

It's time for Tax Justice for the poorest communities at home and globally



Members of the Commission visited the Tax Bus when it stopped at George Square, Glasgow. Church Action on Poverty and Christian Aid joined forces to take the campaign for Tax Justice on the road, with a seven-week Tax Justice Bus Tour of the UK, to get the message across. In an age of austerity and spending cuts, tax avoidance is morally unacceptable. Tax dodging costs lives. It effectively amounts to robbing the poor – in the UK and in poor countries – of the money that should be spent on education, health and welfare.

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editorial

Commercialised Christmas is now well underway and our attention is being ruthlessly directed to an event still two months off. It's hardly surprising that shops rely on Christmas for between a quarter and a third of their trade, since they spend the same proportion of the year promoting it. By the time the feast arrives, the spirit is fairly exhausted.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting for the first time Ruth Grayson, who single handedly set up CASC-aid, a charity promoting the idea of matching our Christmas spending with charitable giving in 50-50 fashion. We've been in contact over the years, but it was a real pleasure to meet Ruth, an economist by profession who has lived and worked in Scotland, Korea and England.

CASC-aid is not simply about matching spending: it is an attempt to reclaim the meaning of Christmas as a part of the life of the church. For instance, the frantic run up to Christmas means that the period of waiting, fasting and expectation that should be Advent is overwhelmed by other expectations. And while for most, Christmas effectively ends in torpor after Christmas dinner, this is only the beginning of the liturgical season, which culminates in the Epiphany after the twelve days of Christmas. While the normal routine has moved on to choosing sofas and booking next summer's holiday, Christians celebrate the gifts the Magi bring for the Messiah. Ruth reminds us that the Magi bring gifts for the infant king, whose birth they celebrate, not for each other. This emphasis on the Epiphany is reminiscent of other countries that make much less fuss over the run up to 25 December.

Estimates put our Christmas spending in the UK at around £20 billion in 2011 – more than ten times what the world's poorest 1.4 billion people are living on each year. According to *The Spirit of Christmas*, (Johnston Press), of the £20 billion spent on Christmas, about £1.6 billion was spent on food and drink alone. The average pre-Christmas lunch cost £14. The average Christmas costs per household were £975, with the average adult shopper spending between £350 and £400 on presents. We put up 7.5m Christmas trees, costing a total of £245m. The average family spent £170 on Christmas dinner including over 10m turkeys, at an estimated cost of £400m. As Ruth points out, however, 'Many people will not, of course, spend anywhere near £400 on themselves in the first place; but the exercise of estimating planned expenditure at Christmas and aiming to donate at least an equivalent amount to charitable causes could be salutary.'

At present about 2.5% of Christmas spending is estimated to go to charity. This is just a bit less than the 3% which is the amount from some 'charity' Christmas cards that ends up actually going to charity. Many of our readers will have already worked out, over the years, ways of increasing charitable giving to organisations or through partnerships. Nevertheless, advent could be a useful time to have a personal audit of financial discipline.

The advent theme is developed early in Luke's gospel where John the Baptist tells his followers to prepare for their encounter with Christ by sharing possessions with those

who have none and practising economic justice (Luke 3:10-20).

The commercial attitude is to encourage more and more spending: and the evidence for the effects of this view in terms of debt, stress, family tension and breakdown is readily available. Redistribution of resources changes our human relationships. What CASC-aid proposes is that, rather than being drawn into an orgy of spending by cultural pressure, that we find sensible ways of combatting it. It's not an attempt to do away with preparation for Christmas: but of showing that preparation in anticipation actually enriches the festivities. Nor is it an attempt to abolish Christmas: but rather of redressing the balance and allowing us to recover the feast from the fantasy. If we start the liturgical year from a wrong perspective, we might not be able to get back on track.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reiterates the marvellous traditional means of penitential discipline: 'fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others' (1434). Each of these penitential dimensions is about reconciliation, about restoring the balance. Almsgiving is what the Greek text of Matthew 6:1 calls 'acts of justice', which set right the balance with our neighbour. Fasting is about restoring the balance in ourselves. And prayer gives us the space to find a balance with God. Without that, everything else is pointless. So the sixth chapter of Matthew's gospel sets these jewels in the prayer we get directly from Jesus, the *Our Father*. And the Church's year leads us through a time of expectation and waiting for the cosmic balance to come to rest on the fulcrum of history which is the Incarnation. In this way advent helps us to regain a clearer picture of what the feast of Christmas is about.

For most of us the soundtrack to Christmas from November on will be fifty years of schmalzy 'hits', mixed in with a sentimental collage of carols where the we three kings mean no more than the three ships that come sailing by, or indeed the three French hens. Our faith will be consumerised into eating, drinking, entertainment and self indulgence. Yet, unless we take time to prepare ourselves, we may miss the fact that, unlike the dumbed down cosiness of so many nativity stories, the infancy narratives of the gospels are profoundly subversive. They tell of communities who believe that a poor Jewish child is not only the messianic heir of King David, but also carries the titles reserved to the Roman Emperor and is the Son of God. Little wonder that, from the outset, it is a story fraught with danger at the same time as it is filled with hope for all, not least those who are themselves poor, and yet open to the gift of God's kingdom.

The CASC-aid website, www.casc-aid.org.uk provides lots of ideas and resources. It doesn't solicit any money for itself; and while it may be difficult to go immediately to a full 50-50, it can open the way for a new and deeper understanding of the advent and Christmas stories.

Tim Duffy



What Price Christmas?

Alternativity has produced an excellent and exciting new resource called 'What Price Christmas'. The series of conversation starters are about the dominance of money in our Christmas celebrations. A frightening statistic this year in consumer survey - that 10% admitted that they would not have paid for Christmas 2011 by 2013. This pack looks at this serious issue but ensures a bit of fun and relaxation too. Packs cost £10 are available by contacting their office 0141 221 4242; info@alternativity.org.uk

Prisoners' Week 2012

Fr. Brian Gowans, who writes here, is the RC Specialist Adviser to the Scottish Prison Service in Chaplaincy and Religion. He is a priest of the Archdiocese of St. Andrews & Edinburgh and is currently President of the International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care.

