



"It took just three years or less for Jesus to convince twelve ordinary Galileans that they were the leaven of the whole batch, the salt of the earth, the city set on the world's hill.

What we need is the total conviction that things can be changed: that we can do it if we decide, in faith and hope, that it can be done. The world stands wide open for those who decide that it does.."

*Thomas Cullinan
If the Eye Be Sound*

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How Do We Re-engage Politically?

The American P. J. O'Rourke, asked what is the point of politicians, replied they were only interested in survival by "sustaining an image of competence" from one day to the next. Increasingly as our politics becomes "Americanised" and media driven, this narrow view seems not only accurate but even long term in the era of 24/7 news and Twitter feed. The issue is not only "surviving" with reputation intact from one news bulletin to the next but crucially sustaining an "image" of competence rather than the reality. What is sacrificed is not only longer term thinking and vision but the political search for truth about reality. Politics reduced to a process of survival cannot develop hope. It therefore feeds off fostering fear, in which the space for rational debate, argument and discussion of alternative principles and policies is occluded.

Recently BBC commentator Nick Robinson referred to the Government's need to "control the narrative". We have been moved on from sinister "spin doctors" trying to control the agenda and spin information in the government's favour to a tone of positive government necessity. The "narrative" must be controlled or the country will spin off the rails! What's more the "dominant narrative" has to be defended at all costs,



blaming the last government for the financial crisis rather than the banks and insisting that the poor are the cause of

too much public spending and as a result must pay the highest price of "austerity". Occasionally, under pressure, this dominant narrative shifts when it is realised that Europeans do not come to Britain "just to live on benefits" but to work and are so low paid they need a wages top up (in reality a subsidy to low paying employers).

Archbishop Oscar Romero reminded us that the task of the Church was to "tell the truth about reality and accompany the people". We need both to listen to the experiences of the people and liberate the stories of their reality (Justice and Peace groups could work more closely with SVP members), and to be more outspoken,



Sharing food from Eritrean refugees, Conference 2013

challenging the dominant narrative and reintroducing alternatives. If politicians themselves are too afraid to speak out, then we must raise the agendas at every level.

Deep hope does not come from within politics but from with "faith communities". Faith is the source of hope and that includes developing a sense of faith in people and our capacity to change and remake our world, co-creating as brothers and sisters with our common shared parent.

There are alternative narratives; and in our tradition it runs from the Crib to the Cross but ends in Resurrection. There are no short cuts but a need for outspoken action.

John Battle, former MP for Leeds West.

Action Highlights Spring 2015

See the Diary on p4 for more details

Campaigning is now starting in earnest for the **General Election on 7 May**, with many organisations producing resources to help you raise awareness of the issues that matter with your congregations and candidates.

Lent and Easter provide opportunities for reflection and challenges e.g. **Ash Wednesday Act of Witness** at the MoD (or organise a local action), **Labour Behind the Labels Six Items fashion challenge**, and **CAFOD's Lent Fast Day**. Organisations such as Pax Christi will have resources for prayer and worship.

Fairtrade Fortnight—celebrate the power of our everyday choices; **Romero Week** in March allows us to be re-inspired by the witness of Archbishop Romero on the 35th anniversary of his martyrdom (now officially recognised by the Vatican!); **Global Day of Action Against Military Spending**—what would you spend the money on? **International Days** for: Social Justice, Women, Water, Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Conscientious Objectors.

SAVE THE DATE: 17 June: Climate Mass Lobby of Parliament

To keep up to date with the latest campaigns and resources, why not sign up for our weekly E-Bulletins? Sign up via the website or contact admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

Speaking Personally: Sister Maire Hayes

Where do you think your commitment to justice and peace comes from?

It comes to a large extent from my family upbringing. Both my parents had a social conscience and lived their lives accordingly. They brought me up to be aware of the situation so many people were living in the Ireland of the 1950's.

This was developed and nurtured by the education I received in the schools of the Congregation I was to enter. My study as a student in Liverpool in the lives of such icons as Ghandi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela, their lives of commitment to their beliefs and sacrifice inspired me greatly. Again as a student I took part in protest marches against Apartheid, Ban the Bomb Save the Whale ... but all somewhat spasmodic and "gentle". However it was my privilege to be missioned by my Congregation in 1980 to Chile that changed me radically. Those 22 years were God's gift to me. I lived and worked there during the cruel dictatorship of Augustus Pinochet, in the "poblaciones" - marginalized areas, in Santiago, Chile's capital city. Not only did I share the neighbourhood of the *pobladores*, but also the fear and injustice that marked their daily lives. Liberation Theology, the study of the writings of Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff, Segundo Galilea to mention but a few of these inspiring theologians deepened my option to work for justice. My way of praying the Scriptures changed. I took part in activities and protest that denounced injustices, like the Movement Sebastian Acevedo against Torture. I worked along side the courageous group of women who constantly asked of the Government of Pinochet "DONDE ESTAN!" "WHERE ARE THEY!" of the thousands of missing people who "disappeared" under this regime. I visited political prisoners of some faith and none who inspired me by their dedication to work for justice for the Chilean people. All these experiences and many more, plus the companionship of many *pobladores*, sisters, priests -some even giving their lives for the cause of justice- were an incentive and support during my years in Chile. "Bread Work Justice Freedom", the cry of protesters, still remains with me.

