



ACSJC Monthly Briefing September 2013 No 149



From the Secretariat, September 2013

Dear Friends,

As Social Justice Sunday approaches, now is the time to place your orders for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement. Parishes, schools and groups can order printed copies (minimum of 10) from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council. The order form can be found on the ACSJC [website](#).

Social Justice Sunday is celebrated on 29 September. The title of this year's Social Justice Statement is 'Lazarus at Our Gate: A critical moment in the fight against world poverty'.

Reflecting on the theme of the Statement, Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman of the ACSJC, speaks of the Millennium Development Goals:

'...the proportion of people in the world living in extreme poverty has been halved since 1990. That is only one of the great achievements brought about by work towards the MDGs and proves that development aid works.

'These achievements also call us to think hard about the important tasks still ahead of us. The benchmark for extreme poverty is an income of \$1.25 per day. Can we as Christians really say that that is sufficient? ... Once we have understood that the struggle against profound poverty has produced real achievements, we need to ask where the real faces of poverty are to be found today,' the Bishop urges.

One of the 'faces of poverty' highlighted in the Bishops' Statement relates to the millions of people who are displaced – fleeing their homes in search of safety, asylum and a secure future. There are 45 million forcibly displaced around the world – the highest level since 1994.

'These are men, women and children driven from their homes by war or civil violence.

'Often these people are forced to seek refuge in countries that are themselves facing significant struggles. Eighty per cent of refugees are seeking protection in developing countries, making it even harder for those nations to lift themselves out of poverty. ...

'Not only have these people lost access to their livelihoods, their extended families and their faith communities, but they are very often prevented from moving around freely, earning a living wage or planning for their futures. Those displaced from their homes are prone to



disease and trauma, causing them to experience poverty at many different levels, no matter how high their education or employment levels before.

Facing these odds, it is no wonder that many are forced into desperate choices – living hand-to-mouth in slums or shanty towns, or spending their last savings on risky journeys to places they hope can protect them,’ the bishops say.

This concern for refugees and asylum seekers is brought into sharp relief in the context of the current federal election, where politicians have inflamed fear about increasing numbers of asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat. As the bishops point out in their Statement:

‘In 2012, as a country like Pakistan struggled to accommodate 1.6 million refugees, Australia’s political leaders and media whipped up hysteria over the arrival of 17,000 asylum seekers in Australian waters.’

A basic level of human solidarity has been lacking in political debate on this issue over the past decade.

Bishop Saunders says in his foreword: ‘People in circumstances like these were central to Christ’s mission on earth. These are the ones he went out of his way to hear and to serve. As Christians, we are called to be inspired by and to imitate his care and to make their needs our needs. Pope Paul VI called us to build a world where “Lazarus can sit down at the same table with the rich man”.’

Order forms, associated resources and information about the Social Justice Statement can be found on the ACSJC [website](#).

Here is an entry for your parish bulletin or school newsletter:

We celebrate Social Justice Sunday on 29 September. This year’s Social Justice Statement is titled: ‘Lazarus at our Gate: A critical moment in the fight against world poverty’.

The Statement urges all Australians to focus on our obligation to help the world’s poorest and to work to combat poverty wherever it is found. Although progress has been made over the past decade in the fight against extreme poverty, one billion people still live on less than \$1.25 per day, and 20 per cent of the world’s poor live in countries near Australia.

For further details about the Social Justice Statement, visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council [website](#) or call (02) 8306 3499.

I am grateful for any of efforts of your part to promote this Statement and the celebration of Social Justice Sunday on 29 September.

