

NONVIOLENCE: THE WITNESS OF OSCAR ROMERO AND THE NONVIOLENCE INITIATIVE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

A rare opportunity to hear two outstanding speakers share their thoughts about this important new initiative within the Catholic Church.



Bishop Kevin Dowling was elected to the Pax Christi International board in 2004 and became Co-President in 2010, bringing with him a wealth of experience in working for human rights and social justice. He has been Chairman of the International Sudan Ecumenical Forum through which he engaged in the Sudan Peace Process. As a trustee of the Ecumenical Solidarity Peace Trust, he is involved in research of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe.



Pat Gaffney has been General Secretary of Pax Christi since 1990. She is a member of the international working group that initiated the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and helped facilitate the Rome Conference. She has spoken at innumerable conferences and been an outstanding contributor to peace work both here in the UK and internationally.

This event is the only speaking engagement that Bishop Dowling is undertaking in the UK on this visit.

Tuesday 25 April 7pm – 9pm at the Oxford Place Centre, Leeds LS1 3AX

See our website for more details and how to book a place. There is no charge to attend this event though a collection will be taken to help defray expenses.

As an introduction to the topic, here is part of the text of a talk given by Bishop Kevin at a conference in Africa for peacemakers in December 2016

In April 2016 a conference took place in Rome, organised by the International Catholic Peace Movement, Pax Christi International, and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Cardinal Peter Turkson opened the conference with a message from Pope Francis. The theme of the Rome Conference was: *"Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence"*.

Cardinal Turkson reflected on how Pope Francis

sees the option for war and violence. He said Pope Francis would say: **'You don't stop an aggression by being an aggressor. You don't stop a conflict by inciting another conflict. You don't stop a war by starting another war.'**

"It doesn't stop," said the cardinal. "We've seen it all around us. Trying to stop the aggressor in Iraq has not stopped war. Trying to stop the aggressor in Libya has not stopped war. It's not stopped the war in any place. We do not stop war by starting

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another war." Cardinal Turkson said the participants at the conference promoted "another thinking:" Gospel nonviolence, or "nonviolence as Jesus was nonviolent."

Reflecting on the cultural, economic, political and religious context of Jesus' time, it seems clear that Jesus' life was one of non-violent resistance to the structural evil in his situation. He invited everyone, especially the excluded, into a community. He taught an alternative way to respond to the "enemy," the way of nonviolence. "Love your enemies. Do good to those who persecute you."

Archbishop Romero commented: **"The gospel's advice to turn the other cheek to an unjust aggressor, far from being passivity and cowardice, is evidence of great moral strength that can leave an aggressor morally defeated and humiliated. The Christian can fight, but prefers peace to war.....this is the moral force of nonviolence"** (Medellin Documents, *Peace*, #15).

This is all about a choice, a decision every person, group and organisation can make. The choice, the decision for us, is to be peacemakers who work to relieve peoples' suffering – but always in solidarity and action *together with* the affected people; we try to change the economic and political structures that bring so much suffering to the vulnerable; we try to remove or transform the underlying causes of violence, conflict and war so that there can be sustainable peace and economic justice, especially for the excluded and the victims of conflict – but, we are committed to do all this without any form of violence. The challenge therefore, is how to introduce the power of nonviolent responses to our nations and communities, groups and individuals both to, if possible, prevent wars and violence breaking out, or to limit the effects of war and violence when they occur, and to bring healing, hope and new beginnings after wars and violence have ended. For example, there are many instances of how civil society and Church groups have protected vulnerable people from violence through unarmed civil protection.

And after wars and violence have been limited or stopped, we as peacemakers need to be deeply involved in the whole process of "transitional justice"for example,

- ❖ documenting the stories and experiences of the victims,
- ❖ working towards Truth and Reconciliation Commissions when these are appropriate,
- ❖ discussing what needs to be done about the perpetrators of violence and war – do we focus on punishment (retributive justice), or restorative justice which promotes the healing and reconciliation of people and communities, including the use of all the cultural methods which we have in Africa, and
- ❖ finally working for economic justice so that the victims, those who have suffered, the

poor can have a future of dignity and hope.

This vision and program of active non-violence and just peacemaking must be brought to the heart of every society and community where we are. And our vision must be

based on the following values, and our belief that a nation, or a society is peaceful only when it has *all* of the following:

- the rule of law;
- its people enjoy the full range of human rights;
- the economy is just;
- the people are enabled to grow to their full potential;
- they live in harmony with one another;
- they have the skills and commitment to solve conflicts without violence.

