

Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission Newsletter

www.birminghamjandp.org.uk



Issue 38

Spring 2018

Message from the Chair

Dear friends,

In his Advent Pastoral Letter we were delighted to see Archbishop Bernard emphasise the importance of Pope Francis Letter on the challenge of climate change Laudato Sii. He suggested it might form the basis of Lenten Study group using one of the study guides. It can of course be studied individually or in a group at any time of the year. He also suggested working as a parish or school for the Cafod 'Live Simply' award as a practical response to the need for change . This is one way of engaging the whole parish community in challenging their lifestyle and way of thinking in line with Pope Francis plea for action and change on the part of us all. The relevant part of the Archbishop's letter can be found in this newsletter.

I wish you a blessed Lent as we journey towards the joys of Easter.

Our next Commission meeting will be on Saturday 14th April at St Osburg's Hall, Coventry 9:30 for a 10am start, finishing by 12:30. You are very welcome to join us and see what you might do to share in the work of the Commission. Contact us for more details. bham.jandp@gmail.com

With all good wishes for your work for justice and peace.

Fr Gerard Murray (Chair)

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Dates for your diary:

Annual Justice and Peace Lenten Retreat will take place at Selly Park Convent, Selly Park. Birmingham B29 7LL on 17th February 2018

National Justice and Peace Network Annual Conference Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd July 2018

Our next Justice and Peace Assembly will take place on Saturday 13th October 2018

'We are not alone, no reason for despair', a South Sudanese Woman

By Rev. Fr. Martin Ochaya Agwella

The violent conflict which started since December 2013 in South Sudan and still raging, has inflicted and continues to inflict damaging impact with dire consequences on lives and property. The brutality with which the war is fought seems to have reached a magnitude never experienced before. These include killings of innocent civilians based on their ethnicities, rape and other forms of violence against women by uniformed men, destruction of property and forced displacement. More than 200,000 people are sheltering in the United Nations protection of civilian sites (PoCs) as internally displaced persons (IDPs) for fear of targeted killings, while thousands have fled the country because of insecurity, famine and economic collapse among others. With current inflation at 2,000 percent, food prices have soared, yet civil servants are paid a month's salary after four to five months without. More than half the population is without enough to eat, appeals for more humanitarian aid has been repeatedly made by the UN. Over 80 percent of those fleeing as refugees to neighbouring countries are women and children. These women are fleeing from hunger, war and appalling acts of gender-based violence; the use of rape and other forms of violence against women by uniformed men has continued unabated since the inception of the civil war. Women are the hardest hit and bear the brunt not only because of abuses, but also because the lives of children, the aged, the sick and disabled are dependent on them as men are either killed, fighting the war or are in hiding.

With these horrors at the background, an appeal was preached in March 2017 at St. Elizabeth's Parish in Coventry by Fr. Martin O Lino Agwella, a South Sudanese priest undertaking Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Bradford, to support agriculture activities of women at St. Mary Immaculate Terekeka, a parish in a newly established Vicariate of the Archdiocese of Juba. The relative calm in the area has allowed the women group of the parish to continue farming along the River Nile, where as a group they grow vegetables and other crops for their families. But they lack the capacity to acquire the needed implements and seeds due to soaring prices.

Through their generous collections, the Justice and Peace Committee and the parishioners of St. Elizabeth's parish have stepped in to support the activities of these women who are willing to help themselves and their dependents in the dire situation. Referring to the support, the leader of the group was quoted to have said "the help from our sisters and brothers in the UK, who have not even physically seen us but share in our suffering is a demonstration that we are not alone, no room for despair". The statement reflects the notion of justice as 'sharing' among many South Sudanese communities and across Africa. The letter of appreciation from His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro, the Archbishop of Juba sent to St. Elizabeth's

parish confirms the gratitude of the Church for the solidarity of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, through St. Elizabeth's Parish with the people of South Sudan. St. Elizabeth's Justice and Peace Committee has earlier provided water to the people of Lokiliri by supporting the digging of boreholes and provided food for the displaced people of Sacred Heart Parish Kworijik. We hope this solidarity will continue and expand to other areas of collaboration between the two Archdioceses. Much as the people of South Sudan need material support, they also need prayers for peace to prevail in South Sudan.



