

Justice and Peace Diocesan Gathering

By John Battle

Chair of the Justice and Peace
Commission, Leeds



On the 24th June 2020 we held the annual meeting of our Leeds Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission as an open "gathering" on "Zoom" to announce the refocussing of our project work; responding as a Diocese to the climate crisis, developing our parish "Poverty in the UK" workshop pack as an on line resource and reasserting tackling peace and non-violence. These priorities were discussed in 'break out' groups and we have three Action Groups working on these priorities which people are welcome to join. The discussions were very productive and uplifting, thank you to all who contributed.

We introduced our new project organiser, heard from our young person's J& P "SPARK Social Justice" worker and Christine Allen director of CAFOD was our guest speaker. Aoibheann Kelly, our SPARK project director, explained how the project has gone online, using YouTube for young people to access videos with interviews inspiring young people to get involved with social justice issues. There will be an autumn programme for each educational setting of Zoom meeting where young people can come together to work to tackle social issues.



Christine took us on an illustrated tour guide of the work CAFOD is continuing to support in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Bangladesh, Ecuador and Jerusalem - despite the lock down at head office. CAFOD, despite the serious pressures of Covid19, is still out there tackling poverty and fostering real longer term development. For CAFOD the short term issue is a drop off of funds to support the projects.

Throughout the diocese in recent years we have been welcoming and supporting those fleeing from the conflict in Syria and their families. Now, there are accounts of a currency collapse and soaring food prices, half the population going to bed hungry and over a million facing starvation. This is causing great distress for Syrian refugees settled in Yorkshire, as they still have relatives there. Syria faces an immediate food emergency and governments must press now for international aid to be allowed into Government run and rebel held areas alike to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.



In the UK, it is reported that not all have struggled equally under Covid19 lock down and some report they are better off! Some who have mercifully avoided or have survived the illness and have stayed in may well have found they have saved a bit. Not all pensioners for example find themselves out of pocket and have saved by not going out. Perhaps some of that saved surplus could go to CAFOD who need it now to continue helping the poor and desperate and promoting CAFOD's "Summer of Hope". Their work "saves lives" too. On top of the Summer of Hope appeal, CAFOD is part of the DEC Emergency Coronavirus Appeal and people can donate by clicking the link here

<https://tinyurl.com/y9nslk65>



CAFOD has joined forces with the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) to help millions of vulnerable people whose lives are at risk as the coronavirus pandemic spreads across refugee camps and countries suffering conflict.

Families who have been forced to flee their homes in places including Syria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, now face another deadly threat as coronavirus takes hold in new areas. There are not enough hospital beds or supplies to treat those who fall ill, and families face hunger as a result of lockdowns, price rises and job losses.

We need to reach and protect the most vulnerable who have already lost everything.

Summer of Hope

You and your family are invited to be part of a Summer of Hope to ensure clean water and food reaches some of the poorest families in the world during this global emergency.

The Olympics, the Notting Hill Carnival, Glastonbury and Euro 2020 might be some of the fun things that are on hold until next summer - but we can still come together as a sign of hope by raising money for communities who need it most during the coronavirus crisis.

Diocesan CAFOD worker Bronagh Daly comments "After seeing the phenomenal community spirit emerge from the recent lockdown in the UK, we want to inspire the nation to remain hopeful this summer by recreating at home the events you'll be missing"

<https://cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news/Hope-for-our-world>



Caritas Leeds: Criminal Justice Inquiry

By Rev. Dr. Joseph D Cortis

Coordinator for Caritas Leeds



Caritas Leeds, an umbrella organisation to bring together existing charitable and social action groups across the Diocese of Leeds, was launched in September 2017

www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/caritas/

Marking the 'Third International Day of the Poor' in November 2018, an open meeting was held and invited to consider issues relating to people living with disabilities, homelessness, families and young people, prisoners/ex-offenders, with the aim of following the attendees hearing the points presented to the larger group they then voted on the strength of the case presented. This strategy was carried out to identify two Diocesan priorities which Caritas Leeds would lead on.

The two priorities which carried the most votes were prisoners/ex-offenders and families and young people.

An open call-out together with a targeted approach was made to gather people who were interested in exploring the issue of prisoners and ex-offenders. A steering group was formed which then became a group of Commissioners who would formulate the strategy for the inquiry and then engage in the collection of evidence.

The 15 commissioners bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience from within the criminal justice system and included two barristers, a former magistrate, a former MP and cabinet minister, an ex-assistant chief constable, an ex-forensic psychologist and prison visitor, a prison chaplain, a chief executive of a charity working with ex-offenders and others with a variety of voluntary roles and experiences from the third sector. All Commissioners were formally approved by Bishop Marcus.



A briefing paper was developed and approved by the Bishop which included the following aims for the inquiry:

- Increase Catholics' knowledge and understanding of the UK's criminal justice system and the experiences of people in our Diocese who encounter it.
- Explore and reflect on different models of restorative justice
- Encourage Catholics to take more action to support people encountering the criminal justice system and address the injustices they may face.
- Make practical recommendations for change.



