



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2019

WE MUST REDOUBLE OUR EFFORTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

CAFOD and other development agencies believe countries' efforts so far have been inadequate to the challenge in front of all of us. Whilst the UN summit in Katowice, Poland agreed on most of the fundamental aspects to implement the Paris Agreement, the responses to the urgent and vital questions on increasing governments ambitions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions did not match the scale of the problem. Neil Thorns, Advocacy Director of CAFOD, has commented *"Once again, leaders have ignored the science and the urgent cries of the poorest communities who are on the front line. Governments must go home, raise the ambition in their national plans and bring them to the UN Secretary General summit in September. As we've heard often in the last two weeks, tomorrow is today - we cannot wait."*

This needs coordinated action from all of us – and CAFOD are launching a new strand in their Climate Action campaigning this month. Keep an eye on the CAFOD website to see more details:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate/Climate-Change>



SPRING 2019 DAY OF REFLECTION: CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Saturday 30 March 10:00 – 4pm

SS John Fisher & Thomas More, Burley in Wharfedale

A day of prayer, some short inputs, discussion and time for personal reflection about our place in God's creation and our responsibilities towards our common home.

This day is free to attend but anyone wanting to come is asked to book a place by emailing jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk



SCHOOLS **JOURNALISM COMPETITION 2019**

Are you a budding journalist?

We are looking for students (aged 15-18 inclusive) to write an article or make a video report that informs, challenges and raises important issues on the topic:

"The Challenge Of Climate Change"



Who could you encourage to take part?

For more details see the Columban website especially for this competition:

www.columbancompetition.com/

Do you know a young person who is passionate about climate change? –

Show them this competition by the Columbans – which is open now and entries must be submitted by February 8 2019. Entries must be less than 1000 words.



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PAID WORK OPPORTUNITY WITH THE J&P COMMISSION



Last month we reported that we have received funding to work with people aged between 16 and 30 on issues of Social Justice. ***We need someone (or an organisation)*** who can do the activities of this exciting new project.

The work that we need doing includes developing a set of 1-2-hour workshops about issues of Social Justice that will engage young people and then (over a period up to 31 Dec 2020) facilitate at least 36 of these workshops in parish, school and college settings. The workshops will need to be promoted to key people in the diocese and there will be some administration around monitoring and evaluation of the work. Our aim is that by the end of the project there will be some self-sustaining groups of young people, working on issues of social justice through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.

We are looking for an individual or organisation with a passion for social justice, experience of working with young people and facilitating small groups and an understanding of the organisation and networks of the Catholic Church.

In total we have a budget of about £19,000 for someone or some organisation to deliver these activities (including travel) . Our expectation is that individuals will be self-employed.

If you are interested – or think you know someone who might be interested – then please email the office (address in header) and we can send out some more detailed Terms of Reference for this work.

THIS LENT STAY SILENT FOR A CHANGE

Join siLENT in solidarity with young people who don't have a voice, and raise money so young people can make a change.



The Million Minutes organisation, organiser of the Million Minutes Awards, is encouraging people to sign up to raise money for their projects which are all aimed at helping young people. Take a look at their website for more details to get your parish or school community signed up.

<http://millionminutes.org/>

A PILGRIMAGE TO PALESTINE by Anne Tracy

In November I was fortunate enough to be able to take part in a study tour of Palestine and Israel organised by ICAHD, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. It was particularly focused on discovering what daily life is like for Palestinians today in Israel and the occupied territories known as the West Bank.

Jews have suffered centuries of persecution in Europe, culminating horrifically in the Holocaust; it is a terrible history, and the claim for a Jewish homeland is something that I fully accept. However, a previous visit to the Holy Land and much of what I have read, raised serious questions for me about the way Palestinians are being treated by the Jewish State of Israel, (this is how it names itself) and I wanted to know more. The tour introduced us to Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Moslems and Christians who are seeking a just peace. Some of these were also human rights lawyers, medics, journalists, psychologists, and UN workers.

For five days we were based in Bethlehem. It was a poignant place to be so near to Christmas, and for this article I would like to focus mainly on some of our experiences there.

