

RELIGIOUS OF  
THE ASSUMPTION



# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation

SPRING 2018 – ISSUE NO. 3 NEWSLETTER

## Eastertide 2018

'In the Christian understanding of the world the destiny of all creation is bound up with the mystery of Christ,' Pope Francis (Laudato Si). For 'all things have been created through him and for him' (Col 1. 16). Indeed the whole world can be considered a sacrament... and there is great suffering in our world, hunger, violence, species loss, injustice.

As we accompany in our small way, that great journey of Paschaltide, let us not lose hope. For we have a reason for our hope! Alleluia!



## Ending Hunger in the UK



We know Food Bank usage has risen rapidly in the last 5 years. UNICEF reckons we, in the UK, have the highest rate of food insecurity in Europe. Hospital admissions for malnutrition are rising. Many families in work suffer food insecurity. It is getting worse.

But the 'End Hunger' campaign, a coalition of organisations led by Church Action on Poverty (CAP) are managing to put pressure on government.

Public support for Frank Field's Holiday Provision Bill, though it has not yet made it through parliament, means that the government has now agreed to put in place a number of pilot schemes cross the country and will monitor the impact on children's health and attainment. The debate will continue in April. A consensus is growing that there is a real issue of child holiday hunger.

A private member's bill, Food Insecurity Measurement, was introduced last November. It is important to measure and better understand the problem of hunger in the UK. At present, unbelievably, this does not happen. The second reading of the Bill will now take place in October 2018.

In the meantime people do what they can to alleviate the situation by supporting the local Food Bank.

If you are asking questions such as: What is the purpose of my life in the world? Why am I here? What is the goal of my work and all my efforts, then **journey with us.** (From the final Litany)

If you want to slow down and look at reality in a different way, promote best practice, stimulate creative solutions and encourage group and individual initiatives, then **journey with us.** Visit: [www.endhungeruk.org](http://www.endhungeruk.org)



# Cécile Renouard Talks in the UK



Sr. Cécile had arranged a sabbatical at Schumacher College renowned all over the world for its integral learning, head, heart and hand, based on insights from ecology and work for sustainability. It attracts post graduate students from all over the world. Cécile much appreciated her time there.

The original hope was that being in the UK, Cécile might, by her input, move the business and economics sector of St Mary's to incorporate the challenge of climate change a little more in their thinking and discussion. St Mary's is currently almost bottom of the 'green' league tables of universities. As it happened students were mostly in the middle of exams the only time she could make herself available. The solution was an interview videoed for teaching purposes (unfortunately with no public access) with the academic director of the Business and Law Management.

While she was in the UK it was an opportunity to spread the word. We arranged for her to speak at Newman House, the chaplaincy to London university students, and at Milleret House using our existing contacts and beyond, thanks mainly to Anne Marie and Amy.

The title of her talk at Milleret was challenging, 'Alternatives to Business as Usual'. There was a good response, it seems many people are wanting to explore alternatives knowing that change is necessary. Cécile underlined the necessity of change, the need to change radically both at the individual level and at the macro level: the current economic model does not promote social and ecological bonds, quality of life deteriorates in the midst of economic growth: resources are not unlimited. Participation, dialogue and collective discernment are really needed to chart a way ahead, this needs to be both multidisciplinary and interfaith. Frugality and non-violence are part of this for any 'integral ecology', at both the personal and collective levels.

It was 'changing the rules of the game' that was perhaps the most striking aspect of her talk. Change the metrics, the way we do the accounts to include natural and human assets and liabilities. Change the legal definition of a firm so that profit is seen as a means to a goal, not an end in itself; there could be a new definition of a company as for the common good, consistent with the Paris Agreement. Change the way we think about and reward work so that the gap between the lowest and highest paid is not so extreme. Taxation is there to promote the wellbeing of people,

change the way we view taxation, plug gaps and close in on evasion. 'Due Diligence' for the global value chain with consumers playing their part. Change the way we



calculate growth.

Find business models which promote trust and the quality of social bonds. These were a few of the thoughts presented to us. Interestingly it seems that people went away just that little bit more hopeful about our world and possible ways forward. Hope is important today!

Come and join us for the next talk by Cécile on Thursday 3rd May 2018 - find details below.

