

WHO SAID YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T GET INVOLVED IN SOCIAL JUSTICE?

About 200 young people came together for the first Leeds Peacejam Conference (there has been a previous one in Bradford) on the weekend of the 25-26 November. Peacejam is an international organisation founded in 1996 by a group of Nobel Peace laureates. It is specifically aimed at young people and is about encouraging them to become more involved in civil society to address issues of social justice. The conference was hosted at Leeds Trinity University.



The keynote speaker for the weekend was Nobel laureate Mairéad Corrigan Maguire from Northern Ireland. At a Trinity Talk on Friday evening she gave a

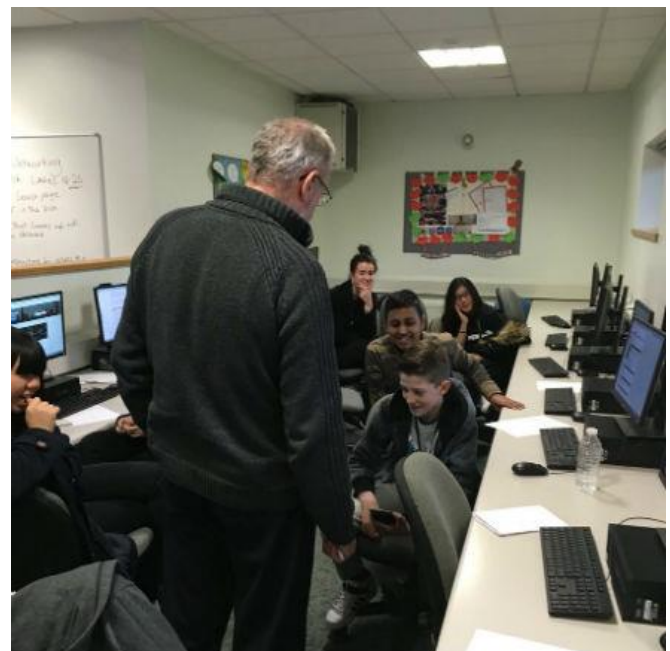
movingly personal and passionate address, full of strength and hope, teaching us that “a real peace movement can be built”. “Don’t get stuck in the past” she said’ “be present in the community, in the moment”.

John Battle & Liz Firth from the J&P Commission led a workshop on each day of the weekend conference. On Saturday they used a case study to explore the difficulties that families on low incomes experience. The Sunday workshops across the event were more focussed on undertaking some sort of practical action. John & Liz introduced the participants in their workshop to the basics of campaigning. The young people participating in the workshop were asked to go through that day’s newspapers and find a social justice issue about which they felt strongly. Then they had to find out who their MP was, what party they belonged to, what their particular interests were and so on. They then had to work out what they wanted their

MP to do, prior to getting in contact with them. It was left to them to decide how they would contact their MP.



A young person from Alex Sobel's Leeds NW constituency researching about his MP. Liz Firth tweeted “Amazing participants @PeaceJamUK doing some research on issues of injustice and learning from @battlejohn on how to work with MP’s to get them to hear your voice - many can’t vote yet but we’re getting them ready early! @TheyWorkForYou” which Alex promptly re-tweeted



John Battle looks on as a Bradford student rings his local MP to ask him about providing more aid to Yemen.

THE CHRISTIAN PEACE EDUCATION FUND –SUPPORTING PEACE WORK IN YORKSHIRE FOR 35 YEARS

2017 marks the 35th anniversary of the Christian Peace Education Fund (CPEF). The trust deed was signed on 19 November 1982 and the inaugural meeting of CPEF took place in London on 4 June 1983. The fund was set up by Pax Christi to support its own peace education work and to encourage and fund educational initiatives around the country. In November they held a special event to celebrate all the people and projects that they have supported.

Over that time there has always been a strong connection with Yorkshire.



One of the founding trustees of the fund was **Professor Paul Rogers** who, in the 1990's went

on to head up the Peace Studies department at the University of Bradford.

