

'VIVIR BIEN' : WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO SHAPE DEVELOPMENT IN BOLIVIA

By Nikki Evans-CAFOD Programme Officer for Bolivia (and resident of Yorkshire!)

In 2016, Bolivia experienced its worst drought for over 25 years. Water rationing was imposed in the capital, La Paz in November and the reservoirs dried up as an unprecedented crisis unfolded. The rural regions of Bolivia had been suffering for many months due to the low levels of rainfall and over half of the municipalities in the country declared a state of emergency.



The Aymara and Quechua indigenous farming communities living on the Altiplano plain, high in the Andes mountains, were hit hard by the drought. Unable to plant sufficient crops to survive the year, many families have been forced to leave their land to seek temporary employment in the cities. In May, the families that have stayed on their land will harvest their crops in the hope that they have been able to produce enough to survive. Prices of food are expected to rise which will hit hardest those families that are already suffering the effects of last year's drought.

Farming in harmony with nature and the environment is a central pillar of community life for indigenous farming families. These Andean indigenous communities still organise their political, economic and social systems according to pre-colonial traditions. Community leaders are appointed by rotation with each family obliged to take responsibility for roles within the community and decisions are made by consensus. Land is managed communally and people care for Mother Earth (Pacha Mama) in gratitude for the gifts she gives.

Central to the Andean view of the world is the idea of "*vivir bien*" which can be roughly translated as "living well". For many families and communities, *vivir bien* means living simply in harmony and nature but each person you speak to will have their own idea of what it means for them. One farmer told me "For me, *vivir bien* means that you have everything you need. You're able to grow food and you're able to eat well". Another said "Before we hardly had any money. We didn't really grow very much. We didn't eat very well. I didn't dress very well. We didn't have any proper shoes. Now we've got much more. We eat well and we're producing food. For me, that's *vivir bien*."

Respecting communities and each family's understanding of *vivir bien* underpins the work of the local Bolivian organisations supported by CAFOD. These organisations are providing essential support to communities in helping them respond to the effects of the drought and the challenges of farming in such a tough environment. The work being done to support these families responds directly to their vision of *vivir bien*.

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If you would like to hear more about 'Vivir Bien' and CAFOD's work in Bolivia then you can!

Nikki is giving the CAFOD Lecture at Leeds Trinity University:-

Thursday 04 May 2017
Leeds Trinity University
Horsforth, Leeds,
LS18 5HD
7pm – 9pm

The event is free but please register
Via Eventbrite or email
leeds@cafod.org.uk

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PARISH RENEWAL THROUGH THE LIVE SIMPLY AWARD

Come along to this Workshop if you care about our planet and the poor and want to think about how we can create a better world for us all to share



SATURDAY 24 JUNE

10:30 – 14:00 ST BENEDICT'S PARISH CENTRE GARFORTH

What's it all about?

CAFOD manage an award scheme called 'The Live Simply Award'. It is awarded to parishes that can demonstrate that they have given thought, and undertaken a range of actions, directed towards everyone in the parish living more simply, more sustainably and in solidarity with the poor.

But what does that mean, exactly?

Living Simply

In other words that we are not always seeking 'more' but are working so that each of us has 'sufficient'

Living Sustainably

Are we playing our part in looking after God's creation? What are we doing about Climate Change?

Living in solidarity with the poor

The idea of 'Solidarity' is one of the foundation stones of Catholic Social Teaching – that we must all take care of one another. This particular part of the scheme is concerned with how we show this care towards the poorest – whether that be in our local area or more globally.

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Leeds.

This is a family-friendly event – so bring the whole family along.

Places for children under 8 are limited – so please register as soon as possible.

What will happen in the workshop

This workshop is about getting people to think more deeply about their lifestyle and how they are living out their vocation as Christians in the 21st century.

Do you sometimes think that you should be doing more to help care for the environment and to help others in need – but are unsure where to start?

This workshop will give you many ideas of things that you could do at a personal level and at a parish level.

One reason that we are holding the event at St Benedict's in Garforth is that this is the only parish in the Leeds Diocese that has so far obtained this award. However, we are also planning on having some people from other parishes across the country that have obtained the award. Come and listen to the different sorts of actions that people have taken.

Most of the time will be spent in small groups examining different aspects of the scheme and talking to people who have already worked on gaining the award. There will also be the opportunity to ask questions from a panel of people

We will end the workshop with a shared lunch for everyone that also helps to illustrate many of the points that will have come up earlier in the morning.

There will be a separate programme of activities for young people aged 15 or below.

Simply go to www.leedsjp.org.uk to register

Garforth is very easy to reach but if you need help with transport then you can request this when booking a place. We cannot guarantee to find you transport but we will do our best.

