



LIVESIMPLY PARISHES ACROSS LEEDS MEET TOGETHER

By Trish Sandbach, Commission member

On Jan 20th about 25 Parishioners from 4 Parishes (Our Lady of Kirkstall, St John Fisher & St Thomas More, St John Vianney, and St Benedict's) gathered at St Benedict's, Garforth. All the parishes either have the Live



Simply Award, some for many years, or have started on the

journey towards it. The purpose was to meet and share ideas for action, not merely in terms of achieving or keeping the award, but because one of the demands of our Christian lives is to care for God's Creation, the Earth, our common home. Pope Francis has spelt out so clearly that doing this is not an optional extra but a constituent part of being a Catholic Christian – and we recall that Vatican II made a similar declaration with respect to working for justice.

The day began with a brief resume from each of the parishes, giving us all some ideas about what had already been achieved and what the hopes for the future are. A range of very practical activities emerged such as putting solar panels on churches and houses, insulating churches, LED lights and timers for energy and water usage. Most of the parishes were involving children in growing vegetables or flowers that attract pollinators or in making insect homes, bird boxes or even a hedgehog hotel. CAFOD campaigns, appeals and Fast Days are also well supported, as is the SVP with food and other essentials. Supporting refugees and asylum seekers also

formed a common theme across the parishes. For some, the passage of time and Covid restrictions meant that a need for renewal was evident in order to actively re-engage with parishioners.

Laudato Si' makes it very clear that we all need to undergo an ecological conversion. If our patterns of consumption continue as they are and there is no change in our lifestyles and mindset, the planet's poor will grow poorer, eco-systems will be further disrupted, weather extremes will worsen and much hardship will ensue. Lent offers an opportunity, both spiritually and in practical terms, to focus on a change of heart, a conversion that will open our minds and hearts to the "cry of the poor and the cry of creation".

In mixed parish groups, participants then addressed three questions.

1. What are you planning to do for this Lent?
2. How do we raise awareness about justice issues with regard to the elections?
3. How do you approach tackling climate justice and global and local Poverty?

Discussion was lively and generated a wide variety of ideas. However, a few key themes emerged. The first was the need for formation and reflection so that theology, spirituality and liturgy become foundational to our actions. In living simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor, in fighting for the planet and against poverty, we should not simply be activists but followers of Christ. A few sessions on Catholic social teaching might be one of the activities that we can offer our parishioners during Lent. It is after all one of the foundation stones of our work for justice.



Secondly, we must be courageous in speaking truth to power. We should try to build a relationship with our MP, so that we can meet and respectfully challenge current policy and practice to repair the brokenness of our planetary system. Most CO2 is emitted, and most environmental damage is inflicted, not by us directly, but on our behalf and largely outside of our individual control. As churches and other faith organisations, we need to find ways to respond to this.

If we care about creation, then we need to believe, as Pope Francis says, that human beings can change. He obviously believes in the power of the Holy Spirit, and so should we! We recognise that the global South suffers far more from the effects of climate change, than we do, but they are least responsible for it. Therein lies a massive injustice that we must address. At the same time in the UK poverty is growing as the cost of living is rising. People who just about managed before can no longer do so and are forced to use food banks and often cannot avoid going into debt. Organisations such as Citizens and Church Action Against Poverty are working to raise awareness and seek structural change as well as addressing urgent needs.

Liz Taylor: "It was a splendid day: so many enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed people dedicated to wanting to make a positive change and to support their parishes to do the same. I came away with renewed vigour and determination to re-commit to Live Simply, Sustainably and in Solidarity with those who are poor."

The meeting offered encouragement and people felt energised by this coming together. We think it will not be a one-off event and we will try to meet again, maybe 3 times a year and in different parishes, to walk in solidarity and support each other on the journey.

+++++

LISTENING EVENT ADDENDUM

At the recent Commission meeting in early February, we discussed how to take forward the listening event that we held just prior to Christmas. We received very good feedback from the event and at first thought we might do a follow up in March.

However, we agreed that the next similar event should take place somewhere else in the diocese (the pre-Christmas one was at Wheeler Hall). We also agreed that we should take a topic-based approach to the next meeting. So, to give ourselves a little more time to make suitable



arrangements, we decided that it should take place towards the end of April – Saturday April 27th 11am to 1pm – with a light lunch included. **Look out for further details once we have a venue sorted out!**



2024 ROMERO LECTURE

By Joe Burns, Commission member

The Archbishop Romero Trust engages someone every year to do a short speaking tour.

This year the speaker is Raymond Perrier. The Commission is organising a presentation of Raymond's talk in the Leeds Diocese. As with last year, we are partnering with Leeds Trinity University. The meeting will take place on Thursday 14 March at 7pm at Leeds Trinity University. There is no charge to attend this event, but please register by using the link at the end of this article.