What for you are the most important areas of concern today?

I returned to the UK and was missioned to multicultural and multi-faith Luton. New doors opened in the form of Interfaith dialogue. Hans Kung expressed it thus, "No peace in the world without peace among religions. No peace among religions without dialogue between religions". I work in an ecumenical organization Grassroots in a programme "A Spirituality that Does Justice". With my Grassroots colleagues we engage in interfaith dialogue through reflection and action. Over the challenging years we have with a multi-faith steering group achieved Fairtrade Town status for Luton. We organize events like the Peace Walk each year visiting places of worship of the different Faiths, with conversations and exchanges of hospitality hopefully leading to a better understanding of "near neighbours" - a few examples of working for a Luton in Harmony despite the tensions constantly brewing in the town. My years in Luton have urged me to contemplate the teaching of peace and justice in other faiths.



What sustains you in your commitment?

My prayer life -the spirituality of my congregation expresses it thus:

"The same Spirit who gathers us in Congregation is also the one that sends us in the simplicity and boldness of the Gospel with those who seek to build the world through justice and love." RL 10; and "For us there is no mission without adoration without calling upon the Spirit to renew the face of the earth". RL12.

There are organizations that sustain me like the vision of NJPN, GRASSROOTS, LUTON COUNCIL OF FAITHS, CAFOD,

LINKS- RELIGIOUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, JPIC COMMISSION NORTHAMPTON....Again the examples of so many people who hit the headlines challenging injustices and working for the Common Good and also the unsung people who work quietly in their localities building a society of friendship and kindness. Then there are my memories for to remember is to stress the obligation we have as Christians to humanize an inhuman world. Memories are a form of meeting people who have touched my life and are witnesses of a God of justice and tender love. Indeed I do not think I could live my vow of poverty authentically without working on justice issues.

What are your hopes for a Church like ours for the 21st Century?

The words and gestures of Pope Francis are an expression of Hope for me, the "untying of the knots" that bind our Church. He speaks of the Church as "a mother with an open heart and with doors wide open". I hope for an inclusive Church in every way compassionate and not so legalistic, where women are appreciated for their gifts of insight and have a role in decision making and taking at different levels in the structures of our Church. A Church that is poor and is for the poor, that lives out the directives of Vatican II especially regarding relations with other Faiths (Nostra Aetate). A Church in which we the baptized are helped and supported to live out the responsibilities of our baptism in our families, parishes and society and so build up the living stones spoken of by St Paul. How we would be changed and begin the ripple effect around us! Finally a Church that speaks out strongly on option for the poor, compassion for refugees, economic justice, care of the earth, indeed the injustices of our world -we know them, let us the Church help our leaders to articulate them. Religious women and men have been directed by Pope Francis to "Wake up the world!" (Rejoice) or as the prophet Micah proclaims; "This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God". Micah6:8

Sister Maire Hayes is a member of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit, currently living in Luton working with Grassroots interfaith project. She is a member of the NJPN Executive.

A New Patron for NJPN

National Justice and Peace Network is pleased to welcome **Sarah Teather** as a patron. Sarah is currently a Liberal Democrat MP and former Minister of State for Children and families, but has announced that she will stand down at the General Election. She spoke at the Annual Justice & Peace Conference in 2014, and has spoken out strongly against the treatment of refugees. Sarah joins our other patrons: John Battle, Julian Filochowski and Bishop John Rawsthorne.



