



SOUTHWARK J P I C NEWS

Summer 2007

Seeking to renew the work of Justice & Peace in our Diocese

Oscar Romero - A Saint for the 21st Century?

"What is more important than the moment of my death is to give God the whole of my life. I don't believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me I will rise again in the Salvadorian people." This, reported Monsignor Ricardo Urioste, was part of the last writings by Archbishop Oscar Romero before his death.

Speaking at the first **Archbishop Romero Memorial Lecture**, the former Secretary and Vicar General to the Archbishop gave his personal memories of the man who has come to symbolise the struggle for human justice, civil rights and peace work throughout the world. Urioste is a living witness to the sanctity of Romero, who is seen to be a prophet, martyr and saint for the 21st century. Indeed, his statue was one of ten chosen to represent all those who have died/continue to die in circumstances of oppression and persecution in the 20th century, and was placed on the front of Westminster Abbey in 1998.

Mgr Urioste was able to give insights into the man who had been appointed Archbishop of San Salvador as a 'safe pair of hands' (*Urioste said the clergy of the country had wanted Bishop Rivera but the Vatican wanted an Archbishop who would be less critical of the government so they chose Romero!*) In fact, he (Urioste) had not even gone to Romero's installation because he was disappointed.



Romero had been appointed General Secretary to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Central America in 1967 and in 1970 as auxiliary bishop of San Salvador. A move to a rural diocese as Bishop followed until in 1977 when, amidst great dismay and disappointment from the clergy, this 'conservative, solemn, nit-picking awkward cleric' was made Archbishop of the capital, San Salvador.

When two weeks later he had met his new Archbishop at the door of the seminary, the first thing Romero said to him was, "Help me". This, said Urioste, was the first indication of the humility of the man, prepared to ask everyone for help to do his task. He wanted to know what everyone thought - including 'the poor of the streets' just as much as what the clergy thought. At the time,

the situation in El Salvador was bad - split into three 'power' camps capitalists, military and church. Romero began to separate the church from these powers and was called subversive and a communist for doing so by the rich - "just", remarked Urioste, "as was Jesus by the Sanhedrin (Luke 23:1).

He had begun to change whilst bishop in the rural diocese of Santiago de Maria. On a retreat there, he had heard the campesinos being asked which they would prefer, money, land or to be able to help each other. Surprisingly to him,

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The Archbishop Romero Trust

Founded in 2005 on the 25th anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero to keep alive the courageous example of Romero in his option for the poor.

The Trust exists to promote knowledge and awareness of his life; to encourage & organise prayer liturgies; and to support human rights & social justice initiatives in Latin America which carry forward the tradition of his work.

Details from 8 Dean's Mews, London W1G 9EE or see website: www.romerotrust.org.uk

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Lift the lid on bad loans - Jubilee Debt Campaign

For years, rich countries have lent money to poor countries and have secured lucrative contracts for their own companies. They have not stopped at lending to corrupt and oppressive dictators.

Poor countries are still giving more than US\$4 million EVERY HOUR to the rich world in debt repayments. Many of these 'debts' are the rest of irresponsible, self-interested or reckless lending by rich companies or countries.

Following the serious pressure from campaigners, the rich world has at last, cancelled some substantial debts, but only to a few poor countries, and after they have agreed to put in place policies demanded by the rich. This means there are still many more unjust debts that need to be written off, e.g. loans and credit that have helped to buy weapons which have then been used against their own

people. Indonesia owes the UK more than £300 million for weapons bought by the regime of President Suharto - who was known to use them on his people. And the present government has been told it must pay this debt.

Other unjust debts cover those given for useless or overpriced projects, given to corrupt regimes that were likely to steal the money, or given on unfair or unbearable terms.

The Jubilee Debt Campaign is calling on the UK and other rich governments to change this. They have postcards available to send to the Secretary of State for International Development, UK to 'lift the lid' on these bad loans, to investigate and then cancel the unjust ones.

For details, call JDC on 020 7324 4722 or send an email to: info@jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

"Each of us has to have a burning commitment to justice, to human rights, to freedom, to equality, but looking at them with the light of faith. It's not doing good out of philanthropy. There are many groups that do good, but so that they will be in the newspaper, so that there will be a plaque with their names as great benefactors. There are many who do good looking for recognition on earth. What the Church is looking for is to call all of us to do justice and to brotherly and sisterly love. This is for the benefit of the person who does good, because the benefactor receives more good than the one to whom good is done. "Then you will call out to the Lord and he will answer you; you will cry out and he will say: Here I am" [Isaiah 58:9]. What more can we want, brothers and sisters?"

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they had chosen the third option. When he later put the same questions to his clergy, he didn't get the same answer! Gradually he came to really identify with the poorest of the poor. Urioste saw his conversion to work for so-

cial justice as in the story of Jesus and the blind man. When first 'touched' he saw the poor as people who needed something which he tried to give. Then, when 'touched' again he began to ask WHY they were poor. He had been given a new way of seeing.

