

# ACSJC Monthly Briefing April 2015 No 166



## From the Secretariat April 2015

Dear Friends,

At the time of writing, Myuran Sukamaran and Andrew Chan are being held at the Nusakambangan island prison, awaiting execution. Their lawyers are before a state administrative court arguing that it does have the authority to rule on the Presidential decree that denied the two clemency. ([link](#))

At this time, and it seems against all odds, we pray that the legal processes in train will recognise the efforts of these two men to take responsibility for their crimes and to reform themselves and to assist and serve others in similar situations in prison.

Archbishop Denis Hart, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, wrote to President Joko Widodo and the Ambassador of Indonesia in late January, appealing for their death sentences to be commuted to continued imprisonment. He said, 'I recognise the seriousness of the offences committed in your jurisdiction and the devastating effect of drugs in communities both in Indonesia and Australia. Justice must prevail and appropriate punishment used for the common good of our societies when such crimes are committed. However, we believe that jail sentences, not execution, are the more appropriate means of punishing offenders and deterring those who would consider committing such crimes.'

Archbishop Denis went on to highlight how the two had been reformed. 'I am aware that Andrew and Myuran are remorseful and have been reformed. They have initiated education programs with the intention of supporting and reforming other prisoners. This is testimony to the opportunity for rehabilitation afforded them in Indonesia's penal system and to the commitment of these two men to make a positive contribution to the lives of fellow inmates and to the broader Indonesian community. It is my hope that their lives will be spared and that their contribution can continue', he said. ([link](#))

In early February, over 100 Members of the Parliament of Australia signed a letter to the Ambassador, pleading for the lives of the Australians and others on death row, and noting the consideration of judges of Indonesia's Constitutional Court that the death penalty does not have a deterrence effect greater than a life sentence or long prison term.

They said, 'We humbly request that due consideration be given to this letter so that the circumstances of Mr Chan and Mr Sukamaran can be reconsidered in light of their rehabilitation, their suffering and their families' suffering, and upon the reasoning of the Indonesian Constitutional Court, we request that their death sentences be commuted to an appropriate term of imprisonment or that they be deported back to Australia on condition that they face the criminal justice system here.' ([link](#))

And these words of Foreign Minister Julie Bishop to Parliament on 12 February sum up the mind of all calling for clemency. 'Whatever one's views of the rights and wrongs of this situation, after speaking to the mothers of Australian citizens Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, I ask others to place themselves – just for a moment – in the shoes of these young men and their families. Sons, brothers, facing death by firing squad for shocking actions, for shocking mistakes, made over a decade ago.

'Australia's strong opposition to the death penalty at home and abroad is reflected in the Government's determination to do all possible to seek a stay of execution and clemency for Andrew and Myuran. At the same time that we seek clemency, we acknowledge the serious drug smuggling crimes for which Andrew and Myuran were convicted. We are not understating the gravity of the nature of these crimes ... 'Without doubt, Andrew and Myuran need to pay for their crimes with lengthy jail sentences. But they should not need to pay with their lives.' ([link](#))

To place oneself in the shoes of Andrew, Myuran and their families is a great challenge. And to show mercy to those who have committed serious crimes is part of that challenge. But the spectre of capital punishment highlights the importance of mercy as an essential underpinning to criminal justice.

Pope Francis made this point in his letter of 20 March to Frederico Mayor, President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty.

'The death penalty is contrary to the meaning of *humanitas* and to divine mercy, which must be models for human justice. It entails cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, as is the anguish before the moment of execution and the terrible suspense between the issuing of the sentence and the execution of the penalty, a form of "torture" which, in the name of correct procedure, tends to last many years, and which oftentimes leads to illness and insanity on death row.

'In some spheres there is debate over the method of execution, as if it were about finding "the best" way. In the course of history, various lethal mechanisms have been defended because they reduced the suffering and agony of the condemned. But there is no humane form of killing another person.

'Today, not only are there means of effectively addressing the crime without definitively depriving criminals of the chance to reform, but there is also a heightened moral sensitivity regarding the value of human life, arousing public opinion in support of the various provisions aimed at its abolition or at suspending its application and a growing aversion to the death penalty,' the Holy Father said.

