

ACSJC Monthly Briefing November 2014 No 162



From the Secretariat November 2014

Dear Friends,

Last Saturday we celebrated the solemnity of All Saints. And on Sunday we commemorated All Soul's Day. In these days of prayer, we celebrated and drew inspiration from the saints and honoured our dead. Recognising our communion with them, how do their lives speak to us in today's world? How did they face the griefs and anxieties of their times?

How can we remain committed to peace-making and continue to seek justice in a world recoiling from the fear of terrorism, divided by extremism, violence and drawn towards war?

I would like to draw from the wisdom of a young woman of 14 years of age, who returned to school in August following the violent death of her mother. I believe I can learn from her and that she has something worthwhile to say about peace-making, particularly at times when it is difficult to do so.

In the first week back at school, her religion class was given the debating topic, 'Good always triumphs over evil'. I read the speech and asked the young woman and her extended family if I could share it with you in this briefing. They said yes.

Here are her words:

Turn on the television news any night of the week and your room will be filled with bad news. It seems like evil always defeats goodness.

Investigators struggle to get to the bombed airliner in Ukraine. The Israeli army destroys a school full of Palestinian children. Tens of thousands of Iraqis flee Islamic fighters and are stranded on a mountain in northern Iraq. War and famine in south Sudan put the lives of 50,000 children at risk. A man is shot in a car park in Leichhardt and stumbles to the street where he dies.

This night my father turned off the TV and said, 'What good can come of all of this?'

The statement, 'Good always triumphs over evil' does not seem true in the face of the bad things we see around the world.

What answer can I find to my dad's question and who has the wisdom to help me find the answer? I need to listen to people who have endured the greatest evil and always held on to the hope that good always triumphs.

Mahatma Gandhi led the Indian people in peaceful protest against the British. He said, 'When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall. Think of it – always.'

Think also of Martin Luther King Jr. who led his people in the face of racist persecution in America. He said, 'I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.'

Most of all, for us, Jesus Christ gave the greatest advice on how we should respond to evil. He broke from the old law of "An eye for an eye" and said that we must respond to evil with love. He said, "do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; ...Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:38-39,44-45)

This is a big challenge, how can I respond to evil with goodness? How can I show love or forgiveness to someone who would want to kill me or my family? I have started by listening to these three wise men. They were so good but they were brutally murdered in cold blood and suffered the violence of evil. It is like the world could not cope with their goodness but, at the same time, the world could not destroy their goodness.

Good always overcomes evil and their words and deeds live on. Because Jesus overcame evil and rose from the dead, he gives us hope that good will always triumph. He actually shows us the way that good can always come from the evil around us.

Discord and violence can have different dynamics and levels of intensity depending on the context; be it interpersonal, among communities or between nations. Some may even find it naive to apply the Christ-like response in a personal tragedy to a global terror the like of which we see in Syria and Iraq.

But the one Christ-like quality that is the essential basis of true peace-making at all levels and in any context is basic concern for the dignity of the person – even the aggressor. This young woman's strength can be seen in her refusal to be captured by hatred or driven by a desire for revenge. The same quality can guide a response to evil and violence, whether that is through peace-making, the defence of ourselves or others, or the pursuit of justice and in restoring right relations.

Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ recently [wrote](#) in *Eureka Street* of how punishment is not the way to peace. Speaking of the global war on terror, he observed how a focus on retributive justice and the vilification of the aggressor or offender will not save the day; 'the means taken to prosecute the war threaten to poison the peace that they are meant to achieve'.

He quoted at length the words of Pope Francis in his 23 October address to the International Association of Criminal Law:

Not only are scapegoats sought to pay with their freedom and their life for all the social evils, as was typical in primitive societies, but beyond this sometimes there is the tendency to construct enemies deliberately: stereotype figures, who concentrate in themselves all the characteristics that the society perceives or interprets as menacing. The mechanisms of formation of these images are the same ones that once made possible the spread of racist ideas.

Reflecting on these words of the Holy Father, Fr Andrew says:

Those who play at war play for high stakes. But the best way to peace and security is not to wage war on people but to be curious about them – on what makes them safe, on what leads them to criminal acts, on how we can intervene to help them make good connections with society, and on how we can best prevent them from returning them to jail. Reflection and care are always better than war.

In this sense we realise that peace-making is not easy. Turning the cheek or loving the enemy can so easily be portrayed as ineffectual or illogical when scapegoats are being sought or the enemy is being pursued.

The words of all of these people and the young woman who lost her mother remind us of the hard work of peace – anger not succumbing to violence and revenge, proportionate force in defence of others, finding alternatives to violence; restoring the dignity of victims; acknowledging the dignity of the aggressor, building a lasting peace through reconciliation and a restorative justice.

The words of these people remind us of the generations of women and men – some of them saints - who have worked tirelessly for peace and sometimes against all odds. Their words and deeds can strengthen our resolve that good always triumphs over evil.

John Ferguson

National Executive Officer



Current Issues/Resources November 2014

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

Persecuted Christians around the world desperately need your prayers. Will you commit to pray for them? Every year, Christians around the world gather on the first Sunday of November to pray for the persecuted Church. As Victoria and fellow believers at the Deeper Life Church in Gombe, Nigeria, prayed together for the persecuted church, they couldn't have imagined how soon they would be persecuted themselves. But at that very moment, gunmen opened fire in the church, killing Victoria's father and younger brother. Yet Victoria's hope in Christ shone as she spoke of her father, declaring: 'He is not dead. Definitely one day we are going to meet again.' Join the Christians in Gombe and others around the world as we unite in prayer for the persecuted on Sunday 2 November, the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Resources are available on the Voice of the Martyrs [website](#).

POPE FRANCIS CALLS FOR ABOLISHING DEATH PENALTY AND LIFE IMPRISONMENT

Pope Francis called for abolition of the death penalty as well as life imprisonment, and denounced what he called a 'penal populism' that promises to solve society's problems by punishing crime instead of pursuing social justice. Pope Francis spoke during his general audience in St Peter's Square on October 22, 'All Christians and people of good will are thus called today to struggle not only for abolition of the

death penalty, whether it be legal or illegal and in all its forms, but also to improve prison conditions, out of respect for the human dignity of persons deprived of their liberty.' [Read](#) the full story from the Catholic News Service.

DEATH PENALTY APPEAL FOR ASIA BIBI

Catholic leaders in Pakistan will appeal to their country's Supreme Court after a lower court upheld the death penalty for a blasphemy ruling against a Christian mother of five children. 'The only option before us now is to appeal against the verdict ... We will appeal against it in the Supreme Court,' Fr Mani said, adding Christians were praying for an acquittal. A statement from the Cecil and Iris Chaudhry Foundation, a Catholic group named for being a critic of Pakistan's blasphemy law, expressed disappointment in the ruling, 'Bibi has wrongly been convicted of blasphemy. We remain optimistic that the rule of law will prevail and justice will be done (when the appeal is heard in the Supreme Court). For now that is our only hope'. [Read](#) the full *Catholic Herald* story.

NEW PUBLICATION BY SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE: 'INCOME MANAGEMENT IN THE APY LANDS'

The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands is an Aboriginal Local Government Area located in north-west South Australia. In 2012, the local Women's Council requested the introduction of income management into the APY Lands. The report found there are indications that income management may have made a modest contribution to addressing some of the challenges, but cannot alone make significant inroads into the social problems within the community. [Download](#) the report.

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (ACOSS) POLICY SNAPSHOT: COMPULSORY INCOME MANAGEMENT

With a major welfare review report due to be released in the next month and a push for an expansion of income controls by the Forrest Employment Review, it is timely to consider the evidence to date on the impact that compulsory income management policies have had on people, families and communities. This policy snapshot reviews the evidence on the impacts of compulsory income management since its implementation in 2007 and proposes an alternative policy agenda. [Read](#) the ACOSS policy snapshot.

NEW ACOSS REPORT: 2.5 MILLION PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Council of Social Service has today released a new report revealing that poverty is growing in Australia with an estimated 2.5 million people or 13.9% of all people living below the internationally accepted poverty line. The report provides the most up to date picture of poverty in the nation drawing on new data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Income and Expenditure surveys for 2011-12 and previous years. It finds that 603,000 or 17.7% of all children were living in poverty in Australia. [Read](#) the ACOSS poverty report.

