

ISSUE n°3
faith in politics
magazine

in a year



faith in politics
Catholic
Parliamentary
& Public Affairs
Internships

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Foreword

The Faith in Politics Internship has had another successful year, with six more Catholic graduates leaving us equipped to work in public life. Alongside the annual trips, including Brussels and Rome, participation in a course in Catholic Social Teaching, and individually guided spiritual direction, there have been many new experiences for this year's group, including living in More House, Kensington, a trip to Scotland to visit SCIAF and the Scottish Parliament, and the addition of a mid-year retreat.

“
WE ARE GRATEFUL
TO EVERYONE
WHO MAKES THIS
YEAR POSSIBLE

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Our relaunched Faith in Politics Network is thriving, and has held events with Adrian Chiles, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, and Elizabeth Filkin, Nikki Dhillon-Keane and Esther Sweetman, who together formed a panel discussing what we can do to change the culture of domestic abuse. These events foster lively discussion and opportunities for networking, and we look forward to future events.

We are grateful to everyone who makes this year possible: the Members of Parliament and organisations with whom our interns are placed, the team of Jesuit spiritual directors, the teaching staff at St Mary's University, Twickenham, the donors who so generously support our young people, and the interns and alumni who show such deep commitment to the scheme and to living out their faith in a committed way.

Bishop John Arnold

Introduction

The Faith in Politics: Catholic Parliamentary and Public Policy Internships scheme is unique in the way that it offers a foundation of Catholic faith and spiritual formation for those who believe that they may have a vocation to public service in politics or public affairs. Interns commit to a varied year working in Parliament with an MP or in the public affairs teams of the Bishops' Conference and its agencies, and they study for an MA in Catholic Social Teaching. They visit Rome on pilgrimage, to learn how the Vatican works, and how the UK relates to the Holy See. Importantly their journey begins and ends with a retreat, and spiritual guidance is an integral part of their year.

Since 2003, the Faith in Politics scheme has successfully formed Catholics for public life through its robust programme. Interns continue to testify that the Faith in Politics programme strengthens their faith and leaves them feeling more equipped to navigate contemporary life and its many challenges.

The scheme has built a strong network of alumni who want to take this work forward beyond the year of the internship, and into the many different areas in which they work. In fact, almost 100 young Catholics have benefitted from this scheme, and form this group – The Faith in Politics Network.

Hosting debates, talks and social events, the Faith in Politics Network provides an opportunity for the thought-provoking and enriching experiences of interns on the Catholic Parliamentary and Public Policy Internship scheme to continue beyond their internship year. The events put on by the Faith in Politics Network provide ongoing formation for alumni of the scheme who are looking to continue to learn how to implement Catholic Social Teaching in their daily lives.

We are immensely grateful for the support which the scheme has had from so many people over the years and without which it simply could not continue. We believe that it makes a difference: to the mission of the Church, to civic life in our country, and to those with whom the interns work, especially the MPs, seeing a different aspect of the Catholic Church.

Greg Pope and Steph MacGillivray
Coordinators of Faith in Politics

This year our interns were:

Rosa Lewis
Leila Bousbaa
Jonathan Lunness
Niamh Buckingham
Aaron Humphriss
Lucy Jordan



Rome

Enriching,
informative, prayerful
and emotional.

Jonathan muses over the
trip of a lifetime.

After a 3:30am wakeup, 4:15am taxi ride to Heathrow and a quick nap on the plane, we stepped into the midday sun in Rome on 10th April. The initial tiredness faded away and the excitement set in as we caught our first glimpses of the Eternal City on our way to Villa Irlanda, which is attached to the Pontifical Irish College, where we stayed during our trip. With no time to spare in our packed itinerary, we dumped our suitcases and after a quick change of clothes we headed to our first meeting.

We arrived at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development to meet with Fr Augusto Zampini. Fr Zampini spoke passionately about the Vatican's work in this important area, discussing areas such as the environment and human ecology, exploring how we all as Catholics are called by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* to engage with this topic.

Following an interesting and lively discussion, feeling sufficiently inspired, we began our meander through the streets of Rome to the British Embassy to the Holy See. It was an honour and privilege to accept the invitation of the Deputy Ambassador to a briefing and reception to learn more about the work of the Embassy. We were welcomed to the Ambassador's Residence where we were given an insight into the world of diplomacy, exploring the interactions between the UK and The Holy See and how that relationship can develop. After the briefing, a range of Britons who live and work in Rome joined us for a reception hosted by the Ambassador. We all felt incredibly lucky to have the chance to chat with such a diverse range of interesting and accomplished people.

