

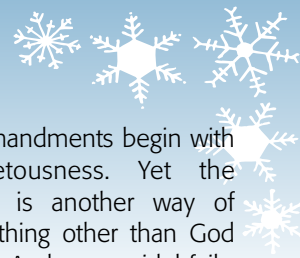
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editorial



And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. (Luke 2:1-3, KJV). You can almost hear the Carol service and smell the mince pies, so redolent of Christmas is this text from Luke's gospel. It has also provided ammunition for critics who point out the historical discrepancies on the question of world wide censuses and the chaos if everyone had returned to their place of origin. I have to confess that these critics do not disturb either my carol singing or mince pie munching.

Part of the reason is that this narrative was put together three quarters of a century after the event. Another part of the reason is that Luke's narrative (along with Matthew's) were composed for different constituencies, but shared the expectation of the time that the birth of a great man would be accompanied by miraculous events. The most important part of the reason, however, lies in Luke's purpose in contrasting the might of Augustus' Roman Empire, with its dominating power of registering and taxing; and the truly miraculous power of Jesus, born powerless, yet destined to have a greater effect than Rome.



At one level, Luke's Gospel (and the Acts of the Apostles to which it is linked) present an account of the growth of Christianity as accessible to the non Jewish world, as law abiding and not in any conflict with Rome. But it stresses Jesus' compassion and concern for the poor and marginalised. The parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son only appear in Luke, as does the Magnificat. Acts (17:6) has early Christians dragged before the authorities by a mob stirred up by local Jews and accused of causing trouble by their preaching; 'turning the world upside down' as the hymn would have it. At root there is an irreconcilable tension between the domination of Rome and the values of the Magnificat in which the poor are raised up and the mighty cast down.

The scripture critic John Dominic Crossan points out that the entire range of titles and attributes given to Christ by the gospel writers – Divine, Son of God, Lord, Redeemer, Saviour and Bringer of Peace - can all be found on monuments to the first Roman Emperor Augustus. The emerging Christian community of that first century used the same terminology, but from its own perspective. The Romans happily absorbed other Gods into their own pantheon. They were puzzled and vexed by Jewish insistence on only one God – theirs. But to have a Jewish related sect appropriating the titles of the Divine Augustus could only be seen as treason.

Nonetheless, the realm of Roman domination and God's kingdom are very close; if only because the former is a kind of mirror image of the latter. Where Rome (even in its memorable achievements) is built on greed, force and acquisition, the Kingdom of God is rooted in love of neighbour through compassion, forgiveness and sharing. They see the same things, but with different eyes and with a different intent.

To put it another way, the commandments begin with idolatry and end with covetousness. Yet the commandment against coveting is another way of prohibiting idolatry: making something other than God the be all and end all of existence. And as one idol fails, we tend to spiral on coveting the next. A greedy world is obsessed with ever greater growth and a violent world with ever greater force. As the seventeenth century theologian Bishop Robert South puts it: 'Of covetousness we may truly say that it makes both the Alpha and Omega in the devil's alphabet, and that it is the first vice in corrupt nature which moves, and the last which dies.'

The central dynamic of both the Empire of Rome (or wherever) and the Kingdom of God is desire. The difference is that in the Empire desire is disordered, even when it seems clear, perhaps in particular when it thinks it knows what it wants. We speak of people being 'consumed with desire'; and St Augustine reminds us that 'our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee'.

And there is surely no better time for restlessness and misplaced consuming desire than Christmas. Shops in our culture rely on an extended Christmas from about October to January, still trading on the Christian story despite being wrapped up in Winterfest flannel. Thomas Merton expands on this in inimitable fashion: 'It is important to remember the deep, in some ways anguished seriousness of Advent, when the mendacious celebrations of our marketing culture so easily harmonise with our tendency to regard Christmas, consciously or unconsciously, as a return to our innocence and our own infancy. But the church, in preparing us for the birth of a 'great prophet' a Saviour, and a Prince of Peace, has more in mind than seasonal cheer.' This preparation is foreshadowed in Isaiah's prophecy of Emmanuel (God with us), who is endowed with titles to outmatch Augustus (9:5-6).

A census in the Roman Empire was for two purposes: taxation and military conscription, the institutionalisation of greed and violence for selfish gain. But God has taken a deeper census: 'not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid' (Matt 10:29-31). A properly ordered desire for God is an unselfish response to God's initiative of unconditional love. As the psalmist says: 'Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you' (Ps 73:25).

God's response to this desire is the mystery of the Incarnation – the Word made flesh, the way the truth and the life in our midst. In contrast to the imposed and ruthless peace of the Pax Romana, Pax Christi comes to us in the form of a vulnerable infant, without wealth or power. In contrast to an Imperial theology which divinises an Emperor, the coming of the Son of God ushers in a kingdom of justice and peace whose aim is nothing less than the divinisation of all of humanity (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n460). We acknowledge this at every Mass: 'may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity'. Now that is reason for celebration.

Tim Duffy

Cover: Stained glass window at Taize by Br. Eric de Saussure

dulce et decorum est

Peter Kearney, Director of the Scottish Catholic Media Office, offers the following reflection on an event from this year's Remembrance Sunday

At one of the many Remembrance Sunday services held across Scotland in November a priest was asked to lead prayers for the dead. A common enough event on such a day yet on this occasion the priest concerned, bravely and courageously decided that in good conscience he had to depart from the all too familiar litany of war, sacrifice and glory. He prayed for those who died in the service of their country but also for those left 'wounded and disabled' and for soldiers 'forced to fight in unjust wars' as well as for a society intent on redefining marriage and thereby undermining its own foundations. His remarks occasioned a burst of outrage in the local press. In conversation with the cleric concerned, I commended him for his iconoclasm and bemoaned the absence of such sentiments in our annual remembrance observances.