How time flies. It is time again to highlight Prisoners' Week 2012 although I'm not sure many prisoners would agree that their time flies! This year's theme *Making it at last* builds on the theme of the previous two years. The story began with *More than a Number* and we asked how Prisoner 479602 and others felt as they came to learn their prison number and accustomed themselves to being in custody. The importance of seeing the person and not just the crime was stressed. People thrive when they come to know they are precious, each one made in the image of God, immeasurably more than a number.

In 2011 we followed Prisoner 479602 as he moved towards the end of his sentence and began to prepare for release. *Welcome Home? Starting over after prison* was a theme that explored some important questions like: What's it like preparing to return to a community left possibly some considerable time ago? Will it be the same, or how realistically, will things have changed? Starting over can be hard, but with the right support it can be done - so what kind of support might that be? How can communities prepare for the return of those who have been away in prison? Are there things that help, and if so what are they?

Making it at last - the theme for 2012, allows us to walk with Prisoner 479602 across the threshold of the Prison Gate and on towards a new life. How will he survive out there? Who will meet him at the Gate and what will they offer? Realistically, how good will that life be? How long will he be in the community before he returns? Many short term prisoners, both male and female, are doing a life sentence by instalments and they will be in and out of prison many times over the course of the years, caught in the proverbial revolving doors. Some will reappear less frequently, and the length of time they stay in the community between periods of custody will increase. These are marks of real progress and it is important to affirm that though they are returning to prison, people have been able to manage in the community for longer than before. Then it becomes a rare occasion, until he or she does not come back to prison at all and in a sense it can be said they have 'made it at last'.

This is the pattern for many who are caught in lifestyles beset by addictions and other pressures. Some will have the resolve and be able to stand by promises they have made to themselves and others that they will never be back in jail. *Scotland's Choice*, a report of the Scottish Prisons Commission quoted statistics that said 'nearly half of offenders receiving custodial sentences had already been in prison three times or more, nearly one in

six had been in prison more than ten times.....More than two-thirds of offenders are reconvicted within two years of a custodial sentence'. 'Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"' (Matt, 18:21-2).

Research into why criminals stop offending tells us what works and what leads to a person staying out of prison: positive social connections, family and friends, accommodation, employment and self-belief all contribute to a person being able to stay away from offending behaviour. In many ways *Making it at last* is a theme which recognises we are all in this together and that success, if measured by returns to prison or re-offending, is about communities working together to create opportunities and offer support. Not everyone makes it, but we can improve the odds. Over my years as a chaplain I have been very impressed by ex-offenders who are now happily married, gainfully employed and great contributors to their local community and society at large; ranging from brick-layers, painters and decorators (including the Forth Bridge!), chefs, mechanics, personal trainers, oil rig engineers and even a film star!

Prisoners' Week provides an opportunity to remember all in our communities who are affected by crime and imprisonment - prisoners and their families, victims of crime and those who work within the criminal justice system.

Prisoners' Week is an initiative of the Churches that aims to stimulate discussion, highlight concerns and share hope. You might like to host a discussion in your community about how best to care for those who offend and those who are offended against. Can our communities make it at last into places of new beginning?

The Prisoners' Week Launch Service will be at 6.30 in Dunblane Cathedral, on Monday 19 November. Cardinal Keith O'Brien, Church of Scotland Moderator the Rt Revd Albert Bogle, and Canon Alison Peden representing the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church have agreed to take part and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Mr Kenny MacAskill has accepted an invitation to attend.

The Service will last approximately 45 minutes followed by a similar period of time during which people can converse over tea and coffee. It is anticipated that attendance will be drawn from the Churches, the Criminal Justice Community, and the local community; a number of prisoners are to be invited to attend and prisoners' family members also. Anyone interested is welcome.



Christmas Greeting Cards Campaign

Every year Justice and Peace promotes the Christmas Greeting Cards Campaign organised by Action by Christians Against Torture (ACAT). The Christmas Card Campaign is in support of prisoners, persecuted Christians, human rights groups under threat, prisoners on death row, etc. Cards and messages of support can bring hope to those suffering torture, imprisonment or persecution because of their faith or their work as human Rights defenders. Details of the Christmas Greetings Campaign will be available from the ACAT Office early in November. As soon as the list is available we will put it on the Justice and Peace website, or you can contact ACAT (UK) 8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4LX. Tel :01752 843417 uk.acat@gmail.com www.acatuk.org.uk/index.php

Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. Hebrews 13 v 3

Conference of European Justice & Peace Commissions

Grace Buckley, Commission vice Chair, who attended the Conference, gives the following account

The Conference, representing 30 European National Commissions, met in Malta from 14-16 September for their International Workshop on the impact and consequences of the 'Arab Spring' one year on. Malta was chosen because of its geographical proximity and close ties with the region.

The Workshop studied the core values behind the struggles - such as human dignity, freedom from arbitrary violence, freedom of expression, freedom of religion - and recognised the need to protect these throughout the long and difficult task of constructing a new foundation for the nations affected.

A core element of the Workshop was a reflection on how we, as Europeans, can make a positive contribution to political processes in these countries. We cannot assume our democratic systems could simply be transplanted to other national and cultural contexts. We need to respect the right of other nations to define democracy in accordance with their traditions and religious beliefs, but we need to protect human dignity and rights.

As part of the Workshop, Commission members met Imam Elsadi of the Muslim community to learn of the challenges facing his community in living according to their values in European society. We heard about a different type of inter-cultural and inter-religious relationship from Maltese businessmen working in North Africa.

The European countries of the Mediterranean bear a heavy burden as the first point of contact for the migration of large numbers of vulnerable people from Africa, and this is most extreme in Malta which is a small island.

We visited three centres for migrants as well as hearing from representatives of charities which provide support for refugees and migrants in Malta. We learned of the desperation which drives people to undertake long and perilous journeys of many years in the hope of getting a place in an unsafe and overcrowded boat, and the challenges facing the staff of the centres attempting to care for traumatised

people, and we were impressed by the efforts of staff and volunteers to respect the dignity and promote the recovery of the people in their care with the very limited means at their disposal.