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Our second day in Rome began with a trip to St. Peter's Basilica. Seeing St. Peter's square at daybreak was an incredible sight, basked in the glow of the morning sun and free from the crowds of tourists and worshippers which usually occupy it. Fr Dushan, one of our spiritual directors for the year, accompanied us on the trip and we were lucky enough to celebrate Mass at the Chapel of St. John XXIII which was a very moving experience. We weren't able to hang around for long, as our day was packed full with more meetings. Archbishop de Noia was kind enough to give us some of his time to discuss the work that the Church is doing in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. We talked about the changing focus of his work over the decades which was an important and engaging discussion. Following this, we met with representatives from the Youth and Women Office at the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life which left us full of hope and positivity for the future of our Church.

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After these meetings, we walked back over towards St. Peter's where we were given a tour of the Apostolic Palace by Mgr Robert Murphy. This was a surreal experience, being granted such an opportunity and privileged access. We explored the stunning Sistine Chapel and took in the breath-taking views of the Rome skyline, all the while guided by the knowledgeable and informative Mgr Murphy. As if this wasn't enough, we had the honour to meet Cardinal Parolin which was a humbling moment.

The third day in Rome began with a Mass at the Church of the Gesu, in the rooms of St. Ignatius. This Mass was particularly poignant as Fr Dushan is a Jesuit. Another packed day awaited us, mainly focusing on the outward face of the Church dealing with communications. We had the pleasure to meet Sean-Patrick Lovett of the Vatican Radio Service, who led a lively discussion and helped us understand just how vast the network of the Catholic Church is. Additionally, we met with Cindy Wooden, who works for the Catholic News Service.

Cindy was able to recount many fascinating tales about the work she undertakes, including accompanying the Holy Father to report on His trips abroad. We were lucky to experience such insights into the world of communications and journalism. To help us understand the ecumenical work that is done, we were given the opportunity to question Fr Tony Curren of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Following three days of meetings and discussions, we were ready for a more relaxing pace. That is exactly what we found on our pilgrimage to Assisi. It was a glorious day and we were able to take in the stunning landscape as we walked through the streets, stopping off at various Churches, including a Mass at the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi. The day was truly full of gratitude, prayer and reflection, enjoyed together as not just a group of interns or colleagues, but close friends.

Our final day in Rome did not disappoint by any measure. We were welcomed by the Venerable English College for a beautiful Palm Sunday Mass, with a particularly moving homily that left us inspired. The Mass finished slightly before midday and we decided to chance our luck and venture to St. Peter's Square to soak up the atmosphere after the Mass celebrated by the pope. As we arrived, we managed to make our way to the front of the barriers. The Pope was amongst the crowds in the Popemobile, greeting the jubilant crowds. To our utter amazement, The Pope drove right in front of us smiling and waving. We all discussed how moved we felt, how blessed we were and proceeded to immediately start phoning every Catholic in our phonebooks to let them know (starting of course with our grandmothers). A moment we will all cherish forever.

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Thus ended our visit to the Eternal City. It was enriching, informative, prayerful and at times emotional. We regularly reminisce about the visit, the people we met and the places we visited. I'm sure we will continue to do so for a long time to come. We are all incredibly grateful to all those who gave up their time to meet with us, to Greg and Steph for organising it all, and to Fr Dushan for accompanying us. Truly it was the trip of a lifetime.



Rome



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Rome



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Brussels

Walking through the same corridors that so many great leaders have walked through

Leila reflects on her time in the European Parliament.

Our trip to Brussels was uplifting and inspiring. We visited lots of organisations doing great work, especially with regards to human ecology and the environment. We were filled with hope that Catholics can lead the way in efforts to change how we live to combat climate change and begin to see the world around us having a population and a natural environment worthy of dignity, respect and protection. However, this was bittersweet at times as we also had to confront the fact that our country is making efforts to move further away from some of these organisations and the forward-thinking initiatives in Brussels.

On our second day in Brussels we had the experience of attending a book presentation in the European Parliament's library. Andrew Copson was presenting his new book, which is entitled 'Secularism: Politics, Religion, and Freedom'. The event was hosted by the European Parliament's Vice-President, Mairead McGuinness. It was a truly privileged opportunity to see first-hand the ways in which dialogue is encouraged and facilitated in the European Parliament. Observing the ways in which different stakeholders and MEPs engaged with the book-presentation was interesting and showed me the primacy that freedom of speech holds within the European Parliament. Afterwards we were able to speak briefly with Ms. McGuinness, who explained her roles and responsibilities within the European Parliament, as well as taking the time to find out about the work that we are undertaking as interns.