His actions caused me to think more deeply about what we expect to achieve through an act of remembrance. I came to a number of conclusions but the first was that whatever it may be, it is not an act of justification or vindication. I fear however that for an increasing number of people, that is exactly what the 11th of November has become.

In June 1879 addressing the graduating class of the Michigan Military Academy, General William Sherman, famously reminded the eager and newly qualified recruits, that 'war is hell'. Sherman spoke from experience, previously he had written: 'it is only those who have never heard a shot, never heard the shriek and groans of the wounded and lacerated ... that cry aloud for more blood, more vengeance, more desolation.' As a commander of the Union forces in the American Civil War, he had seen blood and slaughter on an unimaginable scale. He spent the rest of his life cautioning against the glorification of war.

'Lions led by donkeys' was how one author described the British infantry of the First World War and the generals who commanded them. Yet, the danger always exists that in glorifying 'the lions' we glorify 'the donkeys' too. This would be folly of the first order. In his fascinating account of the Dardanelles campaign in 1915, the naval historian Dan Van Der Vat provides a detailed account of catastrophic failure and ineptitude on the part of the British Admiralty and particularly the then First Sea Lord, Winston Churchill. By the end of the ill fated campaign over 120,000 men had died in a catastrophe for which Churchill, according to Van Der Vat 'must bear the lion's share of responsibility'. Churchill of course was not among the dead, neither was he among those he most

eloquently enjoined to 'fight on the beaches, on the landing grounds, in the fields and in the streets' in the summer of 1940.

It was however on the fields of France between 1914 and 1918 that senseless and wanton slaughter reached its apotheosis. Over 7 million British and German soldiers died. In the Battle of the Somme alone, in 1916, one million men perished. In the course of the First World War, 150,000 Scots died. At Gallipoli in the Dardanelles campaign most of the Allied dead were Australians and New Zealanders fighting for 'King and Country'. The fact that the 1976 song The Green Fields of France was written by the Scottish-Australian singer-songwriter Eric Bogle was singularly appropriate. The lyrics comprise an address to the war grave of 'Private William McBride', one of 'countless white crosses' which 'in mute witness stand to man's blind indifference to his fellow man. And a whole generation who were butchered and damned.'

If blood flowed freely in the Great War, so too did verse. Fearless poets like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon railed against the slaughter and the establishment's deceit that it served a higher purpose. They met while recovering from the effects of the war at Craiglockhart Hospital in Edinburgh (subsequently the Sacred Heart sisters' convent and a teacher training college). In his searing and seminal 1917 poem *Dulce et decorum est* Owen demolishes the conventional wisdom of the day that it was 'sweet and right' to die for one's country when he writes of the horrors of the Western front. His description of the aftermath of a gas attack in the trenches should be pinned to the wall of every recruiting office in the country:

*If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est
Pro patria mori.*

Owen's words echo down the decades, an antidote to the cant and hawkish jingoism of generation after generation of political leaders. We ignore them at our peril and imperil another generation if we leave them in ignorance of them.

a real gift *Margaret Donnelly, J&P Representative of Galloway Diocese sent in the following idea*

Many of us have given a present of a Real Gift to someone who is near and dear to us and recently, while looking for an original Real Gift, I came across something that I thought was really different.

Care International in association with the Co-operative have a project called 'Lend with Care'. Through this you can lend money to an entrepreneur in the developing world through a local microfinance institution (MFI). The MFI can act quickly if they are satisfied that the proposal is sound, and provide the initial loan.

The amount you lend can be as little as £15 up to the whole amount that is asked for by the person with the proposal. At present the number of countries where this service is provided is small, but in time, the number of countries will increase. You can give a loan yourself or purchase gift vouchers to pass on to family or friends.

Care International was founded in the USA in 1945 as 'Co-operative for American Remittances to Europe'. Care International UK was founded in 1985 and they have a Partnership Programme Agreement with DFID. More information is available at www.lendwithcare.org

justice and peace annual conference

The Justice and Peace annual conference was held on Saturday 1 October, in Renfield St Stephen's Hall in Glasgow. About fifty people attended. It was encouraging as well as pleasurable to meet old friends and to hear about their continuing work in the area of justice. Archbishop Conti was with us during the whole of the morning as an enthusiastic and supportive participant (so much so that we were worried he might be late for a subsequent appointment). It is good to be reminded of the level of support we receive from our bishops in Scotland.

The main speaker was Professor Greg Philo, the research director of Glasgow University Media Unit whose work centres on media presentation including many issues of social justice. Greg spoke passionately about the imbalance of wealth in the UK and how in the guise of reducing the deficit, government justifies cuts in spending which benefit the well off and adversely affect the poorest members of society. He pointed out that personal wealth in the UK is £9,000 billion, and that this is mainly concentrated in a small percentage of the population. This wealth at the top of society is largely stored and unusable in properties and pensions.

So using this, Greg Philo proposes a one-off tax of 20% on the super rich. This would raise £800 billion which would eradicate debt and reduce the deficit as interest payments would decline as well. This has proved to be a very popular policy as well, as a commissioned

YouGov poll found that only 10% disapproved and apparently support came more from the wealthiest than the poorest groups. It seemed popular with conference participants too.

Geraldine Donnelly and Susan Cassidy are part of *Communitas*, the Education and Training arm of the Union for Life Community and they spoke from a trade union perspective. It was an excellent and well prepared presentation that followed the parallel history of trade union development and Catholic Social Teaching which has always been well disposed to proper and well organised unions. Time constraints prevented a fuller development of a fascinating topic which could have filled a conference day by itself; but there was a lively question and answer session. We hope to put some of the material on our website.

