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An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence must not be contrived but found, uncovered.

Laudato Si, 225

I may have on occasion have mentioned that my youthful visits to the confessional generally skipped the first couple of commandments. I never quite saw myself as an idolater and I was perhaps too blasé about the gospel precept that the Sabbath was made for man rather than the other way round (Mark 2:27). With the years came, if not wisdom, a different perspective.

At root, idolatry turns a means into an end; it makes absolute something which is only instrumental. Idolatry replaces what is absolute and fundamental with a perishable and replaceable ultimate.

It could be objected that idolatry is not possible in an essentially post religious world. Yet this is the point: even or perhaps especially where gods are felt to be absent, humans absolutise a replacement. From the earliest times there is a satirical disdain for idols made by humans and then worshipped. Thus we find in Deuteronomy: 'There, in a foreign land, you will worship idols made from wood and stone - gods that neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell' (Deut 4:28). And in the book of Isaiah, the first formal statement of monotheism - 'I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god' (Is 44:6) occurs alongside an extended mockery of idols. This dates from a time when the Jewish people had been deported out of their own culture to Babylon in the mid-sixth century BC. It is no coincidence that what we call the ten commandments begin with a prohibition against idolatry.

In a modern consumer society these idols have become material goods and services. Our self image is defined in terms of our consumption. This is the fundamental principle of advertising. Yet while what we consume must be replaced, each new thing in its turn is ultimate until consumed. Think fashion, cars, celebrities, electronic media and our views on any number of issues. Our true self is reflected back at us through the distorting mirrors of the latest idolatry; and as has been well said, 'egotism is the anaesthetic that dulls the pain of our stupidity'.

In a largely urban society, goods and services are in effect contracted out. We no longer grow our own food, build our own houses and furniture, make our own clothes, or take responsibility for the welfare of the body from birth to death. Our behaviour and culture is similarly collectivised under politics, law and religion. And our security is

overseen by police and military forces.

All of these function at one remove from our control and depend on trust. Where community flourishes, these responsibilities are participatory and accountable as mandates. Where community is dysfunctional, responsibilities are abdicated, becoming unaccountable and ripe for exploitation.



Certainly the recent electoral campaign was a cross between a pantomime and a TV talent show which suggests politics as entertainment rather than public service. Here too, idolatry, both of policies and politicians played its part. To personalise something makes it more easy to love it or hate it for many people. Thus I may not have a clue about a particular political issue, or how I feel about it. But link it to a party, personify it in a politician about whom I do have a view, and it is judged in this light.

The *Guardian* set up focus groups whose members kept diaries in the run up to the election. 'People say they want to know about policy but they are actually far more interested in personality. Out of hundreds of daily diary entries, just 27% mentioned policies while 73% were about parties or politicians, especially the latter: their dress sense, their hobbies, their speech mannerisms, even their wives.' Those who do show interest in the detail of policies are denigrated as 'anoraks', defined by the dictionary as '(informal, derogatory) a socially inept person with a hobby considered by most people to be boring.'

The prevalent influence of television and news media over public opinion is related to what is called the 'accessibility bias' in the way we process information. In general, the more widely and frequently we are exposed to information in the media, the more easily it can be retrieved from memory. It therefore tends to dominate and form our judgements, opinions and decisions. And while few of us are able to pursue all the intricacies of economic or social

argument, a good sound bite - whether right or wrong - lodges in the memory.

Promises are made at election time, but as Carl Jung pointed out, 'the man who promises everything is sure to fulfil nothing, and everyone who promises too much is in danger of using evil means in order to carry out his promises, and is already on the road to perdition'. Politicians create idols too, but they are in constant danger of being dethroned by the self serving fickleness of people and the transitory fashions of public opinion. And many who feel that the political process has written them off simply opt out. The two maps on page 8 show the actual result of the general election and what would have happened if those who didn't vote (at around 15.7 million, over a third of the electorate) are amalgamated as a single group.

In his new encyclical, Pope Francis is forthright on the need for a dialogue between politics and economics, devoting an entire section to it (Chapter Five, Section IV). 'A politics concerned with immediate results, supported by consumerist sectors of the population, is driven to produce short-term growth. In response to electoral interests, governments are reluctant to upset the public with measures which could affect the level of consumption or create risks for foreign investment... True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good. Political powers do not find it easy to assume this duty in the work of nation-building' (Laudato Si, 178).

Even so, there are times when one might think that civil society existed purely for the benefit of political parties. Instant communications make them the object of idolatrous interest. As Lord Acton said, 'There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it.' Sometimes a little reminder is necessary: 'The political community and civil society, although mutually connected and interdependent, are not equal in the hierarchy of ends. The political community is essentially at the service of civil society and, in the final analysis, the persons and groups of which civil society is composed. Civil society, therefore, cannot be considered an extension or a changing component of the political community; rather, it has priority because it is in civil society itself that the political community finds its justification' (Compendium, 418).

Tim Duffy

Praise Be!

It didn't take a genius to work out that the environment was going to be a feature of Pope Francis' pontificate. His inaugural sermon in St Peter's on St Joseph's Day was in part a precis of the encyclical *Laudato Si*. During the next two years the Pope's intention of producing the encyclical was extensively trailed. His overall approach suggested it was going to be affirmative by putting the creation at the centre of Catholic Social Teaching.

But the timing was crucial as well. At a discussion on Human Rights and Climate Change on 6 March this year, Archbishop Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN carried the Pope's message: 'The effective struggle against global warming will only be possible with a responsible collective answer, that goes beyond particular interests and behaviour and is developed free of political and economic pressures ... On climate change, there is a clear, definitive and ineluctable ethical imperative to act ... The establishment of an international climate change treaty is a grave ethical and moral responsibility.' The United Nations Climate Change Conference, which will seek for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, a binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world, will be held in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015. There can now be little doubt about the Vatican's stance on this issue.