In 1985 the fund supported a group of Catholic sixth formers to have an exchange visit between Leeds and Belfast. The organisation of this exchange was managed by **David Jackson** from Shipley. He comments *"The Leeds Catholic sixth formers emerged from their short visit with some appreciation of the reality of sectarian conflict and its effects on families. They could no longer see things in simplistic terms and*



hopefully could develop a more empathetic approach to all those caught up in violence, and have a deeper appreciation of those who worked to reduce conflict with the tools of nonviolence. It is not

known

whether any of them became involved in any form of peace-making or education because of the visit. They might well have reflected that if peace-makers are blessed it is not a blessing lightly or easily won."

Tim Devereux applied to the fund and obtained a grant to help towards the costs of studying for a Masters Degree in Peace Studies at Bradford University. He writes:

"It was a great pleasure to attend the recent Anniversary event, and be able to say a double 'Thank you' to CPEF. Firstly, for the grant they made to me when I studied for an MA in Peace Studies at the University of Bradford in 1985/86. Funds were in short supply, and though my dear wife was happy to provide me with accommodation & food, I needed outside help for student essentials such as a microcomputer to word process my essays and dissertation. Between them, CPEF & my mother kept the wolf from the door!"



The other thanks was on behalf of the Movement for the Abolition of War. Tim did not waste his studying! – he is now Chair of this organisation. For the last ten years, CPEF has given considerable financial support for the annual Peace History Conferences. These have been organised by MAW members and others, aiming "to explore ways in which past experience and historical examples may shed light on contemporary peace and conflict issues."

Tim went on:

"My studies in the 1980's enabled me to have a much clearer understanding of the craziness and

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017

wickedness of the nuclear arms race. Perhaps the present US President could benefit from the taking the course – or just read and take to heart MAW's latest booklet "From War to Peace - Thoughts on the end of Warfare", a collection of quotations and illustrations."

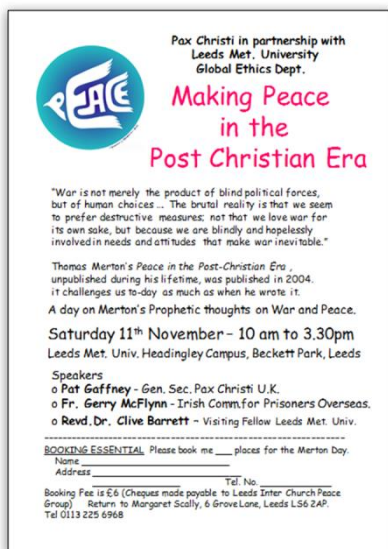
As a footnote to his emails, Tim includes the following quote – which is well worth repeating:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

President Dwight D Eisenhower

The **Leeds Inter-Church Peace Group** flourished in Leeds in the 1980's and 1990's. In more recent years it has morphed into an ecumenical **Leeds Pax Christi group**.

Over the years it has arranged various workshops, conferences, and Days of Reflection - a number of which received some level of support from the fund.



a Poster from an event in Year 2004

The key names that come up time and again are Fr Gerry MacFlynn (who works with Irish prisoners in UK jails), Pat Gaffney (General Secretary of Pax Christi for over 25 years now) and Rev Dr. Clive Barrett (Chair of the Peace Museum in Bradford). Clive distinctly remembers being on a demonstration in London during the 80's when he had just found out he was moving to Leeds. He saw a banner from the 'Leeds Inter-Church Peace Group' and knew then that the move 'up north' would work out OK.

In more recent times (2014), the CPEF supported an event organized by the Commission working with the West Yorkshire Network of Pastoral Musicians. This was to put on an evening workshop entitled 'Singing for Peace' with the American hymn writer **Marty Haugen**.