After lunch, Tim Duffy of Justice and Peace spoke on the theology of work as the central issue in Catholic Social Teaching. Work is so much more than a mere job. It is the guarantor of human dignity and the link to our divine origin. It is also the way in which our uniqueness can be affirmed in society as well as our opportunity to render service to our neighbour and thanks to God.

The day concluded with a liturgy put together by the conference planning committee, who had themselves put in a great deal of work into making the day informative, varied and enjoyable.

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tackling poverty

Mary Macpherson, our Motherwell diocese representative, reports on the recent Poverty Alliance AGM/Seminar

Poverty is predicted to rise with an economy which is faltering, unemployment rising, cuts being made in public services, welfare reform etc. This was the context of the Poverty Alliance Annual Seminar.

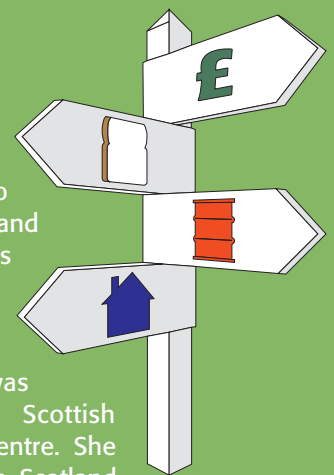
Professor Adrian Sinfield was the first of three speakers. He spoke of the prospects of poverty over the next five years. He believes the government will not help those regarded as undeserving poor and that with the measures it is introducing, has lost the balance between preventing and alleviating poverty.

Anne Johnstone of the Herald spoke of the political context of moving towards a more socially just Scotland. The Westminster Government is taking from the poorest in and out of work but unfortunately we lack a powerful, articulate opposition. In Scotland, the size of the SNP majority has caused an emphasis on constitutional issues. We need a real opposition in Scotland too. Newspapers are in difficulty, complex issues are overlooked or misreported. Ms Johnstone

suggested we work out who our friends are in the media and use them. Use the letters page, respond but expand the argument. Write and submit your own articles.

The third speaker was Fiona Garvin, director of Scottish Community Development Centre. She spoke about communities in Scotland having an unequal landscape. She then spoke about how communities can and should work together to become healthy in all ways.

Groups then discussed what the priorities of the Poverty Alliance should be over the coming three years. Among the suggestions made were that we learn from our mistakes and change our approach. We need to decide what kind of society we want and set the political agenda; get angry; politicise community.



Money, Money, Money?

It's rare for any Vatican document (unless it concerns sex) to catch the public interest. A recent publication of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace on the international financial system gained a mixture of fame and notoriety across the media. Was it the less than snappy title - *Towards Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority?* Probably not. Was it the fact that its publication coincided with a Eurozone teetering on collapse, a G20 meeting and a time of worldwide protest at banking greed exemplified in the Occupy movement? Very likely. Perhaps it was just the fact that people welcomed somebody saying clearly, at a time when it seems we are slipping back into business as usual, that the present system is wrong and that there is an alternative. Three cheers for the Pontifical Council then.

The document was presented on 24 October by Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson and Bishop Mario Toso SDB, respectively president and secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and by Leonardo Becchetti, professor of political economy at the Roman University of Tor Vergata. Cardinal Turkson mentioned the sixth summit meeting of heads of government of the G-20 nations, due to take place in Cannes, France, on 3 and 4 November to discuss issues related to finance and the global economy. 'The Holy Father and the Holy See,' he said, 'are following these matters with particular concern, constantly calling not just for "joint action", but for "examination of every facet of the problem: social, economic, cultural and spiritual." It is in this spirit of discernment that the Holy See, with the note of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, wishes to make a contribution which might be useful to the deliberations of the G-20 meeting.'

The Note referred to is a technical term in the hierarchy of Vatican documents, deriving from the Latin, Nota – pay attention to this, mark it well. A number of American Catholic economic neocons have suggested it is little more than an opinion from some individuals having little authority; but then they would because they don't think the church should meddle with the 'real' world of finance unless it agrees with them. In much of American culture there is a sense of enterprise and individualism, not only rugged but rich and pretty ruthless, that can't quite cope with the idea of the common good, indeed which it sees as one step away from lefties and commies. Bishop Toso is a professor of social philosophy and has a deep grounding in Catholic Social Doctrine.

Weighing in at just over six and a half thousand words, this is a serious Note. The first section of the document is a perspective on recent economic development. It compares the quantitative limits of resources and personnel with the inflationary possibilities in the financial markets and the over-extended credit of the banks. The negative consequences are outlined on the developed countries, 'but also and above all for billions in the developing ones.' There is an acknowledgement of the close connection between an inadequately managed process of globalisation (which is otherwise treated as a benevolent force) on the one hand, and the world's great inequalities on the other. The root of the inadequacy is identified as 'utilitarian thinking: that is, theoretical and practical approaches according to which what is useful for the individual leads to the good of the community.' Against this is contrasted the sense of solidarity that works for the common good. The basic stance in this document derives from Pope Benedict's starting point in *Caritas in Veritate* of 2009. Nor is this viewpoint new. In 1985, Archbishop Ratzinger himself presented a paper on Market Economy and Ethics at a symposium in Rome in which he said: 'It is becoming an increasingly obvious fact of economic history that the

development of economic systems which concentrate on the common good depends on a determinate ethical system, which in turn can be born and sustained only by strong religious convictions. Conversely, it has also become obvious that the decline of such discipline can actually cause the laws of the market to collapse.'

Thus the current crises of economics, politics and the environment are therefore not simply technical or ideological failures; they are moral and spiritual failures. This is why Bishop Toso said at the launch: 'it is necessary to restore the primacy of ethics and, with it the primacy of politics, which is responsible for the common good.'