Romero loved being with his people, "you could say his 'office' was outside with people"; said Urioste. "He used to say, 'a Bishop has to be where the suffering is', which you could say should be true of any Christian," commented Urioste.

Mgr Urioste concluded by saying that people were drawn to Romero because of his spirituality. He had the spirit of Jesus, which for him was firstly his communication with God the Father (*whenever he had to make a decision or meet someone in government etc he would first spend time in prayer*) and secondly the compassion of Jesus. These two dimensions can be seen in Jesus and were clear in him.

*Further report on the lecture at www.romerotrue.org.uk

Towards a vision A Prayer for the Diocese of Southwark

God our Loving Father,
pour out on us afresh
the gifts of your Holy Spirit.
Open our ears to hear your Word,
open our eyes to see your presence,
open our minds
to understand your Wisdom
and open our hearts
to be more available for your mission
so that, strengthened by your grace
we can truly be a sign and instrument
of your presence in our world today.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Have a loaves & fishes picnic this summer

Picnics are a great way of celebrating summer, so why not hold one this July as a way of joining in the spirit of *livesimply*? You could invite the whole parish to take part. Eating together has always been part of the Biblical tradition, look at how often Jesus had a meal with his friends and followers.

The 'loaves & fishes' picnic is a way of celebrating being together. You can try to make it as inclusive as possible, by inviting people from beyond the parish perhaps, and building links with others.

CAFOD has prepared materials that includes tips on organising the event, a special themed liturgy and ideas for children. The suggested date is July 15th but any date will do. And if you contact CAFOD Southwark they may be able to arrange for a guest speaker to come also. The resource pack is free and will be available from the beginning of June.

*A set of 6 A2 size *livesimply* posters will also be available in June - in full colour with quotes from *Populorum Progressio* on each. Send an email to: resources@cafod.org.uk or call 020 7095 5572



The Olive Tree Campaign - Keep Hope Alive - a follow up

You may recall the article in the last issue of the JPIC newsletter about the 'Keep Hope Alive' campaign?

From Sevenoaks Justice and Peace group comes news of a follow up.

Michael Whiting of Sevenoaks Parish (St Thomas of Canterbury) has recently returned from six months with East Jerusalem YMCA, near Bethlehem, working on advocacy for the local West Bank Palestinians. At a speaker's meeting arranged by the local J & P group, Michael described his part in the Olive Tree Campaign 'Keep Hope Alive.'

The farmers have to cope with the uprooting or destruction of their olive trees. Often they have difficulty gaining access to fields outside The Wall. Travel permits may be arbitrarily withdrawn. Michael explained that the presence of international helpers in the fields, particularly in October, assists a successful harvesting of the olives. He saw the grubbing up of olive trees, which will begin to fruit after 8 years. The YMCA is seeking finances for some 8,000 new trees this year.

At their meeting, individuals contributed enough for 13 trees to be purchased, with a further 10 supported from the parish itself. Each tree will be marked (to help its protection)

with an inscribed label giving details of sponsors. Contributors receive certificates that indicate the exact position of the tree they have sponsored.

Michael's talk also included details of present day life in the Bethlehem area of the occupied West Bank, and he had brought with him maps showing how the occupation of land had changed from 1947 to the present day.

He also had a large detailed satellite photograph of the entire Bethlehem area and was able to illustrate his talk by giving the names of the villages where he had had experiences of the life of the Palestinians.

Thanks to Pat & Bob Harmon, St Thomas's for sending in the above article.

**If you would like to sponsor an olive tree they cost US\$20 (around £10) which covers the young sapling, distribution, planting and information to the farmer on the best way of caring for the tree. It also covers the official certificate and the inspired label that is put on the tree. Details and a downloadable form are available on the East Jerusalem website:*

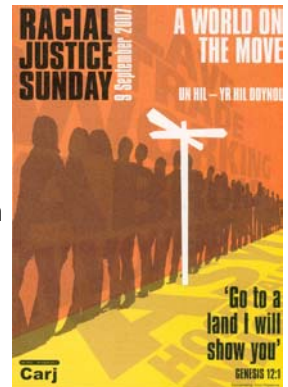
www.ej-ymca.org/site/ The campaign is well known and supported by Pax Christi.

Racial Justice Sunday: Sept. 9th 2007

'Go to a land I will show you' Gen. 12:1

People everywhere are on the move, and the result is that people from all over the world 'rub shoulders' with each other.

This Racial Justice Sunday takes the theme of this



mass-movement of peoples from a variety of "signposts".

