



ACSJC BRIEFING

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From the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, the social justice and human rights agency of the Catholic Church in Australia - www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

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FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

An important date in the Australian Church's social justice calendar occurs during September with the celebration of Social Justice Sunday. This year, Social Justice Sunday is celebrated on Sunday 28th September.

The Australian Catholic Bishops will launch the annual Social Justice Sunday Statement on Wednesday 17th September. The Statement addresses the critical issue of racism and is entitled: A Generous Heart in the Love of Christ: Challenging Racism in Australia Today.

As Social Justice Sunday approaches, I thought it might be worthwhile to highlight the range of resources that are now available for Social Justice Sunday.

2003 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT: The timing of this Bishops' Social Justice Sunday Statement on the theme, Challenging Racism in Australia Today, is very relevant to international and national crises over recent years and to some reactions of bitterness to these events that have discriminated according to racial and religious differences.

The Statement addresses the causes and consequences of racism at all levels: from personal to national experiences of

racism. The Statement explores the Australian story of welcome and exclusion - considering the impact of white settlement, the arrival of immigrants from other parts of the world, the emergence of multiculturalism and recent challenges of racism in Australia.

Positive advice is provided through the ministry of Jesus Christ who welcomes the stranger and calls all to recognise the inherent dignity of all God's children. The Statement highlights ways in which the Australian story of welcome can be fostered by individuals, in parishes, Catholic schools, local communities and in Australian public life.

Copies of the Social Justice Sunday Statement (minimum order quantity 10) can still be ordered through the ACSJC at a very affordable price. Those requiring less than 10 copies should download and print from the website when the free electronic version becomes available (from Wednesday 17th September). The Statement will be available on the websites of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (www.catholic.org.au) and ACSJC (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

LITURGY NOTES AND TEACHERS' NOTES:

A short summary of the Statement is already available at: http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/a_generous_heart_in_the_love_of_christ_challenging_racism_in_australia_today.html

Along with this summary are the accompanying Liturgy Notes and Teachers' Notes to the Statement.

The Liturgy Notes reflect on the theme of the Social Justice Statement for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The

Teachers' Notes draw on particular aspects of the Statement and suggest basic activities that could be undertaken in the classroom environment. It is hoped the notes will assist teachers to spread the Statement's message of welcome in Catholic schools around the nation. These are free resources that are available at the ACSJC website.

ECUMENICAL JUSTICE KIT - SUBVERTING RACISM: The Uniting, Anglican and Catholic Churches have prepared a Social Justice Sunday Kit for this year's theme which is titled: Subverting Racism. This is a wonderful resource to inform group discussions on the subject of racism.

Included are liturgical and theological resources from the traditions of the three Churches as well as ecumenical prayers. The kit includes suggestions about how to run discussion sessions and includes definitions of racism and the response of Christians to racism.

Five Australian stories are told about racism - about: indigenous justice, vilification of ethnic minorities; racism in sport; Australia's foreign affairs; and, racial hatred in Australia. These stories are provided as discussion points and as models for the process of subverting racism. Reference to further resources is also provided.

The Ecumenical Social Justice Sunday Kit, Subverting Racism, is now available and can be purchased at minimal cost through the ACSJC.

TEN STEPS TOWARDS CHALLENGING RACISM: The next leaflet in the "Ten Steps" series - Ten Steps Towards Challenging Racism in Australia Today - provides practical suggestions that we can take as individuals and in our faith and local communities to become aware and to address any issues of racism and discrimination. The leaflet is accompanied by the Prayer Card. Call the ACSJC for further information.

COMMUNITY ACTION KIT FOR ACTION AGAINST RACISM: In mid-2002, Sandie Cornish was co-editor of A Fair Go - Community Action Kit for Action Against Racism. This kit was produced by the National NGO Coalition

Against Racism. It can be downloaded from the ACSJC website at: http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/community_kit_for_action_against_racism.html

In making this kit available, it is recognised that while governments have important responsibilities in the fight against racism, individuals, small groups and local communities also have important roles to play. A Fair Go outlines various definitions of racism and identifies it as a human rights issue. It offers further information and resources on racism. Included are ten action sheets that highlight simple, concrete ways that individuals and groups can take action to fight racism. This is an invaluable resource.

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE: In 2001, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace updated a Statement issued a decade earlier entitled: The Church and Racism - Towards a More Fraternal Society. The updated document recognised the increasing pace of globalisation as well as greater levels of ethnic violence over the intervening decade. It was submitted as a contribution at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban.