Archbishop's Office
Archdiocese of Juba,
Catholic Church,
P. O. Box 32,
Juba - South Sudan.

Ref: CADJ/ABO/2017

13 August 2017

My dear Rev. Frs.: Moses Pitya and Martin Ochaya,


I greet you from Juba, South Sudan. My intention to send you these few words is to inform you that I have received the amount of £1,600 cash from Uganda through Fr. Martin Ochaya, as Lenten Appeal which you collected from your good people to help our really now starving brothers and sisters, especially the children.

I only want to say that on behalf of all those who receive this donation, I sincerely thank all those who have offered this help.

We are people of prayer, we therefore pray for them all as part of our gratitude.

Thank you to you too, dear Fathers, for sharing our difficult situation with all those who have donated.

God bless you all.


✠ Paolino Lukudu Loro
Metropolitan Archbishop of Juba.



**The Power of Words - Holocaust Memorial Day
Coventry - January 2018**

The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial day was the Power of Words. At the event held in Coventry a number of speakers talked about their experiences. Martin Reeves, Chief Executive of Coventry City Council welcomed everyone and the Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councillor Tony Skipper talked about the work that goes on in Coventry to help with Peace and Reconciliation. Lore Napier, A Holocaust Survivor gave her story about how she arrived in Britain on the Kinder Train.

Emilie Lauren Jones, winner of the Coventry Peace Festival Poetry Competition read out some poems.

Positive Words - Proactive Listening

www.hmd.org.uk

On a human level one of the many pleasures of being a Christian is the annual rhythm of the liturgical calendar. In the depths of winter we celebrate new life in the form of the birth of our Saviour. In Spring this new life becomes a reality, both in the fields around us, and in the death and resurrection of Our Lord that we celebrate at Easter. And, of course, we are soon to enter the period that leads up to Easter. Lent can mean many things. Originally, the name comes from an old English word meaning 'lengthening', again reflecting the annual cycle with the blessed lengthening of days after the winter darkness. Within Christianity, traditionally, Lent has been thought of as a time of giving things up, though increasingly today the church calls on us not so much to give things up, but to use Lent as a time of spiritual reflection, growth, and even of transformation. This is the essence of what CAFOD is calling on us to think about, especially around the time of the Lent Fast Day, Friday 23 February.

Our faith tells us that Lent is a time for transformations. It is a time to look at our own lives, dig deep into our hearts and souls, and make changes which bring us closer to God. However, we do not have to stop there, as this Lent CAFOD is giving us the chance to create amazing transformations in the lives of other people too by praying, giving and taking action. As always, CAFOD seeks to aid these deliberations by focussing on the life of specific individuals, and the ways in which what we do here in the Birmingham Diocese can impact on the lives of people who live thousands of miles away, and whom we will never meet, but are, of course, our sisters and brothers in Christ.

CAFOD's Family Fast Day is a day to give up a meal and give generously to help some of the poorest people in the world. And this Lent, that giving can make double the impact, as every pound we give will be matched with another pound, a point to which I'll return.

By fasting, we can focus on what really matters - our relationship with God and love for our brothers and sisters. But not all our brothers and sisters can choose whether or not they go without food. This Lent CAFOD wants us to focus on a family in Africa, a mother, Marian, and her two sons who live in Zimbabwe. The older son, Tawanda, lived his childhood without enough to eat. Marian used to leave him in the morning to find work. She would return hours later to find him sitting in the same place. 'I didn't have enough food to give him,' she said. 'He hadn't played, or even walked. It was very painful to see him like that.'

When Tawanda was a teenager, Marian had another son, Svondo. He was brought up on fresh vegetables, beans and peanut butter. Now seven years old, Svondo is growing healthy and strong. He plays with his friends. He's happy.

These two brothers both had dreams. But one was prevented from reaching his God-given potential. The difference between these two boys is you and me! Our past donations helped to give Marian some seeds. And she did the rest. She worked hard month after month to grow a vegetable garden and she didn't stop until it flourished. So unlike Tawanda, Svondo didn't go hungry.