Despite the premature release of a pirated spoiler draft, the actual reception of *Laudato Si* was largely welcoming. Many secular organisations (even the generally anti-religious *Guardian* and its readers) found a positive message. Whether they would buy into what Archbishop Tartaglia describes as an 'integral ecology which is able to articulate the fundamental relationships of the person: with God, with one's self, with other human beings, and with the creation' is of course another question.

Archbishop Tartaglia himself has welcomed the encyclical saying, 'Pope Francis puts our moral responsibility for the creation at the centre of our religious duties: "For human beings...

to destroy the biological diversity... by causing changes in its climate;... to contaminate the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life - these are sins". From now on, our examination of conscience needs to include these things too.'

Of course there was always going to be the awkward squad, mainly but not exclusively from the US. Nearly 70 million Catholics (22% of the population) includes a wealthy and powerful constituency, which resists the idea of human culpability in global warming or climate change. For many, fossil fuels and their products are the basis not only of wealth and profit, but of lifestyle. Catholic Republican hopeful for President Jeb Bush said, 'I don't get economic policy from my bishops or my cardinals or my pope'; which is essentially a way of saying follow the money. Other Catholic Republicans like Rick Santorum expressed a more simplistic view: 'The church has gotten it wrong a few times on science, and I think we probably are better off leaving science to the scientists and focusing on what we're good at, which is theology and morality'. Would they have been so unenthusiastic, one wonders, if the Pope had supported their view that human action is not a major factor in climate change?

Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the retired archbishop of Washington, is quoted in the *New York Times* as saying that at the last meeting of the US Bishops when they discussed their top priorities for the coming years, 'nobody mentioned the environment... They don't understand it. They don't understand the complexities.' The Cardinal added, 'When the encyclical comes out they'll all get behind it, but they're waiting to see what's in it.'

However, I particularly liked the comment of Bishop Oscar Cantú of Las Cruces NM who is chairman of the US Bishops' committee on international justice and peace. He said 'he would remind "so-called serious Catholics" who might want to dismiss the encyclical for political reasons that church teaching was not Hints from Heloise' (an American syndicated newspaper column advising

on consumer issues, pets, travel, food, home improvement, and health).

Elements in the US are the clearest opponents to the holistic message of *Laudato Si* but they are not the only ones. Opposition has less to do with morality or science and more to do with profit as Pope Francis himself identifies (nn187-190). Pope Francis formally declares that *Laudato Si* to 'is now added to the body of the Church's social teaching' (n15). But it is not restricted to Catholics: the subtitle of the encyclical is 'On Care for our Common Home'. On this topic, says the Pope, 'I wish to address every person living on this planet' (n3).

So, what of its content? Well I'm sorry to disappoint you if you expected a five hundred word summary. That would be a bit like the man who read War and Peace after doing a speed reading course and said it was about Russia. Weighing in at just over 40,000 words of Pope Francis' clear, accessible and exciting style of writing; and divided (like the creation, into six episodes) it is a wonderful and challenging read.

Like any good whodunnit there are the major villains. But, at root we are all implicated and 'the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion' (n 217). The Pope draws together the Franciscan spiritual tradition of wonder at and love for God's creation with his Jesuit Ignatian patrimony of finding God in all things. So download the Vatican Press edition, buy the text or get the Kindle version. Read it over a week or so, a chapter at a time; use it with your Justice and Peace group; create a reading group of friends to discuss it; and if you want to be naughty, ask your parish priest what he thinks of it and when he intends to preach on it.

To put yourself in the mood, read the Wikipedia article on St Francis' glorious Canticle (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canticle_of_the_Sun) which has been set to music by the Italian popular singer Angelo Branduardi (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vlzGZg7iss>)

Tim Duffy

Changing the Climate of Opinion

Carol Clarke reflects on recent initiatives and campaigning activities showing concern about climate change

May and June were certainly the months for climate action. The Pope's encyclical was the most important contribution and you can read more about the encyclical on page 3.

But meantime activists up and down the country were raising their voices about climate change. On 27 May Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) organised a lobby outside the Scottish Parliament to which hundreds turned up to see thousands of postcards - detailing all the things people care about that are threatened by climate change - addressed to the First Minister being handed over to Aileen McLeod MSP the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform.

Tom Ballantine, Chair of SCCS said: 'The *For the Love of* initiative has really focussed the minds of people across Scotland on the things they care about that could be affected if we don't take urgent action on climate change. It's great to see so many people turn out today to tell the First Minister that they expect Scotland to not only reduce its emissions but also that the Scottish Government shows leadership internationally.'

This was followed by the lobby of the UK parliament on 17 June, the day before the Pope's encyclical was published. Approximately 9,000 people turned up for the lobby with an amazing 45 of Scotland's 59 MPs taking part and being lobbied. This was a great turn out by Scottish constituents including J&P people, and all who travelled down to London deserve a round of applause, with thanks also to the team at SCCS, and the SCIAF and Christian Aid campaign teams who organised transport for many of the Scottish contingent.

As far as I am aware, all Scottish MPs lobbied gave an undertaking to work towards ending climate change. The main goals set out by SCCS to the Scottish Parliamentarians are

- To call on the Prime Minister and Chancellor to deliver an infrastructure and investment plan that is low carbon, covering energy, and transport and the restoration of nature and builds the foundation to deliver both the UK's and Scotland's Climate Change Acts.
- This means; warm homes for all; clean safe power; ending climate pollution from coal by 2023
- And globally, the UK government should use all its powers and influence to work for international action on climate change.

At the same time MPs were asked to think about what they could do to improve carbon omissions in their own constituency. I have to personally thank my own MP Angela Crawley for her commitment, and without showing any preference, it was a joy to catch up with former SCIAF campaigns manager Patrick Grady MP. He tweeted later 'Great meeting constituents #fortheloveof lobby. I support more climate change action'.

