

# ACSJC Monthly Briefing May 2015 No 167



## From the Secretariat Chairman May 2015

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](#).

### **The Dignity of Work: When it matters most**

Fifty years ago, Pope Paul VI promulgated the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. The opening words reaffirmed how the heart of the Christian vocation is bound to the welfare of humanity:

*The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.*<sup>1</sup>

Dealing with groundbreaking changes in economic and social life, politics and international relations, the Vatican Council highlighted where the welfare of humanity was most at risk. It held up the value of human dignity and said that the person should be 'the source, the centre and the purpose of all economic and social life'.<sup>2</sup>

Australians who have enjoyed a stable career and worked hard at their job – even if it pays just enough to cover the bills, raise the children, and put a little away for retirement – will know the meaning of the dignity of work. It cannot be characterised by an individual workplace contract: it is about expressing God-given talents, developing skills and engaging with colleagues, clients and the broader community. And the labour market cannot be treated as just any market governed by impersonal forces, since the worker is more than a 'tool' or factor of production. Labour is 'superior to the other elements of economic life'. Importantly, work is the most important means of meeting the costs of living.<sup>3</sup>

The dignity of work can be found in its threefold capacity: for individual and family fulfilment, for building up the community and for securing the wellbeing of future generations. Society fails its citizens at these three levels where the economy does not generate sufficient employment and when government does not adequately intervene to promote job creation and maintain basic wages and income support.

### **Failing vulnerable individuals and families**

Just leaving it to the market will not ensure the benefits of prosperity flow to low-paid and unemployed workers. The Federal Government's *2015 Intergenerational Report* rightly claims that Australia's high standard of living has been boosted by a rapid growth in incomes due to increased productivity and economic growth.<sup>4</sup> Not all have benefited, however.

Many have fallen further behind average weekly earnings, currently at \$1,476 per week.<sup>5</sup> Low-paid workers on the National Minimum Wage receive only 43 per cent of that amount at \$641. And many

people who are unemployed are forced to rely on a Newstart Allowance rate of \$260 – only 17 per cent of the average wage. The long-term decline in the wages and income support safety nets has seen growing numbers at risk of poverty. Around 10 per cent of workers and over 67 per cent of people on the unemployment benefit have fallen below the poverty line.<sup>6</sup>

It should come as no surprise that many have had to resort to loan sharks and payday lenders to make ends meet. There are stories of income support recipients caught in exorbitant agreements with consumer rental organisations that draw repayments directly from the government's Centrelink system – a \$650 fridge ends up costing \$1,800.<sup>7</sup> Poor workers accumulating small loans to meet the essentials of life can be trapped in unserviceable debt – with effective interest rates over 300 per cent. As one commentator said, 'It's a world of poverty-level welfare ... a product of decisions society has made about how to deal with those in financial hardship'.<sup>8</sup>

### **Failing communities on the edge**

The latest report on welfare reform highlights the importance of vibrant communities in creating employment and social inclusion. Government, business and civil society play essential roles in supporting community capacity for social development, especially in assisting the most disadvantaged communities.<sup>9</sup> The basic requirements for dignity – food, shelter, education, employment and quality of life<sup>10</sup> – are matters of justice that should not be limited by a narrow economic valuation. It was disheartening, therefore, to hear our Prime Minister describe remote Indigenous communities as economically unviable and people's traditional connection to the land as mere 'lifestyle choices'.<sup>11</sup> In my pastoral visits, I have witnessed the uncertainty caused by the reluctance of governments to provide relatively meagre funding for essential municipal services, threatening community closure.

This cost-benefit analysis does not properly value communities. It can undervalue the dignity of residents and undermine society's collective responsibility to ensure fellow citizens are afforded the basics. An approach geared to building up disadvantaged communities would ensure essential services are the basis of economic development. The current enthusiasm for imposing Work for the Dole and compulsory income management in remote Indigenous communities is questionable in terms of cost and effectiveness.<sup>12</sup> There should instead be genuine job creation led by government, skilling locals, investing in social and economic infrastructure and providing the necessary incentives for business. Research has shown that Indigenous people living in remote areas are slightly more likely to find employment if they stay in their community rather than moving to a major city.<sup>13</sup> The emphasis should be on bringing jobs to the people rather than encouraging them to relocate.

