



Archdiocese of Southwark  
Commission for

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

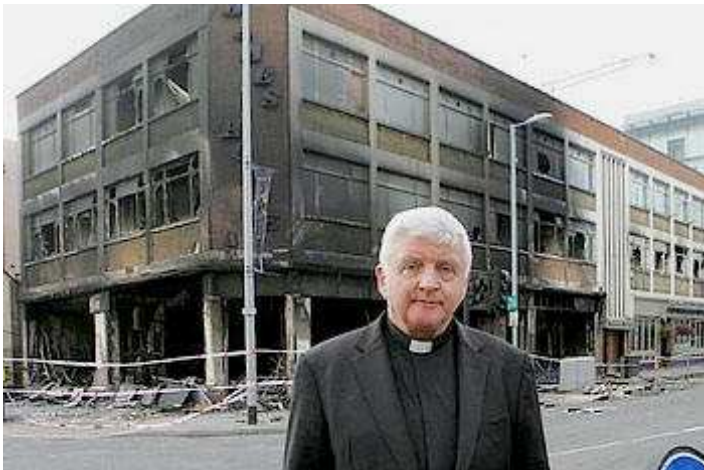
Newsletter - Autumn 2011



### A voice calling for calm ...

On Monday night, 8th August 2011, Father Michael Scanlon, Chairman of the Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission and parish priest of Saint Peter's, Woolwich, was on the streets of his parish appealing for calm during the riots. He described the town centre as anarchy and a 'free-for-all' as gangs smashed and looted scores of shops.

Father Michael was able to escort people out of the area and confront some of the looters, telling them that what they were doing was wrong. He found it a 'horrible experience' and 'a very tough night'. He said: 'We need to reclaim the streets. We cannot let these people destroy our neighbourhoods and our city.'



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*Father Michael standing outside the Great Harry pub in Woolwich, which was set alight on Monday night.*

After meeting Greenwich Council and police leaders on Tuesday, Father Michael said: 'This is a deprived area. More money needs to be invested in things for young people to do ... we have to be realistic about finding ways of dealing with this.'

The riots have affected a number of towns in the diocese, especially in the South East London area. Here Bishop Patrick has been in discussion with police and local clergy to ensure that peace swiftly returns to the streets. He has called for a public inquiry into the events of the week.

We pray for those who have lost their homes or businesses and all who have been adversely affected by the rioting.  
(see [www.tablet.co.uk](http://www.tablet.co.uk) 20th August for a longer article)

### The Catholic Environmental Justice Group

The environmental challenges which the world faces are well documented and widely accepted. As a Catholic Community we are called to protect God's creation and be effective stewards on earth. In coming together as a group of people and organisations who are active in the Catholic Community on environmental issues we seek to ensure a joined up and effective response to the environmental issues which face us today and those of future generations.

The CEJG is made up of those people with a link to the Catholic Community in order to establish a clear sense of purpose and it is hoped that the group will later reach out to other faith groups and others working on these issues. The group is chaired by Bishop John Arnold who provides the link with the CBCEW. The group meets three or four times a year.

The group's aims are:

- To engage the Catholic community and inspire them to be a force for good on environmental issues.
- To be a forum where people representing different groups and bodies within the Catholic Community can come together and discuss ideas, activities and concerns in order to enable the Catholic community to respond better to the environmental challenges.
- To seek and gather together useful and inspiring materials and publications as a source of information for the Catholic Community. These include theological and educational materials as well as information on campaigns and activities.
- To provide and update a portal, hosted under CBCEW website, to provide access to materials, events, seminars and activities
- To provide support and input into the Bishops' Conference on moving forward work on "The Call of Creation" and the Windsor Action Plan and on environmental issues generally
- To respond in the media as a CEJG to bring attention to the issue of the environment and the way in which our faith calls us to respond
- To set up events or seminars to better inform the Catholic Community, or to establish clear and coherent positions and on particular issues or topics.

If you are interested in finding out more about the CEJG, please contact the Resource Officer, Juliana Barrett at [Juliana.Barrett@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:Juliana.Barrett@cbcew.org.uk) or telephone 020 7901 4880

**Into the darkness  
– or the light?  
Anarchy in UK streets  
By Francis Davis**



The riots that rocked Britain this week appeared to take the Government by surprise. A closer look, however, reveals an awareness of the need to confront the social issues behind the crisis in our inner cities. But, asks an authority on Catholic social action, is it all too little too late?

Nick Clegg may not have realised, as he arrived back from holiday this week, but in the eyes of many, a prediction he had made was being fulfilled. Just over a year ago, campaigning before the general election, the Lib Dem leader suggested that “Tory cuts” would make riots a “serious risk”. But touring the streets of Tottenham on Monday, the now Deputy Prime Minister had moderated his argument, joining a senior cross-party coalition of voices intent on criticising “criminality”, rejecting violence and promising to bring the perpetrators of theft to justice. The mayor of London, Boris Johnson, went further, actively criticising those who sought to find “social and economic” explanations for what had happened. Once the smoke clears over this week’s crisis, however, how might Clegg and his Conservative partners respond?

