



ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK

JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION COMMISSION

Autumn 2012

Living our Vocation for Peace and Justice in the Year of Faith Keynote speaker Fr Christopher Jamison

The Southwark JPIC 2012 Autumn Assembly was held at the Amigo Hall, St George's Cathedral on Saturday 3rd November. We were delighted to welcome over 60 J&P supporters from around the diocese, and further afield, to the meeting including four members of the Beech Grove Bruderhof community near Sandwich who brought some of their books which they gave free of charge to others attending.

Fr Michael Scanlon opened the day with the prayer to St Martin de Porres and the morning session then started with lively table discussions which resulted in some interesting feedback, facilitated by Phil Kerton

A wide range of topics emerged, many around the subject of the day. Some information was shared about the Bruderhof community and the wider value of inter-faith initiatives.

There were concerns expressed at the difficulties in keeping parish J&P groups active and in getting younger parishioners involved. Could we have a mini World Youth Day to coincide with the event in Brazil or perhaps follow the example of the Brentwood diocese and have a schools J&P day?

Some tables discussed the practical aspects of their work, promoting and selling FairTrade goods and making food collections for local drop in centres.



There was discussion about the structures of the Church, the effect of married priests which we now have in some parishes and a plea from the representative of the National Board of Catholic Women to help galvanise Catholic women to wake up to the growing poverty in our communities.

The final table raised the issue of a priest stopping CAFOD collections in his parish. The advice was to be vocal without being disruptive.

Rosa Shea was invited to say a few words about "A Call to Action", an initiative which sprung from a letter to The Tablet in June where seven priests expressed concerns regarding the future of our Church.

There has been a meeting with Archbishop Nichols who agreed 'something needs to be done' and that he would observe and see how new group develops and an open meeting at Heythrop College which was attended by over 350 people. The consensus there was to start with meetings at diocesan level which are small enough to promote trust and openness between people and priests, people and bishops, priests and bishops on non-controversial topics. More information can be found at www.acalltoaction.org.uk

Our first speak was Colette Joyce, who has been working from Westminster to promote the 100 Days of Peace Campaign throughout the three London dioceses.

Her topic was "Living a Legacy: What next after 100 Days of Peace"

Colette started by giving us some background to the origins of the games which were started in ancient Greece where a truce was called to allow competitors to travel in safety. In the modern era the UN instigated the truce only in 1993 and since then many countries have signed a resolution to take steps to promote peace but only in 2011 did the UK get all UN member states to sign.

Schools and parishes throughout London took up the theme of peace and the Pax Christi peace icon, which was present at our Assembly, toured around 16 parishes with a summer break at Aylesford.



Amongst other events the Sisters of Mercy in Eltham held a simple service of prayers and hymns followed by a most inspiring talk from Margaret Mizen from the Jimmy Mizen Foundation. Following the service and a cream tea and invited to write a message of peace on a card. The cards were attached to balloons and released, thanks to a kindly wind direction, in the direction of the Olympic Park.

But where, asked Colette, are our Memorials to the work of peace? The Imperial War Museum does have a peace garden and perhaps those created in schools and at Aylesford Priory will remain but only museum dedicated to peace in the whole UK is the one in Bradford!

Colette quoted from a homily given by Bishop Stephen Cottrell at a "Sport in the Service of Peace" service in Chelmsford Cathedral: "Brothers and sisters, conflict in our world is a reality. And although there are some of us who still reckon that sport, especially team sports played between nation states, is warfare by other means - you may remember the old joke: I went to a fight the other night and an ice-hockey match broke out! - it is not an exaggeration to say that sport gives us a place and a way to set aside other differences, to compete without conquest, and to find in the triumphs and exertions of sporting endeavour a metaphor for all the other good things we strive for, not least comradeship, mutual support and fair play. That is why the themes of our service have focused on the good things that sport engenders: training, resolve and commitment; international cooperation; the creation of community; and joy and celebration. For even the interruption of violence is worth celebrating, and it may inspire us to greater endeavours for peace".

For Rio 2016 we have passed over an Olympic cross and a print of the Pax Christi icon to the Brazilian community at a mass in St George's.

For the future in this country Colette suggested that we keep in contact with Pax Christi and their annual list of actions. There is more information available at www.peacelegacy.org.uk

Marie Mann was our next speaker. Marie is an Adult Formation Advisor at our Centre for Catholic Formation in Tooting Bec and her topic was "The Year of Faith - for all faiths?".

We are celebrating the Year of Faith, with the 50th anniversary of the start of Vatican II and the 20th of the Catechism. With these important anniversaries in mind it is an opportunity for us to reflect on some of the teachings of Vatican II. One central area addressed by the council, and specifically by the decree on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, was our relationship with other faiths and other denominations.



Pre Vatican II it was clear what we meant by ecumenism, it was more like “you come in ism”. We were clear that they just needed to realise that they were wrong and that we were right. Now we are challenged to meet with followers of other faiths and other Christian denominations in friendship and engage in meaningful dialogue, as the Bishops Conference encouraged us to do in their 2010 publication ‘Meeting God in Friend and Stranger’

We looked at the ways we each now meet and sometimes have the opportunity to work with others, especially in the area of peace and justice. The meeting then shared the many ways in which they as groups and individuals are now getting to know and becoming true friend with those of other faiths and denominations.

