

**OUR NEW VIRTUAL J&P WORLD** by Helen Hayden

In these extraordinary times we are living through, it has been necessary for many people to radically change the way they work - including the Justice and Peace Commission. Many of us experienced the Easter services live streamed from St Anne's Cathedral, through the internet, into our living rooms. It has been impressive how quickly people and institutions have adapted to the restrictions. This has meant a rapid assessment of etiquette in these new and strange situations but many of us are appreciating being able to see friends and family on video calls, enjoying quizzes and virtual birthday parties! Live streaming of Mass will never replace physically being with other people in church and being able to receive the Blessed Sacrament however I am very appreciative of being able to engage in the Mass in this virtual way.

At J&P we quickly signed up to Zoom and have been conducting virtual meetings and it is good to see people even if we sometimes get interrupted by little ones! Joe Burns and I joined a Zoom conference



hosted by Citizens UK with over 250 other people. It worked incredibly well, and the subject was virtual and online campaigning. The conference's main input was from Nona Jones who as well as being a Pastor of their Church community in Florida advises Facebook on Faith Communities. She introduced us to the excellent resource hub [www.facebook.com/community/faith](http://www.facebook.com/community/faith). Nona likened a Facebook presence to a home. The Facebook page is the 'front porch' which is viewed passively by people passing by and then you can invite people in by

setting up a Facebook group in which people can engage and participate in discussions. This is a safer area as it can be controlled by the host and is much more interactive and targeted. We already have a 'front porch' so perhaps it is time to be developing Facebook groups where people can safely share their thoughts about particular issues.

There are issues in this brave new world, we have received warnings about 'Zoom bombing' where people are able to join meetings to which they haven't been invited. There have been reports of people having their accounts hacked through 'Houseparty' another online video chat website. The biggest and most important issue is of people not being able to access the internet either due to financial reasons, lack of experience or both. As I marvelled at the number of people watching the live feed from St Ann's on Good Friday, I couldn't help wonder how many people would have attended services around the diocese who could not watch on YouTube. Although technology is enabling us to stay in touch, share information and stay safe in these times of crisis, there is a danger of the very people we are most concerned about, being left on the margins of our virtual communities.

When we evaluate the outcomes of this crisis, we may decide that we want to carry on some of the practices we have developed to carry on during the lockdown. There are benefits, environmentally and community wise. Zoom could be a great way to involve a much wider cross-section of the diocesan community – people for whom attending a meeting in Leeds, for example, would simply be too difficult -especially in the evening.

However, we must be careful not to leave out the very people we need to include and protect.

## PILGRIMAGE, PALESTINE AND ACTING JUSTLY

Many people hope that one day they can go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land; to see for themselves the places where Jesus walked and where key events in the bible are thought to have taken place. All of us want to be able to identify better with the Gospel stories that we have heard since we started going to church. Even though there may be modern towns in those places there is something special about being where events have actually taken place.

What we sometimes forget is the context in which Jesus lived and the tragedy of the similarities of his situation with the situation that exists in the Holy Land today. We want to understand more about Jesus, so we crowd out the modern-day elements and, often, envisage a Holy Land full of holy people and idealised places. Adverts for Holy Land pilgrimages often reinforce this mental image.

Jesus' family fled to Egypt to avoid the danger to their lives – they were refugees in Egypt. When they returned to Palestine, they returned to a region that was under military occupation by the Romans. In order to crucify Jesus, the permission

of the Roman authorities had to be obtained – and it is worth remembering that the official charge against Jesus was subversion – plotting to overthrow the state! Today, most Palestinian people live under occupation by the Israeli Government. They suffer fierce restrictions on where they can go, the documentation needed in order to be able to travel and the seizure of much of their land (despite international agreements to the contrary going back to the period following the 1967 war). The Israeli government has, for some time, been building a 'security barrier' to separate Israeli land from Palestinian land. This has also resulted in much hardship for most Palestinians. This is the Holy Land today.

The situation raises some ethical dilemmas for Christians. How can we go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land without supporting the terrible injustices inflicted on the Palestinian people today? – It is a question many of us will shy away from – it goes in the "too difficult" box. The last thing I want to do is discourage anyone from going to the Holy Land. However, I believe that there are things that we can, and should, do to ensure that we limit our complicity in the injustices that are ongoing.



