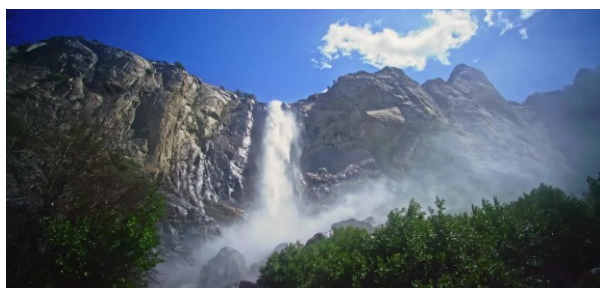


Age of Meditation and Praise?

by John Battle

Chair of Justice and Peace Commission, and Helen Hayden.

The American social justice activist Fr Daniel Berrigan once surprisingly recommended an instruction of the Buddha; "Don't just do something, stand there!". The impact of the Covid lock downs and enforced stoppages has apparently resulted in people watching more TV and films, reading more, clearing out cupboards and doing home improvements as the main daily fill in occupations. Meanwhile health workers, scientists, politicians and businesses are working their utmost to defeat the virus and sustain the economy. It is increasingly clear that we are moving into a "new normal" which demands radically new economic thinking. In other words, we are now in a Covid enforced time of deep reflection. Our Churches too are locked back with restricted access with limited social supportive action in our communities and prayers at home regarded as the option. Some churches are managing to provide "on line Mass" but struggling with real liturgical participation.



SEASON OF CREATION HEARING THE CRY OF THE EARTH AND THE CRY OF THE POOR

Recently the Leeds Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission organised a "Zoom Liturgy" to mark the Church's "Season of

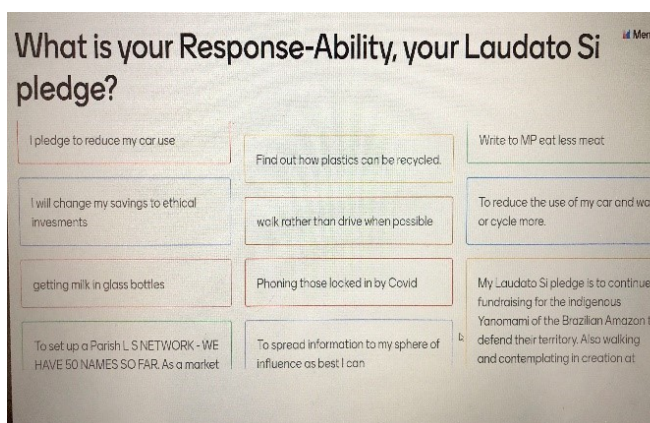
Creation " launched by Pope Francis, structured around readings and images from the seminal encyclical "Laudato Si: the cry of the earth and cry of the poor". Significantly focussing on "ecological conversion", it was not a desperate account, reinforcing a catastrophic sense of fatalism.



Rather the prayers and images centred around the great "Creation Prayer" of St Francis stressing the theme of "praise" and our role as "co- creators", whose "response-ability "could make a difference. When asked to sum up briefly what in the face of climate degradation we could now do. Sir David Attenborough replied: "Tackle waste". Perhaps that should include "time" and instead of wasting the lock down hours we should use this time opportunity to together deepen our prayer and reflections in a new age of meditation and praise.

It can be difficult to adapt to this online, digital reflection and prayer. The atmosphere is very different when you are looking at a screen as opposed to being physically with people in a reflective space. However, at a time when we cannot participate fully in the mass, especially the livestreaming services, online video platforms offer a way of bringing people together to pray, reflect and share their experiences in safety. At our recent 'Season of Creation' liturgy we were able to

hear from five 'modern prophets' sharing their experience of hearing the 'cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'. One of our younger prophets who is studying at university in Glasgow was able to share his thoughts on a video which we then played during the liturgy. This is meant that we heard his powerful testimony even though he was not able to join us on the evening. This was one of the advantages of a digital platform as well as the fact that people are able to join us no matter where they live and there is not the problem of transport and the added advantage of less contribution to our carbon footprint and no contribution to poor air quality.



People were able to share their commitments to change something or start something having been inspired by the Season of Creation and Laudato Si. We used Mentimeter, which again poses issues of suitable reflective ambience but the ideas and pledges people shared were positive and life affirming. Ideas included 'Get an allotment', 'Not to buy fruit and veg in plastic packs', 'Talking to my MP re: climate change' 'To stop, sit still, pray' In total there were 34 pledges made; some were on the theme of reducing car use, appreciating and reflecting on nature, to reduce plastic use, to nurture and be inspired by grandchildren. Others emailed their pledge later as not everyone

was able to use Mentimeter. Reflecting on the commitments filled one with such hope that there was so many people prepared to make a difference and create a future Pope Francis describes in Laudato Si.

