

Southwark Justice & Peace News

www.southwarkjandp.co.uk

Spring 2006

Creator of heaven and earth,
from the nearest flower in the
garden
to the farthest galaxy in the universe
broaden our minds to grasp
the connectedness of all created
things.

As our knowledge expands
to probe more and more into the
secrets of life,
as our communications improve
to see at first hand what is
happening far away,
help us the better to understand the
links
between past and present
and between events and trends the
world over.

Remind us that just as ocean currents
in the Pacific
affect the weather over England
and chemicals we put into the air
affect the ozone layer over the
Antarctic
so our lives are conditioned by events
in other countries and other cultures
and everything we do
has reverberations for the rest of
humankind.

[Alan Litherland, *harvest for the world*,
(Compiled by Geoffrey Duncan, Christian
Aid/CAFOD, 2004) p22]

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JUSTICE & PEACE COMMISSION

SPRING ASSEMBLY 2006

SUSTAINING CREATION

with

Sean McDonagh ssc

at:

**The New Barn, The Friars, Aylesford,
Maidstone, ME20 7BX**

on

Saturday April 29th

10.30 am – 4.00 pm

and

Contributions from other faith traditions:

Muslim, Bah'ai, Native American

Please bring or buy a packed lunch,

Tea & Coffee will be provided

(See map on back page for directions)

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE:

The J & P group at **Our Lady Immaculate, Whistable**, went ecumenical last year, combining with the Churches Together in Whitstable to work together for their shared goals and vision. Just before Christmas, they heard of a local initiative to provide people and funds for sureties for men held in the Dover Detention Centre. Being locked up, sometimes for months on end, they have no access to legal advice in many cases. Many are still traumatised from the experiences they had undergone in their own countries, and from the subsequent treatment they had received on arriving here in the UK. After a parish appeal and a meeting, the group now has 6 people actively involved in standing bail for people from the detention centre, doubling the number available before. If you are able to help, please contact Joanna Waller, 01227 274710 or email joannawaller@btinternet.com

South London Interfaith Group visited St George's Cathedral at the invitation of Canon James Cronin. After a very interesting and informative tour of the Cathedral, the group adjourned to Amigo Hall for questions and to share food. The group held its AGM early in March. Anyone who would like to find out more or join the group please contact Alan Dadd, Secretary of S L I G,

holmewood24@surefish.co.uk or 020 8678 8977

Congratulations to **Mrs Thelma Lewis**, of **St Anselm's** parish, Tooting Bec, on receiving an MBE for her services to Guyana, and to the Guyanese community in the UK. Thelma is a long serving member of the Justice and Peace group in Tooting.

Jennifer Austin has been visiting the Travellers' sites in Kent and preparing the children for the sacraments. A member of the Canterbury & District Independent Ethnic Minority Council, she has met city councillors and given them a copy of the DVD produced by the Catholic Children's Society to help in a better understanding of Travellers and Gypsies. (*The Bishops' Conference has produced a newsletter which you can download from www.catholic-ew.org.uk/*)

Bearsted & Harrietsham J & P group continues to work ecumenically on a range of issues and always welcome new members. Here's just a 'taste' of some of their many activities. In December they wrote to the Prime Minister opposing the renewal of Trident and calling for full implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They received a 'polite reply' from 10 Downing St, and a detailed reply from the Ministry of Defence to whom their letter was passed on. An appeal for the Pakistan

earthquake survivors raised more than £1,000, whilst the Manna Centre appeal raised over £800 as well as items needed by the centre. They are taking part in the Living Ghosts campaign by CAP and have sent postcards to the Home Secretary via CAP and will take any relevant follow up action. Members continue to donate good used clothing to the Shelter shop in Chatham where it is sold in aid of homeless people.

St Anthony's, Anerley, organised a clothing collection for the Spires Centre for Homelessness Sunday and distributed prayer cards and displayed information from the Homelessness Sunday pack at a coffee morning. They have been raising money for an education fund for a primary school in Kampala, Uganda, which resulted in 30 children receiving lunch for a whole term as well as paying the school fees for an orphan. When they displayed news from Kampala in the parish, the high level of interest resulted in 3 new members for the J & P group.