But no child should have to go hungry. Since you began reading this piece, eight children around the world have died from malnutrition. The lack of good food made them vulnerable to everyday infections.

On Family Fast Day, as we pray and fast, we bring to mind all God's children. We remind ourselves that as God's family, we are all connected - when one child goes hungry, we all go hungry.

As ever, the Mass readings around Family Fast Day help us focus on these messages. The weekend beforehand, we read in Mark's Gospel (1: 12-15) about Jesus fasting for 40 days and 40 nights and being tempted in the wilderness. Despite temptation, he steadfastly puts all his hope and trust in God. During Lent, our fast reminds us of our spiritual hunger for God, and all the gifts we have been given. Then, on the weekend after 23 February the Gospel (Mark 9: 2-10) tells us of Jesus's Transfiguration, how he is transformed before his disciples and the disciples catch a glimpse of who Jesus really is. Lent is a time for us to have our eyes opened to who we are called to be as children of God, and, through fasting and prayer, to be open to our own transformation. And, in line with this idea we can all take part in Family Fast Day by giving up a meal or having a simple meal and giving generously to CAFOD. Through CAFOD's Family Fast Day, we can show children like Tawanda and Svondo that they are not forgotten. They are part of our family. And we care.

We can donate using one of CAFOD's Family Fast Day Appeal envelopes which will be available in our parishes. If we pay tax, we should also fill in the form to Gift Aid our donation. Our gift can help end hunger and poverty across the world. And this Lent, our donation will make double the difference. For every pound we donate to CAFOD, the UK Government will also donate a pound. So, if we give £5, it will be turned into £10. This means that, at no extra cost to ourselves, twice the number of lives can be transformed. Twice the number of children can have the opportunity to grow up healthy and strong. The government will double our donations throughout Lent, up to a total value of £5 million, so now is a crucial time to give. Please note though: our donation can only be doubled during the appeal period so **please donate between 13 February and 12 May 2018.**

On behalf of CAFOD and the people it supports, thank you for all you do to ensure our brothers and sisters around the world are not forgotten.

Report On Romero Trust Pilgrimage To El Salvador In November 2017

We were 28 pilgrims in all who arrived in El Salvador in mid-November; a mixed group of men and women including 3 priests, 2 nuns a bishop and a deacon, so our spiritual needs were very well catered for. We were there to mark the centenary of Archbishop Oscar Romero's birth and to further the cause for his canonisation. El Salvador is a small country on the isthmus of Panama, between north and south America. It has a tropical climate and it is about the size of Wales, with a population of 6 million people. We arrived in the late evening after having travelled all day and night across the Atlantic through several time zones; a very disorientating experience! A bus brought us from the airport to the capital, San Salvador where we were accommodated in the Loyola Jesuit Centre. The accommodation was not luxurious but more than adequate for our needs and we received a warm welcome from the Carmelite sisters who run the Centre.

The whole city is built on very steep hillsides, the Loyola Centre included. Due to the high level of crime it is accessed through a 12-foot-high steel gate with an armed guard on duty. There is a steep road up to the reception area and then steps between the dining room and the accommodation, built on three levels of rooms across the steep slope. At the top level stands the chapel with a very fine view over the whole city. Within the chapel there is no decoration other than 'stations of the cross' and a very large crucifix above the altar with a huge plate glass window below it which looks out across the city, surrounded by mountains and a volcano. Our first visit was to the Hospital of Divine Providence where Oscar Romero lived during the latter months of his life when he knew he was a marked man. We had Mass in the hospital chapel where he was shot, and could visualise how easy it was for a trained marksman to shoot dead 'Monsenor Romero' whilst he was celebrating Mass. We also visited his modest living quarters, and the patients in the hospital, which provides palliative care for cancer sufferers and for which it has a renowned reputation. Every cubicle has an additional bed for a relative or friend and we were able to talk to many of the patients.

