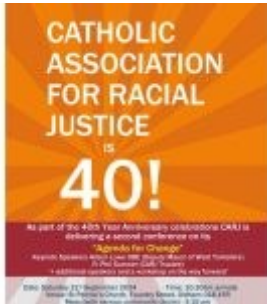




## RACISM AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE

By John Duffy, Commission Member



Last weekend I attended the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference of the Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ). After welcome and

introductions by Yogi Sutton (Chair of CARJ) and Bishop John Arnold, Alison Lowe gave a keynote speech, describing her own journey and background, and describing aspects of her work as West Yorkshire's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. She has worked to overcome police resistance to the recommendations of the McPherson Report, and to accepting the concept of institutional racism.

She has introduced a Race Action Plan to examine and challenge police internal culture, to involve police and different communities in conversation and engagement – one of the benefits of this was



the successful de-escalation of the Harehills riot, where damage was limited, and the police personnel withdrew from

their visible presence to allow community leaders to restore calm and reassurance. She said that it is significant that no July unrest occurred in West Yorkshire, because of the police force's relationships with communities, and a greater confidence from

people in communities coming together to demand justice and fairness.



Fr Phil Sumner (who is the parish priest at Our Lady & St Patrick in Oldham - where the conference was held) quoted Pope Francis on

combating racism: *progress is not as real or as definite as we think*. For example, state and church have both responded to the July riots by stressing immigration, rather than leading on dealing with inequalities and scapegoating.

He led us through an Agenda for Change, with the mnemonic

### BIAS:

### Belonging/Information/Accompaniment/Strategy

**Belonging:** In *Fratelli Tutti* para 53, Pope Francis has written 'We forget that "there is no worse form of alienation than to feel uprooted, belonging to no one. A land will be fruitful, and its people bear fruit and give birth to the future, only to the extent that it can foster a sense of belonging among its members, create bonds of integration between generations and different communities, and avoid all that makes us insensitive to others and leads to further alienation".'

In *The Ungrateful Refugee*, Dina Nayeri says that *Allowing newcomers to affect you on your native soil, to change you* is an enriching experience and he has worked to ensure that welcoming people into parish life must not



only involve them in welcoming, reading and other ministries, but changes the fabric of the building, so that when they come in, they see something of themselves. He has installed new stained-glass windows with African and Filipino imagery. Our welcome must go beyond theme nights, must stop seeing incomers as exotic, but welcome the changes they bring to liturgy and parish life.

**Information:** We must educate ourselves about such things as institutional racism, structural racism, critical race theory, stereotypes, racist trolls, claims to be "colour blind", stereotyping, and the unconscious power of established groups. Accuracy is important, and we must be clear what we say and what we mean - a claim to uphold "British values" - vague and undefined - makes others into the problem.

**Accompaniment:** Simply, we must stand alongside the different communities in the Church and beyond in our struggle for equality.

**Strategy:** Too often we focus on the white experience as the place that holds solutions to racism, rather than listening to and learning from our sisters and brothers who face this daily. Each Diocese should adopt a Racial Justice Strategy which must include a process of consultation, an audit, a plan of action and a timetable. White Catholics must be prepared to do something uncomfortable by allowing people to be themselves, and move from hand-wringing about racism to hand-holding, standing up and alongside in solidarity.

CARJ is facing a loss of funding and may launch a crowd-funding appeal: a message from Yogi Sutton to me says: *We are working*

*on 'survival'. Funds are low. Keep us in your prayers.*

## CELEBRATING CREATION IN GARFORTH

*By Joe Burns, Commission member*

The parish of St. Benedict's in Garforth was one of the first 20 parishes in the country to receive a LiveSimply award in 2016. However, the award does not mark the end of working to live simply, live sustainably and live in solidarity with the world's poor. One of their major actions was the creation of a flower and vegetable garden on part of parish land and the cultivation of that, and the sharing of the fruits, has continued to this day. However, since Covid, the parish had not really taken any new initiatives around LiveSimply.

The Faith, Justice & Action group in the parish decided they wanted to renew peoples' interest in both the LiveSimply principles and in *Laudato Si* more generally. They decided to hold a parish 'Celebration of Creation' event on 15 September during the Season of Creation.



The shape of the event was that it took place immediately following the 10:30 Sunday



Mass celebration and continued through to 2:30pm. It seemed like nearly everyone at mass continued on into the parish hall afterwards to take part in the event – it was certainly very crowded in there!

There were all sorts of activities that were especially aimed at younger parishioners. The person providing animal face painting was so popular that she wasn't able to look up until nearly the end of the event. Other activities included colouring in outline shapes of butterflies, hanging a climate action pledge onto a tree, guessing the number of worms in some composting soil and making and painting things out of clay. The group had also arranged for a company to come in with various animals that people could look at up close and some could be handled.



*A very large snail!*

St Benedict's Primary School were also very involved, with all classes producing fantastic work about God's wonderful creation.



*The Church Narthex display as people went in for mass*

It was encouraging to see so many people come along and join in the celebration. No doubt some of this was down to the children's activities and a shared lunch and free refreshments. It was also helped by encouragement from the parish priest, Fr Henry Longbottom, in the weeks leading up to it and a strong sermon about the imperatives of *Laudato Si* on the Sunday of the event itself. This was supplemented by having a colourful display in the porch area so that everyone was aware that the celebration was coming up.