The concluding words of the Pope's letter have great relevance as we approach the Passion of Christ this Holy Week, with the two Australians and others facing the death penalty in our prayers:

'... [He] was captured and unjustly condemned to death, and who identified with *all prisoners*, whether guilty or not: "I was in prison and you came to me" (Mt 25:36). May He, who before the adulterous woman did not question her guilt, but invited the accusers to examine their own consciences before throwing a stone at her (cf. Jn 8:1-11), grant you the gift of wisdom, in order that the action you undertake in favour of the abolition of this cruel punishment, may be appropriate and fruitful.' ([link](#))

Pope Francis' moving words certainly bring to our minds the anguish of Myuran and Andrew. We can also remember in our prayers thousands of others facing the death penalty in Indonesia, in the U.S., in China and other nations around the globe.

John Ferguson  
National Executive Officer



## Current Issues/Resources April 2015

### MERCY CAMPAIGN

The Mercy Campaign is seeking clemency for Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan who were arrested in 2005 in Indonesia for trafficking drugs. Following a lengthy judicial process and unsuccessful appeals against the death sentence, both lodged appeals for clemency with the President. Their appeals have been rejected and last minute appeals to a state administrative court are being made. Their execution is imminent. To support the Mercy Campaign, visit the [website](#) where you can sign the petition and see other activities in hope and support for Andrew and Myuran.

### CARITAS AUSTRALIA: PACIFIC EMERGENCY APPEAL

Caritas Australia has opened the Pacific Emergency Appeal to respond to urgent needs such as food, shelter and clean water following the impact of Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu? Caritas Australia and Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand have deployed staff members who are working with the Bishop and Diocese of Port Vila to identify the needs of the many displaced people and the next steps in the response efforts. Caritas Australia's Pacific Emergency Appeal is now open. Donations may be used for Disaster Risk Response initiatives such as disaster preparedness training in this vulnerable region, as communities' ability to identify and respond to disasters with speed is proven to save lives, livelihoods and property. To donate, [visit](#)

### PROJECT COMPASSION 2015 – PUT YOUR COMPASSION INTO ACTION

On 15 February, Caritas Australia, the international aid and development organisation of the Catholic Church, launched its annual Project Compassion appeal – one of Australia's largest humanitarian fundraising and awareness-raising campaigns. Each year Project Compassion, which runs through the six weeks of Lent, brings hundreds of thousands of Australians together in solidarity with the world's poor. Caritas Australia CEO, Paul O'Callaghan, said Project Compassion was an extraordinary, ongoing demonstration of the faith, love and generosity of caring supporters, all in the name of justice and peace. To donate to Project Compassion, or for fundraising ideas [click here](#) or phone 1800 024 413.

### NEW PUBLICATION: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE REFERENDUM TO RECOGNISE INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

This book details how our Constitution was drafted, and shows how Aboriginal peoples came to be excluded from the new political settlement. It explains what the 1967 referendum – in which over 90% of Australians voted to delete discriminatory references to Aboriginal people from the Constitution – achieved and why discriminatory racial references remain. With clarity and authority the book shows the symbolic and legal power of such a change and how we might get there. Concise and clear, it is written by two of the best-known experts in the country on matters legal, Indigenous and constitutional. This is essential reading on what should be a watershed occasion for our nation. Authors: Megan Davis and George Williams. [Link](#).

### DVD RESOURCE: EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES

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](mailto:admin@acsjc.org.au)

### **REFUGEE COUNCIL ON MOSS REVIEW**

The Refugee Council of Australia says the Moss Review finds an urgent need to protect asylum seekers on Nauru. The review conducted by Philip Moss into the allegations relating to sexual and physical abuse of both children and adults at the Offshore Processing Centre in Nauru revealed a disturbing lack of protection for asylum seekers held in detention there. It uncovered multiple allegations of physical and sexual assault against asylum seekers (including children); noted that many asylum seekers detained on in Nauru were concerned about their personal safety and privacy; and found that there is underreporting of assaults against asylum seekers due to 'family or cultural reasons', fears that reporting assaults could negatively affect asylum claims or loss of confidence that anything would be done about their complaints. In a statement, RCOA called on the Australian Government to act urgently to identify the relevant authorities and support the immediate and thorough investigation of sexual abuse and physical assault allegations on Nauru. RCOA President Phil Glendenning said that 'it is not good enough for the Government to have one set of rules for how Australian institutions respond to child sexual abuse here and another set of rules for Australian-funded institutions on Nauru. A child is a child, and they deserve our greatest protection and care.' Read the full statement at [here](#). The redacted Moss Review report is available [here](#)

### **JUMP UP AND DOWN FOR KIDS CAMPAIGN**

There are currently 211 children held in detention centres in Australia, and a further 119 in detention in offshore facilities. Mandatory detention is damaging the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of children. The Human Rights Commission's inquiry into children in detention provides evidence that is both shocking and shameful. The evidence is clear. Children are being harmed and the trauma they are experiencing may be carried well into their adult life. Surely most decent adults would step in and not let this happen to any child in pain? We are hoping that all good people will jump up and down once they become aware of the suffering that the children are experiencing. Will you help get the message out that we are calling for the release of all children from immigration detention? We are asking you to get #jumping4kids. No petitions. No donations. [Click here](#).

