



ACSJC BRIEFING

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FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

Over the past week, the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has released a Discussion Guide titled "The Church speaks on war and peace".

On issuing the Discussion Guide, Bishop William Morris, Chairman of the ACSJC said, "There has been much public debate on the issue of war and whether Australia should be involved in any military intervention into Iraq. As the crisis in the Middle East grows, so has the intensity of the debate..."

"This week the Holy Father has invited all members of the Catholic faith to dedicate with special intensity Ash Wednesday (5 March 2003) to prayer and fasting for the cause of peace. It is hoped that this Discussion Guide will provide some assistance to the Church community and all people of good will in their prayer for peace."

DIFFERENT TRADITIONS

There are two strands historically running through the Catholic Church's responses to questions on the use of force: what we would call today a

'pacifist' or non-violent tradition, and the 'just war' tradition.

As a rule, the pacifist tradition, exemplified especially in the religious orders, seeks the maintenance of peace using non-violent means. Based on Gospel values and the experience of national and global violence, pacifism regards war as being unthinkable and not to be justified. The just war tradition, on the other hand, opposes the use of force for similar reasons, but concedes that engagement in war may be justified in certain circumstances, under strict moral conditions and only as a last resort, in order to protect the innocent or to restore justice.

Though these traditions are strictly logically incompatible, they have co-existed over the centuries. While there is often disagreement between them on specific issues, there are also areas of strong convergence. For example, in response to emerging forms of warfare involving the threat of mass destruction, the pacifist and just war traditions often find themselves as one in calling for dialogue and the art of diplomacy as a means for avoiding the use of force.

RESPONDING TO NEW SITUATIONS

The Church's teachings on war and peace have changed greatly over time and will continue to do so in response to new situations. The just war theory, which was formalised in the 5th Century by St Augustine, has continued to evolve as a moral framework for considering the changing nature and circumstances of conflict and, when it is acceptable, to engage in war as a response to aggression.

Today, questions have been raised about the adequacy of the 'just war'

theory in responding to emerging forms of aggression which include ethnic cleansing and global terrorism. Would the suspected possession of weapons of mass destruction by so-called 'rogue' states constitute a certain threat or even an actual aggression that would justify the use of force? Could pre-emptive military action be justified?

"PREVENTIVE WAR" DOES NOT BELONG TO THE DEFINITION OF JUST WAR

Recent terrorist acts and the ensuing 'war on terror' may present challenges for aspects of this theory. But the strict moral requirements of this tradition continue to emphasise that war must remain a last resort and that peaceful and diplomatic means must be used to avoid it. In response to the unfolding events in the Persian Gulf, the Church has called for the peaceful resolution of differences and stated that notions of "preventive war" and "pre-emptive strikes" do not belong to a definition of a just war and would not constitute a legitimate use of force.

VIEWS INFORMED BY CHURCH TEACHING

Over the centuries the views of Christians on issues of war and peace have diverged widely. In the face of current world events, people hold many different opinions and views on circumstances surrounding the crisis in Iraq. We must respect the right of others to form their own conscientious views on this matter. As Christians and as Catholics, however, it is important that our views and our judgements on these world events are informed by Church teaching and the voice of Church leaders at this time.

This ACSJC's Discussion Guide is provided as a resource to inform interested readers of the basics of Church teaching on this issue, of the statements of Church leaders around the world concerning the threat of war in Iraq, and a summary of the Church's teachings on war and peace as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

WHERE CAN I GET MY COPY?

Your free copy of the Discussion Guide "The Church speaks on war and peace"

is available in full text and pdf at: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

Further information can be gained in a history of Church teachings on war and peace - see ACSJC Series Paper no. 23, *The Peace of God*, by Dr Paul Rule.

Also, a soon to be released Series Paper (no. 47) by Fr Bruce Duncan CSsR will deal with the topic of 'Just War and Iraq'.

ACSJC Series papers can be ordered from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council by Ph: (02) 9956 5811 or email: admin@acsjc.org.au

CARITAS AUSTRALIA

Caritas Australia has joined 30 other Australian Aid agencies in signing an Open Letter to the Prime Minister warning of the humanitarian consequences of a war in Iraq and urging the PM to support and pursue all possible actions to bring about a diplomatic and peaceful resolution to the situation. This open letter was published in *The Australian* and can be accessed at: <http://www.acfoa.asn.au> and <http://www.caritas.org.au/>

- *John Ferguson (National Executive Officer)*

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

(details at <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/briefing>; orders Tel: 02 9956 5811 or email: admin@acsjc.org.au)

OCCASIONAL PAPER: A FAIR SOCIETY? COMMON WEALTH FOR THE COMMON GOOD: TEN YEARS ON

Eight prominent commentators record their observations and reflections on whether Australia has moved forward in addressing the social and economic issues raised by the Bishops in the landmark justice statement *Common Wealth for the Common Good*. They include: Veronica Brady IBVM; Julian Disney AO; Bruce Duncan CSsR; Robert Fitzgerald AM; Thomas Keneally AO;

Lowitja O'Donoghue AC; John Philips AM; and John Warhurst. Michael Costigan provides the introduction to this Occasional Paper. He administered the Bishops' consultations in the late 1980s and co-ordinated the drafting of the final 1992 Statement.

"A Fair Society? Common Wealth for the Common Good: Ten Years On" is No. 46 in the series of Occasional Papers in the Catholic Social Justice Series (cost \$5.50 inc GST PLUS POSTAGE).

OCCASIONAL PAPER: CHRISTIAN SOCIAL CONSCIENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Father Neil Brown, the President of the Catholic Institute of Sydney, is the author of Christian Social Conscience and Social Justice, No. 45 in the series of Occasional Papers in the Catholic Social Justice Series (cost \$5.50 inc GST PLUS POSTAGE).

SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR 2003

The Social Justice Calendar for 2003 focuses on the themes of eradicating racism and cultivating multiculturalism. These themes coincide with this year's theme for the Social Justice Sunday Statement. During 2003, the ACSJC will publish a 'Ten Steps' brochure and prayer card that pick up these important themes (cost \$6.60 inc GST PLUS POSTAGE).

CURRENT ISSUES

MEDIA RELEASE - CATHOLIC JUSTICE COUNCIL RELEASES DISCUSSION GUIDE ON WAR AND PEACE

- 25 February 2003: The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has released a Discussion Guide titled "The Church speaks on war and peace". This Guide is provided as a basic resource for local church communities, justice groups and individuals who are seeking information about the Church's teachings on war and peace. It provides excerpts from a wide range of statements by the Holy Father and other Church leaders on the circumstances facing the people of Iraq. The media release is available at:

(http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/media_releases/2003_02_25_1046212038.html)

ACBC MEDIA RELEASE - CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP CALLS ON RUDDOCK TO LET THE EAST TIMORESE STAY

- 18 February 2003: Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference President, Archbishop Francis Carroll has written to Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock with an urgent plea to allow a group of East Timorese asylum seekers to stay in Australia. It is the second time Archbishop Carroll has written to the minister on behalf of the group of about 1800 asylum seekers.

The first letter, followed by a brief meeting with Mr Ruddock, produced no concession from the government. The government expects the East Timorese, many of whom are children and have lived their whole lives in Australia to return to their impoverished and unstable homeland. In his letter Archbishop Carroll restated his request that the government create a special visa category to acknowledge the special circumstances of the East Timorese people in question.

(http://www.catholic.org.au/media/2003/feb18_et.htm)

NCCA - DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE PROGRAM:

The National Council of Churches of Australian has launched a resource kit for the Decade to Overcome Violence. The Give Peace a Hand kit is available electronically at: <http://www.ncca.org.au/dov/index.asp>

For further information call Rev Jon Inkpin on (02) 9299 2215

MARCH NOTICES

IN THE EVENT OF WAR: Various networks such as the "Victorian Peace Network" and the "Walk Against the War Coalition" are preparing for Public Rallies in Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra, Newcastle, Darwin, Brisbane, Perth and Hobart at 5.00pm on the day war commences (or the next day if news comes late in the day). (further info: <http://www.vicpeace.org/diary.html>)

Each Friday: **PEACE VIGIL** held at Sydney Town Hall between 5.30 - 8.30pm, Walk Against the War Coalition. Contact: Bruce 9386-1240; Nick 0409 762 081; Hannah 0418 668 089; John 9567 7533.

Throughout March the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the federal Disability Discrimination Act with the launch in each capital city of a publication which will outline achievements over the past ten years. (further info: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/tenyears.htm)

March 4: **SBS DOCUMENTARY:** The Cutting Edge - MS Tampa: Refugees at Sea. (further info: <http://www.sbs.com.au/whatson/index.php3?progdate=04:03:2003>)

March 5: **ADULT FAITH LEARNING** - Brisbane Archdiocese has produced a lenten program. This six week program assists participants in 'attending to the sacred' in their lives, in the scriptures, in God's creation and in their actions. Visit <http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/pub/AdultLearning/documents/advancednotice.pdf> for details of how to access this resource.

March 5: **ASH WEDNESDAY** - A Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace. (further info: <http://zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=31771>)

March 5: **CARITAS AUSTRALIA LAUNCH:** 2003 Project Compassion Appeal. Holy Mass celebrated by Archbishop Pell at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney 12.10pm (further info: <http://www.caritas.org.au/ourwork/projectcomp.htm>)

March 9: **WORLDWIDE DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTIANS OF IRAQ.** The Churches representing the two million Christians of Iraq are calling for a special day of prayer. (further info:

<http://www.anglicanmedia.com.au/news/archives/000613.php#more>)

March 12: **ADVOCACY!** The Council of Social Service of NSW presents a conference to examine the role of systemic advocacy in the non-government sector (further info: <http://ncoss.org.au/conferences/index.html>)

March 13: **SURVIVING AUSTRALIA'S MANDATORY DETENTION:** A lunchtime forum in Sydney with Maqsood Alshams, founder member Coalition for Justice for Refugees (further info: <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/briefing/303maqsood.html>)

March 14: **ACEH: THE OIL WAR NEXT DOOR:** A forum in Sydney organised by Action in Solidarity with Asia & the Pacific (further info: <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/briefing/303aceh.html>)

March 14-16: **MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOR PREVENTION OF WAR** National Conference 2003 - Global Conflicts - A Clinical Audit, Nth Adelaide (further info: <http://www.mapw.org.au/conferences/mapw2003/details.html>)

March 15: **THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY.** Melbourne day of local actions against the war. Check www.vicpeace.org for details.

March 15: **RECONCILIATION** - Melbourne networking session organised by ANTaR, with topics including Scouting, Yorta-Yorta, ANTaR community development projects. (further info: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/briefing/303antar.html>)

March 20: **ACEH: THE OIL WAR NEXT DOOR:** A forum in Melbourne organised by Action in Solidarity with Asia & the Pacific (further info: <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/briefing/303aceh.html>)

March 29: **WORLD PEACE FORUM:** Peace, Ethics & Sustainability at Sydney

Convention Centre, Darling Harbour.
(Further info:
www.worldpeaceforum.org.au)

March 30 - April 1: **NATIONAL CONFERENCE - AUSTRALIAN WOMEN SPEAK**, Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women, Canberra. (further info:
<http://www.osw.dpmc.gov.au/index.html>)

FEBRUARY NEWS MONITOR

CATHOLIC WELFARE SAYS TAX MOVE WILL SLOW UNEMPLOYED RETURN TO WORK: Treasurer Costello's "preemptive" strike on tax credits will discourag unemployed Australians receiving welfare benefits from seeking employment, according to Catholic Welfare Australia's national director Toby O'Connor.

CATHOLIC COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS WAR CRIMES WARNING FOR AUSTRALIA: Melbourne's Catholic Commission for Justice Development and Peace amplified the warning of 42 eminent international law experts who signed a statement declaring that an invasion of Iraq may constitute a war crime and crimes against humanity.