CHECKPOINT 300. We drove from Jerusalem, entering Bethlehem through Checkpoint 300. For us as tourists, this was a simple process - a check of the driver's papers, and we were waved through. Early the following morning however we began to see the effect the barrier has on the people who live in Bethlehem. We walked down to the checkpoint at 5.30 am. It was still dark. Crowds of men, and a few women, were streaming down the road and milling around the barrier. Unemployment in Bethlehem is high, so many people work in Jerusalem, ten miles to the north. Shockingly, the checkpoint begins as a long narrow cage, resembling nothing so much as the kind of metal holding pens you might see in a



cattle market. We watched as hundreds of people, crammed together, and already looking tired, inched their way towards the checkpoint itself where young armed soldiers inspected the permits. An old man was refused. Without a word he turned, his face rigid with unreadable emotion. Outside the barrier, I spoke with Amir, a middle-aged man, part of the diminishing Palestinian Christian population. He makes his living selling glasses of thick Arabic coffee to the waiting men. He told us that his family used to own a little land, enough to keep a few chickens etc but twenty years ago it was taken by the State of Israel. At the time he was a first-year university student. He was arrested for throwing stones during a street protest and was imprisoned. By the time he got out, his university career was over, and because of his prison record he knows he will never be given the permit needed to work in Jerusalem, so he sells his coffee and remembers.

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AIDA REFUGEE CAMP: Just behind the main road into the city centre, lies AIDA Refugee Camp, one of 19 such camps in the West Bank. We were invited to visit it. Aida is not a temporary camp made up of tents. It is more like a poor and densely overcrowded township, with little in the way of shops or infrastructure. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency say 3150 people live within its 0.071 sq. km boundaries. There are five watchtowers overlooking it, and along one side, the Wall. Frequent incursions by the army take place, usually during the night, when boys are taken away and questioned by the military - traumatic and scarring experiences for them and their families.

In 1950 Aida was provided by the UN for the refugees from 26 villages. The names of these 26 villages are written up on walls in the camp and people keep the keys to their old homes as a sign of hope and resistance. Meanwhile they do what they can, creating a colourful playground for the children, and a cultural centre, where vegetables are being grown on the roof.

LAND SEIZURES: One Sunday, while trying to discover the times of Mass in the Church of the Nativity, I fell into conversation with the owner of a small olive wood shop near Manger Square. His family too had once owned land, in their case enough to produce thousands of litres of olive oil a year making them a comfortable living. "One morning", he said, "I went to groom my olive trees and there were soldiers who told me the land no longer belonged to me." Land seizures are far from being a thing of the past. Many times, we heard accounts of land being taken and houses being demolished or taken over. The United Nations office in the West Bank reports that between 2009-2016, Israeli authorities demolished or seized over 4,800 Palestinian – owned structures in the West Bank and East Jerusalem alone.



Following the establishment of the State of Israel, around 750,00 Palestinians were driven from their homes. Palestinians call this 'the Nakba' – 'the Catastrophe'. The people fled across neighbouring borders or became internally displaced in their own country.

We travelled to the Negev, the vast and beautiful wilderness of southern Israel. Once it was dotted with Bedouin villages, but now few remain, as people are steadily forced to move into small urban townships where Bedouin culture and their agricultural way of life cannot exist, although they try hard to maintain it. We saw where a village had been demolished to make way for a forest, another was to be demolished for the road to an Israeli settlement. In the village of Al-Sira, we were given lunch in a house with demolition number 67 posted onto its door. But the people are actively resisting. As it says on the wall of a village community hut, 'To Exist is to Resist' - it's that simple.

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THE WALL: The Wall, or Separation Barrier, comes through Bethlehem where it takes the form of a sheer 26 foot -high concrete wall dwarfing everything around it. Once completed, the barrier, made up of walls and fences, will be 440 miles long and visible from space. It cuts families off from their olive groves; and creates numerous checkpoints, necessitating permits which must be obtained before travelling to hospitals, or work, or to transport farm produce to market in Jerusalem. The wall is famously graffitied by Banksy - to a mixed reception from Bethlehemites. The wall certainly does not 'keep the Palestinians out,' as tens of thousands of Palestinians live within Israel itself, and thousands more who live in the West Bank work in Israel. Some, like Israeli academic Jeff Halper, argue that its real purpose today is political and demographic; 85% of its convoluted route is built in Palestinian land, and it snakes around illegal Israeli Settlements placing them on the Israeli side of the Barrier.



We did not see any overt violence during our stay, but plenty of evidence of demolitions. We saw the tight military control of the West Bank, and heard many accounts of arrests and disproportionate punishments. We saw what Catholic Social Teaching identifies as Structural Injustice - injustice that is deeply embedded in

discriminatory laws, regulations, systems, attitudes and values.