We ended our liturgy with a prayer from Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si which reminds us of the sin of indifference but also reminds us of a hopeful future of justice, peace, love and beauty.



The feedback from participants (there were about 60 people joining in), mainly by email, was overwhelmingly positive and the Commission would like to thank everyone who took the time to get in touch. The comments were generous in their understanding and patience of technical glitches which will always threaten to occur when we are so reliant on technology, the internet and digital streaming. We will learn from this liturgy so that future liturgies are timed more effectively, with less material and more time for personal reflection.

The next liturgy will take place at the beginning of Advent on the **3rd December at 7.30pm**. The theme of this liturgy will be Poverty and it will be held online, using Zoom. There will be prayers, reflections, hymns and opportunities to hear from those with lived experience of poverty in our communities. Details to follow.

**J&P LITURGY OF CREATION REFLECTION
OCTOBER 1ST 2020**

By David Jackson

ONION

Here is an onion - just come back from the Onion Catechism class. I asked if it could remember the questions and answers - It has a fantastic memory: 'Who made you? God made me. How did God make me? God made me with earth, air, fire and water. Fire? Why did God make you? God made me to be peeled, chopped and eaten in this world and..... I stopped Onion before this went too far. How does God peel you? God peels me disguised in lots of different ways

Do God's eyes water when he peels you?
YES! NOW WE can ask - How does God peel my onion?



Onion

WHAT DISGUISES DOES GOD USE TO PEEL ME? - so I am led to care for creation, working for climate, social justice?

GOD COMES DISGUISED AS EVERYBODY - TO NAME JUST A FEW –and the Divinity starts as soon as or even before I am born– disguised as my FAMILY, my TEACHERS – the whole community of the 'followers in the court of the King's Son' then and still now – THEY ALL INSPIRED ME TO GET PEELING!

**GOD AS CHRIST CAME DISGUISED AS
CREATION AND PEELED ME**

– I became an 'earthling' on foot, on a bike, on foot, swimming, playing at the start of my creation with my pals – the sons and daughters of God. I was inspired to love nature – walking in, almost wanting to "eat" landscape, seascape. I have watched birds since God (disguised as) a Teacher in Primary school passed on his passion for all that lived. John Leedal. A GREAT ONION PEELER!

VATICAN 2 – PEELED ME - A gang of us have grown old peeling and being peeled, disguised in the dream of a church renewed with inspirers here, in Peru, through J&P, Pax Christi, CAFOD - inspired and inspiring onion peelers all.

Then INTERFAITH DIALOGUERS - members of other Christian families and **OF OTHER RELIGIONS PEELED ME** – the Catholic layers REVEALED OTHER RELIGIONS peeled by friends Mushtaq, Rajinder, Joniah, Rachel to reveal the beautiful rich layers of the onion hidden beneath – lovely layers getting juicier as we got nearer the onion's centre!
INTERFAITH AND INTERSPIRITUAL DIALOGUERS and INSPIRERS – peeling away to get to my centre! God in the disguise of many faces – playing there. Is that Gerard Manley Hopkins?

TODAY: I AM BEING INSPIRED TO EXPLORE THE LOVELY CENTRE OF THE ONION OF ME AND THE WORLD BY GOD DISGUISED AS THOSE WHO **PEEL SLOWLY** – THE CONTEMPLATIVES of silence and THOSE WHO **PEEL QUICKLY** – those who act for justice – inspiring me to listen to the cries of the poor and of the earth. Lately folk like Ann, Trish - LAUDATO SI ANIMATORS /

INSPIRERS. You lot! But Especially the young ones! GRANDCHILDREN MOST OF ALL!!

SLOWLY WE BEGIN TO SEE GOD, CHRIST, THE SPIRIT - PEELING US ROUND AND ROUND IN A GREAT DANCE WITH ALL THESE OTHERS, PEELING TO GET TO THE CENTRE, TO OUR HEARTS AND REVEALED IN ALL NATURE – WE SEE THERE THE UNIVERSAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST (OF GOD). **ONE BIG ONION** make up of all of us - ONE INSPIRER, GOD ALL IN ALL! THE ONIONS DANCE! WE ALL JOIN IN THE DANCE WE CALL THE TRINITY WITH ALL THAT EXISTS! ONE BIG ONION.