The vast majority of the migrants do not want to come to Malta but see it as a step on the journey to continental Europe. Existing European legislation, notably the Dublin Regulation, which determines that asylum applications must be processed in the country of arrival, places an unfair burden on Malta and increases the suffering of the migrants affected.

Both migrants and charity volunteers told us that in Malta, as in other parts of Europe, racism and xenophobia are on the rise. Some media reports have made a significant contribution to this with talk of 'invasion' and inaccurate accounts of what is happening in North Africa. However we need to look at our own willingness to adopt a critical attitude to information provided, and actively challenge messages we consider to be false or unjust.

One of the most important messages of the Arab Spring was the power of young people united against oppression. Pope Benedict, in his recent visit to Lebanon, called on the young people of the region to set an example by showing how 'Muslims and Christians, Islam and Christianity, can live side by side without hatred, with respect for the beliefs of each person, so as to build together a free and humane society'.

Our Commissions took time out to reflect on the contribution of all those who have dedicated their lives to work for justice and peace in the Mediterranean region. A tree was planted in Hastings Gardens, Valletta in their memory. Those who undertake this work do so frequently under the threat of violence. European Justice & Peace Commissions, aware of the extent to which conflict can be deepened by access to weapons, are currently campaigning for a strong and binding Arms Trade Treaty aimed at making a safer world for all.



International Day for the Abolition of Slavery 2 December

This day marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (resolution 317(IV) of 2 December 1949). The focus of this day is on eradicating contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.

"To eradicate contemporary forms of slavery, we need new strategies and measures that can unite all actors. While Governments bear the primary responsibility, the private sector has an integral role to play. Earlier this year, the Human Rights Council endorsed the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, outlining how states and businesses should implement the UN Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework. I welcome the widespread support it has received from the business sector."

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,
Message for the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December 2011

DECLARATION FOR A STRONG AND BINDING TREATY ON THE ARMS TRADE

The following declaration emerged from the recent European Justice and Peace Conference in Malta

The Member States of the United Nations met from 2 to 7 July 2011 in New York in order to adopt a Treaty to regulate the arms trade. Unfortunately, these negotiations ended in failure. Even though 50,000 people died as a result of armed violence and the acts of repression intensified in Syria during the very same month in which these negotiations were held, several important countries asked for more time to assess and to make a decision upon the draft Treaty proposed by the Chairman of the Conference held in New York.

The consequences of the arms trade are both multiple and disastrous. Every day, thousands of people are killed, injured, raped or displaced by armed groups, criminal gangs or government forces. The effects upon the socio-economic development of some states are equally devastating, since the unchecked usage of arm by some of the states far exceeds their legitimate national defence requirements, thereby diverting substantial amounts of money away from health and education budgets and engendering a generalised practice of corruption, which is estimated to represent a figure of several billion dollars.

The turnover generated by the arms trade is somewhere in the region of 1,400 billion dollars per year – or in other words, the equivalent of Russia's GDP in 2010. It would appear that many of the people involved in the arms trade have precious little regard for human rights and are engaged in a form of trade that can only be described as being irresponsible.

The failure of these negotiations may be explained by the high financial stakes related to wars and to the arms trade in general, geo-strategic interests, looming elections in certain countries, the lack of the will to act on the part of certain sceptical countries, as well as the fact that some countries focus exclusively on their own national concerns. However, it is essential to move beyond the interests of the individual states and to ensure international peace and security, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

We would like to emphasise that although the Conference in New York was not able to adopt a final text, it did succeed in triggering off a dynamic process, which brought together more than 90 countries in favour of a legally binding text. These ninety countries declared that they 'are determined to secure an Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible. One that will bring about a safer world for the sake of all humanity.'

Specifically, we call upon the negotiating countries to resume negotiations in order to adopt a strong and binding Treaty as quickly as possible and also to ensure that:

- A ban is placed on transfers which infringe international obligations and commitments, notably those introduced under the measures adopted by the Security Council and especially arms embargoes;
- A ban is placed on the transfer of arms which are susceptible to being put to improper usage or of being resold;
- The usage of the arms obtained by these transfers does not lead to any infringement of human rights or of international human rights law;
- The usage of the arms obtained by these transfers does not lead to the perpetration of acts of violence against women and children;
- The transfer of arms is not an obstacle to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals;
- The transfer of arms does not favour terrorist, organised crime networks or organised violent networks;
- The transfer of arms does not cause or extend armed conflict or further aggravate existing tensions or conflicts;
- The transfer of arms does not have a negative influence on regional security and stability;
- The transfer of arms does not encourage corruption in the recipient countries.

Finally, the Treaty must have the broadest scope possible, so that all of the objectives are clearly fulfilled. In this way, munitions, and in particular those for light arms and small calibre weapons, as well as the highest possible number of conventional arms, should all be covered by this Treaty. Complete transparency should also be required through the publication of annual reports which record all of the operations carried out by the states.

We, the signatory Justice and Peace Commissions, hereby declare that we will not cease our efforts until this historic Treaty, which will represent a fundamental step towards world peace and justice, is finally approved.

Malta, September 18th 2012

Signatory Justice and Peace Commissions: *Commission Justice et Paix Belgique francophone, -Justice et Paix –France, -Justice and Peace Greece, Commission luxembourgeoise "Justice et Paix", Justice and Peace Scotland, Justicia y Paz de España, Österreichische Kommission Iustitia et Pax*

Eco Century

St Joseph's Clarkston will become Scotland's 100th Eco Congregation. There will be a service of celebration on Saturday 3rd November, led by representatives of the local church and Eco-Congregation Scotland at 2pm. This will be followed by a presentation by St Joseph's of the work they have done to achieve their award and the presentation of their award plaque, with tea and coffee served afterwards. It is hoped that many of the other 99 award winning churches will attend the event.



