

**DECEMBER**

- 10 Human Rights Day
- 10 White Band Day 3 [www.makepovertyhistory.org](http://www.makepovertyhistory.org)
- 12 -18 World Trade Organisation, Ministerial Conference, Hong Kong
- 25 Christmas Day. Rejoice! Rejoice!
- 28 Holy Innocents Day

**2006  
JANUARY**

- 8 'Feast of the Epiphany' Justice and Peace Sunday. Bishop Moran's letter to be read out and collection to be taken up for the work of Justice and Peace at all Masses. Please make sure this is happening in your parish.
- 29 Homelessness Sunday. Leaflet and order form enclosed.

**FEBRUARY**

- 26 Poverty Action Sunday. Leaflet and order form enclosed.

**MARCH**

- 6-19 Fairtrade Fortnight
- 18 Justice & Peace National Conference. Renfield St Stephen's Church Centre, Bath Street Glasgow

# diarydiary

## A DATE for the DIARY

Because of our focus on **MakePovertyHistory** this year, we have put off our own Conference to the spring. We will hold the Conference on Saturday, 18 March 2006 in Renfield St Stephen's, Bath Street, Glasgow. Provisional title:

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING:  
THE LEGACY OF GAUDIUM ET SPES**

We want to use the occasion to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of **Gaudium et Spes**, the last document of Vatican II, and the foundation of modern Justice and Peace work.

We would also like to use the occasion to introduce the recent **Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church**.

Further details will be announced next month and in the February magazine.

The Staff at **Justice & Peace** send best wishes to all our readers for a **joyful Christmas and a Peaceful New Year**

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Justice and Peace Scotland is the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland; our remit is to have a concern for social justice, human rights, peace, development and the integrity of creation.

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**Go, therefore, and  
make disciples of all  
nations . . .** (Matthew 28:19)



*E.U. Trade Justice Lobby*

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# ethics aren't just for christmas

The 2004 Annual Cost of Christmas survey published by Switch / Maestro estimated that during last year's festive season we planned to spend £813. This includes £337 on presents, £100 on food and £56 on drink. The rest would be spent on wrapping paper, cards and postage (£53); Christmas tree and decorations (£64); going out (£119) and travel (£84).

The majority of parents (43%) will spend between £100-£200 per child on Christmas gifts. However, 24% of parents will spend between £200-£500 per child, and the luckiest 4% of children will receive gifts worth over £500.

According to a Boots commercial, this Christmas we will give each other 500 million presents. I don't know if this includes the new fashion for charity presents, where people in developing countries will find goats, cows and cans of worms in their Christmas stockings, but we will end up spending well over £30 billion - just a few billion more than the annual UK defence budget.

Not that it's all bought and paid for. According to Credit Action statistics, total UK personal debt broke through the £1.1 trillion barrier (£1,100,000,000,000) in June 2005. This is only 11 months after it broke through the £1 trillion barrier in July 2004. Britain's personal debt is increasing by £1 million every four minutes.

So how do we get off the merry go round, not just at Christmas, but during the rest of the year. One way might be to use the system against itself: Consumerism for a better life. If the better life is only for you, you've missed the point. Sadly some publications tend to suggest it's about personal growth only. Commerce is of its nature interpersonal, political even. And it's here that we can make a difference in our retail choices. Fairtrade products get us started, but what about fuel, clothing and consumer durables?

We need a reliable guide through the often complex tangle of arguments. If you can give some of the following as gifts, you may start the business of awareness raising. If you can contrive to get one yourself, social justice can become even more embedded in your life. I would go so far as to say there cannot be a proper spiritual formation without a base of ethical consumerism. And that formation will have nothing to do with the pathological purity of those Jesus took to task in Matthew 23. What follows is a

selection of recent books, to enlighten, advise and help you make consumer choices. It's no coincidence that you can often find these books at a discount in shops or on Amazon.



**The Rough Guide to a Better World**, by Martin Wroe and Malcolm Doney, published free by DFID available through post offices or direct from [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk) almost a hundred pages of advice, resources and contacts.

**The Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping** by Duncan Clark. Publisher: Rough Guides 2004, costing £8.00 or less. Gives a more detailed account of the arguments and consequences, in the same user friendly style.

**The Good Shopping Guide: Your Guide to Shopping with a Clear Conscience** by Charlotte Mulvey Publisher: Ethical Marketing Group, around £9.00. This more detailed guide (make sure you get the latest edition) tabulates producers by their involvement in things like animal testing and involvement with the arms trade. Innocent seeming companies are often part of big immoral corporations, bringing more moral quandaries.

**A Good Life: The Guide to Ethical Living** by Leo Hickman, Eden Project Books, 2005 £15 (available cheaper). A big directory. Do you want to know the difference between organic, fair trade and locally grown food - and crucially, which you should buy? Do you want to make your home a toxin-free zone? Do you want to save energy and money at the same time? Fully illustrated, with a directory of contacts and suppliers.

And . . . for the sheer dominating power of supermarkets in our lives, you may want to read **Shopped** by Joanna Blythman, Perennial, £7.99

**Do the Right Things! A Practical Guide to Ethical Living** by Pushpinder Khaneka Publisher: New Internationalist Publications (September 1, 2004) around £8.00. This is more of a manual than a catalogue, written in an easy informal style.