The Church and Racism identified pardon or forgiveness as the only path to national reconciliation. It identifies the fundamental role of education in the struggle against racism and the role of religions in human rights education. The call of Pope John Paul II to all Christians is reiterated: 'to be generous in their welcome, particularly through positive actions such as family reunification, and to recognise that immigrants bring with them the riches of their culture, history and traditions'. This document is available at: www.petersnet.net/browse/3925.htm

CONCLUDING REMARKS: The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council prepares the Social Justice Sunday Statement on behalf of the Bishops each year. In doing this, the ACSJC also develops a range of supporting resources for use in schools, parishes, social justice groups, religious

congregations, church agencies and among any who are interested in receiving this material.

I hope you will find the material listed above an important body of material that will assist in your reflection and preparations for Social Justice Sunday. Please feel free to distribute this information through your own networks.

- *John Ferguson (National Executive Officer)*

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

(orders Tel: 02 9956 5811 or email: admin@acsjc.org.au)

OCCASIONAL PAPER: THE LORD HEARS THE CRY OF THE POOR - THE MAGNIFICAT REVISITED.

Sister Marie Farrell rsm, lecturer in Christian spirituality and the theology of Mary, is the author of "The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor". This reflective examination of the Magnificat calls us to contemplate the implications for our own times of this prophetic canticle. Linking the Old Testament tradition of the anawim, the poor of Yahweh who wait for justice in the coming of the Messiah, with fulfilment in the person of Jesus Christ, Sister Marie shows how the prayer of Mary gives perfect expression to the cry of the poor.

Through reflection on the Magnificat as "the great canticle of discipleship" we are reminded of our own responsibility to hear the cry for justice for the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised and those seeking a safe haven in our land. Through contemporary stories of those who are committed to justice and the presentation of evocative images in poetry and Australian art, this Occasional Paper reveals a new and deeper appreciation of this great prayer of the Church.

"The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor - The Magnificat Revisited" is essential reading. It is No. 48 in the Catholic Social Justice Series (cost \$5.50 plus postage). Order now.

2003 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT & RESOURCES:

Australian Catholic Bishops Statement: A Generous Heart in the Love of Christ - Challenging Racism in Australia Today.

Hard copies still available. To order 10 copies or more, call ACSJC: (02) 9956 5811

Free electronic version of the 2003 Statement will be available from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (www.catholic.org.au) and ACSJC (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) from 17th September.

ECUMENICAL SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY KIT: SUBVERTING RACISM:

Ecumenical Kit produced by the Anglican Social Responsibilities Network, Uniting Justice Australia & ACSJC, now available (cost: \$5.50 {plus postage: 1 copy \$1.45; 2-3 copies \$2.45})

Leaflet & Prayer Card: Ten Steps Towards Challenging Racism in Australia Today

Now available. Call (02) 9956 5811

Social Justice Sunday Statement Liturgy Notes & Teachers' Notes

Now available at:

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/a_generous_heart_in_the_love_of_christ_challenging_racism_in_australia_today.html

BRIEFING PAPER: 40th ANNIVERSARY OF PACEM IN TERRIS:

Available on the ACSJC website -

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/40th_anniversary_of_pacem_in_terris.html

OCCASIONAL PAPER: WAR ON IRAQ: IS IT JUST?

Catholic Social Justice Series no.47 - Fr Bruce Duncan (cost \$5.50 plus postage)

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPER TO CSJ Series no.47: THE STRUGGLE TO DEVELOP A JUST WAR TRADITION IN THE WEST:

Supplement by Fr Bruce Duncan available free as HTML or PDF download at

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/publications/documentation/the_struggle_to_develop_a_just_war_tradition_in_the_west.html (PDF link at bottom of page)

(Postage rates for Catholic Social Justice Series Papers: 1 copy \$1; 2-3 copies \$1.45; 4-5 copies \$2.45)

CURRENT ISSUES

See

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/mediareleases.html>

ACSJC BACKGROUND PAPER - AUSTRALIA & UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT - August 2003

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council is releasing a Background Paper on the Australia & United States Free Trade Agreement (A&USFTA).

The ACSJC sees trade as essential for development of countries and acknowledges the positive effects of globalisation. However, the economy cannot be taken as the ultimate determinant of human life. The challenge is to ensure that the human person remains the centre and the beneficiary of all aspects of globalisation and trade. It is not free trade, but fair and just trade which will enable this for all peoples.

