

- In May 21 we held an open Zoom meeting with **Alessandra Sciarra**. She is the Policy Manager for social justice with the SVP at a national level.
- The pandemic caused some curtailment of activities but the action group is now reforming and more activity is expected in 2022-23.



## Spirituality of Justice

- During this year we continued to focus on Zoom liturgies, as they fulfilled a need during these pandemic times
- During the Season of creation we offered two liturgies relating to Climate Change – one seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit into how we respond to the Climate Crisis and one focussing on the linkages between Climate Change and violence.
- In March 2022, we held an in person event in Bradford to commemorate the assassination of St Oscar Romero by showing the film 'Righting the Wrong'.



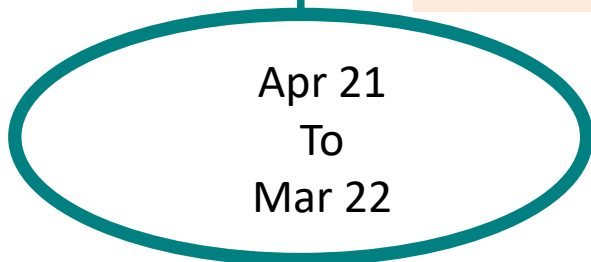
## UK Poverty Action Group

## Outreach

- As with liturgies, we focussed this last year on doing outreach via Zoom.
- In October **Paul Vallely** led us in an exploration of Justice & Philanthropy.
- Also in October, **Stephen Cottrell (Archbishop of York)** led us in an exploration of the role of Justice & Mercy in the Church
- In February 2022, **Dr Ann Marie Mealey** led us in an exploration of leadership and young people

## Racial Justice

- Following a review of our priorities, we added Racial Justice as a priority issue.
- Recognising our ignorance, and consulting with the Catholic Association for Racial Justice, we agreed that we needed to undertake a Listening Exercise within the Leeds Diocese in order to understand BAME experiences of Church.
- We commissioned Leeds Citizens to lead this Listening Exercise. It will be ongoing during most of 2022 and will provide a firmer foundation for planning actions to take on this issue.



## Climate Change Action Group

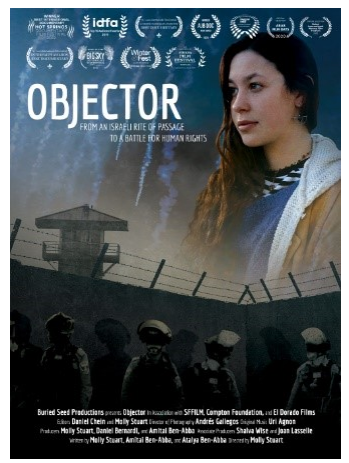


*Our Climate Action Group includes Commission members, parishioners, Diocesan Laudato Si animators and CAFOD in the Leeds Diocese*

- In the last year they have worked with the Diocesan Curia with the full support of the Bishop. The diocese divested from fossil fuels with the arrival of the new Chief Operating Officer, Jack McGrory. The group are continuing to work with him to develop a comprehensive 'Laudato Si' environmental vision and strategy for the Diocese.
- It will include the ongoing support already provided for those parishes and schools working towards a LiveSimply Award.

## Peace and nonviolence Action Group

- For a third time we collaborated with the Leeds Palestinian Film festival & Pax Christi in the Leeds Diocese to present a film (Objector) at the Festival. This was held at Wheeler Hall and attended by about 80 people
- We also worked with the Leeds Diocese Pax Christi group to contribute to the Conflict and Climate Change liturgy.
- To mark Peace Sunday **Tim Devereux, Chair of the Movement for the Abolition of War**, led us in a more detailed examination of the links between Climate Change and various conflict situations.



**Spark Social Justice** is our project working to reach out to younger Catholics.

- During most of this year we had no certainty of funding and focussed on keeping the social media up to date and adding content to the SPARK YouTube channel.
- We also sponsored 5 people to attend the NJPN Conference on Climate Change in July 2021 and paid the travel expenses for two young people to attend COP26 through CAFOD
- We have now obtained funding for an additional 4 years and have obtained the services of someone who will start managing the project in April 22



## ANNUAL REVIEW: Apr 2021 - MAR 2022

In teaching us to pray, Jesus encouraged us to address our common parent to realise we are to become brothers and sisters all. But the difficult issue is exactly how is "thy kingdom" to come and "thy will" to be done "here on earth as it is in heaven" in practice? What are we being urged to do as co-creators of the future? How should we envision the kingdom and live and work to bring it about together?

The Second Vatican Council was not just about revising the liturgy, changing altars round and allowing lay readers. Central to the Gospel-based work of the whole pilgrim "people of God" is engagement in the everyday world and working for justice and peace focussed on solidarity with the poor and suffering.

In other words, working for justice and peace, is not an optional extra for concerned enthusiasts but central to the evangelising daily work of all the Church, "a basic *constituent dimension of the Gospel*".

Our major challenge remains to "mainstream" the work of the Justice and Peace Commission into the daily life of the Church and society.