**Change the World for a Fiver: We Are What We Do** Publisher: Short Books, London 2004 £5. A lovely light read that does what it says in the title

And of course, if there is all that spare cash sloshing around, you could always take out a gift subscription to the **Justice and Peace Magazine** as a present! In any event, may all the Humbug of Christmas leave you unscathed, and may you experience a deep and renewed sense of incarnation in your life.

Tim Duffy



# lobbying for trade justice



Claire, Kathy and Gerry from Christ the King Parish in Grangemouth with their MP, Michael Connarty.

and interesting discussion with my MP (Tommy McAvoy, Rutherglen and Hamilton West). He agreed that Trade Justice was indeed an important issue and felt that the Government were doing a good deal towards this. I accepted that the Government were making promises of support and that Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry had stated that he would not be imposing trade liberalisation on developing countries. But I expressed my concern that lots of promises have been made over the years and not enough had come of them. Developing countries were still being pushed into agreements which did not improve their situation, but provided further income for the multi-nationals. Mention was made of the corruption in some of the countries; I pointed out - and Mr. McAvoy agreed - that British companies have recently been found guilty of using corrupt practices in their dealings with other countries. I had taken along some notes to help me answer some points that might arise about which I wasn't clear. It was interesting to find that Mr. McAvoy had been in touch with Mr. Johnson for the same reason. Therefore, as a result of our meeting, we both learned more about the issues involved.'

Richard commented: 'I was happy to join over 8000 others in lobbying for trade justice at Westminster. It was a shame that the impact of the lobby was diminished by the resignation of David Blunkett, which grabbed the headlines that day. But it is clear that what we were trying to achieve is far more important than the share dealings of a politician. We were trying to get our politicians to listen to us to make them put pressure on the government to make trade policies fair. Trade Justice is essential if we want to make poverty history. I was delighted to take part in the mass lobby so that I could tell my MP Jim McGovern that Justice and Peace Scotland expects the UK government to take the lead at the forthcoming World Trade Organisation meeting by helping to rewrite world trade rules to benefit poor countries, respect workers' rights and protect the environment. I wanted the MPs I spoke with to know that we are concerned about the impact of unjust trade rules on the world's poorest people - and that while these rules continue we cannot make history.'

On 21 November, campaigners from all over Europe lobbied their Parliamentarians. Many Scots made their way to Brussels and I was part of group of 20 Scottish campaigners made up from staff and supporters of Justice and Peace, SCIAF, Oxfam, Christian Aid and the World Development Movement. Joining me from J&P was Mary Macpherson and Grace Buckley. Our trip had been arranged by Oxfam in Scotland in conjunction with Alyn Smith MEP, and our timetable was well planned with meetings with 5 of our 7 MEPs. There were also meetings

with 2 Director Generals of the EU, Jeremy Nagoda, European Commission Directorate General, Europe Aid and Jean-Charles Vaneckhaute who is an official within the Commission's DG Trade, WTO Unit, as well as MEP Margrete Auken (Danish Socialistisk Folkeparti).



Mary and Tommy

**We called on the European Union:**

- to stop forcing trade liberalisation and to champion the right of developing countries to decide their own trade policies
- to respect poor countries' and workers' rights to decide on trade policies that will help them end poverty and protect their environment

**We asked MEPs:**

- to use their influence to demand that the EU stop pushing for unfair trade-offs at the WTO between agricultural subsidies on the one hand and increased market access for services and industrial goods on the other. This only benefits the interests of European countries and large-scale business while undercutting the needs of developing countries
- to take a lead in redressing the imbalanced role of the WTO in the global governance system by ensuring that global trade rules do not undercut internationally-agreed social, labour and environmental standards and that WTO negotiations are conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive way.

Alyn Smith MEP was preparing the equivalent of an Early Day Motion for the European Parliament. It calls on the EU to allow developing countries to decide their own trade policies on agriculture and Non agricultural Market Access Negotiations, and to endorse the position of 'no forced liberalisation.'

Margrete Auken was a breath of fresh air. A theologian, she was on side with all the TJM demands, and saw no reason why the EU could not deliver at the WTO.

But for the most part, everything seemed to be tied up in red tape, a tape that no one seemed able to or willing to disentangle.

The general view of the WTO talks in December is that they will not deliver for the poor. After my visit to the European Parliament and speaking to the MEPs and Director Generals my feelings are also that the WTO will not deliver. But it was very worthwhile going to the European and the UK Parliament, to let those who represent us know that we are watching, that we will not give up and that we will hold them to account.







# rosa parks ...a modest heroine

On 24 October 2005, Rosa Parks died, aged 92. Almost exactly fifty years earlier on 1 December, 1955, Mrs Parks had refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama. She was arrested, convicted of violating segregation laws and fined \$10, plus \$4 in court fees. In response, blacks in Montgomery boycotted the buses for 381 days while mounting a successful Supreme Court challenge to law that enforced their second-class status on the public transport system. Finally, the Supreme Court's ruling in November 1956 declared segregation on transportation unconstitutional.