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2017**NEW CAFOD VOLUNTEER CAMPAIGNS CO-ORDINATOR FOR LEEDS DIOCESE**

This is Patrick Tauro Chabviaka. He is the new volunteer Campaigns Coordinator in the Leeds Diocese CAFOD Volunteer Centre. Patrick says about himself:



"I come from Malawi which is a land locked tiny country on the South eastern part of Africa. Inspired by my modest upbringing and experience of being born in one of the world's poorest countries I had a great passion to study international development. I joined the British Army and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. I have a Master of Business Administration degree and a Master of Public Administration degree from the Open University. I did several of the assignments for these whilst on my tours of duty in Afghanistan. Since coming to the UK I now have been able to study International Development and now hold an MA in International Development Management (University of Bradford)."

Patrick lives in South Leeds with his wife and two children (a boy and a girl).

As the CAFOD Campaign Volunteer Coordinator for Leeds diocese his role involves;-

1. Building positive relationships with Campaign Volunteers – answering their questions, sharing resources and plans with them, and helping them have confidence to act; reaching out to volunteers who are not in parishes.
2. Networking with other- engaging with parish priests to secure permission to campaign in parishes, making connections with other organisations' activities etc.
3. Monitoring and where necessary recording activities happening locally and passing it on to Community Participation Coordinators and the Campaign Team at Romero house.
4. Supporting the recruitment and training of volunteers.

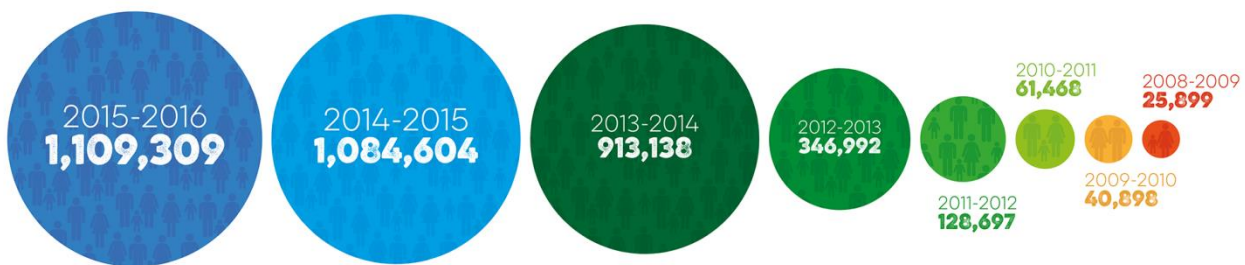
Patrick comments *"CAFOD is always involved in campaigning on a wide range of issues affecting humanity. At the moment it is heavily involved in climate change campaigning inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical letter "Laudato Si" where the Pope is inviting all Catholics and the world at large to join him to save the planet by living simply and also to live in solidarity with our poorest brothers and sisters."*



For the next few weeks, as a General Election has just been called, Patrick won't be able to encourage people to be out campaigning. However, this is good news for the Commission as he is one of the people on our Project Working Party, organising a Diocesan workshop about the Live Simply Award scheme. Full details of this can be found in the article following this.

WHAT SHOULD WE BE ASKING CANDIDATES IN THIS GENERAL ELECTION?

Over two years ago the Commission held a one day conference about foodbanks. At that time nearly a million sets of emergency food supplies were being given out by the foodbanks organised by the Trussell Trust. Since then the situation has become worse. More people are using foodbanks today than 2 years ago. The rate of increase in usage has slowed – as the infographic below shows – but in the last 5 years there has been an almost tenfold increase in the numbers obtaining emergency food supplies from trust foodbanks.



Number of 3 day emergency food supplies given by the Trussell Trust – courtesy of Trussell Trust

Of course, this is not the whole picture. At the time of our conference we also undertook a survey within the Diocese to try and establish how many people were involved with providing food to people in local situations where they did not have enough. From this we estimated that about 1200 to 1500 people were either giving food items regularly or helping out with the provision of food in other ways. Many of these activities were the initiatives of individual parishes or Churches Together groups in a particular area. None of these activities show up in the Trussell Trust statistics. Consequently, the real situation is **worse** than the horrifying figures given above..

Remember, this is happening in our country - in one of the top ten richest countries in the World.

This is only one of many issues where Catholics need to review their candidate options in the light of Catholic Social Teaching. Elections are not something where we can just put our faith to one side. How we relate to one another is at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching and must be at the heart of how we vote for our country to be governed.

This is easy to say but much more difficult to do: we live in a messy world where situations are much more complicated than a twenty second soundbite might suggest. Perhaps a starting point is to try and listen to the voice of poor people – both in this country and across the world. .