Unfortunately, the day after the lobby SCCS had to tweet 'Greatly disappointed at UK cutting support for renewable energy just a day after the biggest climate lobby ever!' We can add to this the disappointment that on the 9 June the Scottish Government announced that it had missed the fourth annual climate target. SCCS responded by saying 'Today's figures are disappointing but show that the target was within reach. To ensure Scotland meets all of its targets going forward the Scottish Government needs to announce significant new policies. Greater action on climate change will let us build a healthier, fairer society and a stronger economy'.

Looking forward ahead of UN climate talks in Paris in December, there will be a climate march in Edinburgh on 28

November. This is the big moment in 2015. Together we will march through the streets of Edinburgh to demand tough action from our politicians who will be setting off for Paris. This is part of a global day of action that will see millions marching to protect all that we care about that is or will be affected by climate change.

A chartered coach, or train carriage, will take at least 100 people from Scotland to the heart of Paris to take part in a large demonstration on that final weekend of the UN climate talks. Details of both events will be available later but meantime keep 28 November free.



Climate lobby in Westminster Hall

A prayer for our earth

This prayer is one of a pair that conclude Pope Francis' encyclical

All-powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

JUSTICE AND PEACE EUROPE ON MIGRATION

The European Executive has issued a powerful commentary on the issue of migration and the treatment of refugees in Europe

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers (Hebrews 13:2)

Since 19 April 2015, when 800 people died in a boat disaster in the Mediterranean off the Libyan coast, the European institutions have intensively addressed the issue of migration and the treatment of refugees in Europe and on its borders. The Executive Committee of the European Conference of Justice and Peace Commission (Justice and Peace Europe) joins the public debate at this stage to welcome all efforts for a more compassionate treatment of those who have been forced to abandon their country because of war and civil unrest, natural disaster or unbearable economic and social conditions. It also draws attention to Europe's responsibility to work for justice and peace in the world and, accordingly, to design long-term policies for conflict prevention and transformation and for sustainable development. Justice and Peace Europe strongly invites those member states of the European Union who are opposed to a fairer allocation for welcoming refugees and asylum seekers to reconsider their position.

- 1** The engagement of Heads of State and Government during the Extraordinary European summit on 23 April 2015 to triple the financial resources for search and rescue missions and, thus, to address the immediate humanitarian crisis, shows a renewed preparedness to increase rescue operations in the Mediterranean. Justice and Peace Europe welcomes this decision and asks for its immediate, complete and continued application.
- 2** Justice and Peace Europe supports legitimate measures to suppress smuggling and trafficking of human beings, and put an end to all criminal activities carried out on the back of refugees. The detection and prosecution of these criminals should be actively promoted and measures harmonised at the EU and international levels. The decision taken by EU ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence on 18 May 2015 to establish a naval military operation which includes the collecting of information, the blocking, control and, ultimately, neutralisation of the boats of trafficking organisations may be useful in this respect. However, any form of military intervention should be covered by a clear mandate of the UN Security Council and the lives of innocent people should not be exposed to risk.
- 3** Justice and Peace Europe furthermore recognises the right of each state - or group of states as in the case of the European Union - to exercise its sovereign right to control and manage its borders as long as it is done with due respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of each person. Measures to prevent flows of irregular migration in cooperation with neighbouring countries are justified if they form part of an integrated approach. Repression on its own will not resolve anything. It is even more important to address the root causes of irregular and forced migration. In this respect, Justice and Peace Europe recalls the European promise to devote 0.7% of GNI to public development aid and to reserve half of it for the poorest countries. However, much more effort needs to be invested in addressing root causes, including good governance, accountability and just economic structures. The EU should also consider new ways for legal migration and mobility. In the future, EU member

states could create a common corps of Border Guards. All in all, the "European Agenda on Migration", which the European Commission adopted on 13 May 2015, sets out a balanced approach in this respect. It is a first step in the right direction.

- 4** The same document and the first concrete proposals adopted on 27 May 2015 by the European Commission also suggest the relocation of around 40,000 refugees from Greece and Italy to other member states and resettling about 20,000 people from outside the EU who have been identified by the UNHCR as being in clear need of international protection. Both measures should cover the next two years and are considered part of the immediate crisis response. They propose a guideline for allocating refugees among member states based on four criteria (GDP, population, unemployment and asylum seekers already received) in order to share the task of welcoming refugees and dealing with their requests for asylum.
- 5** The European Commission has also stated its intention to use the same allocation mechanism to provide for a lasting solution for sharing the responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers. This constitutes a new path and signals the willingness of the European Commission to replace the current Dublin Regulation, which is ineffective. In 2014, for instance, more than 600,000 people asked for asylum in one of the 28 EU member states. Nearly 300,000 did so in just two member states (Germany and Sweden). During a debate in Strasbourg on 20 May 2015 a large majority of Members of the European Parliament welcomed the Commission plan and pressed the European Council to do the same. Unfortunately, several EU governments have voiced their opposition to the introduction of a system of allocation. Ahead of the European Summit on 25-26 June, Justice and Peace Europe strongly invites those governments which are still reticent, to re-examine their reservations and to constructively engage in the discussion of the proposal. Member states with an opt-in clause for the Common European Asylum System should make use of it.

Caring for refugees and asylum seekers requires solidarity among all EU members. Hospitality is a task for all Europeans and their governments. Europe must not forget 'to show hospitality to strangers'.

Prague, 15 June 2015

The Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions (Justice and Peace Europe) is a European network of 31 national Justice and Peace Commissions, working for the promotion of justice, peace and respect for human dignity. It contributes to raising awareness of Catholic Social Teaching in European societies and the European institutions. The Executive Committee of Justice and Peace Europe is composed of 9 elected members and its President is Archbishop Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg.



Pentecost Peace Witness at Faslane

Grace Buckley provides a moving account of this year's service of witness to peace at the nuclear weapon base at Faslane

This year SCANA (Scottish Christians against Nuclear Arms) held its annual peace witness, not at its usual time on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, but on the Saturday before Pentecost and the weather clearly benefitted from the change. We had sun rather than the usual cold, rain or snow! Justice & Peace were represented by members of the National Commission and several Diocesan Commissions.