Raising the Roof in Ethiopia

Molly McGavigan describes a rewarding visit to Ethiopia, building houses

I know everybody is moaning about the weather we've had this summer but I was lucky enough to spend part of June and July in Ethiopia where the weather was most pleasant apart from a few storms. On

my first day in Debre Berhan which is about 120 kilometres north east of Addis Ababa, I was handed a pick and shown the line of the trench I was to dig. Ah well I thought in for a *santim* in for a *birr*, but after only a few whacks I was gasping for breath and thought that my decision to join a work party was definitely a mistake. Too old, too unfit I thought sadly, realising the inevitable. It was a great relief when I turned to the 20 year old girl next to me and found that she was in almost as bad a state as me. We simply had not acclimatised to the height. Debre Berhan is almost 10,000 feet above sea level on a good route through the country and was an early capital of Ethiopia. By the next day we were all fighting fit and ready to go: digging, hammering, sawing, carrying loads, painting and much more.

My husband Mike and myself were part of a team of nine from the UK who had decided to join a work group with *Habitat for Humanity*. This is a charity which was founded in 1976 in the United States to build modest houses on a no-profit, no-interest basis, thus making homes affordable to families with low incomes. Today *Habitat* has projects in all parts of the world - currently in 80

countries. This year, for example, there are *Habitat* builds working to repair homes with the help of skilled volunteers in Christchurch recovering from the earthquake of February 2011. In Northern Ireland the emphasis has been on reconciliation and regeneration in communities impacted by deprivation and the legacy of conflict. In Ethiopia we were working on a project to provide affordable houses to people who are currently living in shacks or are homeless. In particular *Habitat for Humanity*, Ethiopia, gives priority to vulnerable members of society e.g. those who have suffered leprosy or those who are widowed. The builds obviously vary according to local needs and situations but the principles are the same in all: to help people out of housing poverty and to campaign for this as a human right.

All this information is important and necessary to have an understanding of what this charity is and does but it does not convey the experience of being on a build.

For 10 days we spent all day (with very generous breaks) toiling away and thoroughly enjoying ourselves. This was because we were working with Ethiopian people many of whom were going to be living in the houses we were working on. The local people made us so welcome and accepted us as part of their team in such a warm way in spite of the fact that most of us were assuredly in the unskilled category. As always seems to be the case when abroad, I was shamed by the fact that our friends and co-workers had more English than we had Amharic which is the language spoken by the majority of Ethiopians. Try getting your tongue around 'amasaganalo'! This is 'thank you' but as Amharic is written with a version of the Ge'ez script it should not even look like this.

The way *Habitat for Humanity* works varies according to local needs. In Ethiopia there is a local office with a small number of staff. For us the most important member of this staff was Zehruin Endale. He accompanied us during our time in the country and was our translator, guide, friend, fun maker, guru and general *factotum*. There was nothing that this man could not do. After helping us all day on the build he could produce a birthday cake with almost no notice, organise a birthday party, find singers and musicians and create a wonderful celebration for a wedding anniversary. I don't know what his job description is but he played such a big role in the success of our time. It was very difficult to show how much we appreciated all he did.

Each day we went by bus from our accommodation to the building site which was on the outskirts of the town where there was already quite a development of new houses. As far as we could gather some of these were built by the government, some by private owners and some by *Habitat*. The difference with the *Habitat* build was that their houses were available on a basis of need to anyone who applied and were allocated according to a points system by a local *Habitat* committee. The chair of the committee had made a most gracious welcoming speech to us and came most days to see how we were progressing. His wife, along with women who were already living in *Habitat* houses or were hoping to receive one, organised the delicious meals we were given every day. All of the work done by aspiring home owners, whether on the buildings or helping to look after groups like ours counted as what was very accurately termed 'sweat equity' and improved the chances of getting a house.

The supervisor of the site allocated the work each day. This was done very fairly to give us all a wide experience of most of the tasks involved. We did not work solely on one house but over the 10 days dug foundations, put up the wood frames, strapped them together, slapped on the mud and straw walls (*chika*), pounded the earth floors, carried materials to point of use, sieved sand and mixed cement. The only tools we saw or used were picks, shovels, saws, hammers, nails, a plumb line, homemade ladders and 'stretchers' for carrying materials. Not a power tool in sight. The most innovative piece of equipment was an old bedstead set up on its end against which rough sand was thrown to separate the good sand from the stones! Working with a good number of local volunteers and a few skilled tradesmen what emerged were 2-roomed houses; very basic but watertight and secure. Each house had a separate latrine building at the back, conduits led in for electricity which could be added if and when it could be afforded and water pipes on each street which could also be led up to a standpipe at the door for extra cost.

For me there was a difficulty in comparing such a simple building which was considered to be a wonderful house with the luxury in which I live until we were taken to visit one of the potential home owners. The squalor in which this young woman had to live with three young children since her husband had been killed in a road accident will remain with me forever and yet she was on the building site most days having walked about 5 miles to leave her children with her parents



and then walk to the site, always smiling and helping us. I hope so much that she now has a house which for her will, I am sure, be as special as mine is to me.

On our last day on site we finished painting two houses which were to be handed over to their new owners. This was undoubtedly a highlight of our time. When we realised that there was to be quite a ceremony we hastily invited Gareth Malone and formed our own choir but our little contribution was nothing compared with the wonderful singing and dancing which went on in one little room in one little house in Debre Birham on our last day. I had seen the lady who was to have the house on the site. She had been badly burned while rescuing her children from her shack which had gone on fire. What struck me was not her burns but her sadness. So it was so lovely to see her face transformed



as she received her keys and the gift of a bible and the good wishes of all who had worked on her house. There was a lot to celebrate.

Our hosts made sure that we packed as much as possible into our time and although we did work every day except Sunday, we had time to enjoy the very important coffee ceremonies and shop at the local market where much beautiful traditional basket work, pottery and embroidery vied for customers with plastic imports and recycled clothes. We also visited a local Church with its traditional painted icons and had a short trip out to Ankober where a former castle situated high on the hillside gave us extensive views of the escarpment of the Rift Valley.

On our journey back into Addis Ababa we stopped in awe at a small new development of houses which by any standards could only be described as 'gobsmacking'. Our bus driver informed us that these were the homes of politicians and Olympic runners. Mike and I travelled back from Addis separately from the rest of the group some weeks later. On our plane were three runners one of whom won a silver medal a week later in the Olympic 5,000 metres. We did not ask them where they lived.