The second section identifies the role that technology has played, not only in enriching human life, but too often in dehumanising and working against human dignity, when it tries to treat all problems as being merely technical. In recognising 'the primacy of being over having and of ethics over the economy, the world's peoples ought to adopt an ethic of solidarity as the animating core of their action.'

The third and fourth sections have proved by far the most contentious and concern the setting up of a global authority to order the political and economic spheres of activity. Yet it should hardly come as any great surprise that a hierarchical and centralised church should suggest this model of organisation in the field of globalised economics and politics. The Church has been supportive of the UN, from its inception, and through its more and less successful attempts to live up to its ideals. It is therefore logical, with its ethical and spiritual outlook, that the Church should envisage an ever greater convergence towards agreed stability and a dignified life for all. Economic proposals include: a Financial Transaction Tax in the Tobin tax style, to be used both for global development and to build up a financial reserve for times of crisis, as well as greater regulation and supervision of banking practices.

The strongest reaction to this suggestion, however, has come from a certain strand of Catholicism in the US, which has come to see itself as sovereign – the leader of a New World Order. Where a culture tries to make itself normative it cannot properly respect the dignity of others; it also misappropriates power and disrupts the common good. This strand tends to be over represented by its prevalence on the internet. But it is ironic to see well heeled economic liberalism (which gave rise to the 1% of those in the US who own 40% of the wealth and inspired the 'We are the 99%' of the Occupy movement) complaining about a lack of subsidiarity on the part of the Vatican. They are the equivalent of modern day Pharisees flaunting their own rectitude and comparing themselves favourably with lesser mortals involved in tax collecting.

Historically the church has tended to align institutionally with other large institutions as a matter of subsidiarity, and not always with happy results. The suggestion for a world political and economic authority in this document is so hedged with qualification that it almost anticipates (even if it cannot pre-empt) the selfish resistance and greed of those addressed. It also suggests that opponents will need to mount a better case than has so far appeared: 'It is the task of today's generation to recognise and consciously to accept these new world dynamics for the achievement of a universal common good. Of course, this transformation will be made at the cost – of a gradual, balanced transfer of a part of each nation's powers to a world Authority and to regional Authorities, but this is necessary at a time when the dynamism of human society and the economy and the progress of technology are transcending borders, which are in fact already very eroded in a globalised world.'



bearing witness

Tim Duffy reflects on the life of Fr Dean Brackley SJ, who died recently...

Between 2am and 3am on 16 November, 1989, a military death squad trained in the US entered the Central American University in San Salvador and brutally murdered six of the Jesuit staff, their housekeeper and her daughter. The dead included Fr Ignacio Ellacuria, one of the most respected theologians in Latin America and rector of the university. The most well known Jesuit on the campus, Father Jon Sobrino, was out of the country lecturing. The murderers made a point of shooting the priests in the head and scattering the brains as a warning to show what they could not tolerate – reason and compassion rather than violence.

While the world expressed abhorrence at the brutality, Jesuits responded in two ways. First, rather than making it simply a violent act against themselves, they broadened it out into an example of the conflict that cost over 70,000 lives in just over a decade. Second, from around the world, fellow Jesuits volunteered to take the place of those who had been murdered. Among these volunteers was an American, Dean Brackley. He entered the Jesuits in 1964 and was ordained a priest in 1976.

The 32nd General Congregation in 1974-75, had committed the Jesuits to the promotion of justice as an integral part of all its ministries in the service of faith. Before El Salvador he had spent 10 years teaching theology and ethics at Fordham University in New York. He also led a church programme in the South Bronx and spoke of how this experience of life and death drama, with its 'daily crucifixions and resurrections' helped gather together his scattered self, that followed years of soul searching living as a privileged man in a world of injustice.

From these early experiences, as well as his experiences at the Universidad Centroamericana administering the university's School for Religious Education and pastoral formation came his book *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times: New Perspectives on the Transformative Wisdom of Ignatius of Loyola*. This reworking of St Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises in the world of structural injustice and spiritual growth is a marvellous book, in particular for those in Justice and Peace who have recently undergone the Craighead course rooted in Ignatian spirituality.

Legend is a much over used word but here it is appropriate. It originates in the Latin word *legenda* meaning things to be read and reflected upon for spiritual or moral purposes. And as Miriam McHardy (who first introduced me to Dean Brackley's writing) admirably shows below, reading this book can be a life changing experience.

Dean Brackley died from cancer in October, aged 65. His influence went beyond his own fellow Jesuits and the people he worked with and served in El Salvador. In an e-mail to a worldwide network of friends earlier this year, he left a kind of testament:

The faith factor is decisive, as you know... Let us pool our faith. Mine is weak enough, but with all of us, that is another matter. God wants to give life more than we want life. St. Ignatius wrote to Francisco Borja: I consider myself wholly an obstacle to God's work in me. In other words, the exercise of faith, our fundamental human challenge, gets us out of the way of God's work. So, let us pray.

Miriam McHardy, the Co-ordinator for Justice and Peace in the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, gives her own appreciation of Dean Brackley

I first came across Dean Brackley SJ when a friend gave me his book *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times*. Knowing that I had an interest in exploring the link between spirituality and justice she suggested a book by a Jesuit linking social justice with the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola. I have to say my heart sank as I imagined heavy text and dry, complex explanations.

How wrong I was! From its first chapter, Dean Brackley wove stories and shared personal experiences that drew me in to his understanding of the interaction of spirituality and justice. With every page I found myself captivated further by Dean's deep honesty and reflection, and his incredible gift for explaining centuries old ideas in the context of today. The complexities of the Spiritual Exercises were set in the context of our modern day dilemmas, with the purpose of encouraging the reader to use them as tools for discernment and decision making: to inspire us to take time to hear what God calls each one of us to. With a passionate belief that Gospel values need to be reflected upon from the perspective of the poor and marginalised, Dean's writing urged the reader to begin to understand what our action and response might be to the injustice we see all around us.