### **SEASON OF CREATION AT ST JOHN MARY VIANNEY PARISH IN LEEDS**

As part of our Season of Creation celebrations, the "God for Grown Ups" and "Christian Meditation" groups hosted a 2-hour PowerPoint presentation featuring prayer, reflection, and music on the theme "Seeds of Hope."

During one segment of the event, we observed a Penitential Rite, reciting the





response, “Forgive us our thoughtless wasting for”:

- Lights in empty rooms
- Heat blasting from open doorways
- Homes basking in T-shirt warmth
- Cars that guzzle petrol for short journeys
- Lofts left un-insulated
- Lagging left undone
- Choosing cheap plane fares over sustainable options

The service concluded with a communal meal of fruit and homemade dishes. As we departed, attendees were encouraged to take home wildflower seeds and an acorn. These gifts serve as a reminder of Mother Teresa’s words: “It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little.”



## ACTING WITH COMPASSION: SEEKING JUSTICE

How can Christians in West Yorkshire respond to recent riots and racism? How can we build a better society? This was the theme of the recent Caritas Catholic Care Day of Reflection. Caritas Catholic Care focus on social action – what services can, and should the Diocese provide to help those in need? This ranges from supporting older people to the Gianna Baby Bank to helping Syrian refugees get settled in Yorkshire to providing counselling in schools.

However, at the same time as responding to immediate need, we also need to respond to the root causes of problems such as racism, homelessness and local poverty. This is where SPARK comes in – SPARK is the J&P project working with younger people and is all about helping people tackle these root causes of social injustices. SPARK were invited to have a stall and also to do a short presentation to explain what SPARK Social Justice is all about.



One of the SPARK community is Lucy, a student teacher from St Winefride’s parish in Wibsey, Bradford. She came along and stole the show with an amazing and inspirational presentation in which she described her work helping young people to engage creatively with Catholic Social Teaching. Lucy has already organised events in her parish exploring themes to do with refugees and asylum seekers and the Season of Creation. All SPARK has done is to support the passion that Lucy already has for social justice. We are also sponsoring Lucy to undertake some training with Citizens UK. This will give Lucy a whole new set of skills to explore issues in more depth with other people and to engage them more easily.



Pictured below with Lucy is Tom Allan. Tom became involved with SPARK during our pilot project, when he was



still a student at St Mary's school Menston, and featured in a number of the videos that we did during the COVID lockdowns. Now in his final year at University, Tom has continued to be involved and is a member of the Project Steering Group – ensuring that the voices of young people guide how the project develops and the sorts of thing that we do.



### **WORLD MIGRANT DAY EVENT**

On Sunday 29 September, SPARK organised a partnership event with Caritas Catholic Care. To celebrate the World Day for Migrants and Refugees' We heard the stories of some of the people who have been helped to re-settle in the Yorkshire area with help from Caritas Catholic Care. They are an official Government partner for the Syrian Re-settlement scheme, which, in 2015, guaranteed resettlement for 20,000 Syrian refugees.

Sue Parsons from Caritas Catholic Care took a few minutes to explain how the Resettlement

Scheme works. It involves both direct help from Caritas Catholic Care and the building of a community of people around those being resettled.

We then heard directly from some of those who had been resettled in Pateley Bridge and in Ripon. Their route to the UK involved travelling out of Syria to Jordan prior to getting to the UK. However, it took a long time to sort out papers: it was much more arduous than just getting into Jordan and hopping on a UK-bound plane. They did not speak of the hardships they had to endure along the way – one merely described his time in Jordan as 'difficult'. However, it had been deliberately left to the refugees themselves to decide what they wanted to share.

They were all clearly delighted to now have a more settled existence. A couple from Pateley Bridge (Huda & Mohamed) are starting up a catering business serving Syrian food (called 'Road to Damascus'). They are already supplying one of the cafes in Pateley Bridge and we became another of their early customers. We asked for some typical Syrian food that could be eaten without additional cooking or heating. They provided a feast!



*Some of the food provided at the event.*



The food provided a good accompaniment to people chatting more informally and asking questions to find out more both from Sue Parsons and from the refugees themselves.



### **'LET US DREAM WORKSHOP' AT LEEDS TRINITY UNIVERSITY**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October SPARK held a sustainability event at Leeds Trinity University in partnership with the new Director of Sustainability and the Director of Catholic Mission.



To facilitate this workshop we had invited John Paul de Quay of the Ecological Conversion Network in Arundel & Brighton diocese. He came to a Northern Dioceses Environment Group event at Wheeler Hall in Leeds in 2023 and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the way in which he linked environmental issues with our faith.

The 'Let us Dream' bit is the quote from Pope Francis asking us to imagine what our future might be like in our parishes and educational institutions once we have achieved net zero carbon emissions.



Then, in small groups, everyone was asked to discuss the questions he had posed and to produce a visual representation of what they thought Leeds Trinity University might be like once they had attained net zero.



