



ACSJC BRIEFING

No. 49 – August 2004

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 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friends,

Below are some issues relating to the ongoing work of this agency and regarding social justice issues with international significance.

2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT: Social Justice Sunday is celebrated this year on Sunday 26 September. The Australian Catholic Bishops' 2004 Social Justice Sunday Statement will be launched on Wednesday 22 September. The theme for this year's Statement is "Peace Be With You – Cultivating a Culture of Peace".

The Statement acknowledges that "a culture of peace begins within our own hearts, spreads to our own households and then our communities before it can become an entrenched fact of the larger society's life."

Parishes, schools and groups can order printed copies (minimum of 10) from the ACSJC. Details can be found on the ACSJC website (http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/publications/documentation/documentation_sjs01.html) Orders are now being taken for printed copies of the Statement. Order now!

Other resources including Liturgy and Teachers' Notes are available on the same page of the ACSJC website.

Any support you can give to the process of making your networks, parish communities and Catholic schools aware of Social Justice Sunday and the availability of this Statement would be greatly appreciated.

CARITAS SUDAN CRISIS APPEAL: Since early 2003, a violent conflict between Arab militias (the Janjaweed) armed by the Sudanese Government and rebels of the Sudanese Liberation Movement has escalated in Sudan. The large Darfur region of Sudan has been a particular focus of the conflict. Militia attacks on tribes and villages, including mass human rights violations, have seen between 30,000 and 50,000 people killed, the displacement of one million people, and the flow of 160,000 refugees to the border with Chad.

Many who have fled the violence have sought haven in ill-prepared and makeshift refugee camps – often pursued by the Janjaweed with the support of Sudanese military. People in these camps are vulnerable to violence, starvation and disease. Despite promises made to the UN in early July by the Sudanese Government that it would rein in the militia, the atrocities continue. The Sudanese Government has indicated it would strongly resist any UN resolutions for the despatching of international forces to Darfur.

Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Holy See's permanent observer to the UN in Geneva, warned last week that the conflict might end in genocide (<http://www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=57458>). Archbishop Josef Cordes, acting as the Pope's personal envoy, visited Sudan earlier that week and urged "Sudanese leaders, together with the international community, to guarantee assistance and a safe return to their villages to all of those who have been deprived of everything; they have been forced to flee and live in conditions unworthy of man." The Holy Father has called for the mobilization of the Church and the world to relieve the plight of these peoples. (<http://www.cathnews.com/news/407/146.html>)

Caritas Australia has been supporting numerous aid and development programs in Sudan since the mid-1990s. Its presence in Sudan means it is well placed to assist in addressing this humanitarian crisis. Caritas Australia needs your help urgently. Those fleeing the campaign of violence desperately need food, water, shelter and medical supplies now. Caritas is coordinating an emergency appeal and needs donations to assist people today. Please phone 1800 024 413 to make a donation. For further details and updates regarding Caritas Australia's advocacy position on events in Sudan, refer: <http://www.caritas.org.au/emergencies/sudan.htm>

THE POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN INDONESIA: On Sunday 25th April 2004, the banned separatist movement known as the Republic of South Maluku celebrated the 54th anniversary of its Declaration of Independence with a public rally in Ambon. Provoking opponents of independence, the rally erupted into violence over the ensuing fortnight resulting in the deaths of 40 people, the displacement of hundreds of families and the destructions of homes and public facilities. The violence rekindled tensions and memories of the recent war throughout Maluku (1999-2002) that saw the loss of over 5,000 lives and the displacement of half a million people.

Advocacy and aid agencies such as Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) report that many of the tensions that remain unresolved to this day include land disputes, poverty, continued displacement, high levels of unemployment, lack of education, and ethnic tensions. Some of these tensions have also been evident in other troubled provinces of Aceh and Irian Jaya. There is no doubt that, in Ambon, conflict between Christians and Muslims have been a significant feature of the civil unrest.