At present, Australia and the USA are negotiating a free trade agreement. The objective is a legally binding agreement which would remove all trade barriers between the USA and Australia. Both the US and Australian governments have linked the A&USFTA with the post-September 11 security alliance, claiming that it would put our economic relationship on a parallel footing with our political relationship.

However, the Australian economy is only 4% the size of the US economy. This puts Australia in a very weak bargaining position. The Australian government's own background paper says that the US sees Australia in economic terms "as the addition of another medium sized state roughly equivalent in GDP to that of Pennsylvania".

The ACSJC Background Paper will soon be available on the ACSJC website (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au).

AUGUST NOTICES

THE HOUSE OF WELCOME is seeking employer support. The House of Welcome is a project of the NSW Ecumenical Council assisting refugees and asylum seekers. It is seeking the assistance of employers who may be able to offer paid or voluntary work for the people it assists. Contact Liz at the House of Welcome (02) 9727 9290

AUGUST 14 - SEPTEMBER 6: The play "Necessary Targets", Darlinghurst Theatre, Sydney (call: (02) 9331 3107 or refer:

www.darlinghursttheatre.com/3.html)

SEPTEMBER 3: ADDRESS, "FIRESTORM - TRIAL BY FIRE". Recounting stories of the firestorm that hit Canberra in the summer of 2003 by Mr Peter Clack. National Press Club 12.00 - 2.00pm, Canberra (refer: www.npc.org.au/speakers.htm)

SEPTEMBER 3: MEETING "WALKING TOGETHER - RECONCILIATION THROUGH UNDERSTANDING". An opportunity to meet and learn from indigenous people exploring historic and contemporary relationships. Contact: Western Sydney for Reconciliation on (02) 9896 3839 or email unfolding@smartchat.net.au. (refer: www.active.org.au/sydney/calendar/?display=zoom&event=786)

SEPTEMBER 5 - 6: FORUM "NATIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HARMONY" Convened at National Baha'i Working Group on Racial and Cultural Harmony, 107 Derby St. Silverwater, Sydney. Registration fee of \$50. Register on Brisbane numbers ph: (07) 4728 8294 or fx: (07) 4772 1840.

SEPTEMBER 5 - 27: THE PLAY "YANAGAI! YANAGAI!" and exhibition of contemporary Yorta Yorta artists, Melbourne. (refer: www.playbox.com.au/season/yanagai.htm)

**SEPTEMBER 5: PUBLIC FORUM
"WHEN IS IT SAFE TO RETURN?"**,

convened by the Refugee Council of Australia, 12 noon to 2pm, Level 5, Red Cross House (157 Clarence St, Sydney). Contact (02) 9660 5300 or email info@refugeecouncil.org.au

SEPTEMBER 10 - 14: 5TH WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Refer: www.dfat.gov.au and for more info: www.aftinet.org.au

**SEPTEMBER 11: FORUM:
"GLOBALISATION - SIGNS OF HOPE?"**.

The NSW Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes' Social Justice Committee is hosting this event from 9.30am to 1.00pm followed by lunch at the Good Samaritan Centre, 2 Arcadia Rd, Glebe, Sydney. Cost: \$30 per person. For bookings contact (02) 9663 2199 or email clrinsw@ozemail.com.au or clriadmin@ozemail.com.au

SEPTEMBER 13: RALLY "SAY NO! TO GLOBALISATION AT GUNPOINT".

International Day of Protest against War and Globalisation coinciding with the World Trade Organisation summit in Mexico. (refer:www.GlobalJusticeSydney.org)

SEPTEMBER 17: LAUNCH OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' 2003 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT.

Electronic copy of Statement will be available at: www.catholic.org.au and www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

SEPTEMBER 18 - 19: CONFERENCE "CARING MATTERS: A NATIONAL DEBATE".

A conference in Canberra to raise national debate on matters effecting Australia's 2.3 million unpaid family and other informal carers. (refer: http://coss.net.au/events/acoss/1048044212_895_20030319.jsp)

SEPTEMBER 19 - 21: CONFERENCE "WHY CAMPBELLTOWN???".

The Australian Forum for Justice is running this Sydney event at Campbelltown Catholic Club that will explore, observe and learn about local history and local

issues and concerns. Cost: \$120 (excluding accommodation). For more information call (02) 6337 2307.

SEPTEMBER 20: SEMINAR "HEALTH CARE AT RISK".