ONLINE RESOURCE: THE WAY OF PEACE - ANZAC CENTENARY EDITION 1915-2015

This is an online resource produced by the Columban Mission Institute's Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice to enable Christian reflection and response during the time of the Anzac Centenary. It was launched on 4 October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. As violence and warfare continue to plague so many parts of the world today, this resource provides stimulus for you to be creative and active in

responding to the Christian call to be peacemakers in the footsteps of the non-violent Jesus. For further information: email pej.cmi@columban.org.au or 02 9352 8000. Download [here](#).

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN LOBBY (ACL) MEDIA RELEASE: 'SAVINGS SHOULD BE USED TO RESETTLE MORE REFUGEES'

The multi-billion dollar savings from the wind-down of detention centres should now be channelled into doubling the refugee intake, Australian Christian Lobby Managing Director Lyle Shelton said today. 'Now that people smuggling has all but stopped and Australia's border protection costs are coming down, it is time to adopt a more generous approach to refugees. We can afford to resettle more people and we know these people will in time help grow the Australian economy ... There are 51 million displaced people in the world today, millions of whom have been languishing for years in camps in Africa, the Thai-Burma border, Lebanon and Jordan,' Mr Shelton said. [Read](#) the media release in full.

PHIL GLENDENNING IN AFGHANISTAN, 'AFGHANISTAN IS AS BAD AS I'VE SEEN IT IN 10 YEARS'

After a recent trip to Afghanistan, Edmund Rice Centre's (ERC) director Phil Glendenning has said that contrary to reports from the U.S. Government and the security determinations of Australia's own Immigration Department, that Afghanistan is 'the worst I've seen it in 10 years.' The purpose of Glendenning's recent journey to the troubled state was to monitor the safety of several asylum seekers who were deported to Afghanistan from Australia after their application for asylum was rejected. Devastatingly, it appears that six of the eight men who Glendenning was in Afghanistan in August to monitor have already been killed. The Australian government's own Department of Foreign Affairs has also recently listed Afghanistan as an unsafe place to travel, and have issued a 'do not travel' warning for Australians. [Read](#) the ERC newsletter.

NEW ASYLUM AND MARITIME LEGISLATION STRIPS AWAY CHECKS ON MINISTERIAL POWERS

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) condemned the Federal Government's new Bill to amend asylum and maritime powers as a comprehensive assault on Australia's obligations to protect victims of persecution. RCOA produced a preliminary overview of the amendments and issued a statement critical of the Government's plans to strip away the already limited safeguards for people seeking asylum. The statement said that, while the legislation was presented to the public as a humane political compromise between the Government and the Palmer United Party to remove children from detention and provide a pathway to a permanent visa for refugees, there appeared to be no clear pathway to permanent protection. [Read](#) the RCOA statement and overview.

ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE (ASCRC) CAMPAIGN: STAND UP TO PROTECT REFUGEES FROM DANGER AND OUR COURTS FROM POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

ACRC are very concerned about the proposed Bill - the Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014, as it undermines two key Australian principles:

1. Abuse of Power – It will see the Minister give himself an unprecedented level of power to make life or death decisions about individual asylum seeker cases, without court oversight.

2. Harm to People – It will cause significant mental suffering and see people returned to danger, persecution, torture and death in their home countries.

The laws attack Australian values, like helping people in trouble, like giving people a fair go, like keeping a check on political power. Find out how to take action by [contacting](#) your local member of parliament before these changes can be pushed through.

ONLINE PETITION – PUT AN END TO OFFSHORE DETENTION

Our Government is failing to ensure even the most basic standard of care for people in the Manus Island and Nauru detention centres. Join the campaign calling on Immigration Minister Scott Morrison to put an end to this disgraceful policy, which is fast-becoming our nation's greatest shame. The petition to close down the Manus Island and Nauru detention centres is a collaboration between GetUp, the Refugee Action Coalition, Doctors for Refugees, ChilOut, the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, and numerous groups and individuals fighting for compassionate and humane treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

What can you do?

- 1) Sign the petition [here](#);
- 2) Add the petition to your facebook page or twitter account;
- 3) Distribute the link to the petition to your own email list, and encourage others to sign and distribute. If you would like to sign on to the petition as an organisation or group, please email petition@getup.org.au.