*Jess, January 2018.*



**RELIGIOUS OF THE  
ASSUMPTION**

## The NEED to CHANGE

- Further thoughts on  
'Alternatives to Business as Usual'




**Thurs 3rd May 2018**  
7PM FOR 7.30PM



**Sr Cécile Renouard RA**  
explores issues around ethics, economics and ecology; the implications of climate change, endless growth vs. de-growth.

*Cécile Renouard, Religious sister of the Assumption, holds a doctorate in Political Philosophy and teaches at the Jesuit University of Paris. She is also the Director of the CODEV - Companies & Development - Research Programme at ESSEC Business School. She continues her research on ethics and economics, promoting a concept of ecologically and socially responsible and sustainable development in corporations around the world.*

 **Venue:** Milleret House, 23 Kensington Square, London W8 5HH (Entrance via Heythrop College reception)

 **Free entry, RSVP:** [youth@assumptionreligious.org](mailto:youth@assumptionreligious.org)

The Assumption congregation and our province have already signed 'An appeal to the Catholic Church to re-Commit to the centrality of Gospel Non-violence'. Pax Christi International continue to work on active non violence, 'the heart of the vision of Jesus, the life of the catholic church and the long term vocation of healing and reconciling both people and planet.' There have been meetings in the Vatican and work continues to gather witnesses and examples of good practice from all round the world. There are groups looking at theology, scripture, peace practice at the international level and the hope of an encyclical. Pat Gaffney is very involved



the Nobel Prize for Peace. There is also the good news that Non violence works! Here in England there was a series of meetings with Pat Gaffney. Marie Dennis and Maria Stephen. Some of the Twickenham community got to the London one. The research of Maria Stephen shows clearly that non violence is twice as effective as violence for achieving a desirable outcome, armed struggle has realistic alternatives. But for non violence to be effective coalition skills are needed, building and sustaining are large and diverse participation, use of creativity, eliciting loyalty shifts and eroding power structures by means of non co-operation. Militarism



needs to be resisted. In a world where smaller more useable nuclear weapons are being considered we need good news.

The call is for:

- Continue developing Catholic social teaching on nonviolence. In particular, we call on Pope Francis to share with the world an encyclical on nonviolence and Just Peace;
- Integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into the life, including the sacramental life, and work of the Church through dioceses, parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders, voluntary associations, and others;
- Promote nonviolent practices and strategies (e.g., nonviolent resistance, restorative justice, trauma healing, unarmed civilian protection, conflict transformation and peacebuilding strategies);
- Initiate a global conversation on nonviolence within the Church, with people of other faiths, and with the larger world to respond to the monumental crises of our time with the vision and strategies of nonviolence and Just Peace;
- No longer use or teach "just war theory"; continue advocating for the abolition of war and nuclear weapons;
- Lift up the prophetic voice of the church to challenge unjust world powers and to support and defend those nonviolent activists whose work for peace and justice put their lives at risk.

There is good news in the awarding of ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons)

Pope Francis has given a strong and clear condemnation of nuclear weapons: "Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. They cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family."

### Prayer for the Vatican conference:

Creator God, We thank your Holy Spirit for inspiring and guiding those who met at the nuclear weapons conference in Rome, including the Pax Christi delegation.

Your world is precious but human folly threatens its very existence. We pray for those whose lives have been destroyed by nuclear weapons and nuclear testing.

We pray for those denied the essentials of life when money is squandered on nuclear weapons production.

We pray that our Church will speak to the world with clarity and wisdom and work with world leaders to ban the development, possession and use of nuclear weapons.

With Pope Francis, we commit ourselves to work for a world without nuclear weapons. We pray in hope for a world built on just relations and cooperation between people who wish to live in peaceful co-existence. Amen

# Ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia Left in Limbo without Citizenship

Ethnic Vietnamese who have lived in Cambodia for generations are deprived of citizenship, trapped in poverty, lack access to education, live under deplorable conditions, and are shut out from economic, social, and political life, a local minority-rights advocacy group says in a new report, seeking urgent government intervention.

About five percent or 750,000 of Cambodia's 15 million people are ethnic Vietnamese, the largest ethnic minority in Cambodia, but most of them are stateless and, according to the report, are "consequently deprived of their most fundamental human rights."