As I write this, I realise that I may have made Dean's writing sound rather dull and worthy. It was anything but! Somehow, in ordinary words he was able to express ideas that were both difficult yet joyful. Stories of his own life, and the lives of others that highlighted the common experiences of temptation, inertia, grief and pain but also of challenge, transformation and resurrection. There was a sense through the book of getting to know Dean, this unknown writer who shared so deeply of himself: who seemed to experience that sense of freedom that only comes from a deep love and faith in God.

A year or so later, I had the chance to hear Dean Brackley when he came as the speaker at the Romero Lecture at the Lauriston Jesuit centre. Speaking about El Salvador, he also spoke movingly of the need for each of us to hear and respond to our deepest calling. For Dean, part of that calling was volunteering to go to El Salvador immediately following the murders of the six Jesuits; choosing to live with the risk and be with those in poverty and injustice. A quiet, gentle man, he spoke as he wrote, with clarity, humility, love and joy.

Sometimes when we work for justice and peace, it can be easy to feel that we are alone. Dean's writing reminds us that we are not. Towards the end of *The Call to Discernment* he tells a story of being on a study trip in Peru when he sees a penguin waddling down the street! No one believes him. In fact they laugh at him, and he begins to doubt himself. Yet the next day he speaks with another person on the tour who reports that he had also seen a penguin. The penguin is real! For Dean, this reminds him that 'we need others in order to stick with our vision in a sometimes cynical world that smothers dreams and expects few surprises!' That there can be a penguin in the desert, that a different world of love, justice and peace is possible.

Teacher, academic, community organiser, writer, storyteller, accompanier. The world needs people like Dean Brackley and we mourn his loss yet we give thanks for his life and the gifts he shared with so many.

If you have the chance to read this Christmas, try and get hold of a copy of *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times*. It is a book profoundly relevant to the times we are living in, but beware. It will draw you in, shake you up, and force you to question what you are called to in these troubled times. It may even have you looking for penguins!



Lobbying for the faithful

In 1970 fewer than 40 organisations were engaged in religious lobbying or religion-related advocacy in Washington DC. This has increased roughly fivefold in the past four decades to more than 200 today. US religious groups collectively employ at least 1,000 people in the greater Washington area and spend at least \$390 million a year on efforts to influence national public policy. Note that these are religious groups only; the total spent annually in the US on lobbying is estimated at \$3,500 million. These findings are part of a study on religious advocacy groups released by the The Pew Research Centre's Forum on Religion & Public Life and indicate the extent of consumerised religion in the US.

About one-in-five (19 %) of religious advocacy organisations in Washington have a Roman Catholic perspective and a similar proportion is evangelical Protestant in outlook (18%), while 12% are Jewish and 8% are mainline Protestant. The remainder of the groups studied (54) either represent multiple faiths or advocate on religious issues without representing a specific religion. Groups for which recent (2008 or 2009) financial data were available spend on average \$1 million annually. About a third of the groups reported annual advocacy expenditures between \$1- \$5 million per year, while 14% reported spending more than \$5 million a year. Over half of the groups for which data on expenditures were available reported that their advocacy spending was lower in 2009 than it had been in 2008. About 80% of the advocacy groups surveyed qualify as non-profit organisations, but are denied

the right to allocate funds to lobbying. In order to engage in lobbying, they must create and fund sister organisations that are legally able to lobby.

The most commonly addressed domestic issues are the relationship between church and state, the defence of civil rights and liberties for religious and other minorities, bioethics and life issues (abortion, capital punishment and end-of-life issues) and family and marriage issues (such as the definition of marriage, domestic violence and fatherhood initiatives). Internationally, the most commonly addressed concerns are human rights, debt relief and other economic issues, the promotion of peace and democracy and religious freedom in particular countries or worldwide.

More than eight-in-ten of the groups say they use targeted or mass e-mails to mobilise constituents. More than 60% used social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter in 2009. Most (79 %) of the groups for which staffing data were available employ 12 or fewer people in the Washington area. More than half (55%) have five or fewer employees.

Even when one takes into account the difference of population, and the size and diversity of religious groupings, it gives pause. But it is interesting that the US, while making a constitutional point of separating church and state, still maintains a very close relationship notably in economic areas.

TD and sources

THE GREEN THING

– a lesson in conservation from a 'selfish' old person!

Checking out at the store, the young cashier suggested to the older woman, that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The woman apologised and explained, 'We didn't have this green thing back in my earlier days.' The clerk responded, 'That's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations'

She was right -- our generation didn't have the green thing in its day.

Back then, we returned milk bottles, lemonade bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the factory to be washed and sterilised and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled. But we didn't have the green thing back in our day.

We walked up stairs, because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two blocks. But she was right. We didn't have the green thing in our day.

Back then, we washed the baby's nappies because we didn't have the throw-away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 220 volts -- wind and solar power really did dry our clothes back in our early days. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that young lady is right; we didn't have the green thing back in our day.

Back then, we had one TV, or radio, in the house -- not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size

of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of Scotland. In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used wadded up old newspapers

to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn petrol just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity. But she's right; we didn't have the green thing back then.

We drank from a fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But we didn't have the green thing back then.

Back then, people took the tram or a bus and kids walked to school instead of turning their mums and dads into a 24-hour taxi service. We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerised gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the green thing back then?