The event began as usual with a service of witness, led by Rev David McLachlan of Langside Parish church, with music provided and led by members of the Wild Goose Group. A small number of police kept discreet watch. As David commented, they had obviously come to the view that we were a peaceful bunch.

A plain wooden cross was placed at the gate and, as the adults prayed and sang, children in the group played at its foot and drew on the ground in coloured chalk, providing such a contrast to the base in the background. As well as prayers of witness and commitment and hymns from across the world, there were keynote speeches.

The first was from Ellen Charlton, who spoke as Chair of the National Justice & Peace Commission. She made the point that the Catholic Church has always been clear and consistent in its position on nuclear weapons: their use is morally wrong and the threat of their use is morally wrong. By logical extension, the possession of such weapons can be viewed as wrong. They do not give security. As Christians, Ellen said, we say we are followers of the Prince of Peace. To follow another way and seek security in nuclear weapons is a kind of idolatry. As people of truth, we must pray and act for peace.

Ian Milligan of the Anabaptist Network spoke next. He reminded everyone present that they were witnesses for peace, and it was so appropriate to do so at Pentecost, the foundation event of the Church. Pentecost was a two-part event in which the Spirit testified about God to the disciples and they, in turn, testified about Jesus to the people. This is

what we were doing today at Faslane – a good and necessary thing.

Ian turned our attention to the Hebrew word that we translate as 'peace' – shalom. It is a much bigger concept – that of soundness in every way, when everything works together as God designed it. For this reason, we need to resist violence wherever we find it. He concluded with the well-known quotation from Isaiah describing the time of peace when 'spears will be beaten into ploughshares'.

The final speaker of the day was Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, Convenor of the Church of Scotland's Church and Society Council. She began by describing Pentecost as such a symbolic story. God, she said, has dreamed so much better for us. Instead we invest in weapons which lead us to fear each other more. We are planning to spend £100bn to intimidate others – what could this money do for the health service, schools etc. instead of being spent on machines to destroy us all. The challenge, she said, is the same as it was at Pentecost – to be blown away by the wind of the peace of God, rather than by our own foolishness.

The peace witness always includes very inspiring and affecting symbolic actions. This year, as we sang Bernadette Farrell's wonderful hymn *Christ be our Light*, we turned our backs to the gate of Faslane, turning back only at the final verse to look again towards the cross which we had placed at the gate.

At the end of the service, pitta bread and fruit juice were shared as we prayed for peace in the world. Then we sat by the gate and had our picnic, and shared fellowship. It is difficult to know what those inside Faslane make of our annual service but the reactions of passing traffic seemed mostly positive with drivers hooting in support.



Without nuclear disarmament, world is in great danger

The US Bishops' International Justice and Peace Committee has urged Secretary of State, John Kerry, to step up efforts to advance nuclear disarmament and ensure the success of a multilateral conference being held in New York. The comments were made in a May 12 letter issued as the Ninth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) meeting continues at the United Nations. This is the full text of the letter to Secretary Kerry:

Today as the bishops of the Committee on International Justice and Peace meet in Washington, DC, we are acutely aware of the Ninth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) meeting now at the United Nations in New York through May 22.

It is critically important that the United States do its part to ensure the success of the NPT Review Conference. For most Americans, there is an assumption that the nuclear threat receded with the end of the Cold War.

Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth. In a multi-polar world where there are risks of nuclear proliferation and even nuclear terrorism, it is imperative that the world move systematically and relentlessly toward nuclear disarmament and the securing of nuclear materials. Preserving the NPT is a cornerstone of this effort. Article VI of the NPT commits nuclear-armed nations to nuclear disarmament; and Article II commits other nations not to acquire nuclear weapons.

The Holy See declared at the beginning of the NPT Review Conference: 'We are all aware that the goal of a world without nuclear weapons is not easy to achieve. ... But this is neither a reason nor an excuse not to implement the obligations undertaken in conformity with the NPT. ... Ethics based on the threat of mutually assured destruction is not worthy of future generations.'

The United States and other nuclear weapons possessing states bear a particular responsibility for nuclear disarmament and despite the success of the New START Treaty in further reducing the numbers of weapons, there has not been enough progress.

We urge bold and concrete commitments to accelerate verifiable nuclear disarmament, including taking weapons off 'launch on warning' status to prevent a catastrophic accident, deeper cuts in nuclear arsenals, ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to bring it into force, serious negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and other prudent measures.

As the Holy See recently said: 'Lack of concrete and effective nuclear disarmament will lead sooner or later to real risks of nuclear proliferation.' We share the view that the erosion of the credibility of the NPT could have catastrophic consequences for all countries and for the future of humanity as a whole.'

Please be assured of our prayers as you work for a world without nuclear weapons.

The letter signed by the Most Reverend Oscar Cantú, Bishop of Las Cruces and Chair of the US Bishops Committee on International Justice and Peace.

Where There Isn't a Will...

This is an edited version of an article by Wilfred Wan, published in the UN University Centre for Policy Research

It became official with the closing meeting of the month-long Ninth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in May that the parties could not reach consensus agreement on a substantive final declaration.

By all accounts, the failure of the 2015 conference to produce a consensus outcome document with any substance can be attributed to the discussions around the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, an issue linked to a resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. According to the head of the United Kingdom's delegation, 'this issue and this issue alone was the stumbling block.' The final document of the 2015 conference would have imposed a March 2016 deadline for convening a conference towards this end, part of a last-minute plan drafted by the Russians (cosponsors of the 1995 resolution along with the United States and the U.K.). But the U.S. decried the 'arbitrary deadline,' while Canada demanded that any negotiations on this issue include Israel, a non-NPT party. At the contentious final plenary, the U.S. criticised the inflexibility of the Arab League on the subject, singling out Egypt. For its part, Egypt – as well as Russia and the Non-Aligned Movement – blamed the obstructionism of the Americans, British, and Canadians.