Typical Pilgrimage Brochure picture of Jerusalem

This was one of the key areas that the new Peace & Nonviolence Issue Action Group of the Commission explored at its first meeting. This took place just before the lockdown was

imposed. This group of volunteers come from parishes and church communities across the Diocese – including Skipton, Mytholmroyd and the wider Leeds area. It also includes Tricia

Griffin, a member of Sabeel Kairos in Yorkshire and part of the organising committee of the Leeds Palestinian Film Festival.



**Pilgrims from the Leeds Diocese next to the 'Security' barrier**

We had all sorts of ideas about what we could do to promote the idea of pilgrimages that took better account of the current situation in the Holy Land. These ranged from a 'preparation evening' for those going on an organised pilgrimage to the Commission taking the lead in organising a pilgrimage itself (something it did in 2013 – which is where the picture above was taken).

At this point we felt that building awareness amongst would-be pilgrims was the most useful thing that we could do. This could be done through producing written or online resources – but there are many of those already in existence.

The real question is how to engage people in exploring the issues involved.

We felt that some sort of 'Pilgrimage Preparation Evening' would be a better way forward. This could be offered to any parish that was organising such a pilgrimage. Holy Land pilgrimages are not a cheap holiday and people want to get the most out of the experience. We thought we could capitalise on this interest by developing a format to specifically address people in a parish setting. The evening would include some tasters of the sorts of food that you can expect to find (food is always a good idea for an event of this sort!) as well as some basic information about how Palestinians have to live day to day and the opportunity for people to ask questions from people who have had first-hand experience of the plight of Palestinians today.

The group had a number of ideas for other sorts of events to build awareness of the plight of Palestinians. These included having a Day of Reflection as well as participating in the 2020 Leeds Palestinian Film festival (assuming it all goes ahead!). These are all things that you will hear more about as we work out the detail of what we can offer – even if it has to be a virtual offering!

### **ISSUE ACTION GROUPS – HELP US DISCERN THE ACTIONS TO TAKE TO RESPOND TO THE 'SIGNS OF THE TIMES'**

As reported earlier this year, the Commission has set up 3 Issue Action Groups to help us decide what actions we can take on our key priority areas

#### **Peace & Nonviolence**

The Commission agreed that for the next 12 months at least this group would focus on the Israel Palestine situation and the article above reports on this group's first meeting.

#### **Climate Change**

This group has had an initial meeting via Zoom – and there will be a report in next month's newsletter

#### **UK Poverty**

This group has yet to meet but we hope to arrange this soon

If you are interested in joining any of these groups then simply email

<mailto:jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk>

We would be delighted to welcome new members

## SPARK SOCIAL JUSTICE GOES VIRTUAL

It was only last month that we were reporting on the 300 or so young people who have attended SPARK workshops in the last few months – using drama to explore issues of social justice such as UK poverty and the devastating impact that it can have on people’s lives.

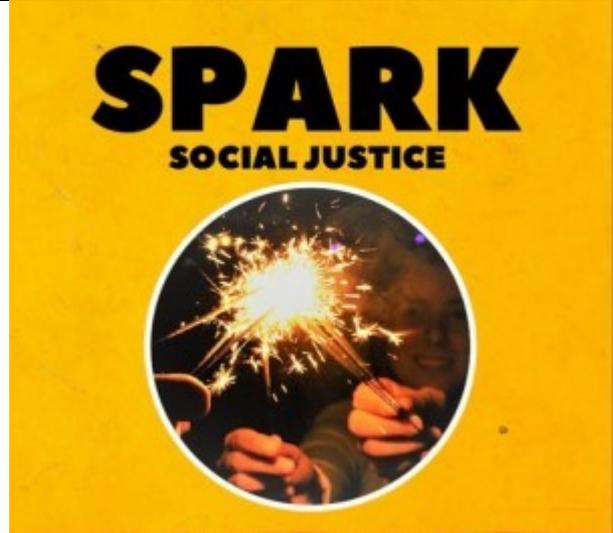
With the lockdown, of course, all workshops are off. It seems unlikely that the project will be able to engage directly with young people before September at the earliest.

