

diarydiary

JUNE

- 18-24 **Refugee Week**
- 20 **UN World Refugee Day**
- 26 **International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**
- 26-27 **Make It Happen**, Church Property and Housing Conference

JULY

- 7 Mid-point of the **Millennium Development Goals**
- 16 **First Atomic Bomb** detonated in New Mexico, USA 1945

AUGUST

- 6 **Hiroshima Day (1945)**
- 8 **Atom Bomb** dropped on Nagasaki, 1945
- 9 **International Day of the World's Indigenous People**
- 23 **International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade**

SEPTEMBER

- 9 **Racial Justice Sunday**
- 12 **30th Anniversary of the murder of Steve Biko**
- 21 **International Day of Peace**

OCTOBER

- 21-28 **One World Week**

Full details and links on the events page on our website
www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/events.shtml

richard moves on

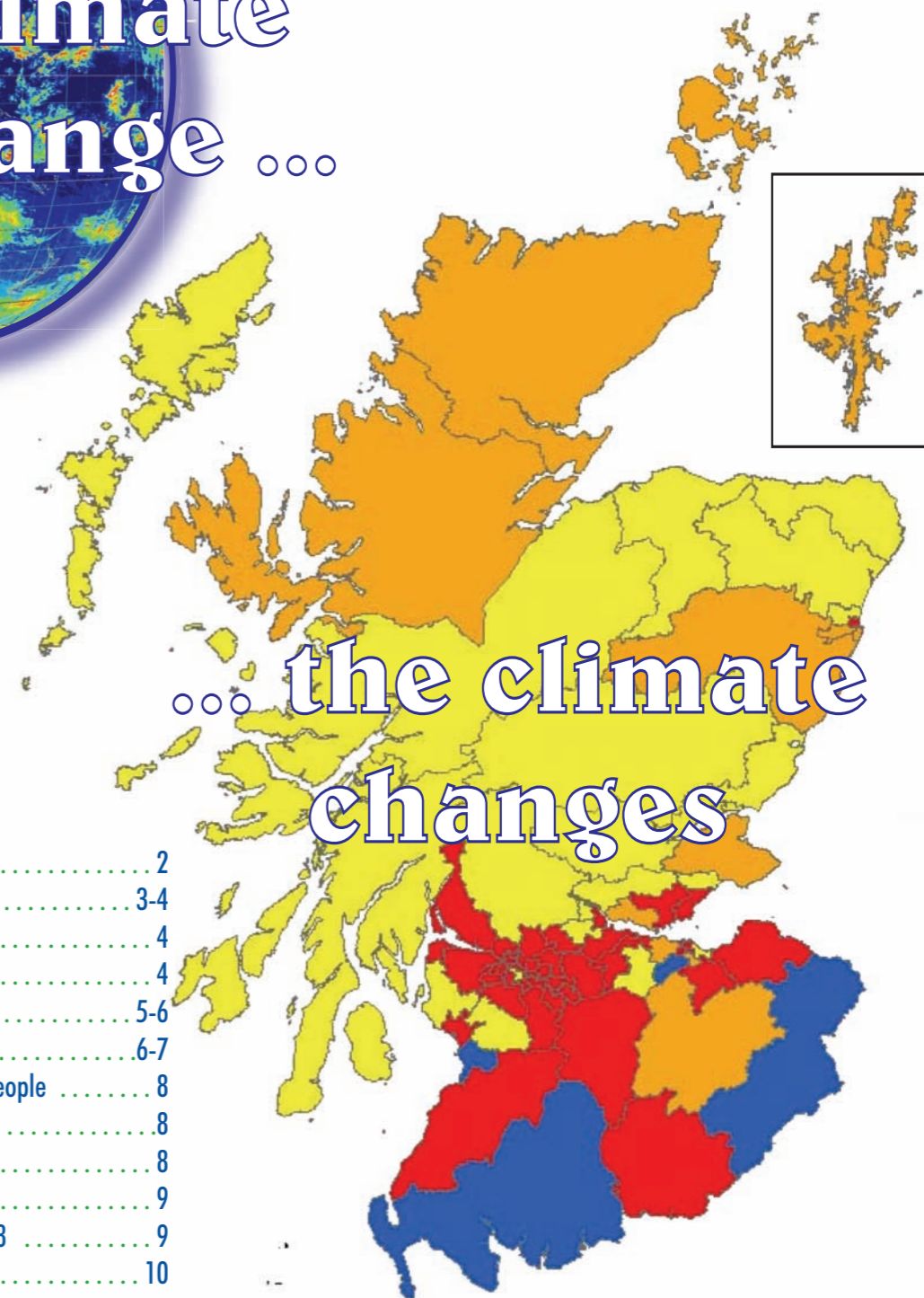
At the end of April, National Secretary Richard McCready left the Commission. He was elected as a councillor to Dundee City Council in the recent elections.

At the recent meeting of the National Commission, a unanimous vote was passed, thanking Richard for his contribution and the work he did over the last three and a half years. His efforts to raise the profile of Justice and Peace and broaden the range of contacts, particularly in the areas of ecumenism, racial justice and asylum were recognised.

We wish him well in his new work, and we are sure that the spirit of Catholic Social Teaching will not desert him as he moves into another kind of social concern.

www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk

ISSUE 3: 2007



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Constituency Seats by Party 2007



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Pope John Paul's visit to Scotland

It is difficult now to remember that the papal visit to the UK 25 years ago in 1982 nearly didn't take place. The UK government had failed to forestall the problem of the Falklands from turning into a war; and the visit hung in the balance. It was less than a week before the visit was due that it was confirmed; thanks largely to classic Vatican diplomacy, with UK and Argentinian bishops agreeing that the pope would also visit Argentina later in the summer as part of a pilgrimage of reconciliation.