The next morning, we went to a public park in the city centre where there is a wall of black marble inscribed with 25,000 names of people killed or 'disappeared' during the 12 years of civil war which ended in 1992. Our city centre tour then took us to the Metropolitan Cathedral from where Archbishop Romero delivered his homilies (which CAFOD helped to broadcast), urging both sides in the civil war to stop fighting and start talking. His tomb is in the crypt of the cathedral.

The next day took us to the University of Central America (UCA), the site of yet more killing of unarmed clergy. Here in 1989, 28 years ago, on the same date, 16th November, six Jesuit priests who lived in a small house in the university precinct, their housekeeper, and her daughter, were shot dead in

cold blood. This event was marked by a splendid commemorative Mass in the university theatre, concelebrated by many clergy, a large choir, the main celebrant being the Salvadoran Cardinal Gregorio Rosa y Chavez who later visited us in the Loyola Centre. The previous day in the same venue Clare Dixon from CAFOD headquarters in London (Latin America desk) was honoured in a formal presentation ceremony with the 'Jose Simeon Canas medal for 'extraordinary merit' in the campaign for democracy and human rights.

Our subsequent visits were out of town to see sites associated with other killings of innocent civilians by the Salvadoran military, the intention being to have the Salvadoran government accept liability for past - atrocities and have Oscar Romero respected for his faith and courage in speaking up for the downtrodden 'campesinos'. The pilgrimage was a well-organised and moving experience and if any Parish 'Justice and Peace' or CAFOD groups would like a short talk on the pilgrimage, I would be happy to come — for a donation to CAFOD. Please contact me,

Mrs. G. Allison on tel; 01386 792039





The Fair Tax Mark – A Tool for Tax Justice?

Main Speaker Richard Livings

Project Manager, the Fair Tax Mark

Unity Trust Bank (also invited)

8th floor, Church of England Diocesan Office,

1 Colmore Row, B3 2BJ (just by Snow Hill Station)

Monday March 19th, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

(hot drinks available from 6 pm, bring your own food)

Richard was appointed as Project Manager in July 2014, the Fair Tax Mark's first full-time member of staff. Based in the Manchester office, he is now responsible for overseeing the assessment process of our licensed organisations and responding to new enquiries. He is also involved in various Fair Tax Mark activities, including media and communications, conferences, AGMs, finances, sales and relating to our shareholder members.

Richard is a Theology graduate and previously has worked for Sir Bobby Charlton's landmine charity and as Business Development Manager for The University of Manchester.

This is a vital topic as tax dodging remains high on the public agenda, after the Panama and Paradise papers, and inequality increases despite all the Government's promises. How can the Fair Tax Mark address the tax challenge?



Extract from Reverend Bernard Longley's Pastoral Letter

The signs of God's Kingdom are also present in the life of the Church as she seeks to be faithful to the mission received from Our Lord - proclaiming a *year of favour from the Lord*. Like St John the Baptist the Church is also called to be a *witness to speak for the light*. As members of the Body of Christ, each one of us has an important part to play in building up the Kingdom of God. We view the world in a new way through the light of Christ and we learn to have a deeper appreciation for the gift of creation.

Two years ago Pope Francis emphasised this in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* when he said: *What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?* The Holy Father urges us never to forget the intimate relationship between the fragility of the planet and the plight of the poor, echoing the compassion of the Messiah: *He has sent me to bring good news to the poor*. They are the ones who suffer most from the way our earth has been mistreated and exploited.

Pope Francis also says that we need to listen both to the cries of creation and to the cries of the poor. When we do so we undergo what he calls an *ecological conversion*. The Holy Father encourages us to live more simply, more sustainably and more in solidarity with the poor. He invites us to make our choices *based on a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters – including future generations*.