In our new age of anxiety and fear, environmental challenges of climate crisis, world hunger and conflict are endemic. Closer to home, the running crises of economics and politics with Brexit, Covid, costs of living and war in Ukraine not only take over our mediated consciousness but all are still unresolved challenges. Christine Allen of CAFOD reminds us that as Pope Francis insists "politics is failing the poor". Making sense of how we exercise a "preferential option for the poor" remains an imperative.

Here in the Leeds Diocese Justice & Peace Commission we try to focus (not least in our monthly newsletters) on a handful of current themes; the climate crisis, peace and nonviolence, addressing poverty at home and abroad, and engaging with young people who are increasing disadvantaged in our own society. Covid led us into new programmes of reflection and online themed prayer. As we move forward, co-working with others such as the Citizens movement and refugee aid agencies helps us move forwards.

Pope Francis in his latest encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti", offers a "new world view", building on our strong tradition of Catholic social learning and insisting on the dignity of each human person and advocating listening and dialogue for the common good: "For the Church is a common home, a place of relationships and of coexistence in diversity".

We live in an extremely fast changing world of new urbanisation, new mobility (and enforced migration), new warfare and increasing inequalities and divisions. St Oscar Romero just before his death said the point of the church is twofold: to "Tell the truth about reality and accompany the people". The Justice and Peace Commission is not a separate "think tank", analysing and producing reports. Its roots must be deep in "accompanying the people" and enabling their experiences and life stories to be told so that truth challenges power. Neither think tank nor direct service agency (such as the SVP or Catholic Care), the work of Diocesan Justice and Peace is to help link the personal suffering experiences, especially of the marginalised, to the structural blockages to change and enabling that speaking of "truth to power" in its various dimensions.

What is most needed now in our desperate times is the development of "prophetic imagination" in the ministry of the Church, as scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann proposed in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. Not to foretell or predict the future or to design specific programmes of action but rather to nurture and nourish and "evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the dominant narrative by standing in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets energised by the future perspective of prophetic hope". Can this coming year be a year of "prophetic imagination"?

**John Battle, Chair of the Commission April 2022**

The 4 key points to make are:

1. We had steady income generation through a regular grant from the Diocese and a small number of people who generously give money on a regular basis. We are extremely grateful for these regular contributions as they allow us some certainty in planning activities over the year. I would encourage anyone who is able to think about setting up such a payment so that we can expand our work.
2. Reduced, or lower cost, activities from the continuing effects of the pandemic..
3. Increased volunteer activity over the course of the year. The expenditure in the previous financial year was about £16,000. For the financial year just gone it is around £8200. However, when you factor in the time given voluntarily to the Commission (using paid services replacement costs as per the NCVO suggestions) then the spend is more like £14,000. So, a reduced level of activity but not as much as might be assumed from the bald expenditure figures.
4. Renewed funding for our project working with younger adult Catholics: SPARK Social Justice. Although our bid for additional funding was submitted in December 2020, it was only in December 2021 that we received approval for additional funding from Benevolentia. The really good news is that they are funding this project for 4 years – which allows sufficient time to really make an impact. During 2021 we continued to spend on producing additional videos and keeping the social media presence alive. However, there were no workshops or online groups meeting. This will change rapidly during the 2022-23 financial year when we start using the services of Katherine Hogg to manage the project from late April.

Joe Burns , Treasurer.

April 2022

### DIOCESE OF LEEDS JUSTICE & PEACE COMMISSION: ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 02 APRIL 2021 TO 01 April 2022

	Money in 2021/2022	C/F to 2022/23
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>Donations</b>		
Regular Giving	£ 3,080.00	
Donations from Events	£ 250.00	
One off Donations	£ 30.00	
<b>Grants</b>		
<b>Unrestricted Grants</b>	<b>£ 5,610.00</b>	
Diocese of Leeds	£ 5,000.00	
Religious Orders	£ 610.00	
<b>Restricted Grants</b>	<b>£ 2,000.00</b>	
Society of the Holy Child Jesus	£ -	
Other SPARK Donations	£ 2,000.00	
SPARK (2022) Benevolentia	£ -	£ 10,000.00
<b>Sales of Resources &amp; books</b>	<b>£ -</b>	
<b>Other Income</b>	<b>£ -</b>	
<b>TOTAL MONEY IN</b>	<b>£ 10,970.00</b>	<b>£ 10,000.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>During 2021-22</b>		
Communications	£ 1,440.61	
Office costs	£ 892.32	
Subscriptions	£ 460.00	
Bank Charges	£ -	
Governance	£ 265.00	
Publications & Resources	£ -	
<b>Projects</b>	<b>£ 5,176.69</b>	
Peace & nonviolence	£ 312.00	
Climate Change	£ 334.05	
UK Poverty	£ 80.00	
Racial Justice	£ 860.00	
Spirituality of Justice	£ 280.00	
SPARK (2019)	£ 3,310.64	
SPARK(2022)	£ -	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£ 8,234.62</b>	

### The work of Justice & Peace is the work of everybody in the Church.

#### What will you be doing in the next year?

Sign up on our website for regular monthly updates and follow us on Facebook for ideas and to take inspiration from what others in the Diocese are doing