At the time he had just published a new book of hymns related to peacemaking. The CPEF grant enabled us to pay for Yorkshire to be included in his short UK tour. Many of his hymns have a justice or peace-related theme. Some of the most popular hymns in our hymnbooks today such as 'All are Welcome' or 'Here in this place' are by Marty. If you look, you will probably find many more that are not so well-known but should be – such as 'God of Day and God of Darkness' which very explicitly reflects on today's issues of inequity, Climate Change, Refugees and Migrants.

The **Movement for the Abolition of War** has a lovely book of quotes called "From War to Peace" – *thoughts on the end of warfare*. It can be bought from their online shop for just £2. See their website:

<http://www.abolishwar.org.uk>

Thinking that you might like to make a donation to CPEF?

All you have to do is reach for your phone!

Simply text cpef35 £5 to 70070 to donate £5 (if you are feeling generous you can put £10 instead)

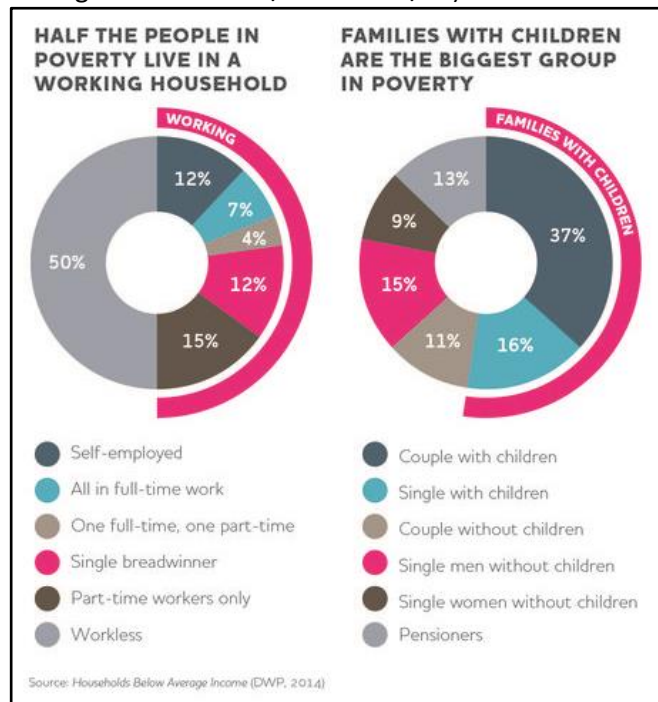
VIEWS: THE CHURCH, ‘FAMILY VALUES’ AND THE SCANDAL OF FAMILY POVERTY

By Joe Burns

The Catholic Church would self-describe as a strong advocate of ‘family values’: the importance of bringing up children in a loving atmosphere with two parents, being open and generous towards one another, praying, doing things together and supporting one another throughout life so that all members of the family can enjoy the full dignity that God has given them. In so doing they become closer to God through the love that they experience in family.

Of course, that is what life is like in an idealised world – not the world in which we actually live. The reality is that for many people family relationships are complex. In many marriages the relationship breaks down. For most families today both partners need to be in work in order to have enough money to enable them to even try to live a life with dignity. In turn, this leads to complications about childcare using both paid childcare and members of the extended family. For single parent families these problems are only magnified.

According to the DWP 3.9 million children (28%) are living in poverty (DWP 2016- Households below average income: 1994/95 to 2014/15).



The mantra from the Government is that people must get into work. However, work does not provide a guaranteed route out of poverty in the UK. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of children growing up in poverty live in a family where at least one member works. These are shocking statistics for a rich country like the UK.

So what are Catholics doing about it? All the work of helping people to make family life work better - by organisations like Marriage Care or the UCM - largely goes unnoticed, as does the tremendous family support given by SVP conferences up and down the country. The compassion and understanding shown by the workers and volunteers in these organisations is humbling.

As with a number of other issues today (such as help for refugees and migrants) we need to ask ourselves when compassion is no longer enough. At what point does helping people actually become part of the problem? – in that it enables Governments to continue to ignore the root causes of the problems or to actually compound them.