This week messages have flown via text and Twitter, beginning when a distraught family could gain no insight from the authorities as to how their son, Mark Duggan, had come to be shot by the police. No one yet knows from among the hundreds arrested who genuinely shared that sense of grievance or how many have blithely taken advantage of it.

“We need a major inquiry very quickly,” says Dr Rob Berkeley, director of the racial justice think tank, the Runnymede Trust. “While I recognised the events linked to the initial peaceful protest by the family from previous history, subsequent developments have been unprecedented. Particular care will have to be taken to disentangle the way that the riots have been reported from a record of what actually happened on the ground.” BBC tele-vision, for example, spent much of Tuesday morning describing the “looted” London Borough of Ealing as uniformly “leafy” and “wealthy” when its population comprises 55 per cent black and minority communities, including many new immigrants on the first rung of the economic ladder.

Dr Berkeley is not surprised by the emergence of violence. “We had been saying for months,” he said, “that the combination of high unemployment, low school attainment and an absence of a feeling of having a stake in society among young people in

some communities was creating the conditions where conflict might erupt.” In two recent reports, the Runnymede Trust had even named Croydon and Birmingham – sites of conflict this week – as potential flashpoints.

Christian Guy, policy director at the Centre for Social Justice, the think tank founded by the Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith, himself a Catholic, is more trenchant. What happened was “unacceptable” but “revealed something complicated”. “Sections of our society”, he says, “have become so detached from the mainstream that they no longer live by common values and responsibility.” For at least some of those involved in the disturbances, he argues, “the anarchy of home life was playing itself out on the streets”.

A Conservative council leader who did not wish to be named wondered if the demise of the Michael Heseltine tradition in the Conservative Party, and the years out of power, had reduced the current Cabinet’s memory of the party’s own capacity for urban renewal. Heseltine, of course, was nicknamed the “Minister for Merseyside” in recognition of his passionate advocacy of inner cities. The former Labour Liverpool MP, Peter Kilfoyle, reportedly remains full of admiration for Heseltine’s achievements in the city. He recalls Heseltine as a politician who “cut through the crap and got things done”.

In cities, of course, are concentrated many of the nation’s ethnic minorities. Nationally, two-fifths of those in ethnic minorities live in low-income households, a figure that is double the number for white families. Even in working families, 65 per cent of Bangladeshis, 50 per cent of Pakistanis and 30 per cent of black Africans nationally now live in low-income households, with figures proportionately higher still when calculated in the north of England, the Midlands and inner London. Their position has declined in the last decade. Meanwhile, black young adults are four times as likely to be in prison as white young adults.

Just before last year’s election, Dominic Grieve, now Attorney General, wrote that ethnically diverse communities had been historically difficult for Conservatives to understand because for a long time they had not represented such seats. A Conservative adviser close to Downing Street and Conservative Central Office told me that some Conservative voices had long ago recognised this challenge and – especially since last summer – had been pressing Number 10 to take black communities more seriously. Ironically, in the few days before this week they felt they had made a breakthrough when it became clear that black majority Churches would become a renewed target for both mayor Boris Johnson’s re-election campaign and the Conservatives more widely.

Rob Berkeley is more sceptical. "It took Andrew Stunell [Lib Dem MP and Minister responsible for racial equality] nine months to meet organisations specialising in this field," he says, "and the Coalition Government still has no racial equality strategy." In this context, it is notable that the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government, Sir Bob Kerslake, announced earlier this year that he had made redundant senior civil servants advising on racial equality. Nevertheless, Christian Guy rejects the suggestion that there are not policies in place that will make a difference. "The challenge is not income but behaviour and we need to see that as a shared task comprising personal responsibility as well as welfare, school and police reform ... the Churches and the rest of the voluntary sector have a special role to play in this regard."

In the meantime, volunteer police specials were encouraged to report for duty this week while all Metropolitan Police leave was cancelled. But while the deputy mayor of London, Kit Malthouse, has strong relationships with the Met's senior management team, and communities across the capital, the jury is still out on Boris Johnson's capability to work successfully with anyone appointed to serve as one of London's senior officers. At a round table meeting with London Conservative MPs, national advisers and black cadets earlier this year, senior London officers expressed grave concerns that reductions in funding to police training colleges would reduce the likelihood of those from black communities joining the force. Speaking on Newsnight, the respected black writer Darcus Howe suggested a crisis was already upon the police because of their heavy-handed treatment of black youths.

Rob Berkeley suggests that both Boris Johnson and the Government could take a leaf out of the book of the mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg. At the start of this month, he announced that he would personally match US\$30 million from philanthropist George Soros, and add US\$67 million from the city's coffers, to create "the most ambitious and comprehensive attacks on racial disparity ... that any city has ever undertaken".

For some, the future is full of hope. The Bishop of Southwark, the Revd Christopher Chessun, who is also the Anglican Church's Bishop for Urban Life and Faith, said: "The images of violence and destruction ... do not represent the strong, hopeful and vibrant communities I know so well."