But if we are to work towards unity, as Christ asked us to do, what might this unity look like, if it is not to be just others becoming Catholic? Do we need to have a vision of what ecumenism might mean and lead to if we are to work towards it? If unity were to mean all being ‘Catholic’ wouldn’t that be likely to be broken the day after we are all united by someone saying ‘you’ve got it wrong’ and starting a new church, leading to the need to work of ecumenism having to start all over again.

Unity may be more about embracing diversity rather than the need for all Christians to look and act the same. Our Church already embraces diversity in many forms with some of the Eastern Churches and the new Ordinariate, unity in diversity may be the best model for us to focus on as we develop a vision of our hope of future unity.

We then looked at if we can truly remain faithful to our own beliefs and really value others faith. We need to acknowledge that there are still areas where we are not fully united, but friendship and respect for others was something shared by all at the meeting.

As Father Michael said, when thanking Marie for her excellent talk, “we need to make real efforts to offer the hand of friendship to other faiths”

After a break for lunch Fr Michael welcomed our keynote speaker Fr Christopher Jamison OSB. Fr Christopher started out by pointing out that he was Director of the National Office for Vocation in the singular not Vocations. We all have a calling, a vocation, to work for justice and peace, to raise awareness, to pray for those suffering from injustice and to share the word of God.

The fundamental vocation is the call to be baptised or, for somebody baptised as a child, the call to affirm that baptism personally. To be baptised is to accept Christ’s call to follow him in a new way of life. This is the way of holiness; it involves loving attention to the needs of others and to Christ.

There are four basic states of life within the Catholic Church: marriage, religious life, priesthood and the single state as a lay person. Each of these is demanding and people need help to discern which of these Christ is calling them to. Parents have a duty to help their children find their vocation.

In the 1950s we had a totally Catholic culture, state funded Catholic schools with Catholic football teams and Catholic youth clubs and for boys the summons to be an altar server. Young people were asked if God was calling them to be a priest or religious and if they had no “vocation” they got married.

The total Catholic culture began to disappear, along with others such as the total Jewish culture, and this led to a decline in priestly vocations but the 1950s culture had produced a spike in these vocations. In the 1930s there were only an average of 6 priestly vocations per year in England with most of our clergy coming from Ireland. So far in this century we have a far higher and growing number of vocations each year. In the past 2 years priestly vocations have doubled, vocations to become nuns trebled and even marriage is on the increase. This is because there is a new thoughtfulness. There is a new vocational culture among young people and families as a counter to the secular society. A vocation to enable people to be fully alive; love is the fundamental vocation of every human being.



But “everyone has a vocation” can be a very dangerous connotation. If what I choose is my calling now I can do whatever I want.

Invocation 2012 was a very successful national discernment festival for young adults. The weekend event was aimed at young men and women aged 16-35, who were looking to deepen their relationship with Christ and who were searching for the knowledge and tools to develop their own personal formation, discernment and understanding of God’s will for their lives.

Invocation 2013 will be widened to a regional basis with the Southern one at Buckfast Abbey and Fr Christopher asked us to look out for it and spread the word around our communities.

The Church has established a 3 year National Vocations framework to explain how the discernment of vocation is central to the life of the Church. There are three specific aims: Understanding Vocation, Communicating Vocation and Discerning Vocation with the overall aim to help more people to discern their vocation. More information can be found at: www.ukvocation.org



The day ended with all three speakers forming a panel and answering a wide variety of questions. Fr Christopher had mentioned in his talk the need to reach out to NEETs, young people not in education, employment or training. In the Afro-caribbean community this represents 44%. He pointed out that all have a purpose even if they have no job.

When this issue was raised in a question Colette said that she has a dialogue with YCW (Young Christian Workers) members involving their work with NEETs and she felt that their work on leadership training was most valuable. Marie stressed the need to get into Catholic schools and start a dialogue in particular with non-practising parents. We have 63,000 kids in our schools and need to encourage and support their teachers.

How can we develop the work of Justice & Peace in our diocese? One good piece of advice was not just to start a J&P Group with a single issue but first reflect without jumping into a question. It was suggested that new groups should have a commission member to stay with it for the first 3 to 6 months but we probably lack the people to achieve this at present.

“See, Judge, Act” is used by the YCW. It is also used in J&P but we tend to get too focussed on a single issue. The work of London Citizens in setting up City Safe Havens was mentioned as a good example of this system in action. To a separate question it was said that the strength of the Citizens movement was that it involved all generations and that it is important that, as Catholics, we do look to become members of other organisations.

A mention was made of the Contextual Theology Centre which works to assist churches to engage with their communities providing events, courses and publications which help Christians minister faithfully and effectively in multi-faith contexts www.theology-centre.org is their web site.

Marie suggested that as a Church we are too stuck in a mode of “mass and go home” with the homily as the only formation. We need to help people to understand their faith better. There are lessons to learn other denominations in this. One questioner suggested that 11-13 was too early for confirmation and there was a need to spend more time with formation. Marie answered suggesting that we should not link formation with sacramental development.

Rosa Shea raised her discomfort with a Year of Faith when Tina Beattie has had speaking engagements cancelled and she has been a bishop sacked in Australia for speaking out. Fr Christopher said that we should not confuse the two issues. With the Australian bishop we should not be surprised that someone in authority takes exception to what you say and that we should look more closely into the case

Fr Michael ended the day with a closing prayer and called on all present to go out and be “an ambassador for the Year of faith in your community”