Three years ago the Commission raised this question in relation to Food banks. At the time the latest figures, from 2013, showed over 900,000 visits to food banks. In 2015 this had grown to 1.1million – and this is only the statistics from the Trussell Trust – which, though excellent, underestimate the situation as there are other local organisations that are also providing similar services.

A much bigger threat to family life than the tragedy of abortion or people entering civil partnerships is poverty and the loss of human dignity that it brings: missing meals so your children can eat, a life without choice, children who are mocked for their old clothes. If we, as Church, are really concerned about promoting family values then family poverty is a set of issues that we need to tackle in a big way. Giving a bit

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017

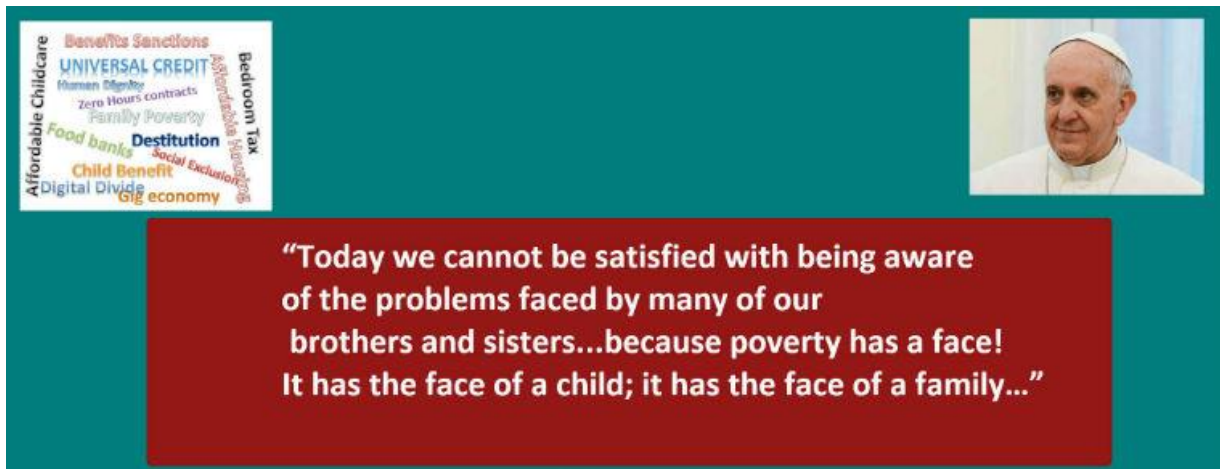
more when there is an SVP collection in your church might be a start – but it cannot end with that. When you have a small scratch an Elastoplast might be all you need; the family poverty in this country is fast becoming a festering wound and needs more drastic treatment. As Church, we need to start calling on our national and local Government representatives to enact policies that help families to obtain enough to live on and a home where they are not in danger of losing it on one month’s notice.

The mainstream press is now coming out with many stories relating to the hardships encountered by people who have to apply for Universal Credit. It is clear that this system is built on a false underlying set of assumptions about family life in Britain today. We in the Catholic Church in the UK run the same risk – of chasing the wrong priorities, focusing on the personal morality aspects of family life and ignoring the far greater danger from the loss of human dignity caused by living in poverty.

FAMILY POVERTY WORKSHOP – FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

Saturday 10 February 2018 10:30 – 15:30

Kala Sangam Centre, Forster Square, Bradford



The word cloud includes terms such as: Benefits Sanctions, UNIVERSAL CREDIT, Human Dignity, Zero Hours contracts, Family Poverty, Food banks, Destitution, Social Exclusion, Child Benefit, Digital Divide, Gig economy, Affordable Childcare, and Bedroom Tax. To the right is a portrait of Pope Francis.

“Today we cannot be satisfied with being aware of the problems faced by many of our brothers and sisters...because poverty has a face! It has the face of a child; it has the face of a family...”