Source: NJPN email update

anti slavery international AGM

Kathleen Summer, of the Motherwell J&P core group, reports on this recent meeting

Andrew Clark (Chair) and Baroness Young welcomed everyone to the AGM. In his report, the Chair pointed out that since its beginning in 1839 the society has been known under five names before becoming Anti Slavery International. The organisation has recently been revised and modernised and staff changes have been successfully carried through. Of course there remain immense challenges ahead which need to be met nationally and internationally. The Chair asked the members to take care of their organisation which had just emerged from a period of financial difficulty. He ended by saying that slavery in all its forms had to be eradicated and that ASI is a time tested organisation which must take up the challenge.

Aidan McQuade the Director then gave his report. He began by saying that India, with help from ASI local partners, had passed an Anti Forced Labour Law in 2010. This is a good example of what can be achieved by working together with government. ASI also continues to work in partnership with the International Labour Organisation. He continued, however, by saying that further funding was needed to eradicate bonded labour in the brickwork industry in the world's largest democracy. While India has been a source of concern, other countries could be mentioned, including Senegal, Romania and Nepal.

Aidan finished by saying that the Olympic Games in

London next year presented new risks of slavery for vulnerable people across a range of areas. There is a likelihood of trafficking for labour, prostitution and child begging. Anti-Slavery is also part of the Playfair 2012 Campaign which is calling on the organisers of the London 2012 Olympics and global sportswear brands to ensure that workers producing sportswear and souvenirs with the Olympics logo have their rights upheld.

The winner of the 2011 ASI Award went to Justice for Domestic Workers. This was a self help group of domestic workers who became aware of their rights. There are about two hundred members in this organisation most of whom are in London. Some workers work for abusive employers and were unable to escape. This award will be an inspiration to other workers to campaign for their rights. The award will help Justice for Domestic Workers to improve their public profile and help other domestic workers to campaign for better working conditions.

Marissa Begonia had received the award on behalf of J4DW at the Human Trafficking Foundation Media Awards, held in the House of Lords, on Anti Slavery Day, 18th October. Marissa used this opportunity to remind the audience and Immigration Minister Damian Green MP about the disastrous impact proposed changes to the domestic worker visa will have. The impacts are likely to include an increase in abuse and return to slavery for domestic workers.

protest locks down Glasgow UKBA reporting centre

On Monday, 21 November many justice and peace supporters joined the Unity protest at the UKBA headquarters in Glasgow, against the resumption of dawn raids on asylum-seeking families in the city. The protest had been called after two dawn raids the week before. The two raids targeted single mums in the city. UKBA officers and police came calling before dawn, 12 of them in one case, all dressed in stab-proof vests. Mothers were handcuffed in front of their terrified children, and dragged off to detention centres. Terrorised in their home, then detained and deported within a week with no chance to gather their possessions, or say goodbye to their friends, let alone mount any kind of legal challenge. This is not the softly-softly approach that the government promised with its new Family Removals Process (FRP).

The protest had begun at 7am, when three activists chained themselves to the gates of the reporting centre, while one scaled a scaffolding tripod, blocking the gates and making sure that no dawn raid vans would leave the UKBA car park that day. They were soon joined by about 100 or so supporters, including many asylum seekers who spoke of the fear they feel every time they have to report, and now the fear of being raided at home.

There was music and drumming and singing of African and Scottish songs and hymns. After a couple of hours the three chained to the gates were removed, but the man on the tripod stayed in the air for an

impressive 10 hours, finally coming down at 5 o'clock.

The point had been made, and the media coverage helped spread the word: people in Glasgow still believe that dragging mothers and children from their beds to detention and deportation is totally unacceptable. The practice was stopped in Glasgow in 2006, following a long campaign of protests, direct action, campaigning and lobbying. It appears that a new campaign is starting in the city.

(Source: NCADC)



life begins at forty

This year we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of what might be seen as the 'Wild Child' of Catholic Social Teaching, *Justice in the World*. Despite being a manifesto of the main principles for practitioners, it has never quite achieved respectability. It isn't quoted anywhere in the *Compendium of Social Doctrine*. Its central principle, that 'Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.'⁽ⁿ⁶⁾ has been a source of theological contention.

The 'us' in that quotation is the Bishops' Synod which prepared the document which was then published by Pope Paul VI. As such the document represents an exercise in collegiality, issued by the Bishops in their own right, with the influence of the oppressed churches of the Third World. This represented a shift in the balance of power which the centralised power of the Curia found unsettling. Certainly no more synodal documents were published in this way; rather the Pope would publish his own reflections on the synod.

Argument raged around the words 'constitutive' and 'liberation' for the Vatican of the time as if they carried the whiff of cannabis and patchouli oil. The real fear was the perceived threat of Marxism; at least, this became the catch all way of summing up any criticism of the status

quo. This is the beginning of the modern Liberation Theology, which frankly threatened the cosy relationships between churches and repressive regimes around the world. It also asked difficult questions about how faith could flourish amid the level of inequality and oppression which modern communications were bringing within reach of living rooms of the developed world and isolated communities alike.

Two very uncomfortable questions were raised. First our own complicity in the world's injustice as part of the individual acts that collectively give rise to structural sin, e.g. world hunger, nuclear weapons. And the other, even more uncomfortable, that a church which preaches justice must itself first be just. And many in the institution wanted to go on pretending that everything in the garden was rosy.