The theme for his talk is 'Prayerful and Prophetic Resilience in the Face of Injustice - Archbishops Oscar Romero and Denis Hurley'. In other words, what is it that keeps us motivated to carry on with the work of Justice & Peace when there are so many wars and injustices across the world at the present time.

Since 2015, Raymond has been the founding



Director of the Denis Hurley Centre – a community centre in the heart of Durban South Africa which brings together different faith

groups to help the poor and marginalised of the city. This landmark building has established its reputation as a place of care, education and community, responding to issues of refugees, drug addiction and homelessness.

Raymond is also involved in different networks working to help transform inner-city Durban. He also works as a consultant to the Global Interfaith Network which provides theological resources for religious leaders in the Global South who wish to look at questions of LGBTI inclusion.

For 5 years, Raymond was Director of the Jesuit Institute - South Africa, working to bring a faith perspective to debates on social issues. He also designed and facilitated courses in values-based leadership delivered at several South African and US business schools. For 6 years, Raymond was a trainee Jesuit priest. This included 2 years living and working in a refugee camp in Uganda with the Jesuit Refugee Service serving 60,000 Sudanese refugees with pastoral support and education. After leaving the Jesuits, Raymond became the Head of Communities for CAFOD working with Catholic parishes and schools across the country. Raymond's initial professional experience was in marketing consultancy, working for Interbrand with companies such as American Express, British Airways, IBM and BP. He developed with Business Week an annual league table of the world's most valuable brands and pioneered a global consulting practice in brand valuation. He was Managing Director of the New York office of Interbrand with a staff of 160.

Of Indian parents, Raymond was born and educated in the UK. He holds a BA in Philosophy and Theology from New College, Oxford; an MA in Philosophy from the University of London; and an MSc in Human Rights from the London School of Economics. He recently completed a PhD with the University of KwaZulu-Natal writing about Paddy Kearney (the founder of the DHC and a renowned Struggle activist). He is also a



Research Associate at the University of Pretoria’s Centre for Faith and Community and a frequent writer and commentator in newspapers, on radio and television, including a regular column in ‘The Southern Cross’ (SA’s national Catholic newspaper).

The Link to register to attend is <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/resilience-in-working-for-justice-peace-the-2024-romero-lecture-tickets-827524125937>

+++++

MAZZINI’S DREAMS IN LONDON

By Rafael Antonio

Victorian era Britain remains one of the most popular and well-known time periods in memoriam. So popular, indeed, that to this day, we can still picture in our minds such popular images like the top hat of the gentleman and banker, a street of cobblestone filled with merchants and apprentices selling/practicing their trade, the strange and often wonderful events and characters that can take place in the city, and almost immediately find ourselves sent back in time to the period.

We, of course, have so much to thank the authors of the penny dreadfuls and most especially Charles Dickens, perhaps the greatest English author since William Shakespeare – for they had captured the strange and wonderful world that they had lived in – and created a timeless heritage to be read and passed down. Even better, many of the locations where their stories took place still stand to this day! One could go to Camden town and locate the home of Bob

Cratchit and Leadenhall Market from A Christmas Carol and then take a bus to Fleet Street to locate where Sweeney Todd’s barber shop should stand.

But, if these places stood the test of time, and remind us of these wonderful fictional events, so too should the “non-wonderful” elements of the era. As previously mentioned, the Victorian authors also captured the troubling (and often ignored) events of their time period. The Victorian Era was a time of horrific working and living conditions for the working class, an appalling divide between rich and poor, and for the Catholics, a time of uncertainty.

It was only a few decades, before the Victorian era, where the rights of Catholics were restored by law. However, the wider public’s apprehensions did not change, and the Catholic community, be it the descendants of the recusancy or the newly arrived Irish and Italian families, continued to face the hostility of their new neighbours. But events such as these did not deter them, the fact that many of us today can practice faith without fear is a testament to their faith and tradition. Victorian era Britain, in truth, was a time for the best and dare say, for the most daring of, to stand against such troubling times and lead as an example – even if they were different.

One such example is Giuseppe Mazzini. Mazzini, inspired by the romantic literature of his homeland, aspired to change the society he belonged to in the hopes of bettering the lives of his fellow countrymen and progressing a form of universal brotherhood not just for Italy, which had yet to emerge, but to the European states as



well. For his writings and his political activities, he was exiled and hounded out of his homeland, later Switzerland, and finally settled in London – which he called “his second home”.