As Catholics, we promote the importance of family life. Today, poverty is one of the key threats to families. How can this situation exist in 21st Century Britain? This lively event will mainly involve working in small groups and listening to short presentations and video clips examining and discussing questions like:

- What is poverty? Why are so many families falling below the poverty line?
- What can we, as Christians, do about it? - and does it need to be more than prayer and 'charity'?

Come along and engage with us in our exploration of these issues. FREE to attend but **registration is essential.**

There is a separate programme for young people aged 7-12 and a limited crèche for young ones. Refreshments are provided but, if possible, please bring along some (finger) food that can be shared at lunchtime.

Follow the link on our website home page for more information and to register

REFLECTION

Our God is a God who wants us to receive what he gives. He pours out his gifts in the world – the gifts of natural resources, the gifts of human skill, the gifts of human love and understanding – and he invites us to use them so that together we may find joy, together we may grow to maturity, together we may be glad and grateful for each other.

His purpose is justice: not an abstract idea of fairness, but a situation where every person has the fulfilment God desires for them, without interference from others who want – in Jesus' own words – to shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against them. 'You lock the door to the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces, and you yourselves don't go in, nor do you allow those who are trying to enter!' says Jesus to his enemies in Mt 23.12.

Archbishop Rowan Williams' sermon to the Anglicans in Zimbabwe

Sunday 9th October 2011

BRADFORD PEACE MUSEUM FAITH AND PEACE PROJECT by Liz Firth

How often do we hear religion being blamed for the wars of the world? The argument goes that, as there is a religious dimension to the mess in the Middle East, Islamic State, Northern Ireland... so religion must be a force for bad.

Yet within each of the three Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – there is a priority of peace, a vision and longing for peace over violence. A new exhibition exploring the theme of peace within different faiths, glimpses the textual and practical search for peace in each of these "Religions of the Book". It tells stories of their peace-makers. It shows how each stresses hospitality and welcome for the stranger, including the stranger of other faiths.

Faith and Peace is sponsored by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship and illustrated with images of artefacts in the collection of the Peace Museum in Bradford.

Women and Faith and Peace

Liz Firth, Peace Education Worker and Trustee of the Peace Museum and member of the Justice and Peace Commission has been working with local groups of women in Bradford at different community venues and places of worship. The

groups were Syrian refugees who recently arrived in Bradford from Syria, members of the Shine Creative Threads group who meet at St Stephen's church in West Bowling in Bradford and a group of women from different faiths who met at Bradford Cathedral.



Stitching a *Tree of Life for the Healing of the Nations*, or working on a faux-stained-glass representation of Naomi and Ruth, biblical refugees from famine, or creating a book of link prints has been a formative experience for

these women.

Peace be with you

What priority do we give to peace-making and nonviolence in our own faith? Seeing *Faith and*

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017

Peace encourages us to work creatively with people of other faiths, side by side to learn the things that make for peace.

We hope that the exhibition will provide the opportunity to reflect on the male and female heroes for peace, on Jesus's teaching and example against violence, and the importance of working alongside neighbours of other faiths. If we all act on the imperative for peace-making in our own faith, perhaps others will see that religion is not the problem but part of the solution for the peace of our world.

Exhibition

The exhibition was installed at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford and will be exhibited in Leeds and Bradford next year as well as further afield. Liz will be hosting more workshops with local women



to create new pieces of artwork as well as facilitating stand-alone workshops on the themes of the exhibition with other local groups.

Liz.firth@peacemuseum.org.uk

IT'S CHRISTMAS – LET'S TALK MORE ABOUT LIVING SIMPLY!

There are now 30 parishes in England & Wales who have obtained this award. St Benedict's in Garforth is still the only parish in our diocese. The parish of our Lady of Kirkstall in NW Leeds has now submitted their plan and are working towards the award. They undertook a parish survey earlier in the year so they have a good basis for judging whether the actions that they take are making any impact at the whole parish level. A couple of other parishes have shown some interest.



People from John the Baptist cathedral in Norwich where they recently obtained the Live Simply Award.