A Conservative Party spokesman pointed out that a positive step had been taken before the Prime Minister left for his now-abandoned holiday: just before the parliamentary recess, the Conservative MP Greg Clark had been appointed as Minister for Cities and charged with leading the social, environmental and commercial renewal of the largest eight conurbations

outside London. This reflects the Government's view that economically powerful and well-led cities in the north of England, the Midlands and the West Country will both be more at ease with themselves and allow UK plc to become less dependent on the South-East. Clark will work across Government as a minister in both the Department for Business and the Department for Communities and Local Government, in addition to a prime ministerial mandate to work on decentralisation.

Nick Clegg will chair a senior group of ministers charged with accelerating Clark's progress as he gets his feet under the table. Clegg himself represents a city, Sheffield, whose future is intimately tied up with the ability to kick-start urban job creation, social innovation and regeneration. So it could just be that as, with those of all political parties, he condemned the darkness that fell across Britain this week, he saw a light dawning beyond the immediate whose energy and form he could help to shape. And whose success would undermine any accusation that the cuts made by a Government that he has helped lead could create "the serious risk" of riots.

(This article, which first appeared in The Tablet on August 13th, is reproduced by kind permission of the author. It is available free of charge from The Tablet's website on [www.thetablet.co.uk](http://www.thetablet.co.uk))

**Should you wish to discuss any issues raised, Francis Davis will be our keynote speaker at our Autumn Assembly on October 22nd**

### ***A Muslim, Christian and Jewish Prayer for Peace***

O God, you are the source of life and peace.  
praised be your name forever.

We know it is you who turn our minds to thoughts of  
peace.

Hear our prayer in this time of crisis.

Your power changes hearts.

Muslims, Christians and Jews

remember, and profoundly affirm,

that they are followers of the one Creator,  
Children of Abraham, brothers and sisters;

enemies begin to speak to one another;

those who were estranged join hands in friendship;  
nations seek the way of peace together.

Strengthen our resolve to give witness to these  
truths by the way we live.

Give to us:

understanding that puts an end to strife;

mercy that quenches hatred, and

forgiveness that overcomes vengeance.

empower all people to live in  
your law of love. Amen.

Pax Christi



**October 22nd Our Autumn Assembly  
Big Society?- Fair Society?- Just Society?  
at Amigo Hall, St George's Cathedral, SE1.**

We are delighted to have Francis Davis and Alison Gelder as keynote speakers. Francis is a fellow of Blackfriars Hall, Oxford University & a director of the Las Casas Institute on Ethics, Human Rights & Social Justice. Alison is Director of Housing Justice.

Other plans include a talk from Fr. Mauricio Garcia a Jesuit priest who is Director of a leading NGO (and CAFOD partner) that works on peace and human rights issues in Colombia, and the Southwark launch of "100 Days of Peace", a campaign to surround the London Olympics with a lasting legacy of Peace

**All Welcome No charge to attend**

**September 17th - Progressio's 'Have your say' supporters' event**

Tea and cakes followed by an afternoon of workshops and discussions with Progressio. Find out more about Progressio's work on the ground and meet with others who are passionate about helping poor people overcome the barriers that keep them poor. A great opportunity to hear more about their work, and for them to hear ideas and suggestions from members and supporters about where Progressio should head. At Scope conference centre, 6 Market Road N7 9PW. AGM at midday then the workshop event will start at 2.30pm.

**PROGRESSIO**

**September 20th - Reclaiming our food system**

The evening will explore the idea of food sovereignty, a way of putting both people and the planet first. There will be short films, interspersed with expert speakers and discussion. From 6.30 at Ground floor bar, Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, E1. Free event, paid bar.

**October 1st CAFOD invite us to: Join in Bearing Witness.**



Over a thousand people will come together in Manchester to stand in solidarity with the world's poorest people. Alongside our friends at Christian Aid and Tearfund, CAFOD will be leading an inspiring day of campaigning and prayer to bear witness to our faith and the need for climate action. With a Campaign Energiser, a special ecumenical service at Manchester Cathedral and vigil procession around the city, it's promising to be a great day.

**October 6th - Damian Green at Canterbury**

Damian Green, MP (Minister for Immigration) will speak on the issue of immigration and asylum at 6.30pm in Old Sessions House, Canterbury Christ Church University. The talk is part of the Making Politics Matter series, and is open to the public.



**October 13th - Africa demands climate justice**

7pm at University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY World Development Movement invite us to hear speakers from social movements on the front line of the campaign in Durban.

**October 15th Annual Fairtrade Supporter Conference**

At Aston Conference Centre, Birmingham. It promises to be a day packed full of inspiring speakers, informative workshops and challenging debate.

**October 29th - First steps to sustainability.**

At Bore Place, Chiddingstone, Kent from 10am to 4pm. Organised by Shrinking the Footprint and hosted by Common Work the day will feature local, regional and national speakers on the environment and theology as well as practical guidance on how to green your church. The lunch will be sourced from and cooked at Bore Place. Delegate rate £25.

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