



## Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

As you will know, last Thursday 18th June, Pope Francis' long awaited encyclical 'Laudato Si ' saw the light of day. It has generally had a very positive welcome in church and other circles. The hope is that it will help to spur real action in response to the threat that climate change is bringing to our world today.

There is plenty in this beautiful and inspiring document for our reflection, prayer and action in the months and years to come. It is safe to say that this document puts concern and action for the environment at the heart of the social teaching of the Church. It challenges us to work with others of good will for the common good of our planet, our common home.

The document & further comment can be found in several places, particularly:  
[www.catholicnews.org.uk](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk) (The Encyclical & 10-page PDF Summary) and  
[www.thinkingfaith.org](http://www.thinkingfaith.org) (Article by Damian Howard SJ).

May the spirit of St Francis of Assisi help us all towards a more healthy relationship with Creation, acknowledging our errors and indifference in the past and inspiring conversion of heart at the personal, national and global levels.

May God bless you,  
Fr Gerry Murray (Chair)

## National Justice and Peace Network Annual Conference

**Friday 17th to Sunday 19th July**  
**"The Things That Make for Peace"**  
*Exploring the real threats to human security and  
how we can work together to build a more peaceful world.*  
*At the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.*

Places still available, booking form from NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square,  
London SW1V 1BX tel. 020 7901 4864 Email [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk)

Some assistance may be available for families.

## From Shared Water Taps to Shared Cars

Brendan Noonan, Holy Family, Coventry

In the 1994 CAFOD Pope Paul VI Memorial Lecture former President of Ireland Mary Robinson said:

*“... if we are to preserve the world’s resources we have to share them: a commonsense and downright ethical notion, but one which has been greatly resisted.”*

Mary Robinson’s words resonated with me back then as in 1994 I returned to the UK after spending 2 years as a District Engineer with the Village Water Supply section (VWS) of the government of Lesotho.

Lesotho is an independent country completely surrounded by South Africa and still one of the poorest countries in the world. In the mountainous rural areas traditional water supplies consist of springs that are open to the elements and at risk of getting contaminated. The role of VWS was to protect these springs with concrete caps and pipe the water first to storage tanks then on to standpipe taps in villages.

The overall aim of VWS was to supply 30 litres of water per person per day with at least **30 people sharing each water tap**. [According to Waterwise, in the UK each of us use an average of around 150 litres at home every day]. VWS provided a lot of the materials and skilled labour but the people in each village had to do most of the hard manual work on their water system such as quarrying and shaping stones for the water storage tanks and helping with pipe laying. Building such a system could take from 6 months to a year.



**Village team laying a water supply pipe**

And water systems weren’t the only thing shared in Lesotho. One of earliest sights and lasting memories I have of my time there was seeing people sharing lifts in the back of pickup trucks. On my return to the UK I found it difficult to get work. I ended up studying at Coventry University which included doing a project

looking at the **environmental benefits of car clubs** that had been operating for a number of years in Germany and Switzerland but were unheard of here at that time.



**People sharing a ride in a pickup truck in Lesotho**

Car clubs give drivers the option of being able to use a car without having to own it. After joining a club they can hire a car for as little as an hour at a time, pick it up from its parking bay on a street close to where they live and return it at the end of the booking.

*According to research done for **Car Plus**, the not-for-profit body that supports car club development, **each car club car replaces 4 private cars**.*

*In 2013 **carbon dioxide emissions** from car club cars in England and Wales were **38% lower** than the UK average car.*

[www.carplus.org.uk](http://www.carplus.org.uk)

After completing the course at Coventry University I set up a company along with three other co-founders with the aim of establishing car clubs in the UK and persuading British drivers to share cars by joining a car club. This company became City Car Club which at the end of March this year had 30,000 members and 750 cars across the UK. That works out at **40 members sharing the use of each car**. (All my links to City Car Club ended in March and the four co-founders didn’t make any money at all!)