A seminar on equitable and affordable access to health services. Seminar at The Grail Centre, 22 McHatton St. North Sydney from 11.00am to 4.00pm. Cost \$15 (waged), \$10 (unwaged) or what you can afford. Bring lunch. Book in advance ph: (02) 9955 3035 or email grailsydney@ozemail.com.au

SEPTEMBER 20: AN TAR VICTORIA SCREENING OF "BENEATH CLOUDS" AND "BACKROADS",

7pm at the Kaleide, RMIT Union Theatre, Swanston Street Melbourne. For bookings contact (03) 9419 3613 or email antarvic@nativetitle.org

SEPTEMBER 21: PICNIC IN THE PARK,

Wollongong Picnic at Stewart Park from 12 noon onwards, North Wollongong (near Fairy Meadow Lagoon). For all people who want freedom for refugees. For further info contact: quiltforrefugees@yahoo.com.au

SEPTEMBER 27 - 28: PROJECT SAFECOM WEEKEND SYMPOSIUM,

"The Cost, the Carnage and The Bill". A weekend symposium in Perth on asylum seeker policies, issues and implications at the University of Western Australia. Registration details at: www.safecom.org/symposium03.htm

SEPTEMBER 30: ADDRESS ON TERRORISM BY DR ROHAN GUNARATNA,

chair NATO-PIP Working Group on Counter Terrorism. National Press Club 12.00 - 2.00pm, Canberra (refer: www.npc.org.au/speakers.htm)

SEPTEMBER 30: SEMINAR "WHERE SOCIAL POLICY MEETS INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS:

Global Governance and the Management of International NGOs". 1.00 - 2.30pm Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney (refer: www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/seminars/2003s2.htm)

OCTOBER 5 - 10: NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CATHOLIC COUNCIL - 6th Annual Assembly. This event in South Australia will provide an opportunity for Indigenous Catholics from all over Australia to come together and discuss issues that relate to indigenous participation in the Catholic Church. (refer: www.natsicc.org.au/assembly1.htm)

(email news of your forthcoming social justice events to: admin@acsjc.org.au)

AUGUST NEWS MONITOR

COMMISSION SOUNDS ALARM AS RUDDOCK TIGHTENS VISA RULES: Melbourne's Catholic Commission for Justice Development and Peace yesterday expressed fears for refugees who will lose their right to permanent protection in Australia under an extension of the Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) program announced yesterday by Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock.

CARITAS HEAD HITS BACK AFTER DOWNER SLUR ON CHURCH: After Foreign Minister Alexander Downer accused the Catholic bishops of hypocrisy, Caritas Australia national director Jack de Groot said Downer is "misguided" if he thinks churches have no role in speaking out on moral and social issues. Sydney Archbishop George Pell later put a positive interpretation on the talk.

CARITAS DELIVERS DESPERATELY NEEDED FOOD TO LIBERIA: Caritas Liberia distributed desperately needed food to newly displaced persons along the highway between Monrovia and Gbarnga, with the help of the World Food Program.

CATHOLIC LOBBY SUPPORTS WATER QUALITY INQUIRY: The independent Catholic lobby group PolMin welcomed the inquiry into

Salinity being undertaken by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Science and Innovation.

TASMANIAN PLAN TO EDUCATE POORER CHILDREN: Hobart's Catholic Education Office was considering an education fund to help low-income parents give their children a Catholic education.

BISHOPS WELCOME RELEASE OF DETENTION CENTRE CHILDREN: Port Pirie Bishop Eugene Hurley, whose South Australian diocese includes the Baxter Detention Centre, described a court decision to release five children until their parents' asylum claims are processed, as a win for human dignity.

NZ PARISHES OPPOSE GMO RELEASE : While media reports indicate Vatican support for genetic modification, several New Zealand Catholic parishes were voicing their opposition to their Government lifting its moratorium in October on the release of genetically modified organisms.

US BISHOPS PROD BUSH ON AFRICA PROMISES: The President of the US Catholic Bishops Conference warned President George Bush that the "commitment" reflected in his recent trip to Africa "could be lost" if Congress fails to find the money for a variety of initiatives including the fight against AIDS.

CHURCH DIPLOMATS REMEMBER UN ENVOY AS CHAMPION OF PEOPLE: Mourning the death of UN Iraq envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello, Vatican diplomats remembered him as a highly efficient champion of people whose rights were being trampled.

CATHOLIC WOMEN FACE UP TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING: The stark reality of the growing stream of trafficked women and children into Australia for slavery and sexual servitude was tackled by delegates at the National Biennial Conference of the Catholic Women's League.