About this time a new pastor had arrived at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery. He was in charge of the Montgomery Improvement Association, set up to co-ordinate the activities of those working for civil rights. His name was Martin Luther King, and the Montgomery boycott was the beginning of his work in the modern civil rights movement. Mrs Parks expressed her concern that more recently in the US Martin Luther King was being domesticated, a man who had a dream and not much else. *'As I remember him, he was more than a dreamer,'* Mrs. Parks said. *'He was an activist who believed in acting as well as speaking out against oppression.'*

Rosa Parks' action, born of desperation rather than defiance,

became the spark that inspired the American civil rights movement. Mrs Parks, an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, who had served as secretary and helped organise registration campaigns, was always modest about her own contribution and uneasy about attempts to idolise her. *'Decades later I am still uncomfortable with the credit given to me for starting the bus boycott. I would like people to know I was not the only person involved. I was just one of many who fought for freedom.'*

In her later years, she was often asked how much relations between the races had improved since the civil rights laws were passed in the nineteen sixties. She thought there was still a long way to go. Her faith was a major part of her action for change: *'I had a very spiritual background and that I believe in church and my faith and that has helped to give me the strength and courage to live as I did.'*

Feted in later years with the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal, she nevertheless lived out the last years of her life with dementia and was unable to pay her rent. Yet thirty thousand people filed silently past her body in the United States Capitol building in Washington, the first American woman to be so honoured. Four thousand people attended her funeral in Detroit, Michigan. And in a country that now seems to run on celebrity and special effects, it was a reminder that from the smallest of sparks can come a great fire of social change.

TD

## lobbying for trade justice

**Carol Clarke reports from the campaign trail:**

November was a month of action for **Trade Justice** with MPs lobbied at Westminster on November 2, and MEPs lobbied at Brussels on November 21. Justice and Peace was well represented at both lobbies which took place in preparation for the WTO talks in Hong Kong in mid December.

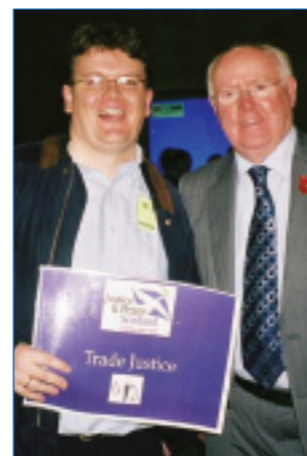
The Westminster lobby was a great success with over 8,000 trade justice campaigners taking part. 375 MPs were lobbied on the day making it the biggest lobby of the UK Parliament this year. We were asking MPs among other things to support

Trade Justice by writing to Trade and Industry Secretary Alan Johnson ahead of the WTO meeting, asking him to set out what the UK Government is doing to ensure that the EU negotiating position at the WTO allows developing countries to choose trade policies which help them end poverty and protect their environment.

National Secretary Richard McCready was joined at Westminster by myself and other J&P supporters. We all lobbied our own MPs and Richard managed to talk with another 7 MPs as well.

After the Lobby, Mary Macpherson, long time J&P campaigner (and a former chair of the Commission) said: *'I had a frank*

## keeping our commitments



Richard with Tom Clarke, MP

Tom Clarke the MP for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill has been successful in the ballot for Private Members' Bills in the House of Commons. With cross-party support he is proposing the International Development (Reporting and Transparency Bill). This bill will require the government to report annually on progress towards achieving the long held goal of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on development assistance. In countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands similar initiatives have seen the government make progress on this long held goal.

Private Members' Bills cannot commit the government to

spending more money but the intention of this bill is to put pressure on the government to meet its now 35 year-old commitment to spending 0.7% of national income on international development.

The Bill needs support from MPs and therefore the Commission has prepared a letter to send to MPs asking them to attend the second reading of the bill which takes place on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2006. As this is a Friday and many Scottish MPs spend time in their constituencies on Fridays it is important that they are asked by their constituents to attend on the 20<sup>th</sup> January and to support this bill.

**By supporting this bill we can keep up the pressure on the government to MakePovertyHistory.**

The draft letter is available on our website at [www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk](http://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk) or by email [office@justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk](mailto:office@justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk) or by telephoning the national office on **0141 333 0238**.

## asylum – the human cost

*The following letter appeared among the Letters to the Herald October 12 2005. It seems well worth reprinting.*

For centuries British justice has led the world in defence of the freedom of the individual and human rights but now, faced with the threat of overwhelming immigration and terrorism, we are betraying the very principles on which our civilisation is based. I have just watched a helpless family of asylum-seekers, who have lived in Glasgow for the past five years, flee in terror to London because they have an appointment to sign on at the Home Office. Their fear and distress over the past week has been truly dreadful and finally, on Sunday, their nerve snapped and they fled. How I feel for the parents and the two young children of 10 and 14.

It is true that the government regulations do not permit the Home Office to take into account the time a family have spent in this country awaiting a decision on their application, but is this justice? Is the situation of distress and suffering in which hundreds of asylum-seekers are now living truly British justice?

Justice without mercy is justice denied. In the present British system of dealing with applications for asylum there is no evident sign of mercy, of compassion. The very civilisation of which we are so justly proud was built on Christian faith, and by abandoning that faith we are destroying the very foundations on which our society and culture are built.