Thousands of pilgrims go to the Holy land every year, but they are often bussed into the holy sites and out again, unknowingly passing the sites of demolished villages and never really having a chance to meet the people or hear their stories. There are Pilgrimage Tours that include some acknowledgement of the Palestinian experience, and we should look for these. There are also the ICAHD tours and projects that I took part in, and excellent 'Witness Tours' run by Christian organisations such as Sabeel- Kairos and The Amos Trust, that combine Pilgrimage with an experience of the social and political realities. These can all be found on-line.

The people we spoke to had no easy answers, only a determination for justice and a longing for peace, so that they can just get on with their lives. We were often thanked for coming and asked to tell people what we had seen. Palestinian hospitality is warm and welcoming, they love visitors to come. The food is wonderful, and for tourists it feels very safe. It's a never to be forgotten experience.

ICAHD is an international organisation started by Israeli writer and academic Jeff Halper. It includes both Palestinians and Israelis. See their website for more details:-

<https://icahd.org/>

We often advertise events put on by Sabeel Yorkshire.

The Amos Trust is a Human Rights organisation that works in Palestine Israel amongst other places

<https://www.amostrust.org/>

SYRIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT UPDATE FROM SETTLE

It is now two years since the inaugural meeting of the Diocesan refugee Support Group. Last year's meeting was attended by over 100 people. One of the speakers was Sean Ryan, He is the National Coordinator for the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) of the Community Sponsorship Scheme run by the Home Office for resettling Syrian refugee families accepted into the UK.

One parish that has taken up the challenge is St Mary & St Michael in Settle. Initially working with Settle & District Churches Together, the parish project has now extended to a community-wide project with 90 local supporters. Work proper started at the end of summer, making a huge amount of progress as the following report highlights.

There is a team for each of the following:

Housing – This group have undertaken various explorations of how to get a property for a long term (two year) rental and hope to sort something out soon.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) – community sponsors must provide each adult 8hrs formal teaching and 4hrs conversation. The response from the community has been extraordinary: they have assembled a fantastic team committed and already skilled/qualified to provide ESOL in-house. One wrote and supervised the 'Talk English' scheme used for the first refugees in Wakefield. Two sets of premises have been offered in Settle for teaching and conversations including the library where there is IT access and space for a creche if needed. Many social groups have indicated they will encourage the family to join their activities if they wish e.g. gardening.

Family, welfare, education, benefits – this team is responsible for much of the day-to-day settling in of the family. Planning a welcome at the airport and how to transport everyone together,

Refugee ReSettlement Community Sponsorship Group

To welcome, protect and support a refugee family



It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the global scale of the refugee crisis – but there is something practical we can do.

Refugee ReSettlement Sponsorship is an initiative by local community volunteers to help a refugee family settle and flourish in the UK. We aim to welcome one family into Settle and support them to find housing, jobs, language lessons, schools and doctors. We will offer friendship and advice, and empower the refugees to become self-sufficient.

We will work with the Government and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) who select the family from refugees known to them.

We need



A House to rent
with a two year contract
(rent will be paid)

- > A minimum fund of £9,000.
- > Volunteers to help with all aspects.

Do you want to help?

For further information, to offer help, support or donations towards the support fund please contact: settle.refugee@gmail.com



[Leaflet explaining the scheme](#)

Welcome packs/info, initial money, welcome meal. They will organise volunteer rotas to ensure the family are supported but not overwhelmed. They will help with getting the family registered with a local GP and with a local dentist. Solace UK, based in Leeds, has a therapy programme specifically for Syrian adult and child refugees and covers Settle.

Settle primary school have been very supportive and keen to accept/help integrate the family (most families prioritised by the UNHCR have had younger children). Giggleswick school offered extra-curricular support and attendance at a summer school.

They have also had offers from a local working in Jordan to bring back spices that would be familiar and from a Lebanese gentleman who volunteers for the Refugee Council. He takes the Skipton refugees to Manchester once a month to shop in Arab Street, "just like in Syria you have everything your heart desires".

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Safeguarding – A team of 4 have been assembled. Catholic Care, as the sponsoring charity, provides governance and takes safeguarding responsibility.

Publicity & Communication – it is important to have the community aware and on-board to welcome the new family. 1,000 flyers have been printed. The group had a stall at Settle lights switch on, and have had articles in U3A newsletter and Settle Community News. Paul Kelly the Project Lead addressed Settle Town Council and Giggleswick Parish Council. They are generally supportive; the Mayor is arranging a councillor to act as liaison. One Town councillor offered help finding employment.