The three month conflict was pretty much a foregone conclusion militarily, with only a fortnight left. The UK and Scotland in particular was coming to terms with the first Thatcher government. Probably the major social justice issue was the stationing of Cruise nuclear missiles in UK bases. Pope John Paul II had issued a powerful Message for World Day of Peace at the beginning of 1982, and was to follow up with a major intervention at a UN Special Session on Disarmament on the time bound nature of nuclear deterrence. It was also of course the spring which saw the Scottish Bishops' statement on nuclear weapons.

In a country which was still getting over the rejection of devolution by a phoney and fixed referendum, there was something quite inspiring to see a pope who was not shy about his own Polish nationalism, and proclaimed self determination as a human right, kissing the earth of Scotland as he descended from the plane. This attitude, already incorporated in his first encyclical, **Redemptor Hominis**, was to provide a strong impetus to the devolution campaign which began five years later with the **Claim of Right**, and not only to Catholics.

The visit itself was not notable for any major social justice pronouncements (the main anti war statement was made symbolically in Coventry). But it was a major source of social identity and affirmation for Scots Catholics. Throughout his pontificate, but particularly in the more vigorous early stages, Pope John Paul had an extraordinary rapport with the young. At Murrayfield this was in full display. Here and at Bellahouston there was the atmosphere of revivalism almost. Attempts were made afterwards to consolidate in diocesan renewal initiatives and various other ways, but it did not stem declining numbers. For many who were there, or who followed the visit on television however, it reinforced and affirmed the sense of being Catholic

and Scottish. There is an interesting website with summaries of the papal visit, scanned copies of all the Pope's addresses during his visit and some nostalgic photos as well at

www.catholic-heritage.net/papal_visit/index.htm

Perhaps the most enduring effect of the visit was in the area of ecumenism. The sight of the Pope of Rome under the forbidding statue of John Knox in New College in Edinburgh meeting Professor John McIntyre and other church leaders was a perfect photo opportunity minutely chronicled on television. (It is sometimes forgotten that it was television showing the Pope in places we recognised with bishops we knew that increased the sense of 'our Pope'.) Here was the 'man of sin' of protestant mythology, charming, gracious and complimentary of existing ecumenical work. And conveniently, Mrs Thatcher (and Ronald Reagan) perhaps made more useful demonic substitutes for odium that would once have



been reserved for the Pope.

In particular, however, John Paul's Bellahouston plea to 'make the pilgrimage together hand-in-hand' had an extraordinary resonance. It legitimated ecumenical activity by Catholics, still seen as suspect or at best the preserve of small, secretive committees. It had a profound effect on justice and peace work in particular which increasingly moved to the Lund Principle of only doing separately what could not be done together. As Bishop Monaghan, the first President of Justice and Peace put it, 'the great thing about justice and peace is that we do things with our fellow Christians together, without getting involved in theological arguments.' Evidence of this in Scotland could be found in the joint opposition to nuclear weapons, joint trips to South Africa and the preparatory work for the 1989 ecumenical congress in Basel on Justice Peace and the Integrity of Creation. All of this paved the way for ACTS, which had its Catholic roots in that papal visit.

Any sense that ecumenical progress has stalled also needs to bear in mind how far we have come and how far we now take ecumenical co-operation for granted at all levels of justice and peace work above all.

The last years of the pontificate can perhaps make us forget the extraordinary energy and vigour of those early years. It should remain important for more than merely nostalgic reasons.

Tim Duffy

a modern martyr



Sister Dorothy Stang was an American-born sister of Notre Dame who was murdered in Anapu, a city in the state of Pará, in the Amazon Basin of Brazil in February, 2005. She had received death threats ever since she started to work on behalf of landless farmers in the region of Anapú in sustainable development projects, and to fight the illegal logging practiced by large landowners in that part of the Amazon jungle.

Born in Dayton, Ohio, Sister Dorothy had worked as an advocate for the rural poor for over twenty years, becoming a naturalised Brazilian and helping local people make a living by farming small areas. She worked to help settlers along the Trans-Amazon Highway to become environmentally conscious communities, able to resist violent loggers, ranchers and speculators who would claim the land through false land titles backed up by hired guns. Even though poor settlers themselves damage the forest, Sister Dorothy believed they could learn to manage their land sustainably. Perhaps the most well known photograph shows her wearing a t-shirt with the slogan, "A Morte da floresta é o fim da nossa vida," which is Portuguese for "The death of the forest is the end of our life." Despite the threats she stayed, saying, 'I don't want to flee, nor do I want to abandon the battle of these farmers who live without any protection in the forest. They have the sacrosanct right to aspire to a better life on land where they can live and work with dignity while respecting the environment.'

The 73 year old sister was intercepted by two hired gunmen as she walked to a meeting in the jungle. According to witnesses, while being held at gunpoint she read from the gospel of Matthew: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied." She was shot and killed at point-blank range, and then the gunmen shot her body five more times. Authorities believe the murder was arranged by local ranchers for \$19,300.

Her death did not lead to silence, but a global outcry. And a proclamation came quickly from Brazil's president, Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva that the land in question, over 22,000 acres, would be reserved for sustainable development by the poor farmers whose cause Sister Dorothy had championed.

Sister Dorothy's assassination was also one of nearly 500 land related murders in the preceding twenty years in the state of Para, many of which have gone unpunished. After Sister Dorothy's death, murders in the area not only continued but actually increased, with 39 more killings in 2006 than in 2005. In 2005, two farm hands were found guilty of shooting Sister Dorothy, and were sentenced to 27 and 17 years in prison. The rancher who employed one of the farm hands was given a 27-year sentence for hiring the two killers.

On 15 May, wealthy landowner Vitalmiro Bastos de Moura was given the maximum sentence of 30 years for authorising the murder. Another landowner accused of masterminding the murder is currently on bail pending trial.