Mazzini faced the difficulties of first being a foreign exile with little to no connections, his shared home poor, his meals, and lifestyle, meagre, and later and more troubling to him the doubt and criticism of his contemporaries. The man was anguished and often contemplated if all his aspirations were for naught and if he should end it all: dreams and life alike. Thankfully he did not give up for he still had a gift – that we must admit that at times we also take for granted – the love and care of his mother. She often sent him whatever financial aid she could (from her own savings) and did her best in trusting that God had something grand planned for her son. Mazzini paid it forward. He climbed out of his episodes of doubt and depression, and would charitably often share his finances, at times too much, to his countrymen, and to the political movements that he re-started/joined in London. By sheer will and politicking, he was soon able to cultivate a circle of “who’s who” admirers and friends.

His life was by no means glamorous, the people & events that he witnessed however certainly were. He had befriended liberal thinkers and politicians, and even the famed writer Charles Dickens himself – all of whom would leave a huge influence on his work as a writer for his continuing vision for the unification of the Italian states. He also would see firsthand the radical movement’s importance for the demand for better rights

and treatment, whilst also seeing the dangers of the use of violence.

In perhaps his finest hour in London, Mazzini started a charitable initiative in the form of free education and later legal representation for the Italian diaspora, some brought illegally for virtual slavery or outright sold into inhumane labour by cruel and shrewd businessmen. This initiative was, of course, soon patronized by Mazzini’s own circle of friends from the upper class and the liberal circles, and amazingly, so did others from different parts of the world and even members of political parties.

Not swayed by discrimination of any kind, and being of a Lapsed Catholic background, Mazzini refused to let anti-Catholic teachings be introduced to the curriculum! In these brief moments, the divided city of London boasted that prejudice was stomped out in the name of human dignity. The building of the former school still stands and bears a plaque that honours Mazzini.

Very few people know Mazzini, and even fewer know of the importance of his efforts, as many of these rights we enjoy at times have refused to share are a result of his contributions to creating a better world. The world now may seem dark and bleak, but he has paved the way on how to address such issues. If we are to begin addressing the “non-wonderful” elements of our world, we ought to begin with the love we have for each other, the belief in God for having better and sometimes long and difficult plan for all of us, and most importantly, remember that it is not what we do that is important rather what we can do, and perhaps that will lead to a better tomorrow.



DAILY COMPASSION FOR LEEDS THROUGH LENT – THE LEEDS LENT PRAYER DIARY IS LAUNCHED

By Emma Temple, Communications and Marketing Manager, LCI

“Therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Colossians 3:12)

On Tuesday 6th February, LCI and Leeds Christian Community Trust launched the 2024 edition of the Leeds Lent Prayer Diary.

The launch event at Roscoe Methodist Church brought together the huge variety of organisations who contributed to the diary – all inspired by faith to work for the good of the city.

The diary has been released every Lent for over a decade, a longstanding collaboration



between LCI and LCCT to shine a light on the important work of faith organisations in Leeds. Contributors were represented at the event, including SPARK social justice, the Joanna

Project, Torch Trust, Space and Kidz Club, among many more.

The theme for this year’s diary is compassion. As well as a Christian value that unites faith organisations in the city, making Leeds a compassionate city is one of the ambitions of Leeds City Council. The work highlighted in the diary this year shows that compassion is alive and well in the city and is lived out in vital services to improve Leeds for the benefit of all.

Dr Helen Reid, Director of Leeds Church Institute, said: “I am thrilled to partner with Leeds Christian Community Trust to launch

this diary for 2024. Listening to city voices is at the heart of everything LCI does, and this diary is brimming with passionate and compassionate voices from Leeds communities. These reflections build a vision of a city where everyone can thrive and flourish, and it should make all of us proud to faithfully live and work here.”

Liz Harden, assistant Pastor for Leeds Vineyard church, gave a powerful keynote talk on compassion in the city. “You might be



holier than me, but I don’t naturally come clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, or patience. These are not my default settings... no matter how I look at it, I’m lacking in the nature of Jesus without the help of His spirit.”

Liz continued to explore how we are called to do good works through God’s love for us and gave us the important reminder that we need to care for ourselves in order to care for others. The full recording of Liz’s talk will be available on the [LCI podcast on Spotify](#).

After the talk, we shared a simple soup supper provided by Nurture Catering from St George’s Crypt, with grace led by Revd Andy Muckle, chaplain at the Crypt. There was an opportunity to pray together for the city and for ourselves, led by Helen Reid.

[The prayer diary is available to order for individuals or churches](#), to help you pray for Leeds every day during Lent. It includes reflections for Good Friday from Revd Dr Joseph Cortis, Deacon in the Leeds Diocese, and for Easter Sunday from Dr Paul Coleman, Faith at the Margins Lead for LCI.



FRAGILITY OF FREEDOM: HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

By Matty Maslen, Newsletter Editor

Earlier this month, I was invited to attend the Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony at the University of Bradford, organised by the Peace Studies department. This was the sixth consecutive year that the department had gathered to remember the victims of the Holocaust, and of all genocides since then.