Pope Francis has made it clear that he sees care for all creation as a work of mercy. He says: *As a spiritual work of mercy, care for our common home calls for a grateful contemplation of God's world, which allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us. As a corporal work of mercy, care for our common home requires simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness and makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.*

In *Laudato Si'* we have an authoritative and comprehensive presentation of the Catholic Church's social teaching. During Advent we can try to appreciate its particular focus on the environment, the world that Christ came to redeem. The Holy Father has shown us that peace, justice and the preservation of creation are intimately interconnected. We also hear this in the words of the Prophet Isaiah as he looks forward to the coming of the Messiah: *For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seed spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.*

I would ask you, if you have not already done so, to look carefully at Pope Francis' encyclical. Perhaps it could be the basis for a study group in your parish during Lent. Encouraged by *Laudato Si'* you may wish to consider becoming a LiveSimply parish, using the scheme prepared by CAFOD.

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; for all things give thanks to God.

Pastoral Letter for the Third Sunday of Advent, 16-17 December 2017 - 2/2



Pope: Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ.

In his homily on World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 14 January, Pope Francis repeated his call for Christians to welcome migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

He referred to his message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees: "Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age (Mt 25:35, 43)."

The Holy Father stressed his three essential points in addressing refugees: "to protect, to promote and to integrate." He said doing this requires that Christians must "welcome, know, and acknowledge" new arrivals.

He continued: "In today's world, for new arrivals to welcome, to know and to acknowledge means to know and respect the laws, the culture and the traditions of the countries that take them in. It even includes understanding their fears and apprehensions for the future. For local communities to welcome, to know and to acknowledge newcomers means to open themselves without prejudices to their rich diversity, to understand the hopes and potential of the newly arrived as well as their fears and vulnerabilities."



The full text of Pope Francis' holiday' can be found at www.indcatholicnews.com/news/34147



ICAN Receives 2017 Nobel Peace Prize

22nd December 2017: This year's **Nobel Peace Prize** was presented to ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons) at a ceremony in Oslo, Norway, on 10 December in recognition of our work "to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" and our "ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons."

Text of the Nobel lecture given by the Nobel peace prize laureate 2017, ICAN, delivered by Beatrice Fihn and Setsuko Thurlow, Oslo, 10th December 2017:

Beatrice Fihn: Today, it is a great honour to accept the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of thousands of inspirational people who make up the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Together we have brought democracy to disarmament and are reshaping international law. We most humbly thank the Norwegian Nobel Committee for recognizing our work and giving momentum to our crucial cause. We want to recognize those who have so generously donated their time and energy to this campaign. We thank the courageous foreign ministers, diplomats, Red Cross and Red Crescent staff, UN officials, academics and experts with whom we have worked in partnership to advance our common goal. And we thank all who are committed to ridding the world of this terrible threat.

This is our passion and commitment for our one precious world to survive. www.icanw.org/campaign-news/ican-receives-2017-nobel-peace-prize/

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a coalition of non-governmental organizations in one hundred countries promoting adherence to and implementation of the United Nations nuclear weapon ban treaty. Pax Christi is a member. This landmark global agreement was adopted in New York on 7 July 2017. Sadly the UK Government has so far refused to sign the Treaty. www.icanw.org/projects/pledge/

The text of the Nobel Lecture is available at www.icanw.org/projects/pledge/



Columban Young Journalists Competition

Ellen Teague: The Missionary Society of St Columban is inviting young people to enter a journalism competition, an initiative to mark their centenary. Students aged 15-18, who are budding journalists, are asked to write an article or make a video report that informs, challenges and raises important issues on the topic: 'MIGRANTS ARE OUR NEIGHBOURS'. Teachers and parents are asked to alert young people to this opportunity.



Two separate strands are offered, one for students in Ireland and one for students in England, Scotland, and Wales. Each has two categories, writing and video. The closing date for entries is 8 February 2018. Leading journalists in Ireland and Britain will be judging the entries. The winning articles and videos will be announced on 15 March 2018. There are cash prizes.

The objective is to encourage students to use their journalistic writing and mobile skills to look at a topical issue which is relevant to Catholic Social Teaching and resonates with Columban mission. Since 2000 the Missionary Society of St Columban has committed itself in a special way to continue accompanying and defending the rights of migrants, and to address the underlying causes of the migration of peoples.