Fr Henri Burin des Rozières, a French priest and lawyer said: "We have to wait to see if Sister Dorothy's case means a real change or was only an exception brought about by the enormous international repercussions that it had because she was from the United States." The verdict nevertheless represents a landmark because those who order this kind of crime are generally not even tried, far much less imprisoned.

According to the Pastoral Land Commission, 3.5% of Brazil's landholders own nearly 60% of the best farmland, while the poorest 40% of farmers have a mere 1%. Those who work with the landless feel that much more political will has to be invested in land reform, as well as tackling local corruption which allows the landowners and loggers a free hand in brutally enforcing their will.

They also point out, however that the developed world's insatiable hunger for timber, regardless of source; or soya feed and cheap beef; or sugar beet to make ethanol fuel are all part of the problem. "These landowners are able to behave without regard for human life," said one development worker, "because they know the desire for these products in Europe and the US is more important than those whose lives are swept aside, or the forest that is destroyed. Unless consumers become more responsible, nothing will change." **Tim Duffy**

"The politics of lying at the current historical moment offers up the spectre of totalitarianism as it seeks to eliminate intelligent deliberation, informed public discussions, engaged criticism, and the very possibility of freedom and a vital democratic politics. The spirit of critique must be supple-

mented with public debate, and a positive sense of individual and social agency capable of becoming both a witness to injustice and a force for transforming those conditions that impose silence and perpetuate human suffering."

Henry A. Giroux



no-one deserves a tragedy

I came across this speech on the internet, it is by Professor and poet Nikki Giovanni, and was given at a memorial for the Virginia Tech students.

We are sad today, and we will be sad for quite a while. We are not moving on, we are embracing our mourning. ... We do not understand this tragedy. We know we did nothing to deserve it, but neither does a child in Africa dying of AIDS, neither do the invisible children walking the night away to avoid being captured by the rogue army, neither does the baby elephant watching his community being devastated for ivory, neither does the Mexican child looking for fresh water, neither does the Appalachian infant killed in the middle of the night in his crib in the home his father built with his own hands being run

over by a boulder because the land was destabilised. No one deserves a tragedy.

It is perhaps thoughts that we all have, when a tragedy, big or small, gets a lot of news coverage. Day and daily people are living out tragedies away from the spotlight, one person being shot, doesn't get much media coverage, but the family of the victim live the same pain. And we still await the outrage of our newspapers for the 3,000 people who still die daily, because of unjust trade rules, third world debt etc. If only our leaders could wage the war on 'dirty water, lack of medicines and food' with the same fervour as on the war against 'terror'.

CC



august 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous People

The First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People commenced in 1994. In 2004, the UN General Assembly proclaimed a Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

The goal of this decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as culture, education, health, human rights, the environment, and social and economic development, by means of action-oriented programs and specific projects, increased technical assistance, and relevant standard-setting activities. Visit www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/index for more information.

GLOBALISATION & INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

No group is more directly affected by economic globalisation than the world's 350 million indigenous peoples, yet their voices have been largely excluded from the globalisation debate.

The issues include: the growing assault on indigenous lands, where the planet's increasingly scarce natural resources are located; the specific rules of global bureaucracies such as the WTO, IMF, World Bank and others that accelerate the loss of native sovereignty and native political



and cultural rights; the devastating impact of extractive industries.

LANGUAGE: Language not only communicates, it defines culture, nature, history, humanity and ancestry. Language keeps traditions alive, inspires knowledge and respect about our past and the planet on which we live, and links communities across borders and beyond time. Languages are rapidly dying out and need our commitment and interest to keep them alive. Once, there were between 7000 and 8000 distinct languages. Now, very few people speak most of the 6000 known languages around the world. Half of today's languages have fewer than 10,000 speakers and a quarter have fewer than 1000. Linguists face a race against time to document many of the remaining ones.

ENVIRONMENT: There is an inextricable link between environmental and cultural diversity. In fact, people are integral parts of ecosystems. Indigenous peoples often inhabit many of our planet's areas of highest biological diversity. Not only animal and plant species, but also many indigenous peoples' groups around the world are now faced with extinction. The unsustainable exploitation of our earth's natural resources and marginalisation and dispossession of the lands and territories of indigenous peoples and minority groups are both cause and consequence of this loss.

CULTURE: The very origins of environmental conservation lie in ancient cultures found throughout the world. Learning and respecting the ways of today's indigenous and traditional peoples, and integrating them into environmental and development considerations, will prove indispensable for the survival of diversity in nature and culture.

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

democratic deficits

It was Senator Eugene J. McCarthy who said: *"Being in politics is like being a football coach. You have to be smart enough to understand the game, and dumb enough to think it's important."* I had heard that Sir Alex Ferguson had come out in support of Labour's Scottish Election Campaign, so when I heard that the candidate for Presiding Officer was Alex Fergusson, for a moment the second 's' didn't strike me and I thought McCarthy's Principle had come to pass.

The campaign certainly resembled a football match. It settled down early on to Labour versus SNP with the Tories and Lib Dems virtually ruling themselves out. The smaller parties were largely ignored, with the SSP and Solidarity cancelling each other out. Which was a shame, because I found the SSP Manifesto to be a visionary document that I hope will not be entirely lost.

It was an adversarial exercise in primary colours, with the baneful influence of American focus group, consumerist politics. The parties were personified in their leaders, at once champions and scapegoats. The trick (and it is a trick) is to big up your own party's plans, while belittling the adversary wherever possible and, very importantly these days, not making any gaffes that can be endlessly and mercilessly run on YouTube.

From the point of view of Catholic Social Teaching this is not a good model. It partakes too much of what Hugh MacDiarmid called *'the cursed conceit o' bein' richt that damns the vast majority o' men'*. And it is inimical to the kind of consensus politics envisaged and provided for by the Constitutional Convention that drew up the guidelines for the new parliament.