Being a Welcoming Church for People with Mental Health Issues

Understanding of mental health and attitudes in the churches towards those suffering mental distress may not always be helpful or encourage people to feel welcome. Here Gail Sainsbury, who works for the Catholic Bishops' Mental Health Project, talks about the Project and resources available to improve pastoral care and support:

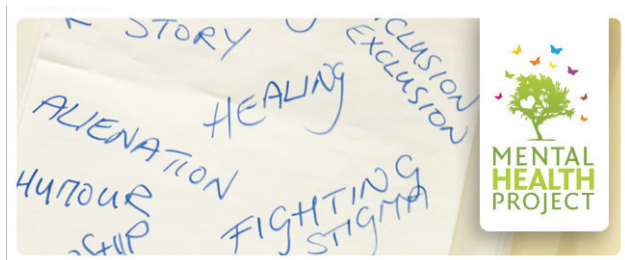
When 15,000 families shared their concerns with the Bishops during "Listening 2004: My Family My Church" one of the initiatives that resulted was the Catholic Bishops' Mental Health Project. It seeks to:

- ◆ Increase pastoral and spiritual care for those with mental health challenges, their families and carers across local Catholic communities in England and Wales
- ◆ Advocate for the pastoral needs of Catholics affected by mental ill-health
- ◆ Continue to support and develop a network of those within the Catholic community in England and Wales with a special interest in locally based mental health support

Funds from the Day for Life collections on Mental Health in 2008, as well as the Day For Life on Suicide in 2009 made possible the creation of a part-time post and £70,000 of small grants to increase mental health pastoral care and foster examples of good practice. <http://www.dayforlife.org/>

Bishop Richard Moth became the lead Bishop for the mental health project and eleven wide ranging projects were selected.

You can see their stories on http://mentalhealthproject.co.uk/funded_projects.html.



As part of the 'Welcome Me as I Am' programme which emerged from one of the projects, a new guide aimed at those who find themselves unexpectedly having to work with someone suffering mental distress has been made available. Resources can be found on www.welcomemeasiam.org.uk.

As 1 in 4 people will experience mental illness at some point this is something that touches all of us. Many charities do outstanding work in raising awareness, tackling stigma, providing resources, help and research and campaigning for equal resources for mental health. We can help by supporting those charities and in our local Catholic communities by:

- ◆ Hosting events that increase a greater awareness of the dignity of those with mental illness
- ◆ Creating support groups for carers and mental health workers as well as those with challenges
- ◆ Requesting and helping organise a diocese mass especially for mental health. (World Day of the Sick Feb 11th which is Our lady of Lourdes feast day, World Mental Health Day Oct 10th, Week of Prayer for Dementia March 12 – 17th. See the following for resources http://pastoralcareproject.org.uk/week_of_prayer_for_dementia.asp)
- ◆ Producing prayer and liturgy resources
- ◆ Producing advice and information posters and packs for your diocese and parish connecting in with local mental health charities who have a wealth of information already available
- ◆ Coordinating a local network in deanery or diocese for those with a special interest in supporting people with mental health needs, their families and carers
- ◆ Hosting awareness raising days – for all or for particular groups e.g. young people
- ◆ Organising a series of Sixth Form school debates on mental health topics
- ◆ Arranging mental health training for parishioners, for youth workers, for catechists, for SVP visitors, for Ministers of Holy Communion, for clergy
- ◆ Seeking ways to support those who are marginalised or returning into parish e.g. gypsies and travellers, sanctuary seekers, migrants, returning armed forces personnel, patients, prisoners
- ◆ Hosting retreat/pamper days for those affected and their carers

Bishop Richard Moth, Bishop of the Forces, and lead Bishop for the mental health project has said:

"All our parish communities are places where people with mental health difficulties seek support, pastoral care, and comfort. It will often be a place where people feel safe; a place where they feel at home, close to God."

For more information please contact Gail Sainsbury, Mental Health Project Officer
gail.sainsbury@cbcew.org.uk
Phone: 07581 205314
www.mentalhealthproject.co.uk
www.catholicchurch.org.uk

Some organisations campaigning on mental health rights and services:

Rethink Mental Illness: www.rethink.org;
Mental Health Foundation: www.mentalhealth.org.uk;
Time To Change: www.time-to-change.org.uk;
SANE: www.sane.org.uk

Welcome to:

Martyn Swaby, who has been working as the Justice & Peace Fieldworker for Nottingham Diocese since June 2014 (so this is a bit of a belated welcome!).

Martyn, who is a permanent Deacon, works three days a week at the diocesan offices in Nottingham.



RIP

Fr Gerard W Hughes SJ, author of *God of Surprises* and *Walk to Jerusalem* (among others), died on 4 November 2014. Gerry gave great support to justice and peace workers, especially in developing spirituality resources and giving peace retreats. You can read the tribute from Pat Gaffney (Pax Christi) here: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=26039>