A 'person-centred' economy would emphasise the obligation of government, business and civil society to foster vibrant communities, rather than regarding them as a burden on the taxpayer.

### **Failing future generations**

As Australia plans for the future, some are worried that an ageing population and shrinking workforce will impede growth and prosperity. The Government's *Intergenerational Report* places great emphasis on the need to extend the participation of older workers in the labour market, to hold onto their skills and to provide financial incentives to employers to retain workers.<sup>14</sup> This is a worthy initiative, but it does raise a question about the lower priority given to the need to skill up and employ younger workers. Levels of youth unemployment have risen dramatically following the global financial crisis. Currently

290,000 Australians under the age of 25 are unemployed. That's an unemployment rate of 14 per cent. The level is much higher for 15 to 19 year olds at 20 per cent – around 160,000 young Australians.<sup>15</sup>

This is a global trend – a challenge that Pope Francis has repeatedly raised:

*We cannot resign ourselves to losing a whole generation of young people who do not have the powerful dignity of work! ... a generation without work is a loss for their homeland and for future humanity.*<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, the approach in Australia has been to argue for some of the most punitive measures for young unemployed people. The six-month waiting period for Allowance payments for under-30s, which was proposed in last year's Federal Budget, would have seen many more people plunged into great hardship. Programs that were successful in re-engaging young people in education, training and employment have been axed and Work for the Dole has been made the default program. The business lobby is asking for this program to be accessible for the private sector.<sup>17</sup> Could it really come to pass that young people could be engaged in private enterprise with the public purse paying a below-poverty wage?

### **The source, the centre and purpose of economic life**

Well before the global recessions of the 1970s and the economic restructuring that caused mass unemployment in certain sections of the labour market, the Second Vatican Council highlighted the risk of economies that failed to serve the people:

*Many people, especially in economically advanced areas, seem, as it were, to be ruled by economics, so that almost their entire personal and social life is permeated with a certain economic way of thinking ... At the very time when the development of economic life could mitigate social inequalities ... it is often made to embitter them; or, in some places it even results in a decline of the social status of the underprivileged and in contempt for the poor.*<sup>18</sup>

Five decades later, Pope Francis warns again of economic systems that marginalise the poor:

*... it is necessary to always place man with his dignity at the centre, countering the dynamics that tend to homologise everything and place money at the apex. When money becomes the end and the motive of every activity and of every venture, then the utilitarian perspective and brute logic – which do not respect people – prevail ...*<sup>19</sup>

Following decades of exceptional growth and with an economy strong enough to survive the worst of the global financial crisis, we now face a slowing economy and the prospect that already vulnerable citizens will fall further into poverty. But our rich nation has the means to repair an economy that has failed to distribute adequate wealth and opportunity to the most vulnerable. A government facing a revenue crisis might, for example, look at netting some of the many billions of dollars shifted offshore by corporations seeking to minimise tax or save billions in superannuation tax concessions going to the wealthiest households before it suspends the unemployment benefits of young people or sends them out to work for the dole.

Ordinary Australians and our most vulnerable citizens need jobs and a social safety net that will protect them from poverty. They need communities that foster social inclusion. They need the economic security to provide for future generations. This is where the dignity of work matters most.