Pope Francis underlines Church teaching about welcoming the stranger when he says: "We have a duty toward our brothers and sisters who, for various reasons, have been forced to leave their homeland: a duty of justice, of civility and of solidarity." Migrant and interfaith work has been a Columban priority in all 17 countries where the Columbans work. In Ireland, the Columbans run a 'Columban Centre' in Dublin which welcomes asylum seekers and provides English classes. Also, Columban Fr Bobby Gilmore was a founder member and is on the board of the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland. In England, Columbans have engaged with migrant communities, and helped to run a house of sanctuary in Birmingham, called Fatima House, for women asylum seekers. Columbans have participated in 'Welcome the Stranger' Walks of Witness in London and Birmingham and there is a long-standing ministry to domestic workers.

The winners in the British category will be given their prizes at the Centenary Columban celebration at Southwark Cathedral on 30th June 2018 by Archbishop Peter Smith of Southwark.

All details on the competition website:
www.columbancompetition.com

Appeal for collection of unwanted shoes for Uganda

We need lots of donations of all sorts of USED and UNWANTED SHOES from individuals, schools, families and organisations. These will be directly distributed to prisoners, refugees in displaced peoples' camps especially from South Sudan and school children who walk barefoot to school daily in the tropical sunshine. Focus is on rural schools in Masaka Diocese of southern Uganda.

Uganda at the moment hosts over 100,000 displaced peoples in refugee camps and 85% of school children in rural areas walk barefoot.

We will much appreciate if we are put in touch with any good willed/interested individuals from any background and from any part of the UK; who can help make the campaign a success.

FREE COLLECTION of the donated items has been guaranteed beginning with the LAST WEEK OF MARCH.

Contact: Fr Silvester Bukenya: [07564512216](tel:07564512216)

(Fr Silvester Kewaza Bukenya is a diocesan priest of Masaka Diocese in Southern Uganda, prison chaplain and a member of the National Justice and Peace Network. He worked for some years in Wandsworth, Southwark Diocese).



ARCHBISHOP ROMERO TRUST

Peace: the Product of Justice and Love



The ongoing struggle for peace in Romero's beloved El Salvador

An ecumenical service to mark the 38th anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero



Speaker:
Rubén Zamora
 Diplomat and Politician

Saturday March 17th at 11.00am

At St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 4JJ

ALL ARE WELCOME



contact: romerotrusted@gmail.com website: www.romerotrusted.org.uk

Archbishop Romero Trust registered charity no 1110009

Free For Good



Saint Josephine Bakhita is the patron saint of Sudan and a patron saint for the victims of slavery and trafficked persons.

Her feast day is celebrated on February 8th

When a person escapes from modern slavery they need help. Somewhere safe to stay, medical treatment, mental health support, legal advice, training, education and most importantly someone to walk alongside them as they figure out their next steps in rebuilding their life. Most of all they need security and stability as they look to the future.

Unlike victims of modern slavery in Northern Ireland and Scotland, the law in England and Wales currently does not give victims a right to support.*

The Government provides these victims with a limited period of care on a non-statutory basis while the authorities decide if the person is a victim, but then the support ends. Although some victims are entitled to further help, the vast majority (and this is true of victims across the UK) are left to fend for themselves, often at risk of homelessness and vulnerable to being re-trafficked.

The Government has said it wants to lead the world in efforts to address modern slavery. This work needs to start with putting victims first and guaranteeing their rights to support.

Lord McColl of Dulwich has brought forward a Bill in the House of Lords to put this right. His Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill will give victims in England and Wales* a guaranteed right to support during the initial period when the decision about the status is being made, and for a further 12 months afterwards.

The Bill was debated at Second Reading on 8th September and was supported by Peers from all parties. Unfortunately, the Government has not yet agreed to support the Bill.

It is very important that the Government hears from as many people as possible asking them to support the Bill. Please click [here](#) to contact your MP today.

Tackling modern slavery must start with supporting victims to live free for good.

*Scotland and Northern Ireland have different laws. As a result Lord McColl's Bill only applies in England and Wales although it will open the door to further positive changes in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Click [here](#) access the Bill's text

<http://freeforgood.org.uk/about-the-bill/>



My time in Uganda

"Disability is *not* inability" was the phrase being chanted by hundreds of schoolchildren, teachers, families and committee board members, throughout the day at Atira Disability Action Group.