POPE SAYS SCIENCE MUST BENEFIT POOR: Pope John Paul II has urged scientists to work to close the gap between rich and poor nations, insisting that research should not be subject to economic or political interests.

BISHOP SAYS WAR DEBATE SHOULD BE INFORMED: The chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has encouraged Catholics to inform themselves before engaging in the "intensifying" debate on war and peace.

POPE TELLS NORTH AFRICAN BISHOPS TO MAINTAIN DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM: Pope John Paul II has encouraged Catholics living in countries with Islamic majorities to promote dialogue with their Muslim brothers and sisters.

ZIMBABWE ARCHBISHOP REBUKES AUSTRALIAN CRICKETERS: Archbishop Pius Ncube criticised the Australian cricket team who played Zimbabwe in Bulawayo, accusing them of being unsympathetic to the plight of ordinary Zimbabweans.

POPE APPEALS TO BLAIR AGAINST IRAQ WAR: Pope John Paul II held a private audience with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, offering the Vatican an opportunity to voice its strong opposition to a possible war against Iraq.

AGENCY WARNS FAMISHED ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA 'RUNNING OUT OF TIME': British Catholic aid agency CAFOD feared that Ethiopia and Eritrea could be running out of time to save millions from the effects of a severe food crisis.

ARCHBISHOP CALLS ON RUDDOCK TO LET THE EAST TIMORESE STAY: Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference president Archbishop Francis Carroll wrote to Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock with an urgent plea to allow a group of East Timorese asylum seekers to stay in Australia.

VINNIES CONCERNED ABOUT MENTALLY ILL BEING SENT TO JAIL : Sr Myree Harris, president of the NSW St Vincent de Paul advisory committee for the care of people with mental illness, told a Sate Government inquiry that "experts from all government departments and from non-government agencies working together" were needed to improve the lives of those with mental health problems.

CATHOLIC LOBBYISTS WELCOME NEW DEBATE ON WAGES POLICY: The group PolMin welcomed the new debate on wages policy initiated by the

introduction of the Workplace Relations Amendment (Protecting the Low Paid) Bill 2003 into the House of Representatives.

SPANISH THEOLOGIAN SAYS JUST WAR IS OLD HAT: The just war theory has given way to a commitment to building a new just world order, according to Spanish Redemptorist theologian Marciano Vidal.

POPE URGES AZIZ TO PUSH FOR IRAQI COMMITMENT TO DISARM: Pope John Paul warned Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariz Aqiz of the disastrous consequences of war, urging him to push his country towards a commitment to disarm.

CARDINAL ETCHEGARAY MEETS IRAQI LEADERS: Cardinal Roger Etchegaray arrived in Baghdad, telling waiting journalists that he would urge Saddam Hussein "to cooperate with the UN on the basis of peace and international law".

CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE, WELFARE GROUPS ISSUE NSW ELECTION KIT: A coalition of Catholic social justice, welfare and education groups, NetAct, launched a kit to give voters information on eight key social issues for the New South Wales state election on 22 March.

US THEOLOGIAN TELLS VATICAN OFFICIALS WAR WOULD BE SELF-DEFENCE: US State Department envoy Michael Novak made a theological case for war on Iraq to a skeptical Vatican audience, arguing that military action was justified under traditional self-defence principles and not under some new concept of preventive war.

CARROLL DOUBTS JUST WAR AS POPE SENDS ENVOY TO IRAQ: Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference President Archbishop Francis Carroll told a high-profile ABC Radio forum that he's not convinced there is Just Cause for war with Iraq

CENTACARE ADELAIDE TELLS WHY ASYLUM SEEKER COMMITTED SUICIDE: A letter to an

asylum seeker from the government offering voluntary return to Afghanistan was the 'final straw' that led to suicide, according to Adelaide Centacare executive director Dale West.

