

ACSJC Monthly Briefing December 2014 No 163



From the Secretariat December 2014

Dear Friends,

As you read this, we will be coming into the season of Advent, the four weeks that lead up to the celebration of the birth of Christ.

Advent is a time of preparation, of meditation and taking stock. It is reminiscent of Lent, the season of preparation for Easter, because it is also a time for penitence, self-sacrifice and a consciousness of the needs of others.

The Gospel readings for this Sunday and last Sunday are particularly striking.

Last Sunday, on the Solemnity of Christ the King, we heard Jesus give an extraordinary description of himself as King (Matthew 25:31-46). The King whom Jesus described must have sounded very strange, even revolutionary, to those who heard him.

The Son of Man – the King – rewards those who have served him well and exiles those who have not. But the king does not reward those who brought him tribute, served in his army or were loyal courtiers. He rewards those who noticed when the king was an outcast, furthest away from a royal court: when he was hungry, naked, even in prison. ‘When did we see you like that?’ they ask him.

The answer is unforgettable: when you saw the least of his sisters and brothers. Those condemned to exile did not commit treason or raid the royal treasury: they are those who did not notice the king when he was an outcast.

This Sunday, the first Sunday of Advent, the Gospel reading is brief but very sobering: ‘Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come.’ (Mark 13:33-37). Only five verses on the theme of the man who has left his house and put his servants in charge: ‘Stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming’.

There is a link between the two readings. As humans, we know that life is unpredictable, that we may be called to account at any time. The master may come at ‘evening or midnight, cockcrow or dawn’. What will that accounting be? We can see from the example of Pope Francis and from the writings of Popes Benedict and John Paul II that much of what we will have to account for will be how we responded to those most in need.

Among those most in need – those hungry, naked, in prison – are the people who have come to Australia seeking protection and security. Instead of protection and security they find themselves behind barbed wire, denied a future, their children denied an education.

For the first week of this Advent, Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) invites you to participate in the National Lament Week of Prayer and Prophetic Witness from the 1st Sunday of Advent, 30th November, to the 2nd Sunday of Advent, 7th December.

CRA says:

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'This Week of Prayer is an opportunity to be in prayerful solidarity with the people seeking asylum in Australia and with the people being detained in Australia and off-shore, many the victims of harsh and punitive policies.'

People of faith are invited to gather and pray a National Lament Prayer in small and large groups. The Prayer is inspired by the words of Pope Francis when he visited Lampedusa.

In particular, CRA says, 'there will be small groups outside the detention centres across Australia, simply being a prayerful presence.'

Like the doorkeeper who is charged to 'stay awake' in Sunday's gospel, surely those who will be standing outside the detention centres in peace and prayer will be a sign that not all of Australia has fallen asleep to the plight of those seeking refuge and asylum in Australia.

If you feel you can join this initiative, CRA asks you to register and nominate the detention centre at which you could be present and the days you could attend.

For more information, [click here](#).

This gesture of solidarity, this appeal to a God who himself was outcast and needed protection, is something we can do. We can hope that such an action touches the consciences of at least some of our fellow-Australians, and perhaps even our politicians. And we certainly know that we are praying to a God who hears our prayers and remembers those who are hungry, thirsty and in prison because he was one himself.

John Ferguson



Current Issues/Resources December 2014

CHRISTMAS WISHES

Members of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and staff of the Secretariat would like to thank our readers and subscribers for their support throughout 2014.

Thank you for your passion and commitment to social justice. May Christmas bring you the peace of Christ and renewal for the year ahead. A happy and holy Christmas to you and your loved ones.

The office of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council will be closed on Christmas day and resume business on Monday 19 January.

CATHOLIC WEBSITE CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

The Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life has produced an excellent web-based resource for the [International Day for People With A Disability](#). It includes tips for celebrating the day, liturgy notes and many others resources. There is also a Facebook page called Celebrating International Day of PWD – where you can send your news and photos to [share](#) with the wider community.

DVD RESOURCE: EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES

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The Women's Reconciliation Network ran a forum on constitution recognition at Ashfield Town Hall in Sydney in March 2014. A recording of the forum is now available in the DVD 'Exploring Perspectives: Conversations on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People'. The Women's Reconciliation Network invites you to share this valuable resource in schools, tertiary institutions, community groups and learning circles. The 27-minute DVD includes presentations by: Kirsten Grey, Kamilaroi/Muruwari Woman, CEO NSW Reconciliation Council; George Williams AM, Professor of Constitutional Law UNSW; Nicole Watson, Birri Gubba Woman, Researcher, Jumbunna House of Learning UTS; and Jeff McMullen AM, Journalist and Film Maker. The DVD costs \$10. To purchase copies, contact Sr Helen Kearins at the ACSJC on (02) 8306 3499 or admin@acsjc.org.au

CARITAS GLOBAL GIFTS

By choosing a Global Gift this year, you are helping to spread the message that together, as one global family, we are making the world a better place. One gift at a time, Caritas is helping to alleviate poverty, enabling people to create healthier, happier futures for themselves, their children and their communities. The range of Global Gifts encompasses many of the most important areas of their work – from responding to emergency situations with food and water to supporting education programs and training farmers in new agricultural techniques that empower and sustain communities for generations to come. To find out more please read our [frequently asked questions](#) or [download an order form](#).