Fr Joe Mc Auley, St Bernard's, 18 Wiltonburn Road, Glasgow

## WTO: the ethical requirement

The excellent Interfaith Working Group of the US trade justice campaign has published an excellent guide to the forthcoming WTO discussions. It analyses and judges trade and investment policies against its five ethical principles. These share many of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. These principles insist that international trade and investment systems:

- *respect and support the dignity of the human person, the integrity of creation and our common humanity;*
- *should advance the common good and be evaluated in the light of their impact on the most vulnerable;*
- *be transparent and should involve the meaningful participation of the most vulnerable stakeholders;*
- *respect the legitimate role of government, in collaboration with civil society, to set policies regarding the development and welfare of its people; and*
- *safeguard the global commons and respect the right of local communities to protect and sustainably develop their natural resources.*

Check out the full briefing on the website at:

[www.tradejusticeusa.org](http://www.tradejusticeusa.org)

## fairtrade coffee: but not as we know it!



As you may know, Nestle are now producing a coffee which has been given the Fairtrade mark. Many aid agencies and NGOs have made statements about this which can be seen on their websites. Traidcraft have sent a letter to all their Fairtraders about the matter. The general feeling seems to be a cautious welcome, but there are many misgivings. Is this a cynical move by Nestle to muscle in on the ever growing fairtrade market, many seem to think so. The overall view seems to be: if Nestle can deliver fairtrade to some of the farmers who produce their beans, why can't they do this throughout their operation? Also questions still have to be asked about the ethics of their baby milk business.

For more information visit the following websites

**World Development Movement** [www.wdm.org.uk](http://www.wdm.org.uk)

**Traidcraft** [www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk)





**Uri Avnery is a long time writer on the Israeli peace site, Gush Shalom. In the run up to elections, he gives his views.**

# sharon's strategy

The question recently resolved is whether Ariel Sharon will leave Likud and set up a new party? Many fervently hope for this possibility. Sharon as the head of a new party is the answer to their prayers - metaphorically, of course, since they do not believe in God - the right-wing general who will carry out a left-wing program. The Great Disengager, will become the leader of the biggest Israeli party and, in alliance with the left-wing parties, create a solid majority for peace.

It's a fetching idea. There is only one problem: it is completely divorced from reality. First of all, it is a sad fact that almost all Israelis, including so-called Leftists, have no idea what is actually happening in the West Bank, while the "agreement" imposed on Sharon in the Gaza strip by the exasperated Condoleeza Rice has created some optimism there.

Recently I was again in Bil'in, the heroic Palestinian village that has become the symbol of the struggle against the Fence. With a hail of tear gas canisters and stun grenades raining down on a peaceful demonstration carrying the portraits of Gandhi, Mandela, Arafat and Rabin, it was hard to detect the benevolent spirit of the New Sharon.

The activists - Palestinians, Israelis and "Internationals" - were attacked when they reached the path of the Fence and sat down in front of the bulldozers, which were busy at work putting up the "obstacle" that is cutting the village off from two thirds of its land. On the side that is earmarked for the extension of the huge neighbouring settlement, we could clearly see where olive trees have recently been uprooted (presumably to be sold to Israeli villa owners, who like a touch of authentic Palestinian flora.)

All over the West Bank, bad conditions are getting worse. The Fence/Wall is being completed. In Jerusalem, it cuts Arab neighbourhoods into pieces, separating parents from sons and daughters, patients from their doctors, students from their schools. Dozens of permanent and temporary roadblocks all over the West Bank make normal activity of any kind impossible. Every night, people are arrested, some killed

*"while trying to escape"*. The number of Palestinians in Israeli prisons is larger than ever.

All over the place, settlements are being enlarged and new ones springing up, disguised as "new

*neighbourhoods*" of existing ones. In Bil'in, for example, one could easily see how the settlement of Modi'in Illit is creeping up, covering hills that just a few weeks ago were still covered with olive trees. Of the hundred or so "outposts"; that Sharon is obligated to evacuate according to the Road Map, not one has been dismantled.

No one seeing what is actually going on in the occupied Palestinian territories can really believe that Sharon is on the march towards peace. Fortunately for themselves, the Leftists are blissfully ignorant.

So would it be a blessing for peace if Sharon sets up his new party?

The contrary is true. Let's assume for a moment that Sharon realises his threat and sets up such a party, and that it wins 35 seats in the coming elections. Let's further assume that the remaining rump Likud is reduced to 26 seats. That would give them together 61 out of the 120 seats in the Knesset. Even if Labour, under the new leadership of Amir Peretz, increases its share to 30, the Sharon-Likud coalition will hold an absolute majority, which can be reinforced whenever necessary with the religious and extreme-right factions.

In other words, the new party would be a device to lure Leftists and centrist voters to the Right, giving Sharon a free hand to do what he really wants to do - impose unilaterally a "final status" that would annex to Israel more than half the West Bank, condemning the Palestinians to life in small, isolated enclaves, completely dominated by Israel.