A summary of what the Bishops said was prepared by the late Fr R. V. Bogan in 1972 and published in England by the National Justice & Peace Commission and the Catholic Truth Society. Pax Christi, National Justice & Peace Network and Columban JPIC have decided to republish this summary of *Justice in the World* because, forty years on, its message about world poverty, peace, participation and education is (unfortunately) still so fresh and urgent. Copies of the booklet, 'Our World and You' are now available, price £1.50 plus p&p, from NJPN admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk There is also a very interesting article on *Justice in the World* by Fr Donal Dorr available through the J&P website.

asylum initiatives

Destitute Asylum Seekers

Positive Action in Housing and the Glasgow Destitution Network are working together to ensure that people who are at risk of destitution over the Christmas and New Year break have access to survival essentials (Food, Hygiene Packs, Night Shelter and Cash Support). More and more people are being excluded from the social welfare safety net, finding themselves homeless and destitute with no access to housing, employment or benefits. Most are migrants, such as refugees who have been refused asylum, or unemployed people from Europe. The Glasgow Destitution Network is a network of churches, community groups and individuals working to coordinate emergency housing, food, clothing, cash and other support.

Winter Night Shelter

The Winter Night Shelter will operate for destitute asylum seeker men and women from December 5th 2011 to 31st March 2012. The Glasgow Destitution Network project aims to provide night shelters through 3 different locations to a maximum of 15 individuals each night of the week. Donations of sleeping bags etc and volunteers are urgently needed. To find out more visit destitutionaction.wordpress.com and www.paih.org



Pilot Travel scheme for destitute asylum seekers

Travel is a major issue for asylum seekers who have been made destitute and in many cases homeless, without the right to work and with no financial support.

They are required to report weekly or monthly to UK Borders Agency in Ibrox. They need to visit their solicitor to continue to pursue their case. They may have medical appointments. Some have to walk several hours across the city to get to these places.

The Refugee Survival Trust www.rst.org.uk have set up a pilot project working with 4 projects within Glasgow Destitution Network to provide a day bus pass (worth £4) to people in this situation. They will be able to get maximum one per week for journeys of further than 2 miles.

If people want to donate £4 to the bus pass campaign they can do it by texting the message FARE00 4 to the number 70070. People can donate any amount from £1-£10 in this way (by texting FARE00 1 or FARE00 10 etc).

100% of the money will go on bus passes for destitute asylum seekers and the phone company doesn't take any charge. Cheques can also be sent to: Refugee Survival Trust, The Melting Pot, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PR.

newsbrief . . . newsbrief



End Indefinite Detention Now: With the magazine you will find a postcard to send to the Home secretary on 'indefinite detention' of immigrants. Please sign and send it. A recent Freedom of Information request on the longest periods of detention brought the following reply: 1 detainee has spent nearly 6 years in detention; 5 detainees have been detained for over 4 years; 11 detainees have been detained for over 3 years. As at 30 September 2011, management information shows that of the 2,909 people detained solely under Immigration Act powers, the 20 longest recorded lengths of detention range from 5.9 years (2,158 days) to 2.9 years (1,064 days).

Good news from Survival International. For centuries, tribal peoples have had their lands stolen and suffered violence and oppression. But things are changing... here are some of the reasons for optimism. The time when entire peoples could be wiped out without anyone noticing is drawing to a close. The abuses of tribal peoples' rights, now make worldwide headlines. In the case of the Yanomami of Brazil, an international campaign helped to secure their lands - and resulted in one of the biggest protected areas of rainforest in the world. Courts are more willing to stand up to governments. The Kalahari Bushmen are returning to their lands after a landmark court case funded by Survival supporters. The movement for tribal peoples' rights is broader than ever before. The Dongria Kondh tribe's sacred mountain was saved from a British mining company after a worldwide outcry; their story was compared to the fictional Na'vi in the Hollywood blockbuster Avatar. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/cozzoze>

Parliamentary Inquiry into Living Wage in Scotland: The Scottish Parliament's Local Government Committee has announced it will hold an inquiry into the implementation of the living wage in the public sector in Scotland. The Inquiry will also consider how the living wage can be included in public sector procurement. Eddie Follan, co-ordinator of the Scottish Living Wage Campaign said 'this is an important development and shows how seriously the living wage is being taken as a measure to protect the poorest members of our society.' More details can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/d7nv8pl> (Source Poverty Alliance enews)

Zimbabwe: thousands of girls forced to leave school: Poverty, abuses, cultural traditions are preventing one third of girls from attending school in Zimbabwe, denying them a basic education. According to a new study carried out by Plan International, an NGO committed against child poverty, harassment and even sexual abuse by teachers and parents, cultural difficulties, lack of school fees, marriages and early pregnancies, the parents commitments, are some of the factors that contribute to school dropout by girls. The study, titled 'Because I am a Girl', documents the long distances that children in rural areas must travel to get to school. The great burden of children who often, after the death of parents, must take the responsibility of their family, are among other factors that contribute to raising the school drop out rate. Because of a government program of forced eviction in 2005, known as 'Operation Murambatsvina', about 700,000 people from urban areas across the country have been forcibly evicted, compounding the difficulties of access to education for girls of the families involved. More information at www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=19279

Incapacity Benefit Reform: the local, regional and national impact. A report by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University looks at the current reforms to incapacity benefits. The report considers questions around how many men and women will lose their entitlement to incapacity benefits, how many will be pushed onto Jobseeker's Allowance and how many will be pushed out of the benefits system altogether. In Scotland the report estimates that 115,000 people will be moved off of incapacity benefit. (Source Poverty Alliance enews)

Children's Commissioners issue Child Poverty Warning: A joint report published by the Children's Commissioner's for Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland has warned that the Government's spending cuts as well as welfare reforms could push many families and children into poverty. The Commissioners expressed fears that the most vulnerable in society are facing disproportionate hardship. A copy of the report can be found on the J&P website. (Source Poverty Alliance enews)