### **GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD DETENTION TURNS 3**

Yet hundreds of thousands of children will spend their third birthday behind bars in immigration detention. These children are seeking asylum, seeking family reunification or fleeing from violence and poverty. This birthday reminds us that there is still much work to be done, but it's also an opportunity to celebrate the progress that would not have been possible without your support over the years. [Sign](#) the global petition to end immigration child detention today.

## **AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORT**

The Australian Human Rights Commission welcomes the tabling in Parliament of *The Forgotten Children, the Report of the National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention 2014*. [Link](#). The Commission also welcomes the release of children in immigration detention over recent months. Since the Inquiry began in February 2014, about half of the 1138 children detained at that time are now in the community or in community detention. The Inquiry considered the impact of immigration detention on the health, well-being and development of children. It reviewed changes in law, policy and practice in the treatment of children in immigration detention over the ten years since the Commission's 2004 report, *A Last Resort?* Commission President, Professor Gillian Triggs said, 'It is my sincere hope that the medical evidence and personal stories and findings of this report will ensure that Australians will say 'never again' to policies that cause harm to the health and development of children'.

## **PUBLICATION: REFUGEES: WHY SEEKING ASYLUM IS LEGAL AND AUSTRALIA'S POLICIES ARE NOT**

This book rejects spin and panic to provide a straightforward and balanced account of Australia's asylum policies in light of international law. Written for a general audience, it explains who asylum seekers and refugees are, what the law is, and what policies like offshore processing, mandatory detention and turning back boats mean in practice. Using real-life examples, this book reminds us of the human impact of Australia's policies. Authors: Jane McAdam (Professor of Law at UNSW) and Fiona Chong (UNSW). [Link](#)

## **CAMPAIGN: 'WE'RE BETTER THAN THIS'**

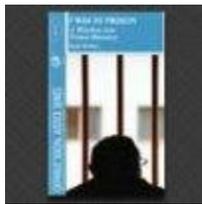
*We're Better Than This* is a movement that has grown from a decision by ordinary Australians to do something about the extraordinary cruelty of our Government towards the hundreds of innocent children in detention/deterrence camps. It has the support of prominent Australians. The founders are a small 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](#)

## **MEDIA RELEASE: Church calls for national redress scheme for child sexual abuse survivors**

Francis Sullivan of the Truth Justice and Healing Council tells the Royal Commission, 'a national scheme is necessary to ensure survivors of child sexual abuse are treated consistently across Australia. It would effectively provide consistent, easy access redress for all survivors of child sexual abuse regardless of where or when the abuse occurred. It would also remove the justifiable criticism that the investigation and determination of abuse claims by the very institutions against which the claims were brought lacked transparency.' Consistent with the Commission's preferred model the Church's redress proposal includes: a single national redress scheme led by the Australian Government and with the participation of state and territory governments and non-government institutions; direct financial redress capped at \$150,000; a matrix that takes account of the severity of the abuse and its impact to determine financial redress; additional funding for counselling and psychological care; a mechanism for a genuine, meaningful apology; an application process that is as clear and simple as possible; and claims determined on the balance of probabilities. [Link](#).

## **FR BRIAN LUCAS: 'Tax as much a moral as a financial issue'**

In a *Canberra Times* opinion piece responding to the Treasurer's discussion paper on the future of taxation, Fr Brian Lucas says, 'tax is a moral issue just as much as it is a financial one. Reform will need to be driven by the right values'. Drawing on the Church's social doctrine, he says, 'Distributive justice recognises that the burdens of the community should be shared based on the ability of people to contribute. Those who can contribute more should do so. Australia is a relatively low taxing and spending nation compared to other OECD countries. How can we justify a system where the already rich keep getting even richer? Drawing on the last census the Australian Bureau of Statistics tells us the top one-fifth of households had substantially more wealth than all the rest put together. Between 2003-04 and 2011-12, the top fifth of households increased their average net worth 28 per cent over those eight years, while the bottom fifth of households saw only a 3 per cent rise. Remember too that we have to turn those "percentages" into real dollars. The wealthy are getting a bigger share and from a bigger base. The preferential option for the poor is a closely related idea which says that the greater the needs of people, the greater the responsibility we have to respond to their needs.'[Read](#) the article in full.