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“ WE WERE ALL CHALLENGED TO HEAR MANY DIFFERENT VIEWS AND OPINIONS. ”

Picking out a highlight from the trip to Brussels is not easy as there were so many special moments. The afternoon spent in the European Parliament was particularly amazing. It felt surreal to be walking through the same corridors that so many great leaders have walked through – including the Holy Father! During our afternoon we were able to meet Charles Tannock, who is a Conservative MEP. Mr. Tannock was wonderful to talk to, and he was very candid about his time as a MEP and the work that the European Parliament does. I think that we were all challenged, particularly on this day, to hear many different views and opinions. As someone in a slight minority within his party, Dr Tannock remains convinced that Brexit must be stopped, which resulted in discussions regarding party identity and the breakdown of traditional political divides.

Not only was Dr Tannock able to provide an insight into Brexit from the party-political side of things, he was also able to discuss eventualities in the case Brexit were to be delayed and how the European Union would deal with this and the difficulties that may arise. Following on from this meeting, we were lucky enough to visit the House of European History, which featured many interesting displays and European memorabilia. It’s important to remember that wherever our country finds itself in decades to come, in or out of the European Union, we have a deep connection to the continent of Europe and a common history, which cannot be erased. This museum served as a perfect reminder of that.

All in all, it was a wonderful trip and the people we met brightened what would otherwise be a cold, grey few days in February! We were looked after very well by COMECE, the commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the EU. At the end of our visit, we were optimistic that whilst the rise of populism across the continent and the fallout of Brexit will continue to create political turmoil, COMECE will serve as a stable and honest conscience for the EU, and England and Wales will be allowed to have a voice on that political stage. Beyond our meetings with various EU representatives, we all really enjoyed exploring the city and eating frites and waffles every day! We feel very blessed and privileged to have had this opportunity and hope the annual visit continues post-Brexit.



Scotland

Returning to familiar soil.

Lucy embarks on familiar territory, finding out what makes Scotland so special.

The interns and I had a wonderful couple of days in Scotland in March. For me and Rosa, it was like returning home as we both studied in Edinburgh before starting the internship. For some of the interns it was their first visit to Scotland, so there was a lot to learn!

Beginning with an uncharacteristically sunny day in Glasgow, we spent the day visiting SCIAF (Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund). Leila and I were particularly interested to meet the advocacy team who are doing similar work to that being done at Caritas Social Action Network and CAFOD but in a different political context. We discussed a wide range of topics from school strikes, to individual action to reduce our carbon footprints, to promoting sustainable development across the world.

We all agreed the importance of highlighting that the people who will be affected most severely by climate catastrophe are those who are already the worst off, and who are the least responsible for damaging the environment. It was wonderful to learn about the opportunity Scotland has to be a leading example in combatting climate change and about the excellent work being done by SCIAF to encourage this. We were also happy to meet members of the Integral Human Development Department, the Outreach, Fundraising and Communications team and Alistair Dutton, Director of SCIAF. It was a brilliant day and we left feeling inspired from meeting the various teams and learning about how they contribute to supporting the organisation to give a hand up to people in need across the world.

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The next day we met with Anthony Horan, Director of the Catholic Parliamentary Office of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland. We discussed the benefits of having a parliament more open to 'the people' which is therefore easier to engage with. We were very fortunate to be able to watch First Minister's Questions, have a lunch with Catholic MSPs Kate Forbes, Annie Wells, Mike Rumbles and Elaine Smith, and a tour of the Scottish Parliament. It was wonderful to see First Minister's Questions being conducted in a far more mature and productive manner than we are used to in Westminster! It was also inspiring to hear from the Catholic MSPs that, even regarding divisive issues such as Scottish Independence, there are generally good relationships between MSPs from different parties in Holyrood. We came away feeling that we in England have a lot to learn from the openness, accessibility and sustainability of the Scottish Parliament.

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A personal highlight of the trip was the tour of Holyrood which was particularly interesting as we learnt how the architecture reflects the underlying principles of politics in Scotland. The semi-circular layout of the debating chamber encourages cooperative rather than combative debate, anyone can enter the Parliament which encourages the people to feel more connected to the decisions being made inside, and the way the building seems to emerge from the land emphasises the connection between the Scottish people and the land.



All in all it was a fantastic trip. We felt so lucky to have the opportunity to learn more about politics 'over the border' and to be motivated to bring back some of what we learnt to our work in London. Much of our internship has been overshadowed by Brexit chaos so it was good to be in a place with some distance and perspective on events in Westminster and to think of Scotland as a country which can lead the way on issues such as climate change.



A day in the life

Niamh Buckingham
Parliamentary Intern

As a parliamentary intern, there is no typical day in the office as the political scene changes so rapidly. I work for a member of the Opposition Frontbench, so my work is largely policy-related which I find hugely interesting. On any given day, I may process the post and answer emails; prepare weekly 'top lines' (updates) for our brief to send out to all Opposition members and staff; manage my MP's diary and accompany him to meetings with stakeholders; and work with the team to produce press releases.