FEBRUARY

- 14 NJPN Open Networking Day:** Cardiff
- 14** Lancaster Faith & Justice AGM: Preston
lfjc@talktalk.net, 01524 383081
- 15** Poverty Action Sunday: Visions of the Good Society
church-poverty.org.uk/news/Sunday, 0161 236 9321
- 17** Urban Network: Payday loans, credit unions: London
carj.org.uk; 020 8802 8080
- 18** Ash Wednesday Witness at the MoD, London
paxchristi.org.uk; 020 8203 4884
- 18** Christians United—to celebrate diversity: Leeds
wyec.co.uk; 0113 293 7403
- 18-4 April:** Labour Behind the Label Six Items Lent Challenge:
labourbehindthelabel.org; 01179 415844
- 19** Network for Peace AGM: London
networkforpeace.org.uk; 07944 036602
- 20** World Day of Social Justice: un.org/en/events/socialjusticeday
- 21** Take Back Our World: Global Justice launch: London
globaljustice.org.uk; 020 7820 4900
- 23-8 March:** Fairtrade Fortnight: fairtrade.org.uk, 020 7405 5942
- 27** CAFOD Lent Fast Day—Focus on Myanmar
- 27-28** The Cost of Life on Earth: companies, climate change and your money: Oxford: eccr.org.uk; 01865 600509
- 28** Leeds J&P Assembly: Food Banks—Charity or Injustice?
leedsjp.org.uk; 0113 261 8055
- 28** How Strong is Your Faith in Politics? London
childrenssociety.org.uk

MARCH

- 2** Burghfield Lockdown: actionawe.org
- 6** Women's World Day of Prayer: prepared by women of Egypt
wdp-natcomm.org; 01892 541411
- 6-8** UNA Wales: Model UN Conference: Cardiff University
cardiffmun.org.uk
- 7** Time to Act Climate March and Climate Service: London
operationnoah.org; 07804 059 426
- 8** International Women's Day: internationalwomensday.com
- 11** St Matthias Lecture by +Declan Lang, CofE Cathedral: Bristol
justiceandpeace@cliftondiocese.com
- 14** Clifton J&P Diocesan Day: Speaker David McLoughlin
justiceandpeace@cliftondiocese.com
- 21** Birmingham J&P Lenten Retreat: Birmingham
jenkins@woxon.freemove.co.uk; 01993 702 654
- 21** Gospels and Government: will CST affect the way you vote?
Lancaster: lfjc@talktalk.net, 01524 383081

20-28 March: Romero Week Events

with Brian Pierce OP

He Heard Their Voice: Archbishop Oscar Romero—Mystic & Prophet

- 21** Annual Romero Ecumenical Memorial Service:
St Martin-in-the-Fields, London: Preacher: Vincent Nichols
- 22** Edinburgh: Lauriston Centre
- 23** Glasgow: St Aloysius
- 24** Norwich: Cathedral Narthex
- 25** Oxford: Blackfriars
- 27** Southwark: Amigo Hall

For details of the above events, or information on organising your own event: contact Archbishop Romero Trust: :
info@romerotrust.org.uk; 8 Dean Mews, London W1G 9EE

- 21** Campaign Against Arms Trade National Gathering: London
caat.org.uk; 020 7281 0297
- 21** Ethics and Politics of Climate Change: Dorset
hillfieldfriary.org.uk; 01300 341345
- 22** World Water Day: unwater.org/worldwaterday
- 27-29** JPIC LINKS Annual Conference—Migration/Slavery/Trafficking
High Leigh: corew.org.uk

APRIL

- 5** Easter Sunday
- 11** Live A Better Life Fair: Liverpool: labl.org.uk/fair_liverpool.html
- 13** Global Day of Action Against Military Spending
caat.org.uk; 020 7281 0297
- 13-17** The Greening of God: Retreat with John Bell: Yorks Dales
scargillmovement.org; 01756 761236
- 18** Think! Environment Day: East Sussex
ashburnham.org.uk; 01424 892244
- 21** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
un.org/en/events/racialdiscriminationday/
- 25** Southwark J&P Spring Assembly: Aylsford Priory
office@southwarkjandp.co.uk; 020 7928 9742
- 27-29** Women's Power to Stop War: The Hague
womenstopwar.org/conference-home

MAY

- 4** St Joseph the Worker Mass: Southwark Cathedral
office@southwarkjandp.co.uk; 020 7928 9742
- 7** General Election
- 12** Embrace the Middle East Annual Lecture by Rowan Williams:
London: embraceme.org/events
- 15** International Conscientious Objectors Day:
paxchristi.org.uk; 020 8203 4884
- 16** NJPN AGM & Open Networking Day: London

DONATE TO NJPN: **Online** at www.cafonline.org, put National Justice and Peace Network in the Find a Charity box; **By cheque** payable to NJPN to the address below. To make a regular donation by **Standing Order**, contact the Administrator or download the Membership Form at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

The National Justice & Peace Network encourages and facilitates communication and networking between Catholic/Christian individuals, groups, and organisations (both lay and religious) who are working for justice, peace and the integrity of creation at grassroots, diocesan, national or international level.

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