



LISTENING IN COTTINGLEY

By Joe Burns, Commission Member



Visual evaluation of our meeting by Bronagh Daly

Just prior to Christmas the Commission held a 'Listening' event at Wheeler Hall, Leeds. People coming along welcomed the opportunity to share their varied social justice concerns and we determined that, as a Commission, we should hold further events like it.

At the end of April, we met at St Mary & St Monica Church in Cottingley. This time we had a specific issue to focus on: uk poverty. Thanks to Liz Firth, who organised this event, our tables were covered with tablecloths that could be written on – and this we duly did!



Liz Firth, centre, with our written on tablecloths!

What we know and have experienced.

There was a lot of experience in the groups from people who volunteered with the SVP



and some who were involved with the 'Community Kitchen' in Bingley. Others were involved in supporting refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom have no recourse to any benefits. The church we were in supported the night shelter for asylum seekers run by Inn Churches in Bradford. Bingley Community Kitchen started out as a kitchen – providing 'cook and eat' sessions and, during the pandemic, cooking meals for delivery to people. An important aspect of their work now is a 'pantry' style organisation where people pay £5 each visit and they can choose a number of items to take for that (along with some additional items that are freely offered). In addition, £1 of that amount is put into a Credit Union account for that person. There is also a café so that people coming to the Community Kitchen can stop and have a chat with others.

Root causes

When we examined root causes of poverty then a lot of it came down to UK Government policy. This has been much more than just financial cuts. The harsh attitude towards migrants and asylum seekers has been well-documented. Some also pointed to the difficulties involved in actually claiming a benefit such as Universal Credit: it is a complicated process to navigate. On top of that it can take several weeks before payment comes through, and many people claiming do not have any savings that they are able to fall back on in such circumstances. Others pointed to increasing cases of people in rented accommodation. Several also cited examples of service 'rationing' – a good example being mental health services where the current waiting list for services is 1.9 million people and so the criteria for actually getting support are set in such a way that only very acute cases get help quickly.

Charities are now covering the gaps in statutory services like these. Those helping people on low incomes should be plugging short-term gaps – not providing a way for Government to permanently reduce the welfare budget.

What actions provide hope?

When it comes to what additional actions we can take, the looming General Election came into play. How do we apply the principles of Catholic Social Teaching?

In considering the 'Common Good', John Battle pointed out that CAFOD and the SVP nationally have collaborated to produce a whole programme in preparation for this.



The ability to full participate in society and to do that with full human Dignity should also be part of our decision-making. When we were talking about what sort of actions, we found hopeful then the Bingley Community Kitchen was certainly one of them: it sounded like a real attempt to provide help with dignity. It provides food for individuals and families very cheaply, which is helpful in itself. Additionally, the people using this service make their own choices about what to take – it is not a handout. By using a small proportion of the money paid to put into a credit union account the service also offering a 'hand up' to people who do not have income levels allowing them to save on a regular basis.



We didn't solve anything in our discussions in this meeting but I think everyone found out something they didn't know before they came along or were given ideas for things that they could do differently. When we went round at the end to see if individuals had any comments, more than

Destitution Solution

Sitting by a candle at night,
too afraid to turn on the light.
People left wondering how to get by,
without a chance to stay warm or dry.
A lot of parents will be filled with dread,
wondering how their children will be fed.
No hot water to even stay clean,
the part of destitution that needs to be seen.
Finding the solution,
To adopt a new constitution.

By Ilesha
(SPARK Social Justice)



SPARK AT LEEDS CITIZENS ACCOUNTABILITY ASSEMBLY

By Kathy Shaw – SPARK Manager

SPARK and the Justice and Peace Commission are members of Leeds Citizens and at their Accountability Assembly at the end of April we heard from the potential Mayoral candidates for West Yorkshire.

I went with Anthony, one of our SPARK supporters and John Battle Chair of the J&P Commission also attended. Leeds Citizens is

one person mentioned how helpful it was to be able to be in a group where such a discussion could take place. Others mentioned the language we use and fall into the trap of using and accepting: the 'cost of social welfare' as opposed to the amount we 'invest to help people live a more dignified life where they can fully participate'. All of this was captured in visual form by Bronagh Daly, from Our Lady of Kirkstall parish & Leeds Church Institute (as shown at the start of this article). She did the same thing at our pre-Christmas event and worked so well that we asked her to do it again!

This format of event is something which we will continue to repeat later in the year. Email the Commission if you would be interested in hosting a session in your area.

For more information about the SVP – CAFOD Encounter programme use this link

<https://svp.org.uk/encounter>

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an alliance of organisations across the city, enabling community priorities to be represented to local politicians, to drive change on priority issues like local bus transport, mental health support and responding to racism. It was great to feel a



part of a wider community working for the Common Good in the greater Leeds area.