Unless by chance they happen to read this article, none of the members of City Car Club will be aware of the credit that is due to the people sharing lifts in pickup trucks and sharing water taps in villages in a small country in Africa over 5,000 miles away.

### **A Sermon from the Mount of Corcovado**

*Blessed are those who seek new ways to survive, new forms of production, of communitarian distribution, of **consumption by sharing**. I assure you that I travel with you and that you will always find new forms of living together.*

**Ecology and Liberation, Leonardo Boff**

# Blessed Oscar Romero

Joe Andrew

The beatification of Oscar Romero on Saturday 23rd May provided real recognition for 'one of the great heroes of the twentieth century', as CAFOD, which closely supported his work, terms him.

CAFOD Director Chris Bain said recently: 'Oscar Romero may not be a household name in the UK, but he was one of one of great heroes of the twentieth century. He deserves to be commemorated alongside the likes of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi as a peacemaker who sacrificed his life standing up to injustice. I hope that his beatification will give him the wider recognition he so richly deserves.'

'During three tumultuous years as Archbishop of San Salvador, Romero braved death threats time and again to denounce violence and speak out on behalf of the victims of his country's civil war. He was a remarkable man, who was inspired by his faith to fight not just poverty but injustice, to give a voice to the voiceless.'

'The reason that CAFOD staff and supporters, like millions of Catholics around the world, hold him in such high regard is obvious. He didn't simply talk about the need to love your neighbour, but courageously denounced the violence and named the injustices that plagued his country. Here at CAFOD we have regarded him as a Saint for years, and we are delighted that the Church is taking this crucial step towards recognising him as one.'

Oscar Romero was the Archbishop of San Salvador from 1977 until he was assassinated in 1980. He was initially regarded as a conservative choice, but he became increasingly outspoken about human rights violations in El Salvador – particularly after the murder of his close friend Father Rutilio Grande. After repeatedly condemning poverty and injustice, he was shot dead while celebrating Mass on 24th March 1980. 35 years later, Archbishop Romero has now been beatified, that is, 'Blessed', on 23rd May, and this is usually seen as a prelude to being made a Saint.

CAFOD has a long history of working with Archbishop Romero and promoting his legacy. In the 1970s, CAFOD supported Romero's famous radio broadcasts, which, at a time when the press was heavily censored, were often the only means by which people in El Salvador knew the truth about the atrocities occurring in their country. When Romero's radio station was blown up, CAFOD provided funding to rebuild it.

After Romero was martyred, the aid agency's staff successfully petitioned Lambeth Council to rename the Brixton street where their office was located 'Romero

Close', and when CAFOD moved to a new office in 2009, it was named 'Romero House'.

Today, CAFOD continues to work in El Salvador, helping farmers to improve their crops, assisting communities in reducing the risk of disasters, supporting people living with HIV, building peace, defending human rights and trying to create a more just society.

Chris Bain continued: 'I think Archbishop Romero would be pleased to see some of what is happening in El Salvador today. In 2013, one socially-minded government peacefully succeeded another, and they are consciously trying to implement policies that Romero would approve of: fiscal reform, free school uniforms and books for children, funding for co-operatives, more social programmes.'

'But El Salvador remains a country in the grip of inequality, and the legacy of the civil war continues to cause divisions. All around the world hundreds of millions of people live in poverty or under oppressive regimes. The world as a whole desperately needs more figures like Romero – leaders with the courage and faith to stand up for the poor against injustice.'

For more information, videos and photos of Blessed Oscar Romero go to [cafod.org.uk/romero](http://cafod.org.uk/romero).

## Attention Schools: a great opportunity for two of your current Year 11/12s!

Columban Justice and Peace Education with the Salesian Youth Ministry Team are inviting up to fourteen 16/17-year olds (two per school) for a five day experience of faith in action, including workshops from organisations doing inspiring social justice work, prayer and reflection, visits to social justice projects, leadership skills, and fun!