Ingvild Solvang of JRS Indonesia says that finding durable solutions for thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is most important for healing the wounds of war and fostering a lasting peace; “advocating on behalf of the IDPs is integral to our broader advocacy work for peace, to bring Christians and Muslims together in an environment where they can interact peacefully and create common experiences. It involves addressing underlying causes of conflict, so as to prevent further outbreaks of violence.” (refer: <http://www.with.jrs.net/files/serv31en.pdf>)

An excellent document, “Indonesia: The Political and Human Rights Situation” has been produced by Uniya as part of its “View on Asia” briefing series. The Briefing considers the significant human rights challenges facing Indonesia within the broader context of this nation’s first popular election for a President and its course of reform towards the rule of law and respect for human rights. It notes the ethnic diversity of Indonesia. Recognising that the vast majority of Indonesians profess to follow Islam, the country is home to a diversity of Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and indigenous animistic faiths. The document considers the important role Australia has to play in supporting Indonesia in this period of transition. (refer: http://www.uniya.org/research/asia_pacific.html)

EAST TIMOR AND THE TIMOR SEA TREATY: The ACSJC looks forward to the launch in September of a Catholic Social Justice Series paper authored by Fr Frank Brennan SJ on the subject of competing claims to the oil and gas reserves of the Timor Sea. CSJS No. 51, “The Timor Sea’s Oil and Gas – What’s Fair?” considers the vexed debate and complex history surrounding current negotiations between Australia and Timor-Leste concerning the resource sharing arrangements and maritime boundaries of the Timor Sea.

Fr Brennan addresses two central questions underpinning these negotiations: Should the Parliament of Timor-Leste pass legislation approving an agreement between the governments of Timor-Leste and Australia giving the security needed for the joint ventures to proceed with the Greater Sunrise project next year?

What is a fair process and a fair outcome for the negotiation of maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea where Timor-Leste has competing interests and conflicting claims with Australia and Indonesia?

Fr Brennan says, “Members of the Church in both countries have an interest in seeking answers consistent with Catholic social teaching including respect for property rights, the pursuit of the common good, and solidarity with the poor. Citizens in both countries have an interest in seeking answers which protect their national interest and which treat fairly with their neighbours”.

The document will be essential reading for anyone who has an interest in the progress of the Timor Sea negotiations and Australia’s evolving relationship with its newest neighbour. Further details about this document will be available on the ACSJC website shortly. Advanced orders can be placed by phoning the ACSJC Secretariat on 02 9956 5811.

- *John Ferguson (National Executive Officer)*

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

(orders Tel: 02 9956 5811 or download an order form from the ACSJC website:
<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/TEMPLATE-ORDERFORM.pdf>)

2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT – ORDER NOW!

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled "Peace be with you – Cultivating a Culture of Peace". The Statement will be launched in September prior to Social Justice Sunday on September 26. The ACSJC is now taking orders for the Statement (minimum order quantity 10). An order form is available on the ACSJC website: http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/publications/documentation/documentation_sjs01.html

OCCASIONAL PAPER: THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC DEBATE

Catholic Social Justice Series no.50 – Prof. John Warhurst addresses the implications of the issue in the latest paper, The Church and Public Debate: Reflections on Speaking Out in an Election Year. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage).

OCCASIONAL PAPER: FROM ETHICS TO SPIRITUALITY

Catholic Social Justice Series no.49 – Fr Gerard Gleeson reflects on the links between philosophy, theology and Christian spirituality. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage).

2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

The 2004 Social Justice Calendar focuses on the theme "Cultivating a Culture of Peace". This coincides with the theme for the 2004 Social Justice Sunday Statement.

Cost: \$4.40 (inc. GST), plus postage.
http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html

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

CURRENT ISSUES

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE – "TIME FOR ALL TO WORK TOGETHER ON POVERTY" – 16 July 2004

The alliance of faith-based organisations co-ordinating the "Vote [1] No More Poverty" campaign has acknowledged the commitment of Mr Latham and all Premiers and Chief Ministers to the task of tackling poverty through Commonwealth-State cooperation. They said they looked forward to seeing more detail on how a national strategy to alleviate poverty would be developed. All political parties were called on to "embrace this commitment to a national strategy, putting aside all partisan differences in the interests of Australia's 3.6 million poor, especially the children in low-income households".
(<http://www.nomorepoverty.org.au/mr16072004.php>)

PRE-ELECTION RESOURCES

Visit the ACSJC website for a range of pre-election information and resources. Included is information about the “Vote [1] No More Poverty” campaign; the Australian Catholic Bishops’ statement “Having Faith in Our Democracy: Building a Better Australia”; the ACSJC leaflet “A Vote for Social Justice”. ([http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/vote_\[1\]_no_more_poverty.html](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/vote_[1]_no_more_poverty.html))

REFUGEE & MIGRANT SUNDAY RESOURCES

Resources produced by the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office for Refugee & Migrant Sunday (29 August 2004) can be accessed at: http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/news/2004_ref_sunday.htm