The controversy over the Middle East all but effectively marks the end of the renewed effort undertaken at the previous Review Conference to implement the 1995 resolution. It is a particular sore spot for non-nuclear weapon state parties to the treaty. Its role in this conference's breakdown could portend further trouble for the non-proliferation regime; after all, scholars acknowledge that the

treaty's indefinite extension in 1995 would have been a much more arduous process without the Middle East resolution. As the 2015 conference fell apart, Egypt, a long-time proponent for the zone, bitterly pointed to the 'fallacious nature of the 1995 process'.

At the same time, this emphasis on the clash over the Middle East zone belies the myriad disagreements that arose during the month-long conference... A substantive final declaration would not have cured all that ails the non-proliferation regime. This appears manifestly true in light of the meagre final draft outcome document ultimately rejected by the treaty parties. Some small delegations 'felt excluded' from the negotiating process. The overall text essentially reiterated the conclusions and recommendations of the 2010 outcome document, offering only minimal advancement of its 64-point action plan, and devoting little space to a review of its implementation: hardly a formula for progress.

Substantial gaps remain in three areas: effective measures towards nuclear disarmament, humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons use, and reporting by the recognised nuclear-weapon states. The discord that surrounds nuclear disarmament will not dissipate, as evidenced by the 107 countries now signed onto an Austrian-led Humanitarian Pledge pushing for 'effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.' For forty five years, the NPT has remained the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. But because of that, its failed Review Conference too will have reverberations across the nuclear landscape.

A Holy Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has announced an extraordinary Jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy, to highlight the Catholic Church's 'mission to be a witness of mercy.'

'No one can be excluded from God's mercy' said the Pope on 13 March, at a service in St. Peter's Basilica marking the second anniversary of his pontificate. 'I have frequently thought about how the church can make more evident its mission to be a witness of mercy,' he said. There will be a special Holy Year, which will be celebrated from 8 December 2015 (the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council), until 20 November 2016.

The biblical basis for the year, the Pope has chosen is 'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful' (Luke 6:36). Commenting on the relationship between mercy and justice, Pope Francis said mercy and justice are 'two dimensions of a single reality that unfolds progressively until it culminates in the fullness of love'.

The Papal Bull of Induction (the formal document presenting the proposal for a Holy Year) with the Latin title *Misericordiae Vultus - The Face of Mercy*, is yet another of Pope Francis' lucid explanations of Church teaching. At once deeply rooted in the Church's tradition and deeply committed to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, it is both comforting

and challenging. As one American commentator has rather crudely put it, it is a Bull without any bull.

After a typical reflection on the scriptural roots of mercy, particularly in the psalms, the Pope offers an astonishingly positive message of hope: *'The temptation, on the one hand, to focus exclusively on justice made us forget that this is only the first, albeit necessary and indispensable step. But the Church needs to go beyond and strive for a higher and more important goal. On the other hand, sad to say, we must admit that the practice of mercy is waning in the wider culture... However, without a witness to mercy, life becomes fruitless and sterile, as if sequestered in a barren desert. The time has come for the Church to take up the joyful call to mercy once more. It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope'* (10).

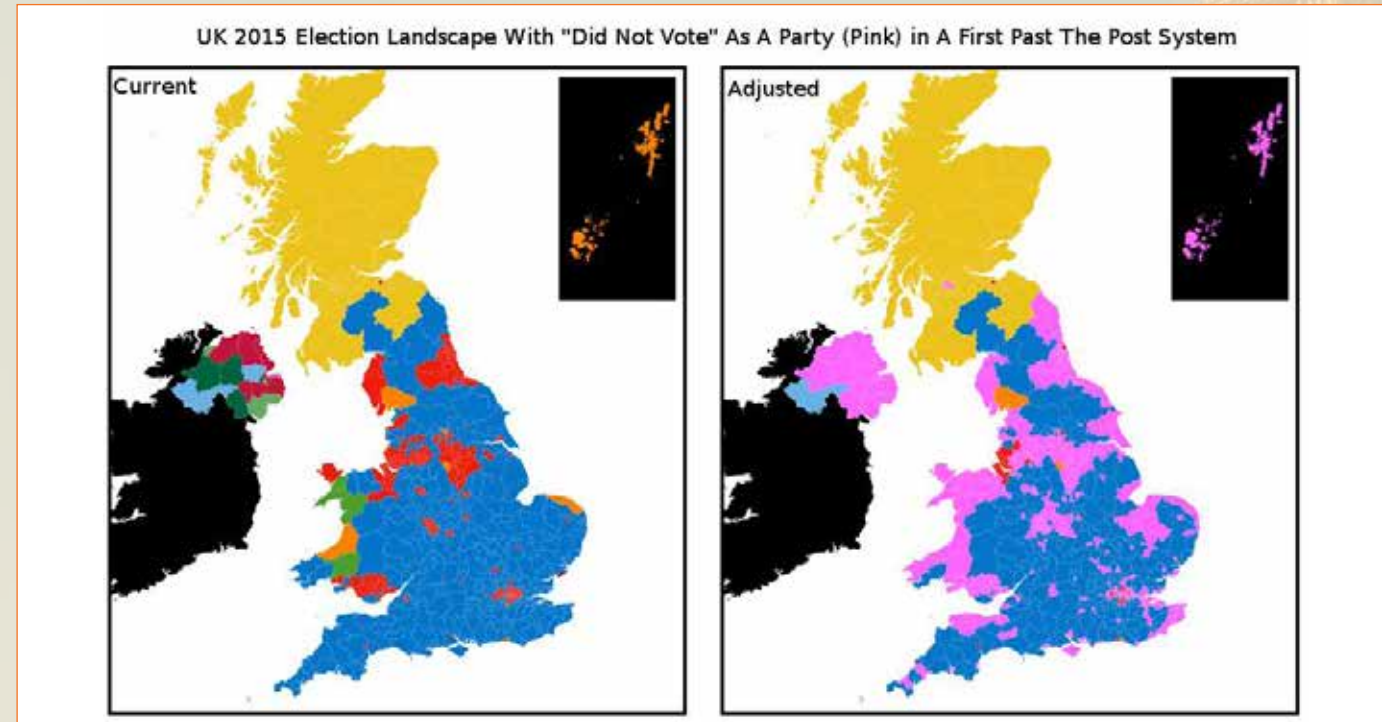
As a first step to getting into the spirit of the year *Misericordiae Vultus* could hardly be bettered. As a resource for use during the year, however, the study pack Rediscovering Mercy produced for the Just Faith project gives a structured programme for groups and can be found on the resource page at www.justfaith.org.uk/resources