ASYLUM SEEKERS RESOURCE CENTRE (ASRC) – WHAT YOU CAN DO

With the political environment so hostile to asylum seekers, ASRC have been getting a lot of requests from people asking what they can do to help. One of the best things you can do is to exercise a fundamental democratic right and write to your Federal MP, holding them to account for the measures they are keeping in place in your name. ASRC's patron, Julian Burnside, has observed that many of our Federal politicians do not know the facts about our refugee policy and have not confronted the moral issues it raises. You can find who your relevant MP is [here](#). Most have a contact button next to their names, which will email them through a standard form. Julian suggests that a handwritten letter is more likely to get attention: you can find the address of their local office in the List of Members [here](#). To help you know what to write, there is a one page tip sheet on Julian's website for how to best get your message through [here](#).

ONLINE PETITION: HELP END SLAVERY

Women and girls leave their homes every day to find jobs as domestic workers in the cities of Australia. But when they show up for their first day of work, some find out they've been deceived. Locked inside the homes of strangers, their passports taken away, often beaten and sexually abused, caught in the nightmare of modern slavery. For the first time ever, there's a global standard to protect domestic workers. It's called Convention 189. 14 key countries have already signed on and momentum is growing for an international surge of support. If Australia ratifies now it will be crucial to ensure other countries

in the region feel compelled to take action. Call on the Government of Australia to ratify Convention 189 immediately and help end domestic slavery. Sign the petition [here](#).

ACRATH ADVOCACY IN CANBERRA RESULTS

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans reports successful outcomes after its members recently went to Canberra for a round of meetings over solutions to human trafficking, ACRATH writes in its newsletter. The 15 ACRATH members met with 79 Members of Parliament and advisors, including 48 members of the lower house and 17 senators, and secured many positive outcomes from their meetings. Read about the significant results [here](#).

AUSTRALIAN FAIR TRADE AND INVESTMENT NETWORK (AFTINET) CAMPAIGN: EMAIL SHADOW TRADE MINISTER PENNY WONG

The Korea Free Trade Agreement (KAFTA) contains an insidious ISDS clause, which allows Korean investors to sue Australian governments over policies which they claim to 'harm' their investment. A Parliamentary Inquiry into the KAFTA was concluded on the 4th of September which, since the Government had the majority on the committee, recommended that the agreement be ratified despite the ISDS clause. However, to be ratified, the KAFTA legislation has to be approved by the Senate, where the government does not have a majority. Labor did make a minority report which was very critical of the ISDS clauses in the KAFTA, and it remains their policy not to include ISDS in trade agreements. However, it will require community pressure for the Labor party implement their policy against ISDS and to oppose KAFTA in the Senate. Senator Penny Wong is the Labor trade spokesperson and the leader of Labor in the Senate. It is critical to let her know that we want her party to reject the KAFTA implementing legislation. Please email Senator Wong now and share the [link](#) with your friends.

VISION OF HUMANITY REPORT LAUNCHED ON PEACE AND RELIGION

The latest report from the Institute for Economics and Peace provides an important statistical analysis of the relationship between peace and religion. The report, 'Five Key Questions Answered on the Link between Peace and Religion', broadens the discussion on whether religion in itself is a cause of conflict or whether there are other more significant factors. The Peace and Religion report shows that religion can be a catalyst for peace, as religious groups and communities tend to strengthen the social bonds of citizens. Civic engagement and participation, as well as higher group membership, such as sports or religious groups, corresponds with slightly higher levels of peace and can strengthen the resilience of societies. [Download](#) the Vision of Humanity report.

SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE (SPRC) RELEASE REPORT TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY MAKE CHOICES

With the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and other self-directed funding packages, it is vital that people with disability have the information and support they need to make choices. The 'My Choice Matters' program is a series of workshops, grants, projects, leadership programs and more, for people with disability and their families in NSW. Read the SPRC report [here](#).

MICAH CAMPAIGN: SHINE THE LIGHT SELFIE!

Developing countries lose vast amounts of money each year due to tax dodging, bribery, corruption and illicit financial flows. This is money that could be used to provide essential services like healthcare, education and water and lift millions out of poverty. Christians from around the world are calling on world leaders for integrity and transparency in the global financial system for the sake of the world's poorest. This collective appeal from ordinary citizens will culminate when the world's most influential leaders (G20) meet in Brisbane, Australia this November. Join in by shining the light on corrupt and unethical business practices, bringing them out from the darkness into the light where they can be overcome. Join the Micah campaign [here](#).