ORDER SAYS DON'T BLUR DISTINCTION BETWEEN POVERTY AND EXTREME POVERTY: Franciscans International urged the United Nations to give explicit attention to the issue of extreme poverty and not relegate it to a discussion on poverty in general.

ACU AWARDS ETHICS PRIZE TO HEALTH ISSUES RESEARCHER: A Melbourne research fellow who has proposed an ethical framework for health research reporting has taken the \$10,000 prize in the Australian Catholic University Eureka Prize for Research in Ethics.

CATHOLIC MISSION SUPPORTING LIBERIANS: As the hope for an end to the violence drew closer in Liberia with the resignation of former President Charles Taylor, Catholic Mission issued a statement confirming its continuing support for projects for children.

COMMISSION WELCOMES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS ON LAND CLEARING : Brisbane's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission backed the continuing commitment of the Federal Government to both a fair deal for primary producers and to the introduction of sustainable practices with respect to land clearing in Queensland.

COMMISSION URGES SEPARATE INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTERS : The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of Brisbane called for separate State and Federal Indigenous Affairs Ministers.

COMMISSION SUPPORTS ESTABLISHMENT OF POVERTY TASK FORCE: Brisbane's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission told the Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into Poverty and Financial Hardship that Australia needs a task force charged with placing the issue of poverty "firmly on the national agenda".

ABORIGINAL CATHOLIC LEADER URGES WHOLISTIC RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE: Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander Catholic Council chair Vicki Walker is hoping the Federal Government will adopt a wholistic approach as Prime Minister John Howard pledges to tackle the problem of domestic violence in indigenous communities.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/308> *****

SEPTEMBER SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 11 - TERRORIST ATTACKS IN USA: On this day we remember in prayer the people who died, their families and the people who continue to suffer as a result of the terrorist attacks on Washington DC and New York on September 11, 2001.

Two years later we continue to be called to raise our voices against violence and injustice in all forms. No corner of the globe has been left untouched. We remember all innocent people who have died violently in the United States, Burma, East Timor, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Bougainville, West Papua, Nicaragua, Chile, Bosnia, Australia and many other countries. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights outlines the entitlements of all people including the right to housing, education, freedom speech, freedom of religion and the right to live free of violence. Many people in the world do not have access to the fullness of their human rights and face violent repression when they seek to access them.

REFLECTION: Terrorism is more than the violence done by those who cannot afford cruise missiles. It is an attitude of mind and heart that fosters the belief that the cause is so important that the end justifies the means, even if the means used are violence and terror.

Strategies of dialogue and negotiation to deal with the core issues that lead to disharmony and unrest are the most effective way to resolve grievances and misunderstandings that exist between people and nations.

SEPTEMBER 15 - RACIAL HATRED ACT (AUST): The 1975 Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) made racism unlawful. The RDA deals specifically with racism related to employment, accommodation, provision of goods and services, access to public places and facilities, and trade-union membership. The Racial Hatred Act (1995) extended the coverage of the RDA to allow people to lodge complaints with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) about vilification or other racially offensive or abusive behaviour.

SEPTEMBER 16 - PNG INDEPENDENCE DAY: Papua New Guinea is a small Pacific nation with a mainly subsistence lifestyle. Because of the many different language groups and distinct cultures that exist, creating harmony has been a difficult task for the people of PNG. Disharmony and conflict are experienced in all facets of society from daily life in the townships through to the political systems.

The incidence of AIDS is increasing at an alarming rate. It is leading to rapid deterioration of communities and is seriously threatening their survival. Throughout PNG, particularly in Port Moresby, AIDS is creating orphans who struggle to survive and eventually become malnourished.

As part of the "Pacific Solution" Australia has established a detention centre in PNG to hold people who are seeking asylum in Australia. The Australian Government has paid the Government of PNG to accept up to 1000 asylum seekers who are actually Australia's responsibility under international law.

SEPTEMBER 28 - SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY: On the last Sunday of September each year, the Church issues a Social Justice Sunday Statement. This year the theme is racism and multiculturalism. Racism continues to flourish throughout the world and to diminish not only the lives of those who experience it directly, but the societies in which it exists and the human family as a whole.

PRAYER FOR JUSTICE

God, You are the source of human dignity

And in your image every person is fashioned.

Teach us to reverence each person,

To be a friend to anyone in need,

To value those who differ from us,

To receive the gifts offered to us by people from other cultures.

Grant that we may always promote the justice and acceptance

That ensures lasting peace and racial harmony.

Help us to remember that we are one world and one family. Amen.

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