John Ferguson

National Executive Officer





Current Issues/Resources, September 2013

MEDIA RELEASE: 'A VOTE FOR JUSTICE'

Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, has called on all eligible voters to remain attentive to issues of justice at the next federal election. 'Each voter shares a responsibility to keep alive the critical faculty, to analyse carefully all policies put forward by the various political parties and individual candidates, and to judge carefully the moral worth of all proposals, before casting a ballot in the September 7th election. On some important issues too many politicians have scrambled to occupy what can only be described as the lowest moral baseline. Asylum seekers and refugees have been treated badly, socially debased by the ambitions of political expediency. Indigenous Australians continue to be disempowered and the once favoured principle of "Self Determination" has been overpowered by an unhelpful emphasis on a service delivery model. ... The Christian citizen will judge carefully and wisely, before exercising the responsibility of voting,' he said. 'There is a marvellous opportunity here to vote for social justice in our land.' [Link](#)

POPE FRANCIS CALLS FOR PEACE IN SYRIA

Following Angelus on Sunday 25 August, Pope Francis said, 'With great suffering and concern I continue to follow the situation in Syria. The increase in violence in a war between brothers, with the proliferation of massacres and atrocities, that we all have been able to see in the terrible images of these days, leads me once again raise my voice that the clatter of arms may cease. It is not confrontation that offers hope to resolve problems, but rather the ability to meet and dialogue.

'From the bottom of my heart, I would like to express my closeness in prayer and solidarity with all the victims of this conflict, with all those who suffer, especially children, and I invite you to keep alive the hope of peace. I appeal to the international community to be more sensitive to this tragic situation and make every effort to help the beloved Syrian nation find a solution to a war that sows destruction and death.' [Link](#)

VATICAN COMMUNIQUE ON WORLD PEACE DAY

A communiqué released by the Holy See says that 'Fraternity, the foundation and pathway to peace' will be the theme of the 47th World Day of Peace in 1 January 2014. 'As the theme of his first Message for the World Day of Peace, Pope Francis has chosen Fraternity. Since the beginning of his Petrine Ministry, the Pope has stressed the need to combat the "throwaway culture" and to promote instead a "culture of encounter", in order to build a more just and peaceful world. Fraternity is a dowry that every man and every woman brings with himself or herself as a human being, as a child of the one Father. In the face of the many tragedies that afflict the family of nations – poverty, hunger, underdevelopment, conflicts, migrations, pollution, inequalities, injustice, organised crime, fundamentalisms – fraternity is the foundation and the pathway to peace.' [Link](#)

2013 FEDERAL ELECTION RESOURCES



The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has issued the major Election Statement ‘A Vote for the Common Good’, which addresses the issues of poverty, marriage and family, child protection, life, Indigenous Australians, refugees and migration, education, health, peace and development, and ecology and sustainability. The Bishops’ Statement has its own webpage and can be accessed [here](#).

The ACSJC has produced an accompanying leaflet, ‘A Vote for Social Justice’ which highlights some key justice issues this federal election. The leaflet aims to help you think about some issues that will be decided in this election and offers some questions that could be raised with all candidates in your electorate. The leaflet is available for download on the ACSJC [website](#).

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK 13–19 OCTOBER

Poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million Australians. Around the world more than a billion people are desperately poor. The main aims of Anti-Poverty Week are to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and within Australia and to encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including actions by individuals, communities, organisations and governments. Last year, at least 600 organisations around the world participated in more than 400 activities during the Week, with a total of more than 10,000 people. Why not organise a display, stall or award? Maybe a workshop, lecture or forum? How about a fundraiser, fact sheet or petition? For information and ideas, visit the website or email apw@antipovertyweek.org or call 1300 797 290. [Link](#).

JUBILEE AUSTRALIA

Jubilee Australia is a non-profit organisation promoting accountability for the causes of poverty and injustice in the Asia Pacific. It is part of the global movement to increase the democratic accountability of governments, and to curb the unchecked power of global corporations. They elevate the voices of affected communities, and inspire Australians to play an active role in keeping our government and corporations accountable overseas. Consider making a donation to the work of Jubilee Australia. Your donation will assist in research and campaigning, exposing injustice and changing policy that will see lives restored for good. To find out more, visit the [website](#).

PALESTINE ISRAEL ECUMENICAL NETWORK (PIEN)

PIEN has members across the denominational and theological spectrum, as well as Christian aid and development agencies working in Palestine and Israel. The group is calling on Australians to respond to the plight of Palestinians living under repressive conditions in the Middle East. ‘Our Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine are crying out to us,’ says the group’s co-convenor, Rev Gregor Henderson. ‘Every month thousands of people from around the world travel to Jerusalem to remember Jesus, but Palestinians living just a few kilometres away can’t reach the site.’ PIEN has launched a website and social media sites with theological and political analysis about the situation for Palestinians. For more information, visit the [website](#).

