

Archdiocese of Southwark
Commission for
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation



JPIC Update January 2012

A copy of letter from Archbishop Peter which was published in The Times on January 11th:

Sir, In coming weeks Parliament will take crucial decisions on amendments to two Bills, which will have a profound impact upon thousands of families.

The proposed cap on household benefits in the Welfare Reform Bill will especially hurt larger families because it takes no account of family size, potentially forcing them to cut back on essentials such as heating and food, and in many cases resulting in the loss of their home. This impact will at least be mitigated if the Bill is amended so that child benefit is not counted towards the capped amount. There are other issues, too, not least claimants being liable for the cost of official errors, even if they are unaware of those errors.

At the same time, restrictions to the availability of legal aid outlined in the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill will affect thousands of children whose parents are involved in civil cases, as well as victims of domestic abuse, fewer of whom will be entitled to support. The result is likely to be increased long-term public costs as well as greater suffering.

The experience of the member charities of our Caritas Social Action Network has underscored the increased poverty facing our society as a result of these changes.

While we all recognise that difficult decisions have to be made, it is vitally important to meet the fundamental needs of the most vulnerable families to prevent them from being pushed into further hardship.

THE MOST REV PETER SMITH (Chairman, Department for Christian Responsibility and Citizenship)

The Welfare Reform Bill is currently at Report Stage; the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill is currently in Committee. CSAN and the Church will continue to address the effects of both bills on the poor and vulnerable as legislation progresses and I am sure they will have our full support.

Recent definitions of Justice and Peace by the Pope:

From his annual address to the General Inspectorate for Public Security at the Vatican, 13 January.

"Justice is not a mere human convention. When, in the name of supposed justice, the criteria of utility, profit and material possession come to dominate, the value and dignity of human beings can be trampled underfoot. Justice is a virtue which guides the human will, prompting us to give others what is due to them by reason of their existence and their actions."

"Peace is not the mere absence of war, or the result of man's actions to avoid conflict; it is, above all, a gift of God which must be implored with faith, and which has the way to its fulfilment in Jesus. True peace must be constructed day after day with compassion, solidarity, fraternity and collaboration on everyone's part."

Cardinal Peter Turkson declares, his support for a tax on financial transactions (Zenit):

The Cardinal, who is president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, voiced his support during his address to CIDSE, an international alliance of Catholic development agencies.

"One way of bringing economics and finance back within the boundaries of their real vocation, including their social function, would be through taxation measures on financial transactions. These should be applied with fair rates, modulated in proportion to the complexity of operations, especially those made on the 'secondary' market". This tax "would be very useful in promoting global development and sustainability according to the principles of social justice and solidarity." Moreover, "it could also contribute to the creation of a world reserve fund to support the economies of the countries hit by crisis, as well as the recovery of their monetary and financial systems."

Bishop John Arnold also supported the tax "Human beings are both the source and the purpose of all economic activity, we have got to reform financial markets so that they can serve human well-being and society,"

Events to promote

Prayer for Poverty & Homelessness Action Week - 28th January to 5th February

Father, we thank you that Jesus came to break down barriers.

He did not see the migrant or the settled, the housed or the homeless, the employed or the unemployed;
He saw and loved the person.

Forgive us when we put up barriers between ourselves and others;

help us show love to all without constraint.

Help us, your church, to build communities without barriers, where all are valued because all are made in your image. In Jesus' name, Amen

A Prayer Calendar and other resources are available from www.actionweek.org.uk or through the office.

Things to Do

Lobby the Prime Minister as part of CAFOD's Thirst for Change campaign .

In developing countries, women and girls spend an estimated 40 billion hours every year collecting water. Every 20 seconds a child dies from diseases caused by dirty water and poor sanitation. Half the girls who drop out of primary school in sub-Saharan Africa do so because of poor water and sanitation. One in eight people around the world don't have access to safe water. The average person in the world's poorest countries uses 10 litres of water every day for their drinking, washing and cooking. The average person in Europe uses 200. About one third of the world's population suffer from diseases linked with dirty water.

There is more information at www.cafod.org.uk/take-action/thirst-for-change .

Or you can send off to CAFOD for some action cards for your family, workplace or parish, phone 0300 011 5680 or e-mail campaigns@cafod.org.uk .

Events to attend

February 4th - Traidcraft event on campaigning work

An afternoon of workshops and talks in central London about Traidcraft's campaigning. This is the first time Traidcraft supporters have got together to talk about their campaigning work so it's a fantastic opportunity to find out more, tell them what you think, learn some new skills and be inspired. Register to take part at www.makeitfair.co.uk/traidcraftevent2012 or ring 020 7242 3955.

February 15th - CARJ Urban Network Meeting - 15 February 2012

12:00 – 5:00. The provisional venue for the meeting is the offices of Housing Justice in Finsbury Square. The Agenda for the day is likely to include a substantive discussion of the 'OCCUPY Movement' internationally and especially in the UK.

A representative from the newly launched Action for Happiness will explore how their perspective and approach might relate to issues of equality, justice and support for marginalised and disadvantaged groups and discussion on the Olympics legacy and the May Elections.

February 22nd (Ash Wednesday)

The annual liturgy and witness of Repentance and Resistance to nuclear war preparations at Ministry of Defence, London and other military sites.

March 20th - SPUC International one day conference.

Abortion or Maternal Health: what should the UK be funding in developing countries?

9.30 to 5.00 at Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street, London. Book on-line at <http://www.spuc.org.uk/shop> or phone 020 7091 7091. Cost £55 (concessions £35)

JUSTICE & PEACE TRAINING DAY

SATURDAY 10th MARCH AT AMIGO HALL, ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, SE1

Choose 2 from a choice of 4 workshops

Active Campaigning - Bernard White **Putting Social Teaching into Action - Valerie Flessati**
How to Live Simply in your Parish - Maria Elena Arana **Poverty (Closing the Gap) - Paul Morrison**

10am to 4pm (Coffee and registration from 9.30)

To register an interest please e-mail the office or phone and leave a message (details below).

OUR SPRING ASSEMBLY

SATURDAY 19th MAY, THE NEW BARN, AYLESFORD PRIORY

The theme of the day will be "**Feed Our World**", please remember the date.

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