What I expected to be a humble group of ten or so adults and children with disabilities, turned out to be a sea of people from all over the community ready and willing to stand with their brothers and sisters who have been born with, or acquired, mental and/or physical impairments. The attitude within this inspiring community is so counter-cultural to the way in which the rest of Uganda treats people with disabilities.

On the drive from Kampala to Soroti, a billboard advertising a brand of milk claimed in large text: '*strong bones = healthy mind*'. Not in Atira. This community don't want your pity, they want to change the way Uganda views disability; and it's working, one schoolchild at a time. Their bones aren't strong, but their brain power and resilience to whatever life throws at them is remarkable. As a group within the community they are not pitied, they are envied.



The group was started with Global Care's help, but is fully community-led and largely self-sustaining. For example, a woman from within the support group has a young boy with cerebral palsy. She was supported by the group in the form of a goat. When the goat gave birth to kids she was instructed, like others in the group, to give the firstborn kid back to the community

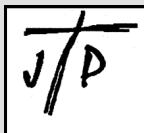
to sustain the numbers. This system allowed the woman to slowly build her assets, she sold the goat's milk until she had enough money to buy another goat, and another, and another. Eventually she had enough goats to trade them for a cow. This story shows the community's initiative, and determination to not settle for less than they deserve.

Unfortunately not all people share the goodwill of the community. Someone who envied this woman's strength and perseverance to create a better life for herself and her son, decided to take advantage of her and sold her a cow that could not produce milk. The cow quickly became ill and died, leaving the woman with nothing. In that moment, all the hard work to provide for her son was meaningless. The community at Atira stepped in, and provided her with another goat. And so it begins again.



The group was started with Global Care's help, but is fully community-led and largely self-sustaining. For example, a woman from within the support group has a young boy with cerebral palsy. She was supported by the group in the form of a goat. When the goat gave birth to kids she was instructed, like others in the group, to give the firstborn kid back to the community to sustain the numbers. This system allowed the woman to slowly build her assets, she sold the goat's milk until she had enough money to buy another goat, and another, and another. Eventually she had enough goats to trade them for a cow. This story shows the community's initiative, and determination to not settle for less than they deserve.

by Ella-Sophia People
Donor Development Officer, Global Care.



The Birmingham Diocese Justice and Peace Commission

For information on the NJPN [J&P calendar](#) and links to J&P organisations, as well as the J&P Commission, also for downloads from the J&P Resource Pack and much more ... access our website:

www.birminghamjandp.org.uk

The Justice and Peace Commission
Archdiocese of Birmingham



Lenten Retreat

Saturday 17th February 2018

Registrations 10am Start at 10:30 finished by 4pm
St Paul's Convent, Selly Park,
Birmingham B29 7LL

A time of reflection, silence and prayer for those involved or interested in the work for justice, peace and social justice.

All welcome

Led by Fr. Dries SJ from Manresa House

£10 concessions £5, to be collected on the day.

Bring your own packed lunch
Tea and coffee will be provided

Please register your intention to attend by Email to:

Janet Vaughan

Administrator, Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission

Email: bham.jandp@gmail.com

Or book on-line <http://bit.ly/2mq2TxF>

RC Archdiocese of Birmingham
Registered Charity 234216



Global
Care

Follow link to see the rest of the
blog

<https://www.globalcare.org/2017/12/they-dont-want-pity-they-want-change/>

Articles for these Newsletters are always accepted with gratitude since we feel it is crucially important for Justice and Peace Groups around the diocese to publicise their activities for the benefit of us all, and to liaise with each other to share thoughts and ideas, and especially Best Practice.

If you have a contribution you would like included in the **Summer 2018** newsletter please send it by Email for consideration to:

The Administrator, J&P Commission.

Email: bham.jandp@gmail.com

June 2018 Edition:

Last date for copy **1st May 2018**

The views expressed in this newsletter are the view of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission or the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham.