



ACSJC Monthly Briefing May 2014 No 156



From the Chairman, May 2014

Dear Friends.

Below is the text of a Pastoral Letter issued to mark the Feast of St Joseph the Worker (1st May), which I invite you to circulate in your parish and local communities. The formatted letter can be downloaded from our [website](#).

Putting People First: The call for an economy of social inclusion

Pope Francis has renewed the call of the Church to make the dignity of the human person the central focus of national and global economies. His Apostolic Exhortation of November 2013 comments on economies in which ‘masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized’ and criticises free market competition, which has left many without work, without opportunity and on the fringes of society.

... some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting.¹

Clearly Pope Francis doesn't agree with the saying that ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’, which has been used to describe the benefits of economic growth. Nor do a growing number of economists and policy experts who recognise that the outstanding performance of the economy can have very unequal outcomes.² Two decades of economic growth in Australia have seen the size of our economy double and income per capita increase by 50 per cent.³ Despite this growth, many of us will know somebody for whom the system has failed.

Think of the older worker made redundant by technology and becoming ‘long-term unemployed’; a son or daughter completing their training but frustrated in the search for a job; a single mother trying to make ends meet on the Newstart Allowance; a household with work but still below the poverty line. The list could go on. Economic growth alone has not worked. As a nation, we need to consider those who have been excluded from the benefits of growth and devise a system of ‘inclusive growth’ that is more equitable in spreading wealth and opportunity.



The need for jobs providing fair wages and conditions

Australia faces a crisis in the income and conditions of its low-paid workers. Over many years, the Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (ACCER) has represented the interests of the one-sixth of the workforce who have little bargaining power and rely on the minimum wage and the wages safety net. Minimum wages are failing to keep pace with the Australian standard of living. Since the turn of the century, average weekly ordinary time earnings increased by 80 per cent, while the minimum increased by only 55 per cent. If the minimum wage had kept pace, it would be almost \$100 more than the current \$622.20.⁴ Not only has the safety net failed to keep pace with the standard of living, but as a result, increasing numbers of working families are falling into poverty. The ACCER has drawn on data from the 2011 national Census which showed that 13.5 per cent of the 106,223 couple parent families with two children were living in poverty. The number of these families with at least one full time breadwinner was 55,020 – meaning over 110,000 children were in poverty even though a parent was in full time work.⁵

Australia has just recorded an annual wages growth of only 2.6 per cent – the lowest since records started in 1997.⁶ Over the past year prices have increased by 2.9 per cent.⁷ Yet some are still calling for real minimum wages to be cut even more in order to increase jobs growth. It is not only the wages safety net that is at risk. Major inquiries are being initiated into workplace law and the possibility of changes to penalty rates and conditions, unfair dismissal and bargaining flexibility. It is unskilled and low paid workers with little or no bargaining power who remain in a precarious position when it comes to defending basic entitlements.

Unfortunately, the national debate on jobs growth has focused on this kind of low-wage flexibility. There has been little consideration of how we can invest in Australia's workforce by developing skills that will make current and prospective workers more competitive in jobs that promise innovation, advanced production and better wages and conditions. A particular area of concern has been the strategy of recruiting increasing numbers of migrant workers to fill skills gaps in the economy. In the year to September 2013, the number of migrants on the 457 working visa grew by 12 per cent from 98,610 to 110,280. This increase was much higher than the 0.8 per cent growth in Australian employment.⁸ While there will always be a place for skilled migrant workers in Australia, the dramatic increase in such arrangements gives an indication that our nation has not invested enough in the development of the domestic workforce.⁹

The need for income support underpinned by real job creation

It may seem strange to suggest that Australia is experiencing a job crisis when the official unemployment rate is at six per cent. However, this official rate conceals the dire circumstances of particular groups who are excluded from the labour market. Youth unemployment has risen sharply to 12.4 per cent, but is as high as 20 per cent in particularly disadvantaged regional and urban communities. Young people make up almost 40 per cent of all people who are unemployed. Their prospects are damaged by early exclusion from the market and a lack of basic experience and skills development.¹⁰ Levels of long-term unemployment are also high at around 20 per cent, with people reporting the main barriers to employment are the low number of vacancies, too many applicants for available jobs and insufficient experience.¹¹

People who are unemployed and dependent on income support are the most at risk of poverty and deep social exclusion.¹² The low payment rate of the Newstart and related Allowances as well as the lack of available jobs are immediate barriers to labour market participation.



Consider also that over the past year the number of Newstart Allowance recipients increased by 6.4 per cent to 727,000. Among the 45,000 or more to come onto the Allowance are single parents shifted from Parenting Payment and people who no longer qualify for the Disability Support Pension since the introduction of tougher impairment tables.¹³ Also competing with these jobseekers are just over half of the 817,000 underemployed part time workers who are actively seeking jobs providing more hours of work.¹⁴

What Australia faces is not a ‘welfare crisis’ but a ‘jobs crisis’. Reframing the debate to consider the failure of the market to create adequate employment would result in a new approach. Australia would invest more in training and skills development and move beyond the current emphasis on job search driven by tough compliance and penalty regimes. Instead of keeping Allowance payments low, we would increase them to lift people out of poverty and assist in their transition to work. The flagship of labour market policy would be a government-led job creation strategy, not a work-for-the-dole programme.

The call for an age of social inclusion

Australians are being warned that the so called ‘age of entitlement’ is over. It is regrettable that, throughout the two decades of economic growth, there has been so little discussion of our society’s obligations to those who have been left behind and excluded from the mainstream. These people *do* have entitlements!

Over thirty years ago, Pope John Paul II foresaw great changes in the world of work, and identified two fundamental entitlements. The first was the coordination of the economy to ensure ‘suitable employment for all who are capable of it’. The second was to make ‘unemployment benefits ... [or] suitable grants indispensable for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families’.¹⁵ These are the foundations for social justice and inclusive growth.

We need an economy that is animated by a concern for dignity of workers and their families. As one commentator succinctly puts it: ‘unlike land and capital, labour is the only factor of production that comes with a human being attached’.¹⁶ In cooperation with all sectors of business, unions, and the community, Government has a responsibility to ensure workers and their families are put first in the nation’s economic system. It should take the lead in:

- creating jobs for vulnerable workers which are secure, adequately paid and relevant to the needs of business and local communities
- supporting industrial and infrastructure development that increases opportunities for local employment
- increasing investment in research and development and lifting national training standards
- assisting employers by reducing oncosts – for example through wage subsidies or tax rebates on employment-related costs
- agreeing on a way of measuring poverty and social exclusion and applying it when setting minimum wages and social security payments.

We need a competitive and productive national economy. But we cannot leave it to the market alone. There is a responsibility on government to ensure all people can make their contribution to the productivity of our nation and reap the benefits of growth. In a modern society, how can we create employment – decent employment – for all who are capable of it? As Pope Francis says:



*Growth in justice requires more than economic growth, while presupposing such growth: it requires decisions, programmes, mechanisms and processes specifically geared to a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality.*¹⁷

Most Rev. Christopher Saunders, DD
Bishop of Broome,
Chairman, Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

Notes

1. Pope Francis (2013), *Evangelii Gaudium* ('The Joy of the Gospel'), Apostolic Exhortation, Art. 53–54.
2. See: Paul Smyth & John Buchanan (Eds) (2013), *Inclusive Growth in Australia: Social policy as economic investment*, Allen & Unwin; Brian Lawrence (Ed) (2014), *Working Australia, 2014: wages, families and poverty*, ACCER (<http://www.accer.asn.au/working-australia-2014/>); Christine Lagarde (2014), *Innovation, Technology and the 21st Century Global Economy*, IMF address to Stanford University (<http://www.imf.org/external/np/speeches/2014/022514.htm>).
3. Rosalie McLachlan, Geoff Gilfillan & Jenny Gordon (2013), *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Australian Government, p. 127.
4. ACCER (2014), *Submission to the Annual Wage Review 2013-14*, March 2014, p. 15.
5. ACCER (2014), p. 32.
6. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2014), *Wages Price Index, Australia, Dec 2013*. Cat. 6345.0.
7. ABS (2014), *Consumer Price Index, Australia, Mar 2014*. Cat. 6401.0
8. CFMEU National (2013), *CFMEU Analysis of 457 Visa Trends, Report No 1*, p. 10.
9. AM with Chris Uhlmann (2014), *Pressure to lift migrant intake*, January 13, <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2013/s3924322.htm>.
10. Brotherhood of St Laurence (2014), *Australian Youth Unemployment 2014: Snapshot, My Chance, Our Future Youth Unemployment Campaign*, pp. 4–5.
11. ABS (2014), *Job Search Experience, Australia, July 2013*. Cat. 6222.0.
12. McLachlan, Gilfillan & Gordon (2013), pp. 11–12.
13. Australia Council of Social Service (2014), *Social Security Trends Snapshot – April 2014*, p. 2.
14. ABS (2014), *Underemployed Workers, Australia, September 2013*. Cat. 6265.0.



15. Pope John Paul II (1981), *Laborem Exercens* ('On Human Work'), Encyclical Letter, Art. 18–19.
16. Ian Verrender (2014), *Workers not the culprit of productivity slide*, The DRUM, ABC, March 10, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-10/verrender-workers-not-the-culprit-of-productivity-slide/5309036>
17. Pope Francis (2013), Art. 204.



Current Issues Resources, May 2014

MEDIA RELEASE: 'PUT PEOPLE FIRST IN ECONOMIC DEBATE'

Issuing the annual Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker (1 May), Bishop Christopher Saunders has called for an economy that is animated by a concern for dignity of workers and their families. In cooperation with all sectors of business, unions, and the community, he emphasises that the Government has a responsibility to ensure low-paid workers and those excluded from the labour market are put first in the nation's economic planning. (refer to our [website](#))

NEW PUBLICATION - WORKING AUSTRALIA, 2014: WAGES, FAMILIES AND POVERTY

'The Australian wages safety net is failing to keep workers and their families out of poverty and provide them with an appropriate standard of living', the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (ACCER) ([link](#)) said. The ACCER published a free e-book today 'Working Australia, 2014: wages, families and poverty'. "The e-book highlights that the real debate in wage setting is not about whether workers should be protected against poverty, they should, but how to identify and use the evidence to close the gap," Greg Crafter AO, Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission said. 'It is a great resource for parish and Catholic school-based groups that are interested in the way in which Catholic social teaching can be applied in the real world', he added. Download the e-book [here](#).

MERCY FOUNDATION RESEARCH: WOMEN, TRAUMA AND HOMELESSNESS

In 2013, the Mercy Foundation funded the Trauma Informed Care pilot project with Vincentian House. Research clearly demonstrates that people who are homeless have often experienced trauma in their lives. Trauma informed care (TIC) is an approach to understanding clients who have experienced trauma and interacting with them for more positive outcomes. Through TIC, more women were empowered to access stable and longer-term accommodation that met their case plans goals because of the experience of safety and support through their stay at Vincentian House. It has clearly demonstrated that applied understanding of the impacts of trauma across services and organisation leads to better outcomes for clients. Read the full report at [Mercy Foundation](#).

FEDERATION OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES' COUNCILS OF AUSTRALIA PETITION TO THE SENATE: SUPPORT REAL ACTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Around 45 per cent of people with disability in Australia are living either near or below the



poverty line. United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities specifically recommended that the Australian Government adopt initiatives to increase employment participation of women with disability by addressing specific underlying structural barriers to their workforce participation. Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) are asking that the Senate leads the way in promoting better employment pathways for people with disability, as a part of recognising the benefits of a vibrant and diverse workforce and the importance of employment to the functioning of families. They call on the Federal, State and Territory public services to double the participation rates of people with disability by 2017, and, in doing so, establish a good practice example for private sector and the community to follow. Sign the FECCA [petition](#).

MEDIA RELEASE: CATHOLIC CHURCH CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO REINSTATE IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The Government announced that asylum seekers, who arrive in Australia by boat or air, would no longer have access to the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS). The Catholic Church in Australia is calling on the Federal Government to reinstate funding for IAAAS. 'Despite a worldwide increase in the number of applications for asylum, due to the ongoing and devastating Syrian humanitarian crisis, the Government continues to show contempt for the basic human rights of asylum seekers,' said Bishops' Delegate for Migrants and Refugees, Bishop Gerard Hanna. Read the full media release on the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference [website](#).

RESTRICTIONS ON FUNDED LEGAL ASSISTANCE RESTRICTIONS RAISE DANGERS FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

RCOA expressed fears for the safety of asylum seekers following the Australian Government's decision to restrict access to funded legal assistance under the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS). In a statement, RCOA president Phil Glendenning said the changes increased the risk of people being returned to persecution and danger and undermined the integrity of Australia's legal system. He said the changes placed the most vulnerable asylum seekers in a 'survival of the fittest' scenario and warned that weakening Australia's system of determining refugee status was a matter of life and death. 'The likelihood of an asylum seeker in need of protection being sent back to danger because they were not given a fair chance to put their case is real and the consequences are deadly. This something every fair-minded Australian should be very concerned about.' Read the statement [here](#).

MEDIA RELEASE: CATHOLIC CHURCH EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR TAMIL ASYLUM SEEKER IN HOSPITAL

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) expresses support for a young Sri Lankan asylum seeker in hospital today, following an attempt to take his own life after his visa was denied. When his visa application was denied the young man left a suicide note stating he would rather die in Australia than die in Sri Lanka. 'The Australian government has gone to such great lengths to punish and deter asylum seekers by treating them so inhumanely and cruelly that self-harm incidents are widespread and occur regularly in Australian immigration detention centres. This young man attempting to end his own life is not an isolated incident,' said Bishops Delegate for Migrants and Refugees Bishop Hanna. ACMRO urge the Australian government to consider other visa options before returning Tamils to Sri Lanka. Widespread persecution of Tamils living in Sri Lanka remains a reality despite the official end to the horrific civil war, which saw over 40,000 Tamils brutally killed. Read the full media release on the ACMRO [website](#).



POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Retired Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra and Goulbourn Pat Power has told a Palm Sunday pro-refugee rally in Canberra that Australia can do “a whole lot better” in the treatment of asylum seekers. ‘Today we are breaking the silence to say to all those who exercise some sort of power that we acknowledge the sisterhood and the brotherhood of all humanity, that we believe in the dignity of every person and that as members of one human family, we Australians do really believe in a “fair go” and want what is best especially for those who most need it,’ he said. Read Bishop Power’s address [here](#).

ASYLUM SEEKERS CENTRE NEW WEBSITE

The new site has been designed to provide information for asylum seekers as well as their supporters, partners and volunteers. It is easy to navigate and the information is clear, while still reflecting the Asylum Seekers Centre’s commitment and passion to support asylum seekers through the difficult process of rebuilding their lives. Visit the new Asylum Seekers Centre [website](#).

REFUGEE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA BRIGHT IDEAS PROFILES ‘WORK AND WELCOME’

Refugee Council of Australia’s (RCOA) Bright Ideas highlights innovative programs, initiatives and projects developed to support refugees and asylum seekers. It provides a way to share ideas, success stories and good practice to improve service provision and assist organisations and communities in addressing key issues and challenges. The latest profile in Bright Ideas series, ‘Work and Welcome’ explores an employment program that provides refugees and migrants with paid work experience funded through a workplace giving scheme. The program was founded in Brisbane and now includes 14 partner workplaces in Queensland and Sydney. To view the summary of this project and other “Bright Ideas”, visit [RCOA Bright Ideas](#).

RESOURCE: I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) has produced a resource for people who want to know more about the Church’s teaching on asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. The leaflet, titled ‘I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me’ (from Matthew 25:35), deals briefly with issues including the numbers of refugees worldwide; the right to seek asylum; dignity, humanity, justice and mercy; and what scripture and Church teaching tell us about what we need to do as individuals and as a nation to ‘heal a global wound’. See the ACMRO [website](#).

LAUNCH: ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAM ON TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

The first free Australian online training program for frontline workers dealing with trafficking and slavery was launched on 25 March by Sydney-based Anti-Slavery Australia at the University of Technology, Sydney. The course offers comprehensive training on human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices including forced labour and forced marriage. It has been developed for frontline workers from community organisations, government, teachers, health care professionals and law enforcement. The course also covers principles for working with trafficked people and details available support, indicators, referral pathways and next steps. Start the [Anti-Slavery Course](#).

WELCOME TO MY PLACE FOR DINNER

‘For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.’ — Matthew 25:35



This is an opportunity for Australian Christians, compelled by the love of Christ, to show hospitality to asylum seekers and refugees during Refugee Week, 15-21 June 2014. Right now the church has the opportunity to rise up and show the tangible love of Christ to those fleeing the trauma of conflict, crisis and poverty in their birthplace to face uncertain futures here in Australia. Find out how to run a Welcome to My Place for Dinner in your home or church ([link](#))

EDMUND RICE EDUCATION RESOURCE: ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS: ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES – FOCUSING ON REAL PEOPLE AND THEIR STORIES

The free 52 page Education Resource offers 35 cross-curricular activities which are practical, engaging and focused on increasing awareness about human rights and advocacy. The activities are adaptable to all year levels in secondary school and some can also be used with primary classes, students with special needs and could also be used in community group discussions. Students are encouraged to think about asylum seekers and refugees with compassion, to move their understanding from the head to the heart. Download the [Edmund Rice Resource](#)

NATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY NETWORK

NEEN is a national initiative to promote open learning and collaboration amongst faith-based and not-for-profit community organisations to achieve energy savings and a positive energy future. Social services organisations, churches and parishes, kindergartens, aged care organisations, not-for-profit agencies and religious congregations are welcome to register for NEEN. For more information, visit the NEEN [website](#) or the NEEN [Facebook page](#). This includes a number of ideas and opportunities for grants.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2015 SYDNEY PEACE PRIZE

Each year the Sydney Peace Prize, \$50,000 and a hand-made glass trophy crafted by the Australian artist Brian Hirst, is awarded to an individual or organisation that has:

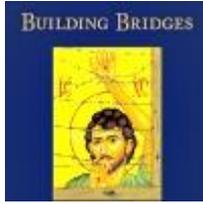
- made significant contributions to peace with justice locally, nationally or globally; such as steps to address structural and cultural forms of violence (for example poverty, racial and gender discrimination and environmental destruction)
- who is committed to the promotion and attainment of human rights
- whose work illustrates the philosophy and principles of nonviolence.

The Sydney Peace Prize Jury accepts nominations until the end of July of the year prior to when the Prize is awarded. We invite you to submit a nomination: please download the Sydney Peace Prize [nomination form](#) and submit it via email or post along with supporting documents before the 31 July 2014.

NEW PUBLICATION: 'IN THE ABSENCE OF TREATY'

This book explores the current inadequacy of the process used in engaging with Aboriginal people, which results in control slipping away from them. It provides concise but incisive account from recent reports about the reasons for the ongoing and growing frustration of many Aboriginal people in the NT. In doing so it hints at possibly the only solution – treaties. Visit [here](#) to read 'In the Absence of Treaty'.





ACSJC Publications

(Orders: phone (02) 8306 3499 or download an order form from the ACSJC website that can be faxed to (02) 8306 3498:

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications/order-forms>)

NEW PUBLICATION – *BUILDING BRIDGES*

The ACSJC is now taking orders for the new publication of the collected Social Justice Statements issued by Australia's Bishops between 1988 and 2013.