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

## Notes

1. Pope Paul VI (1965), *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, art.1.
2. Ibid, art. 63.
3. Ibid, arts. 26, 35, 63, 67.
4. Treasurer Joe Hockey (2015), *2015 Intergenerational Report: Australia in 2055*, Commonwealth of Australia, pp. 23f.
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014), *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, November 2014*, Cat. 6302.0.
6. Australian Council of Social Service (2014), *Poverty in Australia 2014*, pp. 13f. (poverty line: 60% of median)
7. Josie Taylor (2015), *Radio Rentals made \$90 million from Centrelink payments last year*, 20 March 2015, Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
8. Stephen Long & Deborah Richards (2015), 'Game of Loans', *Four Corners*, 30 March 2015, Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
9. Reference Group on Welfare Reform to the Minister for Social Services (2014), *A New System for Better Employment and Social Incomes*, Full Report, Commonwealth of Australia, p. 15.
10. Pope Paul VI (1965), art. 26.
11. Interview with Kirstyn March, ABC Goldfields, Western Australia, 10 March 2015.
12. Australian Council of Social Service (2015), *Improve employment opportunities and incomes for people at risk of poverty*, ACOSS Employment Proposals for 2015 Federal Budget; ACOSS (2014), *Compulsory Income Management: A flawed answer to a complex problem*, Policy analysis.
13. Nicholas Biddle (2015), 'Entrenched disadvantage in Indigenous Communities' in: *Addressing entrenched disadvantage in Australia*, Committee for Economic Development of Australia, pp. 71f.
14. *2015 Intergenerational Report: Australia in 2055*, Commonwealth of Australia, pp. 121f.
15. Brotherhood of St Laurence (2015), 'The Teenage Dream Unravels: Trends in youth unemployment', March 2015.
16. Pope Francis (2014), Meeting with the young people of the Dioceses of Abruzzi and Molise, 5 July 2014.
17. Rachel Browne (2015), 'Work for the dole needs to be in the private sector: ACCI', *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 February 2015.
18. Pope Paul VI (1965), art. 63.
19. Pope Francis (2014), Address to participants in the World Congress of Accountants, 14 November 2014.



## Current Issues/Resources May 2015

### THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS WITH CHAN AND SUKUMARAN FAMILIES

Church leaders have expressed sorrow at the execution of the two young Australians. President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Denis Hart expressed his deepest sympathies to the families of Andrew Chan and Myurun Sukumaran. ‘Today, I assure both families that you are in my thoughts and prayers. The imposition of the death penalty doesn’t achieve what people think it achieves. When it comes to crime and punishment, we must recognise and honour the human dignity of both victims and offenders ... the imposition of the death penalty is cruel and unnecessary for what it does to those found guilty and for what it does to our society,’ he said. Archbishop Anthony Fisher said, ‘Like most Australians I do not support capital punishment: there is enough violence in our world already without legal systems modelling it to others. When the Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohamed, and I made a joint appeal for clemency, we made it clear that we respected Indonesia’s sovereignty and shared its condemnation of drug trafficking. ... But refusing even to entertain appeals for mercy – even after the pair had demonstrably turned their lives around – seemed to us to damage our neighbour’s reputation for justice. ... My heart and the hearts of all good-willed Australians go out to the Chan and Sukumaran families and the families of the others executed with them. May their children rest in peace.’ ([media statements](#))

### CARITAS AUSTRALIA: NEPAL EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

Caritas Australia has opened the Nepal Earthquake Appeal and is working with its Caritas Nepal team to coordinate rescue efforts and an immediate emergency response. The 7.9 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal between Kathmandu and Pokhara. The devastation is immense, and communities across India and Bangladesh as well as on Mount Everest have also been affected. The death toll is increasing by the hour, but more than 3,300 deaths have already been reported. With extensive damage to buildings and continuing aftershocks in the region, many people are sleeping outside and require shelter and protection from the cold and rain. Your donation will allow Caritas Australia to respond to immediate needs such as food, shelter, clean water and non-food items such as cooking kits, while also supporting long-term recovery and development in Nepal and the wider region. Please [donate](#).

### CATHOLIC CHURCH LAUNCHES EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON THREAT OF EUTHANASIA

Catholics across Australia are being urged to learn more about the nature of euthanasia and the dangers it poses to society, with the launch of a new pamphlet exploring the truth and the myths of this life and death debate. A pamphlet, called *Real care, love and compassion – the alternative to euthanasia*, has been released by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. The Bishops are responding to a fact sheet released by the National Church Life Survey late last year, which found 22 per cent of church-going Catholics are neutral or unsure what they think about euthanasia. “The Real care, love and compassion – the alternative to euthanasia pamphlet will help inform people about the dangers of legalised euthanasia”, said Bishop Peter Comensoli, the Bishops’ delegate for addressing euthanasia. “This will help people to appreciate why practices of respect and care are always the better option for the dying.” [Read](#) the full article and [download](#) the pamphlet.