REFUGEE & MIGRANT SUNDAY ECUMENICAL EDUCATION KIT

Each year the National Council of Churches of Australia produces an education kit containing educative, liturgical and parish resources to help celebrate the day and to take further action. Visit the NCCA website for further details: http://www.ncca.org.au/christian_world_service/at_work_with_refugees/refugee_and_migrant_sunday

NETACT PRE-ELECTION KIT

NetAct is a network of Catholic social justice, welfare and educational agencies. NetAct is short for Network for Action. It is committed to a common vision of the world based on human dignity, right relationships and gospel values. In anticipation of the forthcoming Federal election, NetAct has produced a kit which includes a number of Issues Papers with underpinning principles, relevant issues and suggested alternative policies and actions. It provides both information and resources for discussion and for visiting your local Candidate/Federal Member. The NetAct Pre-Election Kit 2004 is available on <http://www.scan.org.au/Templates/Untitled-2.htm>

AUGUST NOTICES

JULY 14 – AUGUST 21: EXHIBITION, “ISLE OF REFUGE”. Monash University is hosting an exhibition that brings together a group of prominent Australian visual artists who, through their personal histories, ethics and politics, have a special sense of solidarity with refugees in detention in Australia and in Australian camps in the Pacific. Open daily, Monash University Museum of Art - Ground Floor, Building 55, Monash University Clayton Campus, Melbourne (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>; <http://www.monash.edu.au/muma/exhibitions/>)

AUGUST 2: BOOK LAUNCH, “A CERTAIN MARITIME INCIDENT”. Author Tony Kevin will launch his book at 6.30pm, Readings Bookshop, Lygon Street, Melbourne (refer: <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=noticeboard>)

AUGUST 2: ABC FOUR CORNERS PROGRAM, “A BITTER PILL?”. As the Australian Senate prepares to vote on legislation that will enable the Free Trade Agreement to take effect, Jonathon Holmes travels to the United States and discovers why a powerful lobby group would like to wear down the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme...and why the ordinary American, struggling to meet the cost of much-needed drugs, looks at Australia with envy. Four Corners, ABC, 8.30pm

AUGUST 3: PUBLIC MEETING, “AUSTRALIA AT THE CROSSROADS: TIME FOR CHANGE”. Major public meeting in the lead up to the federal election. Listen to community leaders such as Julian Burnside and Kevin Carmody discuss key policy issues in the forthcoming federal election. Organised by JustPeace Qld and supported by a range of organisations including the Brisbane Catholic Peace and Justice Commission. 6.45 – 9.30pm, Brisbane City Hall, Main Auditorium. (refer: http://www.justrefugeeprograms.com.au/whatshappening_events.php)

AUGUST 3 – 29: THEATRICAL PRODUCTION, “LANDED”, presents stories of teenage migrants and refugees in Australia. This production, with its timeless and moving live music, striking set and physicality reminds us that love, laughter and uncertainty are fundamental to our shared humanity. At Sidetrack Studio Theatre, 142 Addison Rd, Marrickville, Sydney. Fri-Sat 8pm, Sun 5pm. Matinee Tues-Fri 2pm. Tickets \$20 full, \$15 concession, \$10 matinee. For bookings phone: (02) 9294 4655

AUGUST 5 – 6: BIENNIAL CONFERENCE, “SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY”. The ACT Council of Social Services Conference provides an opportunity for interested people to come together to share the knowledge, experiences and strategies that to sustain our communities. This conference will focus on the following themes: perspectives on social sustainability; community viability; survival strategies for community organisations; social rights and wrongs; people, places and policy. Conference to be held at the Canberra Institute of Technology, Function Centre, K Block, Reid Campus, Canberra. (refer: <http://www.actcoss.org.au/conference.htm#about>)

AUGUST 6: BOOK LAUNCH, “A CERTAIN MARITIME INCIDENT”. Author Tony Kevin in conversation with Margo Kingston, 6.30 – 8.00pm, Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, Sydney. For bookings call: (02) 9660 2333 (refer: <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=noticeboard>)

AUGUST 6 – 9: GARMA FESTIVAL 2004, “INDIGENOUS LIVELIHOODS AND LEADERSHIP”. Yolngu culture in north-east Arnhem Land - a heartland of Aboriginal culture and land rights - is among the oldest living cultures on earth. The Garma Festival is a celebration of the Yolngu cultural inheritance and encourages the practice, preservation and maintenance of traditional dance, song, art and ceremony on Yolngu lands in North East Arnhem Land. (refer: <http://www.garma.telstra.com/>)