The book, *Building Bridges: Social Justice Statements from Australia's Bishops 1988 to 2013*, brings these Statements together in an attractive and readable format. The publication is fully indexed, making this an exceptional resource for education and research. It offers an invaluable insight into Catholic social teaching brought to life in an Australian context over the past 26 years. This collection is a vital resource for anyone interested in the Church's teaching on justice. It is of special interest to schools and universities and to parish and diocesan groups.

Building Bridges is available from the ACSJC for \$35.00 per copy including postage anywhere in Australia. Order forms are available on the ACSJC's [website](#).

PASTORAL LETTER – FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER 2014

The Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker for 2014 is entitled *Putting People First: The call for an economy of social inclusion*. It is available for download in regular and 'three-column' versions [here](#).

DISCUSSION GUIDE: 2014 WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE

The theme for the 47th World Day of Peace Message from Pope Francis is *Fraternity: the Foundation and Pathway to Peace*. In this his first World Day of Peace message, Pope Francis expresses his wish for everyone to live a life filled with joy and hope, in fraternity that helps us 'look upon and treat each person as a true sister or brother'. The ACSJC has prepared a Discussion Guide for the papal message, which is available on our [website](#).

SERIES PAPER 75 – 'JUSTICE IN THE NAME OF GOD'

Time and again in the Bible we come across the concepts of 'name' and 'word'. People of our time hear and read these concepts so often in Scripture and in the liturgy that it is very easy not to ask what their deeper meaning is. In part, this is because in today's society, 'word' and 'name' do not have the significance they had for the ancient peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean. For them, the name of God went with the idea of justice, and the prophets, in taking up the call to justice, did so in God's name: the two are inseparable. In the Gospel of John, the Incarnation is described in a profound way: the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Author Gerard Moore describes this paper as 'an attempt to revisit the theology of God as a God of justice' and asks: 'Where does justice fit as we contemplate the



nature of God?’ This paper surveys the prophets as messengers of God’s ideal of justice and shows how this mission culminates in the mission of Jesus himself. Available [here](#).

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? What can we learn from the teaching of Christ and his Church as we grapple with these questions? Fr Frank Brennan tries to outline some answers to these questions in this 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.’ Frank Brennan sets out the facts calmly and clearly and points us towards some ways forward. Available [here](#).

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



News Monitor

[Australians send letter to Pope over fossil fuel](#)

Religious groups urged Pope Francis to back a campaign to encourage millions of people, organisations and investors to pull their money out of the fossil fuel industry, reported *The Guardian Australia*.

[Bishops praise film about US labour rights leader](#)

Several US bishops praised *Cesar Chavez*, a new movie about the labour rights leader and devout Catholic, for its portrayal of a man whom they say embodied the ideals of Catholic social justice, reported the Catholic News Agency.

[Church calls on Government to reinstate immigration assistance](#)

The Church called on the Australian Federal Government to reinstate funding for the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS).

[Death sentence for Pakistani Catholic on blasphemy charge](#)

The trial court of Lahore in Pakistan sentenced Savan Masih, a Catholic, to death for blasphemy, reported *The Tablet*.

[Dutch Jesuit martyred in Syria](#)

A Dutch Jesuit priest who chose to remain in the besieged city of Homs to care for its starving population been shot dead, writes *The Catholic Herald*.

[Don't look the other way over human trafficking](#)

Heed the words of Pope Francis on today’s slave trade, implored a Loreto sister ahead of an international conference on human trafficking in Rome.

[Call for a US envoy to protect persecuted religious minorities](#)

President Barack Obama was urged to follow up on his meeting with Pope Francis by



backing the creation of a special envoy for religious minorities in the Middle East and south central Asia, reported the Catholic News Agency.

[Caritas fights Ebola virus with household cleaners](#)

Armed with chlorine and soap, 60 Caritas agents in Guinea went out to areas worst hit by the Ebola virus.