Every five weeks the Secretary of State is called to the chamber for oral questions, which is our opportunity to hold him to account, ask questions of his Department and raise important concerns in an official manner. It requires a great deal of preparation, including producing a thirty-page brief in advance, and that week is always very busy and stressful. But a successful oral questions session is incredibly satisfying – especially when afterwards my MP is trending on Twitter!

Some of the longer-term projects I work on involve liaising with the constituency office on policy matters, carrying out research and speaking to the House of Commons Library, and writing letters on my MP's behalf to make representations to the relevant Ministers. Often MPs are the last port of call for

constituents and so their cases can be quite desperate. Whilst not always producing the solution they were hoping for, it gives me great job satisfaction to know that my day in the office has been meaningful with real life benefits. For me it is important to not get caught up in the bubble of politics!

AS A PARLIAMENTARY INTERN, THERE IS NO TYPICAL DAY IN THE OFFICE AS THE POLITICAL SCENE CHANGES SO RAPIDLY.

After nine months in the job, I feel I have a good grasp of a wide range of issues and an understanding of how parliamentary procedure works (or doesn't work). Parliament is a great workplace because the atmosphere is so lively and fast-paced. It is surreal to bump into famous politicians and walk through the Palace of Westminster, dating back over a thousand years. I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to have been in the thick of it for a year – particularly one so historic and unprecedented with Brexit.

After a busy day at work, I usually destress in the parliamentary gym (or with a pint in the on-site bar!) before heading back to our halls. The highlight of my day is often the amazing dinners that are cooked for us and catching up with my fellow interns and other students over the mealtime. Other evenings, we are invited to exclusive receptions and events where we can meet inspiring leaders, network with other people working in politics and public affairs and sample lots of canapés!

Niamh walks us through a visit to HMP Wandsworth.

On Friday 10th May the interns and I had the opportunity to visit HMP Wandsworth for the day. On the way there, we talked about how none of us had ever been to a prison or knew anyone who had served a sentence and approached the day with some degree of trepidation.

We were all taken by how much Wandsworth was really like the Victorian prisons of old depicted in popular culture and our childhood imaginations, complete with Jeremy Bentham's panopticon setup, jangling chains and an overpowering smell of dampness.

Our base for the day was the chaplaincy office – a small, cosy haven in an otherwise wholly grim environment. There we were looked after by a truly inspiring team including a Catholic deacon, Anglican priest, a young imam and a comedy duo of Quakers.

Over tea they told us about the inmates in their care, explaining that the vast majority were working class, suffered from mental illness, passed their childhoods in and out of foster care or in the service of gangs, with histories of physical and sexual abuse. Whilst some had been charged with violent offenses, many more had not.

