Trust in the NPT is being eroded as nuclear weapons states have failed to provide evidence of their 'good faith undertaking' to negotiate multilateral disarmament.

Taken from Pax Christi website www.paxchristi.org.uk

PARISH NEWS

Our Lady of Lourdes, Harpenden...

With the support of our priests we launched the beginning of the LiveSimply Award process in November. We surveyed the parishioners at the Sunday Masses on the feast of Christ the King and had a very positive response.

The formation of a Justice & Peace and the Integrity of Creation group is one of the main initiatives in the 'working in Solidarity with the poor' section of the Draft Action Plan for the award. So we hope to set up a J&PIC sub-group soon. We have our next meeting to agree the Action plan and to arrange its management later in the month on 30 January. So we on the journey! Graham Ryan

St Anselms, Southall...

Father Gerard, Diogo Antao, Jose Mendes and Jan Janoszka, our Parish Social Outreach Worker, and Amanda Walters from West London Citizens write: Thank you to all those who have supported our campaign over the last three years to have the London Living Wage adopted by Heathrow Airport at least 3,200 workers who will see a pay rise (some of whom will see their hourly pay go up by almost £3 an hour!).



ST ANSELM'S TEAM DURING THE WEST LONDON CITIZENS DELEGATES ASSEMBLY HELD AT THE OASIS CENTRE, LAMBETH, 15TH NOV 2017. FROM RIGHT: DIOGO, BERNADETTE, CHRISTINE, ANGELA, FR. GERARD MITCHELL, SJ, MARTIN AND JOSE.



NIGEL MILTON (DIR. OF COMMUNICATIONS FOR HEATHROW AIRPORT) ACCEPTED THE LLW ACCREDITATION PLACARD. STANDING ON HIS LEFT: KATHERINE CHAPMAN (LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION) AND AMANDA WALTERS (CITIZENS UK); STANDING ON HIS RIGHT: STEFAN BASKERVILLE (NEW ECONOMICS)

This week the airport was accredited as a living wage employer by The Living Wage Foundation. The airport has committed to paying its 3,200 permanent employees, as well as any third-party contractors, at least the London Living Wage rate of £10.20 an hour by the end of 2020.

St John Fisher Parish, Shepperton...

We have recently formed a Justice and Peace group with Barbara's help; our first task was to organise our Parish Feast Day Mass on July 2nd around a J & P theme. Before the start of the Mass, Pax Christi prayer cards & badges were given out to everyone coming in to church. The Pax Christi prayer was then read out by all at the end of the bidding prayers. At the offertory a representative from many of the parish groups brought up a relevant gift which was placed in front of the altar as a visual display of all the good work currently being undertaken in the parish.

After the Mass many people stayed on for a shared meal & general socialising in the hall where a display of our parish groups was on the notice board. A Fairtrade stall was set up & did quite a brisk trade! We have recently become the 99th Fairtrade Parish in Westminster Parish. We have also just delivered a collection of toiletries to the Jesuit Refugee Centre in Wapping.



One of our Lenten talks was presented by Megan Knowles from the Jesuit Refugee Service in Wapping. I felt sad and also guilty that I hadn't been aware before of the true crisis of the refugees in his country. I didn't sleep that night and I know I'm not the only one, said Mary Thorn, parishioner.

ST JOHN FISHER PARISH FEASTDAY MASS WITH A JUSTICE & PEACE THEME: JULY 2017

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Welwyn Garden City...

November excerpt from Welwyn Garden City Welcome Refugees via John Fogarty, Justice and Peace
DID ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY GET A BIKE FOR CHRISTMAS?

If so, do you have any spare bikes, in good condition, that you would like to give away?

HWSF Cycles for Syrians scheme has outstanding requests for 9 men's bikes, 3 women's bikes and 16 bikes for children, ranging in age from 7-18.

Can you help in any of these ways:-

- Donating a bike or bikes.
- Collecting/delivering bikes around part of the county - you specify the area.
- Checking/repairing bikes.
- Donating helmets, pumps, hi viz jackets or lights.

The Cycles for Syrians scheme has proved very helpful to our families, enabling children to get to school, adults to get to college and carry their shopping and for everyone to have some fun and exercise.

FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT Vicky Woodcraft. woodcraftvicky@gmail.com

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HAS ALREADY HELPED US AND BEST WISHES FOR 2018

Ware Parish Justice and Peace Group

Our 10 Year Mission

As a Live Simply Parish, Ware is ahead of the game on Waste Reduction. While there was a lot of TV publicity last November, the J&P group had already distributed checklists for families to put on their fridges, giving tips on how to avoid food waste. Human Trafficking has also been high on the agenda, when Mick Duthie from the Santa Marta Group gave a presentation, with J&P colleagues from nearby parishes and other churches attending. This was a particularly special occasion, as it was due to a talk in 2011 by the now National Commissioner on Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking, Kevin Hyland, to the Ladies and J&P Group that the SMG was formed. We are celebrating 10 years of being an active group, and have achieved lots in small and often unexpected ways. We look forward to continued success in our mission for justice and peace.