A press statement was developed with the Diocesan Communication Officer which was picked up by the Catholic Universe and the Yorkshire Evening Post. A designated section for this inquiry was set up within the Caritas Leeds website:

www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/caritas/criminal-justice-forum/

This briefing paper also identified a strategy for site visits and or themed roundtable discussions with key stakeholders engaged in the criminal justice system which included the courts (crown and magistrates) personnel working within the legal sector, local authorities and policy makers, enforcement and prisons, probation and employment, faith and third sector agencies and the media.

In order to achieve a degree of consistency to the inquiry a template was created for commissioners to use to gather evidence. This had broad areas covering purpose, experience, challenges and successes, and change. Each of these broad areas had specific questions to aid clarification. Each contributor to this inquiry was invited to check the record of the meeting for accuracy.

Commissioners had twice the opportunity to review the reports collected with the purpose of identifying where they perceived a gap in evidence or a deeper approach is required. It also offered an opportunity to cross-reference the evidence gathered.

A public hearing event took place in November 2019 offering the attendees the opportunity to listen to testimonies from a senior member from the probation service, two different charities working with ex-offenders focusing on rehabilitation and employment, a senior police officer engaged in supporting victims of crime.

The audience took part in a quiz about the criminal justice system and discussions about what came out from the testimonies they heard and offered some suggestions for this inquiry.

A second public hearing was scheduled to take place in May 2020 but had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Caritas Leeds secured funding from the Diocese to employ a person to carry out a thematic analysis of the evidence collected, write a formal report, and produce on-line resources aligned to the aims of the inquiry, the four target groups (prisoners, ex-offender, families and victims of crime) and draw up a list of recommendations for action. This employment through Heather Tomlinson started on 20th. April 2020 of a 6 month part time basis (15 hours a week).

There is also a presence on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/CaritasLeeds>

Caritas Leeds will be holding a public event on Monday 19th. October 2020 between 2.00-4.00 with contributions from the Bishop of Leeds and the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

For further information please contact Rev. Dr. Joseph D Cortis, Coordinator for Caritas Leeds on joseph.cortis@dioceseofleeds.org.uk



Christian CND Anti-nuclear Weapon Statement: Bishop Marcus Signs Up

By Tim Devereux

(St. Joseph's Pudsey & Leeds Pax Christi group)



Our Bishop, Marcus Stock, has signed Christian CND's ecumenical statement by clergy for the 75th Hiroshima/Nagasaki anniversary (6th & 9th August); my Parish Priest Father Peter Kravos has signed it; and yes, I did ask them to, and they responded

promptly and positively. The statement does not mince words:

"As Christians we reject nuclear weapons. We believe that their capacity to indiscriminately kill millions of our brothers and sisters, and to catastrophically destroy God's creation, makes them contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ."

It echoes the words of Pope Francis, who said in 2017 that humanity cannot fail

*"to be genuinely concerned by the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of any employment of nuclear devices. If we also take into account the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, **the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned ...**" (emphasis added).*

Our Church has moved on from accepting the Cold War-era global system of nuclear 'deterrence' and mutually assured destruction.

Yet our Government clings to its delusions of nuclear club grandeur, and in the face of reason, economics and morality, pursues a £205,000,000 up-grade of the Trident nuclear weapons system.

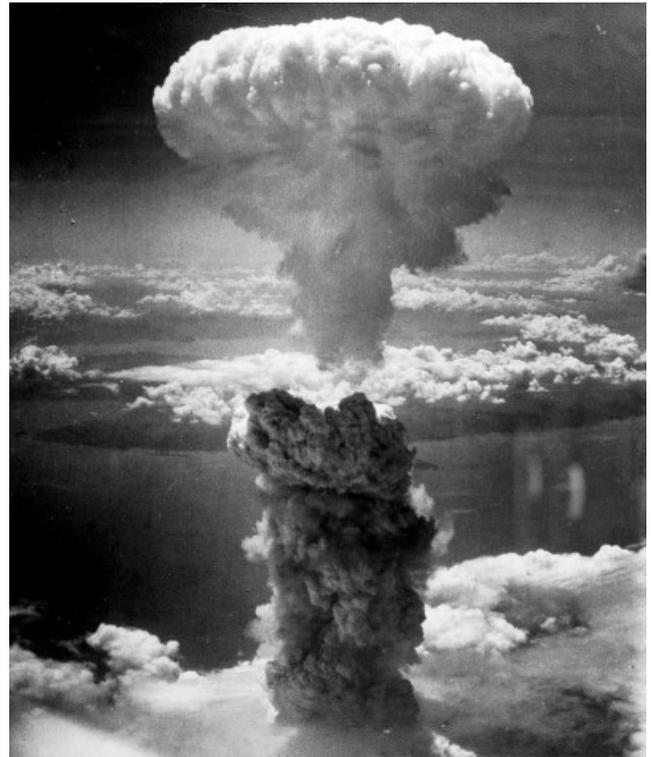


Figure 1 The Bombing of Nagasaki, ©Wikimedia commons

Pax Christi are running morning reflections at 8am between 6th August and 9th August. See their event calendar at <https://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/events-calendar/>