Bishop Kevin Dowling December 2016

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DIOCESAN REFUGEE ACTION WORKER UPDATE

We reported in January about the appointment of a part time refugee Action Worker in the Diocese. Unfortunately, the initial appointment did not work out but a replacement has now been found and will start in her new role on 03 April. The new person appointed is Lucy Irven from Skipton. Lucy has been involved in Social Justice issues for a long time and will be a familiar face from Justice & Peace events.



Most recently, Lucy has spent nearly three years as the Manager of Skipton Food Bank.

Based at Skipton Baptist Church, the Food Bank works with the District Council, local housing teams and a wide range of other support agencies to provide emergency food parcels to those struggling to make ends meet in Skipton and Craven. Lucy was responsible for administering the Food Bank, liaising with the partners, building the team of volunteers, and keeping in touch with a broad range of supporters, including church congregations, schools and businesses.

From listening to the stories of those coming to the Food Bank, Lucy learnt about the reality of their suffering: often a result of low income, benefit cuts, family crises or ill health. She understood the need to treat each visitor with respect and compassion, giving signs of hope and encouragement to those for whom life is difficult and uncertain.

Lucy joined the Justice and Peace group at St Stephen's Parish not long after arriving in Skipton 20 years ago, helping with CAFOD appeals and generally raising awareness of the needs of the poor. Last year the group helped to organise a town collection of clothing, camping materials, tools and household items for refugees as part of their Year of Mercy commitment. For the last four years, Lucy has worked as Parish Administrator and she also enjoys helping with catechesis, music, and reading at Mass.

As an active member of Churches Together in Skipton and District for the last 15 years, Lucy is now working with the recently formed Craven Refugee Support Group, which is helping to settle several Syrian families into new homes.

Lucy lives in Skipton with her husband and their seven children as they come and go from school, university and work in London. She enjoys singing in a choir, going for walks and reading about spirituality.

"I am delighted to be working for the Diocese as Refugee Support Group Facilitator. I look forward to joining the team and working with the parishes to develop their involvement in all the remarkable work being done to support refugees and asylum seekers in Leeds and Bradford."

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PARISH RENEWAL THROUGH THE LIVE SIMPLY AWARD

The Live Simply Award Scheme is a national scheme administered by CAFOD. To obtain the award, parishes have to demonstrate how they

- 'live simply',
- 'live sustainably' and
- live 'in solidarity with the poor'.

The scheme provides wonderful opportunities for both individuals and parish communities to reflect more deeply about their faith, and particularly how they care for the earth and care for the poor.

The Commission, with financial support from CAFOD, are putting on a workshop to enable parishioners from across the diocese to explore how this scheme could be used in their parishes. Come to this workshop to find out more about the scheme and think about how it might work in your parish community.

Saturday 24 June
St Benedict's Church
Aberford Road
Garforth LS25 1PX
10:30am – 2:00 pm

Whole families are welcome to this event.

There is a separate programme for young people aged 8 - 15 and a crèche (limited availability) for children under 8.

Booking is essential, especially if you want to take advantage of the young people's programme or the crèche facilities. See our website for full details.

The event will finish with a simple lunch for all.



REFLECTION -



Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighbourhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood. But somehow, and in some way, we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.

John Donne caught it years ago and placed it in graphic terms: "No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." And he goes on toward the end to say, "Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind; therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." We must see this, believe this, and live by it if we are to remain awake through a great revolution.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution, Address at Morehouse College Commencement, 2 June 1959

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THE 'PROGRESS' OF THE ICON OF PEACE THROUGH THE LEEDS DIOCESE

As this newsletter goes out, the Icon will be in Skipton.

It arrived in the diocese just in time to be taken to **John Henry Newman parish** in Crossgates to be welcomed at the Sunday evening mass at St Theresa's church. The first thing to say about the icon is that it is big! So initial plans by parish priest Fr Pat Wall had to be adapted, as Anne Tracy from Newman parish describes below:-

For a week in February our parish was host to the Pax Christi Icon of Peace. The icon was large, (sadly it proved too large and easily damaged to be safely transported back and forth between the three churches, so it remained in St Theresa's. Replicas were made however, and taken by Fr Pat to Corpus Christi and St Gregory's and to both our schools.)



Icon in position ready for evening mass

First impression of the icon from a distance was of its great beauty, the intense red's and blues and shining golds illuminated by the candles burning before it. Closer, you began to engage with figures, each telling their story of reconciliation, – here were Jacob and Esau running – almost dancing – to embrace, and treading underfoot the sword of their enmity. Here was St Francis of Assisi, and St Clare, friends and peacemakers. Here was Sarah with the infant Isaac – early forerunners of Judaism, and Hagar nursing Ishmael – forerunners of Islam. Other less familiar figures from the Orthodox church were present – St Boris and St Gleb who

refused as Christians to take up arms, St Sofia and her daughters. Here was Stephen the first martyr and Mary Magdalene, first to proclaim the Resurrection. Here was the Samaritan woman and here the Syrophenician woman, both marginalised women, non-Jews, who engaged deeply with Jesus. And, at the base of the icon, was the figure of the risen Jesus teaching his disciples the Our Father.

