

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



JPIC Update - New Year 2015

A call for the eradication of slavery and human trafficking

Following a declaration calling for the eradication of modern slavery, which was signed by Pope Francis and by Anglican, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox faith leaders, the second International conference of the Santa Marta Group was held in London in December. This was organised by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the Home Office. Police chiefs and Church representatives from across the world gathered alongside Home Office Ministers for a Conference aimed at developing strategies to combat human trafficking. A full report can be found at: <http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Featured/Human-Trafficking-Conference-December-2014>

Taking the lead on raising awareness of human trafficking the guiding principle of the Santa Marta Group is always to keep the welfare of the trafficked victim at the heart of all law enforcement.

The Modern Slavery Bill remains on track to be passed before the end of this Parliament. An important development recently announced is the appointment of the Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Mr Kevin Hyland. Kevin was present at a recent meeting, organised by Bishop Patrick Lynch, at which he spoke about his role. He is the former head of the Metropolitan Police's world renowned Human Trafficking Unit, and has worked closely with slavery victims to secure a number of key prosecutions of perpetrators. This newly created role will see him spearhead the UK's fight against modern slavery.

Human Trafficking has been described by Pope Francis as "*an open wound on the body of contemporary society; a crime against humanity*". Please seek to raise awareness amongst your communities. There is very helpful information at the Stop the Traffick web site www.stophetraffik.org

Assistance available to non-EU residents seeking to return to their home country.

Members of our Kent Justice and Peace Group were invited to meet a member of the Home Office Engagement Team which covers Kent and Sussex and is based in the immigration compliance and enforcement office at Folkestone. This is one of 19 regional offices around the UK, the South London office is in Croydon. They are keen to assist non-EU people who wish to return to their home countries, and they are seeking to use various channels (including faith communities) to advertise the help available. There are two schemes:

1. The Home Office can assist people who remain here illegally with obtaining passports and other documents and, to some extent in some cases, with the cost of tickets, although most make their own travel arrangements. People doing are eligible to apply to return to the UK after 1 year.
2. "Choices", is an assisted service run by the charity Refugee Action, channelling funds from the EU. They provide confidential advice and help with travel documents, along with free transport home and information on support that may be available when they get home, this could be continued for a year in some places. I also understand that our Bishops' Conference is looking to set up support schemes for those who return home to five countries.

"Choices" will also provide financial support for families with leave to remain but who wish to return to their country of origin (£2000 per family member). Active or refused asylum seekers or those with discretionary leave to remain can receive £1500, up to £500 of this support can be available when departing from the UK airport.

The schemes are not available to detainees. People here with no legal status do not get the funds, just help with travel, including a free flight. Those who have been assisted cannot return for 5 years.

The engagement team have asked us to raise awareness of the schemes to those who could be interested. Whilst we have no desire to encourage people happily settled in our communities to leave our country the schemes could be of interest to some who have not found our streets "paved with gold"

January 18th - Peace Sunday

Materials and collection envelopes are being distributed to all parishes. Please encourage a collection be taken in your parish to support the valuable work of Pax Christi.

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/peace-sunday/> has some excellent promotional resources.

January 18th - Homeless Sunday

The purpose of Homeless Sunday is threefold:

- showing our concern for individuals affected by homelessness
- challenging the conditions that create it
- celebrating work that tackles the problem

Whatever level of engagement a congregation has with homelessness, Homeless Sunday is an opportunity to take it a step higher. Homeless Sunday brings together thousands of churches. It has the support of all the main denominations and is celebrated in a wide range of congregations. For resources and materials please check the brand new web site www.homeless-sunday.uk

January 27th - Holocaust Memorial Day: Keeping the Memory Alive

27 January 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. 2015 will also be the 20th anniversary of the Genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia . It is therefore particularly appropriate that the theme for this major anniversary year focuses on memory.

To find out more about the theme visit <http://hmd.org.uk/>

January 31st - The Gandhi Foundation Multifaith Celebration

2.30pm at the London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, West Kilburn, London NW6 6RG 'Caring for the Future of People and Planet'. Keynote Speaker: Dr Ursula King
Please register with william@gandhifoundation.org to aid refreshment planning.

January 31st - Arundel & Brighton Justice & Peace Assembly

Taking Action - in solidarity with immigrants, migrants, refugees and people on the move.

Speakers: Sara Teather MP, Rev Fr Terence Bateman, Louise Zanre.

Contributions from Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group and Brighton Voices in Exile.

10am to 4pm at DABCEC, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley RH10 6RP for more information or to reserve a place 01293 651164 or e-mail: ruth.gerun@babnet.org

February 8th - Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking

We are asked to pray especially for all victims of human trafficking on the feast of St Josephine Bakheita. Human trafficking now ranks as the second most profitable worldwide criminal enterprise after the illegal arms trade. The practical response of the Church and its charities is to raise awareness of this horrendous crime and to provide help and support for the most vulnerable victims.

Our 2015 Spring Assembly

**Saturday April 25th from 10.30 to 4.00
in the New Barn, Aylesford Priory**

"From prayer to action and back again - learning and doing together"
A day to meet others for discussion and discernment of how best to work together in the run up to the General Election and beyond.

Group Facilitators will include:

**Susan Kambalu (CAFOD), Barbara Wilson (London Citizens),
Louise Zanre (JRS), Daniel Hale (Progressio), James Truby (Columbans)**