MICAH CAMPAIGN: FINISH THE RACE



In the run up to the federal election in 2013, and with the 2015 goal line for the Millennium Development Goals fast approaching, Australia has an opportunity to save and improve the lives of millions of the world's poorest people. Join us in 2013 as we call on the Australian government to finish what we started when we committed to achieving these goals. Take action by signing a petition, contacting your local politician or organising an event. Find out more at the [website](#).

STOP THE TRAFFIK CAMPAIGN FOR TRAFFIK-FREE TOBLERONE

Stop the Traffik are encouraging people everywhere to send a postcard to Mondelēz (formally Kraft, owner of Cadbury), the world's largest chocolate company. They are asking them to take action to help end child trafficking in the cocoa industry. They have distributed 30,000 cards, but despite recent announcements there's still no clear answer to when Toblerone will be Traffik-free. To get Mondelēz's attention, they will deliver the signed postcards to Mondelēz on 18 October, 2013, Anti-Slavery Day, and need as many signed as possible! You can help. Order postcards by emailing australia@stopthetraffik.org. For more information visit the [website](#).

ACMRO COLLOQUIUM CALLS FOR BETTER SOLUTIONS FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Former Holy See Ambassador Tim Fischer, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Paul Gallagher and Bishop Gerard Hanna addressed a crowd of over 100 people at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) and Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) colloquium on 22 August. Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Gallagher focused on his diplomatic experience emphasising the need for a realistic, compassionate approach. 'I think that it is clear that the phenomenon (of irregular migration) cannot be eradicated. ... We must seek durable solutions, but we should not be scandalised if we do not find them', he said. The Hon. Tim Fischer noted the importance of education and employment opportunities in raising living standards of migrants and refugees from poorer nations. Bishop Gerard Hanna spoke on the pressures facing developing countries who accept much larger refugee numbers than Australia. 'We ask our neighbours, poor third world countries, to do what we, a very rich first world nation, are selfishly unwilling to do ourselves. We must open our hearts to refugees, listen to their hopes and welcome them into our communities. Solutions must be based in the real world and address the real needs of people', he said. [Link](#).

PAX CHRISTI CALLS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

Pax Christi Australia met for its National Conference from August 23 to 25, 2013, and discussed the theme 'Peacemaking: an alternative narrative.' Issuing a statement, the assembly said it 'strongly deplores the indifference that many Australians, including the media and politicians, have fallen into. Many Australians have the belief that we are a generous and fair minded people but this is not reflected in the cruel and inhuman treatment of vulnerable people who have been driven from their homes as a result of oppression and conflicts, some of which Australia has been, and continues to be, involved in. Pax Christi Australia acknowledges that people who seek asylum are our brothers and sisters. It strongly refutes the language and false narrative that is used by sections of the media and by politicians that asylum seekers are illegal, which they are not; that they are jumping a queue, which does not exist; that people seeking asylum by boat are a threat to Australia's border



security, which is not true; and, that we are being overwhelmed by an influx of asylum seekers, which is not the case.' [Link](#)

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD DETENTION

Currently Australia detains more than 1700 children while their immigration status is being processed. At least 15 children are predicted to be born into detention in 2013. Australia is unique amongst states; although it is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, it continues the use of remote, indefinite, mandatory detention for children and their families. As of 20 July 2013, anyone who arrives to Australia by boat (including children) seeking asylum will be sent to detention in Papua New Guinea. Even if found to be a refugee they will not be allowed to settle in Australia. The Global Campaign to End Child Detention and its Australian partners are calling on the Australian authorities to establish a policy that provides against the detention of children. To find out more, visit the [website](#).

JOINT STATEMENT: 'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: IT'S TIME FOR A NEW APPROACH'

The Refugee Council of Australia organised and issued a joint statement by Australian non-government organisations on the first anniversary of the report on the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers. The statement criticises the 'negative, distorted and myopic political debate on refugee and asylum seeker policy' and calls for 'a new approach which focuses on protection rather than punishment, on facts rather than fear-mongering, and on long-term solutions rather than short-term political gain.' The statement calls on both major political parties to demonstrate true leadership by working cooperatively to refocus Australia's policy approach in line with eight fundamental principles. To read the statement, visit the [website](#).