BUILDING A PATHWAY FOR INDIGENOUS TEACHERS

In July, the National Catholic Education Commission and the University of South Australia's More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI) jointly launched a \$500,000 Indigenous education program. The program will help fund innovative systemic programs across Australia, helping to take on and mentor more Indigenous teachers and support Indigenous students on a pathway to the teaching profession. Dr Sharkey describes the response to the program since its launch as extremely positive. 'Our long-term vision focuses on creating sustainable, effective national networks and collaborative systems along with a national system for data collection and further research, ... We will continue to build the professional capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, and in turn increase their numbers in the Catholic sector in remote and urbanised settings.' Like to know more? Visit www.matsiti.edu.au

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.

NEW ACROSS 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.

2014 GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX

Terrorism has become a global phenomenon, with a 61% increase in the number of people killed in terrorist attacks over the last year. The 2014 Global Terrorism Index measures the impact of terrorism in 162 countries according to the number of terrorist attacks, fatalities, injuries and property damage. The research shows that 82% of all those killed in terrorist attacks last year were in just five countries. Find out more and get the facts on terrorism [here](#).

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](#).

LANDMARK REPORT : BEYOND THE BOATS: BUILDING AN ASYLUM AND REFUGEE POLICY FOR THE LONG TERM

This report was developed from a high level roundtable on asylum and refugee policy convened by Centre for Policy Development (CPD), Australia21 and the Andrew and Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law (UNSW). Now that the acute phase of boat arrivals appears over, *Beyond the boats* urges all parties to use this opportunity to construct an overarching national asylum and refugee policy for the long term. Key recommendations include increasing Australia's humanitarian intake, phasing out mandatory detention apart from initial screening and establishing a regional Track II dialogue. Read the report in full [here](#).

CAMPAIGN: 'WE'RE BETTER THAN THIS'

We're Better Than This is a movement that has grown from a decision by ordinary Australians to do something about the extraordinary cruelty of our Government towards the hundreds of innocent children in detention/deterrence camps. It has the support of prominent Australians. The founders are a small group of professionals with experience in human rights, refugee advocacy, PR, film making, advertising, marketing and social media. Send a postcard or upload your own video. To find out more, visit the campaign [website](#).

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.

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.

MERCY SOWING SEEDS

The Seeds of Justice program offers students and teachers the opportunity to deepen their awareness of social justice and meet like-minded people from other schools. Over the last decade, Seeds of Justice, an initiative of Mercy Education, has coordinated two student camps and one staff conference each year for metropolitan schools in Victoria. In 2013 the scope of the project began to grow, stretching to encompass schools from regional Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia. Guest speakers are a feature of the camps, sharing their expert, firsthand experiences working within the field of social justice and then opening up the floor to the students to respond. Like to know more? [Click here](#).

KEEP EUREKA STREET FREE

Eureka Street is not just a magazine. It's a locality – a community – and for 23 years has been the destination of choice for Australians who enjoy conversations about politics, religion and current events with a hefty dose of ethical thinking. There is no cover charge, no paywalls. Eureka Street is free and open to all, compliments of the Australian Jesuits. The team of wonderful writers includes Andy Hamilton SJ, Frank Brennan SJ, Moira Rayner, and around 70 more. They are currently running our Christmas raffle to be drawn on 9 December 2014. Click on the [link](#) and you will be taken directly to the raffle site.

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.



ACSJC Publications December 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](#).

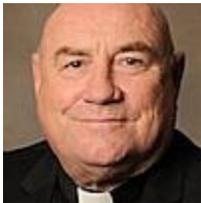
Ecumenical resource: 'Gambling and its Impact in Australia – Is nothing sacred?'. Download from the National Council of Churches [website](#).

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](#).

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



News Monitor December 2014

[Caritas report calls for an end to rape in Congo](#)

Timed to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Caritas report *Fearless Voices: speaking up for peace, equality and justice in the DRC* documented the state of law, war and justice in the country known as the most dangerous place to be a woman.

[Bishops call on community to reflect on violence against women](#)

The Australian Catholic Bishops called on the community to focus on the message of Jesus Christ and his relationship with women, ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

[Francis urges world to do more for the hungry](#)

The Pope urged countries around the world to do more to help those suffering from hunger and malnutrition, telling an international nutrition conference: "Perhaps we paid too little heed to those who are hungry."

[Bishop fears 'catastrophic' result of WA town closures](#)

A study of "rough sleepers" by Centacare in Broome found more than 100 homeless Aborigines there, sparking claims that Premier Colin Barnett's plan to close remote communities will exacerbate the problem, backing the claim by the Bishop of Broome, Christopher Saunders, that the town of 16,000 already faces a significant homeless problem.