GLASGOW GIRLS a Scottish musical

*Written and directed by Cora Bissett,
director of the Olivier award winning
Roadkill*



Scotland 2005. A family is ripped from their home in a high-rise flat in Drumchapel and driven away in the middle of the night to be deported. . .

Driven by a fierce sense of injustice, a group of seven young women in a high school in Glasgow fight for the life of their friend and for the rights of children of asylum-seekers in Scotland. They take on the Scottish Government and the Home Office and succeed where adults and politicians failed.

Based on the true story of one of the most vocal and powerful asylum campaigns to catch the imagination of the media and inspire a community to unite behind its residents, *Glasgow Girls* is a new life-affirming musical for a multi-cultural Scotland still in transition.

The Glasgow Girls are a group of seven young women who have highlighted the poor treatment of failed asylum seekers. The group of girls from Drumchapel High School protested against the detention of one of their friends, Agnesa Murselaj, who had fled from war-torn Kosovo. Publicity grew as the girls challenged the First Minister and publicly voiced their concerns as more children at their school were dawn raided, detained and deported. Two BBC television documentaries have been made of their story.

Presented by the National Theatre of Scotland, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Citizens Theatre, Pachamama Productions, Richard Jordan Productions Ltd in association with Merrigong Theatre Company, Australia.
Recommended for age 14+

Glasgow Girls will run from 31st October to 17th November 2012 at the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, supported by Scottish Power, and will be presented at Theatre Royal Stratford East, London in spring 2013.

International Day for Children - 20 November

The United Nations General Assembly recommended in 1954 (resolution 836 (IX)) that all countries institute a Universal Children's Day, to be observed as a day of understanding between children and of activity promoting the welfare of the world's children. The date of 20 November marks the day on which the Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 1989.

Despite this worldwide consensus on the importance of our children, 70% of the approximately 11 million child deaths every year are attributable to six potentially preventable causes: diarrhoea, malaria, neonatal infection, pneumonia, preterm delivery, or lack of oxygen at birth. These deaths occur mainly in the developing world. An Ethiopian child is 30 times more likely to die by his or her fifth birthday than a child in Western Europe. Among deaths of children, South-central Asia has the highest number of newborn deaths, while sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is taking a huge toll on children, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS is projected to reach 25 million by the end of the decade, 18 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. This, along with only modest progress fighting malaria, means the threats facing child survival are as grave as ever.

(Sources: UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, UNICEF)

LITANY OF THE MACE: A ST ANDREW'S DAY REFLECTION

The Scottish Mace is present in the debating hall of the Scottish Parliament when it sits in session. A new mace was commissioned for the re-establishment of the Parliament and was presented to the Parliament by the Queen at its official opening on 1st July 1999. Engraved in the mace are the words 'Wisdom, Integrity, Justice, Compassion', the values which the Scottish people desire their Parliament to uphold.

Wisdom

'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom.....'
Ps 111.10

God of wisdom, we bring before you the peoples of faith within our nation. + We pray for faith communities who seek to establish harmony within Scotland through the daily living of their faith. + We pray for the traditional churches, that in the challenging contexts they face, they may remain faithful to your Gospel. + We pray for the growing ethnic minority Christian presence in Scotland, that we may find ways of working together in our outreach to the nation.

R. In our witness to Christ may we reveal God's wisdom through our faithfulness.

Integrity

'The integrity of the upright guides them.....' Pr.11.3

God who is righteous, we bring before you all who strive to uphold the values of integrity and righteousness. + We pray for all in positions of political leadership, that they may act in ways which brings about a healthy, vibrant and caring nation. + We pray for all who work with children and young people, that by their example our young people may become responsible citizens of our communities. + We pray for those in leadership in our faith communities, that they may be recognised for their discipleship and witness to faith.

R. In our witness to Christ may we act in ways which demonstrate God's integrity.

This prayer is by Rev. Lindsey Sanderson, URC minister in East Kilbride. It was originally written for the opening prayer of the meeting of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity International Writing Group, a joint group of the World Council of Churches and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity which was held in Scotus College in September 2008. Lindsey is happy that the prayer may be used by others with acknowledgment of the author.

Justice

'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice.....'
Micah 6:8

God who is just, we bring before you all who in our nation are denied justice, peace and security. + We pray for those seeking asylum and for those exploited through human trafficking. + We pray for migrant workers taken advantage of because of their lack of language skills and unfamiliarity with our systems. + We pray for all who are judged by the colour of their skin and not for the people they are.

R. In our witness to Christ may we reveal God's justice to the world.

Compassion

'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion.....' Col 3.12'

Loving God, we bring before you all who in our nation long to feel the compassion of another human being. + We pray for children, women and men trapped in abusive relationships, often fuelled by alcohol or drugs. + We pray for those who are wearied of caring for loved ones and neglect to care for themselves. + We pray for all who feel cast out by society and beyond human care.

R. In our witness to Christ may we reveal God's compassion for the world.

God in whom we discover wisdom, integrity, justice and compassion, hear our prayer and enable us to play our part in shaping the life of our nation. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Make Hunger History

Hunger is one of the most basic indicators of poverty. And for the first time in decades, the number of people around the world going to bed hungry at night is starting to increase. One billion people do not have enough to eat and over two million children die from malnutrition. Food prices are higher than ever before. Even in the UK, many hardworking people struggle to find the money to feed their families. Yet there is enough food in the world to feed everyone. No one need be hungry or malnourished. No child need ever go to bed hungry. Getting enough of the right food gives people their future. It builds the potential for all societies to prosper.

We know that with crises, there are also opportunities to create change. And we know that campaigning works – that small groups of committed people really can change the world, and that our campaigns are strongest when we work together with groups and supporters from like-minded organisations.

In 2013, the UK Government will chair the G8 meeting of world leaders. The UN General Assembly will begin to debate a new set of development goals which will set the ambition and vision for the next decade. So throughout next year, major charities will be working together to share resources and create a real hunger – for change. The message is simple: in a world of plenty, where there is enough food for everyone, nobody should go hungry. Watch this space...

