



2017 – a year of significant landmarks

The UK and Human Rights

Article 50, March 2017, has triggered the Brexit negotiations, and we shall explore what this means for the upholding of Human Rights in the UK at our Annual Study Day on October 28th. The UK will still be signed



up to the UN Convention on Human Rights and the International Court of Justice. The Council of Europe moreover, includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union who have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights,

democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights (pictured) in Strasbourg oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states. **We have not voted to leave the Council of Europe.**



The current attitude to international human rights may not be very positive however, and we need to see how this will affect the most vulnerable. At the J&P Autumn Study Day, MEP Julie Ward will explain some of the key human rights issues in Europe, while Nicolette Busutti from the Jesuit Refugee Service will

describe what human rights mean for those at the cutting edge of life for those on the move. Though parishes such as Enfield are opening their doors to Syrian migrants, a recent church report notes that drop-in centres around the country are inundated with destitute asylum seekers, with no recourse to public funds.

The Centenary of Blessed Oscar Romero

Recently, there were two services in honour of Blessed Oscar's centenary organised by the Romero Trust: one at St George's Cathedral, and one (shown here) at St Martin in the Fields.

Sr Martha Zechmeister CJ preached at St Martin's, concluding:

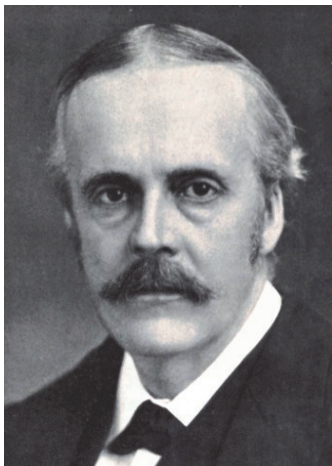


'Our God is the solemn promise that the evildoers of this world WILL NOT HAVE THE LAST WORD. This confidence, that GOD will have the last word, transformed the shy man of El Salvador into a courageous prophet. With him the saving and life-giving love of God passed through El Salvador, and was present amongst us. Blessed Oscar Romero, servant of God, faithful follower of Jesus Christ, friend of the poor, voice of the voiceless - Pray for us.'

The Centenary of the Balfour Declaration – why is that important?

The **Balfour Declaration** was a letter dated 2 November 1917 from the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. It read:

'{The} government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'



The Balfour Declaration is widely held to be the root of the current conflict in Israel-Palestine as it promised the territory already occupied by Palestinians to the Jewish people, and in the end did nothing to protect the rights of the indigenous Palestinians.

Many groups, including Westminster Justice and Peace are seeking to highlight Britain's responsibility in this and to press for British acknowledgement of our role. Justice and Peace will continue to focus on the plight of Palestinians losing their homes through the settlement policy.

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object. It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.



People Power: Fighting for Peace since 1917

Many remember 1917 as the year of the Bolshevik Revolution and of the devastating Third Battle of Ypres but the **Imperial War Museum** explores how peace movements from the First World War to the present day have influenced perceptions of war and conflict in a very pertinent exhibition.

It features much, from conscientious objectors to peace camps, including and modern day marches telling the stories of passionate people and the struggles they have endured. Exhibition open until 28th August.



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Excerpt from the Westminster Justice & Peace comment on Environmental Legislation by US President Trump

“The Westminster Justice and Peace Commission is deeply disappointed by the actions of President Trump regarding energy and climate change, which cuts across all the endeavours of Pope Francis and the Catholic Church towards a new way of caring for creation.

“On 29th March 2017 Donald Trump signed legislation - an Energy Independence Executive Order which has undermined all Barack Obama’s policies to combat climate change by reducing emissions from fossil fuels. Central to the changes is a review of Barack Obama’s clean power plan - a pledge to cut US emissions by 26-28% by 2025 - which paved the way for the Paris agreement on tackling climate change involving 195 countries. Through this action, he has swept away green legislation at a stroke of the pen, he has enforced his statement that global warming was a ‘hoax’ invented by the Chinese. Crucially, the Paris accord of 2015 has been seriously undermined on greenhouse emissions and his actions also threaten to derail the worldwide fight against global warming. He does not address the difficult topic of pro-fossil fuel problem of the Paris Agreement, that is, that the world must move collectively towards renewable energy and abandon the reliance on oil, coal and gas. His plan will therefore make it impossible for the US to meet its Paris obligations”.

