



ACSJC Monthly Briefing November 2013 No 151



From the Secretariat November 2013

Dear Friends,

November is a special time to remember and pray for the dead. On All Saints' Day, we commemorate all of the saints, known and unknown, and pray for their intercession. On All Souls' Day we remember all who have died and pray for their salvation.

This is a time when we mourn the loss of those dear to us, celebrate their presence in our lives and thank God for the contributions they made in this world.

In this time, there is a broad solidarity that also recognises the human mortality and the grief we all share, even for those we do not know or those of different faiths and creeds – 'as in Adam all die', to use a phrase from the Roman Missal for All Souls' Day. This solidarity recognises the sanctity of all human life and the dignity of every person.

The words of Pope Francis when he was visiting the Italian island of Lampedusa in July were striking. He grieved for the thousands of asylum seekers who have died at sea as they fled their homelands in search of safety and security in Europe. He challenged each one of us to consider our response to the loss of life:

“ ‘Adam, where are you?’ ‘Where is your brother?’ These are the two questions which God asks at the dawn of human history, and which he also asks each man and woman in our own day, which he also asks us. But I would like us to ask a third question: ‘Has any one of us wept because of this situation and others like it?’ Has any one of us grieved for the death of these brothers and sisters? Has any one of us wept for these persons who were on the boat? For the young mothers carrying their babies? For these men who were looking for a means of supporting their families?

“We are a society which has forgotten how to weep, how to experience compassion – ‘suffering with’ others: the globalization of indifference has taken from us the ability to weep!” [\[LINK\]](#)

There is a challenge for all of us as individuals and as an entire society – to overcome a ‘globalisation of indifference’ that allows the reality of human suffering and death to be hidden from us and for vulnerable groups to be ignored or scapegoated. The treatment of the asylum seeker issue by the major parties in the recent Federal Election saw the plight of



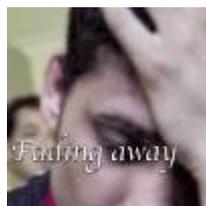
vulnerable people instrumentalised for political gain. Rarely have the ‘push’ factors of war, persecution or destitution been highlighted as the cause of the movement of people around the world and into Australian waters. Instead, they have been seen only with reference to our ‘sovereign borders’ and their ‘illegal arrival’.

Italy’s response to the loss of life when a 20 metre boat carrying 500 people sank a kilometre of Lampedusa in early October showed more compassion as a response to the tragic loss of life. In addition to the rescue efforts and increased patrols to prevent further disasters, Italy’s Prime Minister made the commitment to a state funeral for those who died and declared a national day of mourning, with a minute’s silence held in all schools across the country.

Italy faces greater numbers of people arriving by boat to claim asylum than we do. It also experiences challenges of accommodating so many people in overcrowded and inadequate facilities. Recent riots on Lampedusa are a case in point. But the national act of mourning the loss of life hints at a broad human solidarity that can overcome the globalisation of indifference. It is a solidarity which personalises the tragedy of a desperate situation and can grieve the passing of a stranger.

Marg Hutton of the group ‘sievx.com’ has estimated over 1,500 confirmed and probable drownings of people attempting to enter Australia irregularly by boat since 1998. [\[LINK\]](#)

John Ferguson (National Executive Officer)



Current Issues/Resources, November 2013

MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS TO BUSHFIRE VICTIMS

On 19 October, Archbishop Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, wrote on behalf of the Holy Father: ‘His Holiness Pope Francis has asked me to express his concern for the people of New South Wales and all who are affected by devastation wrought by the extensive fires in the region. He prays especially for those who have died and for those who have lost their homes and workplaces, as well as for the numerous personnel working to combat the fires and to provide comfort and care for those who are suffering. Invoking the spiritual gifts of solidarity and perseverance upon the communities touched by these trying events, the Holy Father sends his blessings.’ [MORE](#)

ON-LINE RESOURCES: ‘REFUGEE FACTS’ & ‘MYTHS ABOUT REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS’

‘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, 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. [MORE](#)

Also, visit the ‘Myths about refugees and asylum seekers’ page of the Refugee Council of Australia. The RCoA says, ‘the circulation of myths and misinformation is one of the biggest barriers to understanding the issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers. Myths create



confusion and can fuel conflict, resentment and disharmony.' [This page](#) aims to highlight the common myths about refugees and asylum seekers and correct the record for people seeking accurate information.

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. 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. Find out more [here](#).

YOUTUBE VIDEO: 'REFUGEES'

Dan is a Year 8 student who has been passionate about the plight of asylum seekers for years - it has often been a topic of conversation of his family. He was so upset at the Rudd government's introduction of the PNG solution that he tried his hand at advocacy for the first time. He wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister expressing his concern. Dan has been involved in a Friday Night School tutoring program since Year 7 and this brings him in regular contact with refugee children. The theme of Social Justice Week at school this year was refugees. It was discussed in classes and he attended Simply Sharing Dinner. Also, his parish held an Asylum seeker Information evening last month where he heard from members of a South Sudanese youth group. Dan decided to make a video about refugees and put it on YouTube. He showed it to his class at school and has had a lot of encouragement and positive feedback from his teachers and classmates who have promoted it to others. Have a look at [this](#) inspiring message.