A Prayer for children affected by AIDS

*To play, to learn, to have food and health.
To be loved, secure and safe.
These are the rights of every child,
rights robbed by a virus and
robbed twice over in countries crippled by debt
and paralysed by trade rules designed to benefit the rich and
powerful
Loving God, vanquish our complacency
at our injustice to these your children.
Remove all traces of empty conscience-salving charity.
Make us, instead, committed to sharing our resources –
your resources – with those who need them most;
to seeking in justice to remove the debt burdens of the poorest,
to working tirelessly
so that all your children might know again
the joys of playing, learning, living,
loving and being loved.*

Ann Smith/CAFOD



World AIDS Day

Philippa Bonella of SCIAF reflects on the problem of HIV

As we reflect on World AIDS Day, Saturday 1st December, we are the closest we have ever been to achieving an end to AIDS.

This summer I was lucky enough to spend a few days in Ethiopia, visiting the office SCIAF shares with our sister agencies CAFOD and Trocaire. In Ethiopia we run some really innovative joint programmes, working and learning together with our partners.

Ethiopia has a fast growing economy and is making huge progress - the proportion of the population living on less than \$1.25 a day has reduced by one-third, down to 39% of the population by 2005. However the country was still ranked 157 out of 169 countries in the 2010 UNDP Human Development Report and 44% of the population is undernourished. Climate change-related food emergencies affect millions more.

In Ethiopia 2.3% of adults are living with HIV. Most of those affected by HIV live in urban areas. As well as the virus, people with HIV have to contend with stigma, poverty and hunger. I visited one of SCIAF's partners in Addis Ababa, an integrated service for people with HIV run by the Brothers of Good Works. I met some wonderful people. Here is one story that our partners told us. Tobia Shiferaw, 28, is among thousands of women supported by the project.

I was born in Wollo in a place called Borena. My mother brought me to Addis when I was very little. She passed away when I was six years old. I was brought up here and there. My aunt found me a job as a nanny and I used to take care of babies until I was 11.

Then I started selling Kolo [roasted barley] on the street to support myself. Life on the street was difficult when there was no one to protect you. I met my husband, Nigatu, when I was 14, he was around 22 years old then. We got married quickly as I was looking for a place I could call home.

I got pregnant with my first child when I was 16. Two months after I gave birth I started to get very sick. When I went to clinic, they advised us to take a HIV test and then I learnt that I am positive. I decided to take my life and drank detergent. I regained my consciousness after I was hospitalised.

My husband was helping me to get strong. He used to say 'We can live, don't worry'. But, I thought there was no life after that.

I got lucky, with my two children. They have become negative, without taking proper care. However, I didn't take a risk with my last child. The project has helped me with guidance and medication, which has helped me to give birth to a child who is HIV negative.

They advised me to give birth at the health centre. My baby was on medication for seven days after he was born. He was checked after 45 days and is given syrup to be taken for the whole year. So far all the result shows

that he is negative. Getachew is nine months old.

The project came to my rescue when I started to fall sick five years back. They helped me start anti-retroviral treatment and gave me close follow up. They were visiting like a close relative and they were taking good care of me. They have been giving me 210birr (£7.20) to buy food every month for more than a year. When I got better, they gave me 2500birr (£85.75) to help me start a business.

The project changed my life. My husband and I sell shoes and own assets. I am able to feed my children properly and send them to school. There were days that I could not afford to give them tea in the morning before school.

The counselling that I have been getting from the project gave me courage and confidence. I am now open about my HIV status. I told my friends and neighbours over coffee. In that way I am able to tell who my true friends are. One day, I saw a woman I called my best friend punishing her child for playing with mine. We haven't talked since that day.



Together with our sister agencies, SCIAF works to reduce stigma, particularly by involving faith leaders in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a strongly religious country and religious leaders have enormous influence within their congregations and in the wider community. One of our partners, an interfaith forum, travelled to the far reaches of the country to collect stories on strong and positive relationships between religious leaders and people living with HIV.

Father Yitbarek Tekelehaimanot is an Orthodox priest who took part in this project. "We should not say 'this is my relative' or 'this is my countryman' or 'this is a stranger'" he says. "Rather we should help him or her because he or she is just human. We should help people without discrimination. The virus is not a sin. A child who knows nothing can get the disease while still in the womb - is the child a sinner?"

What can we do?

- An end to AIDS is almost within reach. Join the Stop AIDS campaign and help make sure the UK government commits to proper prevention, education and care for people affected by HIV. www.stopaidscampaign.org
- How will we fund good quality prevention and care services? The Robin Hood Tax is part of the answer - lend your voice to the call for a tiny tax on financial transactions which would make such a difference to communities around the world. www.robinhoodtax.org.uk
- Remember the 33 million people living with HIV and AIDS on 1st December. SCIAF's sister agency CAFOD has some excellent resources, including prayers and reflections on Catholic social teaching. www.bit.ly/RUBA9z

Colombia has suffered from serious conflict for 50 years.

With over 40% of the land now targeted as suitable for mining, the rush for minerals represents a new threat. People are being forced off their land, with traditional rights under threat and dangerous consequences for the environment. Human rights defenders from the indigenous Awa community in Colombia will be visiting Scotland in November to give first-hand testimony of their experiences. The visit will help launch a new report by SCIAF partners ABColombia, which will outline a call to action to governments and the international community to hold mining companies accountable for their activities in the country. The visitors will speak to the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on International Development, and also at a public event on Wednesday 7th November at 5.30pm in Glasgow University. For more information contact SCIAF on campaigns@sciaf.org.uk

If E-Petition gets 10,000 signatures - Government

Must Give Response: Andrew Lansley: E-petitions have been an important part of increasing public understanding of Parliament. To improve engagement with petitioners, I am today announcing a new threshold of 10,000 signatures to trigger written Government responses to e-petitions, in addition to the existing threshold of 100,000 signatures that makes e-petitions eligible for debate. Once an e-petition has passed 10,000 signatures, departments will provide a response that will appear on the website and be e-mailed to all signatories who opted in to receive updates on that petition. Responses will include a statement of the Government's policy on the issue, and details of any relevant parliamentary processes that are on-going. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm120913/wmstext/120913m0001.htm#12091321000005

Unity Bike Project opens Community Workshop in Govan:

The Unity bike project has just moved into new premises located at 60 Shaw Street (just along the road from their charity shop and clothing depot in Govan). The new workshop is run completely by volunteers to repair and fix up bikes for destitute asylum seekers and to sell to raise funds for the project and to offer a minor repair service to the local community. Initially the workshop will be open to the public on Saturdays from 11.00am and on Thursday evenings from 5.30 - 8.30pm. They need donations of unwanted bicycles, and will take donations of broken bicycles for recycling. (In fact they'll accept any bicycle, as long as it's not completely rusted). As they are setting up a new workshop any donations of spare tools would be welcome. Contact them on 0141 427 7992. The UNITY Centre, 30 Ibrox Street, Glasgow G51 1AQ.