There were 3 settings where some of the people involved in the workshops were ready to start a Social Justice group. This is a key goal of the project and there is a real danger of losing the momentum that has been building up. Some members of the Project Steering Group have been meeting via Zoom to try and re-orientate the project to work with the new circumstances and to understand what opportunities (as well as problems!) there might be to achieve the goals of the project in this different situation.

The Project Director, Aoibheann Kelly, is in the middle of organising an initial set of 4 video sessions aimed at our target audience (anyone aged 16-30 in the Leeds Diocese).



The first session will be with Marc Besford, a member of the Project Steering Group and National President of YCW (Young Christian Workers). He will be discussing examples of inspirational youth leadership.



Other sessions include Tom Chigbo (Senior Organiser for Leeds Citizens) discussing how to start a social justice group and another will be an interview with John Battle, Chair of the Commission.

At first, we considered delivering a number of live Zoom sessions. However, the schools we have been working with were keen to have recorded sessions where they can share the link more widely.

Like many people at this time, we are feeling our way in this situation. The imperative, from the project perspective, was to do ‘something’. We will evaluate any comments we get back from these initial sessions and take it from there.



For more information about the project or to get your school or university involved then please email [Aoibheann.kelly@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:Aoibheann.kelly@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)

**CHARITABLE ACTION?** by John Battle, Chair of the Commission

The Easter Alleluia hymn for morning prayer could not be more prescient in these times:

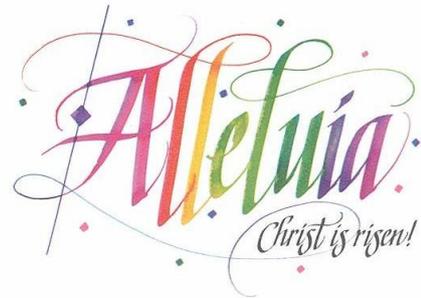
*"Then Life and Death together fought, alleluia,  
Each to a strange extreme were brought, alleluia".*

Certainly, the coronavirus pandemic is not allowing us to move too quickly through the Paschal Mysteries this year. Yet the Gospel message urges us to move forward. As scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann reminds us in his "A Gospel of Hope":

*"The Easter miracles happen here and there, and the people of God sign on for the mystery of God's transformative work. We covet the moments when the power of death and injustice do not prevail in the world. We bear witness to God's steadfast love".*

Well before the pandemic broke out there was practical evidence of that transformative work of Gospel action helping the homeless, assisting asylum seekers and refugees, and helping provide for and support food banks for those in need - not least in our own Diocese. Some of this work was through traditional institutional charities such as the local conferences of the St Vincent De Paul Society and the St Vincents Community Support centre in Leeds ( a national 'beacon' project) and the St George's Crypt for the homeless. More often it was quiet personal and generous action that kept these needed supportive services going.

The necessary institutional support and funding in recent times of austerity has proved difficult to sustain as charities and voluntary organisations have suffered from lack of access to grants and core funding and institutional support. At times of increasing need and demands, keeping going has been proving harder and harder. The hollowing out of local institutional community support with the demise of community centres, tenants associations and local charitable and voluntary organisations has often led to schools



and churches as the only means of coming together, often leaving the Jo Cox Foundation to stress the need to "tackle isolation".

Without doubt the personal response the coronavirus "lock down crisis" has been one of generous individual commitment. Spontaneous food banks have sprung in place such as at St Vincent's Centre, community centres and We Care Leeds - collecting and distributing food. Some local councils have reorganised quickly, setting up community "hub" distribution and help points in conjunction with local charities. But as, We Care Leeds stress, they are a temporary quick response "stop gap" which does not mean test or assess need. This is not sustainable or funded for the long term.

In other words, the generous individual response to calls for help are not a substitute for the necessary longer term "transformational" action which requires the rebuilding of institutional frameworks of support in local communities. In doing this there is a role for parishes. Things will not be the same as the pandemic subsides, but nor should they be. We need to move from individual generosity to sustained structural supportive work.