CONCERNED AUSTRALIANS PUBLICATIONS

The group 'concerned Australians' has published influential material over the years concerning the Northern Territory Emergency response. A key focus of their work has always been to assist Aboriginal people and communities to have their voice heard in the national policy debate. As part of October's Anti-Poverty Week, concerned Australians have decided to make their three substantial publications available for download: *This Is What We Said* (2010) - 3 MB; *Walk With Us* (2011) - 1 MB; and *NT Consultations Report 2011* (2011) - 13 MB. Access these documents [here](#).

NEW PAPER: 'ILLNESS/DISABILITY AND EVERYDAY PROBLEMS INVOLVING THE LAW'

New analyses from the Legal Australia-Wide Survey confirm that high levels of disadvantage are associated with a lower likelihood of taking action and seeking professional advice in response to legal problems, independently of the effects of remoteness. Similarly, unawareness of free legal services was associated with lower levels of taking action and consulting legal professionals. Notably, the results also showed that living in more remote areas reduced the likelihood of taking action and seeking professional advice for certain groups of people, over and above disadvantage. In particular, Indigenous respondents were



less likely to take action and use legal professionals if they lived in more remote areas. Access the paper [here](#).

CAMPAIGN: ‘PUBLISH WHAT YOU PAY’

Publish What You Pay is a global campaign for transparency and accountability in the mining and oil and gas industries. In Australia, the campaign is supported by a coalition of organisations and individuals that are committed to ensuring that citizens of resource-rich countries benefit from their natural wealth. Join the global movement for transparency to help end corruption and poverty in resource-rich countries and support the people’s right to know the value of their oil, gas and minerals. Call on the Australian Government to act and introduce legislation requiring mining and oil and gas companies to publish what they pay to governments where they operate. [MORE](#)

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS – ‘BEHOLD’

The Diocese of Wollongong is taking orders for ‘Behold – Daily Advent and Christmas Reflections 2013.’ Behold contains short daily reflections from the beginning of Advent (1 December 2013) through to the Epiphany (5 January 2014). Each day contains a one-page reflection with two pages for Sundays and major feast days. The daily reflections have been written by four religious orders that also run retreat centres in the Diocese of Wollongong. The aim is to provide reflections that are both theologically and spiritually rich, yet accessible to the average reader. It also contains details about upcoming retreats at each of the retreat centres as a next step for readers who would like to go even deeper after the program has finished. [MORE](#)

KAIROS PALESTINE – ‘CHRISTMAS 2013’

Kairos Palestine, together with various Palestinian civil society organisations, has produced a booklet as part of the preparations and promise of Advent. Last year, too, they addressed this resource to sisters and brothers around the world who, in this season, turn to Bethlehem – informing them about our lives under occupation and raising their awareness about our plight. Like last year, they wish to share their reality. They seek to share the experience of the modern Bethlehem – which remains the ‘little town of Bethlehem,’ surrounded by the Wall and many settlements. Access the booklet [here](#).

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. [MORE](#)

POPE FRANCIS SPEAKS TO WORLD BANK PRESIDENT JIM YONG KIM



Pope Francis and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim have discussed the possibility of working together in the struggle against global extreme poverty during a meeting at the Vatican. ‘What the Holy Father has been saying about inclusion and poverty is exactly the same thing as what we’ve been saying,’ Mr Kim, a trained doctor, told reporters after his audience with the pontiff on Monday. ‘We discussed how we could work more closely together... We feel that if we can find ways of working together we could build a social movement that could accelerate progress,’ he said. Mr Kim, who worked in Latin America for many years and spoke with the Argentine Pope in Spanish, said that Francis has already become a powerful voice against poverty since his election in March. [MORE](#)

REPORT LAUNCH: ‘A SNAPSHOT OF POVERTY IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA’

ACOSS and Rural Health Alliance have come together to release a snapshot of the extent of poverty and disadvantage outside Australia's major capital cities, highlighting the devastating impact on people's lives and on country towns and communities. ‘People living in poverty in our country areas are missing out on opportunities and resources the rest of us enjoy, such as adequate health and dental care, good education, employment opportunities, affordable quality food and recreation.’ Executive Director of the National Rural Health Alliance, Gordon Gregory said. Also speaking at the launch, Deputy CEO of ACOSS, Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine said, ‘We certainly want to see measures to address growing poverty in our country to be a priority of this federal Parliament.’ Download report [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

This day is observed each year on 3 December and the theme this year is: ‘Break barriers and open doors: to realise an inclusive society for all!’ We have this opportunity to rise above our own impediments, open our eyes and see the value and strength within the members of our parish communities that live with a disability. Bishop Terence Brady, Delegate for Disability Issues, Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life, encourages us to recognise that ‘each person in our parish community has a gift to share, a story to tell, and a distinctive and unique place in the Body of Christ.’ A prayer card and other resources are available [here](#).