Justice & Peace Resources for Young People:

Anne O'Connor of Shrewsbury Diocese has produced some very useful J&P resources for young people, downloadable from their website. <http://tinyurl.com/8zkvfnz> The resources are suitable from Primary school upwards.

No End in Sight for Belfast 'Peace Walls': New research shows that more than two-thirds of residents living along the city's notorious peace walls separating Protestant and Catholic communities still want the barriers to stay up. And more than half of the people living on sectarian frontlines have no faith in the police keeping the peace if the walls came down, according to a report released by the University of Ulster. You can read the report at <http://tinyurl.com/clplxpt>

Constitutional Reform and Poverty: The Poverty Alliance has produced a new discussion paper to help ensure that issues of poverty and social justice are central to the debate about Scotland's constitutional future. The paper sets out some key questions that they would like to see both advocates and opponents of constitutional change focus on. You can read the briefing paper at <http://tinyurl.com/8o9jdj9>

Future of Social Fund: The Social Fund provides invaluable support to people who are in real need, and in crisis situations. Responsibility for the fund is being devolved to Scotland as part of the Welfare Reform Act. This informal consultation was designed to look at some of the detail of what the interim

arrangements would be for the new social fund in Scotland. You can read The Poverty Alliance's response at <http://tinyurl.com/8cdw74p>

Impunity for Khymer Rouge leader: Survivors are outraged by Cambodia's war crimes tribunal's decision to free a former leader of the Khymer Rouge. Ieng Thirith, 80, has been declared mentally unfit for trial. She was social affairs minister from 1975 to 1979 during the rule of the Khymer Rouge when an estimated 1.7 million people were executed or died of neglect, overwork or starvation. She was the highest ranking woman and sister in law of the leader, Pol Pot. She was accused of involvement in the planning, direction, co-ordination and ordering of widespread purges and was facing charges of crimes against humanity, genocide, homicide and torture.

Afghanistan - detainees held by UK Military: The number of detainees held by UK military has been rising steadily - over 1,123 were detained in 2011. There is concern that those handed over to the Kabul Government are facing ill-treatment and torture - instances of torture are well documented. Action has now been mounted in the High Court challenging the legality of transferring prisoners to the Afghan intelligence service, (NDS). NDS has been the subject of complaints by the United Nations as well as Afghan and other international human rights groups. Because of the complaints as well as judgements in UK courts, transfers of prisoners to NDS centres have been held up. In addition, detainees cannot be handed over to the US military as they would face indefinite detention without trial. A number of NATO forces have already halted transfers to the NDS and the Afghan police

The following 3 items come from the Nuclear Information Service and more details on all can be found at

www.nuclearinfo.org

BAE - EADS merger raises Trident concerns for Ministry

of Defence: A planned multi-billion pound merger between two major military contractors has raised questions about how key government projects such as the Trident nuclear weapons programme would be managed. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is said to be demanding safeguards over the Trident programme as a condition of the planned merger between BAE Systems, which is currently designing the 'Successor' Trident replacement submarine, and European aerospace corporation EADS.

Atomic Weapons Establishment fire cover-up prompts

calls for greater safety disclosure: An MP has written to nuclear safety watchdogs to ask what steps will be taken to improve fire safety standards at Britain's nuclear weapon factories after it emerged that fire incidents at the Atomic Weapons Establishment have been hushed up. The fires took place earlier this year at Atomic Weapons Establishment sites in Berkshire where the UK's Trident nuclear warheads are manufactured and maintained.

Unanswered questions following Ministry of Defence

Fukushima review: A range of potential safety issues identified following a review of the Ministry of Defence's nuclear weapons and nuclear submarine programmes need further investigation, according to the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR). The safety review was conducted by DNSR in the light of the Fukushima nuclear accident, following a similar review undertaken by the Office for Nuclear Regulation in the civil nuclear sector.

Migrants' Cash Keeps Flowing Home: Migrant workers abroad sent more money to their families in the developing world last year than in 2010, and they are expected to transfer even more cash home this year despite the economic uncertainty gripping the globe. All told, the world's 215 million international migrants transferred about \$372 billion to developing countries in 2011 compared with \$332 billion in 2010, according to the World Bank. The bank projects remittances will reach \$399 billion this year and \$467 billion by 2014. For some time now, remittances have played a key role in supporting families and stabilising the economy of developing countries. Their quick recovery after a temporary dip in 2008 and 2009 has been buffering many countries from potentially devastating effects of the global slump. (Miriam Jordan, Wall Street Journal, 24/09/12)

Welfare Reform: The threat behind the incentive

Margaret McGowan, from the Motherwell Commission, gives an account of a recent seminar

On 28 Sept 2012, Scottish Churches Housing Action held a seminar on the effects of recent welfare benefit reforms particularly on housing. The seminar was introduced by Alastair Cameron, Chief Executive of SCHA.

According to the Directgov website, the Coalition Government has identified two key problems with the current welfare system: work incentives are poor, and the system is too complex. They claim they are reforming the system to help people to move into and progress in work, while supporting the most vulnerable. Reform of the benefit system aims to make it fairer, more affordable and better able to tackle poverty, unemployment and welfare dependency; with a commitment to overhaul the benefit system and to promote work and personal responsibility. The incentive mechanism is designed to make benefits seem less attractive.