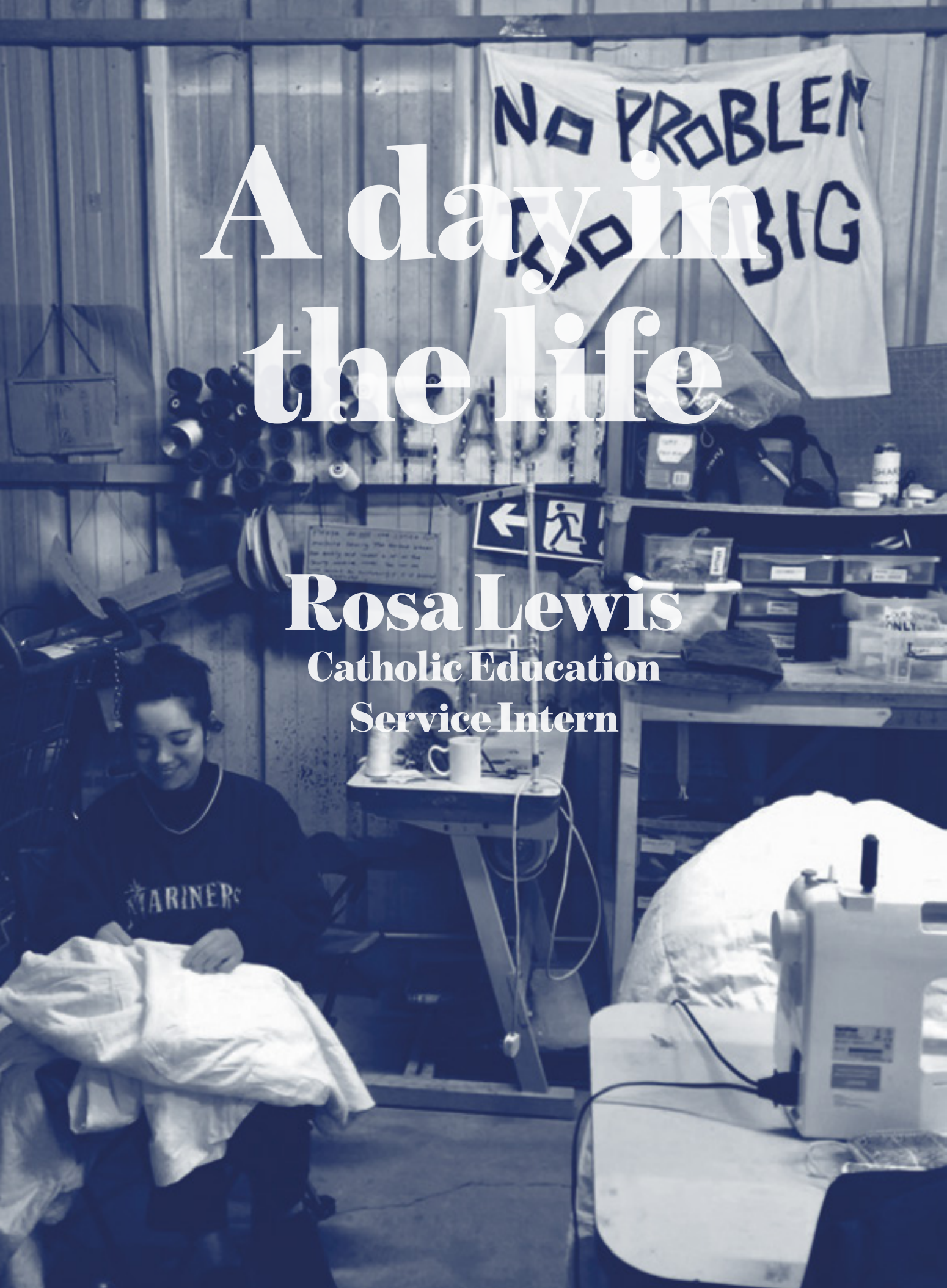
They worked hard to instil a degree of hope and self-worth in those they engaged with but admitted that this was a difficult task – both in the face of their conditions and, realistically, their future out of prison, and in light of their personal, often tragic, histories.

It became clear to us that the current prison system is under crisis and if nothing changes, then we can expect prisons to nosedive rapidly and irreversibly. We only spent one day there but the overriding impression we left with of the chaplains was one of immensely good intentions, but also persons under breaking point.

The horrors of the situation were crystallised when, as we left, one inmate called out to us emphatically: "This is not a museum." One could only think, no but such institutions ought to be condemned to one.

We are very grateful to Reverend Deacon Robert Wellbelove and his colleagues for organising our visit and for giving up their time to host us. It was truly a fascinating and enlightening experience, and we were all inspired and moved by their dedication to their vocation. We committed to keeping them in our prayers and for acting as witnesses to the harsh realities they face – often invisibly.

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 ”



A day in the life

Rosa Lewis
Catholic Education
Service Intern

No two days are the same in my public affairs role with the Catholic Education Service (CES). The role requires proactivity and reactivity due to the ever-changing landscape of parliamentary business. All of this is achieved as part of a dynamic and close-knit team.

My days are formed around a mixture of short-term and long-term projects. One day could see me drafting parliamentary questions, whilst in another I could be writing a briefing to inform MPs and Peers on relevant issues.

Our days are by no means confined to the office, and during my placement I have been able to visit some of our wonderful Catholic schools, journey to Wales to see the Senedd, attend events at Parliament and well as meet and engage with parliamentarians and their staffers.

The CES is blessed to have access to daily Mass, which means there is great integration between faith and the workplace! I have thoroughly enjoyed my year at the CES and I'm looking forward to using the skills I have learned in wherever God takes me next!

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Academic Studies

Aaron reflects on a year of studying Catholic Social Teaching.

Alongside our work placements and spiritual direction programme, we have been studying for a Postgraduate Certificate in Catholic Social Teaching (CST) with St Mary's University, Twickenham. CST consists of the official teaching of the Church on social justice issues, promoting a vision of a society rooted in the common good. As we have all discovered, it is an essential aspect of the faith.

The course is taught over two modules. The first, named "Principles and History of Catholic Social Teaching", examines the theoretical and historical element of CST by drawing on the sources of the tradition in both the Old and New Testaments, the early Church Fathers, theologians and papal encyclicals ranging from Rerum Novarum (1891) to Laudato Si (2015).

The second module, "Catholic Social Teaching Applied", explores the many ways in which the Church has applied the tradition to issues such as unemployment, migration, racism, homelessness, war and the European Union. The most prominent feature of the second module has to be the amazing range of distinguished guest speakers who are Catholics in the public sphere. For example, we have been very fortunate to attend a lecture delivered by John Bruton (the former Taoiseach of Ireland).