Don't forget! The International Mass will take place in St George's Cathedral, on **Sunday May 14th** at 4 pm. All welcome to come and join the celebrations

'Working to free themselves from poverty' - report from a CAFOD volunteer in Ethiopia

Last October, CAFOD volunteer David Murray was fortunate to be taken by CAFOD to visit projects undertaken by their partners in Ethiopia. One such partner is Agriservice, who, working in collaboration with the local people of the town of Amaro, have identified the problems that they can solve together. Three such problems are drought, lack of clean water, and animal disease. David and the other volunteers saw the work that is helping to improve the lives of the farmers and their families by providing clean, safe drinking water through the installation of a 3 km pipe that brings water from the mountains. (75% of Ethiopians still do not have access to clean water.) Now, the cattle also have fresh water that helps prevent disease. And work to rid the area of Tsetse fly infestation has seen the drop in infected cattle from 46% to 4%. With

a regular fresh water supply, the villagers are able to tend and rear animals, confident that they will be able to sell their offspring. One, Almaze Jeldo, was given a goat in the 'goat scheme'; and has already sold two kids, and with a little extra money bought a heifer. She said, "*I was confident to get the heifer now I know it will not get sick from Tsetse fly or dirty water. The benefits are milk for the children.*" Before, their diet was short on protein.

A lasting impression for David was the way in which the people are determined to help themselves out of poverty, given just a little help.

David has written an article for the J & P Office website, with photographs, to give a full description of his trip. He is willing to visit groups to talk about it - contact him on 020 8647 9077.

* www.southwarkjandp.co.uk

From Catholic Social Teaching

"By its very nature water cannot be treated as just another commodity among many, and it must be used rationally and in solidarity with others. The distribution of water is traditionally among the responsibilities that fall to public agencies, since water is considered a public good. If water distribution is entrusted to the private sector it should still be considered a public good. The right to water, as all human rights, finds its basis in human dignity and not in any kind of merely quantitative assessment that considers water as a merely economic good. Without water, life is threatened. Therefore, the right to safe drinking water is a

Where is the worst place on earth to be a child?

Fr Michael writes:

When adults wage war, children pay the highest price. Not only are children the primary victims of armed conflict, they are both its targets and increasingly, its instruments. They are recruited and used as child soldiers, forced to give expression to the hatred of adults.

Their suffering bears many faces, for in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath, children are killed, maimed, orphaned, abducted, deprived of education and health care, and left with deep emotional scars and trauma. So, let us ask ourselves: where is the worst place on earth to be a child?

This question was answered for us by Olara Amii Otunnu, the former UN Under-Secretary & Special Representative for Children & Armed Conflict, who is now president of the LBL Foundation for Children, New York; in a talk I attended at the Commonwealth Club, London, on January 17th 2006.

In his presentation, Mr Otunnu pointed out that of the 56 on-going situations of conflict around the world today, "the worst place on earth to be a child is the northern region of the Republic of Uganda."

There, a conflict has raged in fits and starts for twenty years, has devastated an entire society, destroying it physically, culturally, emotionally, socially and economically – and all in the full view of the international community.

To Mr Otunnu, what is going on is not the usual humanitarian crisis, nor is it a natural disaster: it is a genocide!

To the government of Uganda, what is going on is an insurgency led by a criminal few whose weapons of choice are terror and abduction, particularly of women and children, for use as sex slaves and soldiers in a futile war with no known political goal.

To the affected people, the conflict is a test of wills between two war-mongers at the expense of their lives, property and welfare.

What was heart rending to see at the Commonwealth Club was the

extent to which the conflict had divided the people of northern Uganda, who composed the bulk of the audience.

The question and answer session that followed Mr Otunnu's talk brought this to light: opinions on who must be held responsible for this on-going tragedy split not only the Acholi community, who are the most affected, but also the government and people of Uganda, as well as the international community.

There are those, particularly from government, who hold the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leadership responsible. And those, particularly from among the people, who hold the government of Uganda responsible. A few did hold both the LRA and the government responsible. The international community has turned a blind eye.

But the Christian way, as the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us, is that we are all responsible. And this, in a way, was the message in Olara Otunnu's presentation.

How then, can we act responsibly in the face of this tragedy?

During the presentation and the debates that followed, what was truly amazing to see was the human

capacity to realise that, in all this, all sides to the conflict share in one humanity. Though the conflict has pitted brother against brother, government against people, Ugandans against the international community, it was clear that underneath all the recriminations lay a willingness to forgive. As in the parable of the Prodigal Son, despite the resentment that some may feel, there is a palpable desire to forgive.

Our duty as Christians is to firmly grasp this feeling of forgiveness, however fleeting it may be at the moment, and to strengthen it with the lesson our Lord and Saviour teaches us when He says: 'Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me.'

It is in realising the power of such forgiveness that we can truly live the Gospel message of love for one another. As Christians we must join hands with our suffering brothers and sisters in northern Uganda and help them, and us, realise the promise in which our salvation as humans, who have fallen short of the glory of God, truly lies.

