

ELY DIOCESAN BOARD FOR CHURCH IN SOCIETY

AUTUMN NEWS 2010



DAME ANNE OWERS TO SPEAK IN CATHEDRAL

We are delighted that Dame Anne Owers, H.M. Chief Inspector of Prisons from 2001 to 2010, and current Chair of Christian Aid, has accepted an invitation from the Criminal Justice Group to give a lecture entitled 'Beyond Prison' for Prisons' Week on Sunday 21st November at 6.30 p.m. in Ely Cathedral. Please display and circulate the attached poster. All are welcome and there is no charge.

Prisons' Week is held every November and gives us an opportunity to think about the criminal justice system and reflect on current issues and our own involvement. The Diocesan Criminal Justice Group is formed of professional and lay people who work or volunteer in the criminal justice system. As we have two prisons in the Diocese we also try to support the work of the Prison Chaplains. The Mothers' Union runs Parenting Courses at HMP Littlehey and has recently trained additional facilitators to work with the new Young Offenders' Unit.

There is a website for Prisons' Week 21 – 27 November, <http://www.prisonweek.org/2010> and this year's theme is 'Be with me' Luke 23 vv. 33-43. Resources for worship etc. can be downloaded from the website.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is a Patron and writes:

“One of the most serious aspects of being in prison can be the sense of isolation and even abandonment; and one of the most effective witnesses that can be given to prisoners is the assurance that they are not forgotten. ‘When I was in prison, you visited me’, says Jesus and this tells us two things – that Jesus is already with those in prison, as he is with all who live in loneliness (including the loneliness of self-reproach or self-hatred); and that he is waiting for us there. I hope and pray that this year’s Prisons Week will help us all to connect with the Jesus who waits for us in prison, and that those undergoing imprisonment will feel confident that they are accompanied in prayer and compassion by the Lord and his servants.”

+ Rowan Cantuar

SOUTH AMERICA REVISITED

As many of you will know, Annie & I worked as missionaries in Argentina and Bolivia from 1977 – 1987. We have never had the opportunity of going back – until last month, when we spent 3 ½ weeks revisiting some of the churches we worked with and also spending some time visiting major sites we had never seen. Most memorable among them was Iguazu Falls and the Jesuit Missions of N E Argentina. If you have seen the film 'The Mission' you will know the area and the story.

The Jesuits went to S America and began evangelising the indigenous Guarani people in the 17th century. They were way ahead of their time in terms of their missiological thinking. They suffered great hardship and often death, reaching peoples who lived at the heart of dense, unexplored jungle. They used music and the arts to engage people in the gospel. They formed communities which were Christ centred but retained much of the structure of Guarani life and hierarchy. They taught the people valuable skills as musicians, masons, carpenters, farmers. They also helped to defend the people from the raids of the slave traders from Brazil. At a time when most considered the indigenous people less than human, they gave dignity to an embattled and exploited people.

However, their success was to be their undoing. They became, economically and militarily, a force to be reckoned with, breeding the fear that they presented a threat to the colonial powers. One by one the rulers of Europe banned them from their territories, leaving the Guarani people defenceless against attack. Now all that remains are the impressive, red sandstone ruins of what were once vibrant communities. There are still small Guarani communities around those ancient sites, living in poverty, selling handicrafts or begging from tourists.

Those who ask for justice and stand up for the poor and the oppressed have rarely been welcomed with open arms. History tells us of the huge opposition, not just from state but from church as well, to those who seek to rock the boat. We found our visit to the Jesuit ruins hugely challenging and were left with the question: what are the causes we need to stand and be counted for today? And, what are the actions we need to take, alongside those who are most vulnerable and oppressed, which we know will cost us dear?

Alan Hargrave
Chair BCS

Ruins of San Ignacio Mini



CIRCLES EAST MAKING GOOD PROGRESS

Another initiative supported by the Criminal Justice Group is the formation of a regional Circle of Support and Accountability for Sex Offenders post release.

Volunteers from a faith background are most welcome for this work and the first regional training session has been held. The Regional Project Manager is Annabel Francis who can be contacted at afrancis@sova.org.uk

She is hopeful that an Ely based Circle may be set up before the end of this year. For further information and an online volunteer application form see www.circles-uk.org.uk and click on the regional link.



ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION TO 'THE TABLET'

The Board has taken out a 6 month trial subscription to 'The Tablet' the weekly RC news magazine which is highly regarded for the quality of the journalism. If you are interested in accessing the online edition, go the website www.thetablet.co.uk and click on 'pdf version'. At the prompt enter email address as bsr@ely.anglican.org and enter password 'thetablet'. It would be most helpful if you could let us know whether you have used this link and found it to be worthwhile.

'LIVING WELL' BY ALAN HARGRAVE



As many of you may know Alan has recently published his second book – 'Living Well'- with SPCK. It is a moving and entertaining read drawing on Alan's lifetime experience first as a student, then as a missionary involved in development work in South America, and finally his current position as a

residentiary Canon in the Cathedral where the Benedictine tradition is still a major influence. Each chapter concludes with questions designed to prompt the reader to reflect on their own lifestyle, contribution to and integration with the community that surrounds us. Available in bookshops now.



NOTICEBOARD

CHURCH URBAN FUND

'A YEAR IN FOCUS 2009-2010'

This Diocese continues to support the work of the Church Urban Fund which is about to hold its annual meeting for Diocesan Link Officers in Leicestershire. On this occasion it will be combined with the Social Responsibility Network giving a good opportunity to share ideas and experience.

The aim of the Church Urban Fund is to relieve poverty wherever it is found. In these days of recession, credit crunch and public sector cutbacks, this role to those most in need in our society will become even more vital. More than 13 million people in the UK – about a fifth of the population - are living in poverty.

A large part of the income comes from individuals and churches and the majority of spending goes directly to supporting community projects in the poorest areas.

At present Mustard Seed Grants of £5000 are available for start up projects. It is necessary to fulfil the criteria relating to level of deprivation, faith links, etc. See www.cuf.org.uk for more details. Hilary Lavis is the DLO and can be contacted on 01353 652720 for initial advice.

The booklet 'A Year in Focus 2009-2010' tells some of the stories of the initiatives funded this year. From this Diocese the visit of the Parish of the Ascension Cambridge to its Mission Partner link project in Spitalfields is highlighted. For information on becoming a CUF Mission Partner see www.cuf.org.uk/act/mission-partners

Voluntary speakers are also sought to help raise awareness of poverty in this country. If you are a confident public speaker and would like to help in this way, then please contact hilary.elliott@cuf.org.uk

CUF also provide a wealth of information and low-cost training for church leaders and community activists. Regular workshops are run at different venues throughout the country in partnership with local dioceses.

If you would like more information about the work of CUF, or would like a copy of the current booklet, please let me know in the Board for Church in Society office as below.

Hilary Lavis, Board for Church in Society, Bishop Woodford House, Barton Rd, Ely, CB7 4DX, bsr@ely.anglican.org tel: 01353 652720