The Citizens Organising movement also has much to offer in ways of working – it is a very bottom-up organisation and that is very much the approach we have taken with the SPARK project. I try to react to what people in our target age range have been telling me they would like to do about issues of social justice and am doing my best to facilitate that happening.

Having made good links with Leeds Trinity University, the University of Leeds & Mary Mother of God parish in Bradford I would also be interested to hear from any other parishes that are interested in talking with me about building a relationship with the project to better engage with people in the 18 – 30 age group. Just email me at Sparks.jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

CAFOD LAUNCHES EMERGENCY APPEAL TO SUPPORT ‘WORLD’S WORST CRISIS’ IN SUDAN

CAFOD has launched an emergency appeal to support families in Sudan, as Britain’s Ambassador to the United Nations says that Sudan is in the grip of the world’s worst hunger and displacement crisis.

With over eight million people having fled their homes to escape violence, after fighting erupted a year ago between government forces and paramilitaries, and with 25 million in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, CAFOD says there is a short window to act before the growing season in Sudan starts in June, as fears grow of an impending - yet preventable – famine.

Jo Kitterick, CAFOD’s director of participation, said: *“Many aid agencies exited Sudan when the current fighting erupted a year ago. Right now Catholic agencies in the Caritas network that CAFOD is part of, supported by the Church of Sudan, are some of the only organisations able to deliver aid to support the Sudanese people. The communities we serve in Sudan have issued a desperate cry for help and we are inviting the Catholic community to stand alongside us and the local Sudanese organisations we fund in responding to their call.”*

CAFOD has been working alongside communities in Sudan for over fifty years. Donations made to its Sudan crisis appeal – whether online or via collections in parishes this weekend – will go towards supporting families in Sudan and surrounding countries, who are already contending with extreme hunger, as communities strive to stop the crisis becoming the worst in living memory. Speaking at the weekend, Ambassador Barbara Woodward, the UK’s permanent representative to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council that while Sudan is in the grip of the world’s worst hunger and displacement crisis, *“it is not too late for Sudan to return from the brink,”* as she urged the warring parties in Sudan to engage in political negotiations to bring about peace, and for greater access to humanitarian access to reach those most in need.

Donations can be made at <https://cafod.org.uk/give/donate-to-emergencies/sudan-crisis-appeal>

CAFOD YOUNG ADULT RESIDENTIAL

By Angela Powell, CAFOD Leeds



Dominic Deboo, of CAFOD, is organising an event for young adults over the weekend of **Friday 12th – Sunday 14th July**. It would be wonderful to welcome young adults from Leeds and Hallam diocese.

The cost is £100 and SPARK Social Justice is offering £50 sponsorship towards the cost of attending. Email Kathy for more information:

Sparks.jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

CAFOD are running a residential pilgrimage for young adults which will include a two-night residential stay at the Frontier Centre, Irthlingborough, NN9 5UH. On the Saturday we will then be walking from Our Lady Help of Christians & St Lawrence, Olney to The Church of the Holy Child in Bedford, a distance of approximately 13.5 miles.

We know that there is a growing interest in pilgrimage, especially ahead of the Jubilee Year, and 'The Pilgrimage' will provide a great

opportunity for young adults (18 – 40) to set aside time to reconnect with their faith through prayer and worship, to meet and connect with other young Catholics and to enjoy the challenge of a pilgrimage through some classic English countryside. We have space for 70 – 100 people and would love to reach as far into the world of Catholic young adults as possible.

For more information: [Young Adults Residential Pilgrimage \(cafod.org.uk\)](http://Young Adults Residential Pilgrimage (cafod.org.uk))

Sign-up link: Young Adults Pilgrimage July 24 - Formstack

If you would like fliers to advertise this event, or more information, please email: ddeboo@cafod.org.uk

LEEDS TO BRIGHTON FOR MAP

You may remember, from previous years, the incredible fundraising of Tim Devereux. For the last three years, he has cycled for four or five days in the summer, covering about 250 miles.

Tim says:

"This year, I'm planning to ride the 301 miles from Leeds to Brighton in June. I hadn't intended to do any fundraising, but the current crisis in Palestine compels me to change my plans; I will therefore be riding to raise money for Medical Aid for Palestinians."





To learn more about the work that MAP does, follow this link:

<https://www.map.org.uk/>

Already, Tim has raised a whopping £1000!

If you would like to donate to Tim's fundraiser, click the link below to be taken to his JustGiving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/tim-devereux-map>

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Youth and Student CND

By Matthew Maslen, Newsletter Editor

Earlier this month, I travelled down to London to take part in 'A nuclear-free future: A day in Parliament with Youth and Student CND'.

With other young people from across England and Wales, I took part in workshops with MPs and Peers of the House of Lords.

We were joined for short question and answer sessions by Jeremy Corbyn MP, Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, Kirsten Oswald MP, and Baroness Jenny Jones.