It is said that with an icon, you don't so much look at it, as allow it to look at you, and indeed as we stood in silence before it, the love and peace of God surely felt present.

Each day in our three churches we prayed for peace, in our families, our neighbourhoods and our world. As a step towards greater understanding of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, we began our week by inviting Trish Griffin, who has been an Ecumenical Accompanier in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to tell us of her experiences there. Her eyewitness account was often distressing, but always there was hope. Our conversations went on long after the talk as we tried to grapple with the issues and our own thoughts and feelings.

Sometimes religion is blamed as a root cause of the problems of the Middle East. But we heard from Trish how she worked in Bethlehem, in the shadow of the Separation Wall, alongside Palestinian activists, young Israeli men and women who had refused conscription, and Jewish peace-workers including some Rabbis, – Muslims, Jews and of Christians from both the Holy Land and from overseas, working together. The lovely prayer we said that evening had been composed by people of the three faiths and we prayed for peace and justice as 'Followers of the one God, Children of Abraham, brothers and sisters.'

The following week was spent in **St Joseph's in Pontefract**. Fr Simon Lodge commented "The

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power of an icon is such that in certain Orthodox churches it is presumed that the image ‘presides’ at gatherings of the praying community. Our western mindset doesn’t quite go that far, but the icon certainly dominated the beginning of our Lenten observance by being on prominent display in the sanctuary in both of our churches at the Sunday Masses.

On the Friday of the icon’s visit we had a special service of Stations of the Cross and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. The stations were presented in such a way as to enable a reflection on our own efforts in the realm of peacemaking and reconciliation. After the Stations, time before the Blessed Sacrament gave us the opportunity to pray privately and collectively for peace and for the gift of becoming more non-violent in our own lives. The icon remained the focus for private visits throughout the day and all week.”

It then went to Wakefield and through the efforts of Deacon Nick Shields (the administrator for the new ecumenical organisation – West Yorkshire



The icon in Wakefield Cathedral

Churches Together) was on display at **Wakefield Cathedral** and was the centrepiece of four services there on Saturday 11 March.. Additionally, it was also displayed and used at services at **St**

Thornes.

From Wakefield it went to **St Joseph’s church in Pudsey.** The Icon was displayed on the altar, and a well-attended special Penitential Service was held

on Thursday 16th. This was based on a meditation on one of the saints depicted on the Icon, Mary Magdalene. A parishioner commented that the service "really was lovely".

This week the icon is in Skipton. Lucy Irven from **St Stephen’s** has worked with Churches Together in Skipton to arrange a programme there.



In the picture, Lucy is pictured with Rev Veronica James from **Holy Trinity Anglican Church** in Skipton –where there was a special service of welcome on Monday evening. Later in the week they are going to involve local schools with the icon.

There is still time to catch up with the Icon if you have not been able to see it yet. We have been delighted with the ecumenical nature of many of the events that have been organised – praying and meditating about peace and reconciliation is something that can unify nearly all Christians. The remaining dates are shown in the table below. Please check the websites of individual parishes to see what events they might have planned.

27 Mar-02 Apr:	Holy Rosary Church Leeds
03 Apr-09 Apr:	St Benedict’s Garforth
10 Apr-16 Apr:	Our Lady & St Joseph, Cottingley

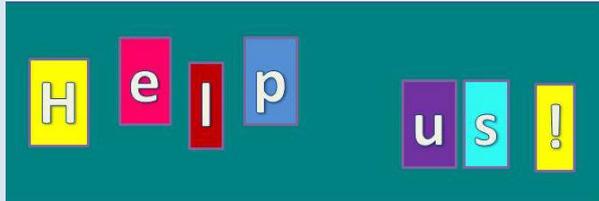


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WE NEED YOUR MONEY!

Could you consider giving a regular amount to the Commission through a Standing Order? Or send us a cheque? Arrange a fundraising event? We are running out of funds.

If only 20 more people agreed to give us £10 per month using a Standing Order, it would cover about one third of our ongoing expenses.



We know that people in the Leeds Diocese are generous for all sorts of charitable giving. The role of the Commission is different to direct giving – but it is equally important. Please help us. Compassion is vital, but

without attacking unjust structures how will lasting change come about?

Please see the donate section of our website or get in touch if you can help us.

<http://www.leedsjp.org.uk/donate/>

A PLACE TO CALL HOME?