For more see our website: www.Westminsterjp.wordpress.com

Fairtrade Update 96 parishes have signed up for the Fairtrade pledge. Where does your parish stand? Keen? Forgotten about it? Hoping to get round to it? It’s such a positive way of challenging world poverty, and the food tastes good too!



Migrant challenges: not going away

Just when many people thought that the Calais Jungle had gone away, we now realise that many migrants are gathering again in the vicinity as was predicted by locals and volunteers last year. Refugees are still wanting to make the journey to the UK to begin a new life here. The huge fire reducing the Grande Synthe migrant camp near the northern city of Dunkirk to “a heap of ashes” has not helped matters. The population of the camp had swelled since the destruction of the Jungle about 40km away. Now the charity Seeking Sanctuary reports that migrants are all around the Northern France areas near Calais and Dunkirk, desperately needed help of all kinds. See their website, www.seekingsanctuary.weebly.com for the latest update and appeal. Voluntary help is as much needed as ever, though coordination remains difficult.

Annual St Joseph the Worker Migrants Mass

And closer to home, the annual Mass in support of Migrants in our city, in honour of St. Joseph the Worker, will be at 11.00am on Saturday 20th May at St Anthony’s Forest Gate, Diocese of Brentwood, with chief celebrant Bishop Alan Williams SM.

UK General Election

CAFOD reminds us that the UK general election on June 8th is a vital opportunity to speak up for the poorest communities and we must encourage and challenge all political parties and candidates. CAFOD offers advice on how to ask an election questions and will provide updates on more ways to take action.

www.cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/Ask-an-election-question

Calling for a New Syria Deal

Recently, a group of Catholic Aid Agencies have called on the Brussels Conference on Syria to recommit support to Syrians forced to flee, as more than five million Syrians (or a quarter of the country's pre-war population)—have been forced to cross borders and register as refugees in neighbouring countries. The Catholic Aid Agencies, including CAFOD campaign to mobilise funds for the longer-term development for Syrian refugees. The Brussels Syria Conference took place on 5 April 2017, hosted by the EU, UN, United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Kuwait and Qatar. It brought together representatives from 70 delegations, major donors and humanitarian and development organisations.

- ◆ *Citizens UK as well as Caritas Westminster are coordinating a number of parish and community initiatives to welcome Syrian refugees into our parishes and boroughs. See also www.refugees-welcome.org.uk for further information.*

Justice, Peace and related events

Lampedusa Cross Service

at Westminster Cathedral, 23rd June at 6.30pm to mark Refugee Week, followed by talk in the Hinsley Room behind the Cathedral by Pawel Zabielski, Coordinator of TB Services at Olallo House, of the Brothers of St John of God Hospitaller, which serves street homeless people in Central London.

Peace Conference

This year's Peace History Conference will take place in London on 9 and 10 June. The theme is **Protest, Power and Change**. Frank Cottrell Boyce, children's novelist and screenwriter, will open the conference. Among topics on the programme will be Fewer Bombs, More Jobs: The Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Alternative Plan 1976 and Lysistrata in the Rainforest: the women's nonviolent campaign which ended the civil war in Liberia.

There is a **Peace Trail** and a play, '**This Evil Thing**' on Friday 9th June at the Oasis Hub and the Conference on Saturday 10th June will be at the Imperial War Museum, London. Further info, and e-tickets can be booked at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2911651

The Oppression & Resilience of Victims of Human Trafficking & Domestic Slavery in London

On Tuesday 16th May at Newman Chapel, Ealing Abbey John Coleby will present the Bitus Lecture. Cost £10 per person with all proceeds to Caritas Bakhita House. Registration by email info@benedictine-institute.org

A concert with Friar Alessandro: Voice from Assisi

On Saturday 6th May at St George's RC Cathedral Southwark. A collection and proceeds will be shared for CAFOD East Africa Crisis Appeal and Caritas Bakhita House. Reserve free tickets at voicefromassisi.eventbrite.co.uk

National Justice & Peace Conference

A Sabbath for the Earth and the Poor

At the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick (Derbyshire) from Friday 21 July until Sunday 23 July, the speakers includes: **Dr Ruth Valerio**; Global Advocacy and Influencing Director for Tearfund, **Fr Peter Hughes** SSC and **Kathy Galloway** ordained minister of the Church of Scotland and head of Christian Aid Scotland. For further information and booking details: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/