Finance – sponsorship from Catholic Care (Diocese of Leeds) enables them to claim Gift Aid using Catholic Care's charity number.



Stall explaining the scheme

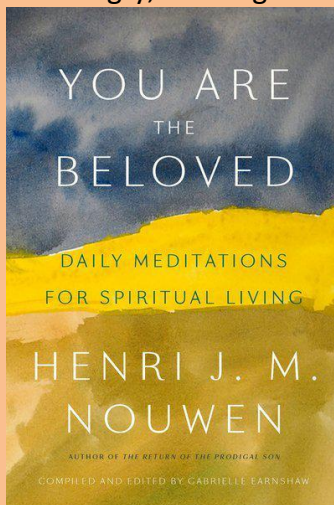
Some generous donors have helped them to feel confident of covering the minimum £9,000 required by the Home Office but they will need a larger cushion to cover all expenses for 2yrs. Various fundraising activities have already taken place and more are planned.

There will be a lot more to this story and, hopefully, we will be able to share some of it with you as it progresses.

Want to find out more? – See the event on the back page on February 12.

REFLECTION: Re-creating God's Presence

All Christian action- whether it is visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or working for a more just



and peaceful society – is a manifestation of the human solidarity revealed to us in the house of God.

It is not an anxious human effort to create a better world. It is a confident expression of the truth that in Christ, death, evil, and destruction have been overcome.

It is not a fearful attempt to restore a broken order. It is a joyful assertion that in Christ all order has already been restored.

It is not a nervous effort to bring divided people together, but a celebration of an already established unity.



This action is not activism. An activist wants to heal, restore, redeem, and re-create, but those acting within the house of God point through their action to the healing, restoring, redeeming, and re-creating presence of God.

Part of a meditation published in *You are the beloved* by Henri J.M. Nouwen, compiled and edited by Gabrielle Earnshaw, New York: Convergent, 2017, p.214



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EVENTS

 Fri 18 Jan Fri 25 Jan	<p>WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY <i>Organised by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland – look out for events in your local area</i> The theme for 2019 is based around Deuteronomy 16:18-20, 'Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue...'. Material for 2019 originates from the churches of Indonesia, where there is a strong emphasis upon the need for unity alongside the nation's ethnic and religious diversity. See their website for more details and resources https://ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer</p>
 Sun 20 Jan	<p>PEACE SUNDAY 2019: GOOD POLITICS SERVES PEACE See the usual set of wonderful resources from pax Christi http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/peace-sunday/</p>
 Sat 26 Jan	<p>YORKSHIRE CND AGM: HOPE IN THE AGE OF TRUMP <i>Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, Leeds LS1 5EB 14:30 – 17:00</i> All are welcome to come along and hear their speakers: Prof. Paul Rogers – Overview of Global Challenges, Janet Fenton – Progress of the UN treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Fabian Hamilton – The Peace Doctrine – restructuring UK foreign policy.</p>
 Tue 05 Feb	<p>LEEDS PEACE LECTURE: ROUTES TO PEACE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD <i>Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 1UR</i> This annual lecture is to be given this time around by Prof Paul Rogers, Emeritus Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford. Professor Rogers must be one of the most widely read, thoughtful and engaging speakers around about peace and the state of the world today.</p>
 Tue 12 Feb	<p>BRADFORD REFUGEE RESPONSE <i>7 to 9pm. St William's Parish Centre, Ingleby Road, BD8 9AJ.</i> An opportunity to hear about the Community Sponsorship scheme and volunteering with organisations supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Bradford area.</p>
 Sun 03 Mar	<p>CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY SUNDAY - National An opportunity to reflect on poverty in our liturgies and to take action. See the CAP website for resources and ideas about what to do http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday</p>
 Fri 15 Mar	<p>CAFOD LENT APPEAL FAMILY FAST DAY - National As usual, CAFOD have some great resources on their website to help parishes take part in their Lenten appeal. Please think about what you could do in your parish.</p>
 Sat 16 Mar	<p>UNDERSTANDING MODERN SLAVERY <i>Leeds Church Institute 20 New Market Street, Leeds, LS1 6DG 10:00 – 16:00</i> Join the Learning Network, the Salvation Army, All We Can and JPIT for a day exploring modern slavery: Save the Date</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.

[See our website for full details of these and other events that may be of interest](#)