Sri Lanka: Army chief is jailed again for speaking out over war crimes. The former chief of Sri Lanka's army was sentenced to three years in prison after he was convicted of alleging the country's Defence Secretary was involved in war crimes in 2009 at the conclusion of the long conflict with Tamil rebels. The allegations centred on a notorious episode, reported by The Independent newspaper, which came to be known as the 'white flag incident'. Supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), as well as human rights campaigners, claimed several LTTE members were shot dead while trying to surrender in the final hours of the conflict. (Source Independent 19/11/11)

The Fairtrade Foundation are Guinness World Record Holders. The longest fairest line of cotton bunting was created to bring attention to the issue of cotton subsidies and the reform of trade rules, that is so desperately needed to give West African farmers a fair deal. Over the last year, thousands of people have decorated bunting, written to Agriculture Minister Caroline Spelman, or lobbied their MEPs to raise awareness of the issue of cotton subsidies and demand that action be taken to end them as part of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Despite our best efforts, and the agreement of the UK Government, we have not made the headway we had hoped for. There has been a definite change in tone from the European Commission and MEPs and they acknowledge that EU reform of cotton subsidies may not have gone far enough. However, yet again, EU member states have failed to take the necessary action to redress the balance between desperately poor West African farmers and European farmers able to take advantage of financial support available to them. Read more and take action here

<http://tinyurl.com/cpp7gcv>



St Andrew's day is always marked at the nearest weekend by two rallies. The STUC Anti Racist March and Rally takes place in Glasgow on the Saturday. The Dungavel Solidarity Gathering takes place on the Sunday. As always Justice and Peace were well represented at both. It must have been the worst weekend of the year so far for wind and rain but that didn't deter a big crowd turning out on the Saturday to march through the streets of Glasgow. Not so many for Dungavel, but we were joined by Clare Adamson MSP for Central Scotland who was with us for the first time.



the prophetic vocation

All people desire false prophets, who, through the glorification of their gods, glorify their followers and themselves. People long to be flattered in regard to their desires and virtues, their religious feeling and social activity, their will to power and utopian hopes, their knowledge and love, their family and race, their class and nation. And a false prophet can always be found to glorify the demon they worship. But when the voice of the true prophet is raised, they shut their ears, they contradict his statements, and they ultimately persecute and kill him, because they are not able to receive his message. The order endures until the prophet's words are fulfilled, and the cities are destroyed, and the land is made desolate.

We are all eager for the prophetic spirit. We are anxious to lead the people to a new justice and to a better social order. We long to save the nations from a threatening doom. But does our word, if it be God's word, have better effect than that which Isaiah saw in his vision and experienced in his life? Are we more than he was? Are our people today less devoted to demons than his people were? If not, can we expect anything other than what he was told to expect through his vision? We must pray for the prophetic spirit which has been dead for so long in the Churches. And he who feels that he has been given the prophetic task must fulfil it as Isaiah did. He must preach the message of a new justice and of a new social order in the name of God and His honour. But he must expect to be opposed and persecuted not only by his enemies, but also by his friends, party, class, and nation. He must expect to be persecuted to the degree to which his word is the word of that God Who alone is holy, that God Who alone is able to create a holy people out of the remnant of every nation.

Theologian Paul Tillich, reflecting on the role of the prophet.

the word became flesh *a guatemalan prayer*

The Word, for our sake, became poverty clothed as the poor who live off the refuse heap.

The Word, for our sake, became a sob a thousand times stifled in the immovable mouth of the child who died from hunger.

The Word, for our sake, became danger in the anguish of the mother who worries about her child growing into adulthood.

The Word cut us deeply in that place of shame: the painful reality of the poor.

The Word blew its spirit over the dried bones of the churches, guardians of silence.

The Word awoke us from the lethargy which had robbed us of our hope.

The Word became a path in the jungle, a decision on the farm, love in women, unity among workers, and a Star for those few who can inspire dreams.

The Word became Light,
The Word became History,
The Word became Conflict,

The Word became indomitable Spirit, and sowed its seeds upon the mountain, near the river and in the valley, and those of good will heard the angels sing.

Tired knees were strengthened, trembling hands were stilled, and the people who wandered in darkness saw the light...

The Word became the seed of justice and we conceived peace...
The Word made justice to rain and peace came forth from the furrows in the land.

And we saw its glory in the eyes of the poor transformed into real men and women.

And those who saw the Star opened up for us the path we now follow.

Julia Esquivel



December

- 10 Human Rights Day
- 10-18 Edinburgh Ethical Christmas Fair
- 18 International Migrants Day
- 20 International Human Solidarity Day
- 25 Feast of the Birth of Christ
- 28 Holy Innocents

January

- 3 First loans by the Grameen Bank (1977)
- 8 Justice and Peace Sunday
- 27 UN International Day of Commemoration for Victims of the Holocaust
- 28 – 5 Feb Poverty and Homelessness action week

February

- 11 Nelson Mandela released from prison 1990

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

Bishop Peter our President, Ellen Charlton, Commission Chair and the members of the Commission join with Carol and Tim in extending best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. We thank all our readers for their continuing support. May the Good News of the Incarnation help us to realise the true Peace of God's Kingdom, which arises from an ever deeper concern for Justice and the love of our neighbour.



and finally...

*For the modern, limited attention span,
The 32-second Nativity -*

Angel: Behold, Mary, you are with Child, the Son of the most High.

Mary: OK

Joseph: Come on Mary, we have to go to Bethlehem.

Mary: OK

Joseph: Have you any room?

Innkeeper: No, try the stable.

Angel: Do not be afraid, for today a Saviour is born.

Shepherds: Let us go then, and see this thing.

Sheep: Baa!

Wise men: Is this where the King is?

Herod: I am King Herod, whom do you seek?

Wise men: The King of the Jews.

Herod: Let me know if you find him.

Wise men: We bring Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, but you'd better run away to Egypt.

Mary: OK



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