The programme will run from 1pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August until 2pm on the 7<sup>th</sup>, at Savio House in Bollington (near Macclesfield), organized by We hope to develop young leaders in justice and peace – supporting their faith formation and helping them engage their peers in putting faith into action – and we hope to support and animate them into the future. We are therefore asking if you could identify two young people who have displayed some or all of:

Leadership qualities (school and/or local community)

Passion about challenging injustice

Commitment to their faith

Spaces are extremely limited, so please move quickly; contact James at [education@columbans.co.uk](mailto:education@columbans.co.uk) or call 07930608626 for forms or more information.

# Diary Dates

Wisdom is knowing what to do next; virtue is doing it.

## JUNE

### **26th: United Nations Day for Victims of Torture**

ACAT(UK) - Action by Christians Against Torture  
see [www.acatuk.org.uk/](http://www.acatuk.org.uk/)

## JULY

### **1st : Day of Reflection for CAFOD volunteers and supporters.** Our facilitator will be Susy Brouard of CAFOD's theology team. At Manresa House, Harborne, B17 0AN from 10am to 4pm.

We hope the focus of the day will be the new Papal Encyclical on the Environment, dependent on the publishing date. All CAFOD volunteers are invited; please contact CAFOD Birmingham, 23 Glebe St, Walsall WS1 3NX Tel. 01922 722 944 or 07771 339 472.

### **10th: Freedom from Torture West Midlands Open Day**

From 10am to 3pm. Includes centre tours and staff talks to help guests build a clear understanding of the services that we provide to survivors of torture living in Birmingham, plus a wonderful opportunity to hear from our clients. See the webpage for more information: Places will be limited so please do book a place via the webpage, or contact Amy by phone on 0121 314 6825 or Email : [aporter@freedomfromtorture.org](mailto:aporter@freedomfromtorture.org)

### **12th: Sea Sunday**

[apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](http://apostleshipofthesea.org.uk) tel. 07505 653 801

### **17<sup>th</sup>-19th: Annual NJPN Conference: "The Things That Make For Peace"** See front page.

## AUGUST:

### **6th & 9th: 70th Anniversary of the first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima & Nagasaki**

[www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

## SEPTEMBER:

### **13th: Racial Justice Sunday**

[www.carj.org.uk](http://www.carj.org.uk)

## OCTOBER:

### **2nd: CAFOD Harvest Fast Day**

### **11th-18th: Week of Prayer for World Peace**

[www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com](http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com) or  
tel. 0209684340

### **13th: CAAT Christian Network Day of Prayer**

See [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

### **17th: J&P Commission Annual Assembly: "Changing the Unjust Structures of Society"**

In St Peter's Secondary School, Solihull. from 10.30am until 4pm. With the very welcome return of John Battle as guest speaker and a wide choice of issue-based workshops. Full Programme and Registration Forms available soon.

## **HOW TO GET IN TOUCH**

The Birmingham Justice and Peace Newsletter is sent to everyone on our mailing list free of charge. If you would like to be added to the mailing list please send your address, including EMail details, to the Administrator.

If you have an event you would like advertised in the Autumn/Winter 2015 newsletter please send details to:

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Home: Yew Tree Cottage, Hailey, Witney OX29 9UB  
Email: [jenkins@woxon.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:jenkins@woxon.freeserve.co.uk)  
Tel: 01993-702654 (home), 07919 325203 (mobile).

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More information about the Commission can be found on our website: [www.birminghamjandp.org.uk](http://www.birminghamjandp.org.uk)

*The views expressed in this newsletter are the views of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Birmingham Justice and Peace Commission or the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham.*

## **The Birmingham Diocese Justice and Peace Commission**



For information on the J&P calendar and links to J&P organisations....

For downloads from the J&P Resource Pack and much more.....access our website:

[www.birminghamjandp.org.uk](http://www.birminghamjandp.org.uk)