We discussed sustainability, peace, and nuclear disarmament. For example, the risks associated with, and greenwashing of, nuclear power. Particularly, the threat that nuclear power stations pose in areas engaged in conflict, as we have seen in Ukraine.

We also discussed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and how we can encourage our government to engage with the treaty process in the run up to 3MSP.

When asked about the role of activism in MPs lives, importance of youth involvement in

It was inspiring to see their dedication and continued passion for these causes, and to hear of their work to empower others to take action. As Corbyn said: "you should not cut yourself off from being an activist on becoming an MP".

At a time when military spending is increasing, and US nukes are set to return to the UK, it's reassuring to know that there are pro-peace voices representing us.





Suzanne Oakes

We are sad to report the death of Suzanne Oakes, of Our Lady of Kirkstall parish in Leeds.



Suzanne setting up a Fairtrade Stall at Kirkstall festival

Suzanne was a prominent member of the CAFOD group in that parish. For a number of years she also provided a regular 'Reflection' column for inclusion in the monthly J&P Newsletter.

Her funeral will be held on 3rd June in the Church of the Assumption, Spen Lane at 11:30am.

Ginkgo Tree Project Update

By Joe Burns Commission member

A few months ago the Commission agreed to move ahead with a project to plant Ginkgo tree saplings originating from trees that were within the blast area of the Hiroshima nuclear bomb explosion. The fact that some plants recovered from this devastating event is, firstly, an opportunity to remind ourselves about the indiscriminate destruction and the dangers of countries using nuclear weapons.

Secondly, the survival of such plants illustrates the remarkable resilience of our natural world and its ability to recover from such devastation. This is a real sign of hope to persevere in our work on living more sustainably with our Common Home.



One of the trees as it appears today (Wikimedia Commons)







Through the efforts of Commission member Sean Morris, Dr Emma Gardner of the Laudato Si Centre at Wardley Hall in Salford has agreed to take seeds and nurture them into saplings which can then be planted out. It will be a while before any saplings are suitable for planting out as they need to be nurtured for about 3 years before they are sturdy enough.

In the meantime, we would welcome any parish or school within the Diocese to express an interest in taking a tree sapling. It might be of particular interest to those that have or are working towards a CAFOD LiveSimply award.

Email us using jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk if you would like further information.



EVENTS

 19th – 26th May	<p>Laudato Si Week – Next Week!</p> <p>The theme is inspired by the symbol for the Season of Creation 2024 : Let us all be <i>seeds of hope</i> in our lives and our world, rooted in faith and love.</p> <p>What is happening in your church community? – get some ideas by following the link.</p> <p>Click here: https://laudatosiweek.org/</p>
 08 Jun	<p>Big Green Week</p> <p>A celebration of community action to tackle climate change. Every year, people up and down the country come together to show the heartfelt, brace, everyday actions being taken to stand up for nature and fight climate change.</p> <p>More info: https://greatbiggreenweek.com/</p>
 Tue 11th Jun	<p>Extinction and Biodiversity: Evolution, Action and Hope</p> <p><i>Holy Name Church @5:30om – 7pm</i></p> <p>Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science (ECLAS), an ecumenical science-faith engagement project, is holding a free panel discussion at the Church of the Holy Name on Manchester Oxford Road on Tuesday 11 June, 5.30-7pm. Hear from leading scientists and theologians ‘as we explore this topic in a spirit of openness and honesty’.</p> <p>More info: https://www.eclasproject.org/extinctionpanel/</p>
 Fri 28th Jun	<p>Catholic Social Teaching: Revisiting the Basics</p> <p>Boarbank Hall 28th Jun 6pm – 1st Jul 2pm</p> <p>3 day course if for anyone interested in discovering, refreshing or deepening their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching. Taught by Sr Margaret Atkins, former lecturer at Trinity and All Saints, Leeds, and Oscott College seminary.</p> <p>To book email: margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk</p>
 19 -21 Jul	<p>National Justice & Peace Network Conference 2024 – Just Politics.</p> <p><i>Swanwick Christian Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire</i></p> <p>A great opportunity to meet people from across the country who are passionate about issues of social justice. The Commission can afford to pay the public transport travel costs of up to 4 people to help with the costs of attending this conference. Just email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk if you are interested in taking up this offer. More details about the conference, and booking, can be found by using this link https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/category/conference-2024/</p>
 Sat 21 Sep	<p>Racial Justice: Agenda for Change with CARJ</p> <p><i>St. Patrick’s Church, Foundry Street, Oldham, OL8 1FR</i></p> <p>This one day conference is the Northern conference in celebration of 40 years of CARJ (The Catholic Association for Racial Justice).The first keynote speaker is Max Farrar (Emeritus professor of Leeds Beckett University).Max will be followed by Alison Lowe (Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire).</p> <p><i>Public Transport costs to get there can be claimed from the Commission. Email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk if interested</i></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.