### 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.

#### **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)

#### **INDEFINITE DETENTION: LETTERS FOR RANJINI**

Ranjini is one of 52 people who are currently facing indefinite detention due to a hole in Australia's legal system. Ranjini was found to be a genuine refugee before ASIO decided last week she is a security risk for Australia. But the government won't tell her why, and now she's facing a life in detention. This site is a collection of letters and support for the ASIO 52. [Send](#) your love and support for Ranjini.

#### **REFUGEE COUNCIL CALLS FOR MORATORIUM ON OFFSHORE DETENTION:**

The Refugee Council of Australia has called for an immediate moratorium on transfers to Nauru following the tragic example of a five year old girl who has attempted to commit suicide following her prolonged detention there. Over 100 Australian organisations and community groups, including churches and religious institutions, human rights, aid and development bodies, advocates and community organisations have joined the call to cease transfer of asylum seekers back to harm. Paul Power, CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia said, 'An innocent young girl of just five years old has been driven to attempting suicide because of the Australian Government's inability to provide a satisfactory duty of care on Nauru. No child should be sent there and certainly not sent to a situation while the environment remains so dangerous.' The group is calling for an immediate moratorium on transfers to offshore detention centres, at least until such a time as all recommendations of the Moss Review and Cornall Report have been fully implemented, and the Australian-funded detention centres comply with minimum international standards for the treatment of the people detained there. Visit [here](#).

#### **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](#).

### **BECOME AN ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIER – SPEND 3 MONTHS IN PALESTINE**

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) works through the World Council of Churches to bring international human rights monitors to the West Bank for three months. Ecumenical Accompaniers accompany children to school; support farmers with olive harvests; monitor checkpoints and many other tasks to reduce the risk of violence and the effect of the Israeli occupation on Palestinians. EA's must be 21 to 70 yrs old, in robust physical and emotional health. Training for prospective EA's is 21–24 May. For more information contact [eappi@ncca.org.au](mailto:eappi@ncca.org.au) or visit [here](#).

### **THEOLOGY AND EDUCATION FUNDING AVAILABLE**

The Australian Research Theology Foundation (“ARTFinc”) is seeking funding applications (max. \$10,000) for religious and educational projects within Australia. Themes can range from academic theology to Christian education at the grassroots. If people have a good idea for the Church, but not the means to pursue it, then they should think about making an ARTFinc grant application. More information can be found [here](#).

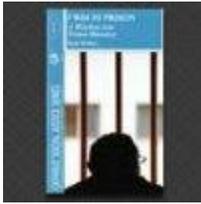
### **OXFAM CAMPAIGN: AUSTRALIANS LOVE DENIM. IT'S IN OUR JEANS.**

The owner of the country's largest denim retailer, Just Jeans, is breaking our denim-loving hearts by refusing to ensure the safety of the people making our clothing. Tell Just Jeans to stop breaking hearts and start protecting their workers. It's almost two years since the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh collapsed, taking the lives of more than a thousand textile workers. Since then, eight of the top ten Australian clothing companies have signed the Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord. But Just Jeans are refusing to sign. Join over 6,000 others who've signed the petition calling on Just Group to sign the Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord. [LINK](#).

### **AUSTRALIAN CLEARINGHOUSE FOR YOUTH STUDIES (ACYS) RESOURCES FOR GROWING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

ACYS have been intensely working on a number of projects to improve how they support your policy, research and practice work with and for young people. They have produced a 'Face the Facts package' on Growing Youth Employment. We all know that the Australian jobs market is relatively stable – but not for young people. We are facing some of the highest youth unemployment and underemployment rates of recent times, particularly in regional centres. One strategy to grow sustainable employment opportunities for young people is not to find jobs but to create jobs through commercial and social entrepreneurship. Through briefings, snapshots, case studies and links to resources and opinion pieces, *Face the Facts* examines what does work and what needs to be done to develop employment opportunities for young people through entrepreneurship in Australia.

They also produce the *Youth Field Xpress* (YFX) online monthly news briefing. This will provide even more of all the important news and information from the youth sector, however, now, more accessible, more colourful, more in-depth and online. View the resources [here](#).