"The lack of identification papers is the root cause of all other difficulties faced by stateless Vietnamese in Cambodia and due to this lack of identity they face widespread discrimination and exploitation. "This has dire consequences on their access to healthcare, education, justice in court, social security, freedom of movement, transfer of assets, and housing 5,000 ethnic Vietnamese who were born in Cambodia.

It expressed the hope that the ethnic Vietnamese claim to citizenship and nationality "will not be drowned out by the expressions of racism in Cambodia," lamenting that anti-Vietnamese sentiments are on the rise in the country.

It referred to several recent incidents of violent assaults on ethnic Vietnamese and their properties which it said "give cause for grave concern". Ethnic Vietnamese minorities are at present regarded as "legal immigrants" or "foreign residents" by the Cambodian authorities and as "illegal immigrants" by politicians and the people of Cambodia.

"It is of paramount importance to act upon these issues, as the problems will only exacerbate and intensify if not solved in the near future," the report said. It is specially important for the children to be registered as it will be the only way they can enjoy other fundamental human rights, such as education.

The report also said discrimination against the ethnic Vietnamese is used as a "tool" in political campaigns of



*A floating village in Kampong Chhnang province, March 18, 2014.*

Cambodian politicians. "During every election event in Cambodia, the Vietnamese have traditionally been the target for political discrimination, attacked by politicians and used as scapegoats in order for the politicians to gain support and votes for their political parties."

All of them were born in Cambodia and their families have lived in the country for many generations. Nearly all those interviewed live in floating houses on the Tonle Sap River in Kampong Chhnang. The houses have been erected on an assembly of bamboo poles with barrels attached underneath so that they float on the water.

Usually, the houses have two or three rooms, which have no windows to protect their inhabitants from the rain, nor electricity or bathrooms; the toilets are latrines that open directly into the water.

It said that the ethnic Vietnamese floating village community was reportedly vulnerable to intimidation and money extortion from authorities such as immigration police, economic police, water traffic police, military police, soldiers, fishing community members, and security guards.

*Emmanuel Bac (edited)  
Reported by RFA's Khmer Service.*

# Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, a project of Pax Christi International, affirms the vision and practice of active nonviolence at the heart of the Catholic Church, and is committed to the long-term vocation of healing and reconciling both people and the planet.

This bold effort was launched at the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference held in Rome April 11-13, 2016 and co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (now part of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human

Development), Pax Christi International, and other international bodies. Lay people, theologians, members of religious congregations, priests and bishops from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Oceania gathered to call on the Catholic Church to take a clear stand for active nonviolence and against all forms of violence. In his message to the conference, Pope Francis said, "Your thoughts on revitalizing the tools of nonviolence, and of active nonviolence in particular, will be a needed and positive contribution."



## Rowan Williams at St Mary's

He spoke rather gently and at the end of the evening was presented with the Benedict XV1 medal. Because there were so many people wanting to hear him we had had to decamp to the chapel rather than the smaller Waldegrave Drawing Room. But what he said was a real challenge, especially to all educational establishments, which he described as being, in our present culture, 'flattened out and trivialized'.

He was actually talking about the encyclical 'Laudato Si'; but his starting point was reason and what we mean by intellect, and the definition of Aquinas 'as entering into that which is not ourselves'. Our culture lacks the ability to look and see what is before us and to do so reflectively, the encyclical of Pope Francis being an excellent exception. We have an intellectual crisis where thinking has become an instrument of control rather than an as an appreciation of the real; and this is the root of the ecological crisis – a failure to see ourselves in relation, an element in a complex whole.

Creation is intelligent all the way down, communicating, receiving and



transmitting life. Ecology is never a backdrop, a neighbourhood is always communicating intelligently. 'Laudato Si helps to clarify our need for connection in an unprecedented way'. Rowan Williams spoke of 'cultural folly' our present disorder, unreason and internal violence. Responding to the ecological crisis is not just a matter of avoiding environmental disaster, however good that would be, but developing a new paradigm where 'knowing' means growing in communion. It means growing towards a reconciled life, open to the infinite life of the Creator, the communication of life from God. All that is comes from God, His is a justice which flows towards its purpose. Rowan Williams threw down the gauntlet to a Christian

university. There is an opportunity here beyond the current restructuring which at present is engaging the energies of so many at St Mary's.