Deacon Adrian Cullen

Good News for Justice & Peace in 2017...

Barbara Kentish writes... While there are always things to be gloomy about, there have been some wonderful justice and peace things quietly taking place over 2017, whether on the global, national or local stage. So we can take hope that ICAN – the consortium of organisations opposed to nuclear weapons, won the Nobel Peace prize, and the Vatican organised an international seminar on non-violence. On a semi-national level, West London Citizens, of which St Anselm's Southall parish is a member, persuaded Heathrow Airport to become a Living Wage employer. Here in the diocese, you, in the parishes, have raised centrally an amazing £16,000 towards helping unaccompanied minors in Calais, as well as goods and clothing. And even more have signed up to becoming Fairtrade parishes, which means that we are only about 7 parishes away from being a Fairtrade diocese.

Other activities of Justice and Peace groups in parishes around the diocese feature here also. A handful of people took the trouble to turn up to organise – a discussion, a talk, a film, a liturgy, a fundraiser, on a theme they care about. And the kingdom grew, little step by little step.

So often we don't act because we feel we are alone. But Julie Ward MEP, who spoke at our annual Study Day in October, declared that she never wasted an opportunity to speak up, and thus make a difference. At the diocesan staff mission day, moreover, we were challenged to come up with a one-line description of what we stand for. Fr Joe Ryan's constant mantra came to mind: '**Being a voice for the voiceless**'. Most of our causes start off as unpopular. But so did Christianity. May we go forth in 2018, despite our personal or political anxieties, with the words attributed to King George VI,



“And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: “Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.” And he replied: “Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

Return to Calais...

Juanjo Peris writes: Officially, the ‘jungle’ refugee camp in Calais was dismantled in October 2016. However some of the camp’s residents who were sent to welcome centres across France have returned, and, barely 500 yards away from the old one, another ‘jungle’ is being rebuilt and destroyed every day. In even more precarious conditions than those of the original Jungle, if that is possible, migrants now sleep under plastic sheets, out of sight, in the woods. The construction of shelters is not allowed. The police dismantle and confiscate the items that people use to shelter under. New migrants arrive with the hope of finding in the UK what they have not found on the European continent...

The profile of those who migrate is now much younger than a year ago. There are many young people, aged between 14-17 years, living in a state of exile. Many are Eritreans, Christians who speak Tigrinya,



who have fled from having to enter compulsory, indefinite military service. They have crossed Sudan and Libya to reach Europe. There are also many families, especially Kurds, with very young children. Many of them try to reach the United Kingdom because their asylum application in Europe has been rejected. Others were forced to give their fingerprints in the first EU country they entered and are afraid of being deported there if they claim for asylum in any other EU country than the United Kingdom.

A policy of hostility and ‘zero tolerance’ towards migrants has been promoted by the Government. The few existing services such as the provision of drinking water points, the food distribution by humanitarian organisations, which had been banned by the Mayor’s office, or the obligation to provide shower points, have only been achieved by force of judicial sentence. Child migrants who are obviously vulnerable and in need of protection are beaten and gassed by national riot police (CRS). CRS police harassment includes gassing and hitting migrants on the legs, kidneys, head, etc. while they are sleeping. The police smash the precious mobile phones, which contain necessary evidence for asylum applications and the contact details of their relatives. The police confiscate the very sleeping bags, tarpaulins, footwear and coats which have been provided by voluntary and religious organisations.



This level of violence is outside of the law. It also benefits traffickers. ‘Every policy that the UK puts in place benefits traffickers,’ a Caritas official in Calais said in a recent

report. Since the new fence was built in Calais (financed by UK) smugglers have increased the fare of the passage from € 1,000 to € 10,000. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in the UK, ‘Safe and legal ways for refugees seeking protection are vital to reducing human trafficking.’

**Excerpt from London Catholic Worker Newsletter To read more go to or www.londoncatholicworker.org.uk*

Juanjo Peris formerly worked for Caritas Spain in Spain and Morocco, with migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, and more recently with the Catholic Worker in Haringey and in the former jungle in Calais.

Justice and Peace Intergenerational European Pilgrimage

Where?

Calais– EU Borders and Refugees,
Brussels– Trade and Economics
Strasbourg– EU and Human Rights,
Taize– Reconciliation
Assisi– Care for creation
Rome– Inspiration of Pope Francis
Geneva– the UN and Human Rights

Why? Visit some of the key places which symbolise themes of justice and peace in Europe, link up with others who share our concerns and work towards similar solutions. The European Union was originally a peace project and not an economic one. Brexit makes our joint collaboration more challenging, but this is not a reason for abandoning contact. We hope ours will be only one of many groups trying to strengthen or renew links with our fellow European Christians.

Who? Perhaps you?

2nd– 11th April 2018 Travel by Coach Price: £695

Please be aware that commitment includes two preparation days: 24th February and 17th March 2018

Contact justice@rcdow.org.uk for application forms or phone 0208 888 4222 Or find form on website, <https://westminsterjp.wordpress.com/2017/12/18/pilgrimage-for-europe-easter-2018/>