Makes your eyes water!

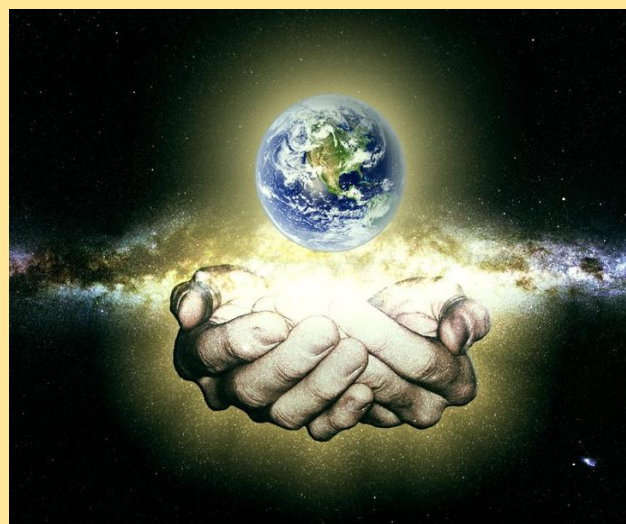
THE CHALLENGE: Mark's Gospel: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."

So we help one another and our damaged church. WE PRAY FOR **great discernment and kindness**, that the messages of Laudato Si become part of its DNA – its bloodstream - so that we can go slowly from our centre BUT work URGENTLY, peeled clean, to hear and heal the cries of the poor and of our world. We say with Lazarus's sisters: 'Lord the ones you love are sick. Lord the world you love is sick'. Help us to heal the ones you love and the world which lies sick.

A FINAL PRAYER:

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God,

Amen.



WHAT DOES EMPOWERING JUSTICE LOOK LIKE IN OUR TIME?



The Eucharist bursting out of a tabernacle in El Rosario church in San Salvador

An online Day of reflection with Fr Diarmuid O'Murchu

Sat 21 November
10:00am – 4:00pm
Via Zoom

Come and join us as we explore this question through
-prayer
-talks by Fr Diarmuid
-quiet reflection and
-small group discussions

Sign up via Eventbrite <https://tinyurl.com/jandpnov2020>
To sign up requires paying a donation of at least £1

Over the course of the day Fr Diarmuid will give 3 talks:

- ***Empowering One Another in a time of Crisis.***
- ***Empowerment and Liberation in the name of the Gospel***
- ***Holy Spirit: Source and Inspiration of Empowerment***



Diarmuid O'Murchu is a member of the Sacred Heart Missionary Order,. He has facilitated programmes on Adult Faith Development across the world. He is the author of many books including 'Quantum Theology' (1996 - revised in 2004), 'Ancestral Grace' (2008), 'Jesus in the Power of Poetry' (2009), and 'When the Disciple Comes of Age' (2019).

SPARK Social Justice Project Update



By Helen Hayden

As reported earlier in the year the Justice and Peace Spark Social Justice Project quickly adapted to the lockdown restrictions. As schools were closed and everyone was encouraged to stay at home, the SPARK project went online. A series of recorded episodes were produced, with our young people taking the lead, interviewing a number of inspirational people, including our own J&P Chair John Battle. A new YouTube channel was launched and the videos went from strength to strength throughout the summer, attracting over 1000 views in total. The top video for views was the powerful conversation with Sr Katrina Alton 'Staying Faithful' in which she explains why she feels it is her faithful duty to take non-violent direct action. The project also gathered momentum on twitter, attracting up to 209 new followers.

Although the schools and universities returned in September, it is impossible to visit and work with our young people in person. Following consultation with our partner education settings, an autumn programme of interactive, live online meetings with young people was launched. The weekly sessions involve young people and Lay Chaplains from three sixth forms; Notre Dame Sixth Form College, St John Fisher's Harrogate and St Mary's, Menston. So far, Marc Besford, President of Young Christian Workers, and Rosa Lewis from Caritas Westminster, have encouraged the

young people to consider effective leadership; develop their own leadership skills; identify how they can use their own gifts and talents to help others and look at examples of how other young people have made a positive difference in their local communities. These meetings will continue up to Christmas and a number of different speakers have been invited to share their own experiences, with particular emphasis on how faith and community can bring about positive change. As part of the series, young people will also have the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas about social justice issues creatively with visiting artists. Under the guidance of their Lay Chaplain, students at Notre Dame have already set up a social action group and the young people who attend the weekly SPARK get-togethers feedback what they have learnt to their social action group in college. The hope is that other partner schools will follow a similar process with a view to creating self-sustaining Social Action Groups in each of the educational settings.