Some intelligent Leftists, while conceding that this may be true, assert that Sharon can change. After being feted by the whole world as the Man of Peace, he may be intoxicated by this unexpected glory, set up a coalition with Labour and make peace. All I can say is that relying on this would be a huge gamble with the future of our country. Judging from my knowledge of Sharon, the odds are forbidding.

What Israel needs now is a clear choice between clear alternatives. With the rise of Amir Peretz to the Labour party leadership, such a choice is possible. He unequivocally supports peace negotiations with the Palestinian leadership and a viable Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, as well as a domestic policy balancing economic growth with social solidarity.

In the coming general elections, Peretz may yet attain a surprise victory, as he did in the Labour elections. But even if he fails to propel Labour into the leading position, an impressive gain may create the conditions for the Left to return to power in the elections thereafter.

[www.gush-shalom.org](http://www.gush-shalom.org)

# newsbrief . . . newsbrief

**JUSTICE AND PEACE UPDATES:** This is an e mail update that goes out in alternate months to the magazine. It keeps you bang up to date with campaigns and all that is happening. If you would like to receive one, go to our website click on updates and fill in your details. If you do not have internet access and would like to receive this by post, telephone the office.

**PETITION FOR AMNESTY FOR SCOTTISH ASYLUM FAMILIES:** As you may know, Positive Action in Housing is campaigning for an end to 'dawn raids' and the criminalisation of asylum seekers. We are deeply concerned at the inhumanities emanating from Home Office asylum policy on Scottish soil. Whole communities are being left heartbroken by the sudden disappearances of their friends and neighbours and school pupils - the complete antithesis of One Scotland Many Cultures. We therefore urge you to consider signing the online petition at <http://www.petitiononline.com/amn2005/petition-sign.html> (A fuller version of this went out with the November update. As many of you have not signed up for the update we felt that it was important that everyone knew about and had the chance to sign this petition.)

**'VISIT DUNGAVEL MONSTER OF THE GLEN'** the new film by Camcorder Guerillas is available on DVD and Video. Cost £5.00 available from Camcorder Guerillas, c/o GMAC, 34 Albion Street, Glasgow G1 1LH, Tel 0141 553 2551 or visit [www.camcorderguerillas.net](http://www.camcorderguerillas.net)

**ANGELA HALE, CO-FOUNDER OF WOMEN WORKING WORLDWIDE**, died on Sept 6 aged 59. Angela helped set up Labour Behind the Label in the 1990s. Angela was also a regular contributor to the Ethical Consumer. Her persistence has ensured that codes of conduct for producers and retailers in the garment industry and also with Kenyan flowers were rewritten to reflect the interests of women workers. [www.labourbehindthelabel.org](http://www.labourbehindthelabel.org)

**COCA-COLA** has been the target of local campaigns in India, with tens of thousands of people mobilising to challenge the company for creating severe water shortages and pollution. It's starting to pay off too. The state government of Kerala recently announced it will challenge Coca-Cola's right to extract water from the common groundwater resource. Sales have dropped 14% in the last quarter in India. For more information [www.indiaresource.org](http://www.indiaresource.org) (Ethical Consumer)

**AS MANY AS 210 DETAINEES**, out of the 500 held without charge at the **US DETENTION CENTRE AT GUANTANAMO BAY**, went on hunger strike, according to lawyers. Amnesty International along with others highlighted serious concerns about this at a press conference in October. Some detainees are too weak to stand, and some have been force fed through tubes pushed through their noses. To prevent them from removing the tubes, they are shackled to their beds 24 hours a day. Amnesty International and Reprieve have called on the UK government to urgently intervene to help prevent unnecessary loss of life.

The U.S. government likes to demand that other nations respect human rights while it violates them systematically in its own territory. Just in California, close to 180 minors are currently serving life sentences without any right to parole according to a report by **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND**

**HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH.** In California, a black youth between 14 and 17 years of age is 22 times as likely to receive a prison sentence as a white youth. Fifty-nine percent of the minors who receive life sentences are first-time offenders and 16 percent of them were between 13 and 15 years of age.

On 29 November, **CECILIA FLORES-OEBANDA**, founding President and Executive Director of the Philippine organisation Visayan Forum Foundation, received the 2005 Anti-Slavery Award. Cecilia has dedicated her life to working for the rights of exploited migrant workers, particularly child domestics. Born into poverty in Negros province, in the Visayas, central Philippines, Cecilia began work when she was five years old, selling fish and scavenging. In her teens she started organising young people and agricultural workers, calling for rights and democracy at the height of the Marcos dictatorship. Her activism led to her being imprisoned, she was pregnant at the time and both her children were born in prison. She and her family were held for four years. Once freed, she moved to Manila, the capital, where her work for marginalised migrant workers began. For more information visit [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)

**CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE ARMS TRADE:** Just two weeks after the launch of CAAT's University Clean Investment campaign, London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) has announced that it is to sell all of its investments in arms companies. The SOAS decision came as a direct result of public disclosures by CAAT, and pressure from staff and lecturers. To find out more visit [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk) or tel. +44-(0)-20 72810297

**CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY - LIVING GHOSTS CAMPAIGN:** We mentioned this campaign in issue 3 of the magazine. There are postcards available to send to the Home Secretary expressing your concern that increasing numbers of asylum seekers are ending up destitute, homeless or living on food parcels, because of Government policies. Please contact CAP on 0161 236 9321 to order postcards for you group, parish, school or even just a few to give to friends and neighbours. Please do something. More details [www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk) 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it' Hebrews 13:2

