



Archdiocese of Southwark
Commission for

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Newsletter – Summer 2013



First held in 2006, the annual May bank holiday mass in support of London's migrant community is always a vibrant and colourful expression of faith which reflects the tremendous diversity of the Catholic community. The mass this year was held in Westminster Cathedral with a congregation of over 2000.

In his homily, Archbishop Vincent Nichols spoke of strain on family life caused by immigration policies: 'Economic and time-period thresholds recently established for non-EU families to be united here are putting great strain on the vital unit of the family and could be seen as actually putting a price-tag on the value of family unity. Given the proven importance of the family for social stability, surely it is for the common good that immigration policies must be more sensitively shaped in such matters.' He reminded us that Pope Francis was the son of an immigrant family who sold all their possessions and emigrated to Argentina at the end of the 1920s



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Archbishop Nichols was quoted at the **Seminar on Family Migration** held on 30th May in Amigo Hall and hosted by Bishop Pat Lynch. The main topic of the day was the damage being caused to families by the rules, brought in last July, which restrict the ability of residents to bring in spouses from outside the EU.

Under these regulations you have to be able to prove regular earnings of over £18,600 per year for 6 months and the ability to provide accommodation, if children are involved income must be higher. The requirements to bring in parents or elderly relatives are now so restrictive as to make this virtually impossible.

The rules, which are having a major impact on family stability, will prevent someone who has been working abroad, married and brought up a family there from bringing their family into the country when they wish to return. It also created anomalies, for example NHS workers from outside London can not bring in their spouses while those with London weighting doing the same job can. This does appear to be a policy designed to reduce immigration regardless of the long term damage to families and potential adverse impact on the economy. If you are aware of someone in this situation like this please write to you MP.

Victims of human trafficking and domestic abuse will be deprived of courtroom support under government proposals to make further cuts in legal aid. These propose that legal aid should be available only for people lawfully resident in the UK who have lived in the country for at least 12 months other than members of the armed forces and asylum seekers who would be exempt. In a letter to the Justice Secretary signed by Bishop Pat Lynch and others, the Catholic church has called for similar exemptions to be given to victims of human trafficking and domestic violence.

Practical Engagement in Justice & Peace

A day of training and workshops to help you make it happen.

Saturday 22nd June 10.30 to 4.00 (tea & coffee from 10am)

at Cathedral Halls, Brentwood, CM15 8AT

**Workshops on: Catholic Social Teaching, Human trafficking,
How the scripture relates to work in the community
and Lobbying your MP. Choose 2 from 4.**

All are welcome. Tea and coffee provided - bring lunch

No charge to attend but donations welcome.

To book a place e-mail davina@dioceseofbrentwood.org or phone 01277 265234 and leave a message

St Mary's, Croydon, Welcomes Aid To The Church in Need

The parish was pleased to host an evening of talks and discussion about the persecution of Christians abroad, especially the Middle East, and growing concerns about the future of religious freedom in the UK.

The event on Tuesday 23rd April evening and attended by more than 200 people was held by Aid to the Church in Need, the Catholic charity for persecuted and other suffering Christians, which provides pastoral help in 130 countries worldwide – Bibles, Mass stipends, faith formation and training for priests, religious and lay faithful, and emergency help for homeless and Christian media.



The guest speaker was Ann Widdecombe, the former government minister and television personality, who contrasted and compared religious freedom violations against Christians in oppressed countries with the situation in the UK.

Detailing the abduction of two bishops in Syria only 24 hours earlier, ACN's John Pontifex gave an overview of persecution of Christians, reporting on some of the worst-offending countries he has visited. Chairing the event was ACN's UK national director, Neville Kyrke-Smith, and on the panel were Bishop Paul Hendricks, who led prayers, and Father Michael Scanlon, acting as both parish priest of St Mary's and chairman of the Archdiocese of Southwark Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. A choir from St Mary's performed and the evening was organised by parishioner Malcolm Fernando.

In her talk, Ann Widdecombe called on people to lobby UK parliamentarians for action to stop persecution of Christians abroad, noting Britain's leverage as a major provider of overseas aid to countries reportedly responsible for some of the worst acts of oppression. She said: "The UK government has said it would, when looking at its overseas aid budget, take note of whether a country has a record of persecuting or of tolerating homosexuals. Now if it can do it for those groups, it can do it for Christians. And when it gives aid it can say to countries: 'we will withdraw that aid or we will reduce that aid if you carry on persecuting Christians'."