Housing benefit changes are designed 'to bring working age tenants in the social sector in line with the private rented sector' and the key changes affecting homelessness concern Housing Benefit. Within this, the major financial effects will be felt in the area of who qualifies as dependent or non-dependent (generally as reductions); and the relations and ages of those sharing rooms for qualification – a so called 'bedroom tax'. And most importantly, and usually unremarked, the benefit of costly rented housing does not go to claimants, but rather those who rent the properties.

In general the philosophy is that 'people should not get more in benefit payments than the average wage paid to people in work' and that 'the benefit cap will encourage people to look for work and help to promote fairness between those in work and those getting benefits'. From April 2013, no claimant will receive more than £350 a week for a single person, and a couple, with or without children, and single parent, no more than £500 a week.

The main differences between the current welfare system and the new Universal Credit are characterised by simplification of the number of benefits, changes in availability and the means of payment. To summarise there are major changes, done on cost-neutral basis – if some gain, others must lose. These proposals ignore the reality that the smallest properties, of which there are few, will be in highest demand. Realities of family life such as separated parents needing a room for visiting kids, adult children leaving family home and then returning are being ignored. The objectives of simplicity and fairness are overwhelmed by complexity of real lives. The language used emphasises benefit fraud setting 'claimants' against 'hard-working families'

Mike Crockart, Liberal Democrat MP for Edinburgh West, responded on behalf of the coalition. He agreed with the Coalition saying there needed to be a radical overhaul of the benefits system and that Universal Credits will mean work will always pay. Also, changes in circumstances from work to benefit will take place in real time and fraud and error will be eliminated. He also felt they reflected the spirit of Beveridge. He said that in Scotland one in five households receive housing benefit but acknowledged there was a shortage of one bedroom properties. He also said that the direct payments were a cause of concern.

The final speaker was Margaret Lynch, Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Scotland. She started by saying there was a supply/demand issue in relation to both jobs and housing in Scotland - too few jobs and not enough

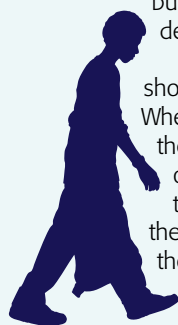
social housing. CAB is experiencing much higher demand for advice due to the impact of both the changes to the welfare system and the recession. She said that Church groups have considerable reach and need to be made aware of the changes so that they can give advice and help. She felt the reforms were really about cost cutting and would result in up to 4400 households homeless. In fourteen local authority regions supply for houses needs to double. The 'bedroom tax' will affect 9500 households. Information needs to be gathered about real life experiences. So far CAB has had increased requests for food parcels to feed children and money for bus fares to sign on (in country areas this can cost up to £7.00 a time). All voluntary groups will have to deal with what is in front of us. There will be more need for 'jam jarring' - 'If I give you my rent money will you hang on to it till I need to pay my rent' - as well as emergency feeding centres, more starter packs and night shelters.

A period of discussion followed. The main topics were the need for more job creation, the role of credit unions and credit referencing agencies in giving advice about rent and rent arrear management, making more money available to local authorities to build suitable sized housing. The subject of the mushrooming of Pay Day Loan Companies who bleed people dry by charging enormous APR interest was brought up by Miriam McHardy (J & P Edinburgh). She said that Britain does not have a cap on the amount of interest that can be charged and recently when one agency opened in Edinburgh they gave out balloons advertising their 'service' outside a primary school.

Concern was also expressed about the fact that many of those in the system won't be able to afford the internet access or lack the capacity to manage their benefits on the internet. Mike Crockart responded by saying they were looking into a form of smart card which compartmentalises payments putting so much into compartments for housing, food bills etc. He also said that we could email him any real life experiences we came across where people on benefits were now being disadvantaged.

What did I think? If history teaches us one thing about government IT projects, it is that they rarely seem to go to plan. With a system of this scale and scope, the potential for problems is even bigger. I despair more people than ever will 'fall through the cracks' into a life of crime and desperation. Many of the people who fall through the cracks will inevitably be those with mental health problems, disabilities and other personal problems that prevent them 'engaging with the system'. Making work pay does not mean making benefits less and work paying the same as before. Perhaps reviving the economy might be quite a good way of getting people back to work, but sucking more demand out by making the poor destitute might not be quite so helpful.

Through our words, prayers and deeds we must show solidarity with, and compassion for, the poor. When instituting public policy we must always keep the preferential option for the poor at the forefront of our minds. The moral test of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called, therefore, to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor. This is the 21st century. This is the sixth richest country in the world. Why should ANY of our citizens be living in poverty? Why are we still struggling to grasp the nettle?





OCTOBER

- 11 Start of the year of Faith
- 21-28 One World Week
- 24 United Nations Day
- 25 From Climate Act to Climate Action, Lobby of the Scottish Parliament
- 25- 2 Nov Africa in Motion Film Festival, Edinburgh and Glasgow
- 27 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis. CND event, Glasgow 10.30am
- 27 Making a movement: a skills share and networking day for local campaigners, Edinburgh
- 30 'A Gathering for Syria' Ecumenical Service, Edinburgh. 6pm

NOVEMBER

- 5 World Community Day
- 5-9 Living Wage Week
- 6 International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict
- 8 Be Seen, Be Heard, Be Known. Social media event, Glasgow 2.30pm
- 10 Annual National Peace History Conference, Manchester 9.30am
- 16 International Day for Tolerance
- 16 Ceilidh for Glasgow Destitution Network 8pm
- 18-25 Prisoners Week Scotland

Stop Refugee Destitution

Please sign the petition
New research in an independent study entitled Trapped - Destitution and Asylum in Scotland by Morag Gillespie, head researcher at Glasgow Caledonia University, shows that over a hundred asylum seekers in Glasgow are destitute – many of them children and pregnant women. Read the report which is on our website and please sign the petition.

OPEN YOUR EYES TO DESTITUTION IN SCOTLAND

NOVEMBER cont.

- 20 Universal Children's Day
- 24 STUC St Andrew's day anti-racism march and rally 11am
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- 29 UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

DECEMBER

- 1 World AIDS Day
- 2 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- 9 International Anti-Corruption Day
- 10 Human Rights Day
- 18 International Migrants Day
- 20 International Human Solidarity Day
- 25 Christmas Day Rejoice! Rejoice!

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

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