AUGUST 8 – SEPTEMBER 28: EXHIBITION, “INNOCENT VICTIMS: Children’s drawings from the Woomera Detention Centre”. The exhibition, hosted by the Sisters of St Joseph, consists of 20 drawings created by children who have been confined to the Woomera Detention Centre. These drawings vividly express everyday life, conditions and experiences – many depicting the violence witnessed by the children during the breakout in 2001. The exhibition will be open daily from 10.00am – 4.00pm, Mary MacKillop Place Museum, 7 Mount Street, North Sydney. (refer: <http://www.cathnews.com/news/407/doc/20mackillop.doc>)

AUGUST 10: SEMINAR, "HUMAN RIGHTS IN LIMBO: AUSTRALIANS IN GUANTANAMO BAY". This Amnesty International seminar considers the plight of two Australian citizens detained by US Authorities without charge for over two years. Speakers include Steven Hopper, Legal Counsel for Mamdouh Habib and Julie Debeljak, Lecturer in Law, Monash University. 6.15pm, Allens Arthur Robinson, Level 34, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne. Donation: \$5.00 - Proceeds to Amnesty. RSVP: 3 August 2004, Elizabeth.Bennett@aar.com.au, ph: (03) 9613 8208.

AUGUST 12: PUBLIC ADDRESS ON REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER POLICY by Dr Carmen Lawrence. 7.30 – 10.00pm, the National Theatre, Wallace Street, Braidwood, NSW. For further info call (02) 4842 1000 or refer: <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=noticeboard>

AUGUST 12: SEMINAR, “INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL”. Abha Shrestha, a postgraduate student of the Centre of Peace and Conflict Studies will talk of her experiences working in conflict situations and CPACS staff members will talk about ongoing research at CPACS. 12.30 – 2.00pm, CPACS Oval Office, Mackie Building K01, Arundel Street, Glebe, Sydney (across the footbridge over Parramatta Road from the main campus of the University of Sydney) (refer: <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/centres/cpacs/seminars.htm>)

AUGUST 13: PUBLIC LECTURE, “EAST TIMOR, A UN SUCCESS MODEL IN NATION-BUILDING?”. Dr Jose Ramos Horta will deliver the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, Annual Lecture 2004. 1.00 – 2.00pm, Queen's hall, Parliament House, Spring St, Melbourne. RSVP ph (03) 9905 3327. (refer: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news_and_events/news_and_events.html)

AUGUST 15: EXHIBITION – TOOWOOMBA REFUGEE DISPLAY. A sound and multimedia exhibit which expresses through sound the trials and tribulations that refugees face on their journey to seek asylum in Australia. Organised by Sound and Design students from the University of Southern Queensland. From 10.00am at the Phoenix Building (Q Block), University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. (Refer: http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=20040705_168)

AUGUST 16: PUBLIC LECTURE, “WOMEN – WITNESSES TO THE TRUTH”. Northern Sydney Region Spirituality in the Pub event. Speakers include Sr Susan Connelly RSJ of Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies, and Karen Lunney, Co-ordinator Youth Ministry, Broken Bay. 7.30 – 9.00pm, The Union Hotel, Cnr Pacific Highway & West Street, North Sydney.

AUGUST 25: PUBLIC LECTURE, “HEALING A BROKEN WORLD” by Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez SDB. Cardinal Rodriguez of Honduras is one of Latin America’s leading activists for justice and human rights. He has been at the forefront of confronting corruption in society and championing the rights of the poor and suffering in a globalised world. 7.30pm, Cathedral Hall, Marist Place, Parramatta. For further info contact Br Mark O’Connor FMS on 0401 222 596 or email moc@maristmelb.org.au

AUGUST 25: ADDRESS BY DR SEV OZDOWSKI OAM, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, 12.00 – 2.00pm, NPC, Canberra (refer: <http://www.npc.org.au/speakers.htm>)

AUGUST 26: PUBLIC LECTURE, “ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION: A THEOLOGY OF RESURRECTION”. Fr James Alison, theologian and author offers a unique perspective on faith, bringing together traditional Christian doctrine and contemporary insights and concerns. 7.30 – 9.30pm, Australian Catholic University, McAuley Campus, Nudgee Road, Banyo, Brisbane.