[Religious freedoms under attack](#)

Aid to the Church in Need released a report detailing the attack on religious freedom around the world, with Fr Paul Stenhouse referring to stories of persecution, murder and kidnapping.

[Townsville parish acts to stop Afghani deportation](#)

A Townsville Catholic church community banded together to try and save one of their parishioners from deportation back to Afghanistan.

[Iraqi minorities: Why doesn't government protect us?](#)

Iraqi religious minorities, including Christians, were questioning why their government failed to protect them from the brutality of Islamic State forces.

[Faith leaders call on G20 leaders to act on climate change](#)

Australian faith leaders from across the religious spectrum issued a joint call for G20 leaders to urgently act on climate change, end fossil fuel subsidies and rapidly transition to a low carbon economy.

[Church leaders urge MPs to change approach on criminal justice](#)

Leaders of Victorian churches sent an open letter to Victorian parliamentarians and candidates for the 2014 Victorian state election, calling for a new approach to criminal justice, including recognition that each person is made in God's image and has a dignity that can never be lost.

[SOSJ forum on govt plan to settle refugees in Cambodia](#)

The Sisters of St Joseph in Melbourne opened their Hawthorn East administration centre for a public community forum to discuss the "Abbott government's illegal and racist plans to 'resettle' refugees on Nauru in Cambodia."

[Francis to focus on tackling racism in EU address](#)

The Pope took Europe to task over racial and religious intolerance in his address to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe.

– Courtesy cathnews.com



Social Justice Diary December 2014

December 2014

1	Mon	<u>World AIDS Day</u>
2	Tue	<u>International Day for Abolition of Slavery</u>
3	Wed	<u>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</u> 1874: Battle of the Eureka Stockade

4	Thu	
5	Fri	<u>International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development</u>
6	Sat	St Nicholas (Santa Claus)
7	Sun	Second Sunday of Advent 1965: Vatican II Pastoral Constitution <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> ('Joys and Hopes')
8	Mon	
9	Tue	<u>International Anti-Corruption Day</u>
10	Wed	<p><u>Human Rights Day:</u></p> <p>The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p> <p>1948: Adoption of United Nations Declaration of Human Rights 1992: <u>Redfern Speech by Prime Minister Paul Keating</u>, at launch of International Year of the World's Indigenous People</p>
11	Thu	
12	Fri	1831: Sisters of Mercy founded by <u>Catherine McAuley</u>
13	Sat	
14	Sun	Third Sunday of Advent
15	Mon	
16	Tue	
17	Wed	<u>First day of Hanukkah (Jewish Feast of Dedication)</u>

18	Thu	<u>International Migrants Day</u> 1894: South Australian Parliament the first in Australia to give women the right to vote
19	Fri	
20	Sat	<u>International Human Solidarity Day</u>
21	Sun	Fourth Sunday of Advent 1991: Dissolution of the USSR and the founding of the Commonwealth of Independent States including Russia 1993: Native Title Bill passed by the Australian Senate
22	Mon	
23	Tue	1901: Immigration Restriction Act (White Australia Policy) enacted 1996: Wik High Court decision
24	Wed	Christmas Eve Last Day of Hanukkah
25	Thu	Christmas Day
26	Fri	2004: South Asia devastated by tsunami, killing 200,000 to 300,000 people
27	Sat	
28	Sun	Feast of the Holy Family
29	Mon	
30	Tue	1987: Pope John Paul II's encyclical <u>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</u> ('The Social Concern of the Church')
31	Wed	

January 2015

1	Thu	Mary, Mother of God <u>World Day of Prayer for Peace</u> <u>Theme: <i>Slaves no more, but brothers and sisters</i></u> <u>1901: Foundation of Commonwealth of Australia</u> <u>1994: Native Title Act commenced operation</u>
2	Fri	
3	Sat	1977: First loans by Grameen Bank, founded by Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh
4	Sun	The Epiphany of Jesus
5	Mon	
6	Tue	
7	Wed	
8	Thu	
9	Fri	
10	Sat	<u>1946: First UN General Assembly opens with 51 nations represented</u>
11	Sun	The Baptism of Jesus
12	Mon	
13	Tue	
14	Wed	
15	Thu	<u>1842: Birth of St Mary MacKillop in Fitzroy, Victoria</u> <u>1929: Birth of Martin Luther King Jr in Atlanta, USA</u>
16	Fri	

17	Sat	
18	Sun	Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
19	Mon	
20	Tue	
21	Wed	
22	Thu	
23	Fri	
24	Sat	<u>Feast of St Francis de Sales, patron saint of journalism</u>
25	Sun	Third Sunday in Ordinary Time <u>1959: Pope John XXIII announced his intention to convoke the Second Vatican Council</u>
26	Mon	<u>Australia Day / Survival Day</u> 1972: Aboriginal Tent Embassy established in Canberra
27	Tue	<u>International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust</u>
28	Wed	
29	Thu	
30	Fri	
31	Sat	