In a political structure designed for consensus, coalition and cooperation, the media and some of the parties tried to characterise the issues as an apocalyptic battle of the Union under threat from independence. Certainly it was the first time many of these unionists had popped their heads up in this tercentenary of the Union, which has gone largely unsung. Fortunately, however, there's nothing like dire warnings from Westminster politicians to engender disbelief in Scotland.

Westminster and the London media still don't seem to have caught the difference between independence and self determination – the right to make our own decisions based on sovereignty of the people and historical, cultural and social affinities (see the [Compendium](#), n157). This distinction is rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. Paradoxically, the reserved issues like the war in Iraq and Trident only served to underline the cultural difference and couldn't help obtruding into the *'Scottish'* debate.

Then of course there was the scandal of spoilt ballots - 140,000 it now appears. This requires an independent enquiry to ensure that it does not happen again. Perhaps we could also look at the merits of one unified voting system to avoid confusion. At least we could be told why three separate systems are better than one. Fortunately Catholic Social Teaching does not see voting systems as an issue on which it needs to give a judgement.

A far greater scandal was the low turnout, 51.72%, or just over 2 million of Scotland's 3.9 million voters. The highest constituency turnout was in Eastwood (63.4%) while the 10 constituencies with the highest turnout were spread across Scotland. In contrast the 10 constituencies with the lowest turnout were all in urban locations with nine of the ten in Glasgow. The lowest constituency turnout was 33.4% in Glasgow Shettleston.

There are two issues here: one of political responsibility, and

one of political education. In a system which suggests that a vote every four or five years is democracy, all the more reason to exercise a vote. In Athenian democracy, the person who stood back from political participation was described by the Greek word for self - *idiot*.

In the light of an 82% turnout for French presidential elections after 20 million watched the debate between the candidates, many in this country seem switched off from politics. There is another, more worrying aspect. Low turnout often coincides with deprivation and low education. When Paolo Freire was pioneering literacy programmes more than forty years ago, they were geared to purposeful reading and social involvement. There is a clear link between poverty, literacy and political education. And there is a real need for Catholics to promote political awareness on the basis of Catholic Social Teaching. ([Compendium](#), nn 413, 567-74).

Addressing our Annual Conference a month before his death in 2001, Cardinal Winning said he was less concerned about having a justice and peace group in every parish than having a justice and peace presence. His argument applies just as strongly in politics. Certainly calling a party Christian doesn't make it so, and the two parties which used the term in Scotland were very different. The Scottish Christian party polled 31,000 votes with some policies eg on punishment which many found frankly repellent. The Christian Peoples' Alliance tried family values along with some social justice issues in a social democrat framework and polled 14,750. Scarily, these parties bracketed the BNP's total of nearly 25,000 votes. I think Cardinal Winning's point about being a presence was a development of the gospel injunction (Matt 13:33) for us to be leaven or yeast in society, whether in political parties, the workplace or wherever.

With the apparent apprehensiveness of the unionist parties to accept the SNP, Canon Kenyon Wright and Ian McWhirter have proposed reinstating the Constitutional Convention. Here they suggested, the contentious issue of independence could be considered outwith the arena of daily politics. I put the point to Rev Graham Blount, the Churches' Parliamentary Officer. Graham said he was sceptical about attempts to reinvent a Constitutional Convention. *"It was the right and necessary thing at the time but it delivered the Parliament, and the real challenge now is to make the new model of government work. I was taken with Alex Salmond's commitment 'that this government will rely on the strength of its argument in parliament and not the argument of parliamentary strength.'*

There is a need for the SNP to avoid triumphalism and build consensus. There is also a need for the other parties to avoid being merely obstructive, but also to stick to their principles. We are in a situation where, rather than relying on inbuilt majorities, every vote counts. We may end up being surprised at what negotiated politics can deliver.

There is also of course a need for greater political education and debate in civil society. But people tend to miss how accessible the Parliament already is. Through committees and reports it is possible not only to influence policy, but to hold the policy makers to account."

These views possess coherence. A Convention, particularly if it restricted itself to Constitutional matters, would let the politicians off the hook; in the same way as limited issue Christian parties allow the mainstream parties to dodge the issues. It could also be one more barrier to the wider and more mature political debate this country desperately needs. One of the more interesting aspects of the election campaign

democratic deficits contd

was that an essentially unionist media was in effect subverted in its online versions. The comment boards for the **Scotsman** and, to a lesser extent the **Herald**, found themselves as the real hustings, veering between articulate, substantiated comment and ignorant vituperation. Towards polling day, articles could attract over a thousand online comments. Average net circulation figures for March 2007, according to ABC, however, show figures for **The Herald** (70,907) and the **Scotsman** (56,094). This hardly compares with the **Scottish Sun** (405,049) and the **Daily Record** (376,802) with their self consciously populist outlook.

Political education still has a way to go. It is ironic that the Liberal Democrats, so long the advocates of PR, find themselves marginalised by it. More worryingly Labour, like a wee boy who has had his ball taken away, seems to have

decided to go into a sulk rather than into opposition. The Prime Minister (whoever it currently is) still hadn't contacted the new First Minister a month after the election. It's worth reminding politicians of whatever stripe, that they are appointed and fairly handsomely paid, not for tribal party loyalties, but to represent and further the common good of those who elected them. They would do well to remember the words of Good Counsel in Sir David Lindsay's **Satire of the Three Estates**:

*Mark weill, my lords, there is na benefice
Given to a man, but for a good office!
Wha taks office and syne they cannot use it,
Giver and taker, I say, are baith abusit.*

Tim Duffy

more than good intentions needed

John Deighan, the Catholic Parliamentary Officer, gives his view on the aftermath of the election.