The Justice and Peace SPARK Project has already led to an exciting opportunity for one of the young interviewers, Tom Allan. Inspired by his excellent involvement in hosting the SPARK YouTube episodes, the Million Minutes charity are now developing a new podcast series with him as the main host. This is a great example of how the SPARK Social Justice project can have a long-term impact in a different way and inspire others too.

The success of SPARK in these challenging times is testament to the innovative, resourceful approach by project director, Aoibheann, whose response to the challenges of a global pandemic have resulted in our young people continuing to be inspired and given opportunities to influence and improve their own experience, communities and the future.

J&P SPONSORS FILM & DISCUSSION EVENT IN 2020 LEEDS PALESTINIAN FILM FESTIVAL

The Leeds Palestinian Film Festival provides an opportunity to find out about the Palestine Israel conflict from various angles – and with stories that are rarely told in the mainstream media.

Last year we took the step of sponsoring a film called 'Voices Across the Divide' – with voices of Palestinian and Jewish people who had mainly emigrated to the USA. We showed the film in Wheeler Hall of Leeds cathedral and straight afterwards Commission Chair, John Battle, chaired a discussion about the issues raised by the film.

About 60 people attended this screening and we thought it was a good way of surfacing the issues whilst at the same time listening to the voices of people with first-hand knowledge. So, we decided to take part again in 2020.

As with so many things, the festival this year has gone online. As a result, the festival films will be available via an online platform for a fortnight starting on 14 November. This includes the film that we are sponsoring – featured in the panel below. If you wish to see the film, you must book through the festival site. People who sign up can also submit questions about the panel discussion taking place on Wednesday 25 November. We are still finalising the panel for our discussion.

JEW'S STEP FORWARD

Available to view Sat 14 November – Sat 28 November

To book, go to www.leedspff.org.uk



This powerful new documentary features 24 diverse American Jewish voices across the demographic divide, sharing their thoughts on cultural identity, the proud Jewish contribution to social justice, their evolving views of Israel, and the importance of Jewish values and conscience.







J&P MODERATED DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ISSUES RAISED

Wed 25 November 2020

7:30pm

If you sign up to view the film (minimum charge £3) then you will also have the opportunity to submit questions about the issues raised by the film and an invite to join the online discussion on 25 Nov. There will be a panel of 4 speakers with John Battle chairing the discussion.

EVENTS

 23rd Oct- 25th Oct	Reimagining the Promised Land This is an online festival with prominent speakers, discussion, music and worship on creativity and imagination, spirituality and activism, organised by Green Christian. More details at www.greenchristian.org.uk/
 24th Oct 9.45am- 3.45pm	Bonhoeffer: Responding to the Climate Crisis: Theological Reflections The Board of Project Bonhoeffer are pleased to announce that the annual Dietrich Bonhoeffer day conference will still go ahead, despite COVID-19 restrictions. The day will be held over Zoom, and will be focused on Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the current climate emergency. Keynote addresses will be made by Prof Peter Scott, University of Manchester and Christine Allen, Director CAFOD. More details at www.projectbonhoeffer.org.uk
 Wed 04 Nov	Hearing the Cry of the Poor and Disadvantaged This is one of a series of online speaker events organised by ACTA. What kind of Church are we becoming? What kind of Church will we be in the future? Dr Clare Watkins, Reader, Roehampton Institute will present a keynote address and there will be opportunity to discuss the ideas in small groups. For more details see: www.acalltoaction.org.uk/
 7th Nov 2 -3.30pm	Peace Building in the Post-Covid World This is the Movement for the Abolition of War Annual Remembrance Lecture. It is being given by Fabian Hamilton MP, shadow minister for peace and Disarmament. This is a Zoom event with a simple registration on the MAW website www.abolishwar.org.uk
 14th – 28th Nov	Leeds Palestinian Film Festival Discover Palestine through the Eyes of Others – sign up to the J&P Sponsored film : “Jews Step Forward” Please see website for details www.leedspff.org.uk/
 Sat 21 Nov	What Does Empowering Justice Look Like In Our Time? Via Zoom 10am – 4pm An online Day of Reflection with Fr Diarmuid O’Murchu See the home page of our website https://www.leedsjp.org.uk

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 details of these and other events which may be of interest.