World leaders were meeting in Montreal from 29 November to 9 December to begin the process of agreeing a game plan for averting dangerous **CLIMATE CHANGE** after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. As we were going to press and as part of 'Stop Climate Chaos' demonstrations were due to take place on 3 December in major European cities, including Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dublin, as well as in America, Canada, and the Global South. The Kyoto Protocol must be followed up with far bigger cuts in our carbon emissions. Binding targets are the only way to stop catastrophic climate changes kicking in. Not only that, Stop Climate Chaos want Montreal to recognise that within a safe global carbon budget every country and everyone - rich or poor - is entitled to a fair share of the economic benefits which responsible use of fossil fuels can bring.



# looking back

**Fr John Eagers of Paisley diocese reflects on his time with the National Commission during a period of change.**

In June 2005, after seven and a half years, my term as a member of the Scottish Conference of Bishops Justice and Peace Commission came to an end. This is a short reflection on my experience of the Commission during this period.

Bishop John Mone appointed me to the Commission as a consequence of my appointment as *"Spiritual Adviser"* to the Justice and Peace Movement within the Diocese of Paisley. Bishop John was of course the National President and Maryanne Ure was the National Secretary. In the first few years it seemed to me that the Commission had two functions. Firstly as forum for the exchange of information and ideas; and secondly as a group which would advise the Bishops on matters concerning International Development, Human Rights, Social Justice and Peace. This second task appeared to be delegated primarily to the office staff. In consequence, Maryanne Ure was often seen on Scotland Today or Reporting Scotland, and would be quoted in our national newspapers.

In general the commission members would report on the activities of their diocesan groups and networks, or the interest groups, such as human rights, women, or spirituality of Justice and Peace. It was this exchange of information and ideas, which I found to be of greatest interest and value. In a sense we fed off and stimulated one another. An important extension of this role of the commission was to organise an annual conference. Conferences give us the opportunity to reflect on current and key issues. Last year we had the privilege of listening to the views of Tom Devine, the Scottish historian on Refugees and Asylum seekers. In the past we have looked at other issues such as Trade Justice and the Spirituality of Justice and Peace.

Conferences are not just a place to learn and reflect they are also an opportunity to socialise, to meet friends from other parts of the country and to once again exchange experiences.

I found that the strength of the commission was the members and the experience, commitment and knowledge that they have. In my first few years this strength was also reflected in the number of members, in theory about twenty four, though I was never quite sure. The Bishops Conference also recognised this strength was also a weakness, and asked Fr. Eamonn O'Brien, among others to review the Commission. This was a painful period. Changes were necessary, a new constitution needed to be written. The commission was reduced in size to a leaner, more focused group. It has certainly benefited from the organisational skills of the present National Secretary, Dr. Richard McCready, and his staff. This I believe is evident in the new Magazine which, without losing its quality, has become more reader friendly and therefore a better communicator.

During the last two years there has been a new focus within the Commission, which is in the process of providing literature for distribution on key issues, Water, Trade Justice, and Asylum Seekers, based on the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church.

I would suggest that one of the strengths of the Commission is its expertise on the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church, which is personified in its Research officer, Tim Duffy.

I believe that the Commission is still in a period of transition. I hope that it will become an even stronger vehicle for the promotion and the education of the Church's Social Teaching within Scotland. I also hope that it will return to offering a platform for the exchange of resources, experiences, and expertise for people working for Justice and Peace within local diocesan groups, and interest groups.

Perhaps it could once again, as allowed in the constitution, co-opt members directly working in key areas such as Refugees and Asylum seekers, who would enrich the commission with their experience and expertise.

Once again I would like to note my appreciation to all who have been part of the Commission during the last seven and a half years and for the way in which they have enriched my life.

**homelessness sunday 29 january 2006**  
**poverty action sunday 26 february 2006**

With the magazine you will find fliers about **Homelessness Sunday** and **Poverty Action Sunday**. These are ideal campaigns for groups and parishes to get involved with. The fliers include order forms for packs and resources. Please send for either or both packs and get involved.

# an olive branch for palestinians



**The work of Maureen Jack with the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) was introduced in the last issue. Here is an extract from a recent diary of some of the situations Maureen and CPT people encounter.**

Checkpoint patrols were reasonably quiet. Mary and I had an interesting discussion in the early evening with some young soldiers, including a lovely young woman. She told us that they check the IDs of any young Palestinian man that they do not recognise. But they were doing it politely and efficiently. It's good to see at checkpoints how sometimes soldiers and Palestinians will chat away while waiting for phone confirmation that things are OK.