Rowan Williams went on to talk of the sacramentality of everyday life; he quoted Laudato Si 231 'love overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, which is also civic and political', reality is profoundly interconnected. (This is not to discount necessary action at the macro level). He told us 'we are being summoned to a true cultural revolution', to 'love our neighbour our and our neighbourhood' and in that way witnessing to our belief 'that the world is shot through with the meaning of God.' It was inspiring.

# “Know What Is Going On...”

further.

to explore

Fight for your right to know all the facts

We strive

This was the comment made by an Assumption Sister at a recent PPC and it has kept me thinking ever since.

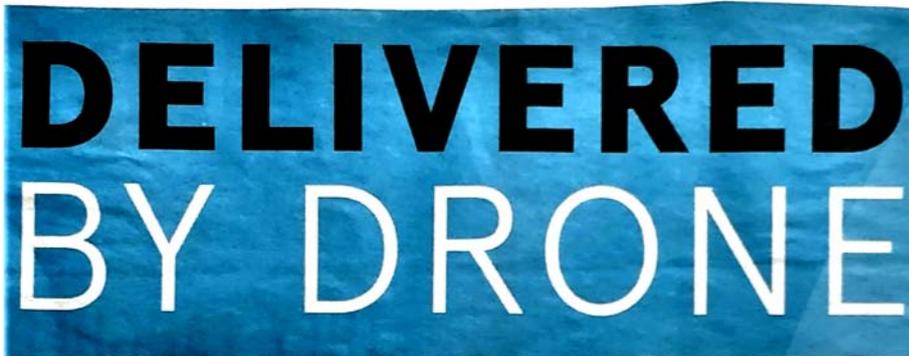
Do I take the trouble to find out, inform myself about God’s world?

I then consider those things especially dear to me: Public Libraries; our wonderful green parks, gardens; the homeless in my Borough, our schools and young people. All these issues and more are our shared responsibility. Our smallest act can influence the whole.

What of Grenfell Tower? That black reminder of a tragedy?

Yes, the truth is that we do need to “know what is going on” as Sr. Christine aptly reminded us.

*Sr. Muriel*



Gove pledges to eliminate scourge of plastic straws

### Guerrilla gardeners use flower power in pothole protest

Residents in Bicester are taking a stand against roads riven by potholes — by filling them with compost and planting flowers. Kizzy Burt and Alyson Eales turned to guerrilla gardening to catch the attention of the council after cold and wet weather caused road



surfaces to crumble in the Oxfordshire town. Ms Eales said that the public response had been very supportive. “Cars were stopping to let us carry on planting,” she said. The council has bought new machinery to mend the roads.

Betting on a slice of American pie

Murdered boy, 17, carried combat knife

# “Walk on Earth Gently”

## - A Multi-Faith invitation to Sustainable Lifestyles

To all members of the human family and to leaders gathered at COP23:

We extend our warm greetings. We represent the world's family of spiritualities, faiths and religions who share a profound gratitude for our precious planet. Earth is a blessing. She supports life and is the basis of all our economies. She conveys beauty and evokes our recognition of something greater than ourselves. She is our temple, our mosque, our sanctuary, our cathedral. Our home.

Our actions now threaten the delicate balance of life on Earth, with climate change posing a most grave danger. Record numbers of severe storms, droughts, fires, and related catastrophes leave trauma and grief in their wake. Recent months have witnessed the tragedy of such occurrences in the Caribbean, the US, and India. We shudder over the enormity of this suffering and over what more lies ahead.

For thousands of years, our traditions have taught us to care for Earth. This responsibility has become urgent in recent decades. Our misuse of Earth's generosity, while improving conditions for many, is not improving them for all and is fraying the web of life. The most vulnerable among us, those least responsible for this global threat, suffer the impacts of a warming climate unfairly and unjustly.

We have begun to respond, raising consciousness and starting to consume more sustainably. We have implored leaders to act. We have studied, prayed and petitioned, advocated, marched and mobilized. We have awakened to the urgent challenge and begun to change our ways.