ACSJC Publications

(Orders: phone (02) 8306 3499 or download an order form from the ACSJC website that can be faxed to (02) 8306 3498. [\[LINK\]](#))

ORDER NOW! – 2014 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2014 Social Justice Diary includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice. The Diary provides a social justice program for the full year. Information and ideas for prayer and reflection are included. This is an essential resource for teachers and parishes. A great Christmas gift. Diaries will be available in November. Cost: \$7.50 (including postage). To download an order form, click [here](#).

LAUNCH OF THE 2013–2014 SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT



Addresses delivered at the launch of the 2013–2014 Social Justice Statement by John Menadue AO, Author and Social Commentator, Helen Forde, Acting CEO of Caritas Australia, and Gregory O’Kelly SJ are available for download on the ACSJC [here](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2013–2014 – STILL TAKING ORDERS

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 [[LINK](#)]

Prayer Card & Leaflet: Ten Steps Towards Solidarity.

Now available. Call (02) 8306 3499

Social Justice Statement Summary, Liturgy Notes, Community and Student Resources, PowerPoint, Video – available [here](#).

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

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

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 [here](#).

(Catholic Social Justice Series papers: \$7.50 a copy, including postage)



News Monitor

[Caritas sounds alarm on Syrian refugee deluge in Jordan](#)

Within four months it will be "impossible" to meet the medical demands of



the ballooning number of Syrian refugees in Jordan unless the international community steps in, said Caritas Jordan.

[Pope and World Bank chief discuss joint action on poverty](#)

Pope Francis and World Bank president Jim Yong Kim discussed the possibility of working together in the struggle against global extreme poverty during a meeting at the Vatican.

[East Timor student immersion trip](#)

Students from Catholic College in Sale, Victoria, returned from a trip which could be life-changing.

[Pope receives Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese opposition leader](#)

Pope Francis met with Burmese opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, for what the Vatican called a "rather significant encounter" between two leaders, reported the Catholic News Service.

[Biotech must consider ethics, compassion: Turkson](#)

Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, told those on both sides of the GM debate that they must engage in conversation and dialogue, reported the Catholic News Service.

[Healing power of restorative justice](#)

"Restorative justice is an alternative to the criminal justice system and it encompasses a focus on healing the heart," said retired County Court Judge David Jones

[Vinnies tells government it's time for new thinking on poverty](#)

The St Vincent de Paul Society National Council marked Anti-Poverty Week by launching *Two Australias*: a report on poverty in the land of plenty, which urged the government to rethink its approach to poverty.

[CHA wants GPs to look for poverty symptoms](#)

General practitioners should screen patients for chronic diseases that the World Health Organisation identified as a key risk factors that generate poverty, said Catholic Health Australia, reported The Catholic Weekly.

[It's not safe to return asylum seekers, said advocate](#)

Claims by the Federal Government that Sri Lanka is safe enough for the return of asylum seekers from Australia been challenged by a representative of Brisbane archdiocese's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, reported The Catholic Leader.

[Cardinal Turkson talks to both sides of GM food debate](#)



Ghana's Cardinal Peter Turkson is in the middle of a genetically modified food fight, but he's determined not to let it get messy, reported NCR.

[Obama admires Pope's inclusive spirit](#)

US President Barack Obama had warm words for what he sees as Pope Francis' inclusive attitude in recent remarks urging the Roman Catholic church not to focus only on abortion or gays, reported AFP on Yahoo7.

– For details click on headlines or go to cathnews.com



Social Justice Diary, November 2013

1 Fri All Saints Day

2 Sat Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed

3 Sun Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

6 Wed International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

International Week for Science and Peace

8 Fri 1907: Justice Higgins hands down minimum wage judgement in Harvester case

9 Sat 1989: Berlin Wall opened

10 Sun Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

World Science Day for Peace and Development

1995: Nine Nigerian environmentalists and human rights activists hanged

Restorative Justice Week commences

11 Mon Remembrance (Armistice) Day, commemorating the end of World War I in 1918

12 Tue 1991: Dili massacre, Timor-Leste: more than 271 people killed

14 Thu World Diabetes Day

16 Sat International Day for Tolerance

17 Sun Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

20 Wed Universal Children's Day



1959: UN adopts the Declaration of Rights of the Child

21 Thu World Philosophy Day

World Television Day

24 Sun Christ the King

25 Mon International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

1981: Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

27 Wed 1998: First Sydney Peace Prize awarded to Muhammad Yunus

28 Thu First day of *Hanukkah* (Jewish Feast of Dedication)

29 Fri International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

1980: Death of Dorothy Day, Founder of the Catholic Worker Movement

30 Sat 1971 Synod of Bishops Statement *Justice in the World*