In March 2016 we were instrumental in bringing the Las Casas Institute of Oxford University to Leeds Trinity University spend a day exploring what Pope Francis meant by wanting a 'Poor church, for the poor'. The question is still relevant today – perhaps even more so in the light of the General Election campaigning that is already well underway.

For our reflection quote this month here is a fuller context for the Pope Francis quote:

REFLECTION

For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor “his first mercy”. This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have “this mind... which was in Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a “special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness”. This option – as Benedict XVI has taught – “is implicit in our Christian faith in a God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty.” This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them

Evangelium Vitae (“The Gospel of Life,” Donders translation), Pope Francis, 2013, #198

THE ICON OF PEACE COMPLETES ITS YORKSHIRE ‘TOUR’

In the last three weeks of its time in the Leeds Diocese the Icon was in Leeds, Garforth and Cottingley.

Between 27 March and 02 April it was at the Holy Rosary Church on Chapeltown Road in Leeds – part of the parish of Our Lady of Unfailing Help. They had an event every day centred around the Icon – ranging from Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, a couple of peace liturgies and peace Stations of the Cross followed by a simple lunch. There was also an event involving the primary school, taking the story of Esau and Jacob as the theme.

The following week the Icon was in St Benedict’s parish in Garforth where there was a similar pattern of using the icon as a focus for reflection about peace and reconciliation.

The Icon’s last week in the Diocese (encompassing Holy Week and Easter) was spent at the parish of Our Lady and St Joseph of the Aire Valley – at the church of St Mary and St Monica in Cottingley. Again, the icon was placed to one side of the altar to provide a focus for prayer and reflection about reconciliation.



The Group photo from St Mary & St Monica shows parish priest Fr Sean Molloy with parishioners after the Maundy Thursday mass. On the far right is parishioner Paddy Spiller who was heavily involved in preparing the reflections about the icon in the parish. Annette Mitchell, who also helped to organise the icon, commented, “The icon provided a beautiful focus for prayer and reflection. I understand the need for action on peace issues such as the

injustices suffered by Palestinians, but sometimes we also just need to take time to reflect and pray. I am really glad that we were able to host it in our parish.”

The icon leaves Leeds for Birmingham, where it is to be used at a large Taize event at the end of April.

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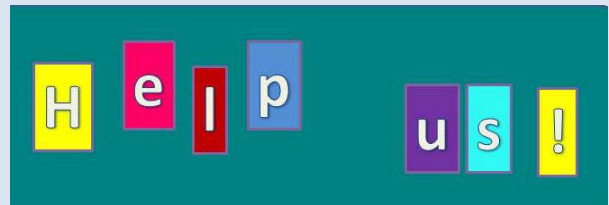
Its presence across the diocese has touched many people – in the region of 1000 prayer cards with an image of the icon have been distributed and the icon has been a part of over 50 services. ☒ The icon was on loan from Pax Christi UK and anyone wanting further information about the icon should get in contact with them directly.

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. The Diocese is unable to offer any financial assistance to the Commission at this time because of the overall Diocesan financial situation. ***At our current rate of spend we will be unable to continue operations beyond the end of 2017.***

We are applying to grant-giving trusts to help promote what we do. However, we also need to demonstrate that we have some level of support from parishioners across the Diocese.



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/>

VIVIR BIEN continued

For many families, this may be this may be about having access to water to irrigate their plants, for others it might technical training to help to help them grow more crops or learn how to make bread and cheese.






For Don Ismael, *vivir bien* meant having his own greenhouse that allows him to grow vegetables all year round.





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EVENTS

 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></p> <p>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></p> <p>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></p> <p>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></p> <p>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>
 Fri 21 Jul – Sun 23 Jul	<p>NATIONAL JUSTICE & PEACE NETWORK CONFERENCE: A SABBATH FOR THE EARTH AND THE POOR – The challenge of Pope Francis <i>The Hayes Conference centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire</i></p> <p>Speakers at this weekend conference include</p> <p>Dr Ruth Valerio who is Global Advocacy and Influencing Director for Tearfund,</p> <p>Fr Peter Hughes SSC. has spent most of his life as a missionary in Peru, working in some of the most impoverished communities in Lima. He is an advisor to the <i>Instituto Bartolome de las Casas</i>, working in programmes of leadership and social justice.</p> <p>Kathy Galloway is an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland and was leader of the Iona Community from 2002-2009. She is currently head of Christian Aid Scotland. She is also a published poet, author and hymn writer.</p> <p>Lots of other elements to the weekend and there is a completely separate programme of activities for young people. See their website for full details and booking arrangements:- http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/</p>



‘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.