It is safe to say that learning about CST has been transformative. The course has challenged my previously held views, leading to significant changes in my political opinions and general outlook. Knowledge of CST was also vital during the selection process for my new internship with the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York which I will begin in September.

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Rosa looks back on the benefits of spiritual direction.

In essence, the Internship year is time set aside to grow in self-knowledge. So far, the year has been a whirlwind of studying, travelling, laughing and Brexit, let alone getting to grips with the realities of everyday working life. The busy year of work and study is punctuated by regular spiritual direction and retreats. These moments of reflection are vital in such a rich and packed programme. The interns are accompanied throughout the year by the wonderful Laudato Si' Community. Ruth, Fr. Jim and Fr. Dushan are a group of Jesuits who are interpreting and living out the values which are espoused in the Holy Father's encyclical of the same name.

The Laudato Si' Community accompany us in every sense of the word (indeed Fr. Dushan is coming on the trip to Rome!). In their role as Spiritual Directors we are able to divulge any issues, spiritual or otherwise that we feel we would like to discuss. The spiritual direction not only enriches what is already an incredible year but provides the opportunity for us to fully appreciate the significance of the moments that we are experiencing.

As Jesuits, the Laudato Si' Community is suffused with Ignatian spirituality. This nuanced, thoughtful and reflective way of assessing both prayer and daily life has been transformative for each of the interns. What has been truly outstanding is to see how much the times of Spiritual Direction have enabled us to know ourselves better. Surprising decisions have been reached through careful reflection and becoming better attuned to the ways in which God speaks to us in our lives. Each of us has had very different experiences of spiritual direction, and I have been amazed by the breakthroughs that we have each had.

We undertake three retreats throughout the year, the first and last at Saint Bueno's retreat centre and the middle at the new SPEC retreat house in Pinner. We also have days of recollection at the Laudato Si' house in Clapham Common. It has been such a blessing to experience the internship with a bunch of people who have grown into firm friends and I believe that the retreats have really bonded the intern group together. The time on retreat is given over to simply being with one another in the presence of God, and that is really precious

Saint Bueno's is nothing short of idyllic. The retreat centre sits upon a hill, surveying the beautiful countryside of Rhyll in North Wales. The building was once inhabited by the great poet and Jesuit, Gerard Manly Hopkins, and the surrounding nature inspired some of his most loved works. It is in Bueno's that we were first shown the mechanics of Ignatian spirituality. A key element of Ignatian spirituality is choice, freedom and attention to the ways in which you are being moved. Buenos, in a funny sort of way, embodies this - the centre is full of hidden nooks and crannies, libraries, chapels and even an art room. Only when I had so much time to fill with whatever I wanted to, did I realise what a luxury this truly is!

Our mid-year retreat was similarly refreshing. Taking time to come together and recapitulate on the year so far was much needed. We have each had such different experiences of the internship due to our placements, so was great to come together and take the time to appreciate how far we had each come as individuals and a collective.

One of the most treasured parts of the accompaniment that we have received from the Laudato Si' Community is the abiding sense that each of us will take forward the insights and lessons from our time with them into the future. Learning the rudiments of Ignatian spirituality has made us each more emotionally and spiritually literate and this has engendered a shift of perspective in each of us.

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Christine Allen

Leila interviews the new CEO of CAFOD.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE ROLE AS DIRECTOR OF CAFOD AND WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO IT?

I was aware of the vacancy, but I was approached by the organisation doing the search for suitable candidates on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Using search agencies (often called head-hunters!) is not unusual for senior posts.

My last job was with Christian Aid, so I have been working closely alongside CAFOD for many years and was well known to a few people within the organisation. I wasn't surprised that the head-hunters approached me. I am a Catholic who has been working in development for a while. In 2001 I became Executive Director of Progressio (CIIR) and most recently was Director of Policy & Public Affairs at Christian Aid. I am quite well-known in the sector, having also served on the Board of Bond – in fact I was Vice Chair for a few years. As a Catholic working in international development, I can't think of a better place than CAFOD! My job at Christian Aid was fantastic, and it was quite a wrench to leave, but CAFOD really is my natural home. Obviously, like many women, I asked myself whether I had the skills and experience to lead such a large and well-respected organisation. I thought I do and thankfully the trustees agreed!

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY DIFFICULTIES AS A DIRECTOR SO FAR, IF SO, DOES YOUR FAITH PLAY A PART IN TACKLING THEM?