Talking about the situation in the UK, she spoke out against employers discriminating against Christians in the workplace for giving pro-Christian views privately and wearing small crosses at work. She said: "If we refuse to be cowed and bullied [by people discriminating against Christians], we will be making a major contribution to the survival of and the thriving of Christianity in this country – which must not become a very tiny minority pursuit practised behind closed doors."

ACN UK director Neville Kyrke-Smith said he was very grateful to Fr Michael and the parish for their warm welcome. We were delighted to host such a significant event and congratulate CAN and its supporters for their outstanding work they do for the suffering and persecuted Church. Please keep them in your prayers.

For more information, visit www.acnuk.org or contact Aid to the Church in Need, 12-14 Benhill Avenue, Sutton SM1 4DA. Tel. 020 8642 8668.

50th Anniversary of *Pacem in Terris* – an Incessant Appeal for Peace on Earth

Pacem in Terris was published by Pope John XXIII as a heartfelt cry for the cause of justice and peace and is a testament to the incontestable fact that Pope John XXIII was an apostle of peace. It was issued the year following the Cuban Missile Crisis – described as an "arm wrestle" between the U.S. and the USSR" - and after the erection of the Berlin Wall. Given the existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction an atomic war seemed imminent and John XXIII's encyclical helped deactivate the horrific mechanism of the crisis.

The encyclical had the distinctive feature of being 'an open letter to the world' as it was addressed to "all people of good will", to both believers and non-believers, beyond borders and "blocs". Not unexpectedly, the encyclical's optimistic tone and development of a philosophy of rights gave the encyclical a universal appeal and evoked favourable response almost from all the quarters and blocs. The then UN Secretary U-Thant said: "The encyclical is certainly in line with all ideas and objectives espoused by the United Nations." Soviet agency Tass widely distributed the text, stressing, above all, the part about disarmament. The U.S. Department of State welcomed it "as a historic encyclical of global importance." The Washington Post wrote that the encyclical "is the voice of the conscience of the world," and that Pope John XXIII had the support of the people. Even in Britain, a number of Anglican representatives presented a motion praising John XXIII's message.

Envisioning a new relationship under the sway of truth, justice, love and freedom, the encyclical recommends a culture of peace. It sets out four main guidelines for following the path of peace: the importance of the inviolability of a person's rights; the universal nature of the common good; the moral foundations of politics; the strength of reason and the beacon of faith.

Well worth a read, *Pacem in Terris* is just as pertinent now as it was 50 years ago. Its appeal that "any disputes which may arise between nations must be resolved by negotiation and agreement and not by recourse to arms" (no.126) should go a long way in ensuring and establishing peace among all warring countries in any part of the world. To learn more please come to our Autumn Assembly (October 19th) where Bruce Kent will be speaking about *Pacem in Terris* – and possibly mentioning Trident as well. Details are overleaf.

How can the churches respond to London's housing crisis?

A seminar to discuss this issue and come up with practical options was hosted by Housing Justice on May 22nd. The essential problem is the inadequate supply of housing being built, it is calculated that England needs 230,000 new homes a year but only 107,000 were built in 2010 and 114,000 in 2011. This net deficit has led to overcrowding and increases in purchase and rental costs. Mortgage assistance for first time buyers has helped a few of the better off but, with inadequate supply, pushed house prices even higher.

Changes in welfare reform and the "bedroom tax" are meaning that families are being moved out of London, possibly away from their jobs and schools, there are more single homeless and Housing Associations will suffer people cannot make up the extra proportion of their rent that they now need to pay. Meanwhile funds to build or develop additional social housing are being cut. The solution? - Campaign for the government to regulate private rents and build more houses.

The biblical vision of shalom points to every family dwelling in peace and security "sitting under their own vines and fig trees" (Micah 4:4).

On a practical level churches can help address the needs by the provision of night shelters, hosting schemes to give temporary accommodation and assisting with rent deposits. The bigger question is what can and should be done by churches to ensure that their assets are being put to best use. Church land is not there to make a profit and the Charity Commissioners accept that the doctrine of Christianity enables the "best value" test to be passed if land is sold or made available for affordable housing as this is in the interests of the work of "the charity" to provide assistance to poor and needy people.