Friday 11 November 2005 I was out in the morning shopping, patrolling, and helping Anne with a group. Meanwhile a call came in from up on Tel Rumeida that Israeli settlers were hassling Palestinians picking their olives. Cathy, Mary and I put on our oldest clothes in preparation (olive oil makes a terrible mess) and made our way up the hill. We passed one group at some distance from the settlement and went to join a family that was picking olives in a garden nearer to where Israeli settlers have taken over a house; there was a group of women picking in a neighbouring grove. There was no sign of settlers at that point. We joined the family. For months the Israeli military had occupied the house. They had moved out a week ago and so this was the family's first chance to pick the olives. People had buckets, empty cans and seed bags to put the olives into. We picked off the tree the olives that were within reach. The others were knocked down onto the ground by a boy climbing up a handmade ladder that his father held for him. We then picked them up off the ground. Things were going well in the garden and so Cathy and I moved across to help the women nearby. Then the settlers arrived. First, a thin young man, on his own, who told us that we would have to leave. When we refused he told us that he was a soldier and that we would have to leave. When we expressed doubt at this (he was not in uniform) he showed us a card. At this point other settlers arrived and we got in between them and the Palestinians. The settlers were shouting.

Then three young soldiers arrived. I had overheard the thin settler on the telephone. I don't know Hebrew, but I did recognise two words: the word for Palestinians and the word Nazis. The soldiers told us all to leave the garden. They said that although the army had vacated the house this did not mean that the family who own it are free to move back in. I asked the young soldier in charge if he would be telling the settlers to leave too and that we should all leave together. He said that when we had left he would move the settlers off. I

said that in that case I would leave. In fairness to the soldier he did more than once tell the settlers to leave. But the first settler to arrive persisted in staying in the garden.

I again pointed out to the soldier that the settler had still not left and that now these settler boys had returned. *'I do not think it is good for the army's authority that these people disobey your orders. Also, you told me that if we left you would make them leave too. I don't think that it is fair that they are still there.'* All this in my most pious voice. I couldn't help feeling sorry for the young soldier, because he was clearly powerless to get the settler to move.

Two other new arrivals were two men from the blue police. They asked for the passports of us three CPTers and also a young Irishman from another international group. A guy from the border police sternly told us that we had to leave the area. We protested that we could not do this because the blue police had our passports. The blue police noted our passport details (we were glad they didn't arrest us) and then returned our passports with a polite *'Thank you very much.'* They then told us to leave the area. We did, however, hang around.

A smartly-dressed Palestinian man in a suit arrived while we were olive picking. It was his land on which we had been picking the olives. Just for being on his own land, the police arrested him. We took as long as possible to leave in order to give more time to the Palestinian women who were picking olives in the grove. Altogether, we reckon that we bought them another hour. They plan to pick again tomorrow and so we shall go up there again. Throughout, the police and soldiers were polite. But the Palestinian family cannot return to their own home and there is a real danger that Israeli settlers will simply take it over.

We had an interesting discussion with some young soldiers who told us that they want peace but that they will have to kill all the terrorists first. One lad said that his friend's younger sister had been killed in a suicide bus bombing. We stressed our opposition to all violence. We parted wishing one another *'Shabbat shalom.'* In fact, at an earlier checkpoint a soldier had shouted to us, *'Shabbat shalom, CPT.'*

Another heartening (ish) story. A Palestinian woman was caught with a knife at a checkpoint. It turns out that she is subject to domestic abuse and had been seeking to be arrested as a way out of her situation. Good sense prevailed and after a bit the Israeli soldiers let her go. One of the soldiers involved in this case was the young woman soldier that we spoke to yesterday.

# a backward glance

It has been a strange and momentous year, bracketed by powerful natural disasters. The Boxing Day tsunami killed perhaps a quarter of a million. Such events used to be thought of as *'natural evils'* – unavoidable and not the result of human agency. Yet efforts at assistance came in for criticism as being ill organised and carried out by organisations springing up with no real capacity to help. A survey by Oxfam found that tsunami aid had tended to go to businesses and landowners, exacerbating the divide between rich and poor.

The poor were likely to spend much longer in refugee camps where it is obviously harder to find work or rebuild lives. Private donations amount to \$5 billion and government pledges – many not fulfilled – to \$6.9 billion. This brings the total funds on offer to about \$12 billion, making the tsunami efforts historic in their generosity. By comparison, the cost of military operations in Iraq is estimated at \$5.6 billion per month in 2005.

In October there was the Kashmiri earthquake which to date has killed over eighty thousand. As the first US relief helicopters from nearby Afghanistan were brought in, I had to listen to a bone headed American officer say, *'We are happy to provide aid to our friends and allies in the war against terror.'* More than five weeks after the quake struck, the UN has received only 22 percent of the \$550 million it requested for the emergency (\$119 million with a further \$40 million pledged), Oxfam said in a recent press release. Whether it was *'compassion fatigue'*, inaccessibility leading to less media exposure or, as the President of Pakistan claimed, that there were no holiday resorts for westerners in Kashmir, twenty times more aid went to the tsunami relief.

It is strange that a world that is armed to the teeth, supposedly against the disasters of war, cannot put together international provisions against natural disaster. With every such disaster there comes the appeal to private charity and the diversion of development agencies from their primary work to disaster relief.

Between these two natural catastrophes there was the campaigning and lobbying from the Make Poverty History campaign which represents one of the biggest and most sustained campaigns the country has ever seen. It is no diminishing of the magnitude of the tsunami and Kashmiri earthquake to say that the total death toll is less than two weeks' of the unending casualties of world poverty. The MPH campaign represented a high point of public concern and opposition to the low priority given by the richest governments to issues of trade justice, aid and debt. Certainly the 2 July march in Edinburgh was a tremendous event.