AUGUST 26: SEMINAR, “MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES IN SIERRA LEONE”. Sarah Elliot (MSF), a postgraduate student of the Centre of Peace and Conflict Studies will speak of her experiences working in conflict situations. 12.30 – 2.00pm, CPACS Oval Office, Mackie Building K01, Arundel Street, Glebe, Sydney (refer: <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/centres/cpacs/seminars.htm>)

AUGUST 27 – 29: ACSJC DIOCESAN CONTACTS’ WEEKEND IN SYDNEY.

AUGUST 28: SEMINAR, “CELEBRATING EXTRA-ORDINARY WOMEN TODAY”. This seminar will gather women across generations and experience for interaction in telling stories of lives well lived in ordinary and extra-ordinary ways. Facilitated by Monica Brown and Hilary Musgrave rsc at Sancta Sophia College, Camperdown, Sydney. Cost \$50 – contact Sr Betty McMahon rscj on ph: (02) 4862 2930

AUGUST 28: PUBLIC LECTURE, “HEALING A BROKEN WORLD”, the joint Knox/Camara lecture by Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez. 6.00pm, Cardinal Knox Centre Hall, 383 Albert Street, East Melbourne.

AUGUST 29: PUBLIC LECTURE, “BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER”. Refugee and Migrant Sunday lecture sponsored by the National Council of Churches of Australia. Speakers include: Fr Mark Raper SJ, Jesuit Provincial Australia; advocate Ian Skiller and refugee employees. 2.30pm, Cardinal Knox Centre, St Patrick’s Cathedral, 383 Albert St, East Melbourne. (refer: <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=noticeboard>)

AUGUST 29 – SEPTEMBER 1: NATIONAL CONFERENCE, “JUSTICE HI-JACKED”. The National Association of Community Legal Centres and the South Australian Association of CLCs is holding a national conference that will consider the fundamental principles of a democratic system of justice in the light of a continuing national climate of fear and strategies promoted as making us “safer”. The conference will be held at the Stamford Grand Hotel, 2 Jetty Road, Glenelg, Adelaide. (refer: <http://www.naclc.org.au>)

AUGUST 30: SEMINAR, “RELIGION AND VIOLENCE”, BY FR JAMES ALISON. 12.00 – 2.00pm, Griffith University, Nathan Campus, Kessels Road, Nathan, Brisbane.

SEPTEMBER 4 – 5: NATIONAL CONFERENCE, “HUMAN RIGHTS: A PACIFIC AGENDA”. Amnesty International is hosting the inaugural Human Rights Conference aiming to promote dialogue and understanding between key actors in the Pacific region on critical issues affecting the promotion and protection of human rights, including Australia’s role. The Conference will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Brisbane. (refer: http://www.amnesty.org.au/whats_happening/hrc)

SEPTEMBER 6 – 8: NATIONAL CONFERENCE, “JUST CARE”. Catholic Health Australia’s annual National Conference, to be held in Adelaide, aims to raise public awareness of the health needs of vulnerable Australians and to explore the contribution the Church makes and can make to improve access to essential care for everyone. Visit CHA website for booking details (refer: <http://www.cha.org.au/conference/index.html>)

(email news of your forthcoming social justice event by the last week of each month to: admin@acsjc.org.au)

JULY NEWS MONITOR

CATHOLIC WELFARE JOINS CALL FOR FAMILY SERVICES FUNDING BOOST: Agencies supported by Catholic Welfare Australia and two other welfare peak bodies issued an urgent plea for \$16 million in Federal Funding.

AMERICAN BISHOPS SET IMPACT ON POOR AS FREE TRADE'S 'MORAL MEASURE': The moral measure of any international trade agreement is how it impacts the poorest and most vulnerable, said a statement from the bishops of the United States and Central America.

COMMISSION URGES CRITICAL APPROACH TO ELECTION ISSUES: Brisbane's Archdiocesan Catholic Justice and Peace Commission urges Catholics to take an active interest in the forthcoming Federal election.

MACKILLOP MUSEUM SHOWING DETAINEE CHILDREN'S TRAUMA IN ART: An touring exhibition featuring drawings by children held at the Woomera Detention Centre opened at the Mary MacKillop Place Museum in North Sydney.