## ACSJC Publications May 2015

### PASTORAL LETTER – FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER 2015

The Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker for 2015 is entitled *The Dignity of Work – When it matters most*. It is available for download in regular and 'three-column' versions at [here](#).

### 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](#).

### 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](#).

### 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 May 2015**

### **[Pope says workplace disparity a 'scandal', calls for equal pay](#)**

The "disparity" between men and women in the workplace is "a pure scandal" and women should receive equal pay for equal work, said Pope Francis.

### **[ACU VC announces scholarships in memory of Bali 9 pair](#)**

The ACU's Prof Greg Craven announced that in recognition of Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, the university will introduce two scholarships open to international students from Indonesia to study undergraduate degrees at its campuses.

### **[Archbishop Hart expresses sympathies to families of Bali men](#)**

The President of the ACBC, Archbishop Denis Hart, expressed his deepest sympathies to the families of Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, and Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher OP, condemned their executions.

### **[Vatican: Climate change fight a 'moral and religious imperative'](#)**

The Vatican called the fight against climate change "a moral and religious imperative". In a Final declaration issued after a symposium on the environment, delegates said human-induced climate change was a "scientific reality".

### **[Caritas leads Nepal relief effort as humanitarian crisis looms](#)**

Fr Pius Perumana, head of Caritas Nepal, said the charity was supplying tarpaulins, tents and food, and was trying to help protect people from the rain and cold in the aftermath of the massive earthquake.

### **[Quiet bells in vigil for doomed Bali 9 pair](#)**

Every day from early March, a small group of people come to a church in Richmond in Melbourne to sit and think about the two doomed Australian men in Indonesia who were executed.

### **[UN leader asks Francis for help in fighting climate change](#)**

The Vatican announced that Francis' encyclical on the environment will be released in June, as UN chief Ban Ki-moon praised his efforts to address climate change.

### **[Mercy Campaign last-ditch bid to spare lives of Bali pair](#)**

The Mercy Campaign launched a petition in a bid to persuade the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, to grant clemency to Bali Nine ring leaders, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran.

### **[El Salvador's gangs promise truce for Romero beatification](#)**

As the beatification of Oscar Romero looms, the criminal gangs which terrorise El Salvador have promised, as a gift to the martyr, to suspend killing police and military officers, judges, politicians, and the poor.

### **[Armenian Church canonises 1.5 million genocide 'martyrs'](#)**

The 1.5 million Armenians massacred by Ottoman forces in the genocide that lasted from 1915-22 were canonised in a two-hour ceremony.

#### [Caritas working in Kathmandu after earthquake devastation](#)

Caritas Australia's had three staff members in Kathmandu in the immediate aftermath of the magnitude 7.9 earthquake which left more than 2,500 people dead, a toll that is still rising.

#### [Vatican urged to speak out against polluters](#)

Environmental groups in the Philippines were urging the Vatican to deliver a strong message of climate justice against carbon polluters, ahead of a major UN conference on the environment that the Vatican hosted during the month.

#### [New 'springtime' for women in the Church, forecasts Cardinal](#)

Speaking at a conference in Rome on women's role in conflict resolution, Cardinal Peter Turkson told participants that the next Secretary of the pontifical council that he heads could be a woman.

#### [JRS concerned over fate of Vietnamese asylum-seekers](#)

The Jesuit Refugee Service Australia expressed its deep concern about the recent interception and return of 46 Vietnamese asylum-seekers who had been found in waters north of Australia.

#### [Francis makes nuclear weapons control a priority](#)

The Vatican has long opposed nuclear weapons, but Pope Francis is making the cause one of the top diplomatic priorities of his two-year-old papacy.

#### [US bishops object to death penalty in Boston bomber case](#)

The Bishops of Massachusetts reiterated the Church's opposition to the death penalty as the trial of Boston Marathon bombing defendant Dzhokhar Tsarnaev went to the jury.

#### [Support for priest calling for 'gay panic' murder reform](#)

Queensland priest Fr Paul Kelly led a fresh push to eliminate a homophobic loophole from Queensland law that allows a "gay panic" defence to be used in murder trials.