However, we are at a crossroads. The Paris Agreement affirmed limiting temperature rise to well below 2°C, while pursuing efforts to a far safer



1.5°C limit. Our friends from Fiji and small island states, understanding the stakes and underscoring the science, have told us “1.5 to stay alive.” Yet we are currently headed for warming of 3°C or more, perilously beyond this limit

This challenge is both dire and urgent. It calls for us to act.

As religious and spiritual leaders, we are committing to make changes in our own lives, and to support the members of our communities in doing the same. Together, we come to you with an invitation to embark on a journey towards compassionate simplicity for the sake of the climate, the human family, and the community of life. For many of us, changes in three areas make the greatest impact: dramatically reducing emissions from our home energy use, adopting a plant-based diet and reducing food waste, and minimizing automobile and air travel. Because of the gravity of our situation, substantial and long-term changes in these areas are indispensable if we are to reach a 1.5°C future, particularly for those of us in communities whose carbon footprints exceed sustainable levels. We pledge our commitment to such change.

*Through this collective effort, we look forward to creating a global community of conscience and practice in which we learn to put belief into action in relation to our own lifestyles. Our spiritual and faith communities will give us hope and companions for this journey. We will share ideas,*

*materials, and stories of struggle and success. Our practices of mindfulness, spiritual discipline and prayer will enable us to grow. These ancient teachings and practices, and our renewed commitments and willingness to strive, will help us build pathways towards a sustainable future.*

*We wish to be clear that we understand that systemic change is required to solve this crisis. We will continue to advocate for the policies that are so urgently needed. However, we also believe that individual commitments and behaviours are as important in addressing climate change as they are in addressing poverty, racism, and other grave social ills. And we know that our spiritualities and traditions offer wisdom about finding happiness in a purposeful life, family and friendships, not in an overabundance of things. The world needs such wisdom; it is our privilege both to share and to seek to embody it.*

*We invite you to join the many others willing to walk this path by adding your name to this document, and by preparing to make commitments in the three areas named above. The diverse groups coming together in this moment will reach out to invite you to become involved in a programme of support and action which will take shape over the coming year.*

*Let us pray and hope we can come together in love for each other, those who suffer from climate change, future generations, and planet Earth.*

*Let us commit to walk gently on Earth.*

*“A paso suave con la Tierra”*



# Justice, Peace and the Integrity of

It seems to me that the arts supply a kind of “mortar” in our common search for truth, beauty and goodness.

The beauty of a hand crafted pot; the appreciative visitor to the National Gallery; the wonder of the Palestinian/Israeli orchestra; the creativity alive and well in our society.

There is the everyday “creativity” of those who mend our roads; nurse in our hospitals, teach our children... all artists in their own sphere.

I am concerned as to whether we pay enough homage to the gift of “imagination”.



## Tulip Café

*From S O’Keefe: Reflections/resources  
for Dementia Sufferers. 2011*

Tulip Café,  
Place of safety;  
In the middle of town,  
Walking distance from my home.  
Refuge from loneliness,  
Centre of friendship;  
Tea freshly brewed,  
One cup in every seven free of charge,  
Tulip Café,  
Balm for my soul.

People need people.  
You said of Adam,  
“It is not good that man should be alone”.  
Friends share a smile,  
Waiters who have you as their model  
In Tulip Café;  
Waitresses who listen with hearts that understand,  
Hearts that do not judge,  
Hearts that free me to be who I am,  
Share a cup of 70p tea in Tulip Café.



## Loneliness

Emma (friend) sitting  
waiting for a bus  
in East London...  
Chats to an old lady.

Reply: *“You are the first  
person who has talked to  
me in nearly two weeks.”*

Afterthought: sadly, we  
never found out where  
the lady, Mavis lives.



**Helping Hands:** a patient at the Prickley Ball Farm Hedgehog Rescue Centre, part of a tourist attraction, near Newton Abbot, Devon, that is on sale for £1,275,000

“I believe the Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace.” **Pope Francis, Leudato Si:10**

**Prayer: Lord, help us to live in the Assumption this “wonderful harmony”.**



**Little Boy Blue:** Leo Bartholomew, three, with a lamb at Chapel Amble in Cornwall, where the lambing season starts earlier than most areas because of its mild climate