Britain is facing a housing crisis – a claim which few people dispute. This has many symptoms that stretch across the whole of society. For some it means no home at all. Since 2010 there has been a steady increase in the number of families accepted as homeless and in the numbers living in temporary accommodation. More recently the number of people sleeping on the street has also begun to increase. More and more families (especially families with children) are forced to live in overcrowded housing.

Recent changes changes in Housing Benefits that have come into force for young people will only exacerbate this situation. For all of us concerned about family life this is an issue that warrants further study and action.

‘A place to call home?’ is a resource on housing; a set of six bible studies for small group discussion focusing on a range of issues around housing. It is produced by JPIT-the [Joint Public Issues Team](#) (Baptists Together, The Methodist Church, The Church of Scotland and the United Reform Church) - in collaboration with [Housing Justice](#) and [Scottish Churches Housing Action](#). It’s a great place to start as not only does it provide thought-provoking material it also encourages us to meet and discuss the issues with other people. The material is very accessible and come with good instructions on how to best use it.

The pack can be downloaded as a PDF from the JPIT website by clicking on the link above. You need the ‘resources’ main menu item and the ‘Study Resources’ sub-menu item.



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EVENTS

 Feb 20 – Apr 16	<p>PAX CHRISTI ICON OF PEACE DIOCESAN ‘TOUR’ See the article above and our website to find out where it is and where it is going. It’s more than half way through its tour-so don’t delay!</p>
 Thu 23 Mar	<p>ROMERO CENTENARY EVENT: “THE SECRET OF ROMERO: PASSION FOR GOD AND COMPASSION FOR THE POOR” 7pm – 9pm <i>St Marie’s Cathedral, Norfolk Walk, Sheffield</i> Last reminder if you were thinking about going along to this.</p>
 Sat 25 Mar	<p>EYEWITNESS: SETTLER VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH HEBRON HILLS 7.30pm <i>St Augustine’s, Harehills Road, Leeds LS8 5HR</i> Ecumenical Accompanier Maria Huff has recently returned from South Hebron and will share some of her experiences there. ALL WELCOME</p>
 Tue 25 Apr	<p>NONVIOLENCE: THE WITNESS OF OSCAR ROMERO & THE NONVIOLENCE INITIATIVE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH <i>Oxford Place centre, Leeds LS1 3AU 19:00 – 21:00</i> Bishop Kevin Dowling of South Africa and Pat Gaffney of Pax Christi UK share thoughts about this exciting new initiative in the Catholic Church. Please book a place using Eventbrite.</p>
 Thu 04 May	<p>VIVIR BIEN: WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO SHAPE DEVELOPMENT IN BOLIVIA <i>Leeds Trinity University, Brownberrie Lane, LS18 5HD</i> This public lecture at LTU will be given by Nikki Evans, CAFOD’s programme manager for Bolivia (and featured in last month’s newsletter). She will be sharing experiences about the Andean concept of “<i>vivir bien</i>”, which is roughly translated as “living well”, and how organisations work with communities to ensure that they are shaping their own development in line with their own understanding of what that means.</p>
 Fri 05 May - Sat 06 May	<p>THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT MIGRATION TO THE NORTH OF ENGLAND <i>Trinity Church Centre, The Market Place, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough, TS3 6LD</i> The recent crises and aggravated politicisation of migration has also sparked the desire to think more deeply and theologically about refugee and asylum themes in various Northern universities. This conference, hosted by Seedbed, seeks to explore this. The gathering will be of interest to people working and volunteering in the refugee, asylum and migration fields; academics; and people who themselves have needed to find sanctuary. For more information please email adm.seedbed@gmail.com</p>
 Sat 24 Jun	<p>PARISH RENEWAL THROUGH THE LIVE SIMPLY AWARD <i>St Benedicts Church, Aberford Road Garforth LS25 1PX 10:30 – 14:00</i> The Live Simply Award Scheme is a national scheme administered by CAFOD. To obtain the award parishes have to demonstrate how they ‘live simply’, ‘live sustainably’ and live ‘in solidarity with the poor’. The scheme provides wonderful opportunities for both individuals and parish communities to reflect more deeply about their faith, and particularly how they care for the earth and care for the poor. Come to this workshop to find out more about the scheme and think about how it might work in your parish community. Limited crèche facilities available and limited places for a young people’s programme during the event. A simple lunch will be provided.</p>
 Find us on Facebook	‘Like’ our page on Facebook and ‘follow’ us to help keep up to date with the key campaigns that the Commission is supporting.

Please forward this E-News to anyone else who you think might be interested. Even better, get them to send us their email address so we can add them to our contact database.