A proliferation of small parties arose in an attempt to profit from the list system which delivered handsomely in 2003 for the Socialists and Greens in the election of 2003. Their hopes were dashed for a variety of reasons. Not least being a change in the design of the ballot paper which had the additional effect of ensuring a massive number of spoil papers.

Two Christian parties entered the political contest and fared rather badly. The need for a Christian emphasis in some important areas is crucial but this approach to changing the political dynamic was far from successful. Whether these parties continue or not, still the reality is that those motivated by Christian principles are absolutely necessary across the parties.

The Greens collapse may well be largely to do with the surge by SNP but it can't claim to have a vote winner with its policy of eradicating Catholic schools. Strong SNP support on Catholic schooling may help calm down this issue but Westminster regulations on sexual orientation and campaigning within the EIS could on the other hand contribute to keeping Catholic schools in the political limelight.

The big question is whether the SNP can make a minority administration work. Alex Salmond is under no illusion that he does not have the power to implement

much, if any, new legislation without broad cooperation. The reduction in the number of bills which will result will be a good thing. The previous two sessions overcommitted themselves in their legislative programmes resulting in some bills being rushed through without adequate scrutiny in the parliamentary committees. Less legislation may encourage longer periods of consultation and hopefully make these periods more likely to have effect on the outcome.

A look over the party manifestos reveals many areas of overlap on social issues – their mutual commitment to improving health and education as well as tackling housing. Then again, who is against improvements? But all politicians soon find that the solutions don't materialise just because of good intentions. Vigorous debate on what works best in these areas will help identify the best policies but will only help if parties are open to learning and changing their minds.

A big challenge, I believe, will be the extent to which politicians can get to the roots of the challenges of creating a decent society. John Paul II stated that the Catholic Church's social policy is a family policy and it is in this area that the previous parliament found the greatest degree of consensus, yet unfortunately in the wrong direction. Whether the emphasis in this area changes or not will be crucial to the long-term service that the Executive and Parliament will provide for Scotland.

John Deighan

If you want to make changes in the world, you're going to have to be working day after day, doing the boring, straightforward work of getting people interested in an issue, building a slightly bigger group or organisation, carrying on, experiencing frustration and finally getting somewhere. That's how the world changes.

That's how you get rid of slavery, that's how you get women's rights, that's how you get the vote, that's how you get protection for workers.

Every gain you can point to came from that

type of effort, not from people going to one demonstration and dropping out when nothing happens or voting every four/five years and then going home. It's fine to get a better or maybe less worse candidate in, but that's the beginning, not the end. If you end there, you might as well not vote.

Unless you develop an ongoing, living, democratic culture that can compel the candidates, they're not getting to do the things you voted for.

Marking a cross and then going home is not going to change anything.

Maryknoll Friends

how the world changes



newsbrief . . . newsbrief

RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY: Enclosed with the magazine is a flier for Racial Justice Sunday which takes place this year on the 9th September. With the flier is an order form for Racial Justice Sunday packs and prayer cards. Please have a look at the leaflet and consider ordering the pack and/or prayer cards for your parish or school. The pack is also ideal for individuals who want to learn more about racial justice.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S ANNUAL REPORT: 'Powerful governments and armed groups are deliberately fomenting fear to erode human rights and to create an increasingly polarised and dangerous world, said Amnesty International as they launched their 2007 Report, their annual assessment of human rights worldwide. The report monitors developments in human rights through the world, covering over 150 countries, and was launched on 23 May. 'Through short sighted, fear-mongering and divisive policies, governments are undermining the rule of law and human rights, feeding racism and xenophobia, dividing communities, intensifying inequalities and sowing the seeds for more violence and conflict,' said Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International. You can read the report at www2.amnesty.org/

CHINA EMBRACES NUCLEAR FUTURE: China intends to spend \$50 billion to build 32 nuclear plants by 2020. Chinese government scientists have begun boring holes deep into granite in the first steps toward building what could become the world's largest tomb for nuclear waste. Washington Post 29th May (*Global Network News*)

FAIRTRADE ON EBAY: The following snippet comes from the new consumer www.newconsumer.com. eBay has launched a Fair Trade hub with UK brands. It works because the seller has already paid a fair price for the goods, so you can still snap up a bargain. People Tree, Bishopston Trading Co and Shared Earth are just a few of the brands that now have an eBay shop. While it's perhaps not quite as cheap as broader eBay stuff, being virtual stores means they can keep their prices low and can offer previous season's stock for even less. You could also type in 'fair trade' or specific brand names to buy ethical stuff from personal sellers - we just saw an Ascension t-shirt, with the tags on, going for 99 pence. In the name of recycling you've got to love that. Check it out at http://pages.ebay.co.uk/fairtrade/index_static.html

The film **'BLACK GOLD'** is now screening all over the UK, to find out your nearest cinema visit www.blackgold-movie.com Multinational coffee companies now rule our shopping malls and supermarkets and dominate the industry worth over \$80 billion, making coffee the most valuable trading commodity in the world after oil. But while we continue to pay for our lattes and cappuccinos, the price paid to coffee farmers remains so low that many have been forced to abandon their coffee fields. Visit the website for this must see film, and pledge to see it.

ANTI-SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL: Despite all the celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, there are many modern slave trade activities happening today. In March of this year, Anti-Slavery helped free four women trafficked into prostitution in Cote d'Ivoire, resulting in their safe return home and the prosecution of their traffickers. The women aged between 17-24 were trafficked from the Philippines believing they were going to work in France, instead they were forced into prostitution. Sadly thousands are not so lucky as these four women. **'Act to End Slavery Now'** is a publication ideal for groups, churches and individuals who want to learn about modern slavery and the campaign to eradicate it. Cost £3.00 plus £2.00 P&P. order form Becky Shand 020 7501 8922. Visit the J&P website and sign the Anti Slavery International Pledge. The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade takes place on August 23.