The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 was 'Fragility of Freedom'. At the University of Bradford, this was honoured by a panel discussion featuring Professor Paul Rogers, Tom Woodhouse, Professor Udy Archibong, Dr Becky Alexis Martin, community members, and students of the Peace Studies department.

In 1942, Rafael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish lawyer coined the term 'genocide'. In 1948, the 'Convention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' officially codified genocide as an independent crime. Yet, in the past century, there have been 27 genocides across the world.

In reflecting on these, the speakers talked about *why* genocide has occurred so many times. Dr Becky Alexis-Martin spoke of imperialistic necropolitics: the entanglement of the use of power to "*dictate how some people must live and some must die*", with imperialism and colonial legacies. As Professor Udy Archibong said, "racism, hatred and discrimination fuelled these genocides".

After each of the key speakers had done a short presentation, there was time for questions. Gathering during the current atrocities in Palestine was extremely potent, and one of the most interesting discussions which took place was in response to the question: '**What do we pragmatically do to protect staff and students?**'

Discussion turned to the role of educational institutions in supporting their students through distressing and complicated times in the international sphere. Each member of the panel was speaking with different lived experiences of the current atrocities in Palestine. Yet, all the speakers agreed that the main responsibility of the Peace Studies department, and the university as a whole, to its students and staff is to foster an environment for dialogue.







As Prof. Udi had said earlier: "*inclusion is not an afterthought, or something that is nice to do; it is something that is necessary*". Also with Tom Woodhouse, she spoke of the need for there to be a safe space that allows for "*ambivalence and contradiction*". A place where different points of view can be explored and discussed meaningfully. As Fiona Macaulay put it, the job of educators is to teach respectful dialogue and to teach students not to prescribe opinions or perspectives to other people. As Paul Rogers said, it is the "*essential mark of a university*" to be able to rise above personal feelings.

Dr Becky Alexis Martin summarised it well: universities can protect their staff and students and help prevent future genocides by keeping them informed, educated, and empowered.

The same is true of us all: we must seek facts, question norms, and stand up for what is right.



EVENTS

 Sat 9th Mar	<p>Care for Creation: Commitments, Actions & Participation <i>St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Hardybutts Wigan Lancashire WN1 3RZ @ 10am to 3:30pm</i> Input on the latest environmental initiatives across the Archdiocese of Liverpool, and Care for Creation leadership training. It is a joint event between the Archdiocese and Liverpool Justice & Peace. With talks from Bishop John Arnold and Sr. Margaret Atkins. To register, click: https://archdioceseofliverpool.churchsuite.com/events/vr8p9ggi</p>
 Mon 11th Mar	<p>Sketch Walk: 'Don't Forget Me' David Oluwale Bridge and Hibiscus Rising <i>Leeds @ 5:30pm to 7:30pm</i> You are invited to join Leeds artists to sketch the city at night, and get a fresh perspective on its fascinating history. Learn about David Oluwale, the British Nigerian and Leeds resident whose personal story inspired local people to create a lasting legacy to mark his life in the beautiful Hibiscus Rising sculpture by artist Yinka Shonibare. To register, click: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sketch-walk-dont-forget-me-david-oluwale-bridge-and-hibiscus-rising-tickets-815309110497</p>
 Thur 14th Mar	<p>Romero Lecture 2024 <i>Leeds Trinity University @ 7pm to 8:30pm</i> Resilience in working for Justice and Peace given by Raymond Perrier. To register, click: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/resilience-in-working-for-justice-peace-the-2024-romero-lecture-tickets-827524125937?aff=oddtcreator</p>
 Weds 20th Mar	<p>Doing Change: Education in Social Justice and Archbishop's Lecture <i>York St John University @ 5pm to 7:30pm</i> The evening will begin with screenings, posters, and presentations by their students, sharing their engagement with social justice across the University. To register, click: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/doing-change-education-in-social-justice-and-archbishops-lecture-tickets-779997963907</p>
 Sat 13th Apr	<p>Climate Symposium <i>Bradford Cathedral @1:30pm to 4:30pm</i> A series of responses to challenges facing the planet due to climate change, including theatre, poetry, panel discussion and film. £7.38 per ticket. To register, click: https://archdioceseofliverpool.churchsuite.com/events/vr8p9ggi</p>
 Thu 18th Apr	<p>Churches Against Racism 2024 <i>New Testament Church of God, LS8 2TN @7:00pm to 9:00pm</i> How can we build a truly anti-racist churches and an anti-racist city? How do we put anti-racism into action? To register, click: https://archdioceseofliverpool.churchsuite.com/events/vr8p9ggi</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 details of these and other events which may be of interest.