ACSJC Publications November 2014

ORDER NOW! – 2015 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2015 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](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2014–2015 – STILL TAKING ORDERS

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement is entitled 'A Crown for Australia: Striving for the best in our sporting nation'. The ACSJC is still taking orders for the Statement. An order form is available [here](#).

PRAYER CARD & LEAFLET: TEN STEPS TOWARDS BEING A GOOD SPORT

Now available. Call (02) 8306 3499

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT SUMMARY, LITURGY NOTES, COMMUNITY AND STUDENT RESOURCES, POWERPOINT PRESENTATION AND VIDEO, RELATED MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES –available [here](#).

ECUMENICAL RESOURCE: 'GAMBLING AND ITS IMPACT IN AUSTRALIA – IS NOTHING SACRED?' Download from the National Council of Churches [website](#).

BUILDING BRIDGES

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 [here](#).

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 [here](#).

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



News Monitor November 2014

Catholic schools in rich areas of Sydney to charge higher fees

Parents whose children attend Catholic schools in the more affluent areas of Sydney will pay higher fees than those attending schools in poorer areas, and the long-held policy of a flat tuition fee will be abandoned next year.

Vatican nuncio asks UN to establish ‘rule of law’ definition

The Vatican’s nuncio to the United Nations called for a broad definition of the term “rule of law” that includes respect, dignity and justice.

Mass rallies by Indonesian Catholics in mining protest

Hundreds of priests and nuns staged simultaneous rallies in Jakarta and several towns in Flores province demanding that the government annul controversial mining permits within 30 days.

ACRATH's successful advocacy push in Canberra

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans reported successful outcomes after its members went to Canberra for a round of meetings over solutions to human trafficking.

Parishes should welcome gay couples, Sydney couple tells Synod

A married couple from Sydney told the Synod on the Family that parishes should welcome same-sex couples, following the example of parents who invited their son and his male partner to their home for Christmas.

Hong Kong bishops speak out, Pope's refugee call

Irish President praises Sisters of Mercy, Buddhist symphony to welcome Pope, migrants keep the faith in New Zealand, Francis on the Jesuits, Anglicans divided on gay clergy, China, Bangladesh, Cardinal Tagle.

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



Social Justice Diary Nov 2014

1	Sat	All Saints
2	Sun	All Souls
3	Mon	
4	Tue	
5	Wed	
6	Thu	International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict International Week for Science and Peace
7	Fri	
8	Sat	1907: minimum wage judgement handed down by Justice Higgins in Harvester case
9	Sun	Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time 1989: Berlin Wall opened
10	Mon	World Science Day for Peace and Development 1995: Nine Nigerian environmentalists and human rights activists hanged
11	Tue	Remembrance (Armistice) Day , commemorating the end of World War I in 1918 (ACSJC resources on Peace Building)
12	Wed	1991: Dili Massacre, Timor-Leste: more than 271 people killed
13	Thu	
14	Fri	World Diabetes Day
15	Sat	
16	Sun	Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time International Day for Tolerance

		Restorative Justice Week commences - read Ten Steps to building bridges not walls 1989: Six Jesuit priests and two co-workers murdered in El Salvador
17	Mon	
18	Tue	
19	Wed	
20	Thu	<p>Universal Children's Day: On 20 November 1959 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It marked the first major international consensus on the fundamental principles of children's rights.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p> <p>World Philosophy Day 1959: Declaration of Rights of the Child adopted by UN</p>
21	Fri	World Television Day
22	Sat	
23	Sun	Christ the King
24	Mon	<p>50th anniversary of passage of National Service Act (1964)</p> <p>Introduction of National Service:</p> <p>In November 1964 the National Service Act was introduced and passed.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p>
25	Tue	<p>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</p>

26	Wed	
27	Thu	1998: First Sydney Peace Prize awarded to Muhammad Yunus
28	Fri	
29	Sat	International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People 1980: Death of Dorothy Day, Founder of the Catholic Worker Movement
30	Sun	<p>First Sunday of Advent:</p> <p>Advent provides us with a waiting space and a time of preparation for Christmas.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p> <p>1971: Synod of Bishops Statement Justitia in Mundo ('Justice in the World')</p>