COMBINED CAMPAIGN SIGNALS TIME FOR ALL TO WORK TOGETHER ON POVERTY: The Vote [1] No More Poverty Campaign, launched by an alliance of Catholic and other faith-based organisations, welcomed last week's commitment of Opposition leader Mark Latham and all Premiers and Chief Ministers to the task of tackling poverty through Commonwealth-State cooperation.

SYDNEY BISHOP RESPONDS TO HONG KONG CATHOLIC CONCERN ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: Parramatta Bishop Kevin Manning made a submission expressing "grave concern" to the Australian Government's Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Dialogue Process following recent moves by the Hong Kong government to exert control over Catholic schools.

MERCIES WORKING TOGETHER TO COUNTER "CLIMATE OF FEAR": 67 Sisters of Mercy from all states in Australia, Papua New Guinea and Pakistan resolved to work together as a single entity - the Institute of Sisters of Mercy - "to respond to the current climate of fear being generated in our country and globally".

QUEENSLAND RELIGIOUS ORDERS LAUNCH FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN: The Social Action Office (SAO) of the Leaders of Catholic Religious Orders in Queensland began its push to get voters to consider the "common good" when participating in this year's Federal Election.

EDUCATION COMMISSION WELCOMES LABOR'S NEEDS-BASED FUNDING PLAN: The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) issued a statement following the ALP's announcement of Federal-State cooperation in achieving a funding formula based on the needs, rather than identity, of a school.

SOUTH AFRICAN CARDINAL CALLS FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST ZIMBABWE: The head of the Catholic Church in South Africa, Cardinal Wilfred Napier said that he could not understand why the South African government is not considering sanctions against Zimbabwe, given the success that sanctions brought to them.

PAKISTAN ARCHBISHOP ALARMED BY DECLINE IN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: The Archbishop of Lahore told the Aid to the Church in Need Catholic charity that Muslim anger over the US-led war in Iraq is having a serious impact on religious freedom in Pakistan.

JESUIT MAKES BANGKOK AIDS PRESENTATION FOR ASYLUM SEEKER ACTIVIST: Fr Peter Norden of Jesuit Social Services in Melbourne made a presentation at the 15th International HIV/AIDS Conference in Bangkok on Tuesday, on behalf of Nigerian HIV/AIDS activist, Olawale Olaitan, currently seeking asylum in Australia and being accommodated in a Jesuit Social Services community house.

JESUIT CENTRE SAYS AUSTRALIA MUST SUPPORT INDONESIA REFORMS: The Sydney-based Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre released a paper stressing that it is in Australia's interests to support Indonesia on its course of reform towards the rule of law and respect for human rights.

CHURCH WELCOMES GOVT CHANGE OF HEART ON PROTECTION VISAS: Bishop Joseph Grech described the Federal Government's decision to allow 9500 people on Temporary Protection Visas to apply for permanent visas as an important and compassionate change of policy.

BRISBANE COMMISSION FORGES SUPPORT LINK WITH ZIMBABWE: Brisbane's Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission resolved to give a helping hand to its sister Commission in Zimbabwe following a recent communication.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES HEAD SHOCKED BY BAXTER DETENTION CENTRE: After visiting South Australia's Baxter Detention Centre, World Council of Churches (WCC) General-Secretary Rev Dr Sam Kobia vowed to confront the Federal Government with the view that "there is a problem with the policy" of asylum-seeker detention.

NUN SEEKING RELIEF FOR DETAINED ASYLUM SEEKER FAMILY: Mercy Sister Claudette Cusack is organising a support group for a family in South Australia's Baxter Immigration Detention Centre in the hope that they can get relief from detention in the form of a bridging visa.

VIETNAM TIGHTENING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: A newly adopted bill that regulates religious practices is worse than the one adopted in the 1950s by Ho Chi Minh, according to a Vietnamese cardinal.

CWL URGES PRAYER TO END SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: The Catholic Women's League of Australia observed the Feast of St Maria Goretti as a day of prayer for an end to the violence and sexual exploitation of women and children.

JAKARTA ARCHBISHOP URGES CATHOLICS TO VOTE FOR THE COMMON GOOD: Cardinal Darmaatmadja of Jakarta published a small booklet containing guidelines for Catholics to enable them better understand the electoral process that will culminate in today's vote for the Indonesian presidency.

VATICAN SAYS 'POVERTY OF IMAGINATION' HINDERS FIGHT AGAINST REAL POVERTY: Overcoming world poverty is slowed by "a certain poverty of imagination among the more fortunate peoples of the world", according to a statement presented by Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences president Mary Ann Glendon.