In the encouraging words of Pope Francis this Easter:

*" Let us not lose our memory once all this is past.  
Let us not file it away and go back to where we were. This is a time to take the decisive step"*

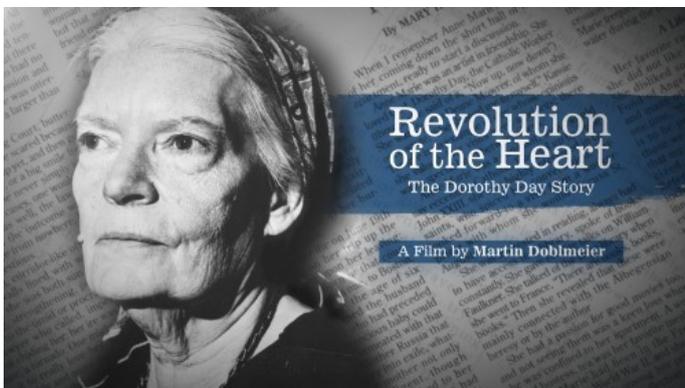
Pope Francis Easter 2020

**REVOLUTION OF THE HEART: THE DOROTHY DAY STORY** a review by Carol Burns

This new documentary by Martin Doblemeier (who has made a number of films previously about people such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Reinhold Niebuhr), is an engaging watch. It's just less than an hour which makes it suitable for showing in small groups and it will certainly spark discussion.

You can see a trailer here .

<http://journeyfilms.com/#>



If you don't know much about the founder of the Catholic worker movement you will learn a great deal.

Whilst sympathetic to Dorothy Day and all she achieved it also doesn't shy away from the many contradictions in her life. She was complicated as we all are and sometimes hard to live with. She required great sacrifices from herself and those closest to her including her own daughter.

There are interviews with two of her grandchildren Martha Hennessey who is a peace activist herself and Kate Hennessey the youngest of Tamar's children who has recently published a biography 'Dorothy Day The World will be saved by beauty' (Simon and Schuster 2017) Also interviewed are Jim Wallis of Sojourners, Robert Ellsberg one of her biographers and Martin Sheen, famous for his acting, but also a peace activist of some courage

The documentary is beautifully crafted posing some interesting questions. Was Dorothy Day a Christian anarchist, and/or a very traditional and obedient Catholic?

As well as her commitment to protesting against the involvement of the USA in the Second World War and Vietnam she is also shown supporting other causes such as those of the fruit pickers protest with the iconic photo of her sitting in the midst of the protest with Cesar Chavez.

Dorothy Day believed very strongly in personal responsibility as well as the need to fight structural injustice and the Catholic Worker Houses of Hospitality were the practical outcome of that. British audiences might want to reflect on her judgement that people shouldn't need to go for welfare and that the Worker houses should offer food and shelter. Our very different welfare system may mean that we respond differently to these dilemmas ( for example the London Catholic Worker house offers hospitality to asylum seekers.)

I have read a number of biographies of Dorothy Day and I still learnt new things about her in this documentary

I would especially recommend one of the extra features which interviews people with different views about whether she should be canonised. She, herself, is frequently quoted as saying '*Don't call me a saint. I don't want to be dismissed so easily.*'

The DVD is unfortunately only available from Amazon at the moment as the makers of the film don't seem to be shipping to the UK.



For more information about the Catholic Worker Movement see

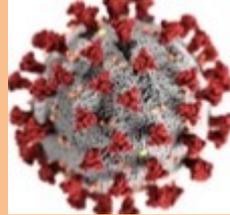
<https://www.catholicworker.org/>



## REFLECTION: IN A TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

As of today, like many of you, I have been in self-isolation for several weeks. Honestly, it is a bit like when I sometimes go on a hermitage during Lent; except now, of course, my prayers are with the innumerable people who are ill with COVID-19 and so many who are grieving loved ones who have died. My heart is heavy for the health care workers, first responders, and other essential workers who continue to put themselves at risk every day. I'm also concerned about the many people now facing financial challenges, or whose marginalization has only been made worse by the virus. This type of prayer leads us to experience solidarity with the suffering.

For all the helpers, including people like yourselves who are doing what you can to meet the needs of loved ones and those who are



suffering, I offer this excerpt of a prayer from my friend Mirabai Starr, who is a translator of Teresa of Ávila's works:  
You [Teresa] lived that beautiful balance

Between active service  
And quiet contemplation.  
Teach us to be of use in this troubled world  
At the same time that we cultivate  
Joyous intimacy  
With the Beloved who lives inside us.