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Being a Faithful Citizen

It's the old conundrum of mixing politics and religion. They shouldn't mix, we are often told. I think the best response is that of Archbishop Desmond Tutu who said 'when people say religion and politics don't mix, I wonder which bible it is they're reading'. Catholic Social Teaching is quite clear about the need to participate in the political process, but it is also very clear about the need for an informed participation:

'It is therefore clearly evident that every democracy must be participative. This means that the different subjects of civil community at every level must be informed, listened to and involved ... The overcoming of cultural, juridical and social obstacles that often constitute real barriers to the shared participation of citizens in the destiny of their communities calls for work in the areas of information and education' (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, n190-1).



So, where do we start? I thought the following quiz might spark your interest as well as pointing in the direction of the sort of basics people ought to know in order to be properly informed.

- Did you vote in the General Election?
- Did you read any party manifestos? If not, how did you find out what party policies are?
- Do you know who your MP is, who your MSP is, and the councillors that represent your area? How would you get in touch with them?
- Do you know how many MPs there are in the House of Commons?
- Do you know the difference between a hung parliament and a coalition?
- Do you know the difference between proportional representation and first past the post?
- Do you know how much the UK government spends on its different departments?
- Do you know the difference between debt and deficit?
- Do you know what the ECHR is and how are its members selected?
- Do you know what part Sir David Maxwell Fyfe played in ECHR?
- Could you name five rights enshrined in the European Convention?
- Do you consider yourself right wing or left wing **or** do you find these descriptions inadequate?
- What are the basic principles of Catholic Social Teaching which should be operative in choosing which way to vote?
- What was the basis of your vote – habit; active political loyalty; the influence of friends, the media; or by a personal comparison of policy proposals in the context of your own political awareness and faith?
- How much thought did you honestly put into whoever you voted for?

Answers for general questions can be found by Googling (other search engines are available). The process of discovering the answers is a part of political education. You can spare yourself blushes by doing the quiz on your own, or else make it a group experience.

The right to vote is seen as basic and profoundly important in a democratic society. But there is a failure to emphasise the corresponding duty to be informed as part of the huge responsibility that comes with being a citizen in a democracy. We seem to think it perfectly acceptable for citizens to be totally politically and economically illiterate while at the same time having a vote. Citizenship for migrants requires a detailed albeit largely irrelevant test; yet it is assumed that those who live here know all they need without instruction.

You need a license to get married or to drive a car. I suggest it would be no bad thing if a certificate of basic political awareness was a prerequisite to voting. But get a move on: it's only ten and a half months to the Scottish parliamentary elections; and then the council elections a year later; with the possibility of at least one referendum, possibly two, during the current UK parliamentary session. And I may well be setting another test!

Tim Duffy

A World gone Adrift

Recent events in the Mediterranean have shocked and distressed people in the UK, not least because of the absence of any coordinated policy by European governments or anyone else to deal with the problem.

In the wake of the latest tragedy in which up to 900 refugees fleeing war and persecution drowned in the Mediterranean, Bishop Patrick Lynch, Bishop for Migration in the Department for International Affairs of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has urged EU countries to do more to assist in the rescue operations and seek long term solutions to the crisis.

In recent months, Malta, the smallest country in the EU, and Italy, has been dealing on its own with an influx of thousands of refugees coming from North Africa - since the EU stopped funding rescue operations last summer. Bishop Lynch said: 'Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the men, women and children dying almost daily in the Mediterranean Sea as they desperately search for a safer life in Europe. We call on all EU member states to involve themselves in the relief efforts and to work collaboratively to find a swift, just, effective and compassionate solution to these humanitarian disasters.' (Source: *Justice and Peace Shrewsbury diocese*)

Pope Francis has urged the international community to take 'swift and decisive action' to assist the refugees. Yet there is no obvious simple solution. The kind of swift and decisive action favoured by some governments such as military interventions is at once the source and the continuation of the problem.

The 'liberation' of Libya, aided and abetted by European weapons and air power, left the country riven by factions. Imported terrorists and criminal gangs underwrite their activities with the proceeds of people trafficking of refugees fleeing other dysfunctional countries. It is reminiscent of the story in the gospels of the unclean spirit revisiting its former home and, finding it clean and ordered, it 'finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before' (Luke 11:24-6).

Social chaos is sustained by geopolitical interests and as usual it is ordinary people who suffer. While the efforts of Royal Navy personnel to rescue refugees from what have been called 'lilos with sides' is truly commendable, there is something ironic about a warship picking up people only to drop them off for someone else to look after. The inability of western governments to see immigration as an opportunity and resource, and to organise policies accordingly, is a part of the short sighted, short term attitude towards globalisation. Immigration is seen only as a problem for which no adequate cultural, social or economic provision planning has been made.

Coordinated policies should be aimed at greater social understanding, cohesion and flourishing rather than the abstract of economic growth, which usually translates into increased wealth for a few at the expense of the majority. Refugees are drowning, not only in a real sea, but in a sea of animosity and indifference. And the answer lies ultimately not with a change of governments but with a change of heart towards our fellow humans.