HONG KONG ARCHBISHOP ATTACKS GOVT OVER ANTI-SUBVERSION LAW: The leader of Hong Kong's Catholic Church, Archbishop Joseph Zen, has criticised the government over the way it handled consultations over the territory's proposed anti-subversion law.

ZIMBABWE ARCHBISHOP SAYS GOVT IS MEDDLING IN CHURCH: Bulawayo Archbishop Pius Ncube accused the Zimbabwean government of planting its agents within the Church in order to divide it along political lines.

MELBOURNE COMMISSION URGES CHURCHES TO BACK UN ON IRAQ: The Melbourne Archdiocesan Commission for Justice Development and Peace (CCJDP) issued a statement condemning the proposed US attack on Iraq as "morally unjustified".

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/302>

DECEMBER SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

MARCH 5 ASH WEDNESDAY: Today is the beginning of Lent, a time during which we are invited to prepare for Easter and the coming of the risen Jesus into our life and our world. Traditionally, there are three ways we can participate in this season of preparation: through prayer, fasting and giving alms.

Through joining in Project Compassion, we can prepare ourselves for Easter by going without some activity or thing (fasting), and giving the money we save (alms giving) to the appeal. When we attend Lenten Masses, we can join others in praying for those who will be

assisted by the funds raised by the Project Compassion Appeal.

Caritas website: www.caritas.org.au

MARCH 10 TIBETAN PEOPLE'S UPRISING: The Tibetan People have been struggling for independence and freedom from injustice since their country was occupied by China in 1950. The Dalai Lama was driven into exile in India in 1959 during the March Uprising. 87,000 Tibetan people were killed in 1959 and many have been imprisoned or exiled. Human rights abuses continue in Tibet. "Political dissidents", often nuns and monks, are arbitrarily gaoled and sometimes tortured. Tibetan religious practices have been forcibly suppressed and Chinese has replaced Tibetan as the official language.

No matter what part of the world we come from, we are all basically the same human beings. We all seek happiness and try to avoid suffering. All of us human beings want freedom and the right to determine our own destiny as individuals and as peoples.

- 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet

MARCH 10 TRUNG SISTERS DAY (VIETNAMESE NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY): In Vietnam, women have always been at the forefront in resisting foreign domination. Trung Trac and Trung Nhi were sisters who led a rebellion against Chinese rule in Vietnam in the first century. The revolt was caused by the attempt of Chinese administrators to raise taxes and consolidate their control over the indigenous people in occupied Vietnam.

After three years of battle, rather than accept defeat, popular lore says that both Trung sisters chose the traditional Vietnamese way of maintaining honour - they committed suicide. Some stories say they drowned themselves in a river, others claim they disappeared into the clouds. If the sisters had not resisted the Chinese when they did, perhaps there would be no Vietnamese nation today.

MARCH 17 ST PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE: St Patrick's Breastplate is a prayer attributed to St Patrick. It is also known as The Deer's

Cry. There are several versions of this prayer.

*I arise today, through the strength of Heaven,
Light of sun, radiance of moon,
splendour of fire,
Speed of lightning, swiftness of wind,
depth of sea,
Stability of earth, firmness of rock.*

*I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me,
God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me. (excerpt ends)*

MARCH 21 INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Racism takes many different forms. It can range from abusive language or discriminatory treatment to genocide, simply on the basis of someone's race or colour. Racism is not only reflected in personal attitudes and behaviours, it can be expressed in the values, presumptions, structures and processes of social, economic, cultural and political institutions. Such institutional racism is less direct and harder to identify for what it is than personal attitudes and behaviour. Structures and processes may appear to be non-discriminatory but in fact operate to systematically advantage or value some groups over others.

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council Leo XIII House, 19 MacKenzie Street, North Sydney NSW 2060. Tel: (02) 9956 5811, Fax: (02) 9954 0056, Email: admin@acsjc.org.au Website: <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au> ** ACSJC Briefing is sent by email at the beginning of each month (except January). To subscribe or unsubscribe, go to the front page of the website Comments and contributions are also welcome.