Ironically, however, much of the publicity was generated after the hijacking of the MPH world agenda by the Live 8 African agenda, aptly described as being for people *'with*

*a song in their hearts and nothing much between the ears'*. As Mr Jarndyce points out in **Bleak House**, there are two classes of charitable people, one, the people who did little and made a great deal of noise; and the other, the people who did a great deal and made no noise at all. (I think he would have excepted the great wave of sound at 3 pm on 2 July.)

But another irony lies in the amount of time, energy and cost that good people lay out to be part of these campaigns – lobbying, writing and demonstrating; while politicians are privately conveyed from one luxurious location to the next with their entourages. World leaders do not seem to see the paradox of spouting with bellies full of haute cuisine concern for the world's poor and hungry. How about a G8 Rich Man, Poor Man Summit?

The actions of the London bombers in July could hardly have been more counter productive. Beyond the carnage and the misery they inflicted, they diverted fickle media from the Gleneagles discussions; and put the British Muslim community on the defensive against suspicion and bigotry. When the amounts trumpeted from Gleneagles were actually examined, it was found that, while it was a response of sorts, much was funding that had already been committed, perhaps the only area where government actually practises recycling. In government finance these days, the MBA has given way to the MCA – the Master of Creative Accounting.

Much had been made of the importance of the UK Presidency of the EU. As it turned out, we presided over a clear indication of popular distrust of the European political process in the rejection of the EU Constitution. And the UK's faith in Europe was well signified by quietly dropping plans for a referendum, while opting for an upgrade to the UK independent nuclear deterrent (as long as that's OK with our special friends in the US.)

And while we hold to the aims of the Make Poverty History campaign, perhaps we should consider the alternative approach: making Excessive Wealth History and reducing obscene inequalities.

In Britain, the wealthiest 1 per cent owned approximately a quarter of the UK's marketable wealth in 2002. In contrast, half the population shared only 6 per cent of total wealth. It has been asserted that the wealth of the world's seven richest men could alleviate the poverty of a quarter of the world's population. These disparities can be repeated across the developed world both for wealth and income. In developing countries wealth for most people is the basics for survival.

Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate, has spoken of the lack of any impact of poverty in a world of economic growth. Rich countries can effectively disregard it. *'I sometimes wish poverty was infectious, like avian flu,'* he said. *'If the rich thought they could catch it by being near it, they might be*

# more inclined to do something about it'

Currency speculators trade over \$1.8 trillion dollars each day across borders (this represents about the entire annual GDP of the UK.) Tobin taxes on this trade would yield an estimated \$100 - \$300 billion per year making it possible to meet urgent global priorities, such as poverty and disease. It could also fund a global relief body for disasters. It would also reduce the volatility of these markets, which are in effect nuclear power stations for global capitalism.

The gospels and Christian tradition are not very sympathetic to wealth. We are generally given Matthew's beatitude, how happy are the poor in spirit, (5:3) as if it was a comment on material wealth rather than the total human identity. The gospels recognise too well the idolatrous potential of wealth – *'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'* (Matt 6:21).

Luke's version has the complementary *'woe'*, or as one modern translation has it, *'Damn you rich. You have your consolation.'* (Lk 6:24). Similarly there is Paul's famous comment to Timothy that the love of money is the root of all wickedness (1 Tim 6:10).

Material wealth (and the prestige that went with it) were

seen as something limited and constant in the ancient world; quite unlike today's economic model of constant growth and expansion. This view is reflected when St Jerome says that *'every rich man is either unjust or the heir of an unjust man'*. It remains true, however, that one person's profit is usually someone else's loss; and big profits are made at the expense of many.

At this time of year we remember again the extraordinary event of how *'Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.'* (Philippians 2:6-7). Part of the promise of the gospel is that there will always be enough for everyone's need; but there can never be enough for everyone's greed. We remember too the end of the Second Vatican Council forty years ago with the document **Gaudium et Spes** which is the founding charter of the modern justice and peace movement. May we too be granted the grace of rediscovering that incarnation through our neighbours and ourselves in the work that we commit ourselves to.

Tim Duffy



## For the Festival of Christmas

*Poverty of means gives birth to a sense of the universal.  
And the festival begins once more. The festival will never end.  
If we were to wake up, one fine morning, to a society replete  
but emptied of all spontaneity ...*

*If praying became mere words, so secularised that it lost all sense of mystery, leaving  
no room for the prayer of gesture and posture, for poetry, for emotion or for intuition...*

*If festival disappeared from mankind ...*

*If we were to lose childlike trust in the Eucharist and the Word of God ...*

*If, on our grey days, we were to demolish all we had  
grasped on days of light ...*

*If we were to decline the joy offered by Him who eight times  
over declares 'happy' (Matthew 5).*

*If festival disappears from the Body of Christ,  
if the Church is a place of retrenchment  
and not of universal comprehension, in all the world  
where would we find a place for friendship  
for the whole of humanity?*

from Brother Roger of Taizé  
"Parable of Community"