The recent drownings were commemorated in a poem by Iranian poet and member of the group *Write to Life*, Faryad:

*For you, stranger, passenger
who trusted the sea
and lent your breath to the sea: *
when you gasp for air
our own breath begins to die.
Your eyes were full of the endless sea
the sky turned so grey
and the water turned black
when it became a grave for your dreams.
I touch your pain I wish you had not trusted the sea
Even though I did trust it myself.
Shame on the world!
Do not imagine I don't understand your language
without any word or syllable.
Your language is every single syllable
of hidden voices from me
and all the women of my motherland.
Even though now, today,
I have chosen exile.
Your groans become screams
Your cries are the screams of our daughters being raped,
buried alive, stifled, murdered.
I am so sick of these bleeding wounds.
Why does the sky not weep to quench the pain?
Why does the sky not weep to quench the pain?*

* 'lent your breath' - a colloquial Iranian phrase meaning deeply trusting, risk-taking.



Pope says workplace disparity a scandal, calls for equal pay: The 'disparity' between men and women in the workplace is wrong and women should receive equal pay for equal work, said Pope Francis. 'As Christians, we must become more demanding in this regard: for example, [by] supporting with decision the right to equal retribution for equal work; disparity is a pure scandal.' (Cathnews.com) <http://tinyurl.com/on7o7yo>

Human Trafficking the GIFT Boxes are back: The Scottish Churches Anti-Human Trafficking Group are working in partnership with Edinburgh Presbytery and Stop the Traffik to host UN Gift Boxes during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival from the 19th - 21st of August and are looking for volunteers to help for a few hours. If you would like to volunteer or for any other information email: miriamweibye@acts-scotland.org or visit <http://tinyurl.com/ncowyzg>

New Social Enterprise Café to give women seeking asylum a sense of autonomy. Milk Café on Victoria Road in the south side of Glasgow opened earlier this month. The venture will provide a safe space to relax, offering up hot drinks and some tasty homely treats. But more importantly, Milk will offer a skills programme that helps migrant women integrate into their new lives and improves their job prospects for the future. More details at <http://tinyurl.com/nmsudwa>

West Papua: Mining in an occupation forgotten by the world: Freeport's massive Grasberg mine – one of the largest open-pit mines in the world, with a minority stake held by global mining giant Rio Tinto – is essentially closed off to outside access. It is a region rich in natural resources, the biggest source of tax revenue for the fourth most populous country in the world and, under de-facto military rule, it is a place where activists are jailed, tortured, disappeared and assassinated. So why doesn't the world know more about West Papua? Quite simply, because Indonesia's restive, easternmost region is home to 'one of the least covered armed conflicts in the world', said Bob Dietz, Asia-Pacific director for the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), of the more than 50-year conflict. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/n279rax>

How Mother's Day USA began as a protest against war: Mother's Day was originally started after the Civil War, as a protest to the carnage of that war, by women who had lost their sons. The original Mother's Day Proclamation from 1870 say firmly: 'We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and

applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience...' ...The women who conceived Mother's Day would be bewildered by the ubiquitous ads that hound us to find that 'perfect gift for Mom.' They would expect women to be marching in the streets, not eating with their families in restaurants. This is because Mother's Day began as a holiday that commemorated women's public activism, not as a celebration of a mother's devotion to her family... Mother's Day is celebrated on 10 May in the USA

Scottish Welfare Fund: In 2013 Social Fund payments for Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants were replaced by the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF), delivered by councils. The fund provides 2 types of grant: Crisis Grants act as a safety net when someone experiences a disaster or emergency situation and Community Care Grants (CCG) to enable people to live independently or continue to do so preventing the need for institutional care. A CCG may also be able to help a family facing exceptional pressure. Last month The Welfare Funds (Scotland) Act 2015 received Royal Assent and there are a range of SWF leaflets online including a toolkit and new easy read leaflet, more info at www.gov.scot/Topics/People/welfarereform/scottishwelfarefund

Joint report: 'Women and Welfare Reform. A Widening Gap': Engender, Close the Gap, SCVO, Scottish Refugee Council and Scottish Women's Aid have updated their 2014 joint report and produced Women and Welfare Reform. A Widening Gap. This joint paper summarises the way that women will be particularly affected by welfare reform measures and makes recommendations to the Scottish Government on how to mitigate this harm. You can read this online at <http://tinyurl.com/njd9bmd>

Time for a Limit: Assessing the post-election political landscape: At first glance, the general election results were disappointing. The Conservatives were the only popular party not to commit to detention reform in their manifesto. But as the dust settles on this election, what has become clear is that any sense of despair is misplaced. Firstly, the Conservative's recent messaging on detention has been at odds with their tone on immigration in general. There are also a significant number of Tory MPs who have come out strongly in favour of ending indefinite detention (Richard Fuller and David Burrowes, both panel members on the cross-party Parliamentary Inquiry on Detention, among them). Secondly, it is clear that the agenda for detention reform is not going away. The General Election campaign period transformed detention into a mainstream issue and the #Time4aTimeLimit movement is only growing, pulling in more civil society,

faith, and community groups by the day. Could a newly confident Conservative government be the one to take the definitive step away from pervasive detention? Read more of an analysis on what the election means for the campaign to end indefinite detention at <http://tinyurl.com/pdkhqbe> There was a fantastic response to the #Time4aTimeLimit parliamentary candidates email campaign – in just a few weeks, 1036 candidates were sent 2565 emails. Thanks to everyone who took part.

Ministry of Defence reviews command arrangements to sort out nuclear weapons 'mess'. Senior civil servants have handed David Cameron proposals to radically reshape the way in which the UK's nuclear weapons programme is managed, following a confidential review undertaken by the Ministry of Defence. One of the options considered by the review team is said to be the creation of a dedicated new nuclear command, which would bring all military and civilian defence personnel involved in nuclear weapons policy-making, the Trident submarine programme, and the Atomic Weapons Establishment, together into a single unit. Read full article at <http://tinyurl.com/nmmnqgq> (Nuclear Information Service)

Cancellation of Trident programme would have limited impact on Scottish jobs: A new report published jointly by the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament shows that many of the skills used by Scottish workers in the Trident nuclear weapons programme could be transferred to other non-Trident submarine work, surface warship work or economic development activity in alternative areas. Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/p9624zu>

Joint call on affordable homes: Four national charities, including Scottish Churches Housing Action, have written to Margaret Burgess MSP, Minister for Housing and Welfare, with a joint call to set an ambitious target for new affordable homes across Scotland. Shelter Scotland, Homeless Action Scotland, Rural Housing Scotland and Scottish Churches Housing Action all believe that the next Parliament, following the 2016 Holyrood elections, should see an upswing in provision of homes for those in need.