It is in our response to tragedies of this kind that we truly understand the meaning of human suffering: a test of our faith and understanding of the message that God is love, God is forgiveness.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: JUNE 5TH 2006

Did you know that drylands occupy 41% of the earth's land area, and are home to more than 2 billion people, 90% of whom live in developing countries? Half of all people living in poverty live in these drylands. The theme of this year's World Environment Day is **Deserts & Desertification**, & the slogan is **'Don't Desert Drylands!'** emphasising the importance of protecting them. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is holding its main celebrations in Algeria. According to the website, (www.unep.org) the day's agenda is "to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable

development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership which will ensure nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future." The first World Environment Day was held in 1972, to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, and the creation of the UNEP. On previous Day's, street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essays and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, recycling & clear up campaigns have been part of the celebrations. Visit the website for more details and information.

Diary

- March 22nd** Three Faiths Forum - London S. E. meet at Hartley Hall, Culverley Rd, Catford, at 8pm. Theme of discussion will be 'the meaning of life'. All very welcome
- April 9th** Flower festival near the Peace Pagoda, Battersea Park, at 3 pm
- April 13th** Celebration of the Jewish Passover
- April 16th** Easter Sunday - Celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ
- April 29th** **Southwark Justice & Peace Assembly, New Barn, Aylesford**
- May 28th** Three Faiths Forum picnic, Greenwich Park
- May 10th** Seminar, 'Poverty, Inequality & the Church' with Professor of Public Policy, Harvard, Mary Jo Bane; at St Vincent's Centre, Carlisle Place, Westminster SW1 11.30 am - 3.30 pm. No fee, donations gratefully received on the day. Email richard.zipfel@cbcew.org.uk to book.
- May 13th** CAFOD Campaigner Conference - launch of the new campaign. Call 020 7326 5692 or go to: www.cafod.org.uk/conference
- May 14th** International Mass St George's Cathedral 4pm
- May 14 - 20th** Christian Aid Week Call 020 7620 4444 or go to: www.christianaid.org.uk
- June 5th** World Environment Day: for more details go to www.unep.org.
- Sept 17th** Peace Pilgrimage, Aylesford with Archbishop Sean Brady, Mass 12.00 Talk 2.00pm

TRAVEL TO AYLESFORD:

Rail: Trains go from Victoria and the Charing Cross/London Bridge lines. Depending on the time of day, you get off at Maidstone East and walk to Maidstone Barracks (10 – 15 mins) for a train to Aylesford OR change at Rochester and/or Strood. There is a 20 minute walk from Aylesford Station * *we are hoping to have cars or a minibus to meet people arriving between 10.00 & 10.30 am.*

Road: M20 junction 6 then follow signs for Eccles & The Friars. A2 to M2 as far as junction 3 (A229) then follow signs to Eccles & The Friars

If you can offer a lift to someone, please let the J & P Office know and we will try to link you with someone looking for a lift.

Prayer for a New Beginning

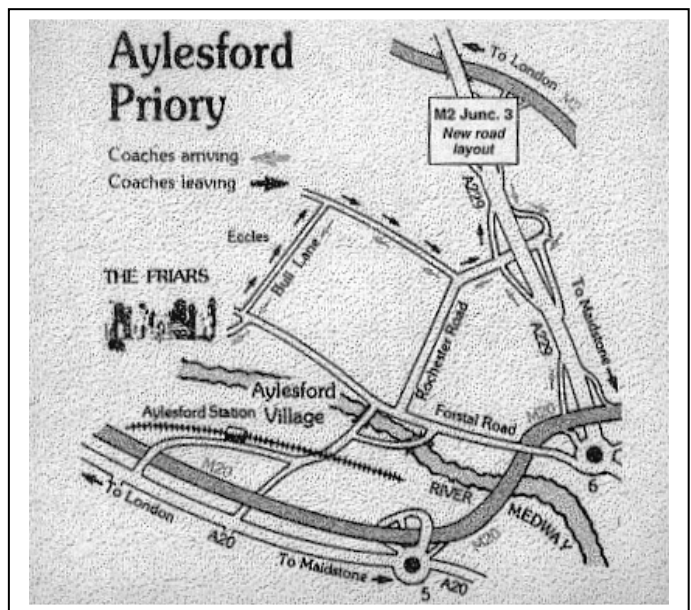
God of our past, present and future,
look with compassion on the wrong we have done,
deal gently with who we are,
and fire us up to become the people
you would have us be.

Grant us the humility to learn from the past,
courage to embrace the present,
and wisdom to change the future
that together we may make poverty history.

Make us mindful of our achievements,
ever eager to work for justice
and always ready to do your will
that your kingdom come on earth.

Give us the energy in the wake of apathy,
inspiration in the face of opposition
and hope in the path of despair
that poverty finds an end
and humanity discovers a new beginning,
in the name of Christ, Amen.

Annabel Shilson-Thomas, for CAFOD, 2006



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I enclose a donation of £ _____ towards the
printing costs of the newsletter.

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ADDRESS: Sr Pat Trussell, Southwark J & P Office, Cathedral House, Westminster Bridge Rd, London, SE1 7HY