So far, the biggest challenge has been taking it all in. I have worked alongside CAFOD for many years, but that is never the same as being in the organisation. There is a lot to learn. Many people have commented that I have already worked for CAFOD, but that was thirty years ago, and a lot has changed since then. So I am listening and talking to people and trying to get a clear sense of the many things going on in CAFOD. I am very pleased to be coming in during a new strategy development process, and we've slowed that down a bit to reflect more fully with staff and others about our way forward. CAFOD has been reflecting on Pope Francis' Laudato Si' document, and we have all been asking ourselves what it really means in practice if we hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth and to respond in a way that is authentic to that teaching.

Given that, it won't surprise you that my faith is central to who I am! It is therefore always going to play a role in my life whether it's celebrating success or facing challenges. I find Ignatian spirituality very helpful and often use the Examen in reflecting on my days/weeks. The questions at the heart of the Exercises – what have I done for Christ?

What am I doing for Christ? What ought I do for Christ? – are very powerful in helping me to take time to reflect and to place myself in the service of God.

I have just spent time in Rome with the global Caritas family and it has been very inspiring to meet people from all round the world who are themselves all responding to local need, putting their faith into practice or acting in solidarity with others. It has been really humbling to have so many Caritas colleagues – from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Mozambique and lots of other places – come up to me and thank me for the support and solidarity they have received from CAFOD. We can only do that because of the amazing support of the Catholic community at home. Knowing that I am part of the global Catholic movement of solidarity is a very empowering thing. CAFOD is the link between a parish community in England and Wales and so many other communities around the world. By being part of something bigger, we add value, expertise, voice and influence. Parish twinning relationships may feel intimate, but the kind of support that the Caritas community offers is so much more effective.

BE CONFIDENT ABOUT YOUR CONTRIBUTION AND LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

WHAT DO YOU DO TO DE-STRESS?

So, recognising the potential of the global family actually helps me deal with stress. It puts things in perspective. Sometimes we feel stress because we think things are overwhelming or are much bigger than they actually are. I see my small role in the global movement, I don't feel alone. The Exercises

help too in putting things in perspective. Aside from that I enjoy music, spending time with my family and all the usual stuff!

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO YOUNG PEOPLE WANTING A CAREER IN THE THIRD SECTOR?

The third sector is not homogenous – there is a wide range of opportunities from small and local through to large, highly professional outfits. Whatever you do, the skills are the same, so don't feel "it's only...." Be confident about your contribution and learn as much as you can from others.

Don't be afraid to ask for advice, guidance or mentoring from people who have more experience. They do like to be asked!! I have mentored young people in different organisations myself and I learned by doing it too, so it's not just one-way. Supporting the intern scheme is just one thing that CAFOD does to support young people across its work, whether in voluntary or paid capacities - I am so proud to be part of an organisation that takes that seriously.

Quo Vadis

LUCY JORDAN

I have had a wonderful 10 months working at Caritas Social Action Network. It has been fantastic to work in a place surrounded by people who are motivated by shared values to support those at the margins of society and promote the common good. The experiences I have gained have made me even more committed to pursuing a career in social justice. I am moving back to Edinburgh in September (where I studied) so I hope to find a job in environmental or social justice in Scotland. My internship has given me the confidence and experience to make this possible.



AARON HUMPHRISS

This year really has been a life-changing experience! Having spent time working in a parliamentary office, engaging with an excellent spiritual direction programme and developing my understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, I feel that the Faith in Politics internship scheme has allowed me to grow as an individual in ways I would never have imagined. I am looking forward to using the skills I have learned over the last year at my new placement with the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York. Once my time there comes to an end, I will continue to discern an intensely felt vocation to the priesthood.



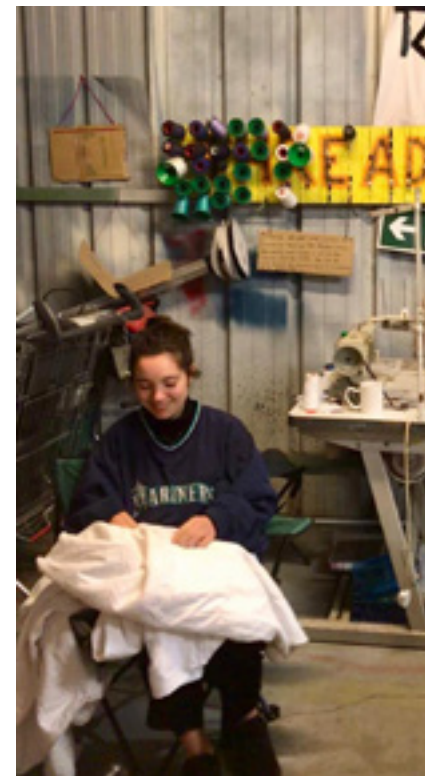
JONATHAN LUNNESS

It has been an incredible year working for Chris Green MP in Parliament. Working for an MP offers you the chance to see a different side to politics, including all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes. Of course, it has been quite a rollercoaster of a year in politics and so to have had the privilege of being Parliament during this period has been something I will never forget. After this year, although nothing is set in stone, I have enjoyed my time so much I hope to continue working in Parliament for a while longer. I will be forever grateful to the Bishop's Conference for giving me this opportunity.