ARMS TO SUDAN? Amnesty International have accused China and Russia of breaching international law in supplying Sudan with weapons that were used in Darfur. A 2005 resolution by the UN Security Council (of which China and Russia are permanent Members) banned the supply of weapons to the area. The Sudanese, Chinese and Russians deny the allegations. (*CAAT News issue 202*)

MERCENARY SPENDING: A parliamentary answer from Foreign Office Minister Kim Howells has revealed that the UK spent approximately £165m on private security companies in Iraq in the past four years – equivalent to about a quarter of the entire Iraq aid budget. One UK security company, ArmorGroup, has become the biggest UK company in Afghanistan after signing a £96m contract to guard the US embassy in Kabul. (*CAAT News issue 202*)

international polar year 2007-2008

The Polar regions have profound significance for the earth's climate and ultimately for its environments, ecosystems and human society. However, many aspects of polar climate and its interaction with ecosystems and societies are unknown. In the last two decades, the three fastest warming regions on the planet have been Alaska, Siberia and parts of the Antarctic Peninsula. The polar regions are highly sensitive to climate change, which raises real concern for the future of polar ecosystems and Arctic society.

Technological developments such as earth observation satellites, autonomous vehicles and molecular biology techniques offer enormous opportunities for increasing our understanding of polar systems. To ensure that researchers get the opportunity to work in both polar

regions, or work summer and winter if they wish, the polar year will run from March 2007 to March 2009. For more info visit www.educapoles.org/ *Australian Catholic Social Justice Council*

REFLECTION

We know it as our home. It is a beautiful benign planet despite its raging storms and awesome geological activity. It may also be quite unique in the Universe because the number of factors which must converge to allow the Earth to exist in the form it does are such that it is not likely to be repeated.

Bishop Christopher Toohy, *Rerum Novarum Lecture, 2006*

24.5 million internally *IDPs displaced persons*

The following report comes from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

"Some 4 million people were internally displaced during 2006 as a result of armed conflict, more than twice as many as in the previous year," Tomas Colin Archer, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The number of people newly displaced within their own countries by conflict has sharply increased, with the Middle East particularly hard hit by new displacements, according to a global survey recently released by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The year 2006 was marked by a steep increase in the number of people newly displaced within their countries by armed conflict and human rights violations, reflecting an escalation of conflict during the year, in particular in the Middle East and Asia. More than 4 million people were forced to flee their homes during the year, more than twice as many as in 2005.

Hundreds of thousands of them were able to return before the year's end - mainly Lebanese and Israelis displaced by the conflict between Israel and Hizbollah in summer 2006.

In many other countries, including Sudan, Colombia and Iraq, those newly displaced in 2006 joined the ranks of millions of other uprooted people who have not been able to return for years or even decades. Altogether, 23 countries were affected by new internal displacement in 2006; the total number of countries with internally displaced populations remained at 52 (not counting a number of situations where

displacement is likely to have taken place, but no IDP-specific information was available).

WHO IS AN INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON?

Internally displaced people - or IDPs - have been forced to flee their homes because their lives were in danger, but unlike refugees they have not crossed an international border. Many IDPs remain exposed to violence, hunger and disease during their displacement and are subject to a multitude of human rights violations. Although IDPs outnumber refugees by nearly 2 to 1, their plight receives far less international attention.

While refugees are entitled to seek international protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the international community is not under the same legal obligation to protect internally displaced people. National governments have the primary responsibility for the security and well-being of all displaced people on their territory, but often they are unable or unwilling to live up to this obligation as defined by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the set of relevant international standards. In the absence of a single agency mandated to help IDPs, the international community has been trying to work out arrangements aimed at ensuring a collaborative, inter-agency response to the needs of the displaced.

IDPs who have been uprooted by conflicts and human rights violations are the focus of this report, but there are also millions of people who have been internally displaced by natural disasters. Many more have been evicted from their homes in relation to development projects.

The **'Still Human Still Here'** campaign is dedicated to highlighting the plight of tens of thousands of refused asylum seekers who are being forced into abject poverty in an attempt to drive them out of the country. Supporters of the campaign believe that the denial of any means of subsistence to refused asylum seekers as a matter of government policy is both inhumane and ineffective. They are calling on the Government to:

- *End the threat and use of destitution as a tool of Government policy against refused asylum seekers*
- *Continue financial support and accommodation to refused asylum seekers as provided during the asylum process and grant permission to work until such a time as they have left the UK or have been granted leave to remain*
- *Continue to provide full access to health care and education throughout the same period*

Please lobby your MP as a matter of urgency on this matter, full details at:

<http://www.stillhuman.org.uk/>

asylum a justice & peace priority

O loving God,

**We remember those who struggle for freedom,
We remember the disabled who cling on to hope,
We remember the injured who fight for their life,
We remember the captives who yearn for freedom,
We remember the deportees who long for the homeland.
We remember our towns, villages and camps that are
often under siege.
We remember the children whose eyes reflect the
light of the future,
We remember the brave who say "no" to injustice,
We lift the olive branch which says "yes" to a just peace**

**O God, we call upon you to grant us your patience,
determination and power so that we may say:**

**No to hate and yes to love,
No to death and yes to life,
No to falsehood and yes to truth
No to oppression and yes to justice,
No to cruelty and yes to mercy,
No to violence and yes to the path of peace,
No, no matter what it may cost,
And yes, no matter what it may cost.**

(Taken from Ecumenical Service - Heads of Churches in Jerusalem)

update on amnesty & abortion

In this article Dan Baird, who is Chairman of one of Amnesty's Glasgow groups, reflects on the latest developments.

Many members and supporters of Amnesty International have watched with dismay the organisation's attempt to add abortion rights to its traditional concerns. In advance of its meeting in Mexico this August, its policy-making International Council has been asking for the views on abortion of its more than 50 national sections.