A Date for your diary: A memorial service for Gerry W Hughes SJ will take place at Glasgow University Chapel, West Quadrangle, Main Gilmorehill Building, on Monday 17 August 2015 6.00pm and thereafter a reception at Turnbull Hall, Southpark Avenue.

Remember to follow us on Facebook and Twitter for up to date news and events. Sign on via our website.

'STICK YOUR LABELS'

Grace Buckley describes a recent campaign relaunch on the damage done by the stigmatising of welfare

Patrick Harvie of the Green Party hosted a reception at the Scottish Parliament on 13 May for the relaunch of the Poverty Alliance's *Stick Your Labels* campaign. Introducing the speakers, he made the point that a culture of increasing stigmatisation of those on any kind of benefits by the media and politicians was enabling the UK Government to achieve an increasingly mean approach to welfare benefits.

The first speaker was Suzi MacPherson, who explained that the purpose of the campaign was to raise the profile of this issue of stigmatisation and the increasing language of division in society eg the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor, to challenge the rhetoric and push back against the stigma. The recent Trussell Trust figures for example highlighted the number of people in work who are having to use foodbanks.

The stigmatising language being used affects people's sense of self-worth and also their mental well-being. She made the argument that we need to get the message out there that the social security benefits system is not just for 'them' but for everyone, and any one of us may need to use it at some time in our lives.

The Poverty Alliance are asking politicians, leaders of organisations and church leaders to sign up to three pledges on the issue. It will also be holding a series of seminars over the summer and developing resources for schools, to get the message across.

The second speaker was Derek Holliday, a very articulate young man who has just joined the board of the Poverty Alliance. He was quite frank about his own story – he has spent more than half of his life in poverty or homelessness and has experienced mental health issues. He made the simple request that other people recognise him as a person who has something to contribute to society. He presently volunteers with a homelessness support network and represents a group of community activists.

He made the point quite calmly but forcefully that people don't choose to be poor, mentally ill or disabled. Everyone should have the right to a home, food and the basics of life. At some time in our lives, he suggested, we have all been in a difficult place. We need therefore to be role models and stand up for those currently in that situation, and lead with our voices. We are all human beings, all citizens. It occurred to me that these sentiments chime well with Catholic Social Teaching principles.

Margaret Burgess, the Scottish Minister with responsibility for welfare, spoke next. She thanked Poverty Alliance for its work and made the challenging observation that stigmatisation may not always be deliberate. We can all be guilty of using language which stigmatises others. We all need to look at the words we use and think of their effects on others.

A fundamental part of the Scottish Government's work is to tackle poverty

and inequality at the roots. Mrs Burgess highlighted various actions being taken currently to address these issues, and argued that in view of the outcome of the UK election, there will be tough times ahead and the Scottish nation needs to work together.

The Scottish Government is developing an action plan for social justice for the period to 2030, which will be wide-ranging. They will be working on it over the Summer, and the intention is that people living in poverty should be centre stage in their deliberations, and their voices should be heard. The planned strategy should not just be dealing with issues of income but also with well-being. She concluded by inviting Poverty Alliance to continue to challenge the Scottish Government and herself if they got their language wrong in talking about these issues.

Peter Kelly, Director of the Poverty Alliance, rounded off what had been brief and to the point speeches by reiterating that the point of the campaign is ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The pledges which people and organisations are being asked to sign are quite practical, and it is important to get moving now as, with a target of £12 billion of cuts to the welfare budget, the UK government will be starting their softening-up process very soon.

The evening finished with various politicians signing off on the pledges. The pledge is also being circulated amongst the churches.

STICK YOUR LABELS PLEDGES

THE ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGE

- 1 Poverty is not inevitable:** it is a problem of political choices, it is neither natural nor acceptable. We all have a role to play in addressing poverty: **We will set out our contribution to tackling poverty in Scotland.**
- 2 Attitudes matter:** How we talk about poverty and how we portray it can stigmatise and harm people: **We will never use language that may stigmatise people experiencing poverty.**
- 3 Actions change attitudes:** To change beliefs about poverty requires action across our whole society: **We will develop actions that help address negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty.**



JULY

- 12 Apostleship of the Sea
- 16 First atomic bomb detonated in New Mexico
- 18 Nelson Mandela Day
- 30 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

AUGUST

- 1 2010: Convention on Cluster Munitions comes into effect
- 6 Hiroshima - Anniversary of Atomic Bomb
- 9 Nagasaki - Anniversary of Atomic Bomb
- 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous People
- 17 Memorial Service for Gerry W Hughes SJ - Glasgow University. 6pm
- 19 World Humanitarian Day
- 23 International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
- 27 Death of Dom Helder Camara (1999)
- 29 International Day Against Nuclear Tests

SEPTEMBER

- 5 The Scottish Fair Trade Forum AGM and National Campaigner Conference
- 8 International Literacy Day
- 13 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- 15 International Day of Democracy
- 16 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- 20 World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel
- 21 UN International Day of Peace
- 22 International Migrants Day
- 26 International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapon

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



Ellen Charlton, chair of J&P is pictured speaking at the STUC 'Shut Dungavel' demonstration on 30 May. About 400 people turned up to call for an end to detention. Ellen compared the values of the Gospel with Dungavel, unsurprisingly there are no comparisons.

The Commission has started a process of evaluating how best to carry forward the work of justice and peace with the resources available to us. Our readers are a large part of our resource and we want to hear from you.

We will be circulating an electronic questionnaire later in the summer through the website and our social media. It would be really helpful if you could take part and perhaps print off copies for people who don't have electronic access.

Watch the website for details. Thanks and enjoy the summer!

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