ON-LINE RESOURCE: 'REFUGEE FACTS'

'Refugee Facts' has been designed to provide quick facts and comprehensive background information on asylum seekers in Australia, in the interest of ethical and accurate reporting. Authors John Menadue AO, Arja Keski-Nummi and Kate Gauthier have compiled this manual, which provides key information and statistics for journalists, editors and advocates on asylum seeker issues. It has been designed to provide quick facts and accessible background information on asylum seekers in Australia in the interest of accurate reporting. Visit the [website](#).

CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

It's time to Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's Constitution. It's the right thing to do. 'This is much more than a question of symbolism, this is a question of national wellbeing and national identity. It's about coming to terms with who we are as a nation and deciding who we want to be in the future.' Noel Pearson, Cape York Institute. Join the Recognise campaign [here](#).

NOMINATIONS FOR 2013 HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

Nominations are now open for the 2013 Human Rights Awards. The aim of the Awards is to recognise people who are working to achieve better human rights outcomes in their work or



community. Nominees are entered in either general or media categories. General categories include: the Human Rights Medal, Young People's Human Rights Medal, Law, Business, Community (Individual), Community (Organisation). Media categories include: Literature (non-fiction) Print and Online Media, Radio and Television. Nominations close on 13 September. To find out more, visit the [website](#).

HERITAGE FILMS CAMPAIGN

For some time now Heritage has had a growing range of social justice films covering topics like human trafficking, poverty, fair trade, activism etc. They have launched a new campaign around this range and are partnering with world changing organisations. For every DVD purchased from the Listen Act Share collection, \$10 will go towards that month's charity (the charity changes each month). Find out more and watch the short campaign video [here](#).

SWYTCH THE FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA

ConNetica is running a Swytch campaign in partnership with some 40 organisations. Simply put – Swytch aims to change the way we think about mental illness and improve Australia's mental health services. Remember mental health effects 1 in 5 Australians every year – so the chances are someone close to you will benefit from this work. Your help is needed to make the change happen. Visit the Swytch website [here](#).



SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2013–2014 – ORDER NOW!

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement is entitled 'Lazarus at Our Gate: A critical moment in the fight against world poverty'. The ACSJC is now taking orders for the Statement.

An order form, letter from the President of the Bishops Conference and summary material are available on the ACSJC [website](#).

Prayer Card & Leaflet: Ten Steps Towards Solidarity.

Now available. To order click [here](#).

Social Justice Statement Summary, Liturgy Notes, Community and Student Resources, PowerPoint Presentation – available soon at the [website](#).

Ecumenical resource: 'Social Justice Matters'. Download from the National Council of Churches [website](#).

2013 FEDERAL ELECTION RESOURCES – 'A VOTE FOR JUSTICE'

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference election statement 'Vote for the Common Good' and the ACSJC's leaflet 'A Vote for Social Justice' can be downloaded from the ACSJC [website](#).

SERIES PAPER 74 – 'TIME TO DRAW THE LINE: FINDING A JUST SETTLEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND TIMOR-LESTE'

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Beneath the Timor Sea vast deposits of oil and gas lie between Australia, Timor-Leste and Indonesia. Who has a just claim to those resources? What does international law say about them? What are Australians' obligations as citizens of the world? Fr Frank Brennan tries to outline some answers to these questions in this latest Series paper, a sequel to his 2004 paper 'The Timor Sea's Oil and Gas: What's Fair?' He writes: 'This paper attempts to explain the issue so that Australians of good will can reach a conclusion about the best way forward for any Australian government committed to justice, transparency and good neighbourly behaviour.' What can we learn from the teaching of Christ and his Church as we grapple with these questions? Frank Brennan sets out the facts calmly and clearly and points us towards some ways forward. Order [here](#).

PASTORAL LETTER – FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER 2013

The Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker for 2013 is entitled 'Time for a New Start – a call to increase allowance payments'. It is available for download in regular and 'three-column' versions at the [website](#).