## ACSJC Publications April 2015

### SERIES PAPER 76 – 'I WAS IN PRISON'

*I Was in Prison: A window into prison ministry*, by Dr Ruth Webber, explores the work of prison chaplains serving prisoners, ex-prisoners and the families of all who are or have been imprisoned. Dr Webber investigates the various ways in which chaplaincy is able to bring comfort to prisoners, meet their spiritual needs and provide practical help. The paper is based on interviews with prison chaplains, prisoners, ex-prisoners and families of prisoners. The paper draws on the 2011–12 Social Justice Statement *Building Bridges, Not Walls* and revisits some of the issues raised in that Statement. Available [here](#)

### 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. Cost: \$7.50 (including postage). To download an order form, [click here](#)

### DISCUSSION GUIDE: 2015 WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE

The theme for the 48<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace Message from Pope Francis is *No Longer Slaves, but Brothers and Sisters*. The Pope Francis speaks of the Ongoing scourge of human trafficking and the need to act to protect and defend its victims – labourers including children who are exploited by industry, migrants who are exploited during a dangerous journey, women and minors forced into prostitution or sold for arranged marriages, those trafficked for the sale of organs, for recruitment as soldiers, for illegal activities, for cross-border adoption. He says the effort to address trafficking is an 'immense task, which calls for courage, patience and perseverance, deserves the appreciation of the whole Church and society'. The ACSJC has prepared a Discussion Guide for the papal message, which is available on our [website](#)

### SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2014–2015

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.

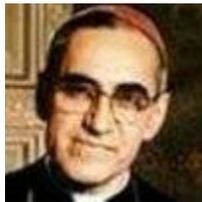
Now available. Call (02) 8306 3499

### ***BUILDING BRIDGES***

The book, *Building Bridges: Social Justice Statements from Australia's Bishops 1988 to 2013*, brings the 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 April 2015**

#### **Salvadorans march in memory of Oscar Romero**

Thousands of Salvadorans marched in memory of slain Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was assassinated 35 years ago during the country's civil war and will be beatified in May.

#### **Papal almoner invites 150 homeless to tour Vatican museums**

The Vatican organised a special afternoon for about 150 homeless people: a walk through the Vatican Gardens, a visit to the Vatican Museums, private time in the Sistine Chapel, and dinner in the museums' cafeteria.

#### **Cathedral sprinklers that drenched homeless going**

St Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco has promised to remove controversial sprinklers it installed to deter rough sleepers.

#### **Caritas Oceania agencies lead Vanuatu relief effort**

Caritas Oceania agencies established a Disaster Response Committee in Port Vila as they help lead a joint response to the damage caused by Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu.

#### **Josephites express concern for Aborigines**

At their bi-annual meeting, Josephite leaders from around Australia expressed their dismay at the Commonwealth Government's plan to cease funding Municipal and Essential Services (MUNS) to remote Aboriginal communities.

#### [Agencies rush to support devastated Vanuatu](#)

The devastation caused by Cyclone Pam to Vanuatu in the Pacific provoked an immediate humanitarian response from Christian agencies and calls for urgent action on climate change.

#### [Vatican diplomat endorses force to stop ISIS 'genocide'](#)

In an unusually blunt endorsement of military action, the Vatican's top diplomat at the UN called for a co-ordinated international force to stop ISIS in Syria and Iraq from further assaults on Christians and other minority groups.

#### [Centacare forced to put women into motels](#)

Catholic welfare group Centacare said it has been forced to place some women clients in South Australia in motels because of a lack of regional crisis services.

#### [Call for Churches to fund research into domestic violence](#)

Australian Church groups should fund a study into domestic violence within their ranks and clerical responses to it, according to a leading independent Christian research and media organisation.

#### [Bishops urge prayers for those who face religious persecution](#)

Leaders of the US bishops' conference invited people to pray for "those facing the stark reality of religious persecution in the Middle East and elsewhere".