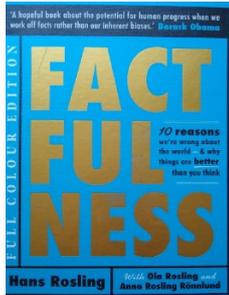
Or email info@paxchristi.org.uk to ask them to send you the link to the first Zoom session

The statement and list of signatories are at: <https://christiancnd.org.uk/statement-on-the-anniversary-of-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-bombings/>

WE COULD ALL DO WITH A BIT OF 'FACTFULNESS'

By Joe Burns

Treasurer J&P Leeds



Every day we seem to be bombarded with statistics of one sort or another in connection with the Covid-19 crisis. The phrase 'the scientific evidence leads us...' is one that is frequently heard. If you ever needed any persuading about the importance of having a modest statistical education, then our current predicament should be motivation enough. Well, it is either that or just ignore all the 'experts' altogether and read the tea leaves (and they are not as common as they used to be).

We might not know the precise definition of GDP but we know that the countries with the smallest GDP are the poorest in the world. We might not know the precise UK Government definition for someone in the UK living in poverty – but we do need to know that there are nearly 4 million children in the UK that come under this Government definition – and that is something about which we should be taking action.

However, there is a great tendency to try to simplify things. So, in a global context, we speak of the 'countries of the North' and the countries of the 'global South', 'developing' countries and 'developed' countries, 'rich' and 'poor' nations. What this does is create pictures in our heads about what it means to live in a 'rich' or a 'poor' nation.

The trouble is, it simplifies our pictures to the extent that they distort our understanding.

This is one of the issues explored by Hans Rosling in his book '*Factfulness*'. It is a book that I thoroughly recommend to everyone. There is no getting away from it: this is a book about statistics! It is about all the sorts of statistics that anyone interested in understanding poverty and inequality needs to know about. It is the only book on statistics that I have ever come across that is a real 'page turner'!

Rosling's interest is in getting people to get beyond the Rich/Poor dichotomy. So, instead of splitting countries and individuals into two categories he splits them into 4 categories by income. That's not difficult to understand is it? However, merely by doing this he transforms the way in which we can view the world. It helps us understand the world in a much more practical way – and it has real implications in terms of the policy measures that should be taken to improve the lives of the world's poorest.

Whilst the book contains lots of bubble charts and other graphs, it is his storytelling style that takes you along with him in his exploration of the world. He was (he died of pancreatic cancer in 2017) a doctor who spent time working in Mozambique and became a professor of International Health at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm. The humility of his self-deprecating stories and his total commitment to helping people understand the world better shine through in his narrative style.

The book itself starts off with a quiz. You can take the quiz online, see the link below. I cannot recommend this enough – you might be surprised at the results. I hope it encourages you to read the book: you will not be disappointed.

<https://factfulnessquiz.com/>



At this time

Dear Lord,

At this time of pandemic,

Let us foster respect and solidarity with others,
especially those who are weak or poor.

Let us remain calm and ignore unsubstantiated
rumours.

Let us take advantage of living together as a
family.

Let us attend to moments of prayer.

Let us cultivate responsibility, patience and
hope.

Amen.

*Prayer adapted from a radio message from
Rodolfo Valenzuela Núñez, Bishop of La
Verapaz, Guatemala*



Events

Helen Keller on belief in the value of one's own tasks

The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of
its heroes, but also by the aggregate of tiny pushes of each honest
worker.

I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to
accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble.

My share of the work may be limited, but the fact that it is work
makes it precious.





 Wed 22nd July @ 6pm	CAFOD Mass At 6pm on Wednesday 22 July, join CAFOD online to pray and sing together at Mass celebrated by Fr Liam Hayes. Click here to register https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/Eucharistic-Celebration
 Wed 29th July @ 6pm	CLIMATE JUSTICE FORUM Global Justice Now is bringing together it's staff and activists for a climate forum. They will share about the work they are doing collectively to fight climate change, learn from each other and discuss what comes next. To register click here https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/event/climate-justice-forum/?instance_id=261
 Thur 30th July	Catholic Nonviolence Initiative – Spreading the Word and the Vision Join Pax Christi to hear more about nonviolence and the work of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative – but also to take part in sharing your own thoughts and ideas. Be ready with paper and a big pen to write your own message about nonviolence for a Zoom Gallery photo. Pope Francis says, ‘...the true battlefield, where violence and peace meet, is the human heart.’ An event led by Pat Gaffney. Email info@paxchristi.org.uk for joining instructions – which will be made available near the date
 6th – 9th August	Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75th Anniversary Events Yorkshire CND events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki For more information please see https://yorkshirecnd.org.uk/hiroshima-and-nagasaki-75-years-on-commemoration-events-6-9th-august-2020/
 Tues 8th Sept 7.30pm – 9pm	J&P Leeds Commission Meeting This is a regular meeting of the Commission where we review our projects and try to discern how the signs of the times should influence how we spend our time and money resources. This will be an online meeting using Zoom. Anyone is welcome to attend. If you are interested then please email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk and we will send you any papers relevant to the meeting – along with the Zoom link.

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