[Pope Francis: Human trafficking is an open wound on society](#)

Meeting four victims of human trafficking, dozens of religious sisters and senior police chiefs from 20 countries, Pope Francis praised their coordinated efforts to fight against a 'crime against humanity,' reported the Catholic News Service.

[Burmese archbishop warns against new religion laws](#)

Myanmar Archbishop Charles Maung Bo of Yangon said proposed laws on 'the protection of race and religion' are unnecessary, and warned against the state interfering in an individual's right to choose their religion, reported Ucanews.

For details click on headlines or go to cathnews.com



Social Justice Diary, May 2014

1	Thu	<p>St Joseph the Worker - read the ACSJC Pastoral Letters for St Joseph the Worker</p> <p>International Workers Day</p> <p>1991: Pope John Paul II's encyclical Centesimus Annus ('On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum'), read the ACSJC PDF summary of the encyclical</p>
2	Fri	
3	Sat	<p>World Press Freedom Day</p> <p>Fair Trade Fortnight begins:</p> <p>Fair trade products are an important tool for ending exploitation of workers across the globe. Buying certified fair trade goods can ensure that the producers are earning a living wage and working in decent conditions. But fair trade products are only a tiny percentage of global markets, and the battle for fair trade doesn't end there.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p>
4	Sun	Third Sunday of Easter



5	Mon	Blessed Edmund Rice
6	Tue	1992: Introduction of mandatory detention of asylum seekers in Australia: In 1992 the Federal Court was about to hear a challenge to the detention of 15 Cambodian asylum seekers who had been detained for two years. READ MORE ↓
7	Wed	
8	Thu	World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day 1945: War ends in Europe 1970: First anti-Vietnam War Moratorium march in Australia
9	Fri	
10	Sat	1994: Nelson Mandela's Inaugural Address as President of South Africa World Fair Trade Day
11	Sun	Fourth Sunday of Easter World Day of Prayer for Vocations Mother's Day
12	Mon	International Nurses' Day
13	Tue	International Conscientious Objectors Day
14	Wed	1971: Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Letter Octogesima Adveniens ('A Call to Action'), read the ACSJC PDF summary
15	Thu	International Day of Families 1891: Pope Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum Novarum ('On Capital and Labour'), read the ACSJC summary 1931: Pope Pius XI's encyclical Quadragesimo Anno ('On Reconstruction of the Social Order'), read the ACSJC PDF summary 1961: Pope John XXIII's encyclical Mater et Magistra ('On Christianity and Social Progress'), read the ACSJC PDF summary
16	Fri	
17	Sat	World Telecommunications and Information Society Day 2005: Death of Fr Ted Kennedy



		<p>Fifth Sunday of Easter</p> <p>Jubilee Sunday:</p> <p>Each year, on the third Sunday in May, people across Australia unite in heart, mind and spirit to recall and be re-inspired by the ancient Old Testament principle of ‘Jubilee’.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p>
18	Sun	
19	Mon	
20	Tue	2002: Timor-Leste Constitution came into force with Xanana Gusmao as first President
21	Wed	World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
22	Thu	International Day for Biological Diversity
		International Day to End Obstetric Fistula:
23	Fri	Obstetric fistula – a hole in the birth canal – is a preventable condition that affects 50,000 to 100,000 women worldwide every year.
		READ MORE ↓
24	Sat	<p>Mary Help of Christians, Patron of Australia</p> <p>1948: Foundation of World Council of Churches</p>
		Sixth Sunday of Easter
25	Sun	<p>Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories commences</p> <p>Africa Day</p>
26	Mon	<p>National Sorry Day</p> <p>1997: <i>Bringing Them Home Report</i> tabled in Parliament</p>
		National Reconciliation Week begins
27	Tue	<p>Week of Prayer for Reconciliation begins, read the ACSJC Prayer for Reconciliation</p> <p>1967: Referendum changes articles in the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Indigenous people</p>
28	Wed	



29	Thu	International Day of UN Peacekeepers 1992: Torres Strait Islander flag launched
30	Fri	
31	Sat	World No Tobacco Day