#### [Oscar Romero to be beatified on May 23](#)

12-Mar-2015

Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero will be beatified in San Salvador on May 23, said Italian Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the postulator or chief promoter of the Archbishop's sainthood cause.

#### [What choice for Aboriginal peoples, asks ACBC](#)

"What choice?" is the question the Bishops Commission for Relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders asked Prime Minister Tony Abbott after his comment that Aboriginal peoples are living in remote communities as a "lifestyle choice."

#### [Honouring Catholics who were prominent in 1965 Selma march](#)

10-Mar-2015

Catholics played a prominent role in Selma, much more than in previous civil rights demonstrations. Never before had Catholic activists turned out in such large numbers.

#### [Cardinal criticises Church's 'harsh' treatment of gays](#)

Prominent Filipino Cardinal Luis Tagle has spoken of his regret at the Church’s “harsh” treatment of gay people while in the UK for one of the largest gatherings of young Catholics in the country’s history.

[Catholic Earthcare leads Carbon Fast, joins Earth Hour](#)

As a founding member of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, Catholic Earthcare took the lead for Australia to participate in a 40-day Lenten Fast for Climate Justice.

[US Catholic publications make call for end to capital punishment](#)

Four US Catholic publications with a broad range of audiences have come together in a joint editorial citing Church leaders in calling for an end to the death penalty in the United States.

[UK bishops back blockade of nuclear weapons factory](#)

British bishops sent messages of support to campaigners blockading a nuclear weapons factory in Berkshire, England.

– courtesy [cathnews.com](http://cathnews.com)



**Social Justice Diary April 2015**

**April 2015**

1	Wed	
2	Thu	<b>Holy Thursday</b> <a href="#">World Autism Awareness Day</a>
3	Fri	<b>Good Friday</b> READ MORE ↓
4	Sat	<a href="#">International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action</a> - ACSJC Resources in <a href="#">Peacebuilding</a>
5	Sun	<b>Easter Sunday</b> READ MORE ↓
6	Mon	<a href="#">International Day of Sport for Development and Peace</a> READ MORE ↓

7	Tue	<a href="#"><u>World Health Day</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwandan Genocide</u></a> - ACSJC Resources in <a href="#"><u>Peacebuilding</u></a>
8	Wed	
9	Thu	
10	Fri	<a href="#"><u>National Youth Week begins</u></a>
11	Sat	1963: Pope John XXIII's encyclical <a href="#"><u>Pacem in Terris</u></a> ('Peace on Earth')
12	Sun	<b>Second Sunday of Easter</b> <b>Divine Mercy Sunday</b> <a href="#"><u>International Day of Human Space Flight</u></a>
13	Mon	
14	Tue	
15	Wed	<a href="#"><u>Yom ha-Shoah, Holocaust Memorial Day</u></a> - ACSJC Resources for <a href="#"><u>Peacebuilding</u></a> <a href="#"><u>1991: Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission Final Report signed</u></a> - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#"><u>Justice for Indigenous People</u></a>
16	Thu	
17	Fri	
18	Sat	<a href="#"><u>World Heritage Day</u></a>
19	Sun	<b>Third Sunday of Easter</b>
20	Mon	
21	Tue	
22	Wed	<a href="#"><u>International Mother Earth Day</u></a> - ACSJC Resources on the <a href="#"><u>Environment</u></a>
23	Thu	<a href="#"><u>World Book and Copyright Day</u></a>
24	Fri	

25	Sat	<p>ANZAC Day</p> <p>The Columban Mission Institute's Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice, has produced a resource, <i>The Way of Peace ANZAC Centenary Edition 1915-2015</i>, to enable Christian reflection during this time of the ANZAC Centenary and beyond.</p> <p><a href="#">Download the complete resource here</a></p> <p>ACSJC Resources for <a href="#">Peacebuilding</a></p>
26	Sun	<p><b>Fourth Sunday of Easter</b></p> <p><a href="#">World Day of Prayer for Vocations</a></p> <p><a href="#">1986: Nuclear plant accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine, causing thousands of deaths and widespread contamination in Europe</a></p> <p><a href="#">1998: Bishop Gerardi murdered in Guatemala</a></p>
27	Mon	
28	Tue	<p><a href="#">1841: Death of St Peter Chanel, first martyr from Oceania, in the New Hebrides</a></p>
29	Wed	<p><a href="#">Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare</a> - ACSJC Resources for <a href="#">Peacebuilding</a></p>
30	Thu	