"Faith in Affordable Housing" is a free web based resource which gives practical and technical information to assist churches in providing affordable housing. www.fiah.org.uk Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor said "As people of faith we are called to address injustice in all its forms. This research presents a practical resource for those considering a preferential option for the poor in their mission to the wider community"

The seminar included a presentation by Paul Regan from the East London Community Land Trust. This scheme enables a church, or perhaps churches working together as an ecumenical group, to create a trust to which land is leased over 99 years for the construction of affordable housing. Ownership of the land remains with the church or churches but land is about 50% of the value of London property and the land rent is spread over 99 years. Property can therefore be sold at affordable prices as only the building, not the land, is being sold and restrictions on resale value can be imposed so that the property remains at affordable cost for its 99 year life.

Andy Redfearn for YMCA, London South West told us on a interesting initiative they are developing to provide low cost housing of good quality at very affordable cost.

Y:cube Housing creates 26 sq metre fully portable one bed room self contained "temporary" housing of good quality which meet all necessary safety standards. The design life is 60 years but the accommodation is classed as temporary.

As well as providing desperately needed one bedroom housing it also makes good economic sense to generate income from unused land as all costs should be able to be recovered from rental income in 10 to 15 years.

The scheme has the support of the Department of Communities and Local Government, London Mayor's Office and Homes and Communities Agency. More information from andyredfearn@ymcalsw.org.uk



July 7th to 9th - a Meditatio Seminar

In a society that is increasingly dependent on legislation to define its values and run its institutions, what is happening to justice? How do we know what is the right thing to do? How do we handle conflict with those who think differently from ourselves? How do we deal with people who do wrong things? This Meditatio Seminar will explore the spiritual dimension of justice revealed in all these responses. At The Meditatio Centre, St Marks, Myddelton Square, London EC1E 1XX Cost: £50 per day or £80 for both days. Includes lunch and refreshments. Financial assistance and bursaries are available. Email meditatio@wccm.org Tel 020 7278 2070

August 6th - the Annual Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemoration

8.20 pm at Aylesford Priory. Refreshments will be provided after the service. All are welcome. Organised by Kent Diocesan Area J&P Group

A DATE TO BOOK NOW

July 19th to 21st – National Justice & Peace Conference
“Breaking Open the Word: A Call to Faith in Action”

At Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. The keynote speaker will be Megan McKenna who is an internationally recognized theologian and story teller. A native of New York City she has lived, visited and gypsied through North and South America (especially Bolivia/Peru), Europe and a collection of islands. She works with Indigenous groups, in base Christian communities and with justice and peace groups as well as parishes, dioceses and religious communities.

In 2002 Megan was appointed an Ambassador of Peace for Pax Christi.

There are activities throughout the weekend for children of all ages and discounted rates for under 16s. For more information and booking forms go to www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or phone 020 7901 4864

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

October 19th - London Justice & Peace Assembly

This year’s Autumn Assembly is being held jointly with Brentwood and Westminster dioceses at the Salvation Army Regent Hall in Oxford Street W1 (across the road from BHS close to Oxford Circus). The meeting will be chaired by Bishop Pat Lynch who will also give a talk on “Justice”, Bruce Kent will be speaking on the 50th Anniversary of Pacem in Terris (and may also mention Trident), we will have a Sister from The Community of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary speaking about “Scripture and Mission” and Bishop Kevin Dowling from the Rustenburg Diocese in South Africa will give a talk on the theme of “Mission and Development”.

The day will run from 10am until 4pm. You can bring your own lunch or make use of the café in the building. Tea and coffee will be provided on arrival and at lunchtime. All are welcome, there is no charge to attend. This looks like being a great day to meet and learn (with added shopping opportunities before and after).

AND AN ACTION TO TAKE NOW

Fed up with Google? All the publicity about tax avoiding, but not yet got round to doing anything about it? There is an alternative, and one which enables you to contribute to a charity of your choice at the same time! **Go to www.everyclick.com**, make this your home page and nominate the charity you wish to support, then for every click you make your nominated charity will receive a minute donation - but they all add up. So far over 200,000 charities have received a total of over £3.5 million at no cost whatsoever to the people who signed with Everyclick, over £25 of it from me!

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, receive the newsletter by email, get notice of actions or forthcoming events via email, or are able to send a donation, please use the form below:

Name:..... I would like to receive future newsletters by:
Address:..... Post: E-mail: Both:
.....Postcode: Please put me the e-mail list to receive regular updates on Justice & Peace issues:
Email: _____

I enclose a donation of £ towards costs (PAYABLE TO SOUTHWARK JUSTICE & PEACE OFFICE)

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