*Richard Rohr Daily Meditations  
Sunday 19 April 2020*

**See the Centre for Action & Contemplation**  
<https://cac.org/>

## EVENTS

*Online Events and Webinars plus key dates and some events that may still be going ahead*

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| <br><b>Wed 22 Apr</b><br><b>Fri 24 Apr</b> | <p><b>Earth Day Live 2020</b><br/> Earth Day Live will feature a three-day livestream where millions of people can join activists, celebrities, musicians, and more in an epic moment of community and hope for the future. It's American -but don't hold that against them<br/> Take a look at their website and decide for yourself<br/> <a href="https://www.earthdaylive2020.org/">https://www.earthdaylive2020.org/</a></p>  |
| <br><b>Sat 25 Apr</b>                      | <p><b>Online World Conference: Abolish Nuclear Weapons; Resist and Reverse the Climate Crisis; For Social and Economic Justice</b><br/> <i>Organised by the Global Coalition of Peace Organisations from 2pm UK time</i><br/> This international online conference will provide a unique opportunity for the world's nuclear disarmament campaigns, allied movements and organisations, and diplomats committed to banning and eliminating nuclear weapons to amplify our abolition demands. It will also be livestreamed if you prefer not to register.<br/> <b>Register by using this link</b><br/> <a href="https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5lrJBZFPSzKJA_B6Qu2xXw">https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5lrJBZFPSzKJA_B6Qu2xXw</a></p> |



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| <br><b>Thu 30 Apr</b>                    | <p><b>Communities Taking Action for Social Justice in COVID-19</b><br/> <i>Organised by Citizens UK – of which the Commission is a member 16:00 – 17:15</i><br/>         Training webinar to enable faith leaders to run local community organising campaigns to protect the poor and the marginalised – especially those most affected by the Lockdown (and, in case you were wondering, we are all faith leaders!)<br/> <b><i>If interested then please email <a href="mailto:jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk">jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk</a> and we will send you the details of how to register as a supporter of the J&amp;P Commission</i></b></p>   |
| <br><b>Fri 15 May</b>                    | <p><b>International Conscientious Objectors Day</b><br/> <i>Worldwide</i><br/>         This day is marked around the world each year on the 15 May, to raise awareness of those who stood up to protect their rights to refuse to kill and refused to participate in armed conflict. The day was first established by the International Conscientious Objectors’ Meeting (ICOM) in 1985. The ICOM was an annual meeting of COs and their supporters throughout the world, created to exchange ideas and offer solidarity.</p>   |
| <br><b>Fri 17 Jul –<br/>Sun 19 Jul</b>   | <p><b>2020 Vision – Action for Life on Earth – NJPN Annual Conference</b><br/> <i>The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire</i><br/> <b><i>Still going ahead at the time of publication</i></b><br/>         A weekend devoted to how we can better reflect on how to care for our Common Home. Workshops, Just Fair and keynote speakers in the lovely surroundings of the Hayes Conference Centre. See their website for booking details – you can go for the whole weekend or just go for the day on the Saturday <a href="https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/">https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/</a></p>  |
| <br><b>Fri 24 Jul –<br/>Sun 26 Jul</b> | <p><b>Nothing can separate us from the love of God</b><br/> <i>The Bi-Annual Conference of the National Network of Pastoral Musicians – also at the Hayes Conference centre in Derbyshire</i><br/> <b><i>Still going ahead at the time of publication</i></b><br/>         This conference is directed at all those with an interest in church music – but there theme this year is tagged “Facing the challenges of a divided country and Climate Change” – themes that will have more than a little appeal for supporters of the J&amp;P Commission. Their keynote speakers and workshop leaders include Marty Haugen (who we have hosted). Chris Walker and Bob Hurd. More information is available on their website <a href="http://nnpm.org/NNPM/National_Events.html">http://nnpm.org/NNPM/National_Events.html</a></p> |
| <br><b>01 Sep –<br/>01 Oct</b>         | <p><b>The Season of Creation 2020</b><br/> <i>Worldwide</i><br/>         This season was created in 1989 in the Orthodox church and endorsed in 2015 after Pope Francis published <i>Laudato Si</i>. We are all encouraged to ensure that our liturgies reflect the need to care for our Common Home during this season. Needs some ideas? – Then take a look at <a href="https://catholicclimatemovement.global/">https://catholicclimatemovement.global/</a></p>  |

***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**