See the front page of our website for some ethical ideas for last-minute Christmas shopping.

There is also now a schools programme related to Live Simply and a lot of work with schools is going on in the Liverpool Diocese. Anyone in Yorkshire interested?









Climate Change is one of the 3 key priority areas where the Commission is concentrating its efforts. The Live Simply Award is much wider than just being about caring for creation but it is an important element of the award. If you would like to do something in your parish but are unsure about where to start or think you need some help then get in touch with the office and we will do all we can.

The workshop we ran in June 2017 produced lots of enthusiasm – but it is always more difficult to sustain that when you get back to your home community and find that there are only a handful of you prepared to do something. CAFOD do provide good support. However, we would encourage you to get in touch with us if you want to explore any possibilities. A key point in *Laudato Si* is about 'community conversion' and action and this is a great way to go about it and the Commission will help in any way that it can.



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017

EVENTS

 <p>Sat 16 Dec</p>	<p>LEEDS CITIZENS LIVING WAGE ACTION AT LEEDS UNITED <i>Elland Road Stadium, Leeds, 13:45</i> J&P Supporters in the Leeds area would be very welcome to go along to this Christmas action by Leeds Citizens which is part of their Living Wage campaign. They are targeting Leeds United to pay the Living wage to its lowest paid employees. If you think you might join in then please email them to let them know, in case there are any late changes or details: mailto:info@leedscitizens.org.uk?subject=Leeds United Living Wage Christmas Action</p>
 <p>Sun 14 Jan 18</p>	<p>PEACE SUNDAY 2018: MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES – SEEKERS OF PEACE As usual, Pax Christi has produced a range of resources for use on this day Every parish is sent a resource pack but you can also download the materials for free or purchase prayer cards and there are children’s liturgy activity sheets that you can download as well. See their website: www.paxchristi.org.uk</p>
 <p>Mon 15 Jan</p>	<p>FEEDING BRADFORD NETWORK MEETING <i>The Storehouse, 116 Caledonia Street, Bradford, BD4 7BQ 13:00 – 15:30</i> This network is open to all those who are providing emergency food to those in need, whether via a formal food bank, hot food on the streets, a pay as you feel cafe or in any other way you have found works! Or feel free to come along if you're interested in supporting efforts to end hunger locally in the Bradford area.</p>
 <p>Thu 18 Jan to Thu 25 Jan</p>	<p>“THAT THEY ALL MAY BE FREE” – WORLD WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY The theme for Christian Unity in 2018 follows easily from the Pope’s theme for World Peace Day. The World Council of Churches have prepared detailed resources to enable churches to deliver special services or incorporate suitable prayers into existing services and masses. Printed copies can be purchased but they are also available for free download-simply go to the Churches Together website and click on the Christian Unity week block: https://ctbi.org.uk/</p>
 <p>Wed 31 Jan</p>	<p>DIOCESAN REFUGEE RESPONSE ONE YEAR ON <i>Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds LS6 2BX 19:00 – 21:00</i> Everyone is welcome to come along and find out more about volunteering for the organisations that support refugees and asylum seekers across the Diocese. There are many different ways in which to help and this event will be a good opportunity to hear what the needs are and to discover where you might want to offer your skills and enthusiasm. Refreshments will be provided.</p>
 <p>Sat 10 Feb</p> 	<p>FAMILY POVERTY: FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION <i>Kala Sangam Centre, Forster Square, Bradford BD1 4TY 10:30 – 15:30</i> Poverty is a real and frightening threat to family life for many people today. How do we, as Christians, respond? – and should we be doing more than providing direct help to people? Come along and join in our exploration of this important set of issues that should concern all Christians who want to promote family life. This workshop is free to attend and families are especially welcome. Booking is essential. See the advert on the front page of our website and follow the link.</p>
 Find us on Facebook	Follow us on Facebook to help keep up to date with the key campaigns that the Commission is supporting.

Please forward this email E-News onto 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.