For the United Kingdom section (AIUK), this has led to the confusion and embarrassment of this year's AGM, in Edinburgh in March. Three resolutions were debated: the first was in favour of **'limited'** abortion - in cases of rape, incest and threat to the woman's life; the second called for what was effectively abortion on demand, while the third urged the organisation to maintain its traditional neutral stance on abortion. The first two were in the name of the Board of AIUK and were, in fact, moved by the same speaker on behalf of the Board. The third was a composite resolution, from three Amnesty groups and one individual member.

These options had already been put to the membership in a pre-AGM consultation. In that, the first was narrowly defeated, the second decisively rejected and the third - in favour of neutrality - passed with the largest majority of all. In a card vote, the AGM voted for limited abortion rights and against abortion on demand. As in the earlier consultation, though, the AGM approved by the largest majority the resolution urging that Amnesty stay neutral on abortion.

What position will the UK delegation take at the International Council meeting? It has been given two contradictory instructions by its AGM, one for limited abortion rights, the other for organisational neutrality. There have been conflicting signals here, and there are those who see the Board of AIUK as lacking in candour.

The current issue of its magazine briefly notes that the two resolutions passed are **'apparently contradictory'** and that the Board now has the task of analysing them and **'determining the UK section's approach to future international discussions on the subject'**. The language is that of a publicity machine in trouble.

It is a situation as surprising as it is unnecessary. Since its foundation in 1961, Amnesty has based its work on the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which set out such rights as freedom of expression, assembly and religious belief and condemned abuses like torture, slavery and arbitrary arrest.

Since all countries joining the UN have had to sign up to the Declaration, and to subsequent international agreements like the 1985 Torture Convention, Amnesty has been able to appeal in its work to theoretical common ground between it and those governments it seeks to influence. There would be no such common ground if Amnesty were to campaign for abortion rights

and, indeed, AIUK's consultation material admits that **'the international legal framework is unclear on the issue of abortion'**.

But a website of Amnesty's US section now lists a number of countries - including countries in Africa, Central America, and the Middle East - where the organisation could campaign on abortion rights. This opens the possibility of a protracted, expensive and highly controversial Amnesty campaign on these countries without clear support from international law and without even theoretical common ground between the organisation and the governments involved.

Though many within Amnesty oppose abortion on moral grounds, the dividing line within AIUK on abortion rights does not run between religious believers and others - Debbie Wakeham, from the Luton and Dunstable Group, who introduced and so convincingly advocated the neutrality resolution at the AGM, is a humanist - and many within the organisation accept abortion but do not see it as an Amnesty issue.

There is a division, too, in differing notions of the organisation's proper area of concern. Over the years of its existence, this has expanded. Thus, a few years ago the membership found themselves consulted on whether Amnesty should urge armed intervention to support human rights. Currently, it has set up a campaign on internet censorship by both information-technology companies and governments.

These developments are being supported by those who see as Amnesty's concern the **'full-spectrum'** of human rights. This strategy takes the organisation into the area of economic, cultural and social rights where there is far less moral consensus than on the narrower core of human rights it has traditionally defended. It brings it into more and more controversial areas - such as abortion - and risks losing both membership and support. This is opposed by those who believe that Amnesty should stick to its traditional concerns and avoid overstretching its resources as well as losing members.

Among its supporters Amnesty has traditionally had Catholic parishes and school and Justice and Peace groups, as well as individual Catholic members. The possible loss of such support has been cited in arguments within Amnesty for neutrality on abortion - a consideration often met with an equanimity bordering on indifference. Every extension of Amnesty's concerns, it is suggested, means losing some members and acquiring others.

Catholic groups and members face, with others who dissent on abortion, an unpleasant choice if the International Council decides for limited abortion rights. This would be more than a paper decision. Pro-abortion organisations, such as International Planned Parenthood, which have supported this move and given briefings to the AIUK leadership, would be anxious to enlist Amnesty's prestige and resources in international campaigns.

update on amnesty & abortion continued ...

It seems likely that the International Council will declare for limited abortion rights. Already, its International Executive Committee is confident these have the support of the majority of the national sections. Those opposed to this move will differ in their response.

Many will leave. Gregory Page of AI's Neath Group in Wales – who worked so hard and effectively to collect proxy votes in support of the AGM neutrality resolution – has already resigned, with others, and his group has disbanded after 26 years in existence. Others will follow. Some, though, argue for staying within Amnesty, refusing to take part in abortion-related campaigns and opposing any extension of its commitment to abortion rights.

For those who remain, there are problems, however. Although members are not compelled to take part in

particular campaigns, there is a moral question about retaining membership in an organisation campaigning for abortion rights and about supporting it financially by collecting for it and paying membership fees. Also, if approval of abortion rights becomes a precondition for employment by Amnesty, we can hardly retain membership in an organisation that would not employ us.

But for those who leave, there are problems too. The human rights violations that first brought us to Amnesty are still there and have to be fought for. Relighting the Amnesty candle, twenty years after the organisation was founded, the founder Peter Benenson said that the candle was for those who *"have died in prison, who were shot on the way to prison, who were tortured, who were kidnapped, who 'disappeared'"*. No matter what the International Council decides in August, our duty to the victims will remain.

My view is that while we have underestimated the scale, urgency and impact of climate change, so too have we underestimated our capacity to address it. The technologies, policies and institutions exist or are emerging. The public support to sustain political change is also rising. Global warming can be addressed...

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

2007 must be the year when the international community injects new momentum into the development of an international framework that can follow the end of the first Kyoto commitment period in 2012. The truth is that without global confidence in the commitment of governments to put a price on carbon, to agree a set of long term commitments for long term emissions reduction, to live up to the commitments in the 1992 Rio Convention to prevent dangerous climate change, initiatives by individual governments, businesses or citizens will not have the drive and the critical mass to arrest the growth of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

That framework must promote sustainable economic development, develop the technologies of the future, and help countries cope with climate change that is here today. A framework must be based on five key elements.