News Monitor

[Colloquium urges better solutions for refugees](#)

Former Holy See Ambassador Tim Fischer, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Paul Gallagher and Bishop Gerard Hanna addressed a crowd of over 100 people at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne about the pressing issues of migration and poverty.

[Francis renews call for peace in Syria](#)

Pope Francis renewed his call for peace in Syria. After the recitation of the Angelus, the Holy Father called on the International Community to do everything in its power to help the 'beloved Syrian nation' find a solution to the ongoing conflict. 'It is not confrontation that offers hope to resolve problems, but rather the ability to meet and dialogue,' he told the crowd gathered at St Peter's, according to a translation by Vatican Radio, reported Vatican Insider.

[Recognition for tireless refugee advocate](#)

She might be only 4 foot 10, but Sr Pat Sealey isn't afraid to speak up for what she believes in. And that includes telling it how it is to the Premier and other officials when she was named South Australia's top volunteer last month.

[Riverview students criticise Coalition over refugees](#)

As Tony Abbott and Barnaby Joyce prepared for the prospect of filling two of the most senior positions in a Coalition government, students at their alma mater, Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview in Sydney, were alarmed that they trashed the Jesuit values that underpinned their educations, reported The Sydney Morning Herald.

[Syrian refugees welcomed by Turkish Christian community](#)



Syria's Christians belong to one of the oldest Christian communities in the world, but chased away by the threat of violence some were heading for neighbouring Turkey, where they been greeted with considerable enthusiasm, reported the BBC.

[Colloquium in honour of Bp Joe Grech](#)

In Migrant and Refugee Week, the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) celebrated with a colloquium in honour of Bishop Joe Grech.

[JRS slams Coalition refugee policy](#)

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) slammed the tough new policy announced by Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott which would prevent 32,000 asylum seekers who arrived by boat since August last year from ever being granted permanent settlement in Australia, reported the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney.

[Bishops in Manila heed pope's call, visit slums](#)

Philippine bishops heeded Pope Francis' call to spend more time with the poor by visiting slum dwellers in Manila, reported Ucanews.

[MacKillop scholarships help indigenous doctors](#)

Seven recipients of Mary MacKillop Foundation Tertiary Scholarships for indigenous students to support university study, graduated as doctors last year, reported the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney.

[CRA calls on politicians to strive for justice](#)

Catholic Religious Australia called on politicians to rise up and strive for justice rather than descend into pursuit of votes.

[Jubilee Debt Campaign](#)

Jubilee Debt Campaign demanded an end to the scandal of poor countries paying money to the rich world. It called for 100% cancellation of unpayable and unjust poor country debts.

– For details click on headlines or go to the archive at <http://cathnews.com>



Social Justice Diary, September 2013

1 Sun

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Fathers Day

National Wattle Day

Biodiversity Month

1815: Sisters of Charity founded by Mary Aikenhead



2 Mon

National Child Protection Week commences
National Landcare Week commences
1991: Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act passed by Parliament

5 Thu

Rosh ha-Shanah (Jewish New Year)
1997: Death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta

7 Sat National Threatened Species Day
1936: Death in Hobart Zoo of the last Tasmanian tiger in captivity

8 Sun

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
International Literacy Day
Child Protection Sunday

10 Tue

World Suicide Prevention Day

11 Wed

2001: Terrorist attack on World Trade Centre, New York, and Washington DC

12 Thu

1977: Death of anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko

13 Fri

2007: UN General Assembly adopts Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

14 Sat

Yom Kippur (Jewish Day of Atonement)
1981: Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Laborem Exercens*

15 Sun

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
UN International Day of Democracy

16 Mon



International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer

18 Wed

1961: Death of UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold

21 Sat

International Day of Peace

22 Sun

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

23 Mon

1959: Australian Consumers Association launched

26 Thu

World Maritime Day

27 Fri

Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul

1988: Aung San Suu Kyi forms Burma's National League for Democracy

28 Sat

1983: Death of John Pat in Roeburne Prison WA, prompting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Green Consumer Day

29 Sun

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Social Justice Sunday

30 Mon

1975: Australia's Racial Discrimination Act proclaimed