Do you know someone aged 18-30 who might be interested in being part of the SPARK Community.

Email the SPARK Project Manager, Kathy Shaw

<mailto:sparks.jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk>

Would your parish or group be interested in hosting a similar event in your area. The J&P Commission would be willing to work with you and support the costs of undertaking such an event. Email us if you are interested.





## DEVELOPMENTS IN CAFOD'S LIVESIMPLY AWARD SCHEME

In the second of their Autumn series of Zoom meetings, on 28 October, the Northern Dioceses Environment Group (NDEG) invite everyone to join them for a review of CAFOD's LiveSimply aware scheme for parishes and schools.



### Northern Dioceses' Environment Group

This may be of interest to a number of parishes and schools in the Diocese, especially since the LiveSimply scheme received a note of encouragement from Bishop Marcus in his recent Pastoral Letter for the Season of Creation.

There are only 4 parishes in the Leeds Diocese that actually have this award, with another two working towards it.

They write:

*Join us for an lively online event where we will be discussing the latest developments in CAFOD's LiveSimply Award program.*

*This award scheme is about parishes and schools devising a plan to*

- Live more **simply**
- Live more **sustainably** with creation and

- Live in **solidarity** with people living in poverty

*The aim of this session is to give an update on how the Live Simply award is developing and equip people with practical suggestions for implementation in parishes and schools.*

*There will be a couple of short inputs and the opportunity to ask questions and to find out what is happening across the Northern Dioceses. There will also be time for networking across the region and the opportunity to find out what other sustainability and environmental actions are being taken by parishes and dioceses across the North of England.*

To receive the Zoom link for this event simply register on their event Eventbrite page. This link will take you there:-

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cafods-livesimply-award-developments-tickets-1034693896297>






## ONE YEAR ON IN GAZA

This week is the anniversary of the terrible Hamas attack on Israel and the subsequent bombing and fighting that has led to tens of thousands of Palestinians killed and injured. We are called to prayer, penance and fasting for peace in the Holy Land.

In this dramatic hour of our history Pope Francis said 'While the winds of war and the fires of violence continue to devastate entire peoples and nations', the Christian community is reminded of its call to put itself at the service of humanity.



EVENTS

 <p>Sat 19 Oct</p>	<p><b>The Evolution of Love: A J&amp;P Day of Reflection</b>  <i>SS Thomas More &amp; John Fisher, Burley in Wharfedale 10:30 – 4pm</i>                  Come and join us for this uplifting Day of Reflection brought to us by the ‘Begin with the Heart’ team who try to carry on the spiritual and theological legacy of Fr Donal O’Leary of the Leeds Diocese.                  More Info &amp; registration <a href="https://tinyurl.com/leedsjpaautumn2024">https://tinyurl.com/leedsjpaautumn2024</a></p>
 <p>Wed 23 Oct</p>	<p><b>Turning Key Moments Into Movements For Change: The Hook Lecture 2024</b>  <i>Leeds Minster Kirkgate LS2 7DJ 7pm – 9pm</i>                  How can we as Christians turn key moments in our collective consciousness into true movements for transformation in Church and society.                  This summer saw racist undertones and culture wars in British society turn into overt violence and intimidation. How can moments like this act as a wake up call to church and society? And how can the church respond? Given by Richard Reddie                  Follow the link to book a place:  <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/turning-key-moments-into-movements-for-change-the-hook-lecture-2024-tickets-884132121977">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/turning-key-moments-into-movements-for-change-the-hook-lecture-2024-tickets-884132121977</a></p>
 <p>Mon 28 Oct</p>	<p><b>NDEG Autumn Zoom2: Developments in the CAFOD LiveSimply Award Scheme</b>  <i>Online via Zoom @ 5pm – 6:30pm</i>                  With input from a couple of speakers and the opportunity to network with people from across the Northern Dioceses this Zoom event provides food for thought for those parishes and schools who want to do more to live out the calls to action in <i>Laudato Si</i>. Sign up via Eventbrite to receive the link:  <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cafods-livesimply-award-developments-tickets-1034693896297">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cafods-livesimply-award-developments-tickets-1034693896297</a></p>
 <p>Sat 16 Nov</p>	<p><b>National Justice &amp; Peace Network Open Networking Day</b>  <i>Save the Date! This will be held at Wheeler Hall at Leeds Cathedral 10:30 – 3:30pm</i>                  An opportunity to meet J&amp;P activists from across the country. The theme of the day will be related to UK poverty. Keep any eye on our website for the link to the Eventbrite page which will go live very soon.</p>
 <p>Sat 23 Nov</p>	<p><b>Film Presentation: Where Olive Trees Weep.</b>  <i>Wheeler Hall, Leeds Cathedral, 6pm – 9pm</i>                  SPARK Social Justice is sponsoring this film which will be shown as part of the 2024 Leeds Palestinian Film Festival. It tells the stories of the people that the filmmakers met on a journey through the West Bank in 2022. Follow the link to purchase tickets (£5 each) <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/film-presentation-where-olive-trees-weep-tickets-1034998637787">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/film-presentation-where-olive-trees-weep-tickets-1034998637787</a></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.*