First, we need to make concrete the 1992 commitment to avert dangerous climate change. That means committing to the idea of a long term stabilisation goal for the amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere.

Second, we must establish carbon markets which put a price on carbon emissions and stimulate a transformation in energy efficiency and low carbon technology.

Third, we need greater technology investment and transfer: a carbon market in which credits are bought overseas will help enormously. But we need increased collaboration to stimulate research and investment. We need to help poorer countries become *'leapfrog economies'* that move straight to low-carbon development.

Fourth, deforestation. Emissions from deforestation in developing countries amount to about 20% of global carbon dioxide emissions. A future agreement must contain incentives for sustainable forestry management.

Fifth, adaptation: we must also recognise that the most vulnerable developing countries will need substantial support to help them adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change already in train.

We will not conclude an agreement in these five areas this year. But we must develop the international political consensus that can form the basis of a new set of commitments for the post 2012 period.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Governments and business must show leadership. But ultimately, the world's fate will rest on the actions of citizens around the world – whether they are prepared to buy products from companies with high environmental standards, reduce the amount of energy they waste, and support governments that are prepared to put a price on pollution.

The task ahead is to forge what one could call an *'environmental contract'* – a shared understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens and business in relation to the natural environment. In the same way that in the 17th and 18th centuries, the great theories of their time wrote of the need to forge a social contract which limited some of our freedoms in return for social order, so too in the 21st century we need to forge an environmental contract to safeguard the environmental order. None of us have a right to pollute and compromise the welfare of future generations, particularly those in the poorest countries.

The world's political leaders have a unique responsibility in helping to forge an environmental contract. But leadership must come from all parts of society. Civil society, especially faith communities, has a huge opportunity and responsibility, particularly in addressing the moral and ethical questions posed by climate change. You have a global reach and influence that individual governments do not. And far from being an add-on to the values and work you do, climate change is integral, particularly to the work you do on development.

In the Pope's message for world day of peace from 1st January 2007, he said:

'Humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, and human ecology. Experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human co-existence, and vice versa...if development were limited to the technical-economic aspect, obscuring the moral-religious dimension, it would not be an integral human development, but a one-sided distortion which would end up by unleashing man's destructive capacities.'

Let me finish with an observation by an organization called the WWF. They have calculated that if everyone in the world were to consume natural resources and generate carbon dioxide at the rate we do in the UK, we'd need three planets to support. We are depleting our natural resources at a far faster rate than we are replenishing them. The challenge is to move towards a one-planet economy and one-planet living – where there is a balance between what we give and what we take. I am optimistic we can meet that challenge, but we can only do so by appealing to a combination of moral duty and self-interest, by engaging a coalition of the world's faith communities, by developing an ethic of environmental stewardship. It is an endeavour around which I hope the world can unite, an endeavour that I believe we must work on together.

There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist fighting for peace by nonviolent methods most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is to succumb to violence. More than that, it is cooperation in violence. The frenzy of the activist neutralises one's work for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of one's work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom, which makes work fruitful.

Thomas Merton: Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander

church & state on climate change

We publish extracts from a significant speech by Rt Hon David Miliband MP at the Climate Change Conference, **Humanity and Nature: a New Balance**, organised by the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace in Rome, 26 April 2007.

I am deeply honoured to be able to address this conference on climate change and development. Climate change is not just an environmental or economic issue, it is a moral and ethical one. It is not just an issue for politicians or businesses, it is an issue for the world's faith communities. The common thread that underpins my speech today is a belief that it is our moral duty to protect future generations, particularly those in the poorest countries who will experience the most acute suffering, from the effects of environmental degradation. I think it is appropriate to address these themes at the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace.

Across the world, we are now beginning to see a change in attitudes to climate change. But well before climate change gained the profile it currently holds, the Catholic Church was warning of its consequences. In 1990, Pope John Paul II in his address to celebrate the World Day of Peace warned us of the dangers of irreversible damage caused by the greenhouse effect.

'In our day, there is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of due respect for nature, by the plundering of natural resources....'

'Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of everyone...its various aspects demonstrate the need for concerted efforts aimed at establishing the duties and obligations that belong to individuals, peoples, States and the international community.'

Seventeen years on, the warnings

are reaching a crescendo. A chorus of scientists and economists, entrepreneurs and politicians, across each country are voicing their concerns.

Our challenge now is to translate the growing awareness of global warming into a sustained movement that changes the way we live, work and travel. We need to mobilise governments, businesses and citizens across the world to act – what Pope John Paul II described as an 'ecological conversion'. Our call to action can be guided in part by scientific evidence, by economic analysis, by illustrating that it is in our self-interest to act. But the foundations of a new climate change coalition must be deeper. They must be grounded in morality and ethics: in a sense of solidarity with the developing world and future generations; a belief that humankind has a duty of stewardship towards nature, and perhaps most critical of all, a belief in securing a socially just balance of responsibility between rich and poor.

The Catholic Church and the world's faith communities have an opportunity to help nurture these shared values. You first invited the Chancellor Gordon Brown to address this conference. I know he has worked closely with you on international development, most recently in respect of the International Finance Facility bond, and I know he sends his good wishes to this conference and your continued engagement in this agenda. Let me also pay tribute to the work of particular individuals – Cardinal Martino who has played a long and distinguished role in developing the moral arguments for tackling climate change and mobilising grass roots activity. I would also like to note the presence of Archbishop Patrick Kelly of Liverpool representing the Catholic Church in England and Wales and Bishop James Jones, the Church of England Bishop of Liverpool who have both played a critical role in the UK in forging the links between faith and the environment.

I want to talk about the international response and domestic response required to address climate change. I want to end by looking at the role of religious groups and civil society in forging a climate change coalition.