REPORT SAYS PROBLEM GAMBLERS ONE THIRD OF MARKET: A new issues paper on gambling from the Tasmanian Catholic Justice and Peace Commission says Tasmanians are losing more than \$80 million a year on poker machines alone.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/407>

AUGUST SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

AUGUST 8: MARY MACKILLOP

Mary was born in Melbourne in 1842. In 1866, with Father Julian Tenison Woods, she founded the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, more commonly known as the Josephites. By the time Mary died in 1909, the Josephites numbered more than 1,000. Mary was beatified in 1995 by John Paul II during his visit to Australia.

AUGUST 9: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

International Decade of the World's Indigenous People 1995-2004.
Theme - *Indigenous People: Partnership in Action.*

The goal of the Decade is to foster international cooperation to help solve problems faced by Indigenous peoples in such areas as human rights, culture, the environment, development, education and health. It is hoped that the Decade will enable the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous people and their empowerment to make choices which enable them to retain their cultural identity while participating in political, economic and social life, with full respect for their cultural values, languages, traditions and forms of social organization.

Indigenous peoples inhabit large areas of the earth's surface. Spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, they number, at a rough estimate, some 300 million. Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples are so-called because they were living on their lands before settlers came from elsewhere; they are the descendants - according to one definition - of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived, the new arrivals later becoming dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means. Throughout human history, whenever dominant neighbouring peoples have expanded their territories or settlers from far away have acquired new lands by force, the cultures and livelihoods - even the existence - of Indigenous peoples have been endangered. The threats to Indigenous peoples' cultures and lands, to their status and other legal rights as distinct groups and as citizens, do not always take the same forms as in previous times. Although some groups have been relatively successful, in most parts of the world Indigenous peoples are actively seeking recognition of their identities and ways of life.

For more information: <http://www.unhchr.ch/indigenous/decade.htm>

AUGUST 12: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

The global economy is going through a period of uncertainty. Rising unemployment takes a heavy toll among young people who are particularly vulnerable to shocks in the labour market. Lay-offs, restructuring and insufficient opportunities to enter the world of work condemn many to a life of economic hardship and despair. We have seen, all too often, the tragedy of young lives misspent in crime, drug abuse, civil conflict and even terrorism. Youth unemployment is a problem that affects all countries. The International Labour Organization estimates that some 74 million young people are currently out of work. In the next ten years, more than one billion will enter the working age population. While this new generation is more educated than any previous one, these young people will continue to face many obstacles in their search for jobs. We must develop strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work that will allow them to become independent and responsible global citizens. This

involves promoting employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation for youth all over the world.

- *Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, International Youth Day 2003*

AUGUST 23: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE SLAVE

Trade and its Abolition

Contemporary forms of slavery cannot be eliminated unless the international community goes beyond mere legal prohibitions to fighting its root causes such as poverty, gender discrimination and violence against women. The international community is fighting new forms of oppression ranging from traditional chattel slavery, bonded labour, serfdom, child labour, migrant labour and domestic labour, to forced labour and slavery for ritual or religious purposes. Combating slavery means not only its direct prohibition by law but also fighting against poverty, illiteracy, economic and social disparities, gender discrimination, violence against women and children, harmful traditional practices and many other factors leading up to its contemporary forms.

Acting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Bertrand Ramcharan, International Day 2003

AUGUST 29: REFUGEE & MIGRANT SUNDAY

Migration has become a widespread phenomenon in the modern-day world and involves all nations, either as countries of departure, of transit, or of arrival. It affects millions of human beings, and presents a challenge that the pilgrim Church, at the service of the whole human family, cannot fail to take up and meet in the Gospel spirit of universal charity. This Day should be a time of special prayer for the needs of all who, for whatever reason, are far from home and family; it should be a day of serious reflection on the duties of Catholics towards these brothers and sisters.

Among those particularly affected are the most vulnerable of foreigners: undocumented migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, those displaced by continuing violent conflicts in many parts of the world, and the victims - mostly women and children - of the terrible crime of human trafficking. Even in the recent past we have witnessed tragic instances of forced movements of peoples for ethnic and nationalistic pretensions, which have added untold misery to the lives of targeted groups. At the root of these situations there are sinful intentions and actions that go contrary to the Gospel and constitute a call to Christians everywhere to overcome evil with good.

- *John Paul II, World Day of Migrants & Refugees 2003*

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