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



## **Social Justice Diary May 2015**

**May 2015**

1

Fri

[St Joseph the Worker](#)

		<p>READ MORE ↓</p> <p><a href="#">International Workers Day</a> - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Workplace Justice</a></p> <p>1991: Pope John Paul II's encyclical <a href="#">Centesimus Annus</a> ('The Hundredth Year') - Download our <a href="#">discussion guide on Centesimus Annus</a></p>
2	Sat	
3	Sun	<p><b>Fifth Sunday of Easter</b>  <a href="#">World Press Freedom Day</a></p>
4	Mon	
5	Tue	<a href="#">Blessed Edmund Rice</a>
6	Wed	<a href="#">1992: Introduction of mandatory detention of asylum seekers in Australia</a> - ACSJC resources on <a href="#">Refugees and Asylum Seekers</a>
7	Thu	
8	Fri	<p><a href="#">World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day</a>  <a href="#">1945: War ends in Europe</a> - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Peacebuilding</a>  <a href="#">1970: First anti-Vietnam War Moratorium march in Australia</a> - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Peacebuilding</a>  <a href="#">Fair Trade fortnight begins</a></p>
9	Sat	<a href="#">World Fair Trade Day</a>
10	Sun	<p><b>Sixth Sunday of Easter</b>  Mother's Day  <a href="#">1994: Nelson Mandela's Inaugural Address as President of South Africa</a></p>
11	Mon	
12	Tue	<a href="#">International Nurses Day</a>
13	Wed	
14	Thu	
15	Fri	<p><a href="#">International Day of Families</a> - ACSJC resources on the <a href="#">Family (Social Justice Statement)</a>  1891: Pope Leo XIII's encyclical <a href="#">Rerum Novarum</a> ('On Capital and Labour') - Download our <a href="#">discussion guide on Rerum Novarum</a>  1931: Pope Pius XI's encyclical <a href="#">Quadragesimo Anno</a> ('On Reconstruction and the Social Order') -Download our <a href="#">discussion guide on Quadragesimo Anno</a>  1961: Pope John XXIII's encyclical <a href="#">Mater et Magistra</a> ('On Christianity and Social Progress')</p>

		<p>READ MORE ↓</p> <p>Download our <a href="#">discussion guide on <i>Mater et Magistra</i></a></p>
16	Sat	<i>World Debt Day - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">World Poverty</a></i>
17	Sun	<p>The Ascension</p> <p><a href="#">Jubilee Sunday - ACSJC Resources on <i>World Poverty</i></a></p> <p><a href="#">Week of Prayer for Christian Unity commences</a></p> <p><a href="#">World Telecommunications and Information Society Day</a></p> <p><a href="#">2005: Death of Fr Ted Kennedy</a></p>
18	Mon	
19	Tue	
20	Wed	<a href="#">2002: Timor-Leste Constitution came into force with Xanana Gusmao as first President</a>
21	Thu	<a href="#">World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</a>
22	Fri	<a href="#">International Day for Biological Diversity- ACSJC Resources on the <i>Environment</i></a>
23	Sat	<a href="#">International Day to End Obstetric Fistula</a>
24	Sun	<p><b>Pentecost Sunday</b></p> <p><a href="#">1948: Foundation of World Council of Churches</a></p>
25	Mon	<p>Mary Help of Christians, Patron of Australia</p> <p><a href="#">Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories commences</a></p>
26	Tue	<p><a href="#">1997: <i>Bringing Them Home</i> Report tabled in Parliament - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Justice for Indigenous People</a></a></p> <p><a href="#">National Sorry Day - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Justice for Indigenous People</a></a></p>
27	Wed	<p><a href="#">National Reconciliation Week begins - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Justice for Indigenous People</a></a></p> <p><a href="#">1967: Referendum changes articles in the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Indigenous People - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Justice for Indigenous People</a></a></p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p>
28	Thu	
29	Fri	<p><a href="#">International Day of UN Peacekeepers - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Peacebuilding</a></a></p> <p><a href="#">1992: Torres Strait Islander flag launched - ACSJC Resources on <a href="#">Justice for Indigenous People</a></a></p>
30	Sat	

31

Sun

**Trinity Sunday**

*World No Tobacco Day*