- ☒ A place of Safety? - issues concerning refugees, asylum seekers sanctuary
- ☒ A warm welcome? - what kind of welcome have we given to migrants?
- ☒ A brave new beginning - stories of Christians who have migrated
- ☒ A land of opportunity? - people who migrate for economic reasons
- ☒ The end of an evil? - 200 yrs since the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act
- ☒ A level playing field? - involving people of minority cultures in church life

The free pack offers stories, worship suggestions, biblical reflections and practical resources to help mark the day. It is a way of celebrating diversity and taking a stand against injustice. Contact CARJ on 020 8802 8080 or email carj@btconnect.com

Women living simply - what can women do?



One of the members of the livesimply network, the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW) has come up with an Alphabet that could help us to live more simply.

Designed to stimulate discussion and creative thinking, it could be used in parishes to suggest ways in which individuals and families could begin to make some changes in their lifestyles in order to 'live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with those who are

poor."

Obviously everyone's circumstances are different, you may be doing some of the actions already, and some may not be appropriate to you, but then they're sure to get you thinking of other ways for yourself!

Here's a taster:

B - Bottle Banks or kerb side collections to recycle glass

E - Energy from a green electricity supplier and low-energy light bulbs NOW!

F - Flush less, use a hippo in your cistern!

J - Join a campaigning organisation

S - Switch off Standby items

V - Vote wisely

W - Water is wasted far too often

Y - Young people must be involved - it's their world. Education!

The full leaflet is available on their website; www.nbcw.org or follow links from the livesimply website at www.livesimply.org.uk/

Forthcoming Events:

June 9 Enough! National demonstration and rally in Trafalgar Square. 2007 marks the 40 yr anniversary of the Six Day War, in which the Israeli army took military control of the Gaza Strip and West bank, including Jerusalem. A group of charities, trade unions, faith and other campaign groups have come together because they want peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike. Join them at the rally. Details at www.enoughoccupation.org

June 16 Pax Christi AGM at Holy Apostle Church Hall, Cumberland St, Pimlico, SW1V 4LV Guest speaker Giles Fraser, Vicar of Putney and contributor to Radio 4's Today programme. Mass with Bp Malcolm McMahon. Bring a lunch to share. RSVP to Pax Christi Office 020 8203 4884 or email: info@paxchristi.org.uk

July 20 - 22 NJPN Annual Conference, Swanwick 'Called to be Peacemakers' in collaboration with Pax Christi and Fellowship of Reconciliation. Places still available. Call 020 7901 4864

September 9 Racial Justice Sunday 'A world on the move, Go to a place I will show you' Free packs to help your celebrations from CARJ 020 8802 8080 or send an email to carj@btconnect.com

October 20th Southwark JPIC Assembly, Amigo Hall

Retreat at Worth Abbey

7th - 9th September 2007

May justice flourish and peace abound...



Led by Fr Paul Fleetwood and Jane Ozanne

A weekend residential retreat at Worth Abbey, Crawley, W Sussex. RH10 4SB

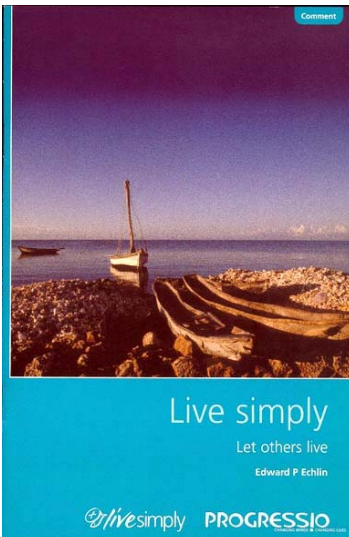
What do the concepts of justice and peace mean for us, and how do they inspire our work for the Kingdom? A chance to reflect together and share our experience, in the light of the Christian tradition. In our time together we will have opportunities for silent reflection and prayerful reading of the scriptures, prayer in common, and sharing our experiences.

Contact : Rosemary Sanders – TOC@worthabbey.net
01342.710318

Progressio have just brought out a new pamphlet in their Comment series. Entitled 'Live simply Let others live'; it has been written by Edward P Echlin and is part of the range of materials available for the livesimply project.

Dr Echlin is an ecological theologian, Honorary Fellow at Trinity & All Saints University, Leeds, and Visiting Scholar at Sarum College, Salisbury. In the book he argues that it's time for people in the global North to recognise the impact that our unsustainable lifestyles are having on people and poverty in the global South.

Go to www.progressio.org.uk



to order or download a copy of the book

New from the British Jesuits
a different way of praying: get God on your pod!

Pray-as-you-go combines music, scripture and some questions for reflection in a new, ten minute prayer session every day.

Play it or download it from their site with one click, or subscribe to the free podcast. Then you can use it at home, in the office, or on the move with your MP3 player.

Go to www.pray-as-you-go.org

We're on the web!
www.southwarkjandp.co.uk

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Name: Please add my name to the newsletter Mailing list

Address: Please add me to the Email list

POSTCODE: I enclose a donation of £ towards costs

Email: **PAYABLE TO SOUTHWARK JUSTICE & PEACE OFFICE**

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