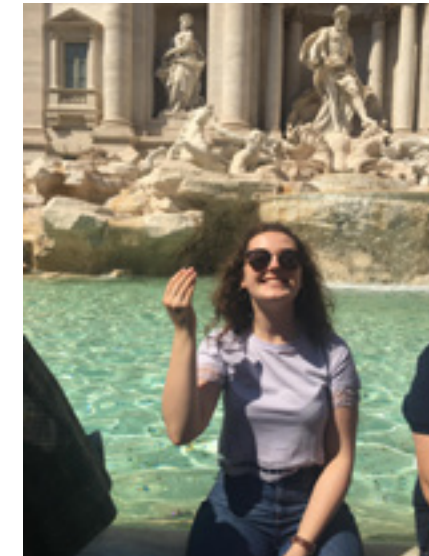
ROSA LEWIS

Throughout the year I have seen my fellow interns grow in skills and confidence, learning to apply their gifts in their respective workplaces and learning to adapt to the pace of London life too! The various elements of the internship have allowed us to grow in self-knowledge and each of us have, I believe, perceptibly felt different avenues open up - careers and opportunities that would have previously seemed unrealistic or impenetrable are now a possibility. As the year draws to a close I am keen to continue using the tools that the internship has furnished me with to develop more. It is for this reason that I would like to keep working within politics. I am excited to discover what the future holds in store for each of us..



NIAMH BUCKINGHAM

My plans are not set in stone but I am hoping to continue working as a Parliamentary Assistant to build on the experience, skills and network I have developed throughout the year. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in Parliament and I am extremely grateful for the opportunities and stepping stone into a career the internship has offered. Ultimately I aim to work in policy and public affairs in the third sector to make a meaningful difference.



LEILA BOUSBAA

I have been working as a Parliamentary Assistant for CAFOD. I have absolutely loved the role, It has truly been an amazing experience. This internship presented the opportunity to assist The Climate Coalition with their Green Heart Hero Awards, and from that opportunity I have managed to secure a role in there campaigns team.



Faith in Politics Network

What is the Faith in Politics Network?

The Faith in Politics Network is a forum which gives young professionals a chance to meet and network. Our aims are to spark and encourage free discussion and meaningful debate around the themes of faith, politics, public life, social action and responsibility. The Network is also a supportive network for young professionals in a world where balancing work and life isn't always as easy as it sounds!

The inspiration for the Faith in Politics Network came from the thought-provoking and enriching experiences of interns on Faith in Politics: Catholic Parliamentary and Public Policy Internship Scheme. Alumni of the scheme had long voiced a desire to take this work forward beyond the year of the internship, and into the many and diverse areas in which we work. Now we want to widen the group and invite all young professionals to share in these important conversations about our changing society.

What does the Faith in Politics Network do?

The Network hosts a range of events, from talks with guest speakers to drinks and networking.

Previous events have included: two young refugees talking about their journey across Europe; a panel discussion on women, Catholicism, and politics; a debate on the future of the EU and its relevance to young people; a quiz night; and a screening of *The Divide*, a film about young people striving for a better life in the USA and the UK followed by a discussion.

We have so far hosted three events in our 2018-19 series.

The first of these was broadcaster Adrian Chiles talking about his faith, football, and being a Catholic in the media. Adrian displayed his trademark good humour while also talking seriously about his faith and how it influences his daily life. The evening of course couldn't go by without some heated discussions about football, with some friendly rivalry being displayed over a glass of wine after the talk.

In April we had a fantastic evening with Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson who gave us an honest and thought-provoking account of what it is like to live with a disability, the role that faith can play in one's personal and political life, and what it is like to be a woman in sport. Fun, warm and insightful, this evening was a real highlight for the Faith in Politics Network.

Most recently, we hosted a panel discussion to discuss what we as Catholics

can do to positively change the culture on domestic abuse in families, at work, and in our churches.

This is an issue which is high on the political and social agenda, and as a faith community it is important that we learn how to tackle this often hidden problem. We spoke with Elizabeth Filkin CBE, Chair of the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse, to which the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is a signatory, Esther Sweetman, herself a survivor of domestic abuse who is now the Survivors Network Coordinator at Restored, an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against women, and Nikki Dhillon-Keane, a counsellor and author of *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities: a safe pastoral response*. It was an evening full of information and positivity as we came together to think about what we can do to make real change, and we are looking forward to releasing the recording of this event as a podcast in the summer.



If you have news that you would like to share with the Network then please let us know.

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stay in touch...

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