

Justice & Peace Newsletter

Diocese of East Anglia
Justice & Peace Commission



November 2011

POVERTY AT HOME

The gap between rich and poor is widening.
What should be the Christian response?

On the steps of St Paul's Cathedral in London placards cry out: "What would Jesus do?" The tented city besides St Paul's resembles (at the time of writing) a refugee camp though the protestors have not yet found a suitable strap-line for their protest, but their website (www.occupyisx.org) says: *"The Occupy London occupations, at London Stock Exchange (by St Paul's Churchyard) and at Finsbury Square, are about social justice, real democracy and challenging the unsustainable financial system that punishes the many and privileges the few."*

However, we all know what they are protesting about: the gap between rich and poor, directors' pay, which rose by 50% in the last year, and bonuses, tax dodgers, government money (i.e. our taxes) propping up failing banks, government cuts which affect most the poorer members of the community. Perhaps many of you have taken part in on line campaigns on one or more of the above issues, or have studied the ideas behind the Robin Hood Tax (www.robinhoodtax.org) from where you can send an email to David Cameron asking him to support this idea. "A tax, of 0.05%, on banking transactions would provide billions to tackle poverty and climate change both here and abroad." ***This idea is supported by Pope Benedict.***

You might like to read the sermons preached from the steps of St Paul's. Rev. Paul Nicholson, Chair of the Zaccheus 2000 Trust, said, addressing the Bishop of London and Dean of St Paul's (who has since resigned) *".....the inconvenience of a few tents on your doorstep is nothing when compared to the anguish of several million tenants threatened with debt, eviction and the bailiffs because they cannot pay the rent in this country through no fault of their own,.....or the increasing poverty of many millions in many parts of the world....."* (www.z2k.org)

The Sunday Times and The Telegraph exposed corruption among MEPs, three of whom were exposed for accepting bribes of £87,000 in return for amendments to consumer banking reform (www.wdm.org.uk/blog/banking-reform-bribery-exposed-european-parliament & www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/8393797/European-Parliament-member-resigns-over-cash-for-laws-scandal.html)

We may not agree with the way the protestors acted outside St Paul's, but we surely, as Christians, share their basic concerns:

The gap between rich and poor is a scandal!

Father Joe Ryan, Westminster Diocese J&P Commission, was invited to preach on the steps of St Paul's on Oct.29th. This is part of what he said. "Greetings of solidarity from the Vatican ... I mentioned the recent statement from the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace. This statement needs to be heard since it spoke of the fact that the financial crisis, characterised by 'selfishness, collective greed and the hoarding of goods, on a great scale is one devastating effect of these ideologies'. It continues: 'It is important the church continues to engage with vital issues such as economics, and financial crisis, affecting people around the world with the aim of encouraging a better future for **all** people.'"

To read the full text go to: www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=19209 or go to u tube: sermon on the steps. The video is not very clear, but it is good to hear the cheers when Father Joe speaks



"There is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed." Ghandi

"For evil to flourish it is only necessary for good people to remain silent."
Edmund Burke

"I came that all may have life and have it to the full."
John 10:10

CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

This VERY IMPORTANT conference will take place from November 28th in Durban, South Africa. "The United Nations Climate Change Conference, Durban 2011, will bring together representatives of the world's governments, international organisations and civil society. The discussions will seek to advance, in a balanced fashion, the implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, and other agreements". It is not too late to take action on this very important and serious issue. CAFOD action www.cafod.org.uk/take-action/don-t-drop-the-ball "Don't drop the Ball on CLIMATE CHANGE"

Christian Ecology Link has an interesting 10 min video: www.christian-ecology.org.uk "Faith and the Environment" This is well worth watching.

Prayer we might say before the Conference: Father, forgive us our shortsightedness, our greed and for the part we have played, however unwittingly, in the destruction of your world. Forgive us that we have exploited the world's resources for ourselves while so many others lack the basic necessities. Create in us a new heart and a new determination, that we may adopt a lifestyle that is gentle to the earth and just to the poor." (Source: CEL)

Peace Sunday 15 January 2012: The theme for 45th World Day of Peace message by Pope Benedict XVI is "Educating Young People in Justice & Peace"
Resources available from Pax Christi, www.paxchristi.org.uk/PeaceSunday.html, Tel: 020 8203 4884.

The Co-operative: Last year the Co-op made record profits. This year profits are still healthy, at £9 billion, but down a little from last year. Co-op banking has seen an increase of 20%. Perhaps more people are interested in ethical banking! The funeral service has seen an increase of 20%. But, on the negative side the Co-op has been criticised for importing goods from Israel. Members have requested that the management live up to the Ethical Trading Standards of the Trading Initiative.(ETI)



Rest in Peace.
Wangarei Maathai, the original "tree hugger", died in September. Wangari, from Kenya, had devoted her life to environmental issues and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004....the first "green" Nobel prize. She said: "economic and social progress should go hand in hand with environmental protection."

Poverty & Homelessness Action Week

January 28th – February 5th 2012, is a project of Church Action on Poverty and Housing Justice, see www.actionweek.org.uk

Church Action on Poverty's three-year campaign to Close the Gap focuses on four areas: people should have fair taxes, fair prices, fair pay and a fair say. These areas of major concern to the poorest. People on low incomes pay a premium on **fuel**, because many use pre-payment meters, which charge a higher rate.

Insurance, because poorer people are viewed as a higher risk.

Food because people in poor communities often have limited access to shops selling affordable and healthy food.

Credit and banking as they have no collateral. And poorer people often receive less than the minimum wage

www.church-poverty.org.uk/closethegap/whatarewecallingfor

Archbishop Rowan Williams wrote recently of: "a quiet resurgence of the seductive language of deserving and undeserving "poor" within the political debate.

We are all made in the image of God

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